

The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein: **The Little Jug of Tears**



Once upon a time there was a mother and a child, and the mother loved the child, her only one, with all her heart, and without her child she could not live, she could not exist. But then the Lord sent a great sickness which raged among children and seized this child, who took to her bed and fell critically ill. For three days and three nights the mother watched, wept, and prayed by her beloved child's bedside, but the child died. Then the mother, who was now alone in God's wide world, was gripped with a violent and inexpressible pain, and she ate nothing and drank nothing and wept, wept again, without cease, for three days and for three nights, and cried out for her child. Now when, on the third night, she was sitting full of deep sorrow at the place where her child had died, weary with tears and weak with pain to the point of fainting, the door softly opened and the mother gave a start, for there before her was standing her dead child. She had become a

blessed angel and she smiled with the sweetness of innocence and the beauty of one transfigured. But in her hands she carried a little jug, and this was almost overflowing. And the child spoke: "Oh dearest mother, weep no more for me! Behold, in this jug are your tears, which you have shed for me; the Angel of Mourning has collected them in this vessel. If you cry even one more tear for me, then the jug will overflow, and I will find no rest in the grave and no bliss in Heaven. And so, oh dearest mother, weep no more for your child, for your child is well taken care of, she is happy, and angels are her playmates." With these words the dead child disappeared, and henceforth the mother wept no more tears, so as not to disturb the child's rest in the grave or her peace in Heaven.