

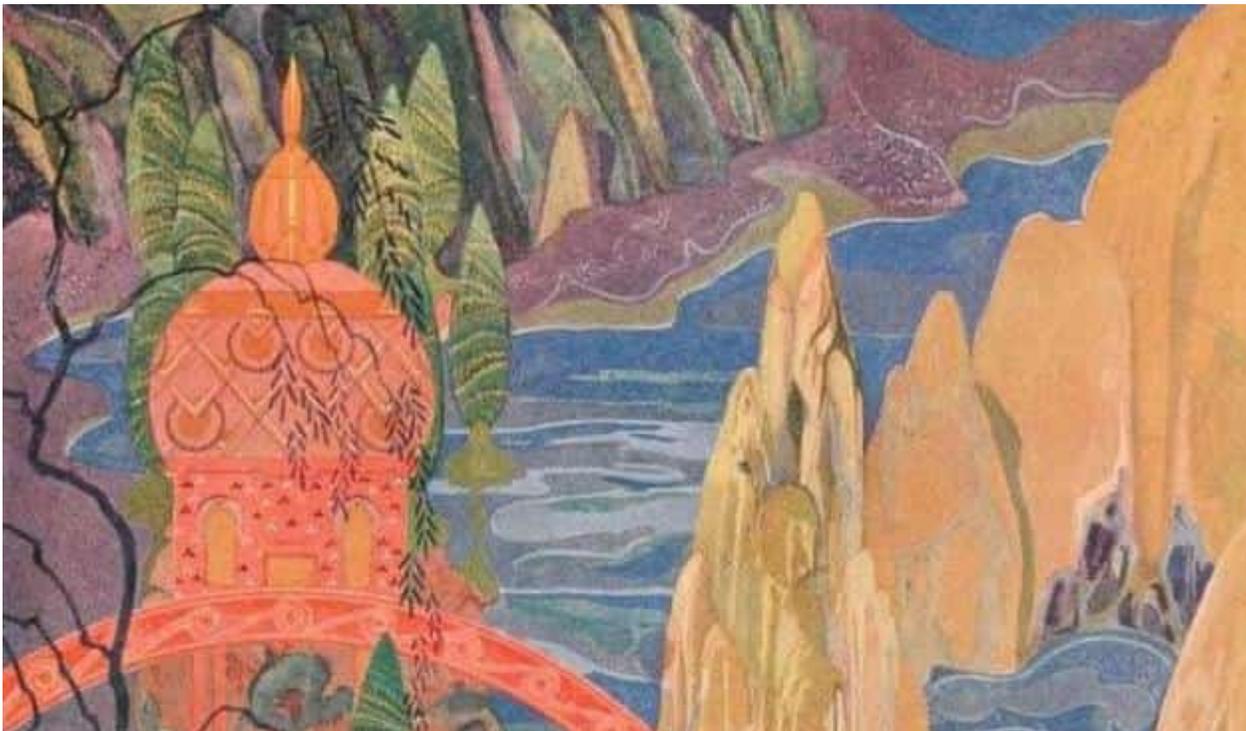
The Sugar-Candy House

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Belgian

Easy
5 min read

Jan and Jannette were brother and sister. They lived near a big wood, and every day they used to go to play there, fishing for sticklebacks in the streams, and making necklaces of red berries. One day they wandered farther from their home than usual, and all of a sudden they came to a brook crossed by a pretty red bridge. On the other side of the bridge, half hidden among the trees, they espied the roofs of a little pink cottage, which, when they came closer, they found to be built entirely of sugar-candy! Here was a delightful find for a little boy and girl who loved sweetstuff! They lost no time in breaking off pieces of the roof and popping them into their mouths.



“Jan and Jannette.” Illustration by Jean de Bosschère, published in Folk Tales of Beasts and Men by Jean de Bosschère (1918). Dodd, Mead and Company.

Now in that house there lived an old wolf whose name was Garon. He was paralysed in one leg, and could not run very fast, but in all other respects he was as fierce and strong as he had been in his youth. When he heard Jan and Jannette breaking off bits of his roof he growled out, “Who is touching my Sugar-Candy House?” Then he came limping out to see who it was, but by that time the children were safely hidden in the woods.

“Who dares to touch my Sugar-Candy House?” roared the wolf again.

Then Jan replied:

*“It’s the wind so mild,
It’s the wind so mild,
That lovable child!”*

This satisfied the old wolf, and back he went to his house, grumbling.

The next day Jan and Jannette once again crossed over the little red bridge, and broke some more candy from the wolf’s house. Out came Garon again, bristling all over.

“Who is touching my Sugar-Candy House?” he roared.

And Jan and Jannette replied:

*“It’s the wind so mild,
It’s the wind so mild,
That lovable child!”*

“Very well,” said the wolf, and he went back again, but this time there was a gleam of suspicion in his eye.

The next day was stormy, and hardly had Jan and Jannette reached the Sugar-Candy House than the wolf came out, and surprised them in the very act of breaking a piece off his window-sill.

“Oho!” said he. “It was the wind so mild, was it? That lovable child, eh? Precious lovable children, I must say! Gr-r-r, I’ll eat them up!” And he sprang at Jan and Jannette, who took to their heels and ran off as fast as their legs could carry them. Garon pursued them at a good speed in spite of his stiff paw, and although he never gained upon them, yet he kept them in sight, and refused to give up the chase. The children looked back once or twice, and saw that the wolf was still following them, but they were not very much afraid, because they were confident of their ability to outrun him.

All of a sudden they found their way barred by a river. There was no bridge across it, and the water was very deep. What were they to do? Nearer and nearer came the wolf!

In the middle of the river some ducks were swimming, and Jan called out to them: “Little ducks! Little ducks! Carry us over the river on your backs, for if you do not the wolf will get us!”

So the ducks came swimming up, and Jan and Jannette climbed each on to the back of one, and were carried safely over to the other bank.

Presently the wolf, in his turn, came to the river. He had seen how the children had managed to cross, and he roared out at the ducks in a terrible voice, “Come and carry me over, or I’ll eat you all up!”

“Very well,” answered the ducks, and they swam to the bank, and Garon balanced himself on four of them, one paw on the back of each. But they had no intention of carrying the wicked old wolf to the other side, for they did not love him or any of his tribe, and, moreover, they objected to his impolite way of asking a favour. So, at a given signal from the leader, all the ducks dived in midstream, and left old Garon struggling in the water.

Three times he went down and three times he came up, but the fourth time he sank never to rise any more.

That was the end of old Garon, and a good job, too, say I. I don’t know what became of his Sugar-Candy House, but I dare say, if you could find the wood, and the sun had not melted the candy, or the rain washed it away, you might break a bit of it off for yourselves.

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