

# *Princess Rosette Part IV: The Second Day of the Festival*

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French

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*Intermediate*  
*12 min read*

In the morning a coarse servant brought Rosette bread and milk and offered her services to dress her. Rosette, who did not wish this rude domestic to see the change in her dress, thanked her smilingly and replied that she was in the habit of arranging her hair and dressing herself. Rosette then began her toilette. When she had washed and combed her hair she wished to arrange it with the superb carbuncle she had worn the day before but she saw with surprise that the ebony case had disappeared and in its place was a small wooden trunk, upon which there lay a folded paper. She took it and read the following directions:

“Here are your things, Rosette. Dress yourself as you were dressed yesterday, in the clothing you brought from the farm.”

Rosette did not hesitate an instant, certain that her godmother would come to her help at the proper time. She arranged her pullet wing in a different manner from that of the day before, put on her dress, her necklace, her shoes, her bracelets and then stood before the glass.

When she saw her own reflection in the mirror she was amazed. She was attired in the richest and most splendid riding-suit of sky-blue velvet and pearl buttons as large as walnuts; her stockings were bordered with a wreath of pearls; her head-dress was a cap of sky-blue velvet with a long plume of dazzling whiteness, which

floated down to her waist and was attached by a single pearl of unparalleled beauty and splendor. The boots were also of blue velvet embroidered in gold and pearls. Her bracelets and necklace also were of pearls, so large and so pure that a single one would have paid for the king's palace.

At the moment when Rosette was about to leave her chamber to follow the page, a sweet voice whispered in her ear, "Rosette, do not mount any other horse than the one the prince Charmant will present you."

She turned and saw no one; but she felt convinced that this counsel came from her good godmother.

"Thanks, dear godmother," she said, in low tones. She felt a sweet kiss upon her cheek and smiled with happiness and gratitude.

The little page conducted her, as the day before, into the royal salon, where her appearance produced a greater effect than before. Her fine, sweet countenance, her splendid figure, her magnificent dress, allured all eyes and captivated all hearts.

The prince Charmant, who was evidently expecting her, advanced to meet her, offered his arm and led her to the king and queen who received her with more coldness than the day before. Orangine and Roussette were bursting with spite at the sight of the splendid appearance of Rosette. They would not even say good-day to their sister.

The good, young princess was of course somewhat embarrassed by this reception but the prince Charmant, seeing her distress, approached and asked permission to be her companion during the chase in the forest.

"It will be a great pleasure to me," replied Rosette, who did not know how to dissimulate.

"It seems to me," said he, "that I am your brother, so great is the affection which I feel for you, charming princess. Permit me to remain by your side and to defend you against all enemies."

"It will be an honor and a pleasure for me to be protected by a king so worthy of the name he bears."

Prince Charmant was enchanted by this gracious reply and, notwithstanding the malice of Orangine and Roussette, who tried in every possible way to attract him to themselves, he did not leave Rosette's side for a moment.

After breakfast they descended to the court for a ride on horseback. A page advanced to Rosette, leading a splendid black horse, which could scarcely be held by the grooms, it was so wild and vicious.

"You must not ride this horse, princess," said Prince Charmant, "it will certainly kill you. Bring another horse for the princess," he said, turning to the page.

"The king and the queen gave orders that the princess should ride no other horse than this," said the page. At this the prince exclaimed:

"Dear princess, wait but for a moment; I myself will bring you a horse worthy of you but I implore you not to mount this dangerous animal."

"I will wait your return," said Rosette, with a gracious smile.

A few moments afterwards Prince Charmant appeared, leading a magnificent horse, white as snow. The saddle was of blue velvet, embroidered in pearls and the bridle was of gold and pearls. When Rosette wished to mount, the horse knelt down and rose quietly when she had placed herself in the saddle.

Prince Charmant sprang lightly upon his beautiful steed Alezan and placed himself by the side of the princess Rosette. The king, the queen and the princesses, who had seen all this, were pale with rage but they dared say nothing for fear of the fairy Puissante.

The king gave the signal to depart. Every lady had her attendant gentleman. Orangine and Roussette were obliged to content themselves with two insignificant princes who were neither so young nor so handsome as Prince Charmant. Orangine and Roussette were so sulky that even these princes declared they would never wed princesses so uninteresting.

In place of following the chase, Prince Charmant and Rosette wandered in the beautiful shady walks of the forest, talking merrily and giving accounts of their past lives.

“But,” said Charmant, “if the king your father has not allowed you to reside in his palace, how is it that he has given you such beautiful jewels, worthy of a fairy?”

“It is to my good godmother that I owe them,” replied Rosette. And then she told Prince Charmant how she had been educated on a farm and that she was indebted to the fairy Puissante for everything that she knew and everything she valued. The fairy had watched over her education and granted her every wish of her heart.

Charmant listened with a lively interest and a tender compassion. And now, in his turn, he told Rosette that he had been left an orphan at the age of seven years; that the fairy Puissante had presided over his education; that she had also sent him to the festivals given by the king, telling him he would find there the perfect woman he was seeking.

