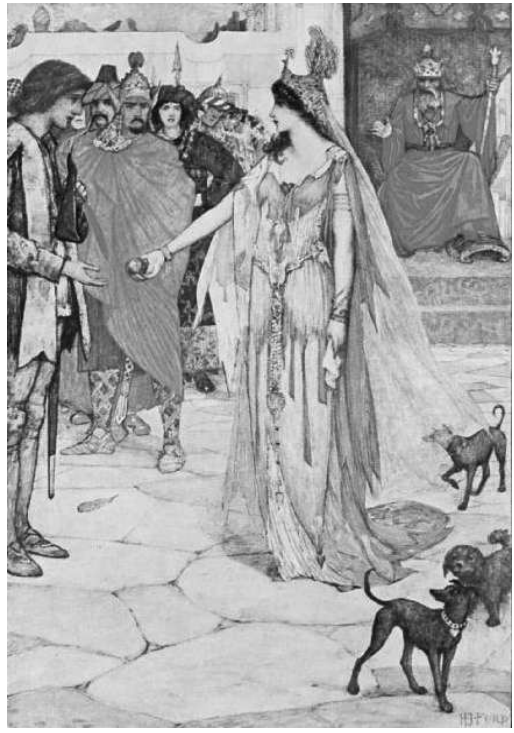
The Olive Fairy Book



Andrew Lang

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* * *

"How the King found the girl playing at ball in the orchard."



THE OLIVE FAIRY BOOK

ANDREW LANG



WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES AND
WITH
NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

H. J. FORD

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THE BLUE PARROT.

PREFACE

Many years ago my friend and publisher, Mr. Charles Longman, presented me with *Le Cabinet des Fées* ('The Fairy Cabinet'). This work almost requires a swinging bookcase for its accommodation, like the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and in a revolving bookcase I bestowed the volumes. Circumstances of an intimately domestic character, 'not wholly unconnected,' as Mr. Micawber might have said, with the narrowness of my study (in which it is impossible to 'swing a cat'), prevent the revolving bookcase from revolving at this moment. I can see, however, that the Fairy Cabinet contains at least forty volumes, and I think there are about sixty in all. This great plenitude of fairy tales from all quarters presents legends of fairies, witches, genii or Djinn, monsters, dragons, wicked step-mothers, princesses, pretty or plain, princes lucky or unlucky, giants, dwarfs, and enchantments. The stories begin with those which children like best—the old *Blue Beard*, *Puss in Boots*, *Hop o' my Thumb*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Toads and Pearls*. These were first collected, written, and printed at Paris in 1697. The author was Monsieur Charles Perrault, a famous personage in a great *perruque*, who in his day wrote large volumes now unread. He never dreamed that he was to be remembered mainly by the shabby little volume with the tiny headpiece pictures—how unlike the fairy way of drawing by Mr. Ford, said to be known as 'Over-the-wall Ford' among authors who play cricket, because of the force with which he swipes! Perrault picked up the rustic tales which the nurse of his little boy used to tell, and he told them again in his own courtly, witty way. They do not seem to have been translated into English until nearly thirty years later, when they were published in English, with the French on the opposite page, by a Mr. Pote, a bookseller at Eton. Probably the younger Eton boys learned as much French as they condescended to acquire from these fairy tales, which are certainly more amusing than the *Télémaque* of Messire François de Salignac de la Motte-Fénelon,

tutor of the children of France, Archbishop Duke of Cambrai, and Prince of the Holy Roman Empire.

The success of Perrault was based on the pleasure which the court of Louis XIV. took in fairy tales; we know that they were told among Court ladies, from a letter of Madame de Sévigné. Naturally, Perrault had imitators, such as Madame d'Aulnoy, a wandering lady of more wit than reputation. To her we owe *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Yellow Dwarf*. Anthony Hamilton tried his hand with *The Ram*, a story too prolix and confused, best remembered for the remark, 'Ram, my friend, begin at the beginning!' Indeed, the narrative style of the Ram is lacking in lucidity! Then came *The Arabian Nights*, translated by Monsieur Galland. Nobody has translated *The Arabian Nights* so well as Galland. His is the reverse of a scientific rendering, but it is as pleasantly readable as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would be if Alexandre Dumas had kept his promise to translate Homer. Galland omitted the verses and a great number of passages which nobody would miss, though the anthropologist is supposed to find them valuable and instructive in later scientific translations which do not amuse. Later, Persian Tales, Tales of the Sea, and original inventions, more or less on the fairy model, were composed by industrious men and women. They are far too long—are novels, indeed, and would please no child or mature person of taste. All these were collected in the vast Fairy Cabinet, published in 1786, just before the Revolution. Probably their attempt to be simple charmed a society which was extremely artificial, talked about 'the simple life' and the 'state of nature,' and was on the eve of a revolution in which human nature revealed her most primitive traits in orgies of blood.

