

# *Ourson Part XI: The Sacrifice*

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French

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*Intermediate*  
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Ourson turned his steps homeward, discouraged and exhausted. He walked slowly and arrived at the farm late. Violette ran to meet him, took him by the hand, and without saying a word led him to his mother. There she fell on her knees and said:—

“My mother, I know what our well-beloved Ourson has suffered to-day. During his absence the fairy Furious has told me all and the good fairy Drolette has confirmed her story. My mother, when our Ourson was, as we believed, lost to us for ever and lost for my sake you revealed to me that which in his nobility and goodness he wished to conceal. I know that by changing skins with him I can restore to him his original beauty. Happy, a hundred times happy in having this opportunity to recompense the tenderness and devotion of my dearly-loved brother Ourson, I demand to make this exchange allowed by the fairy Drolette and I entreat her to complete the transfer immediately.”

“Violette! Violette!” exclaimed Ourson, in great agitation, “take back your words! You do not know to what you engage yourself; you are ignorant of the life of anguish and misery unparalleled, the life of solitude and isolation to which you thus condemn yourself; you know not the unceasing desolation you will feel at knowing that you are an object of fear to all mankind. Violette, Violette, in pity to me, withdraw your words!”

“Dear Ourson,” said Violette, calmly, but resolutely, “in making what you believe to be so great a sacrifice, I accomplish the dearest wish of my heart; I secure my own happiness; I satisfy an ardent and imperious desire to testify my tenderness and my gratitude. I esteem myself for doing what I propose. I should despise myself if

I left it undone.”

“Pause, Violette, for one instant longer, I beseech you! Think of my grief, when I no longer see my beautiful Violette, when I think of you exposed to the railleries, the horror of men. Oh! Violette, do not condemn your poor Ourson to this anguish.”

The lovely face of Violette was veiled with sadness. The fear that Ourson would feel repugnance towards her made her heart tremble; but this thought, which was wholly personal, was very fleeting—it could not triumph over her devoted tenderness. Her only response was to throw herself in the arms of Agnella, and say:—

“Mother, embrace your fair and pretty Violette for the last time.”

Whilst Agnella, Ourson and Passerose embraced her and looked lovingly upon her—whilst Ourson, on his knees, supplicated her to leave him his bear-skin to which he had been accustomed for twenty years—Violette called out again in a loud voice:—

“Fairy Drolette! Fairy Drolette! come and accept the price of the life and health of my dear Ourson.”

At this moment the fairy Drolette appeared in all her glory. She was seated in a massive chariot of gold, drawn by a hundred and fifty larks. She was clothed with a robe of butterflies’ wings, of the most brilliant colors while from her shoulders fell a mantle of network of diamonds, which trailed ten feet behind her and it was so fine in texture that it was light as gauze. Her hair, glittering like tissue of gold, was ornamented by a crown of carbuncles more brilliant than the sun; each of her slippers was carved from a single ruby and her beautiful face, soft, yet gay, breathed contentment. She fixed upon Violette a most affectionate regard.

“You wish it, then, my daughter?” said she.

“Madam,” cried Ourson, falling at her feet, “deign to listen to me. You, who have loaded me with undeserved benefits—you, who have inspired me with boundless gratitude—you, good and just—will you execute the mad wish of my dear Violette? Will you make my whole life wretched by forcing me to accept this sacrifice? No, no, charming and humane fairy, you could not, you will not do it!”

Whilst Ourson was thus supplicating, the fairy gave Violette a light touch with her wand of pearl and Ourson another—then said:—

“Let it be according to the wish of your heart, my daughter. Let it be contrary to your ardent desires, my son.”

At the same moment, the face, arms and the whole body of the lovely young girl were covered with the long hair which Ourson had worn, and Ourson appeared with a white smooth skin, which set off his extreme beauty to advantage.

Violette gazed at him with admiration, while he, his eyes cast down and full of tears, dared not look at his poor Violette, so horribly metamorphosed. At last he looked up, threw himself in her arms, and they wept together.

Ourson was marvellously handsome. Violette was, as Ourson had been, without form, without beauty, but not ugly. When Violette raised her head and looked at Agnella, the latter extended her hands towards her, and said:—

“Thanks, my daughter, my noble, generous child.”

“Mother,” said Violette, in low voice, “do you love me still?”

“Do I love you, my cherished child? Yes, a hundred times, a thousand times more than ever before.”

“Violette,” said Ourson, “never fear being ugly in our eyes. To my eyes, you are a hundred times more beautiful than when clothed with all your loveliness. To me you are a sister—a friend incomparable. You will always be the companion of my life, the ideal of my heart.”

Note: The story continues in Ourson Part XII: The Combat

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