“In short, I believe, dear Rosette, that I have found in you the charming and perfect creature of whom the fairy spoke. Deign, princess, to connect your life with mine and authorize me to demand your hand of your parents.”

“Before answering, dear prince, I must obtain permission of my godmother but you may be sure that I shall be very happy to pass my life with you.”

The morning thus passed away most agreeably for Rosette and Charmant and they returned to the palace to dress for dinner.

Rosette entered her ugly garret and saw before her a magnificent box of rosewood, wide open. She undressed and as she removed her articles of clothing they arranged themselves in the box, which then closed firmly. She arranged her hair and dressed herself with her usual neatness and then ran to the glass. She could not suppress a cry of admiration.

Her robe was of gauze and was so fine and light, and brilliant it looked as if woven of the wings of butterflies. It was studded with diamonds as brilliant as stars. The hem of this robe, the corsage and the waist were trimmed with diamond fringe which sparkled like suns. Her hair was partly covered with a net of diamonds from which a tassel of immense diamonds fell to her shoulders. Every diamond was as large as a pear and was worth a

kingdom. Her necklace and bracelets were so immense and so brilliant that you could not look at them fixedly without being blinded.

The young princess thanked her godmother most tenderly and felt again upon her fair cheek the sweet kiss of the morning. She followed the page and entered the royal salon. Prince Charmant was awaiting her at the door, offered her his arm and conducted her to the apartment of the king and queen. Rosette advanced to salute them.

Charmant saw with indignation the glances of rage and revenge which the king, queen and princesses cast upon poor Rosette. He remained by her side as he had done in the morning and was witness to the admiration which she inspired and the malice and envy of her sisters.

Rosette was indeed sad to find herself the object of hatred to her father, mother and sisters. Charmant perceived her melancholy and asked the cause. She explained it to him frankly.

“When, oh! when, my dear Rosette, will you permit me to ask your hand of your father? In my kingdom every one will love you and I more than all the rest.”

“To-morrow, dear prince, I will send you the reply of my godmother whom I shall question on the subject this evening.”

They were now summoned to dinner. Charmant placed himself at Rosette’s side and they conversed in a most agreeable manner.

After dinner the king gave orders for the ball to commence. Orangine and Roussette, who had taken lessons for ten years, danced well but without any peculiar grace. They believed that Rosette had never had any opportunity to dance and with a mocking, malicious air, they now announced to her that it was her turn.

The modest Rosette hesitated and drew back because it was repugnant to her to show herself in public and attract the general regard. But the more she declined, the more her envious sisters insisted, hoping that she would at last suffer a real humiliation.

The queen now interfered and sternly commanded Rosette to dance. Rosette rose at once to obey the queen. Charmant, seeing her embarrassment, said to her in low tones:

“I will be your partner, dear Rosette. If you do not know a single step, let me execute it for you alone.”

“Thanks, dear prince. I recognize and am grateful for your courtesy. I accept you for my partner and hope that you will not have occasion to blush for your generosity.”

And now Rosette and Charmant commenced. A more animated, graceful and light dance was never seen. All present gazed at them with ever increasing admiration. Rosette was so superior in dancing to Orangine and Roussette, that they could scarcely suppress their rage. They wished to throw themselves upon the young princess, choke her and tear her diamonds from her. The king and queen, who had been watching them and divined their intention, stopped them, and whispered in their ears:

“Remember the threats and power of the fairy Puissante! To-morrow shall be the last day.”

When the dance was concluded, the most rapturous applause resounded throughout the hall and every one entreated Charmant and Rosette to repeat the dance. As they felt no fatigue they did not wish to seem disobliging and executed a new dance, more graceful and attractive than the first.

Orangine and Roussette could no longer control themselves. They were suffocating with rage, fainted and were carried from the room. They had become so marked by the passions of envy and rage that they had lost every vestige of beauty and no one had any sympathy for them, as all had seen their jealousy and wickedness.

The applause and enthusiasm for Rosette and Charmant were so overpowering that they sought refuge in the garden. They walked side by side during the rest of the evening, and talked merrily and happily over their plans for the future, if the fairy Puissante would permit them to unite the smooth current of their lives. The diamonds of Rosette sparkled with such brilliancy that the alleys where they walked and the little groves where they seated themselves, seemed illuminated by a thousand stars. At last it was necessary to separate.

“To-morrow!” said Rosette, “to-morrow I hope to say, yours eternally.”

Rosette entered her little room. As she undressed, her clothing arranged itself as the day before in the case.

This new case was of carved ivory and studded with turquoise nails. When Rosette had lain down peacefully upon her bed she put out the light, and said, in a low voice:

“My dear, good godmother, to-morrow I must give a definite answer to Prince Charmant. Dictate my response, dear godmother. I will obey your command, no matter how painful it may be.”

“Say yes, my dear Rosette, to Prince Charmant,” replied the soft voice of the fairy. “I myself arranged this marriage. It was to make you acquainted with Prince Charmant that I forced your father to invite you to this festival.”

Rosette thanked the kind fairy and slept the sleep of innocence, after having felt the maternal lips of her good protectress upon her cheeks.

Note: The story continues in Princess Rosette Part V: Third and Last Day of the Festival

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