That was the end of the Court and of the Court Fairy Tales, and just when they were demolished, learned men like the Grimms and Sir Walter Scott began to take an interest in the popular tales of peasants and savages all the world over. All the world over the tales were found to be essentially the same things. *Cinderella* is everywhere; a whole book has been written on *Cinderella* by Miss Cox, and a very good book it is, but not interesting to children. For them the best of the collections of foreign fairy tales are the German stories by the Grimms, the *Tales from*

the Norse, by Sir G. W. Dasent, (which some foolish 'grown-ups' denounced as 'improper'), and Miss Frere's Indian stories. There are hundreds of collections of savage and peasant fairy tales, but, though many of these are most interesting, especially Bishop Callaway's Zulu stories (with the Zulu versions), these do not come in the way of parents and uncles, and therefore do not come in the way of children. It is my wish that children should be allowed to choose their own books. Let their friends give them the money and turn them loose in the book shops! They know their own tastes, and if the children are born bookish, while their dear parents are the reverse, (and this does occur!), then the children make the better choice. They are unaffected in their selections; some want Shakespeares of their own, and some prefer a volume entitled *Buster Brown*. A few—alas, how few!—are fond of poetry; a still smaller number are fond of history. 'We know that there are no fairies, but history stories are *true*!' say these little innocents. I am not so sure that there are no fairies, and I am only too well aware that the best 'history stories' are not true.

What children do love is ghost stories. 'Tell us a ghost story!' they cry, and I am able to meet the demand, with which I am in sincere sympathy. Only strong control prevents me from telling the last true ghost story which I heard yesterday. It would suit children excellently well. 'The Grey Ghost Story Book' would be a favourite. At a very early age I read a number of advertisements of books, and wept because I could not buy dozens of them, and somebody gave me a book on Botany! It looked all right, nicely bound in green cloth, but within it was full of all manner of tediousness.

In our Fairy Cabinet, which cannot extend to sixty volumes, we have aimed at pleasing children, not 'grown-ups,' at whom the old French writers directed their romances, but have hunted for fairy tales in all quarters, not in Europe alone. In this volume we open, thanks to Dr. Ignaz Künos, with a story from the Turks. 'Little King Loc' is an original invention by M. Anatole France, which he very kindly permitted Mrs. Lang to adapt from *L'Abeille*.

Major Campbell, as previously, tells tales which he collected among the natives of India. But the sources are usually named at the end of each story, and when they are not named children will not miss them. Mrs. Lang, except in cases mentioned, has translated and adapted to the conditions of young readers the bulk of the collection, and Mrs. Skovgaard-Pedersen has done 'The Green Knight' from the Danish. I must especially thank Monsieur Macler for permitting us to use some of his *Contes Arméniens* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, Editeur).

MADSCHUN

Once upon a time there lived, in a small cottage among some hills, a woman with her son, and, to her great grief, the young man, though hardly more than twenty years of age, had not as much hair on his head as a baby. But, old as he looked, the youth was very idle, and whatever trade his mother put him to he refused to work, and in a few days always came home again.

On a fine summer morning he was lying as usual half asleep in the little garden in front of the cottage when the sultan's daughter came riding by, followed by a number of gaily dressed ladies. The youth lazily raised himself on his elbow to look at her, and that one glance changed his whole nature.

'I will marry her and nobody else,' he thought. And jumping up, he went to find his mother.

'You must go at once to the sultan, and tell him that I want his daughter for my wife,' he said.

'What?' shouted the old woman, shrinking back into a corner, for nothing but sudden madness could explain such an amazing errand.

'Don't you understand? You must go at once to the sultan and tell him that I want his daughter for my wife,' repeated the youth impatiently.

'But—but, do you know what you are saying?' stammered the mother. 'You will learn no trade, and have only the five gold pieces left you by your father, and can you really expect that the sultan would give his daughter to a penniless bald-pate like you?'

'That is *my* affair; do as I bid you.' And neither day nor night did her son cease tormenting her, till, in despair, she put on her best clothes, and wrapped her veil about her, and went over the hill to the palace.

It was the day that the sultan set apart for hearing the complaints and petitions of his people, so the woman found no difficulty in gaining admission to his presence.



