



The Bed Just So

—Denmark

Once there was a tailor in Denmark. He was famous all over the world for the clothes he made. He made the most beautiful dresses and the most handsome pants. People came from far and near to see and buy his clothes. Then something started happening to the tailor. His eyes started to have black and purple shadows and he started falling asleep over his work every day. He was sleep all day because he could not get any sleep at night.

Every night when he began to sleep, someone or something pulled the corners off his bed. All night long the tailor thought he heard something or someone grumbling and complaining and stomping around. “This cannot go on!” said the tailor. He went to see the wise gypsy woman.

“I must be bewitched or hexed,” he said.

“No,” said the wise woman. “If you were bewitched, your feet would be backwards and your hair would be growing upside down. Your trouble is that a hudgin has come to stay with you.”

“A hudgin?” said the tailor.

“A hudgin.” said the gypsy.

“What shall I do?” asked the tailor.

“Make a bed for him,” answered the wise woman. “Then he will leave your bed alone”

So the tailor bought a bed for the hudgin. It was the biggest bed the tailor could find in the village store, a big bed made of oak wood.

“Now,” said the tailor, “you have your bed and I have mine. Let’s both have a good night’s sleep.”

But as soon as the tailor began to fall asleep, he heard a voice grumbling and complaining. “Too high and too hard. Too high and too hard.”

The next night the tailor made a bed of fern and feathers. But as soon as he began to fall asleep, a voice woke him, grumbling and complaining. “Too soft and too tickly. Too soft and too tickly.”

Every day the tailor tried a new bed for the hudgin. Every night the voice woke him grumbling and complaining. When the tailor made a bed in the cupboard, the voice said, “Too dark and too stuffy.” When he tried a hammock, the voice said, “Too long and too loose.”

Then the tailor thought, “Babies sleep in cradles. I will build the hudgin a cradle and then I will get some sleep. But the voice complained, “Too teetery and too tottery. Too teetery and tootottery.”

The poor tailor was very tired. He was starting to think he would never get a good night’s sleep. Then one night he cracked open a walnut to eat with his dinner. The half walnut shell looked to him like a tiny bed. He thought, “Why not? I’ve tried everything else.” So he lined the walnut shell with cotton and peach down. He put a maple leave on for cover and set it on the windowsill. Soon he heard a happy humming sound. The tailor looked into the shell and there was a small dot no bigger than a mustard seed. “That must be a hudgin,” said the tailor, and he closed his eyes to listen.

He heard a contented voice say, “Just so. Just so. I like a bed made just so.” The hudgin went to sleep, and the tailor finally got a good night’s rest.

