

MOLLY EVANS STORY PAGE

for Boys and Girls

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The Winch

HE RUSTLES through the grass, he knows the violets, and the bees, and all the birds that pass. He races through the open fields—he will not pause or stay—Far down the road, across the world, spurning the great highway. He murmurs through the green-leaved trees; as far away he flies. The forest giants laugh at him under the summer skies. He never minds the driving rain; he's happy as can be. That friend of mine, the singing wind, so big and wild and free.

KATHERINE FAITH



NCE upon a time there lived in a distant country a king by the name of Robert. Robert had all a man could wish to make him happy: a large kingdom, a beautiful wife and great riches. Yet, time hung heavily on the king's hands, and the poor queen spent most of her time weeping, for the king had not blessed them with children.

One day as Queen Margaret (for that was her name) sat alone in the garden thinking sadly of the children faces that she wished to see around her, she heard a sweet low voice like the tinkle of a silver bell say:

"Margaret! Looking up, she saw no one; again she heard the sweet sound, 'Margaret!'"

This time she saw a tiny fairy standing on the petals of a half-blown white rose. The lovely creature's hair shone in the sun like spun gold, she was clad in a dainty white robe and her wings were of silver gossamer.

The queen answered and the fairy continued:

"Why are you so sad? Tell me the trouble, and I may be able to help you."

"Well," replied the weeping lady, "I am not loved of the fairies, for I have no children, and all my life is lonely. Who are you that would know the cause of my sorrow?"

"I am Rose, the fairy of the rose tree. Did you not know that every plant has a fairy to care for it? Not well, it is so. You say you are not loved of the fairies; but you are, and one year from today a daughter will be born to you and I will be her godmother, and the gift I bring to her shall last as long as the earth shall last."

As the fairy spoke, she disappeared, and Margaret returned smiling to the palace.

Within a year the promise of the fairy was fulfilled, and a tiny boy named Rosamond opened his eyes upon the world for the first time. Ere long the world was his, and he was bringing with him a small white spider.

Which, she said to the queen, "would begin to spin a golden web that very hour, and as long as the prince would live, he would continue his spinning; but if he wasn't, he would cease; and if dead, he would die; but rest assured, your boy will not die, for he is the son of the Fairy City; and only those who love may enter there."

"Naturally," the baby was named for her godmother. It may be truly said that she was very true to her word, for she was, and so fair to look upon.

She grew lovelier as the years went on, and when she was 12 she was the hope and pride of the whole nation.

Now, of course, dear reader, all folk who are versed in fairy lore know that there are both good and bad fairies, and that the good are followed by the bad, who try to destroy and harm all that the good have worked so patiently to accomplish; so it is needless to say that there are many bad fairies who dwell in the king's garden, who always teased and tried to harm poor Princess Rose.

One day the little lady was playing near the side of a brook which ran through the garden, when she slipped and fell into it. Instead of striking the bottom, she fell down, down through space for many miles. At length she landed in a dark cave, the home of a witch, whose chief pleasure in life was tormenting the good fairies.

Moco, for that was her name, took Rose and forced her to work day and night, sweeping, dusting and getting up the garden, when she was tired, she had never done any sort of work before in her life.

Rose noticed that a pot was kept forever boiling over the fire and that Moco

stirred it often. This greatly aroused her curiosity, and she determined to ask Moco, who said:

"This is poison which I shall throw on the roots of your rose tree, for I can kill it the good fairies will fall into our hands."

"Why," said Rose, "does that one tree make so much difference?"

"Because your godmother dwells within it, and its magic blossoms have power which protect the fairies."

"Our little heroine thought deeply on this conversation for a few days and wondered how she might help the little people whom she loved so well."

These things weighed so heavily on our little Rose's mind that she slept only lightly, and one night she was awakened by a voice in her ear that called her name.

Looking up, she saw a tiny man dressed in green, sitting on a stone in the roof of the cave.

"Rose," he said, "what does the old witch keep boiling in a pot on a stone in the roof of the cave?"

"And," she said, "what can I do to save the fairies?"

"Well," he said, "the only thing that will help is a crystal ball from the Land of the Sunset, containing a liquid which will act as an antidote for the poison."