'Do not think me mad, O Excellency,' she began, 'though I know I must seem like it. But I have a son who, since his eyes have rested on the veiled face of the princess, has not left me in peace day or night till I consented to come to the palace, and to ask your Excellency for your daughter's hand. It was in vain I answered that my head might pay the forfeit of my boldness, he would listen to nothing. Therefore am I here; do with me even as you will!'

Now the sultan always loved anything out of the common, and this situation was new indeed. So, instead of ordering the trembling creature to be flogged or cast into prison, as some other sovereigns might have done, he merely said: 'Bid your son come hither.'

The old woman stared in astonishment at such a reply. But when the sultan repeated his words even more gently than before, and did not look in anywise angered, she took courage, and bowing again she hastened homeward.

'Well, how have you sped?' asked her son eagerly as she crossed the threshold.

'You are to go up to the palace without delay, and speak to the sultan himself,' replied the mother. And when he heard the good news, his face lightened up so wonderfully that his mother thought what a pity it was that he had no hair, as then he would be quite handsome.

'Ah, the lightning will not fly more swiftly,' cried he. And in another instant he was out of her sight.

When the sultan beheld the bald head of his daughter's wooer, he no longer felt in the mood for joking, and resolved that he must somehow or other shake himself free of such an unwelcome lover. But as he had summoned the young man to the palace, he could hardly dismiss him without a reason, so he hastily said:

'I hear you wish to marry my daughter? Well and good. But the man who is to be her husband must first collect all the birds in the world, and bring them into the gardens of the palace; for hitherto no birds have made their homes in the trees.'

The young man was filled with despair at the sultan's words. How was he to snare all these birds? and even if he *did* succeed in catching them it would take years to carry them to the palace! Still, he was too proud to let the sultan think that he had given up the princess without a struggle, so he took a road that led past the palace and walked on, not noticing whither he went.

In this manner a week slipped by, and at length he found himself crossing a desert with great rocks scattered here and there. In the shadow cast by one of these was seated a holy man or dervish, as he was called, who motioned to the youth to sit beside him.

'Something is troubling you, my son,' said the holy man; 'tell me what it is, as I may be able to help you.'

'O, my father,' answered the youth, 'I wish to marry the princess of my country; but the sultan refuses to give her to me unless I can collect all the birds in the world and bring them into his garden. And how can I, or any other man, do that?'

'Do not despair,' replied the dervish, 'it is not so difficult as it sounds. Two days' journey from here, in the path of the setting sun, there stands a cypress tree, larger than any other cypress that grows upon the earth. Sit down where the shadow is darkest, close to the trunk, and keep very still. By-and-by you will hear a mighty rushing of wings, and all the birds in the world will come and nestle in the branches. Be careful not to make a sound till everything is quiet again, and then say "Madschun!" At that the birds will be forced to remain where they are—not one can move from its perch; and you will be able to place them all over your head and arms and body, and in this way you must carry them to the sultan.'

With a glad heart the young man thanked the dervish, and paid such close heed to his directions that, a few days later, a strange figure covered with soft feathers walked into the presence of the sultan. The princess's father was filled with surprise, for never had he seen such a sight before. Oh! how lovely were those little bodies, and bright frightened eyes! Soon a gentle stirring was heard, and what a multitude of wings unfolded themselves: blue wings, yellow wings, red wings, green wings. And when the young man whispered 'Go,' they first flew in circles round the sultan's head, and then disappeared through the open window, to choose homes in the garden.



How the BIRDS were brought to the SULTAN

'I have done your bidding, O Sultan, and now give me the princess,' said the youth. And the sultan answered hurriedly:

'Yes! oh, yes! you have pleased me well! Only one thing remains to turn you into a husband that any girl might desire. That head of yours, you know—it is so *very* bald! Get it covered with nice thick curly hair, and *then* I will give you my daughter. You are so clever that I am sure this will give you no trouble at all.'

Silently the young man listened to the sultan's words, and silently he sat in his mother's kitchen for many days to come, till, one morning, the news reached him that the sultan had betrothed his daughter to the son of the wizir, and that the wedding was to be celebrated without delay in the palace. With that he arose in wrath, and made his way quick-

ly and secretly to a side door, used only by the workmen who kept the building in repair, and, unseen by anyone, he made his way into the mosque, and then entered the palace by a gallery which opened straight into the great hall. Here the bride and bridegroom and two or three friends were assembled, waiting for the appearance of the sultan for the contract to be signed.

'Madschun!' whispered the youth from above. And instantly everyone remained rooted to the ground; and some messengers whom the sultan had sent to see that all was ready shared the same fate.

