

## Finist the Falcon

Many years ago there was a rich, widowed merchant who had three daughters. The two elder daughters were only interested in parties and clothes, but the youngest, Marya (MAR-ya), took on the duties of housekeeping for her father.

One day the merchant was going to the local market and asked his daughters what presents they would like him to bring them. The two elder daughters asked him to bring them expensive new fabric for dresses, but Marya humbly said, "All I want, dear father, is the feather of Finist the Falcon."

When the father came home from the market, he brought new beautiful fabric, but he told his youngest daughter that he could find no one at the market who had ever heard of the feather of Finist the Falcon.

On his next trip, he went to a market much further away from his home. His elder daughters asked to him to buy them new silk scarves, but Marya again asked only for the feather of Finist the Falcon. Again he brought home expensive presents for the elder daughters, but no one at the market had ever heard of the feather.

When the merchant next planned to go to market, this time at a great distance from home, the elder daughters asked for new earrings, and Marya asked only for the feather of Finist the Falcon. In the market he found beautiful earrings for the elder daughters. On the way back he met an old man with a small box in his hands.





"What do you have in the box, good man?" asked the merchant. "The feather of Finist the Falcon" the old man replied. "Please, sell it to me," begged the merchant, and the old man replied "This feather is not for sale, but I can it as a present to a kind man, as you are."

When he returned home with the feather, Marya thanked him with great joy and ran into her room to open the box. She took out the feather, waved it in the air, and a falcon appeared; she rapped on the floor, and the bird turned into a handsome young man. They talked happily with each other far into the night. The elder daughters thought they heard a man's voice in her room and knocked on the door, demanding to come in. Before they could get in, however, Finist flew out the window. Breaking into the room and finding no one there, the sisters were very annoyed and left filled with suspicion.



Every night for the next three nights, Finist flew in through the window to visit Marya when she took out and waved the feather. But on the third night the two wicked sisters saw him leaving. While Marya was out, they stuck sharp knives and needles into the windowframe. Marya did not suspect anything and that night, while waiting for Finist, she dozed off. When Finist tried to enter the room he flew into the sharp objects, which cut him and injured his wings, so he called sadly in to her, "Good bye, my dear. If you love me, you will find me." And he flew away...

In the morning Marya discovered the knives covered with blood on the windowframe. She wept and called out to Finist; when there was no answer, she decided to go to find her sweetheart. She walked for days and days through the forest and finally came to a small hut.



An old woman came to the door, and asked her, "Where are you going, my beauty?"

Marya answered, "To find Finist the Falcon."

"Oh, it's a long way," said the old woman. "I will help you. Take this silver plate and golden egg. Don't give them away for money, but trade them for a word with Finist."



Marya took the present, thanked the old lady and continued on her journey. She came to two more small houses, where the sisters of the first old woman entertained her and gave her two other presents--a golden needle and a golden spindle. Finally, Marya came to a palace. She heard that Finist was there and that the princess of the land wanted him to marry her. Marya went to the kitchen and begged for work as a servant, and was hired to do scullery work.

One evening, after a long hard day of work, she sat down and played with the silver plate and the golden egg. The princess happened to see her and immediately demanded that Marya sell her these rare treasures. Marya, remembering the advice of the three old women, replied,



"I cannot sell them. But if you let me speak to Finist the Falcon this evening, I will give them to you as a gift."

The princess agreed, but she was suspicious so she put sleeping powder in Finist's supper. Later that evening Marya went to Finist's room and started to call to him: "My darling, Finist the Falcon, wake up."



But he was fast asleep and could not hear her. The next day the same thing happened when the princess saw Marya playing with the golden needle. On the third night, when she had won the right to speak with him by giving up the spindle, she entered the room and knelt by his bed as she called to him, but he again had been drugged and could not hear her. Knowing she had lost her last chance, she began to cry, and one burning tear fell on his cheek. This time he felt her sorrow, opened his eyes, and exclaimed,

"Dear Marya, I am so glad to see you again!" She told him all about her adventures since they had last met. They embraced each other and fled from the princess' palace. When they came back to Marya's house, they forgave Marya's sisters, married and lived happily after that.