

One-Eye, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes

There was once a woman who had three daughters, the eldest of whom was called One-eye, because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead; and the second, Two-eyes, because she had two eyes like other folks; and the youngest, Three-eyes, because she had three eyes. However, as Two-eyes saw just as other human beings did, her sisters and her mother could not endure her. They said to her, "Thou, with thy two eyes, art no better than the common people; thou dost not belong to us!" They pushed her about, and did everything that they could to make her unhappy. It came to pass that Two-eyes had to go out into the fields and tend the goat, but she was still quite hungry because her sisters had given her so little to eat. So she sat down on a ridge and began to weep. And when she looked up in her grief, a woman was standing beside her, who said, "Wipe away thy tears, Two-eyes; just say to thy goat,

*'Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,'*

and then a clean, well-spread little table will stand before thee, with the most delicious food upon it, and when thou hast had enough, just say,

*'Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,'*

and then it will vanish again from thy sight."

Hereupon the wise woman departed. Two-eyes said,

*"Bleat, my little goat, bleat,
Cover the table with something to eat,"*

and a little table, covered with a white cloth, was standing there, and on it was the most delicious food. Then Two-eyes helped herself to some food. And when she was satisfied, she said,

*"Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,
And take the table quite away,"*

and immediately the little table and everything on it was gone again. Two-eyes was quite glad and happy.

In the evening, when she went home, she found a small dish with some food, which her sisters had set ready for her, but she did not touch it. As it happened every time, they said, "Two-eyes always leaves her food untasted, and she used to eat up everything." They resolved to send One-eye with Two-eyes when she went to the pasture, to observe. So when Two-eyes set out the next time, One-eye went to her and said, "I will go with you to the pasture." But Two-eyes knew what was in One-eye's mind, and said, "Come, One-eye, we will sit down, and I will sing something to you." One-eye sat down and was tired with the unaccustomed walk, and Two-eyes sang constantly,

"One-eye, wakest thou?

One-eye, sleepest thou?"

until One-eye shut her one eye and fell asleep, and Two-eyes said,

"Bleat, my little goat, bleat,

Cover the table with something to eat,"

and seated herself at her table and ate and drank until she was satisfied, and then she again cried,

"Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,

And take the table quite away,"

and in an instant all was gone. Two-eyes now awakened One-eye, and said, "Come, let us go home again." One-eye could not tell her mother why Two-eyes would not eat, and said, "I fell asleep when I was out."

Next day the mother said to Three-eyes, "This time thou shalt go and observe, for she must eat and drink in secret." So Three-eyes went to Two-eyes, and said, "I will go with you." But Two-eyes knew what was in Three-eyes' mind, and said, "We will sit down, and I will sing something to you, Three-eyes."

Three-eyes sat down, and Two-eyes began the same song as before, and sang,

“Three-eyes, are you waking?”

but then, instead of singing,

“Three-eyes, are you sleeping?”

as she ought to have done, she thoughtlessly sang,

“Two-eyes, are you sleeping?”

Then two of the eyes which Three-eyes had, shut and fell asleep, but the third did not sleep. And when Two-eyes thought that Three-eyes was fast asleep, she used her little charm,

“Bleat, my little goat, bleat,

Cover the table with something to eat,”

and ate and drank as much as her heart desired, and then ordered the table to go away again, saying

“Bleat, bleat, my little goat, I pray,

And take the table quite away.”

Three-eyes had seen everything. When they got home, Three-eyes told the mother, “When she is out, she calls to the little goat and a table appears before her covered with the best of food and she eats all she wants. I watched everything closely.” Then the envious mother fetched a knife and killed the goat.

When Two-eyes saw that, she went out and wept bitter tears. Suddenly, the wise woman once more stood by her side, and said, “Two-eyes, why art thou weeping?” She answered. “The goat has been killed by my mother.” The wise woman said, “Two-eyes, ask thy sisters to give thee the heart of the slaughtered goat, and bury it in the ground in front of the house.” Two-eyes went home and said to her sisters, “Dear sisters, do give me the heart of my goat.” Then they told her she could have it. So Two-eyes buried the heart quietly in the evening.

Next morning, when they all awoke, there stood a strangely magnificent tree with leaves of silver, and fruit of gold, standing on the exact spot where she had buried the heart. Then the mother said to One-eye, “Climb up, my child, and gather some of the fruit for us.” One-eye climbed up, but the branch escaped

from her hands, and she could not pluck a single apple. Then said the mother, “Three-eyes, do you climb up.” Three-eyes was not more skillful, and the golden apples always escaped her. At length, the mother climbed up herself but could not get hold of the fruit. Then Two-eyes climbed up, and the golden apples came into her hand of their own accord, so that she brought a whole apronful down with her. The mother took them away from her, and treated her still more cruelly.

It so befell that once when they were all standing together by the tree, a young knight came up. He was a handsome lord, who stopped and admired the magnificent gold and silver tree, and said to the sisters, “To whom does this fine tree belong? Anyone who would bestow one branch of it on me might in return for it ask whatsoever he desired.” Then Two-eyes came forth, and the knight was surprised at her great beauty. Two-eyes said, “That I certainly shall be able to do, for the tree belongs to me.” And she climbed up, and broke off a branch with beautiful silver leaves and golden fruit, and gave it to the knight. Then said the knight, “What shall I give thee for it?” “Alas!” answered Two-eyes, “I suffer from hunger; if you would take me with you, I should be happy.” So the knight lifted Two-eyes on to his horse, and took her home with him to his father’s castle, and there he married her, and the wedding was solemnized with great rejoicing.

Her two sisters grudged her good fortune. “The wonderful tree, however, still remains with us,” thought they, “and everyone will come and admire it.” But next morning, the tree had vanished. When Two-eyes looked out of the window of her own little room, to her great delight the tree was standing in front of it, and so it had followed her.

Two-eyes lived a long time in happiness. Once, two poor women came to her in her castle and begged for alms. She looked in their faces and recognized her sisters, One-eye, and Three-eyes, who had fallen into such poverty that they had to beg. Two-eyes made them welcome and was kind to them so that they both with all their hearts repented the evil that they had done their sister in their youth.