

Princess Rosette Part I: The Farm

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French

Intermediate
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There was once a king and queen, who had three daughters. The two eldest were twins—Orangine and Roussette—and their parents loved them very dearly. They were beautiful and intelligent, but they were not very good. In this they resembled the king and queen. The third princess was called Rosette and was three years younger than her sisters. She was as amiable as she was handsome, as good as she was beautiful.

The fairy Puissante was Rosette's godmother and this made her two sisters, Orangine and Roussette, very jealous. They were angry because they also had not a fairy for their godmother.

Some days after the birth of Rosette, the king and queen sent her to the country, on a farm, to be nursed. Rosette lived happily here for fifteen years without her parents coming once to see her. Every year they sent a small sum of money to the farmer to pay Rosette's expenses and asked some questions as to her health, but they never came to see her nor disturbed themselves about her education.

Rosette would indeed have been very rude and ignorant if her good godmother, the fairy Puissante, had not sent her teachers and all that was necessary. In this way Rosette learned to read, to write, to keep accounts and to work beautifully. She became an accomplished musician, she knew how to draw and spoke several languages.

Rosette was the most beautiful, the most attractive, the most amiable and the most excellent princess in the whole world. She had never disobeyed her nurse or godmother, and had therefore never been reproved. She did not regret her father and mother, as she did not know them and she did not desire any other home than the farm where she had been so happy.

One day when Rosette was seated on a bench before the door, she saw a man arrive in a laced hat and coat; he approached her and asked if he could speak to the princess Rosette.

“Yes, without doubt,” answered the princess; “I am the princess Rosette.”

“Then, princess,” said the man, respectfully taking off his hat, “be graciously pleased to receive this letter, which the king your father has charged me to deliver to you.”

Rosette took the letter, opened it, and read the following:

“Rosette: Your sisters are now eighteen years old and it is time they were married. I have invited the princes and princesses of all the kingdoms of the earth to come and assist at a festival which I intend to give in order to choose husbands for Orangine and Roussette. You are now fifteen years old and can properly appear at this festival. You may come and pass three days with me. I will send for you in eight days. I cannot send you any money for your toilet as I am now at great expense for your sisters; besides, no one will look at you. Come, therefore, in any clothes you please.

“The King Your Father.”

Rosette ran quickly to show this letter to her nurse.

“Are you pleased, Rosette, to go to this festival?”

“Yes, my good nurse, I am delighted. I will enjoy myself and become acquainted with my father, mother and my sisters and then I will return to you.”

“But,” said the nurse, shaking her head, “what dress will you wear, my poor child?”

“My beautiful robe of white percale which I always wear on holidays, my dear nurse.”

“My poor little one, that robe is indeed very suitable for the country but would appear miserably poor at a party of kings and princes.”

“Of what consequence is all this, nurse? My father himself has said that no one will look at me. This thought will make me much more at my ease. I shall see all and no one will see me.”

The nurse sighed but said nothing and began immediately to mend, whiten and smooth Rosette’s white robe.

The day before the king was to send for her, the nurse called her and said:

“My dear child, here is your dress for the king’s festival; be very careful with it as I shall not be there to whiten and smooth it for you.”

“Thanks, my good nurse; be satisfied—I will take great care.”

The nurse now packed in a little trunk the percale robe and white skirt, a pair of cotton stockings and black shoes and then a little bouquet of flowers for Rosette to wear in her hair. Just as she was about to close the trunk, the window opened violently and the fairy Puissante entered.

“You are going, then, to your father’s court, my dear Rosette?” said the fairy.

“Yes, dear godmother, but only for three days.”

“But what dress have you prepared for those three days?”

“Look, godmother! look!” and she pointed to the trunk, which was still open.

The fairy smiled, drew a small bottle from her pocket and said: “I intend that my dear Rosette shall make a sensation by her dress. This is unworthy of her.”

The fairy opened the bottle, and threw some drops of the liquid it contained upon the robe, which became a coarse India rubber cloth; then a drop upon the cotton stockings, which changed into blue yarn; a third drop upon the bouquet, which became a hen’s egg; a fourth upon the shoes, and they immediately changed into

coarse felt.

“In this manner,” said she, with a gracious air, “do I wish my Rosette to appear. You must attire yourself in all this and, to complete your toilette, here is a necklace of nuts, a band for your hair of burrs, and bracelets of dried beans.” She kissed Rosette who was completely stupefied. The fairy then disappeared and the nurse burst into tears.

“Alas! it was not worth my while to give myself all the trouble of preparing this poor robe. Oh, my poor Rosette! Do not go to this festival. Pretend you are ill, my child.”

“No,” said Rosette; “that would be to displease my godmother. I am sure that she does what is best for me. She is much wiser than I am. I will go and I will wear all that my godmother has brought me.” And the good and obedient Rosette thought no more of her dress. She went to bed and slept tranquilly.

She had scarce arranged her hair and dressed herself in the morning when the chariot of the fairy came for her. She embraced her nurse, took her little trunk and departed.

Note: The story continues in *Princess Rosette Part II: Rosette at the Court of the King, Her Father*

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