



*The Boy Who Had a Moon on
His Forehead and a Sun on
His Chin*

Joseph Jacobs

Indian

*Intermediate
38 min read*

In a country were seven daughters of poor parents, who used to come daily to play under the shady trees in the King's garden with the gardener's daughter; and daily she used to say to them, "When I am married I shall have a son. Such a beautiful boy as he will be has never been seen. He will have a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin." Then her playfellows used to laugh at her and mock her.

But one day the King heard her telling them about the beautiful boy she would have when she was married, and he said to himself he should like very much to have such a son; the more so that though he had already four Queens he had no child. He went, therefore, to the gardener and told him he wished to marry his daughter. This delighted the gardener and his wife, who thought it would indeed be grand for their daughter to become a princess. So they said "Yes" to the King, and invited all their friends to the wedding. The King invited all his, and he gave the gardener as much money as he wanted. Then the wedding was held with great feasting and rejoicing.

A year later the day drew near on which the gardener's daughter was to have her son; and the King's four other Queens came constantly to see her. One day they said to her, "The King hunts every day; and the time is soon coming when you will have your child. Suppose you fell ill whilst he was out hunting and could therefore know nothing of your illness, what would you do then?"

When the King came home that evening, the gardener's daughter said to him, "Every day you go out hunting. Should I ever be in trouble or sick while you are away, how could I send for you?" The King gave her a kettle-drum which he placed near the door for her, and he said to her, "Whenever you want me, beat this kettle-drum. No matter how far away I may be, I shall hear it, and will come at once to you."

Next morning when the King had gone out to hunt, his four other Queens came to see the gardener's daughter. She told them all about her kettle-drum. "Oh," they said, "do drum on it just to see if the King really will come to you."

"No, I will not," she said; "for why should I call him from his hunting when I do not want him?"

"Don't mind interrupting his hunting," they answered. "Do try if he really will come to you when you beat your kettle-drum." So at last, just to please them, she beat it, and the King stood before her.

"Why have you called me?" he said. "See, I have left my hunting to come to you."

"I want nothing," she answered; "I only wished to know if you really would come to me when I beat my drum."

“Very well,” answered the King; “but do not call me again unless you really need me.” Then he returned to his hunting.

The next day, when the King had gone out hunting as usual, the four Queens again came to see the gardener’s daughter. They begged and begged her to beat her drum once more, “just to see if the King will really come to see you this time.” At first she refused, but at last she consented. So she beat her drum, and the King came to her. But when he found she was neither ill nor in trouble, he was angry, and said to her, “Twice I have left my hunting and lost my game to come to you when you did not need me. Now you may call me as much as you like, but I will not come to you,” and then he went away in a rage.

The third day the gardener’s daughter fell ill, and she beat and beat her kettle-drum; but the King never came. He heard her kettle-drum, but he thought, “She does not really want me; she is only trying to see if I will go to her.”

Meanwhile the four other Queens came to her, and they said, “Here it is the custom before a child is born to bind its mother’s eyes with a handkerchief that she may not see it just at first. So let us bind your eyes.” She answered, “Very well, bind my eyes.” The four wives then tied a handkerchief over them.

Soon after, the gardener’s daughter had a beautiful little son, with a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin, and before the poor mother had seen him, the four wicked Queens took the boy to the nurse and said to her, “Now you must not let this child make the least sound for fear his mother should hear him; and in the night you must either kill him, or else take him away, so that his mother may never see him. If you obey our orders, we will give you a great many rupees.” All this they did out of spite. The nurse took the little child and put him into a box, and the four Queens went back to the gardener’s daughter.

First they put a stone into her boy’s little bed, and then they took the handkerchief off her eyes and showed it her, saying, “Look! this is your son!” The poor girl cried bitterly, and thought, “What will the King say when he finds no child?” But she could do nothing.

When the King came home; he was furious at hearing his youngest wife, the gardener's daughter, had given him a stone instead of the beautiful little son she had promised him. He made her one of the palace servants, and never spoke to her.

