



# *Forgot-Me-Not*

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*Advanced*  
*35 min read*

On the good old days, many many thousands of years ago, you must know that this world was inhabited by various little fairies, gnomes, elves, and such-like funny little creatures; beasts could talk like rational human beings, even better than most human beings can talk now-a-days; and in every flower there dwelt a little fairy, who sang sweet songs, and in every tuft of grass little elves played to and fro.

In those days there were no cities, roads, or houses; no big human creatures erected big buildings, drained rivers, or built railroads; everything was peaceful and quiet; wild animals lived happily in the forests, for the little fairies never dreamt of hunting or killing them for mere sport, and the fairy flowers grew in luxurious splendour, for the wild beasts did not pluck or cast them away.

In those days, somewhere in the world—I don't think I can tell you exactly where, for it is such a very long time ago—there stood in the midst of the forest a most beautiful lake, surrounded on all sides by graceful rushes, and covered with water-lilies and lotus. This lake was so clear and beautiful that all the little fairies who dwelt in the rushes and grasses round the lake used to come every morning and sit on the water-lilies, while they looked at themselves in the waters of the lake, which reflected their dainty little forms like a mirror.

It was a very truthful mirror too, for the little goldfishes, who dwelt in the lake, gave their opinion very impartially as to the beauty of the various little faces that peeped down at them from above. Sometimes they

would argue down below as to the merits of one or the other beauty; then there was great splashing and disturbance in the waters, which amused the little fairies very much, and they would all shout as loudly as possible—

“Goldfish, goldfish, living under the lake, who will the prize for beauty take?”

Of course you may imagine that opinions on this point among the little goldfish differed very much, and yet there were some days when they were absolutely unanimous, and those were the days when the beautiful fairy princess, Narcissa, came to the lake, and kneeling on one of the lily leaves, looked down into the clear waters, while she combed her golden hair and sang in the sweetest of voices—

“Goldfish, goldfish, tell me where

Is the fairest of the fair?”

Then all the little fish and all the little sprites would skip out of the water merrily, and sing with one accord—

“Of beauteous fairies ‘neath the skies,

Princess Narcissa takes the prize”

And Narcissa would go home happy and proud, with her head held well erect, for all around her the birds and beasts would do her homage. Wherever she walked the little birds would flutter round her to whisper sweet words of praise in her ears; the little frogs and rabbits would stop in their play to watch her pass; and all the little gnomes and grass elves would march before her in state, as if she were a queen.

Now I am sorry to say all this praise and admiration had a very bad effect on Narcissa. She grew haughtier and more conceited every day, and, in consequence idler and more disagreeable at home, so that her father and mother were made quite unhappy by their daughter’s vanity, till at last it became almost unendurable. She used to go out morning, noon, and night, and sit for hours on the water-lily leaves, looking at her own reflection in the water, and hearing the waves, the winds, the flowers, the beasts, all murmur in concert:

“Princess Narcissa is the most beautiful of all the fairies in the world!”

One day, when her poor fairy mother was thus left sitting all alone in her beautiful palace among the bulrushes, after seeing her daughter go off on her usual journey, she suddenly caught sight, near the edge of the lake, of a

lovely little cluster of forget-me-nots. So sweet and modest did they look, and withal so exquisitely lovely in colour, that she sighed regretfully, and said, "Oh, how I wish I had another, a tiny blue-eyed daughter, modest and sweet, who would be a comfort to me."

Now the Fairy Queen, who always hears the wishes of all her subjects, heard the poor mother's cry, and shortly after presented her with a nice little daughter, with lovely golden curls all round her tiny head, and such beautiful blue eyes that looked so sweetly out into the world, that her mother and father were almost beside themselves for joy, and named her "Forget-me-not," because she resembled those dainty little flowers.

The haughty Princess Narcissa did not take very much notice of her baby sister just at first; she was too much occupied with herself and her own beauty, inventing new garments for her little person, and new jewellery for her hair. She used to tease and torment her occasionally, though, especially when Forget-me-not began to grow up, compelling her to dress her hair, fasten her dress, and altogether using her as a sort of servant to help to administer to her own adornment. But Forget-me-not was so modest and unassuming, and really looked upon her older sister as a creature of such exquisite loveliness that she gladly did all that Narcissa wished, and even tried to invent all sorts of pretty new contrivances to further enhance her beauty.

