

The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood

Moral:

*Many a girl has waited long
For a husband brave or strong;
But I'm sure I never met
Any sort of woman yet
Who could wait a hundred years,
Free from fretting, free from fears.
Now, our story seems to show
That a century or so,
Late or early, matters not;
True love comes by fairy-lot.
Some old folk will even say
It grows better by delay.
Yet this good advice, I fear,
Helps us neither there nor here.
Though philosophers may prate
How much wiser 'tis to wait,
Maids will be a-sighing still --
Young blood must when young blood will!*

- *Source: Perrault's Fairy Tales (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), pp. 3-21. This translation is from Old-Time Stories told by Master Charles Perrault, translated by A. E. Johnson (Dodd Mead and Company, 1921). Translations of the verse morals are from Perrault's Fairy Tales, translated by S. R. Littlewood (London: Herbert and Daniel, 1912).*
- *The title of this tale in French is "La belle au bois dormant."*

Little Red Riding Hood

Moral

*Little girls, this seems to say,
Never stop upon your way.
Never trust a stranger-friend;
No one knows how it will end.
As you're pretty, so be wise;
Wolves may lurk in every guise.
Handsome they may be, and kind,
Gay, or charming never mind!
Now, as then, 'tis simple truth—
Sweetest tongue has sharpest tooth!*

Moral:

Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at

home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.

Source: Andrew Lang, The Blue Fairy Book (London, ca. 1889), pp. 51-53. Lang's source: Charles Perrault, Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités: Contes de ma mère l'Oye (Paris, 1697).

The Master Cat, or Puss in Boots

Moral

*It's a pleasant thing, I'm told,
To be left a pile of gold.
But there's something better still,
Never yet bequeathed by will.
Leave a lad a stock of sense—
Though with neither pounds nor
pence—
And he'll finish, as a rule,
Richer than the gilded fool.*

Another Moral

*Can the heart of a Princess
Yield so soon to borrowed dress?
So it seems—but wait a while— 'Tis
not all a tale of guile.
He was young and straight of limb; She
was just the girl for him.
He was brave, and she was fair.
Tell me, when the right man's there—
Be he but a miller's son—
What Princess will not be won?*

The cat became a great lord, and never again ran after mice, except for entertainment.

Moral: *There is great advantage in receiving a large inheritance, but diligence and ingenuity are worth more than wealth acquired from others.*

Another moral: *If a miller's son can win the heart of a princess in so short a time, causing her to gaze at him with lovelorn eyes, it must be due to his clothes, his appearance, and his youth. These things do play a role in matters of the heart.*

- *Source: Andrew Lang, The Blue Fairy Book (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., ca. 1889), pp. 141-147. Lang's source: Charles Perrault, Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités: Contes de ma mère l'Oye (Paris, 1697).*