In the middle of the night the nurse took the box in which was the beautiful little prince, and went out to a broad plain in the jungle. There she dug a hole, made the fastenings of the box sure, and put the box into the hole, although the child in it was still alive. The King's dog, whose name was Shankar, had followed her to see what she did with the box. As soon as she had gone back to the four Queens (who gave her a great many rupees), the dog went to the hole in which she had put the box, took the box out, and opened it. When he saw the beautiful little boy, he was very much delighted and said, "If it pleases Khuda that this child should live, I will not hurt him; I will not eat him, but I will swallow him whole and hide him in my stomach." This he did.

After six months had passed, the dog went by night to the jungle, and thought, "I wonder whether the boy is alive or dead." Then he brought the child out of his stomach and rejoiced over his beauty. The boy was now six months old. When Shankar had caressed and loved him, he swallowed him again for another six months. At the end of that time he went once more by night to the broad jungle-plain. There he brought up the child out of his stomach (the child was now a year old), and caressed and petted him a great deal, and was made very happy by his great beauty.

But this time the dog's keeper had followed and watched the dog; and he saw all that Shankar did, and the beautiful little child, so he ran to the four Queens and said to them, "Inside the King's dog there is a child! the loveliest child! He has a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin. Such a child has never been seen!" At this the four wives were very much frightened, and as soon as the King came home from hunting they said to him, "While you were away your dog came to our rooms, and tore our clothes and knocked about all our things. We are afraid he will kill us." "Do not be afraid," said the King. "Eat your dinner and be happy. I will have the dog shot to-morrow morning."

Then he ordered his servants to shoot the dog at dawn, but the dog heard him, and said to himself, "What shall I do? The King intends to kill me. I don't care about that, but what will become of the child if I am killed? He will die. But I will see if I cannot save him."

So when it was night, the dog ran to the King's cow, who was called Suri, and said to her, "Suri, I want to give you something, for the King has ordered me to be shot to-morrow. Will you take great care of whatever I give you?"

"Let me see what it is," said Suri, "I will take care of it if I can." Then they both went together to the wide plain, and there the dog brought up the boy. Suri was enchanted with him. "I never saw such a beautiful child in this country," she said. "See, he has a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin. I will take the greatest care of him." So saying she swallowed the little prince. The dog made her a great many salaams, and said, "To-morrow I shall die;" and the cow then went back to her stable.

Next morning at dawn the dog was taken to the jungle and shot.

The child now lived in Suri's stomach; and when one whole year had passed, and he was two years old, the cow went out to the plain, and said to herself, "I do not know whether the child is alive or dead. But I have never hurt it, so I will see." Then she brought up the boy; and he played about, and Suri was delighted; she loved him and caressed him, and talked to him. Then she swallowed him, and returned to her stable.

At the end of another year she went again to the plain and brought up the child. He played and ran about for an hour to her great delight, and she talked to him and caressed him. His great beauty made her very happy. Then she swallowed him once more and returned to her stable. The child was now three years old.

But this time the cowherd had followed Suri, and had seen the wonderful child and all she did to it. So he ran and told the four Queens, "The King's cow has a beautiful boy inside her. He has a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin. Such a child has never been seen before!"

At this the Queens were terrified. They tore their clothes and their hair and cried. When the King came home at evening, he asked them why they were so agitated. "Oh," they said, "your cow came and tried to kill us; but we ran away. She tore our hair and our clothes." "Never mind," said the King. "Eat your dinner and be happy. The cow shall be killed to-morrow morning."

Now Suri heard the King give this order to the servants, so she said to herself, "What shall I do to save the child?" When it was midnight, she went to the King's horse called Katar, who was very wicked, and quite

untameable. No one had ever been able to ride him; indeed no one could go near him with safety, he was so savage. Suri said to this horse, "Katar, will you take care of something that I want to give you, because the King has ordered me to be killed to-morrow?"