At length, angry and impatient, the sultan went down to behold with his own eyes what had happened, but as nobody could give him any explanation, he bade one of his attendants to fetch a magician, who dwelt near one of the city gates, to remove the spell which had been cast by some evil genius.

'It is your own fault,' said the magician, when he had heard the sultan's story. 'If you had not broken your promise to the young man, your daughter would not have had this ill befall her. Now there is only one remedy, and the bridegroom you have chosen must yield his place to the bald-headed youth.'

Sore though he was in his heart, the sultan knew that the magician was wiser than he, and despatched his most trusted servants to seek out the young man without a moment's delay and bring him to the palace. The youth, who all this time had been hiding behind a pillar, smiled to himself when he heard these words, and, hastening home, he said to his mother: 'If messengers from the sultan should come here and ask for me, be sure you answer that it is a long while since I went away, and that you cannot tell where I may be, but that if they will give you money enough for your journey, as you are very poor, you will do your best to find me.' Then he hid himself in the loft above, so that he could listen to all that passed.

The next minute someone knocked loudly at the door, and the old woman jumped up and opened it.

'Is your bald-headed son here?' asked the man outside. 'If so, let him come with me, as the sultan wishes to speak with him directly.'

'Alas! sir,' replied the woman, putting a corner of her veil to her eyes, 'he left me long since, and since that day no news of him has reached me.'

'Oh! good lady, can you not guess where he may be? The sultan intends to bestow on him the hand of his daughter, and he is certain to give a large reward to the man who brings him back.'

'He never told me whither he was going,' answered the crone, shaking her head. 'But it is a great honour that the sultan does him, and well worth some trouble. There *are* places where, perhaps, he may be found, but they are known to me only, and I am a poor woman and have no money for the journey.'

'Oh! that will not stand in the way,' cried the man. 'In this purse are a thousand gold pieces; spend them freely. Tell me where I can find him and you shall have as many more.'

'Very well,' said she, 'it is a bargain; and now farewell, for I must make some preparations; but in a few days at furthest you shall hear from me.'

For nearly a week both the old woman and her son were careful not to leave the house till it was dark, lest they should be seen by any of the neighbours, and as they did not even kindle a fire or light a lantern, everyone supposed that the cottage was deserted. At length one fine morning, the young man got up early and dressed himself, and put on his best turban, and after a hasty breakfast took the road to the palace.

The huge negro before the door evidently expected him, for without a word he let him pass, and another attendant who was waiting inside conducted him straight into the presence of the sultan, who welcomed him gladly.

'Ah, my son! where have you hidden yourself all this time?' said he. And the bald-headed man answered:

'Oh, Sultan! Fairly I won your daughter, but you broke your word, and would not give her to me. Then my home grew hateful to me, and I set out to wander through the world! But now that you have repented of your ill-faith, I have come to claim the wife who is mine of right. Therefore bid your wizir prepare the contract.'

So a fresh contract was prepared, and at the wish of the new bridegroom was signed by the sultan and the wizir in the chamber where they met. After this was done, the youth begged the sultan to lead him to the princess, and together they entered the big hall, where everyone was standing exactly as they were when the young man had uttered the fatal word.

'Can you remove the spell?' asked the sultan anxiously.

'I think so,' replied the young man (who, to say the truth, was a little anxious himself), and stepping forward, he cried:

'Let the victims of Madschun be free!'

No sooner were the words uttered than the statues returned to life, and the bride placed her hand joyfully in that of her new bridegroom. As for the old one, he vanished completely, and no one ever knew what became of him.

(Adapted from *Türkische Volksmärchen aus Stambul*. Dr. Ignaz Künos. E. J. Brill, Leiden.)

THE BLUE PARROT

In a part of Arabia where groves of palms and sweet-scented flowers give the traveller rest after toilsome journeys under burning skies, there reigned a young king whose name was Lino. He had grown up under the wise rule of his father, who had lately died, and though he was only nineteen, he did not believe, like many young men, that he must change all the laws in order to show how clever he was, but was content with the old ones which had made the people happy and the country prosperous. There was only one fault that his subjects had to find with him, and that was that he did not seem in any hurry to be married, in spite of the prayers that they frequently offered him.

The neighbouring kingdom was governed by the Swan fairy, who had an only daughter, the Princess Hermosa, who was as charming in her way as Lino in his. The Swan fairy always had an ambassador at the young king's court, and on hearing the grumbles of the citizens that Lino showed no signs of taking a wife, the good man resolved that *he* would try his hand at match-making. 'For,' he said, 'if there is any one living who is worthy of the Princess Hermosa he is to be found here. At any rate, I can but try and bring them together.'

