

**MOTHER AND HER
FOUR CHILDREN**

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(A traditional fairy-tale from Larissa-Greece)

Once upon a time, many many years ago, there lived one mother with her four children:the Tortoise, the Hedgehog, the Spider and the Bee.



Their father had died when the children were young and mother had to take care of everything.Since then, she had to be both mother and father.She worked really hard to bring them up.She had turned night into day.



**But there was nothing missing, they had everything.....
When time came, the children got married and made their own home.**



Their mother was living alone, happy and satisfied that she had managed to raise and marry her children despite difficulties and anguish.

She had grown old by then. She got sick once and realized that her days were numbered.



Thus, she wanted one of her children to be next to her and close her eyes, at this very last **moment. For this reason, she calls an errand-boy living next door, and tells him:**

-Go to my eldest daughter, the Tortoise, and tell her that I am seriously ill and I want to see her.

The errand-boy goes to the house of the Tortoise and says:



-Aunt-Tortoise, aunt-Tortoise!

The Tortoise comes to the door and the boy tells her:

-Your mother said that she is seriously ill and she is going to die. That's why she wants you to go home quickly.

-Tell my mother that I can't, says the Tortoise. I have clothes in the tub and I am washing them.



The errand-boy tells the mother that her daughter can't come because she has the clothes in the tub and is washing them.

Mother was deeply hurt by her daughter's words and cursed her saying:

-For ever carry the tub on your **back!**



-Go to my son, the Hedgehog, says mother then, and tell him to come home to see me because I am **dying.**

The boy goes to the house of the Hedgehog and says:

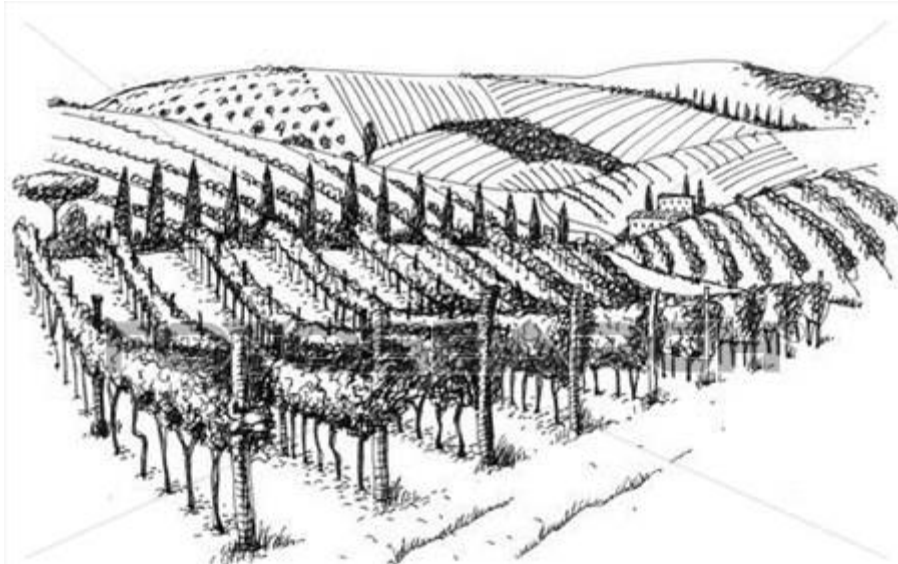


-Uncle-Hedgehog, uncle-Hedgehog!

The Hedgehog comes to the door and the boy tells him:

**-Your mother said that she is seriously ill
and she wants you to go home quickly to see you because she is going
to die.**

-Tell my mother that I can' t, says the Hedgehog.



I am fencing the vineyard with stakes.

The boy goes **back and tells mother that her son can' t come because
he is fencing the vineyard with stakes.**

Mother was hurt once again and cursed her son saying:

-For ever carry stakes on your **back!**



-Go now, to my daughter, the Spider, and tell her to come home.

The errand-boy goes to the Spider' s house and says:



-Aunt-Spider, aunt-Spider! Your mother said you should come home quickly because she is very ill.

-I am weaving in the loom, tell my mother and I can't come, she answered.

The boy goes back and says to mother that the Spider can't come because she is weaving in the loom.

Mother was aggrieved again and cursed her saying:



-Weave and unweave and never have a cloth!

-Go now, my boy, to the Bee, my last-born who is my last hope.

The boy goes to the Bee's house and says:



**-Aunt-Bee, aunt-Bee!Your mother said you should go home, because she is seriously ill and wants to see you.
The Bee was kneading in the trough at the time.**



When she heard her mother's wish, from the boy's mouth, she leaves the dough and runs home.

-My sweet mummy, what's wrong?



-I 'm dying, my daughter, she answered.But before I die, I give you a blessing.May your hands be always full of wax so as people to use it to make candles and light them in church, just like they are full of dough now.May your sweet words and your saliva become honey for people



to eat.

Since then, the tortoise lives with a shell on her back.....



The hedgehog with spines on his body.....



**the spider weaves her cobweb all the
time.....**



And the bee makes wax and honey.....