



Tonight's Bedtime Story

Fairy Tales for Sleepy Children

presents

The Invisible Prince

From "The Fairy Book" by Miss Mulock



here was a king and queen who were dotingly fond of their only son, notwithstanding that he was equally deformed in mind and person. The king was quite sensible of the evil disposition of his son, but the queen, in her excessive fondness, saw no fault whatever in her dear Furibon, as he was named. The surest way to win her favour was to praise Furibon for charms he did not possess. When he came of age to have a governor, the king made choice of a prince who had an ancient right to the crown, but was not able to support it. This prince had a son, named Leander, handsome, accomplished, amiable—in every respect the opposite of Prince Furibon. The two were frequently together, which only made the deformed prince more repulsive.

One day, certain ambassadors having arrived from a far country, the princes stood in a gallery to see them; when, taking Leander for the king's son, they made their obeisance to him, treating Furibon as a mere dwarf, at which the latter was so offended that he drew his sword, and would have done them a mischief had not the king just then appeared. As it was, the affair produced a quarrel, which ended in Leander's being sent to a far-away castle belonging to his father.

There, however, he was quite happy, for he was a great lover of hunting, fishing, and walking: he understood painting, read much, and played upon several instruments; so that he was glad to be freed from the fantastic humours of Furibon. One day as he was walking in the garden, finding the heat increase, he retired into a shady grove, and began to play upon the flute to amuse himself. As he played, he felt something wind about his leg, and looking down saw a great adder: he took his handkerchief, and catching it by the head, was going to kill it. But the adder, looking steadfastly in his face, seemed to beg his pardon. At this instant one of the gardeners happened to come to the place where Leander was, and spying the snake, cried out to his master, "Hold him fast, sir; it is but an hour since we ran after him to kill him: it is the most mischievous creature in the world."

Leander, casting his eyes a second time upon the snake, which was speckled with a thousand extraordinary colours, perceived the poor creature still looked upon him with an aspect that seemed to implore compassion, and never tried in the least to defend itself.

"Though thou hast such a mind to kill it," said he to the gardener, "yet, as it came to me for refuge, I forbid thee to do it any harm; for I will keep it, and when it has cast its beautiful skin I will let it go." He then returned home, and carrying the snake with him, put it into a large chamber, the key of which he kept himself, and ordered bran, milk, and flowers to be given to it, for its delight and sustenance; so that never was snake so happy. Leander went sometimes to see it, and when it perceived him it made haste to meet him, showing him all the little marks of love and gratitude of which a poor snake was capable, which did not a little surprise him, though, however, he took no further notice of it.

In the meantime all the court ladies were extremely troubled at his absence, and he was the subject of all their discourse. "Alas!" cried they, "there is no pleasure at court since Leander is gone, of whose absence the wicked Furibon is the cause!" Furibon also had his parasites, for his power over the queen made him feared; they told him what the ladies said, which enraged him to such a degree that in his passion he flew to the queen's chamber, and vowed

he would kill himself before her face if she did not find means to destroy Leander. The queen, who also hated Leander, because he was handsomer than her son, replied that she had long looked upon him as a traitor, and therefore would willingly consent to his death. To which purpose she advised Furibon to go a-hunting with some of his confidants, and contrive it so that Leander should make one of the party.

“Then,” said she, “you may find some way to punish him for pleasing everybody.”

Furibon understood her, and accordingly went a-hunting; and Leander, when he heard the horns and the hounds, mounted his horse, and rode to see who it was. But he was surprised to meet the prince so unexpectedly: he alighted immediately, and saluted him with respect; and Furibon received him more graciously than usual, and bade him follow him. All of a sudden he turned his horse, and rode another way, making a sign to the ruffians to take the first opportunity to kill him; but before he had got quite out of sight, a lion of prodigious size, coming out of his den, leaped upon Furibon: all his followers fled, and only Leander remained; who, attacking the animal sword in hand, by his valour and agility saved the life of his most cruel enemy, who had fallen in a swoon from fear. When he recovered, Leander presented him his horse to remount. Now, any other than such a wretch would have been grateful: but Furibon did not even look upon him: nay, mounting the horse, he rode in quest of the ruffians, to whom he repeated his orders to kill him. They accordingly surrounded Leander, who, setting his back to a tree, behaved with so much bravery, that he laid them all dead at his feet. Furibon, believing him by this time slain, rode eagerly up to the spot. When Leander saw him, he advanced to meet him. “Sir,” said he, “if it was by your order that these assassins came to kill me, I am sorry I made any defence.”

“You are an insolent villain!” replied Furibon, “and if ever you come into my presence again, you shall surely die.”

Leander made no answer, but retired sad and pensive to his own home, where he spent the night in pondering what was best for him to do, for there was no likelihood he should be able to defend himself against the power of the king’s son; therefore he at length concluded he would travel abroad and see the world. Being ready to depart, he recollected his snake, and, calling for some milk and fruits, carried them to the poor creature for the last time; but on opening the door he perceived an extraordinary lustre in one corner of the room, and casting his eye on the place he was surprised to see a lady, whose noble and majestic air made him immediately conclude she was a princess of royal birth. Her habit was of purple satin, embroidered with pearls and diamonds; and advancing towards him with a gracious smile—

“Young prince,” said she, “you find no longer your pet snake, but me, the Fairy Gentilla, ready to requite your generosity. For know, that we fairies live a hundred years in flourishing youth, without diseases, without trouble or pain; and this term being expired, we become snakes for eight days. During that time it is not in our power to prevent any misfortune that may befall us; and if we happen to be killed, we never revive again. But these eight days being expired, we resume our usual form, and recover our beauty, our power, and our riches. Now you know how much I am obliged to your goodness, and it is but just that I should repay my debt of gratitude: think how I can serve you and depend on me.”