This went on for some time; Forget-me-not was growing up very rapidly, and every day she seemed to grow in beauty, as well as in goodness; her hair was now long and glistened like gold, her skin was fine and transparent, as only fairy skin can be, and her eyes were tenderer and bluer than the little flowers after whom she was named. Her father and mother were now perfectly happy, for their little daughter was all the comfort in the world to them. When Narcissa had finished her toilet in the morning, and gone off to the enchanted lake, followed by her crowd of admirers, little Forget-me-not would go about the house singing merrily, chatting to her father, and helping her mother to spin and sew.

The little creature had never been outside her father's garden, she had never seen any one, except her father, and mother, and sister, so she really did not know how beautiful she was, for the latter had no eyes for any one save herself, and the former had such a dread and horror of vanity creeping up in their darling's heart, that they were particularly careful never to speak on the subject before her.

One day, when Forget-me-not was running about in the garden, she saw a beautiful bright-eyed butterfly lying on the grass. She drew near on tip-toe to have a better look, when the butterfly spread out his wings and flew

off to the other end of the garden. Forget-me-not ran after him, for she had never seen such a lovely creature before—all blue and silver, with great dark spots, like eyes. Hardly had she, however, come near enough to him, when the butterfly again flew off; this time far to the other side of the garden gates. Forget-me-not was tempted to follow him, and so she ran on and on till she saw him apparently settle on a water-lily leaf, and then disappear from her view.

Little Forget-me-not, who had now reached the edge of the lake, was determined to see where the beautiful butterfly had disappeared to, so, treading softly on the lotus and lily leaves, she looked round her, and then into the clear waters of the lake, but no butterfly could she see; only as she was looking a whole crowd of little goldfish and water sprites (things she had never seen in all her life before) rose from out of the water, and, forming a circle round the leaf on which she stood, they bowed low before her, and sang in the sweetest chorus she had ever heard—

“Forget-me-not, lovely blue-eyed Forget-me-not,  
Fairest far of all the lot.”

She could hardly tear herself away from them, so beautifully did they all sing, till finally a little goldfish swam quite close to her, and asked her if she would honour him by getting on his back, and allowing him to swim with her to shore, which she did, as she did not like to wound his feelings by refusing so courteous an offer, but she felt very frightened at this altogether new mode of locomotion, and also very upset and shy at being suddenly so surrounded and admired by a crowd of unknown beings.

When she got to shore she was still so nervous that she quite forgot to thank the goldfish and water sprites for their lovely music, and ran home as fast as her fairy legs could carry her, and into her mother's arms, who was very much upset when she heard the whole story, for she felt that evil would come of this if Narcissa were to know.

The next day Narcissa got up and dressed, or rather made Forget-me-not dress her as usual; she was not yet tired of all the admiration her beauty always roused wherever she passed, and she still loved as dearly as ever to gaze at her own reflection in the lake, and provoke its inhabitants into songs of praise. On this particular morning she had made herself look lovelier than ever, and she stepped out of her mother's garden, anxiously peering round for the squirrels, who always greeted her approach joyfully, and escorted her to the edge of the

lake with many a bow of admiration and envy. However, this morning the squirrels were not to be seen, she could hear them in the distance holding an animated discussion, but not one of the little faces peeped down at her, and Narcissa thought it very strange that they should think other matters more interesting than the sight of her.

She ran down to the lake, and stepped on the broad water-lily leaves, then sitting on one of the pink blossoms the little vain fairy peeped down at her dainty image. How pretty she was! with her fairy figure, her milk-white skin and rosy lips, her graceful arms bent over her head, while she combed her golden hair with a pearl comb, while her garments, made of moon-beams, shone like silver, and made her appear like a bright jewel in the heart of the lotus flower.

