



# *In Love with a Statue*

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Italian

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*Intermediate*  
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There was once a king who had two sons. The eldest did not wish to marry, and the youngest, although he went about everywhere, found no lady to his taste. Now it happened that he once went to a certain city, and there saw a statue with which he fell in love. He bought it, had it carried to his room, and every day embraced and kissed it. One day his father became aware of this, and said to him: "What are you doing? If you want a wife, take one of flesh and bones, and not one of marble." He answered that he would take one exactly like the statue, or none at all. His older brother, who at this time had nothing to do, went out into the world to seek her. On his way he saw in a city a man who had a mouse which danced so that it seemed like a human being. He said to himself: "I will take it home to my brother to amuse himself with." He continued his journey, and arrived in a more distant town, where he found a bird that sang like an angel, and bought that, too, for his brother. He was on the point of returning home, and was passing through a street, when he saw a beggar knocking at a door. A very beautiful girl appeared at the window, who resembled in every respect the prince's statue, and suddenly withdrew. Then he told the beggar to ask alms again; but the beggar refused, because he feared that the magician, who was then absent, would return home and eat him up. But the prince gave him so much money and other things that he knocked again, and the young girl appeared again, and suddenly withdrew. Then the prince went through the streets, saying that he mended and sold looking-glasses. The servant of the young girl, who heard him, told her mistress to go and see the mirrors. She went, but he told her that if she wanted to select the mirrors she would have to go on board his ship. When she was there, he carried her away, and she wept bitterly and sighed, so that he would let her return home, but it was like speaking to the wall

When they were out at sea, there was heard the voice of a large black bird, saying: "Ciriù, ciriù! what a handsome mouse you have! You will take it to your brother; you will turn his head; and if you tell him of it, you will become marble. Ciriù, ciriù! a fine bird you have; you will take it to your brother; you will turn his head; and if you tell him, you will become marble. Ciriù, ciriù! a fine lady you have; you will take her to your brother; you will turn his head; and if you tell him of it, you will become marble." He did not know how he could tell his brother, because he was afraid of becoming marble. He landed, and took the mouse to his brother; and when he had seen it and wanted it, the elder brother cut off its head.

Then he showed him the bird that sang like an angel, and his brother wanted it; but the elder brother again cut off its head. Then he said: "I have something handsomer," and he produced the beautiful girl who looked like the statue. And as the brother who had brought her said nothing, the other feared that he would take her away from him, and had him thrown into prison, where he was a long time; and because he continued to keep silence, he was condemned to death. Three days before he was to die he asked his brother to come and see him, and he consented, although unwillingly. Then the condemned brother said: "A large black bird told me that if I brought you back the dancing mouse, and spoke, I should become a statue." And saying this, he became a statue to the waist. "And if, bringing you the singing bird, I spoke, it would be the same."

Then he became a statue to his breast. "And if, bringing you the lady, I spoke, I should become a statue." Then he became a statue all over, and his brother began to lament in despair, and tried to restore him to life. All kinds of physicians came, but none succeeded. Finally there came one who said that he was capable of turning the statue into a man provided they gave him what he needed. The king said he would do so, and the physician demanded the blood of the king's two children; but the mother would on no account consent. Then the king gave a ball, and while his wife was dancing he had the two children killed, and bathed with their blood the statue of his brother, and the statue straightway became a man and went to the ball.

The mother, when she beheld him, suddenly thought of her children. She ran to them and found them half dead, and fainted away. All around sought to console and encourage her; but when she opened her eyes and saw the physician, she cried: "Out of my sight, ugly wretch! It is you who have caused my children to be killed." He answered: "Pardon me, my lady, I have done no harm. Go and see whether your children are there!" She ran to see, and found them alive and making a great noise. Then the physician said: "I am the magician, your father, whom you forsook, and I have wished to show you what it is to love one's children." Then they made peace, and remained happy and contented.

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