The young prince, who had never conversed with a fairy till now, was so surprised that it was a long time before he could speak. But at length, making a profound reverence, "Madam," said he, "since I have had the honour to serve you, I know not any other happiness that I can wish for."

"I should be sorry," replied she, "not to be of service to you in something; consider, it is in my power to bestow on you long life, kingdoms, riches: to give you mines of diamonds, and houses full of gold; I can make you an excellent orator, poet, musician, and painter; or, if you desire it, a spirit of the air, the water, or the earth."

Here Leander interrupted her: "Permit me, madam," said he, "to ask you what benefit it would be to me to be a spirit?"

"Much," replied the fairy; "you would be invisible when you pleased, and might in an instant traverse the whole earth; you would be able to fly without wings, to descend into the abyss of the earth without dying, and walk at the bottom of the sea without being drowned; nor doors, nor windows, though fast shut and locked, could hinder you from entering anywhere; and whenever you had a mind, you might resume your natural form."

"Oh, madam!" cried Leander, "then let me be a spirit; I am going to travel, and should prefer it above all those other advantages you have so generously offered me."

Gentilla thereupon stroking his face three times, "Be a spirit," said she; and then, embracing him, she gave him a little red cap with a plume of feathers. "When you put on this cap, you shall be invisible; but when you take it off, you shall again become visible."

Leander, overjoyed, put his little red cap upon his head, and wished himself in the forest, that he might gather some wild roses which he had observed there: his body immediately became as light as thought; he flew through the window like a bird; though, in flying over the river, he was not without fear, lest he should fall into it, and the power of the fairy not be able to save him. But he arrived in safety at the rose-bushes, plucked three roses, and returned immediately to his chamber; presented his roses to the fairy, overjoyed that his first experiment had succeeded so well. She bade him keep the roses, for that one of them would supply him with money whenever he wanted it; that if he put the other into his mistress's bosom, he would know whether she was faithful or not; and that the third would keep him always in good health. Then, without staying to receive his thanks, she wished him success in his travels and disappeared.

Leander, infinitely pleased, settled his affairs, mounted the finest horse in the stable, called Gris-de-line, and attended by some of his servants in livery, made his return to court. Now you must know Furibon had given out, that had it not been for his courage Leander would have murdered him when they were a-hunting; so the king, being importuned by the queen, gave orders that Leander should be apprehended. But when he came, he showed so much courage and resolution that Furibon ran to the queen's chamber, and prayed her to order him to be seized. The queen, who was extremely diligent in everything that her son desired, went immediately to the king. Furibon, being impatient to know what would be resolved, followed her; but stopped at the door, and laid his ear to the keyhole, putting his hair aside

that he might the better hear what was said. At the same time, Leander entered the court-hall of the palace with his red cap upon his head, and perceiving Furibon listening at the door of the king's chamber, he took a nail and a hammer, and nailed his ear to the door. Furibon began to roar, so that the queen, hearing her son's voice, ran and opened the door, and, pulling it hastily, tore her son's ear from his head. Half out of her wits, she set him in her lap, took up his ear, kissed it, and clapped it again upon its place; but the invisible Leander, seizing upon a handful of twigs, with which they corrected the king's little dogs, gave the queen several lashes upon her hands, and her son as many on the nose: upon which the queen cried out, "Murder! murder!" and the king looked about, and the people came running in; but nothing was to be seen. Some cried that the queen was mad, and that her madness proceeded from her grief to see that her son had lost one ear; and the king was as ready as any to believe it, so that when she came near him he avoided her, which made a very ridiculous scene. Leander, then leaving the chamber, went into the garden, and there, assuming his own shape, he boldly began to pluck the queen's cherries, apricots, strawberries, and flowers, though he knew she set such a high value on them, that it was as much as a man's life was worth to touch one. The gardeners, all amazed, came and told their majesties that Prince Leander was making havoc of all the fruits and flowers in the queen's garden.

"What insolence!" said the queen: then turning to Furibon, "My pretty child, forget the pain of thy ear but for a moment, and fetch that vile wretch hither; take our guards, both horse and foot, seize him, and punish him as he deserves."

Furibon, encouraged by his mother, and attended by a great number of armed soldiers, entered the garden, and saw Leander; who, taking refuge under a tree, pelted them all with oranges. But when they came running towards him, thinking to have seized him, he was not to be seen; he had slipped behind Furibon, who was in a bad condition already. But Leander played him one trick more; for he pushed him down upon the gravel-walk, and frightened him so that the soldiers had to take him up, carry him away, and put him to bed.