Very soon a large crowd of gold and silver fish had gathered round her, and funny round eyes and gaping mouths peered at her from the green depths below. But instead of the usual chorus of admiration with which they usually greeted her, she found herself apparently the object of an extraordinary curiosity. The fishes appeared to be whispering to each other, then looking at her with their funny wise heads held on one side, till Narcissa could bear the suspense no longer, and she sang in her sweetest tones—

“Goldfish, goldfish, tell me where,  
Is the fairest of the fair?”

Then, to her horror and dismay, a mischievous-looking little water sprite rose to the surface and said—

“Although Narcissa very beauteous be,  
Forget-me-not is fairer far than she.”

Then the whole chorus of fishes echoed—

“Yes, Forget-me-not, little blue-eyed Forget-me-not,  
is fairer far than she.”

Narcissa could hardly believe her own ears. Forget-me-not! ugly little Forget-me-not! Why, she had never been outside her mother’s garden! The fishes could never have seen her, and if they had, why, surely there was no comparison between the lovely Narcissa, more beautiful than the Fairy Queen herself, and this tiny,

unpretentious little sister of hers.

And yet the goldfish would keep on singing—

“Have you seen Forget-me-not,  
Fairest far of all the lot?”

Narcissa went ashore, and in a rage picked up some pebbles and pelted the fishes and water sprites with them, but they did not care; they dived down to the very bottom of the lake and re-appeared again, still singing—

“Forgot-me-not, lovely Forget-me-not.”

The enraged little fairy ran off as fast as she could. As she passed the rushes where all the frogs had congregated she heard them croaking—

“Little Forget-me-not with blue eyes grand—Quack, quack, quack.

Is loveliest in Fairyland—Quack, quack, quack.”

Through the woods she ran, where her friends, the squirrels, always used to pay her homage; now they were running up and down the trees in a great state of excitement, and shouting to each other—

“Have you seen Forget-me-not, the loveliest of the lot?”

This was too much for Narcissa altogether. She rushed through her mother’s garden, up the steps, to where little Forget-me-not sat spinning a dress of spiders’ webs. She was quite startled when she saw her sister rush in in so frantic a manner. Narcissa took hold of her hand, told her to leave her spinning and come with her.

Little Forget-me-not was so accustomed to do as she was told that she obeyed, and followed her sister, though she felt very frightened. On the two fairies ran, Narcissia, dragging her little sister after her, till they came to an old dried-up well, which led down to the centre of the earth.

“Now,” said Narcissa, “I have dropped my spindle in this well, and cannot finish my spinning; you must jump down and fetch it for me.”

“But,” said little Forget-me-not, “the well is so deep; mother says it has no bottom. I should not know where to

look for your spindle.

“If you don’t jump down immediately and do as you are told I will throw you in, for I am stronger than you,” said Narcissa, and her eyes glittered with rage so that she looked quite ugly.

What was poor little Forget-me-not to do? She was all alone with her wicked sister, and no chance for any one to come and help her, so she thought of her dear mother as she stood one moment hesitating on the brink of the well; then, suddenly Narcissa gave her a push, and down she fell—down, down, down. It was pitch dark round her; she seemed to be floating in absolute space, and the last thing she remembered as she lost consciousness in her terror, was, high up above, a little speck of light, and Narcissa’s wicked little face peering down at her and laughing triumphantly.

And so she fell lower and lower yet, the darkness grew more and more intense, and then all of a sudden a ray of light began to penetrate from a long way down below; this little thin streak of light encroached more and more upon the darkness. Little Forget-me-not re-opened her eyes, and suddenly found herself in full daylight on the edge of another well, with tall, over-hanging trees round her; she clambered up and looked round, she was in a strange part of the world, that was very evident, curiously shaped trees and plants surrounded her, flowers she had never seen before, but still they were trees and flowers, and as such Forget-me-not was not frightened at them, but still she did not dare venture through the thick masses of undergrowth, through which even her fairy-like little form could not have always found a passage.

She felt very lonely and miserable, and longed for her dear mother, and her own familiar flowers; this was a very strange country, where perhaps she never would meet a friend who would be kind to her, and take her home. Poor little fairy, she sat down and cried, till the great sobs shook her little form, and her heart ached as if it would break.