"Good," said Katar; "show me what it is." Then Suri brought up the child, and the horse was delighted with him. "Yes," he said, "I will take the greatest care of him. Till now no one has been able to ride me, but this child shall ride me." Then he swallowed the boy, and when he had done so, the cow made him many salaams, saying, "It is for this boy's sake that I am to die." The next morning she was taken to the jungle and there killed.

The beautiful boy now lived in the horse's stomach, and he stayed in it for one whole year. At the end of that time the horse thought, "I will see if this child is alive or dead." So he brought him up; and then he loved him, and petted him, and the little prince played all about the stable, out of which the horse was never allowed to go. Katar was very glad to see the child, who was now four years old. After he had played for some time, the horse swallowed him again. At the end of another year, when the boy was five years old, Katar brought him up again, caressed him, loved him, and let him play about the stable as he had done a year before. Then the horse swallowed him again.

But this time the groom had seen all that happened, and when it was morning, and the King had gone away to his hunting, he went to the four wicked Queens, and told them all he had seen, and all about the wonderful, beautiful child that lived inside the King's horse Katar. On hearing the groom's story the four Queens cried, and tore their hair and clothes, and refused to eat. When the King returned at evening and asked them why they were so miserable, they said, "Your horse Katar came and tore our clothes, and upset all our things, and we ran away for fear he should kill us."

"Never mind," said the King. "Only eat your dinner and be happy. I will have Katar shot to-morrow." Then he thought that two men unaided could not kill such a wicked horse, so he ordered his servants to bid his troop of sepoy's shoot him.

So the next day the King placed his sepoy's all round the stable, and he took up his stand with them; and he said he would himself shoot any one who let his horse escape.

Meanwhile the horse had overheard all these orders. So he brought up the child and said to him, "Go into that

little room that leads out of the stable, and you will find in it a saddle and bridle which you must put on me. Then you will find in the room some beautiful clothes such as princes wear; these you must put on yourself; and you must take the sword and gun you will find there too. Then you must mount on my back.” Now Katar was a fairy-horse, and came from the fairies’ country, so he could get anything he wanted; but neither the King nor any of his people knew this.

When all was ready, Katar burst out of his stable, with the prince on his back, rushed past the King himself before the King had time to shoot him, galloped away to the great jungle-plain, and galloped about all over it. The King saw his horse had a boy on his back, though he could not see the boy distinctly. The sepoy tried in vain to shoot the horse; he galloped much too fast; and at last they were all scattered over the plain. Then the King had to give it up and go home; and the sepoy went to their homes. The King could not shoot any of his sepoy for letting his horse escape, for he himself had let him do so.

Then Katar galloped away, on, and on, and on; and when night came they stayed under a tree, he and the King’s son. The horse ate grass, and the boy wild fruits which he found in the jungle. Next morning they started afresh, and went far, and far, till they came to a jungle in another country, which did not belong to the little prince’s father, but to another king. Here Katar said to the boy, “Now get off my back.” Off jumped the prince. “Unsaddle me and take off my bridle; take off your beautiful clothes and tie them all up in a bundle with your sword and gun.” This the boy did. Then the horse gave him some poor, common clothes, which he told him to put on. As soon as he was dressed in them the horse said, “Hide your bundle in this grass, and I will take care of it for you. I will always stay in this jungle-plain, so that when you want me you will always find me. You must now go away and find service with some one in this country.”

This made the boy very sad. “I know nothing about anything,” he said.

“What shall I do all alone in this country?”

“Do not be afraid,” answered Katar. “You will find service, and I will always stay here to help you when you want me. So go, only before you go, twist my right ear.” The boy did so, and his horse instantly became a donkey. “Now twist your right ear,” said Katar. And when the boy had twisted it, he was no longer a handsome prince, but a poor, common-looking, ugly man; and his moon and star were hidden.

Then he went away further into the country, until he came to a grain merchant of the country, who asked him

who he was. "I am a poor man," answered the boy, "and I want service." "Good," said the grain merchant, "you shall be my servant."