Satisfied with this revenge, he returned to his servants, who waited for him, and giving them money, sent them back to his castle, that none might know the secret of his red cap and roses. As yet he had not determined whither to go; however, he mounted his fine horse Gris-de-line, and, laying the reins upon his neck, let him take his own road: at length he arrived in a forest, where he stopped to shelter himself from the heat. He had not been above a minute there before he heard a lamentable noise of sighing and sobbing; and looking about him, beheld a man, who ran, stopped, then ran again, sometimes crying, sometimes silent, then tearing his hair, then thumping his breast like some unfortunate madman. Yet he seemed to be both handsome and young: his garments had been magnificent, but he had torn them all to tatters. The prince, moved with compassion, made towards him, and mildly accosted him: "Sir," said he, "your condition appears so deplorable, that I must ask the cause of your sorrow, assuring you of every assistance in my power."

"Oh, sir," answered the young man, "nothing can cure my grief; this day my dear mistress is to be sacrificed to a rich old ruffian of a husband who will make her miserable."

"Does she love you then?" asked Leander.

“I flatter myself so,” answered the young man.

“Where is she?” continued Leander.

“In a castle at the end of this forest,” replied the lover.

“Very well,” said Leander; “stay you here till I come again, and in a little while I will bring you good news.”

He then put on his little red cap, and wished himself in the castle. He had hardly got thither before he heard all sorts of music; he entered into a great room, where the friends and kindred of the old man and the young lady were assembled. No one could look more amiable than she; but the paleness of her complexion, the melancholy that appeared in her countenance, and the tears that now and then dropped, as it were by stealth, from her eyes, betrayed the trouble of her mind.

Leander now became invisible, and placed himself in a corner of the room. He soon perceived the father and mother of the bride; and coming behind the mother’s chair, whispered in her ear, “If you marry your daughter to that old dotard, before eight days are over you shall certainly die.” The woman, frightened to hear such a terrible sentence pronounced upon her, and yet not know from whence it came, gave a loud shriek, and dropped upon the floor. Her husband asked what ailed her: she cried that she was a dead woman if the marriage of her daughter went forward, and therefore she would not consent to it for all the world. Her husband laughed at her, and called her a fool. But the invisible Leander accosting the man, threatened him in the same way, which frightened him so terribly, that he also insisted on the marriage being broken off. When the lover complained, Leander trod hard upon his gouty toes, and rang such an alarum in his ears, that, not being able any longer to hear himself speak, away he limped, glad enough to go. The real lover soon appeared, and he and his fair mistress fell joyfully into one another’s arms, the parents consenting to their union. Leander, assuming his own shape, appeared at the hall-door, as if he were a stranger drawn thither by the report of this extraordinary wedding.

From hence he travelled on, and came to a great city, where, upon his arrival, he understood there was a great and solemn procession, in order to shut up a young woman, against her will, among the vestal nuns. The prince was touched with compassion; and thinking the best use he could make of his cap was to redress public wrongs and relieve the oppressed, he flew to the temple, where he saw the young woman, crowned with flowers, clad in white, and with her dishevelled hair flowing about her shoulders. Two of her brothers led her by each hand, and her mother followed her with a great crowd of men and women. Leander, being invisible, cried out, “Stop, stop, wicked brethren: stop, rash and inconsiderate mother; if you proceed any further, you shall be squeezed to death like so many frogs.” They looked about, but could not conceive from whence these terrible menaces came. The brothers said it was only their sister’s lover, who had hid himself in some hole; at which Leander, in wrath, took a long cudgel, and they had no reason to say the blows were not well laid on. The multitude fled, the vestals ran away, and Leander was left alone with the victim; immediately he pulled off his red cap, and asked her wherein he might serve her. She answered him, that there was a certain gentleman whom she would be glad to marry, but that he wanted an estate. Leander

then shook his rose so long, that he supplied them with ten millions; after which they married, and lived happily together.

But his last adventure was the most agreeable. Entering into a wide forest, he heard lamentable cries. Looking about him every way, at length he spied four men well armed, who were carrying away by force a young lady, thirteen or fourteen years of age; upon which, making up to them as fast as he could, “What harm has that girl done?” said he.

“Ha, ha! my little master,” cried he who seemed to be the ringleader of the rest, “who bade you inquire?”

“Let her alone,” said Leander, “and go about your business.”

“Oh yes, to be sure,” cried they, laughing; whereupon the prince alighting, put on his red cap, not thinking it otherwise prudent to attack four who seemed strong enough to fight a dozen. One of them stayed to take care of the young lady, while the three others went after Gris-de-line, who gave them a great deal of unwelcome exercise.

Meantime the young lady continued her cries and complaints: “Oh my dear princess,” said she, “how happy was I in your palace! Did you but know my sad misfortune, you would send your Amazons to rescue poor Abricotina.”

Leander, having listened to what she said, without delay seized the ruffian that held her, and bound him fast to a tree, before he had time or strength to defend himself. He then went to the second, and taking him by both arms, bound him in the same manner to another tree. In the meantime Abricotina made the best of her good fortune, and betook herself to her heels, not knowing which way she went. But Leander, missing her, called out to his horse Gris-de-line; who, by two kicks with his hoof, rid himself of the two ruffians who had pursued him: one of them had his head broken; and the other, three of his ribs. And now Leander only wanted to overtake Abricotina; for he had thought her so handsome that he wished to see her again. He found her leaning against a tree. When she saw Gris-de-line coming towards her, “How lucky am I!” cried she; “this pretty little horse will carry me to the Palace of Pleasure.” Leander heard her, though she saw him not: he rode up to her; Gris-de-line stopped, and when Abricotina mounted him, Leander clasped her in his arms, and placed her gently before him. Oh, how great was Abricotina’s fear to feel herself fast embraced, and yet see nobody! She durst not stir, and shut her eyes for fear of seeing a spirit. But Leander took off his little cap: “How comes it, fair Abricotina,” said he, “that you are afraid of me, who delivered you out of the hands of the ruffians?”