Suddenly she heard a shrill voice quite close to her, calling her by her name,

“Forget-me-not, Forget-me-not, why do you cry?”

The little fairy, looked up in wonder, and there, standing before her, was the funniest little old woman she ever saw, her face was such a mass of wrinkles that you could not see any of the features, the eyes were hidden by deep furrows and ridges, the mouth appeared like a long narrow slit, only the nose, a very big hook nose, was

so prominent and long that it quite frightened poor little Forget-me-not.

Her head was very huge, and seemed much too heavy for the small shrivelled body, all bent as if over-weighted with age. She had large bony hands and feet, with long nails like a bird's claws, and there she stood, blinking at the pretty little fairy, like an old hawk staring at a sparrow.

"Why do you cry?" the old woman repeated impatiently, as poor little Forget-me-not seemed unable to answer, but only stared at her in fear and astonishment.

"Oh," sobbed the poor little fairy, "I am so lonely and so miserable; my sister pushed me down a well, and I have fallen so deep down that now I don't the least bit know where I am, and my poor dear mother at home must be crying after me, and wondering where I am, and I don't remember the way I came here, so I cannot go back. Dear, good, kind fairy, if you are a fairy, take me back to my mother, and I will do anything in the world to serve and help you if I can."

"I don't know that I want to take you back to your mother," the old fairy said, "and I am sure you can be of no possible use to me, so I don't see why I should trouble my head about you at all."

"But I can spin and sew for you," Forget-me-not said eagerly, noticing the funny old green rags in which the old woman was clad, "and I can cook most dainty dishes, and scrub the floors, and dress your hair, in fact, I can make myself most useful about a house, and like doing all kinds of work."

"H'm," said the ugly old fairy, "I have been looking out for a young servant for some time, and you do seem pretty active and willing" . . . "well," she said, "if you will come with me and be my maid, attend to my household and look after me, I will undertake to help and protect you. Will you agree to that?"

"But," said little Forget-me-not, "that will never do. I have no other wish but to go back to my dear mother, and go on living my own quiet happy life, and if I go to be your servant, what use is all protection in the world to me, while I know my dear ones at home are mourning for me, and think that I am dead?"

"Well, you can please yourself," said the little old woman, "I have told you under what conditions I will help and protect you, if they don't suit you you can leave them alone, or rather, I will leave you alone, for I am busy, and don't mean to stand here talking with you any longer. If you change your mind, clap your hands three times,

and you will see me again. Good-bye.”

Saying which, the old fairy hobbled off, leaning on her heavy stick, and laughing maliciously at poor little Forget-me-not, who was left more desolate and lonely than before.

Evening was drawing on rapidly, the forest around grew darker and darker, every moment the poor little fairy began to feel very frightened. She heard strange sounds around her, and great luminous eyes seemed to be staring at her from out the darkness. The moon now rose and shed a soft mysterious light on the strange landscape, and curious little beings, grass-elves and wood-nymphs, came out, skipping and dancing merrily round the now terrified little form. She began to feel that if she spent a whole night here by herself she would die with fright. If only her dear mother could hear her and come to her rescue, or even if the malicious old fairy would be here to keep her company. She felt that anything would be better than stay alone a moment longer, so she clapped her little hands three times, and in a moment, as if she had sprung out of the earth, there stood the funny old woman in her green rags, leaning on her stick. “Oh, take me away from here!” poor Forget-me-not cried. “I will be your servant and do anything you like, but I cannot stay here any longer by myself. I should die of fright.”

“Very well,” said the old fairy; “you must come with me to my palace, but remember, you are to do everything I tell you, and help me to spin, sew, and cook, and to reward you I will help you and give you shelter.”

“Well, then, you must help me now to let my mother know that I am quite safe, and will come back to her as soon as I can.”

The old fairy waved her stick three times over her head, and a huge frog came jumping apparently from nowhere, and waited for orders. “Send any message you like,” the old fairy said, “and this frog will convey it to your mother before daybreak.”

“Please, Mr. Frog,” said Forget-me-not, “go to my dear mother and tell her that I am still alive. Narcissa pushed me down the well, but a kind fairy has rescued me, and I am going to be her little servant until she releases me.”