Now, of course, it was not proper to offer the princess in marriage, and the difficulty was to work upon the unconscious king so as to get the proposal to come from *him*. But the ambassador was well used to the ways of courts, and after several conversations on the art of painting, which Lino loved, he led the talk to portraits, and mentioned carelessly that a particularly fine picture had lately been made of his own princess. 'Though, as for a likeness,' he concluded, 'perhaps it is hardly as good as this small miniature, which was painted a year ago.'

The king took it, and looked at it closely.

'Ah!' he sighed, 'that must be flattered! It cannot be possible that any woman should be such a miracle of beauty.'

'If you could only see her,' answered the ambassador.

The king did not reply, but the ambassador was not at all surprised when, the following morning, he was sent for into the royal presence.

'Since you showed me that picture,' began Lino, almost before the door was shut, 'I have not been able to banish the face of the princess from my thoughts. I have summoned you here to inform you that I am about to send special envoys to the court of the Swan fairy, asking her daughter in marriage.'

'I cannot, as you will understand, speak for my mistress in so important a matter,' replied the ambassador, stroking his beard in order to conceal the satisfaction he felt. 'But I know that she will certainly be highly gratified at your proposal.'

'If that is so,' cried the king, his whole face beaming with joy, 'then, instead of sending envoys, I will go myself, and take you with me. In three days my preparations will be made, and we will set out.'

Unluckily for Lino, he had for his neighbour on the other side a powerful magician named Ismenor, who was king of the Isle of Lions, and the father of a hideous daughter, whom he thought the most beautiful creature that ever existed. Riquette, for such was her name, had also fallen in love with a portrait, but it was of King Lino, and she implored her father to give him to her for a husband. Ismenor, who considered that no man lived who was worthy of his treasure, was about to send his chief minister to King Lino on this mission, when the news reached him that the king had already started for the court of the Swan fairy. Riquette was thrown into transports of grief, and implored her father to prevent the marriage, which Ismenor promised to do; and calling for an ugly and humpbacked little dwarf named Rabot, he performed some spells which transported them quickly to a rocky valley through which the king and his escort were bound to pass. When the tramp of horses was heard, the magician took out an enchanted handkerchief, which rendered invisible any one who touched it. Giving one end to Rabot, and holding the other himself, they walked unseen

amongst the horsemen, but not a trace of Lino was to be found. And this was natural enough, because the king, tired out with the excitement and fatigue of the last few days, had bidden the heavy coaches, laden with presents for the princess, to go forwards, while he rested under the palms with a few of his friends. Here Ismenor beheld them, all sound asleep; and casting a spell which prevented their waking till he wished them to do so, he stripped the king of all his clothes and dressed him in those of Rabot, whom he touched with his ring, saying:

'Take the shape of Lino until you have wedded the daughter of the Swan fairy.'

And so great was the magician's power that Rabot positively believed himself to be really the king!

When the groom had mounted Lino's horse, and had ridden out of sight, Ismenor aroused the king, who stared with astonishment at the dirty garments in which he was dressed; but before he had time to look about him, the magician caught him up in a cloud, and carried him off to his daughter.

Meantime Rabot had come up with the others, who never guessed for a moment that he was not their own master.

'I am hungry,' said he, 'give me something to eat at once.'

'May it please your majesty,' answered the steward, 'the tents are not even set up, and it will be at least an hour before your supper is served! We thought——'

'Who taught you to think?' interrupted the false king rudely. 'You are nothing but a fool! Get me some horse's flesh directly—it is the best meat in the world!'

The steward could hardly believe his ears. King Lino, the most polite man under the sun, to speak to his faithful servant in such a manner! And to want horse's flesh too! Why he was so delicate in his appetite that he lived mostly on fruit and cakes. Well, well, there was no knowing what people would come to; and, anyhow, he must obey at once, if he wished to keep his head on his shoulders. Perhaps, after all, it was

love which had driven him mad, and, if so, by-and-by he might come right again.

Whatever excuses his old servants might invent for their master, by the time the procession reached the Swan's fairy capital there were no more horses left, and they were forced to walk up to the palace on foot. Hiding their surprise as best they could, they begged the king to follow them, dismounting from their own horses, as he, they supposed, preferred to walk. They soon perceived the Swan fairy and her daughter awaiting them on a low balcony, under which the king stopped.

