



# *The Parrot (Second Version)*

Thomas Frederick Crane

Italian

---

*Advanced*  
*6 min read*

Once upon a time there was a merchant who, having to go on a journey, gave his wife a parrot to amuse her in her loneliness. The wife, vexed that her husband should leave her so soon, threw the bird in a corner and thought no more about it. At evening she went to the window and saw pass a young man, who fell in love with her as soon as he saw her. On the first floor there lived a woman who sold coals, and the young man began to tempt her to help him in his love affair. She would not promise, because the merchant's wife had been married but a few days, and was an honest woman. She added, however, that there was a way; her daughter was to be married shortly, she would invite the young wife to the wedding, and the young man, being there too, could manage the rest. The wife accepted the invitation, dressed herself in her finest clothes, and was on the point of leaving when the parrot cried from its corner: "O mistress, where are you going? I wished to tell you a story; but suit yourself." The wife then dismissed the coal-woman, who, not to spoil matters, promised to put off the wedding and return for her the next day. Then the parrot began:

"Once upon a time there was a king's son whose master was so learned in magic that with certain words he could change himself into various animals. The prince wanted to learn these words, too; but the magician hesitated and refused, although he had to yield at last. Then the prince became a crow and flew far away to a distant country and into the garden of a king, where he saw a beautiful girl with a mirror in which was set her portrait. The crow in wonder snatched the glass from her hands, and flew home and resumed his own form,

but he fell so deeply in love with the unknown girl that he became ill.

“She, meanwhile, who was the daughter of a king, seeing the glass taken from her, no longer had any peace of mind, and begged her father until he gave her permission to go in search of it. She dressed herself like a physician and departed. She came to a city and heard a proclamation by the king, that whatever physician should pass that way should be obliged to visit and try to cure his daughter. Then the new physician had to go to the palace, but she could not discover any remedy for the grave disease. At night, while sitting by the princess’ bed, the light went out, and she left the room to light it, and saw in a little cottage three old women sitting around a cauldron boiling over a great fire. ‘Good women, are you washing?’ ‘What a washing! these are three heads, and when they are cooked the princess will die.’ ‘Bravo, my good women; bring the wood and I will help, too.’ She remained there some time and promised to return. The brighter the fire burned, the nearer the princess came to death. The physician consoled the king and had a fine supper prepared. The second night she carried food and a great deal of wine to the old women, and when they were drunk threw them into the fire and lifted off the cauldron with the boiling heads. The princess recovered and the king wished to give her to the physician and reward him with gems and gold, but the physician would take nothing, and departed.”

“You know, mistress, it is late and I am tired,” interrupted the parrot; “I will tell you the rest to-morrow.”

The next day the woman who sold coals came again, and the merchant’s wife was on the point of accompanying her; but the parrot detained her, promising to finish the story. So the woman went away in anger, and the parrot continued:

“The princess disguised as a physician journeyed until she came to another city, and heard a proclamation by the king, that every physician who passed that way should be forced to visit and attempt to cure his son. The new physician, too, had to go to court; but could find no remedy for the severe disease. At night, while sitting at the bedside of the prince, she heard a loud noise in the next room: went to the door and saw three old women, who were preparing a banquet. Afterwards they approached the invalid, anointed him from head to foot, and carried him healed to the table; then when they were full of wine and merry, they anointed him again and replaced him on his bed worse than before. The physician comforted the king, and the second night allowed the witches to take the prince to the table, then appeared and frightening the old women with threats of the king’s anger drove them from the room and restored the son to his father. The king, well pleased, wished

to recompense the physician, who would take nothing, and departed.”

“But you know, mistress, it is late and I am weary. I will tell you the rest to-morrow.”

The next day the woman who sold coals returned, and the merchant’s wife was on the point of following her; but the parrot detained her, promising to finish the story. The woman went away angry, and the parrot continued:

“After a long journey the princess disguised as a physician came to another city, and heard a proclamation by the king, that every physician who passed that way should be compelled to visit and attempt to cure his son. The new physician, too, had to go to court; but she could find no remedy for the severe disease. The prince would speak to no one, but the physician at last made the invalid disclose the secret of his heart, and he told of the mirror and showed the portrait of the unknown lady whom he loved desperately. The physician consoled the king; had garments and ornaments exactly like those of the young girl in the glass prepared; dressed in them, and as she appeared before the prince he leaped from his bed, embracing his betrothed in the midst of rejoicings.”

But here the lady hears her husband arriving. Joy makes her beside herself; and she throws from the window the poor parrot, which now seems to her only a tiresome companion. The merchant enters and inquires about the bird; sees the parrot hurt upon the neighboring roof and picks it up kindly. The parrot narrates to him the wiles of the coal-woman and its own prudence; assures the husband that his wife is innocent; but complains of her being so ungrateful; she had promised him a gold vase, and now treats him thus. The merchant consoles the dying bird, and afterwards has him embalmed and placed in the gold vase. As for his wife, he loved her more than ever.

Read more fairy tales on [Fairytalez.com](http://Fairytalez.com)