“Croak, croak,” said the frog, and disappeared from view.

“Now,” said the old fairy, “you must come home with me at once, and make the beds for the night. My son will

be waiting for me, and you must help to make everything comfortable for him at home.”

She again waved her stick, and presently two bats came flying along, each carrying a broomstick. The old fairy mounted the one, and told Forget-me-not to get on to the other and follow her.

Away she flew, high up over the trees. Forget-me-not felt very frightened and uncomfortable, as she had never travelled on a broomstick before. However, the journey was not a very long one, and presently the two fairies landed opposite a most gorgeous palace, made entirely of glass. Through the walls one could see the long suites of exquisite rooms, with crystal domes and golden pillars. But not a soul was visible anywhere, neither in the palace nor in the beautiful moonlit grounds, the whole palace glittering in the moonlight, surrounded with gigantic trees and exquisitely-scented flower beds, wore a fearfully deserted look, and Forget-me-not wondered more and more about the curious old fairy who went about in rags, and owned such a magnificent though solitary abode. As she stepped off her broomstick and helped her mistress to alight she caught sight, in one of the gorgeous halls, of a sumptuously-laid-out feast, beautiful gold and silver dishes filled with the rarest fruits, and wine in diamond goblets. And there, alone, having a lonely meal, sat the handsomest fairy prince she could imagine. Little Forget-me-not could not take her eyes off him, he had such a lovely face, though he looked very dejected and melancholy in his loveliness.

“That is my son,” said the old fairy. “I am very proud of him, as he is the handsomest prince in all fairyland, but I don’t want him to marry, as then, of course, he would have to leave me. That is why I won’t allow a living thing to come anywhere near my palace, for fear they should captivate his fancy, and put thoughts of marriage into his head. As for a bird, I won’t have one near the place, as they will chirrup of nothing else but love and home. I have had no servant or attendant entirely on that account, and have been obliged to go about in rags, and eat nothing but nuts and fruit, as I had no one to spin, or sew, or cook for me. Bats and frogs are the only creatures I will tolerate, as I don’t think there is the faintest chance of my son falling in love with one of them. I have an old bat’s skin somewhere up in my room, you will have to wear that all day, while my son is at home, you may only take it off for three hours after midnight, as then he always goes to sleep, and there is no fear of his seeing you.”

Little Forget-me-not did not at all relish the idea of going about all day with a horrible old bat's skin on her, but of course she could say nothing, she had to do as her mistress told her.

The old fairy hobbled up the grand glass staircase, and presently returned carrying the skin. She made Forget-me-not put it on, and her own mother would not have recognized in this old gray bat her pretty blue-eyed little daughter.

The old fairy then told her that she might go to bed and rest for the remainder of the night, she would find her room at the top of one of the towers, and little Forget-me-not, now thoroughly tired and worn out, went up a long winding staircase, till she came to a nice little room, with a clean bed of straw, where she lay herself down, and immediately dropped into a long heavy sleep, where she forgot all about the well, the bats, the broomsticks, the little old woman, and even the handsome fairy prince.

The next morning she was up quite early, dressed herself in her bat's skin, and went downstairs. She cooked the breakfast for the prince and his mother, and all day she was kept busy, sewing and spinning new dresses in place of the fairy's old rags. She had to wait at all the meals too, and oh! it made her quite miserable to see the handsome prince sitting at table, looking so dejected and lonely, with no one to talk to, except his ugly old mother; there seemed to be such longing in his eyes when he looked round him, and saw nothing but ugly beings, frogs, bats or spiders; even the new servant was only another old bat, his eyes seemed to quite ache for something beautiful to look at, and his ears for sweet sounds. Forget-me-not quite longed to tell him of all the lovely things in nature, of the birds, the squirrels, and the butterflies, and also of all the beautiful fairies, of which she herself was one, but she was pledged to the old woman, and was never allowed to take off her disfiguring garment, so she was obliged to hold her peace.