Now the grain merchant lived near the King's palace, and one night at twelve o'clock the boy was very hot; so he went out into the King's cool garden, and began to sing a lovely song. The seventh and youngest daughter of the King heard him, and she wondered who it was who could sing so deliciously. Then she put on her clothes, rolled up her hair, and came down to where the seemingly poor common man was lying singing. "Who are you? where do you come from?" she asked.

But he answered nothing.

"Who is this man who does not answer when I speak to him?" thought the little princess, and she went away. On the second night the same thing happened, and on the third night too. But on the third night, when she found she could not make him answer her, she said to him, "What a strange man you are not to answer me when I speak to you." But still he remained silent, so she went away.

The next day, when he had finished his work, the young prince went to the jungle to see his horse, who asked him, "Are you quite well and happy?" "Yes, I am," answered the boy. "I am servant to a grain merchant. The last three nights I have gone into the King's garden and sung a song, and each night the youngest princess has come to me and asked me who I am, and whence I came, and I have answered nothing. What shall I do now?" The horse said, "Next time she asks you who you are, tell her you are a very poor man, and came from your own country to find service here."

The boy then went home to the grain merchant, and at night, when every one had gone to bed, he went to the King's garden and sang his sweet song again. The youngest princess heard him, got up, dressed, and came to him. "Who are you? Whence do you come?" she asked.

"I am a very poor man," he answered. "I came from my own country to seek service here, and I am now one of the grain merchant's servants." Then she went away. For three more nights the boy sang in the King's garden, and each night the princess came and asked him the same questions as before, and the boy gave her the same answers.

Then she went to her father, and said to him, "Father, I wish to be married; but I must choose my husband

myself." Her father consented to this, and he wrote and invited all the Kings and Rajas in the land, saying, "My youngest daughter wishes to be married, but she insists on choosing her husband herself. As I do not know who it is she wishes to marry, I beg you will all come on a certain day, for her to see you and make her choice."

A great many Kings, Rajas, and their sons accepted this invitation and came. When they had all arrived, the little princess's father said to them, "To-morrow morning you must all sit together in my garden" (the King's garden was very large), "for then my youngest daughter will come and see you all, and choose her husband. I do not know whom she will choose."

The youngest princess ordered a grand elephant to be ready for her the next morning, and when the morning came, and all was ready, she dressed herself in the most lovely clothes, and put on her beautiful jewels; then she mounted her elephant, which was painted blue. In her hand she took a gold necklace.

Then she went into the garden where the Kings, Rajas, and their sons were seated. The boy, the grain merchant's servant, was also in the garden: not as a suitor, but looking on with the other servants.

The princess rode all round the garden, and looked at all the Kings and Rajas and princes, and then she hung the gold necklace round the neck of the boy, the grain merchant's servant. At this everybody laughed, and the Kings were greatly astonished. But then they and the Rajas said, "What fooling is this?" and they pushed the pretended poor man away, and took the necklace off his neck, and said to him, "Get out of the way, you poor, dirty man. Your clothes are far too dirty for you to come near us!" The boy went far away from them, and stood a long way off to see what would happen.

Then the King's youngest daughter went all round the garden again, holding her gold necklace in her hand, and once more she hung it round the boy's neck. Every one laughed at her and said, "How can the King's daughter think of marrying this poor, common man!" and the Kings and the Rajas, who had come as suitors, all wanted to turn him out of the garden. But the princess said, "Take care! take care! You must not turn him out. Leave him alone." Then she put him on her elephant, and took him to the palace.

The Kings and Rajas and their sons were very much astonished, and said, "What does this mean? The princess does not care to marry one of us, but chooses that very poor man!" Her father then stood up, and said to them all, "I promised my daughter she should marry any one she pleased, and as she has twice chosen that poor,

common man, she shall marry him.” And so the princess and the boy were married with great pomp and splendour: her father and mother were quite content with her choice; and the Kings, the Rajas and their sons, all returned to their homes.