'Madam,' he said, 'you may be surprised that I have come to ask your daughter's hand in so unceremonious a fashion; but the journey is long, and I was hungry and ate my horse, which is the best meat in the world; and I forced my courtiers to eat theirs also. But for all that I am a great king, and wish to be your son-in-law. And now that is settled, where is Hermosa?'

'Sire,' answered the queen, not a little displeased as well as amazed at the king's manner, which was so different from anything she had been led to expect. 'You possess my daughter's portrait, and it can have made but little impression on you if you don't recognise her at once.'

'I don't remember any portrait,' replied Rabot; 'but perhaps it may be in my pocket after all.' And he searched everywhere, while the ladies-in-waiting looked on with astonishment, but of course found nothing. When he had finished he turned to the princess, who stood there blushing and angry, and said:

'If it is you whom I have come to marry, I think you are very beautiful, and I am sure if I had even seen your portrait I should have remembered it. Let us have the wedding as soon as possible; and, meantime, I should like to go to sleep, for your country is very different from mine, and I can assure you that after walking over stones and sand for days and days one needs a little rest.'



And without waiting for a reply he bade one of the pages conduct him to his room, where he was soon snoring so loud that he could be heard at the other end of the town.

As soon as he was out of their sight the poor princess flung herself into her mother's arms, and burst into tears. For fifteen days she had had King Lino's portrait constantly before her, while the letter from their own ambassador speaking of the young man's grace and charm had

never left her pocket. True, the portrait was faithful enough, but how could that fair outside contain so rough and rude a soul? Yet this even she might have forgiven had the king shown any of the signs of love and admiration to which she had been so long accustomed. As for her mother, the poor Swan fairy was so bewildered at the extraordinary manners of her new son-in-law, that she was almost speechless.

Matters were in this state when King Lino's chamberlain begged for a private audience of her majesty, and no sooner were they alone than he told her that he feared that his master had suddenly gone mad, or had fallen under the spell of some magician.

'I had been lost in astonishment before,' said he, 'but now that he has failed to recognise the princess, and no longer possesses her portrait, which he never would part from for a single instant, my amazement knows no bounds. Perhaps, madam, your fairy gifts may be able to discover the reason of this change in one whose courtesy was the talk of the kingdom.' And with a low bow he took his departure.

The queen stood where the chamberlain left her, thinking deeply. Suddenly her face cleared, and going to an old chest which she kept in a secret room, she drew from it a small mirror. In this mirror she could see faithfully reflected whatever she wished, and at this moment she desired above all things to behold King Lino *as he really was*.

Ah! the chamberlain was right! It was not he who was lying on his bed snoring till the whole palace shook beneath him. No, *this* was her real son-in-law—the man dressed in dirty clothes, and imprisoned in one of Ismenor's strongest towers, and kissing the portrait of Hermosa, which had escaped the wizard's notice, owing to the young king having worn it, for better concealment, tied amongst his hair. Calling hastily to her daughter, she bade her also look, and Hermosa had the pleasure of gazing on Lino, who was behaving exactly as she could have wished. The mirror was still in her hand when the door of the prison opened, and there entered the hideous Riquette, who, from her upraised eyes, seemed to be begging from Lino some favour which he refused to grant. Of course Hermosa and her mother could not hear their words, but from Riquette's angry face as she left the room, it was not difficult

to guess what had happened. But the mirror had more to tell, for it appeared that in fury at her rejection by the king, Riquette had ordered four strong men to scourge him till he fainted, which was done in the sight of Hermosa, who in horror dropped the mirror, and would have fallen, had she not been caught by her mother.

'Control yourself, my child,' said the fairy. 'We have need of all our wits if we are to rescue the king from the power of those wicked people. And first it is necessary to know who the man that has taken his name and his face really is.'

Then, picking up the mirror, she wished that she might behold the false lover; and the glass gave back a vision of a dirty, greasy groom, lying, dressed as he was, on her bed of state.

'So this is the trick Ismenor hoped to play us! Well, we will have our revenge, whatever it costs us to get it. Only we must be very careful not to let him guess that he has not deceived us, for his skill in magic is greater than mine, and I shall have to be very prudent. To begin with, I must leave you, and if the false king asks why, then answer that I have to settle some affairs on the borders of my kingdom. Meanwhile, be sure you treat him most politely, and arrange fêtes to amuse him. If he shows any sign of being suspicious, you can even give him to understand that, on your marriage, I intend to give up the crown to your husband. And now farewell!' So saying, the Swan fairy waved her hand, and a cloud came down and concealed her, and nobody imagined that the beautiful white cloud that was blown so rapidly across the sky was the chariot that was carrying the Swan fairy to the tower of Ismenor.