With that she opened her eyes, and knowing him again, “Oh sir,” said she, “I am infinitely obliged to you; but I was afraid, for I felt myself held fast, and could see no one.”

“Surely,” replied Leander, “the danger you have been in has disturbed you, and cast a mist before your eyes.”

Abricotina would not seem to doubt him, though she was otherwise extremely sensible. And after they had talked for some time of indifferent things, Leander requested her to tell him her age, her country, and by what accident she fell into the hands of the ruffians.

“Know then, sir,” said she, “there was a certain very great fairy married to a prince who wearied of her; she therefore banished him from her presence, and established herself and daughter in the Island of Calm Delights. The princess, who is my mistress, being very fair, has many lovers—among others, one named Furibon, whom she detests: he it was whose ruffians seized me to-day when I was wandering in search of a stray parrot. Accept, noble prince, my best thanks for your valour, which I shall never forget.”

Leander said how happy he was to have served her, and asked if he could not obtain admission into the island. Abricotina assured him this was impossible, and therefore he had better forget all about it. While they were thus conversing, they came to the bank of a large river: Abricotina alighting with a nimble jump from the horse—

“Farewell, sir,” said she to the prince, making a profound reverence, “I wish you every happiness.”

“And I,” said Leander, “wish that I may now and then have a small share in your remembrance.”

So saying, he galloped away, and soon entered into the thickest part of a wood, near a river where he unbridled and unsaddled Gris-de-line; then, putting on his little cap, wished himself in the Island of Calm Delights, and his wish was immediately accomplished.

The palace was of pure gold, and stood upon pillars of crystal and precious stones, which represented the zodiac, and all the wonders of nature; all the arts and sciences; the sea, with all the variety of fish therein contained; the earth, with all the various creatures which it produces; the chases of Diana and her nymphs; the noble exercises of the Amazons; the amusements of a country life; flocks of sheep with their shepherds and dogs; the toils of agriculture, harvesting, gardening. And among all this variety of representations, there was neither man nor boy to be seen—not so much as a little winged Cupid: so highly had the princess been incensed against her inconstant husband, as not to show the least favour to his fickle sex.

“Abricotina did not deceive me,” said Leander to himself; “they have banished from hence the very idea of men; now let us see what they have lost by it.” With that he entered into the palace, and at every step he took, he met with objects so wonderful, that when he had once fixed his eyes upon them he had much ado to take them off again. He viewed a vast number of these apartments, some full of china, no less fine than curious; others lined with porcelain, so delicate, that the walls were quite transparent. Coral jasper, agates, and cornelians adorned the rooms of state, and the presence-chamber was one entire mirror. The throne was one single pearl, hollowed like a shell; the princess sat, surrounded by her maidens, none of whom could compare with herself. In her was all the innocent sweetness of youth, joined to the dignity of maturity; in truth, she was perfection; and so thought the invisible Leander.

Not seeing Abricotina, she asked where she was. Upon that, Leander, being very desirous to speak, assumed the tone of a parrot, for there were many in the room; and addressing himself invisibly to the princess,—

“Most charming princess,” said he, “Abricotina will return immediately. She was in great danger of being carried away from this palace, but for a young prince who rescued her.”

The princess was surprised at the parrot, his answer was so extremely pertinent:

“You are very rude, little parrot,” said the princess; “and Abricotina, when she comes, shall chastise you for it.”

“I shall not be chastised,” answered Leander, still counterfeiting the parrot’s voice; “moreover, she will let you know the great desire that stranger had to be admitted into this palace, that he might convince you of the falsehood of those ideas which you have conceived against his sex.”

“In truth, pretty parrot,” cried the princess, “it is a pity you are not every day so diverting I should love you dearly.”

“Ah! if prattling will please you, princess,” replied Leander, “I will prate from morning till night.”

“But,” continued the princess, “how shall I be sure my parrot is not a sorcerer?”

“He is more in love than any sorcerer can be,” replied the prince.

At this moment Abricotina entered the room, and falling at her lovely mistress’s feet, gave her a full account of what had befallen her, and described the prince in the most glowing colours.

“I should have hated all men,” added she, “had I not seen him! Oh, madam, how charming he is! His air and all his behaviour have something in them so noble; and though whatever he spoke was infinitely pleasing, yet I think I did well in not bringing him hither.”

To this the princess said nothing, but she asked Abricotina a hundred other questions concerning the prince; whether she knew his name, his country, his birth, from whence he came, and whither he was going; and after this she fell into a profound thoughtfulness.

Leander observed everything, and continued to chatter as he had begun—

“Abricotina is ungrateful, madam,” said he; “that poor stranger will die for grief if he sees you not.”

“Well, parrot, let him die,” answered the princess, with a sigh; “and since thou undertakest to reason like a person of wit, and not like a little bird, I forbid thee to talk to me any more of this unknown person.”