Now the princess’s six sisters had all married rich princes, and they laughed at her for choosing such a poor ugly husband as hers seemed to be, and said to each other, mockingly, “See! our sister has married this poor, common man!” Their six husbands used to go out hunting every day, and every evening they brought home quantities of all kinds of game to their wives, and the game was cooked for their dinner and for the King’s; but the husband of the youngest princess always stayed at home in the palace, and never went out hunting at all. This made her very sad, and she said to herself, “My sisters’ husbands hunt every day, but my husband never hunts at all.”

At last she said to him, “Why do you never go out hunting as my sisters’ husbands do every day, and every day they bring home quantities of all kinds of game? Why do you always stay at home, instead of doing as they do?”

One day he said to her, “I am going out to-day to eat the air.”

“Very good,” she answered; “go, and take one of the horses.”

“No,” said the young prince, “I will not ride, I will walk.” Then he went to the jungle-plain where he had left Katar, who all this time had seemed to be a donkey, and he told Katar everything. “Listen,” he said; “I have married the youngest princess; and when we were married everybody laughed at her for choosing me, and said, ‘What a very poor, common man our princess has chosen for her husband!’ Besides, my wife is very sad, for her six sisters’ husbands all hunt every day, and bring home quantities of game, and their wives therefore are very proud of them. But I stay at home all day, and never hunt. To-day I should like to hunt very much.”

“Well,” said Katar, “then twist my left ear;” and as soon as the boy had twisted it, Katar was a horse again, and not a donkey any longer. “Now,” said Katar, “twist your left ear, and you will see what a beautiful young prince you will become.” So the boy twisted his own left ear, and there he stood no longer a poor, common, ugly man, but a grand young prince with a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin. Then he put on his splendid clothes, saddled and bridled Katar, got on his back with his sword and gun, and rode off to hunt.



“A bright light, like that of the moon, was seen shining on his forehead.” Illustration by Warwick Goble, published in Folk-tales of Bengal by Rev. Lal Behari Day (1912), MacMillan and Co.

He rode very far, and shot a great many birds and a quantity of deer. That day his six brothers-in-law could find no game, for the beautiful young prince had shot it all. Nearly all the day long these six princes wandered about looking in vain for game; till at last they grew hungry and thirsty, and could find no water, and they had no food with them. Meanwhile the beautiful young prince had sat down under a tree, to dine and rest, and there his six brothers-in-law found him. By his side was some delicious water, and also some roast meat.

When they saw him the six princes said to each other, “Look at that handsome prince. He has a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin. We have never seen such a prince in this jungle before; he must come from another country.” Then they came up to him, and made him many salaams, and begged him to give them some food and water. “Who are you?” said the young prince. “We are the husbands of the six elder daughters of the King of this country,” they answered; “and we have hunted all day, and are very hungry and thirsty.” They did not recognise their brother-in-law in the least.

“Well,” said the young prince, “I will give you something to eat and drink if you will do as I bid you.” “We will do all you tell us to do,” they answered, “for if we do not get water to drink, we shall die.” “Very good,” said the young prince. “Now you must let me put a red-hot pice on the back of each of you, and then I will give you food and water. Do you agree to this?” The six princes consented, for they thought, “No one will ever see the mark of the pice, as it will be covered by our clothes; and we shall die if we have no water to drink.” Then the young prince took six pice, and made them red-hot in the fire; he laid one on the back of each of the six princes, and gave them good food and water. They ate and drank; and when they had finished they made him many salaams and went home.

The young prince stayed under the tree till it was evening; then he mounted his horse and rode off to the King’s palace. All the people looked at him as he came riding along, saying, “What a splendid young prince that is! He has a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin.” But no one recognised him. When he came near the King’s palace, all the King’s servants asked him who he was; and as none of them knew him, the gate-keepers would not let him pass in. They all wondered who he could be, and all thought him the most beautiful prince that had

ever been seen.

At last they asked him who he was. "I am the husband of your youngest princess," he answered.

