



Blondine Part IV: Blondine's Awakening—Beau-Minon

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French

Intermediate
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Blondine slept calmly all night; no ferocious beast came to trouble her slumbers. She did not suffer from the cold and awakened at a late hour in the morning. She rubbed her eyes, much surprised to see herself surrounded by trees, in place of being in her own room in the palace, and upon her own bed.

She called her nurse and a soft mewling was the only response. Astonished and almost frightened, she looked around and saw at her feet a superb white cat, looking gently upon her and continuing to mew plaintively.

“Ah! pretty puss! how beautiful you are!” cried Blondine, placing her little hand caressingly upon the soft fur, white as snow. “I am so happy to see you, pretty puss, for you will conduct me to your home. I am indeed very hungry and I have not the strength to walk much further without food.”

Blondine had scarcely uttered these words, when the white pussy mewed again and pointed with her little paw to a small package lying near her, wrapped neatly in fine white linen. She opened the parcel and found it contained bread and butter which she found delicious. She gave the crumbs to pussy, who munched them with seeming delight.

When they had finished their simple meal, Blondine leaned over towards her little companion, and said,

caressingly:

“Thanks, pretty puss, for the breakfast you have given me. Now, can you conduct me to my papa, who is certainly in despair because of my absence?”

Pussy, whom Blondine named Beau-Minon, shook her head and mewed plaintively.

“Ah! you understand me, Beau-Minon,” said Blondine. “I entreat you to have pity upon me and lead me to some house before I perish with hunger, cold and terror in this vast forest!”

Beau-Minon looked at the princess fixedly and made a sign with her little graceful white head which seemed to say, “I understand you.” She rose, advanced a few steps and paused to see if Blondine followed her.

“I am here, Beau-Minon; I am following you gladly,” said Blondine; “but how can we pass through these bushy thickets? I see no path.”

Beau-Minon made no reply but sprang lightly into the thicket which opened of itself to allow Blondine and Beau-Minon to pass, and then closed up immediately.

Blondine walked on for about half an hour. As she advanced, the forest became lighter, the grass was finer and the flowers more abundant. She saw many pretty birds singing melodiously and graceful squirrels, bounding along the branches of the trees.

Blondine, who had no doubt that she was about to leave the forest and see her dear father again, was enchanted with all that she saw; she wished to pause and gather the lovely wild flowers; but Beau-Minon advanced steadily and mewed plaintively whenever Blondine relaxed her speed.

In about an hour Blondine perceived an elegant castle. Beau-Minon led her to the gilded grating. However, Blondine did not know how to enter. There was no bell and the gate was closed. Beau-Minon had disappeared and Blondine was once more alone.

Note: The story continues in Blondine Part V: Bonnie-Biche

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