Now, dear reader, perhaps you do not know of the Land of the Sunset, as it is not on any map. Standing on the Heights of Innocent Childhood, one may look at the foot of this wondrous place, where the souls of flowers bloom forever in eternal summer. Beyond the foot of the mountain, the Fairy City rises; only those who love may enter there."

To this place did the little man propose to go and to bring back from it the crystal ball.

While all these things were happening to Rose, her parents were nearly dis-

tracted, and they searched over the whole world to find her, the darling of their hearts; but it was useless. The white spider refused to spin his golden web. The sunbeams seemed less bright, the sky less blue, now that the sweet childish laugh was heard no more.

The little green man, true to his promise, started on his journey. As he had wings, he asked a sunbeam to carry him. Only three days had he to get there and back, so they had to travel at a great rate.

The ball was taken secretly from the queen's palace by the little green man, and on his return homeward a thunderstorm came up and the sunbeam left, so he was forced to walk the rest of the way.

The time came for the pot to be taken off the fire, and the fairies' fate hung on a single hair. A long procession of joyful imps and witches carried the pot, and the witch, who had been so kind to her, heaved a sigh and said:

"The place was reached, and in a low voice old Moco started to chant:

Shrive! roots and soil pot!
Shrive! roots and soil pot!
The fairies know on this liquid hot
That their times shall all be away."

At this moment Rose threw herself between Moco and the roots, and the poison was poured over her instead of the tree, and thus every drop was used.

The hot stuff burned her dreadfully, and she lay half dead on the ground, while the angry imps went shrieking away.

The little green man got there just in time to see the child fall to the ground. When he knew that the tree was safe, so great was his joy that he forgot Rose, and hurried to tell the king and queen of his escape. When the queen asked about Rose, he hung his head with shame at her thoughtlessness, and told her of her generosity to those she loved so well.

Several of the ladies in waiting were sent to find Rose, and to bring her to the Land of the Sunset. And, perchance, the fairy Rose, went for the white spider and his golden web.

Within about two days they met once more in the palace hall. Rose had, with the aid of fairy powers, and told her of her burns and was lovelier than before.

Both the court and she stood as the white spider and his golden web were brought forth. The spider, who had been so kind to her, heaved a sigh and said:

"The golden web Rose wore for a wedding veil, and when she took it off, it did her good, and entered into the hearts of the people. And, perchance, a piece is in your heart and one in mine, because that was the time of love, and the pieces will last until the end of the world in the hearts of mankind."

ELLA SEWELL SLINGLUFF.

full pardon, and placed the paper in Rosamond's hand, that she might herself carry it to London.

Rosamond seized the queen's white hand, covering it with kisses, too overjoyed for words. Then, darting up with the precious paper clasped close, the little maid ran gayly out of the room with her back to the queen, to the infinite amusement of the court.

Not long after this Walter Vere was freed from prison, and lived to a good old age, his chief treasure the little Rosamond, who blossomed from a dear little maid into a good and beautiful woman.

A Native's Cunning

THE natives of Ceylon are among the latest people on the face of the globe. Those working on a certain tea plantation contracted the habit of lying down for a quiet sleep whenever, as often happened, the overseer was called away.

The overseer, in this particular instance, had a glass eye, and one day, being needed elsewhere on business and certain that work would cease the instant his back was turned, he hit upon the happy expedient of leaving his glass eye on the short stump of a tree.

"Now," said he to the workers, "myself must go away, but I leave one of my eyes to watch and see how the work is done."

For some little time after his departure the natives labored with all their might in the heat, until one of them, becoming very tired, carefully placed the tin in which he had carried his food over the eye of his absent master and calmly proceeded to enjoy a nap, followed, of course, by his fellow-workers.

"For that kindness sake we grant thy boon," she said at last, unsteadily, "and forgive thy father. Let him beware how he offends again!"

At once she wrote an order for Walter Vere's immediate release, granting him

structor, a young courier named Raleigh, "see that thou turn not thy back upon the queen. When thou art dismissed, see that thou go out backward."

The eager little maid promised to do all that she had been told. How she trembled as the great lord chamberlain conducted her up the long hall at the end of which the queen, clad in soft blue velvet and wearing her crown, sat under a canopy of state holding court!

