



The Prince and the Tailor

Ann Rhodes
Retold Fairy Tales

THE PRINCE AND THE TAILOR

Andréas hated wearing fancy clothes and so his outfit for his eighteenth birthday party on Saturday night had been limply draped in his wardrobe all summer. But today his mother, the queen, had finally insisted that he try it on.

‘You must look smart on Saturday,’ the queen had said tapping her satin slipper on the green tiled floor, ‘for it is time we found you a bride.’

Andréas didn’t want a bride so it was with a heavy heart that he fetched his party clothes from the darkest corner of the wardrobe.

And when he did he found that the blue silk sleeves were torn and the gold braid was ragged and faded.

‘And those trousers are far too tight’ the queen had said, ‘you’ll rip them when you are dancing and that will never do,’ so she had sent a messenger to fetch Franz the Tailor.

Now, Andréas hated Franz almost as much as he hated wearing silken sleeves so he stamped his foot and wailed so loudly that the Sugar Plum Fairy came to see what the fuss was about.

‘Hmm.....’ she said when she heard Franz had been summoned, ‘I’ve heard he’s planning some mischief again so be careful. I’ll see if I can find out anything more,’ and off she flew.

The Sugar Plum Fairy didn’t like Franz the Tailor either for he had once sewn rock crystals into the hem of her dress so which made it so heavy that she couldn’t fly to the Spring Ball and all the other fairies had laughed at her.

The very next morning Franz the Tailor arrived in his carriage and ordered his apprentices to carry the heavy boxes of coloured cloth, gold and silver threads and sewing needles all the way up to Andréas’s bedroom at the very top of the highest turret.

Once there, he told Andréas to stand beside the candlelight and he set about snipping and stitching the beautiful silk, all the while shouting at him to stand still.

‘Ouch!’ cried Andréas as the tailor measured the length of his new trousers, scratching his ankle with the sharp tape and more than once he felt the stab of a sewing needle.

‘Have a care Master Tailor!’ he said but Franz only smiled and told him that it was he who must have a care.

Later that night, after the moon has risen, the Sugar Plum Fairy came tapping excitedly on Andréas’s turret window.

‘I know what Franz is up to!’ she said as they sat by the fireside sharing a bowl of vanilla spice, ‘I followed him last night and heard him talking to Willa Witch in the forest.’

Andréas’s eyes widened as he listened to the plan. Willa Witch had given Franz a wickedly enchanted sword and he was going to steal into the birthday party and offer it to Andréas as a gift.

‘And,’ said the Sugar Plum Fairy, ‘as soon as you grasp the sword you will prick your finger on the sapphire stones set into the hilt and you shall immediately fall into a deep deep sleep for at least a hundred years!’

‘And,’ said Andréas, ‘my mother is up to something too for she wants to find me a wife. Not going to be a good party for me!’

And so they hatched their own plan.

The party was in full swing, Andréas had accepted many beautifully wrapped gifts, guests were dancing, fairies were flying and laughter and music filled the castle when the stranger arrived bearing his gift of a shining sword fashioned of gold and flashing sapphires.

He placed it on the table and beckoned Andréas, invited him to pick up the sword. He approached and nodded his thanks but as he did so he slipped and landed at the stranger's feet.

'Oh dear!' he cried, 'please help me up. It's all Franz the Tailor's fault for he has not sewn my trouser hem properly.'

And while the stranger gritted his teeth and stretched out a hand to help Andréas to his feet no one saw the Sugar Plum Fairy touch the sword with her wand so that when Andréas gently lifted it a sparkle of white light shot from the sapphire stones and disappeared under the stranger's cloak.

All the music and dancing stopped immediately and the only sound that could be heard in the castle was the snoring of the stranger who had curled up on the floor. The sword had disappeared and on the table where it had rested, there remained nothing but a smoking scorch mark.

The Sugar Plum Fairy waved her wand and the stranger's cloak withered away and there, sleeping deeply, was Franz the Tailor.

The Queen called for the rats who were guardians of the castle and they carried Franz, still snoring, out of the castle, over the drawbridge, through the forest and left him sleeping under the willow tree outside Willa Witch's cave.

Back at the castle the party was soon in full swing again and everyone was having a really good time. Everyone, that was, except the queen who kept glancing anxiously out the window at the sundial in the courtyard and muttering about tardy princesses.

She was annoyed because she had invited Princess Aurora to the party especially to meet Andréas but she hadn't turned up, hadn't even sent a gift, but no-one listened to the queen's complaints at all.

Out on the balcony overlooking the forest, Andréas and the Sugar Plum Fairy raised their glasses in a toast to strangers, one who had been foiled and lay sleeping beneath the willow tree and another one, a princess, who was helplessly lost in the forest, enchanted, she would later say, by the beautiful moonlight.

But Andréas and the Sugar Plum Fairy knew otherwise.

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