Day after day passed off in solitude for little Forget-me-not, her mistress was very kind to her in her old grim way, but watched over all her movements most rigidly, for fear she should ever speak to the prince. At night only, for three hours after midnight, was the little fairy, allowed to wander freely about the castle and the park, unencumbered by the heavy skin, clad in her pretty dress of cobwebs; she would then run down to the edge of a little neighbouring stream, and gather her little namesakes to weave pretty garlands for her hair, then she would sit on the bank and talk to the frogs and bats, who were her only companions; she had taken a great fancy to them, and loved to hear their quaint talk.

They all told her how sorry they were for the poor prince, of whom his mother was so jealous, how they had all hoped when she came to be a little servant, that he would see her, fall in love with her, and marry her, and so change this gloomy, solitary place into one of festivities and gaieties; but, of course, with a badly fitting bat's skin on her, the thing was impossible, and the old fairy, was so watchful all day that it was quite impossible for any one to have a few words with the prince, she only relaxed her vigilance when he was asleep, and then she snored herself.

Forget-me-not listened to all this, and felt more miserable than ever to think that the handsome fairy prince, with whom she was now very much in love, should never have a chance of even knowing there was such a thing as love and beauty in the world; she asked her friend, the chief bat of the establishment, if he could not help her in any way, while her old mistress was asleep.

“Well,” said the bat, “if you like to get on my back I can take you into the Prince's room one night, but then he is fast asleep, so I don't know of what use that can be to you.”

But Forget-me-not was so desirous of seeing the Prince when his mother was not there, that she told the bat she would not mind his being asleep, would he please take her in at his window and let her see him.

The old bat consented. It was too late then, but on the following night he agreed to wait for Forget-me-not under the old cedar tree. The little fairy could hardly contain her impatience all day. When midnight struck, and the old woman and her son had both gone to sleep, she ran up to her little room and took out her pretty fairy dress, then dressed her beautiful golden hair, and having placed a garland of forget-me-nots on her head, she anxiously awaited her friend, the bat, under the cedar tree.

He was punctual to the minute, and Forget-me-not, having mounted on his back, he deposited her on the sill of the Prince's window. She stepped in, and saw the handsome fairy prince lying asleep, looking, oh! so lonely and dissatisfied. She went up to him and kissed him gently, and a tear fell from her eye on to his pillow, where it changed into a brilliant diamond. Near it she laid the wreath of forget-me-nots from her hair, then stole gently out of the room again and regained her own couch without, fortunately, disturbing her old mistress, who was snoring louder than ever.

The next morning the Prince awoke feeling that he had had a most beautiful dream. He dimly remembered seeing a little form of exquisite beauty fly in at his window, come up close to him and kiss him, and then . . . . . but surely it was not a dream, for there, on his pillow, was the wreath of forget-me-nots she wore, and near it glittered the bright tear of love and sympathy which her fair eye had let fall on his forehead, and which had changed into a most brilliant diamond. He took both up and fastened them inside his doublet; then, as it was still very early in the morning, he stole on tiptoe down the stairs, out of the palace, and through the park, into the great world, beyond the crystal gates, which he had never dared to cross before. A new feeling which he could not explain seemed to put an altogether different life into him. Everything around him seemed endowed with unwonted beauty; the great trees waved their majestic branches over his head and whispered words he had never understood before, and when he looked up, there among the boughs, he saw two lovely little beings he had never been allowed to see before, sitting quite close together and chirping sweet words to each other. He seemed to know directly what they were saying: "Love and beauty" was what they were talking of, and that was what the fairy prince was now in quest of—"love and beauty." He was determined to wander until he found the owner of the forget-me-not wreath and the diamond tear. He knew she could not be anywhere within his mother's palace or garden, so he had set off, no matter for how long a distance, until he had once more seen the bright blue eyes which had appeared to him in his dream.

On and on he went; he did not know himself how far he had gone, or how long he had been on the road. He felt no fatigue, all the world was so new to him, and so beautiful. In the forest the nimble squirrels and gaily-coloured birds; in the fields the bright-eyed butterflies, in the grass the tiny elves and fairies, in the waters the jewelled fishes, all were a source of wonder and admiration to him, so beautiful were they all, and yet not one so perfect as the little fairy being whom he had only seen in his dream.