Now the tower was situated in the midst of a forest, so the queen thought that, under cover of the dark trees, it would be quite easy for her to drop to earth unseen. But the tower was so thoroughly enchanted that the more she tried to reach the ground the tighter something tried to hold her back. At length, by putting forth all the power she possessed, she managed to descend to the foot of the tower, and there,

weak and faint as she was with her exertions, she lost no time in working her spells, and found that she could only overcome Ismenor by means of a stone from the ring of Gyges. But how was she to get this ring? for the magic book told her that Ismenor guarded it night and day among his most precious treasures. However, get it she must, and in the meantime the first step was to see the royal prisoner himself. So, drawing out her tablets, she wrote as follows:



'The bird which brings you this letter is the Swan fairy, mother of Hermosa, who loves you as much as you love her!' And after this assurance, she related the wicked plot of which he had been the victim. Then, quickly changing herself into a swallow, she began to fly round the tower, till she discovered the window of Lino's prison. It was so high up that bars seemed needless, especially as four soldiers were stationed in the passage outside, therefore the fairy was able to enter, and even to hop on his shoulder, but he was so much occupied with gazing

at the princess's portrait that it was some time before she could attract his attention. At last she gently scratched his cheek with the corner of the note, and he looked round with a start. On perceiving the swallow he knew at once that help had come, and tearing open the letter, he wept with joy on seeing the words it contained, and asked a thousand questions as to Hermosa, which the swallow was unable to answer, though, by repeated nods, she signed to him to read further. 'Must I indeed pretend to wish to marry that horrible Riquette?' he cried, when he had finished. 'Can I obtain the stone from the magician?'

Accordingly the next morning, when Riquette paid him her daily visit, he received her much more graciously than usual. The magician's daughter could not contain her delight at this change, and in answer to her expressions of joy, Lino told her that he had had a dream by which he had learned the inconstancy of Hermosa; also that a fairy had appeared and informed him that if he wished to break the bonds which bound him to the faithless princess and transfer his affections to the daughter of Ismenor, he must have in his possession for a day and a night a stone from the ring of Gyges, now in the possession of the magician. This news so enchanted Riquette, that she flung her arms round the king's neck and embraced him tenderly, greatly to his disgust, as he would infinitely have preferred the sticks of the soldiers. However, there was no help for it, and he did his best to seem pleased, till Riquette relieved him by announcing that she must lose no time in asking her father and obtaining from him the precious stone.

His daughter's request came as a great surprise to Ismenor, whose suspicions were instantly excited; but, think as he would, he could not see any means by which the king, so closely guarded, might have held communication with the Swan fairy. Still, he would do nothing hastily, and, hiding his dismay, he told Riquette that his only wish was to make her happy, and that as she wished so much for the stone he would fetch it for her. Then he went into the closet where all his spells were worked, and in a short time he discovered that his enemy the Swan fairy was at that moment inside his palace.

'So that is it!' he said, smiling grimly. 'Well, she shall have a stone by all means, but a stone that will turn everyone who touches it into marble.' And placing a small ruby in a box, he returned to his daughter.

'Here is the talisman which will gain you the love of King Lino,' he said; 'but be sure you give him the box unopened, or else the stone will lose all its virtue.' With a cry of joy Riquette snatched the box from his hands, and ran off to the prison, followed by her father, who, holding tightly the enchanted handkerchief, was able, unseen, to watch the working of the spell. As he expected, at the foot of the tower stood the Swan fairy, who had had the imprudence to appear in her natural shape, waiting for the stone which the prince was to throw to her. Eagerly she caught the box as it fell from the prince's hands, but no sooner had her fingers touched the ruby, than a curious hardening came over her, her limbs stiffened, and her tongue could hardly utter the words 'We are betrayed.'

'Yes, you *are* betrayed,' cried Ismenor, in a terrible voice; 'and *you*,' he continued, dragging the king to the window, 'you shall turn into a parrot, and a parrot you will remain until you can persuade Hermosa to crush in your head.'

He had hardly finished before a blue parrot flew out into the forest; and the magician, mounting in his winged chariot, set off for the Isle of Swans, where he changed everybody into statues, exactly in the positions in which he found them, not even excepting Rabot himself. Only Hermosa was spared, and her he ordered to get into his chariot beside him. In a few minutes he reached the Forest of Wonders, when the magician got down, and dragged the unhappy princess out after him.