Leander was overjoyed to find that Abricotina's and the parrot's discourse had made such an impression on the princess. He looked upon her with pleasure and delight. "Can it be," said he to himself, "that the masterpiece of nature, that the wonder of our age, should be confined eternally in an island, and no mortal dare to approach her? But," continued he, "wherefore am I concerned that others are banished hence, since I have the happiness to be with her, to see her, to hear and to admire her; nay more, to love her above all the women in the universe?"

It was late, and the princess retired into a large room of marble and porphyry, where several bubbling fountains refreshed the air with an agreeable coolness. As soon as she entered, the music began, a sumptuous supper was served up, and the birds from several aviaries on each side of the room, of which Abricotina had the chief care, opened their little throats in the most agreeable manner.

Leander had travelled a journey long enough to give him a good appetite, which made him draw near the table, where the very smell of such viands was agreeable and refreshing. The princess had a curious tabby-cat, for which she had a great kindness. This cat one of the maids of honour held in her arms, saying, "Madam, Bluet is hungry!" With that a chair was presently brought for the cat; for he was a cat of quality, and had a necklace of pearl about his neck. He was served on a gold plate, with a laced napkin before him; and the plate being supplied with meat, Bluet sat with the solemn importance of an alderman.

"Ho, ho!" cried Leander to himself; "an idle tabby malkin, that perhaps never caught a mouse in his life, and I dare say is not descended from a better family than myself, has the honour to sit at table with my mistress: I would fain know whether he loves her so well as I do."

Saying this, he placed himself in the chair with the cat upon his knee, for nobody saw him, because he had his little red cap on; finding Bluet's plate well supplied with partridge, quails, and pheasants, he made so free with them, that whatever was set before master puss disappeared in a trice. The whole court said no cat ever ate with a better appetite. There were excellent ragouts, and the prince made use of the cat's paw to taste them; but he sometimes pulled his paw too roughly, and Bluet, not understanding raillery, began to mew and be quite out of patience. The princess observing it, "Bring that fricassee and that tart to poor Bluet," said she; "see how he cries to have them."

Leander laughed to himself at the pleasantness of this adventure; but he was very thirsty, not being accustomed to make such large meals without drinking. By the help of the cat's paw, he got a melon, with which he somewhat quenched his thirst; and when supper was quite over, he went to the beaufet, and took two bottles of delicious wine.

The princess now retired into her boudoir, ordering Abricotina to follow her and make fast the door; but they could not keep out Leander, who was there as soon as they. However, the princess, believing herself alone with her confidante—

"Abricotina," said she, "tell me truly, did you exaggerate in your description of the unknown prince, for methinks it is impossible he should be as amiable as you say?"

“Madam,” replied the damsel, “if I have failed in anything, it was in coming short of what was due to him.”

The princess sighed, and was silent for a time; then resuming her speech: “I am glad,” said she, “thou didst not bring him with thee.”

“But, madam,” answered Abricotina, who was a cunning girl, and already penetrated her mistress’s thoughts, “suppose he had come to admire the wonders of these beautiful mansions, what harm could he have done us? Will you live eternally unknown in a corner of the world, concealed from the rest of human kind? Of what use is all your grandeur, pomp, magnificence, if nobody sees it?”

“Hold thy peace, prattler,” replied the princess, “and do not disturb that happy repose which I have enjoyed so long.”

Abricotina durst make no reply; and the princess, having waited her answer for some time, asked her whether she had anything to say. Abricotina then said she thought it was to very little purpose her mistress having sent her picture to the courts of several princes, where it only served to make those who saw it miserable; that every one would be desirous to marry her, and as she could not marry them all, indeed none of them, it would make them desperate.

“Yet, for all that,” said the princess, “I could wish my picture were in the hands of this same stranger.”

“Oh, madam,” answered Abricotina, “is not his desire to see you violent enough already; would you augment it?”

“Yes,” cried the princess; “a certain impulse of vanity, which I was never sensible of till now, has bred this foolish fancy in me.”

Leander heard all this discourse, and lost not a tittle of what she said; some of her expressions gave him hope, others absolutely destroyed it. The princess presently asked Abricotina whether she had seen anything extraordinary during her short travels?

“Madam,” said she, “I passed through one forest where I saw certain creatures that resembled little children: they skip and dance upon the trees like squirrels; they are very ugly, but have wonderful agility and address.”

“I wish I had one of them,” said the princess; “but if they are so nimble as you say they are, it is impossible to catch one.”

Leander, who passed through the same forest, knew what Abricotina meant, and presently wished himself in the place. He caught a dozen of little monkeys, some bigger, some less, and all of different colours, and with much ado put them into a large sack; then, wishing himself at Paris, where, he had heard, a man might have everything for money, he went and bought a little gold chariot. He taught six green monkeys to draw it; they were harnessed

with fine traces of flame-coloured morocco leather. He went to another place, where he met with two monkeys of merit, the most pleasant of which was called Briscambril, the other Pierceforest—both very spruce and well educated. He dressed Briscambril like a king, and placed him in the coach; Pierceforest he made the coachman; the others were dressed like pages; all which he put into his sack, coach and all.

