

Ourson XIII: The Recompense

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French

Advanced
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Prince Marvellous looked at Violette and sighed heavily; Violette gazed at the prince and smiled sweetly.

“How handsome you are, my dear cousin! I am so happy to have it in my power to restore you your beauty. And now I will pour some of this perfumed oil upon my hands; since I cannot please your eye, I will at least embalm you,” said she, laughing.

She uncorked the vial, and entreated Marvellous to sprinkle some drops on her forehead and cheeks. The heart of the prince was too full for words. He took the vial and obeyed the order of his cousin. Their surprise and joy were indescribable on seeing that as soon as the oil touched Violette’s forehead the hair disappeared and her skin resumed its original purity and dazzling whiteness.

The prince and Violette, on seeing the virtue of this wonderful oil, uttered loud cries of delight and ran towards the stable where they saw Agnella and Passerose. They called their attention to the happy effect of this perfumed oil given them by the fairy. Both joined in their happiness. The prince could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses. And now nothing could prevent his union with Violette, so good, so devoted, so tender, so lovely, so well constituted to make him supremely happy.

The queen thought of the morrow—of her return to her kingdom, which she had abandoned twenty years ago. She wished that she herself, that Violette, that her son the prince had clothing worthy of so great an occasion but, alas! she had neither the time nor the means to procure them: they would therefore be compelled to wear

their coarse clothing, and thus show themselves to their people. Violette and Marvellous laughed at this distress of their mother.

“Do you not think, mamma,” said Violette, “that our dear prince is sufficiently adorned with his rare beauty and that a rich and royal robe would not make him more beautiful or more amiable?”

“And do you not agree with me, my dear mother,” said Marvellous, “in thinking that our dear Violette is lovely enough in the simplest clothing, that the lustre of her eyes surpasses the most brilliant diamonds, that the clear whiteness of her teeth rivals successfully the rarest pearls, that the richness of her blonde hair surpasses a crown of brilliants?”

“Yes, yes, my children,” replied Agnella, “without doubt, you are both of you handsome and attractive but a rich dress spoils nothing, not even beauty. Jewels, embroidery and heavy brocades would detract nothing from your charms. And I who am old——”

“But not ugly, madam,” interrupted Passerose, hastily. “You are still amiable and handsome, in spite of your little country cap, your skirts of coarse striped cloth, your waist of red camlet and your stomacher of simple cloth. Besides, when you return to your kingdom, you can buy every kind of dress your heart desires.”

The evening passed away gayly and there seemed no anxiety about the future. The fairy had provided their supper; they passed the night on the bundles of hay in the stable and as they were all fatigued by the emotions of the day they slept profoundly. The sun had been shining a long time and the fairy Drolette was with them, before they awoke.

A soft “Hem! hem!” of the fairy aroused them. The prince was the first to open his eyes; he threw himself on his knees before the fairy and thanked her with such warmth and gratitude that her heart was touched.

Violette was on her knees by his side and joining her thanks to those of the prince.

“I do not doubt your gratitude, dear children,” said the fairy; “but I have much to do. I am expected in the kingdom of the king Benin where I am to attend at the birth of the third son of the princess Blondine. This prince is to be the husband of your first daughter, Prince Marvellous, and I am resolved to endow him with all the qualities which will obtain for him the warm love of your daughter. And now I must conduct you to your

kingdom; I will return in time to be present at your wedding. Queen,” she continued, turning to Aimee, who was now just opening her eyes, “we are about to set out immediately for your son’s kingdom. Are you and your faithful Passerose ready for the journey?”

“Madam,” replied the queen, with a slight embarrassment, “we are ready to follow you but will you not blush for our dress, so little worthy of our rank?”

“It is not I who will blush, queen,” said the fairy, smiling, “but rather yourself who have this sensation of shame. But I will remedy this evil also.”

Saying this, she described a circle with her wand above the head of the queen, who in the same moment found herself clothed in a robe of gold brocade. Upon her head was a hat with splendid plumes, fastened with a band of superb diamonds and her boots were of velvet, spangled with gold.

Aimee looked at her robe with an air of complaisance.

“And Violette and my son the prince, will you not extend your goodness to them also?”

“Violette and the prince have asked for nothing. I will do as they wish. Speak, Violette, do you desire to change your costume?”

“Madam,” replied Violette, casting down her sweet eyes and blushing, “I have been sufficiently happy in this robe of simple cloth. In this costume my brother knew me and loved me. Permit me to continue to wear it as far as regard for my station allows and allow me to preserve it always in remembrance of the happy years of my childhood.”

The prince thanked Violette for these sweet words, and pressed her hand tenderly.