'I have changed your mother into a stone, and your lover into a parrot,' said he, 'and you are to become a tree, and a tree you will remain until you have crushed the head of the person you love best in the world. But I will leave you your mind and memory, that your tortures may be increased a thousand-fold.'

Great magician as he was, Ismenor could not have invented a more terrible fate had he tried for a hundred years. The hours passed wearily

by for the poor princess, who longed for a wood-cutter's axe to put an end to her misery. How were they to be delivered from their doom? And even supposing that King Lino *did* fly that way, there were thousands of blue parrots in the forest, and how was she to know him, or he her? As to her mother—ah! that was too bad to think about! So, being a woman, she kept on thinking.

Meanwhile the blue parrot flew about the world, making friends wherever he went, till, one day, he entered the castle of an old wizard who had just married a beautiful young wife. Grenadine, for such was her name, led a very dull life, and was delighted to have a playfellow, so she gave him a golden cage to sleep in, and delicious fruits to eat. Only in one way did he disappoint her—he never would talk as other parrots did.

'If you only knew how happy it would make me, I'm sure you would try,' she was fond of saying; but the parrot did not seem to hear her.

One morning, however, she left the room to gather some flowers, and the parrot, finding himself alone, hopped to the table, and, picking up a pencil, wrote some verses on a piece of paper. He had just finished when he was startled by a noise, and letting fall the pencil, he flew out of the window.

Now hardly had he dropped the pencil when the wizard lifted a corner of the curtain which hung over the doorway, and advanced into the room. Seeing a paper on the table, he picked it up, and great was his surprise as he read:

'Fair princess, to win your grace,
I will hold discourse with you;
Silence, though, were more in place
Than chatt'ring like a cockatoo.'

'I half suspected it was enchanted,' murmured the wizard to himself. And he fetched his books and searched them, and found that instead of being a parrot, the bird was really a king who had fallen under the wrath of a magician, and that magician the man whom the wizard hat-

ed most in the world. Eagerly he read on, seeking for some means of breaking the enchantment, and at last, to his great joy, he discovered the remedy. Then he hurried to his wife, who was lying on some cushions under the tree on which the parrot had perched, and informed her that her favourite was really the king of a great country, and that, if she would whistle for the bird, they would all go together to a certain spot in the Forest of Marvels, 'where I will restore him to his own shape. Only you must not be afraid or cry out, whatever I do,' added he, 'or everything will be spoilt.' The wizard's wife jumped up in an instant, so delighted was she, and began to whistle the song that the parrot loved; but as he did not wish it to be known that he had been listening to the conversation he waited until she had turned her back, when he flew down the tree and alighted on her shoulder. Then they got into a golden boat, which carried them to a clearing in the forest, where three tall trees stood by themselves.

'I want these trees for my magic fire,' he said to his wife; 'put the parrot on that branch, he will be quite safe, and go yourself to a little distance. If you stay too near you may get your head crushed in their fall.'

At these words the parrot suddenly remembered the prophecy of Ismenor, and held himself ready, his heart beating at the thought that in one of those trees he beheld Hermosa. Meanwhile the magician took a spade, and loosened the earth of the roots of the three trees so that they might fall all together. Directly the parrot observed them totter he spread his wings and flew right under the middle one, which was the most beautiful of the three. There was a crash, then Lino and Hermosa stood facing each other, clasped hand in hand.



After the first few moments, the princess's thoughts turned to her mother, and falling at the feet of the magician, who was smiling with delight at the success of his plan, she implored him to help them once more, and to give the Swan fairy back her proper shape.

'That is not so easy,' said he, 'but I will try what I can do.' And transporting himself to his palace to obtain a little bottle of poisoned water, he waited till nightfall, and started at once for Ismenor's tower. Of course, had Ismenor consulted his books he would have seen what his enemy was doing, he might have protected himself; but he had been eating and drinking too much, and had gone to bed, sleeping heavily. Changing himself into a bat, the magician flew into the room, and hiding himself in the curtains, he poured all the liquid over Ismenor's face, so that he died without a groan. At the same instant the Swan fairy became a woman again, for no magician, however powerful, can work spells which last beyond his own life.

So when the Swan fairy returned to her capital she found all her courtiers waiting at the gate to receive her, and in their midst, beaming with happiness, Hermosa and King Lino. Standing behind them, though a long way off, was Rabot; but his dirty clothes had given place to clean ones, when his earnest desire was granted, and the princess had made him head of her stables.

And here we must bid them all farewell, feeling sure they will have many years of happiness before them after the terrible trials through which they have passed.

(Adapted and shortened from *Le Cabinet des Fées*.)