The princess not being gone to bed, heard a rumbling of a little coach in the long gallery; at the same time, her ladies came to tell her that the king of the dwarfs was arrived, and the chariot immediately entered her chamber with all the monkey train. The country monkeys began to show a thousand tricks, which far surpassed those of Briscambril and Pierceforest. To say the truth, Leander conducted the whole machine. He drew the chariot where Briscambril sat arrayed as a king, and making him hold a box of diamonds in his hand, he presented it with a becoming grace to the princess. The princess's surprise may be easily imagined. Moreover, Briscambril made a sign for Pierceforest to come and dance with him. The most celebrated dancers were not to be compared with them in activity. But the princess, troubled that she could not guess from whence this curious present came, dismissed the dancers sooner than she would otherwise have done, though she was extremely pleased with them.

Leander, satisfied with having seen the delight the princess had taken in beholding the monkeys, thought of nothing now but to get a little repose, which he greatly wanted. He stayed some time in the great gallery; afterwards, going down a pair of stairs, and finding a door open, he entered into an apartment the most delightful that ever was seen. There was in it a bed of cloth of gold, enriched with pearls, intermixed with rubies and emeralds; for by this time there appeared daylight sufficient for him to view and admire the magnificence of this sumptuous furniture. Having made fast the door, he composed himself to sleep. Next day he rose very early, and looking about on every side, he spied a painter's pallet, with colours ready prepared and pencils. Remembering what the princess had said to Abricotina touching her own portrait, he immediately (for he could paint as well as the most excellent masters) seated himself before a mirror, and drew his own picture first; then, in an oval, that of the princess. He had all her features so strong in his imagination, that he had no occasion for her sitting; and as his desire to please her had set him to work, never did portrait bear a stronger resemblance. He had painted himself upon one knee, holding the princess's picture in one hand, and in the other a label with this inscription—"She is better in my heart." When the princess went into her cabinet, she was amazed to see the portrait of a man; and she fixed her eyes upon it with so much the more surprise, because she also saw her own with it, and because the words which were written upon the label afforded her ample room for curiosity. She persuaded herself that it was Abricotina's doing; and all she desired to know was, whether the portrait were real or imaginary. Rising in haste, she called Abricotina, while the invisible Leander, with his little red cap, slipped into the cabinet, impatient to know what passed. The princess bid Abricotina look upon the picture, and tell her what she thought of it.

After she had viewed it, "I protest," said she, "'tis the picture of that generous stranger to whom I am indebted for my life. Yes, yes, I am sure it is he; his very features, shape, and hair."

“Thou pretendest surprise,” said the princess, “but I know it was thou thyself who put it there.”

“Who! I, madam?” replied Abricotina; “I protest, I never saw the picture before in my life. Should I be so bold as to conceal from your knowledge a thing that so nearly concerns you? And by what miracle could I come by it? I never could paint, nor did any man ever enter this place; yet here he is painted with you.”

“Some spirit, then, must have brought it hither,” cried the princess.

“How I tremble for fear, madam!” said Abricotina. “Was it not rather some lover? And therefore, if you will take my advice, let us burn it immediately.”

“’Twere a pity to burn it,” cried the princess, sighing; “a finer piece, methinks, cannot adorn my cabinet.” And saying these words, she cast her eyes upon it. But Abricotina continued obstinate in her opinion that it ought to be burnt, as a thing that could not come there but by the power of magic.

“And these words—’She is better in my heart,’” said the princess; “must we burn them too?”

“No favour must be shown to anything,” said Abricotina, “not even to your own portrait.”

Abricotina ran away immediately for some fire, while the princess went to look out at the window. Leander, unwilling to let his performance be burnt, took this opportunity to convey it away without being perceived. He had hardly quitted the cabinet, when the princess turned about to look once more upon that enchanting picture, which had so delighted her. But how was she surprised to find it gone! She sought for it all the room over; and Abricotina returning, was no less surprised than her mistress; so that this last adventure put them both in the most terrible fright.

Leander took great delight in hearing and seeing his incomparable mistress; even though he had to eat every day at her table with the tabby-cat, who fared never the worse for that; but his satisfaction was far from being complete, seeing he durst neither speak nor show himself; and he knew it was not a common thing for ladies to fall in love with persons invisible.

The princess had a universal taste for amusement. One day, she was saying to her attendants that it would give her great pleasure to know how the ladies were dressed in all the courts of the universe. There needed no more words to send Leander all over the world. He wished himself in China, where he bought the richest stuffs he could lay his hands on, and got patterns of all the court fashions. From thence he flew to Siam, where he did the same; in three days he travelled over all the four parts of the world, and, from time to time, brought what he bought to the Palace of Calm Delights, and hid it all in a chamber, which he kept always locked. When he had thus collected together all the rarities he could meet with—for he never wanted money, his rose always supplying him—he went and bought five or six dozen of dolls, which he caused to be dressed at Paris, the place in the world where most regard is paid to fashions. They were all dressed differently, and as magnificent as could be, and Leander placed them all in the princess’s closet. When she entered it, she was agreeably

surprised to see such a company of little mutes, every one decked with watches, bracelets, diamond buckles, or necklaces; and the most remarkable of them held a picture-box in its hand, which the princess opening, found it contained Leander's portrait. She gave a loud shriek, and looking upon Abricotina, "There have appeared of late," said she, "so many wonders in this place, that I know not what to think of them:—my birds are all grown witty; I cannot so much as wish, but presently I have my desires; twice have I now seen the portrait of him who rescued thee from the ruffians; and here are silks of all sorts, diamonds, embroideries, laces, and an infinite number of other rarities. What fairy is it that takes such care to pay me these agreeable civilities?"

