

The Pear-Drum

Once upon a time there were two little girls. Their names were Blue-Eyes and Turkey. Blue-Eyes was named after the color of her eyes and Turkey after the red dress she wore. They lived in a little house on a moor with their mother and the baby. Their father was a sailor voyaging to faraway lands.

One day Blue-Eyes and Turkey went for a walk upon the moor, and they met a Gypsy Girl playing on a pear-drum. When she played, a little man and woman came out of the drum and danced. Blue-Eyes and Turkey were enchanted, and begged her to give them the pear-drum. "I will give it to you," she said, "but only if you are very naughty! Come back tomorrow."

So Blue-Eyes and Turkey were very naughty. They shouted, and spilled their food, refused to go to bed, and scribbled on their books. Their mother was grieved, but next day they got up very early and went out on the moor. There they met the Gypsy Girl, and again she played the pear-drum. "We were very naughty," they cried. "Can we have it?" "Tell me what you did," she replied. So they told her. "Oh no," said the Gypsy Girl, "you were only a little naughty. You must be far worse than that."

So that day they were as naughty as they could be. They threw their cups on the floor, and tore their clothes, and walked in the mud up to their knees; and pulled up all the flowers in the garden, and let the pig out so that it ran away. Their mother was still more grieved than before, but next day they got up very early and went out to meet the Gypsy Girl. Again she told them they had not been naughty enough. "You must be *really* bad," she said.

So they went home. This time they broke the chairs and smashed the china, and tore their clothes to pieces, and whipped the dog and struck the baby and beat their mother with their fists. Their mother said sadly, "Blue-Eyes and Turkey, you must not be so naughty. If you do not stop, I shall have to go away, and instead there will come a new mother with glass eyes and a wooden tail to live with you." But still they thought of the wonderful pear-drum and said to each other, "Tomorrow we will be good. Once we have got the pear-drum we will be good again."

Next morning they got up very early and went out on the moor. There was the Gypsy Girl, but she had no pear-drum. "Where is the pear-drum?" they cried. The Gypsy Girl laughed. "It is gone. We Gypsies are all going away today. I am the last to leave." "But we did as you told us"—and they told her all the things they had done. The Gypsy Girl laughed again. "Yes," she said, "you have been *really* naughty, and now your mother has gone away, far, far away to find your father, and instead you have a mother with glass eyes and a wooden tail."

Blue-Eyes and Turkey wandered about on the moor all day, but when evening came, they went back to their house. There were no lamps lit, but in the glow of the firelight they could see through the window the glitter of their new mother's glass eyes, and hear the thump of her wooden tail.