"No, no, indeed you are not," they said; "for he is a poor, common-looking, and ugly man."

"But I am he," answered the prince; only no one would believe him.

"Tell us the truth," said the servants; "who are you?"

"Perhaps you cannot recognise me," said the young prince, "but call the youngest princess here. I wish to speak to her." The servants called her, and she came. "That man is not my husband," she said at once. "My husband is not nearly as handsome as that man. This must be a prince from another country."

Then she said to him, "Who are you? Why do you say you are my husband?"

"Because I am your husband. I am telling you the truth," answered the young prince.

"No you are not, you are not telling me the truth," said the little princess. "My husband is not a handsome man like you. I married a very poor, common-looking man."

"That is true," he answered, "but nevertheless I am your husband. I was the grain merchant's servant; and one hot night I went into your father's garden and sang, and you heard me, and came and asked me who I was and where I came from, and I would not answer you. And the same thing happened the next night, and the next, and on the fourth I told you I was a very poor man, and had come from my country to seek service in yours, and that I was the grain merchant's servant. Then you told your father you wished to marry, but must choose your own husband; and when all the Kings and Rajas were seated in your father's garden, you sat on an elephant and went round and looked at them all; and then twice hung your gold necklace round my neck, and chose me. See, here is your necklace, and here are the ring and the handkerchief you gave me on our wedding day."

Then she believed him, and was very glad that her husband was such a beautiful young prince. "What a strange man you are!" she said to him. "Till now you have been poor, and ugly, and common-looking. Now you are beautiful and look like a prince; I never saw such a handsome man as you are before; and yet I know you must be my husband." Then she worshipped God and thanked him for letting her have such a husband. "I have," she

said, "a beautiful husband. There is no one like him in this country. He has a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin." Then she took him into the palace, and showed him to her father and mother and to every one. They all said they had never seen any one like him, and were all very happy. And the young prince lived as before in the King's palace with his wife, and Katar lived in the King's stables.

One day, when the King and his seven sons-in-law were in his court-house, and it was full of people, the young prince said to him, "There are six thieves here in your court-house." "Six thieves!" said the King. "Where are they? Show them to me." "There they are," said the young prince, pointing to his six brothers-in-law. The King and every one else in the court-house were very much astonished, and would not believe the young prince. "Take off their coats," he said, "and then you will see for yourselves that each of them has the mark of a thief on his back." So their coats were taken off the six princes, and the King and everybody in the court-house saw the mark of the red-hot pice. The six princes were very much ashamed, but the young prince was very glad. He had not forgotten how his brothers-in-law had laughed at him and mocked him when he seemed a poor, common man.

Now, when Katar was still in the jungle, before the prince was married, he had told the boy the whole story of his birth, and all that had happened to him and his mother. "When you are married," he said to him, "I will take you back to your father's country." So two months after the young prince had revenged himself on his brothers-in-law, Katar said to him, "It is time for you to return to your father. Get the King to let you go to your own country, and I will tell you what to do when we get there."

The prince always did what his horse told him to do; so he went to his wife and said to her, "I wish very much to go to my own country to see my father and mother." "Very well," said his wife; "I will tell my father and mother, and ask them to let us go." Then she went to them, and told them, and they consented to let her and her husband leave them. The King gave his daughter and the young prince a great many horses, and elephants, and all sorts of presents, and also a great many sepoy to guard them. In this grand state they travelled to the prince's country, which was not a great many miles off. When they reached it they pitched their tents on the same plain in which the prince had been left in his box by the nurse, where Shankar and Suri had swallowed him so often.

When the King, his father, the gardener's daughter's husband, saw the prince's camp, he was very much

alarmed, and thought a great King had come to make war on him. He sent one of his servants, therefore, to ask whose camp it was. The young prince then wrote him a letter, in which he said, "You are a great King. Do not fear me. I am not come to make war on you. I am as if I were your son. I am a prince who has come to see your country and to speak with you. I wish to give you a grand feast, to which every one in your country must come—men and women, old and young, rich and poor, of all castes; all the children, fakirs, and sepoys. You must bring them all here to me for a week, and I will feast them all."