Rosamond knelt at the foot of the throne and looked up through her curling lashes into Elizabeth's face.

"And so Walter de Vere was thy father?" said Elizabeth, slowly, knitting her brows. All kindness of yesterday seemed to have vanished. "Walter de Vere, who conspired against us to set Mary of Scotland free! Marry, no one ever deserved death more, and death shall be his portion!"

"Have pity, gracious queen!" cried the little maid. "My father's heart is the tenderest of any heart in the whole world, and he was moved by Mary's tears. He signed 'Anne B.' Elizabeth looked at her heart had been moved, too; she is so passing fair."

"Do, child, say no more! Thy father, being a traitor, hath deserved death."

Meanwhile, little William Shakespeare, bumping along the road in a rough little cart on his way home to Stratford, was far too excited to do anything but dream of the golden future and of the queen's words.

Over in Warwick, little Rosamond Vere could not sleep for anxiety over the outcome of the day's happenings.

When, at last, she presented herself at the castle, she was most carefully instructed as to her conduct before the queen.

"Speak, child; whence came the paper and the ring?"

"Above all things else," said the

queen, a boon, a favor!"

But through the lines at soldiers' quarters slipped a little maid, who hid herself at the queen's feet, crying:

"Queen, a boon, a favor!"

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St. Patrick and the Druid Fires

IT WAS years and years ago, back in the very dimmest ages of history, that the king of Ireland held a great festival in the Hall of Tara.

"In all the land," said he, "the fires must be extinguished, so that no flame may appear until my huge fire flares forth from Tara's hill!"

Now, the king was much feared in the land, and so every one among his subjects hastened to obey his edict.

You may imagine how astonished he was, therefore, when he looked forth into the velvet darkness of the night and saw a tiny beam of light shining like a faraway star. Stronger and stronger it grew, until the myriad tongues of a great fire blazed from a nearby hilltop.

A great shudder ran through the assembly on Tara hill at the temerity of the man who had dared to defy the king's edict. Who in all Ireland dared to disobey the king's edict? What meant the fire? The king himself voiced these questions to a wise old Druid priest, who answered:

"If yonder fire is not extinguished tonight, it will blaze forever in Ireland!"

Now at this time the Irish people were Druids and they had many strange and weird beliefs.

At 16 years of age he had been surprised and made prisoner by a band of robbers, who took him to Ireland. He had been their captive for six months before he succeeded in escaping from them and making his way back to Scotland.

A second time he was carried off and again managed to escape.

Arrived at his own home once more, his thoughts continually turned to the land he had left and his heart burned to return and bear to the Druids the message of the Christian religion.

Very earnestly he studied to prepare himself for his great work, and finally his efforts were rewarded and he was made bishop.

Now at last he was able to go back to Ireland.

It was Patrick who had defied the edict of the Druid king, his hand which had lighted the great fire on the hill-top in honor of Easter eve.

"Seize the man who kindled the flames," said the king, "and let him be brought before me at once!"

Patrick, accordingly, was seized and dragged, not in the least frightened, into the king's presence. Here were nobles and priests and princes gathered together to look on so bold a man. Fearlessly Patrick spoke, declaring that he had come to teach the Druids the message of the Christian religion and to establish the religion of Christ in place of their pagan rites and fire worship.

Now, the king, though exceedingly angry, was astonished as well as very curious, and so he asked Patrick to meet the wisemen of his kingdom next day to explain the belief he bore and answer their questions.

Their priests dwell in the great forest of oak trees which almost covered the country, and taught the worship of fire as a symbol of the sun.

The night of the great festival held by the king was so much impressed that he gave Patrick leave to preach all over Ireland his new religion.

And so he traveled from place to place bearing his message to the inland people, speaking earnestly and so well that all who heard him were astonished at his wisdom and power.

In a short space of time all the people became Christians, and gradually the Druid beliefs were forgotten among them and Christianity had blotted out the old pagan rites forever.

So wisely and well did the preacher talk next day that his listeners were persuaded that he not only was a very wise man, but inspired as well, and so became Christians on the spot. Even the king was so much impressed that he gave Patrick leave to preach all over Ireland his new religion.

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