The fairy kindly nodded her approval and called for her chariot, which was waiting a few steps from them. She entered and placed the queen next herself, then the prince, Violette and Passerose.

In less than an hour the larks had flown over the three thousand leagues which separated them from the kingdom of Prince Marvellous. All his court and all his subjects, apprised beforehand by the fairy, expected him. The streets and the palaces were filled by the eager, happy crowd.

When the chariot appeared in sight, the people uttered cries of joy which were redoubled when it drew up before the great entrance of the palace, when they saw descend Queen Aimee, a little older, no doubt, but still pretty and gracious, and the Prince Marvellous, whose natural beauty and grace were enhanced by the splendor of his clothing, glittering with gold and precious stones, which were also a present from the fairy.

But the acclamations arose to frenzy when the prince, taking Violette by the hand, presented her to the people.

Her sweet, attractive countenance, her superb and elegant form, were adorned with a dress with which the fairy had clothed her by one stroke of her wand.

Her robe was of gold lace, while her waist, her arms and shoulders shone with innumerable larks formed of diamonds larger than humming-birds. On her graceful head she wore a crown of larks made of precious stones of all colors. Her countenance, soft but gay, her grace, her beauty, won the hearts of all.

For a long time nothing was heard but shouts of "Long live King Marvellous! Long live Queen Violette!" The noise and tumult were so great that many persons became deaf. The good fairy, who desired that only joy and happiness should prevail throughout the kingdom on this auspicious day, cured them instantly at the request of Violette.

There was a magnificent feast spread for the court and the people. A million, three hundred and forty-six thousand, eight hundred and twenty-two persons dined at the expense of the fairy and each guest was permitted to carry away enough for eight days.

During the repast the fairy set off for the kingdom of King Benin, promising to return in time for the wedding of Marvellous and Violette. During the eight days of the fairy's absence Marvellous, who saw that his mother was a little sad at not being queen, entreated her earnestly to accept Violette's kingdom and she consented to reign there on condition that King Marvellous and Queen Violette would come every year and pass three months with her.

Queen Aimee, before parting with her children, wished to witness their marriage. The fairy Drolette and many other fairies of her acquaintance and many genii were invited to the marriage. They all received the most magnificent presents, and were so satisfied with the welcome given them by King Marvellous and Queen Violette that they graciously promised to return whenever they were invited.

Two years afterwards they received an invitation to be present at the birth of the first child of King Marvellous. There came to Queen Violette a daughter, who, like her mother, was a marvel of goodness and beauty.

The king and queen could not fulfil the promise they had made to Queen Aimee. One of the genii who had been invited to the wedding of Marvellous and Violette, found in Queen Aimee so much of goodness, sweetness, and beauty, that he loved her, and, visiting her several times in her new kingdom and being affectionately and graciously received by her, he carried her off one day in a whirlwind. Queen Aimee wept for a while but as she loved the genius she was not inconsolable; indeed, she promptly consented to wed him. The king of the genii granted to her as a wedding present the power of participating in all the privileges of her husband: never to die, never to grow old and the ability to transport herself in the twinkling of an eye wherever she wished to go. Aimee used this power very often to visit her son and his children.

King Marvellous and Queen Violette had eight sons and four daughters and they were all charming. They were happy, without doubt, for they loved each other tenderly and their grandmother, who, it was said spoiled them a little induced their grandfather, the genius Bienveillant, to contribute all in his power to their happiness. Consequently, they received many rich gifts.

Passerose, who was warmly attached to Queen Aimee, had followed her into her new kingdom but when the genius carried her off in a whirlwind, Passerose, seeing herself forgotten and not being able to follow her mistress was so sad in the loneliness caused by the departure of Aimee, that she prayed the fairy Drolette to

transport her to the kingdom of King Marvellous and Queen Violette. She remained with them and took care of their children to whom she often recounted the adventures of Ourson and Violette. She still remains, it is said, though the genius and his queen have made her many excuses for not having carried her off in the whirlwind.

“No, no,” Passerose replied to all these explanations; “let us remain as we are. You forgot me once—you might forget me another time. Here, my dear Ourson and my sweet Violette never forget their old nurse. I love them and I will remain with them. They loved me and they will take care of me.”

The farmer, the superintendent, and the master of the forge who had been so cruel to Ourson were severely punished by the fairy Drolette.

The farmer was devoured by a bear, some hours after he had chased away Ourson.

The superintendent was dismissed by his master for having let loose the dogs, who escaped and never could be found. The same night he was bitten by a venomous serpent and expired some moments afterwards.

The master of the forge having reprimanded his workmen too brutally, they resolved upon vengeance: seized him and cast him into the blazing furnace where he perished miserably.

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