Leander was overjoyed to hear and see her so much interested about his picture, and calling to mind that there was in a grotto which she often frequented a certain pedestal, on which a Diana, not yet finished, was to be erected, on this pedestal he resolved to place himself, crowned with laurel, and holding a lyre in his hand, on which he played like another Apollo. He most anxiously waited the princess's retiring to the grotto, which she did every day since her thoughts had been taken up with this unknown person; for what Abricotina had said, joined to the sight of the picture, had almost destroyed her repose: her lively humour changed into a pensive melancholy, and she grew a great lover of solitude. When she entered the grotto, she made a sign that nobody should follow her, so that her young damsels dispersed themselves into the neighbouring walks. The princess threw herself upon a bank of green turf, sighed, wept, and even talked, but so softly that Leander could not hear what she said. He had put his red cap on, that she might not see him at first; but having taken it off, she beheld him standing on the pedestal. At first she took him for a real statue, for he observed exactly the attitude in which he had placed himself, without moving so much as a finger. She beheld with a kind of pleasure intermixed with fear, but pleasure soon dispelled her fear, and she continued to view the pleasing figure, which so exactly resembled life. The prince having tuned his lyre, began to play, at which the princess, greatly surprised, could not resist the fear that seized her; she grew pale, and fell into a swoon. Leander leaped from the pedestal, and putting on his little red cap, that he might not be perceived, took the princess in his arms, and gave her all the assistance that his zeal and tenderness could inspire. At length she opened her charming eyes, and looked about in search of him, but she could perceive nobody; yet she felt somebody who held her hands, kissed them, and bedewed them with his tears. It was a long time before she durst speak, and her spirits were in a confused agitation between fear and hope. She was afraid of the spirit, but loved the figure of the unknown. At length she said: "Courtly invisible, why are you not the person I desire you should be?" At these words, Leander was going to declare himself, but durst not do it yet; "For," thought he, "if I again affright the object I adore, and make her fear me, she will not love me." This consideration caused him to keep silence.

The princess, then, believing herself alone, called Abricotina and told her all the wonders of the animated statue; that it had played divinely, and that the invisible person had greatly assisted her when she lay in a swoon.

"What pity 'tis," said she, "that this person should be so frightful, for nothing can be more amiable or acceptable than his behaviour!"

“Who told you, madam,” answered Abricotina, “that he is frightful? If he is the youth who saved me, he is beautiful as Cupid himself.”

“If Cupid and the unknown are the same,” replied the princess, blushing, “I could be content to love Cupid; but alas! how far am I from such a happiness! I love a mere shadow; and this fatal picture, joined to what thou hast told me, have inspired me with inclinations so contrary to the precepts which I received from my mother, that I am daily afraid of being punished for them.”

“Oh! madam,” said Abricotina, interrupting her, “have you not troubles enough already? Why should you anticipate afflictions which may never come to pass?”

It is easy to imagine what pleasure Leander took in this conversation.

In the meantime, the little Furibon, still enamoured of the princess whom he had never seen, expected with impatience the return of the four servants whom he had sent to the Island of Calm Delights. One of them at last came back, and after he had given the prince a particular account of what had passed, told him that the island was defended by Amazons, and that unless he sent a very powerful army, it would be impossible to get into it. The king his father was dead, and Furibon was now lord of all: disdaining, therefore, any repulse, he raised an army of four hundred thousand men, and put himself at the head of them, appearing like another Tom Thumb upon a war-horse. Now, when the Amazons perceived his mighty host, they gave the princess notice of it, who immediately despatched away her trusty Abricotina to the kingdom of the fairies, to beg her mother’s instructions as to what she should do to drive the little Furibon from her territories. But Abricotina found the fairy in an angry humour.

“Nothing that my daughter does,” said she, “escapes my knowledge. The Prince Leander is now in her palace; he loves her, and she has a tenderness for him. All my cares and precepts have not been able to guard her from the tyranny of love, and she is now under its fatal dominion. But it is the decree of destiny, and I must submit; therefore, Abricotina, begone! nor let me hear a word more of a daughter whose behaviour has so much displeased me.”

Abricotina returned with these ill tidings, whereat the princess was almost distracted; and this was soon perceived by Leander, who was near her, though she did not see him. He beheld her grief with the greatest pain. However, he durst not then open his lips; but recollecting that Furibon was exceedingly covetous, he thought that, by giving him a sum of money, he might perhaps prevail with him to retire. Thereupon, he dressed himself like an Amazon, and wished himself in the forest, to catch his horse. He had no sooner called him than Gris-de-line came leaping, prancing, and neighing for joy, for he was grown quite weary of being so long absent from his dear master; but when he beheld him dressed as a woman he hardly knew him. However, at the sound of his voice, he suffered the prince to mount, and they soon arrived in the camp of Furibon, where they gave notice that a lady was come to speak with him from the Princess of Calm Delights. Immediately the little fellow put on his royal robes, and having placed himself upon his throne, he looked like a great toad counterfeiting a king.