At last, one day, after long, long wanderings, he came to the very lake near which Narcissa and her mother and father still dwelt. As he was beginning to feel very tired, he sat down on the reed-covered bank and looked down with delight at a cluster of forget-me-nots close to him, which so strongly reminded him of the bright blue eyes in his dream. He began to fear that he should never see her; that, perhaps, she did not really exist.

Suddenly he looked up, and coming down the path, he saw a lovely little fairy, walking dejectedly along. She was very beautiful, though not quite so beautiful as his dream. She had golden hair also, and blue eyes, but they were not the same blue eyes he had wandered all this long way to see.

Narcissa, for it was she, had never ceased to come to the edge of the lake, and never ceased to look at herself in the waters and ask the goldfish who was the most beautiful fairy in the land, but the goldfish had never ceased to say—

“Although Princess Narcissi very beauteous be,

Little Forget-me-not, far away, is more beautiful than she.”

That is why she looked so dejected, for she was still so vain that she hated the idea that Forget-me-not should still be alive and still be thought more beautiful than she. The Prince looked at the fairy figure in admiration as she trod gracefully on the large lily leaves, then, sitting on a pink lotus, began to comb her golden hair.

Presently a whole row of little goldfish and water sprites put their little heads out of the water, and, looking critically at the fairy, began to sing gaily—

“Although Princess Narcissi very beauteous be,

Little Forget-me-not, far away, is more beautiful than she.”

Then the Prince knew that they must mean his own little fairy, the lovely being that he had seen once, and immediately learnt to love, and in search of whom he had wandered from the other end of the world.

He heard Narcissa asking eagerly—

“And tell me, Goldfish, where is Forget-me-not, who you say is a thousand times more beautiful than I?”

“She is there, standing near you! Welcome, Forget-me-not, the most beautiful in all fairy-land.”

The Prince looked round in amazement, astonished that this lovely being should have been so near him without his knowing it, but he saw no one, only an ugly old bat, whom he dimly recollected having seen a long time ago in his mother’s palace.

Poor little Forget-me-not!—When she had perceived the consequences of her midnight adventure, and had seen her dear Prince go forth in quest of her, she resolved to follow him wherever he went. On and on she had wandered, always after him, until she felt so tired and footsore she could hardly walk, till at last she also had arrived near the well-known lake, and had seen her sister, Narcissa, and her old friends, the goldfish, and all the old familiar places; yet she had no eyes for all these, she only thought of her dear prince, and longed to throw off her ugly disguise, and tell him that she was his own little fairy, who had kissed him in the night, and taught him the meaning of love and beauty; yet she dared not, she was pledged to the old fairy not to take off her disguise, and was too frightened of her to break her word. Besides, if Narcissa were to see her now, surely she would throw her into the water and kill her. So she had to stand by, and feel that the Prince was looking at her, and did not recognize her. Narcissa did, however, in one moment; the eyes of envy and vanity are so sharp. She looked round when the goldfish had spoken, and immediately, under the bat’s skin, she spied her little blue-eyed sister.

Without a moment’s hesitation she rushed at her, and giving her a violent push, threw her into the water.

The Prince, who had learnt to love all living creatures, however mean and humble, could not bear to see even an old bat drown, so he snatched hold of one of its wings to help it swim to shore, when lo! the bat’s skin came right off, and in its place he was holding the lovely being from his dream, she was again looking at him with

those bright blue eyes, he had never since forgotten. He pulled her to shore, and she at last was happy in his arms.

Now, need I tell my little readers any more? Well! perhaps they might like to hear that the old fairy mother, though at first sorely vexed at her son's conduct, finally was obliged to give her consent to his marriage with Forget-me-not, so there was a grand wedding in the palace of glass, which henceforth became the abode of mirth and gaiety. As for Narcissa, she was Forget-me-not's bridesmaid, and it was a severe punishment to her for all her wickedness, to hear the whole fairy world, yea even the Queen herself, say joyfully—

“Yes, Forget-me-not, little blue-eyed Forget-me-not,  
is the most beautiful fairy of the lot!”

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