



Rampion

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Retold Fairy Tales

Once upon the Tyne there lived a couple who had fallen on hard times. A subsequent legal dispute with one of the neighbours, which lasted for several months and cost thousands in legal fees, eventually forced them to sell their home. It was a terrible ordeal. They also had to give up Rampion, their only child.

Rampion grew into a terribly kind-hearted young man. When he turned eighteen, his guardian “Ma” bought him a birthday cake and locked him up in a ramshackle tower. The builders had forgotten to include stairs, central heating and emergency fire exits. There was at least a small window at the top of the tower, which kept the health and safety officers at bay.

One day, Ma decided to see how Rampion was holding up – whether he needed any food or toilet paper, that kind of thing. So she placed herself at the bottom of the tower and sang,

“Rampion, Rampion,
Let down your hair!”

Rampion heard the voice of his captor and cried,

“What hair? It’s cropped!
It’ll never reach you down there.”

Ma rethought her plan and said, “Wait there!”

A few moments later, Ma's face appeared at the small window. She peered in and smiled at the handsome young man. He reminded her of a young Al Pacino and she suddenly imagined herself as the proud mother of an Oscar winner.

"Rampion, from now on I can visit you as often as I like with the help of my magic ladder."

Two years passed and nothing much changed. However, on the first day of the third spring the King and his daughter happened to pass by the tower. Struck by the wailing noise coming from the tower, the Princess wanted to see who was inside, but soon realised that the building had no door. Feeling mildly depressed, the Princess returned home and went to bed soon after the weekly jig.

The next day, the Princess returned to the tower hoping to find a way in. Fortunately, she arrived just in time to see Ma climb the magic ladder. That very same evening, the Princess commissioned her own magic ladder and returned to the tower. When the coast was clear, she climbed up and looked at the image in the window. It was love at first sight. Then she saw Rampion and smiled affectionately.

Just at that moment, Ma returned to the tower.

"Get down!" she said.

In a moment of panic, the Princess lost her footing and fell head first into the bushes below. Ma climbed up, seized Rampion by the throat and dumped him in the woods.

Concussed and confused, the Princess set off towards the woods and soon came across a cottage. Inside, Rampion was scrubbing floors, drying dishes, and taking care of two stray cats.

Poor Rampion! Determined to save him from a life of domestic servitude, the Princess whisked him away to the royal palace for the customary wedding.

The cats stayed behind.

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