Leander harangued him, and told him that the princess, preferring a quiet and peaceable life to the fatigues of war, had sent to offer his majesty as much money as he pleased to demand, provided he would suffer her to continue in peace; but if he refused her proposal, she would omit no means that might serve for her defence. Furibon replied that he took pity on her, and would grant her the honour of his protection; but that he demanded a hundred thousand thousand millions of pounds, and without which he would not return to his kingdom. Leander answered that such a vast sum would be too long a-counting, and therefore, if he would say how many rooms full he desired to have, the princess was generous and rich enough to satisfy him. Furibon was astonished to hear that, instead of entreating, she would rather offer more; and it came into his wicked mind to take all the money he could get, and then seize the Amazon and kill her, that she might never return to her mistress. He told Leander, therefore, that he would have thirty chambers of gold, all full to the ceiling. Leander, being conducted into the chambers, took his rose and shook it, till every room was filled with all sorts of coin. Furibon was in an ecstasy, and the more gold he saw the greater was his desire to get hold of the Amazon; so that when all the rooms were full, he commanded his guards to seize her, alleging she had brought him counterfeit money. Immediately Leander put on his little red cap and disappeared. The guards, believing that the lady had escaped, ran out and left Furibon alone; when Leander, availing himself of the opportunity, took the tyrant by the hair, and twisted his head off with the same ease he would a pullet's; nor did the little wretch of a king see the hand that killed him.

Leander having got his enemy's head, wished himself in the Palace of Calm Delights, where he found the princess walking, and with grief considering the message which her mother had sent her, and on the means to repel Furibon. Suddenly she beheld a head hanging in the air, with nobody to hold it. This prodigy astonished her so, that she could not tell what to think of it; but her amazement was increased when she saw the head laid at her feet, and heard a voice utter these words:

“Charming princess, cease your fear

Of Furibon; whose head see here.”

Abricotina, knowing Leander's voice, cried: “I protest, madam, the invisible person who speaks is the very stranger that rescued me.”

The princess seemed astonished, but yet pleased.

“Oh,” said she, “if it be true that the invisible and the stranger are the same person, I confess I shall be glad to make him my acknowledgments.”

Leander, still invisible, replied, “I will yet do more to deserve them;” and so saying he returned to Furibon's army, where the report of the king's death was already spread throughout the camp. As soon as Leander appeared there in his usual habit, everybody knew him; all the officers and soldiers surrounded him, uttering the loudest acclamations of joy. In short, they acknowledged him for their king, and that the crown of right belonged to him, for which he thanked them, and, as the first mark of his royal bounty, divided the thirty

rooms of gold among the soldiers. This done, he returned to his princess, ordering the army to march back into his kingdom.

The princess was gone to bed. Leander, therefore, retired into his own apartment, for he was very sleepy—so sleepy that he forgot to bolt his door; and so it happened that the princess, rising early to taste the morning air, chanced to enter into this very chamber, and was greatly astonished to find a young prince asleep upon the bed. She took a full view of him, and was convinced that he was the person whose picture she had in her diamond box. “It is impossible,” said she, “that this should be a spirit; for can spirits sleep? Is this a body composed of air and fire, without substance, as Abricotina told me?” She softly touched his hair, and heard him breathe and looked at him as if she could have looked for ever. While she was thus occupied, her mother, the fairy, entered with such a dreadful noise that Leander started out of his sleep. But how deeply was he afflicted, to behold his beloved princess in the most deplorable condition! Her mother dragged her by the hair, and loaded her with a thousand bitter reproaches. In what grief and consternation were the two young lovers, who saw themselves now upon the point of being separated for ever! The princess durst not open her lips, but cast her eyes upon Leander, as if to beg his assistance. He judged rightly, that he ought not to deal rudely with a power superior to his own, and therefore he sought, by his eloquence and submission, to move the incensed fairy. He ran to her, threw himself at her feet, and besought her to have pity upon a young prince, who would never change in his affection for her daughter. The princess, encouraged, also embraced her mother’s knees, and declared that without Leander she should never be happy.

“Happy!” cried the fairy, “you know not the miseries of love, nor the treacheries of which lovers are capable. They bewitch us only to poison our lives; I have known it by experience; and will you suffer the same?”

“Is there no exception, madam?” replied Leander, and his countenance showed him to be one.

But neither tears nor entreaties could move the implacable fairy; and it is very probable that she would never have pardoned them, had not the lovely Gentilla appeared at that instant in the chamber, more brilliant than the sun. Embracing the old fairy,—

“Dear sister,” said she, “I am persuaded you cannot have forgotten the good office I did you when, after your unhappy marriage, you besought a readmittance into Fairyland; since then I never desired any favour at your hands, but now the time is come. Pardon, then, this lovely princess; consent to her nuptials with this young prince. I will engage he shall be ever constant to her; the thread of their days shall be spun of gold and silk; they shall live to complete your happiness; and I will never forget the obligation you lay upon me.”

“Charming Gentilla,” cried the fairy, “I consent to whatever you desire. Come, my dear children, and receive my love.” So saying, she embraced them both.

Abricotina, just then entering, cast her eyes upon Leander: she knew him again, and saw he was perfectly happy, at which she, too, was quite satisfied.

“Prince,” condescendingly said the fairy-mother, “I will remove the Island of Calm Delights into your own kingdom, live with you myself, and do you great services.”

Whether or not Prince Leander appreciated this offer, he bowed low, and assured his mother-in-law that no favour could be equal to the one he had that day received from her hands. This short compliment pleased the fairy exceedingly, for she belonged to those ancient days when people used to stand a whole day upon one leg complimenting one another. The nuptials were performed in a most splendid manner, and the young prince and princess lived together happily for many years, beloved by all around them.

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