The King was delighted with this letter, and ordered all the men, women, and children of all castes, fakirs, and sepoys, in his country to go to the prince's camp to a grand feast the prince would give them. So they all came, and the King brought his four wives too. All came, at least all but the gardener's daughter. No one had told her to go to the feast, for no one had thought of her.

When all the people were assembled, the prince saw his mother was not there, and he asked the King, "Has every one in your country come to my feast?"

"Yes, every one," said the King.

"Are you sure of that?" asked the prince.

"Quite sure," answered the King.

"I am sure one woman has not come," said the prince. "She is your gardener's daughter, who was once your wife and is now a servant in your palace."

"True," said the King, "I had forgotten her." Then the prince told his servants to take his finest palanquin and to fetch the gardener's daughter. They were to bathe her, dress her in beautiful clothes and handsome jewels, and then bring her to him in the palanquin.

While the servants were bringing the gardener's daughter, the King thought how handsome the young prince was; and he noticed particularly the moon on his forehead and the star on his chin, and he wondered in what country the young prince was born.

And now the palanquin arrived bringing the gardener's daughter, and the young prince went himself and took her out of it, and brought her into the tent. He made her a great many salaams. The four wicked wives looked

on and were very much surprised and very angry. They remembered that, when they arrived, the prince had made them no salaams, and since then had not taken the least notice of them; whereas he could not do enough for the gardener's daughter, and seemed very glad to see her.

When they were all at dinner, the prince again made the gardener's daughter a great many salaams, and gave her food from all the nicest dishes. She wondered at his kindness to her, and thought, "Who is this handsome prince, with a moon on his forehead and a star on his chin? I never saw any one so beautiful. What country does he come from?"

Two or three days were thus passed in feasting, and all that time the King and his people were talking about the prince's beauty, and wondering who he was.

One day the prince asked the King if he had any children. "None," he answered.

"Do you know who I am?" asked the prince.

"No," said the King. "Tell me who you are."

"I am your son," answered the prince, "and the gardener's daughter is my mother."

The King shook his head sadly. "How can you be my son," he said, "when I have never had any children?"

"But I am your son," answered the prince. "Your four wicked Queens told you the gardener's daughter had given you a stone and not a son; but it was they who put the stone in my little bed, and then they tried to kill me."

The King did not believe him. "I wish you were my son," he said; "but as I never had a child, you cannot be my son." "Do you remember your dog Shankar, and how you had him killed? And do you remember your cow Suri, and how you had her killed too? Your wives made you kill them because of me. And," he said, taking the King to Katar, "do you know whose horse that is?"

The King looked at Katar, and then said, "That is my horse, Katar." "Yes," said the prince. "Do you not remember how he rushed past you out of his stable with me on his back?" Then Katar told the King the prince was really his son, and told him all the story of his birth, and of his life up to that moment; and when the King

found the beautiful prince was indeed his son, he was so glad, so glad. He put his arms round him and kissed him and cried for joy.

“Now,” said the King, “you must come with me to my palace, and live with me always.”

“No,” said the prince, “that I cannot do. I cannot go to your palace. I only came here to fetch my mother; and now that I have found her, I will take her with me to my father-in-law’s palace. I have married a King’s daughter, and we live with her father.”

“But now that I have found you, I cannot let you go,” said his father. You and your wife must come and live with your mother and me in my palace.”

“That we will never do,” said the prince, “unless you will kill your four wicked Queens with your own hand. If you will do that, we will come and live with you.”

So the King killed his Queens, and then he and his wife, the gardener’s daughter, and the prince and his wife, all went to live in the King’s palace, and lived there happily together for ever after; and the King thanked God for giving him such a beautiful son, and for ridding him of his four wicked wives.

Katar did not return to the fairies’ country, but stayed always with the young prince, and never left him.

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com