

So, during all her childhood days Isabel saw no one except an old woman who tended her, and her governess. Only once in a while did a tall, grave man come to visit her. This man, her governess told her, was her father, the head of a large kingdom and such a busy man that he could only visit his daughter infrequently.

So the days and months and years passed and Isabel grew to be the most beautiful lady in all the courts. No one had ever seen her except a poor villager who, passing the apartments of the princess one day, saw her dreamily gazing out of a window. He stood amazed at her beauty, but only for an instant, for as he gazed the old woman appeared also and took Isabel from his view. But the mischief was done, the man spread the news of the hidden princess' beauty throughout all the land, and many were the suitors who knocked at the king's gate for admittance and for permission to win the fair Isabel. But the king was firm and all were refused. One adventurous knight, however, gained the hall leading to the princess' apartments, determined to at least see the wonderful beauty, but sad and dreadful was his fate. All went well from that day until a messenger from a neighboring prince came in great speed one day with an urgent message for the king. Vitzman was compelled to depart for another kingdom in all haste, leaving behind, however, strict instructions regarding his daughter.

Things went on as before until a prince came on day to claim Vitzman's hospitality. Entertained he was and sumptuously too, but the story of the "caged beauty," as Isabel was called, aroused his pity and curiosity. He determined to see her at whatever cost and day in and day out he haunted the garden below the princess' window, but all in vain.

One day the old woman who tended Isabel was taken sick with rheumatism and in her haste to go to her aid the governess of Isabel left the door leading to the public hall unlocked. Isabel was about to enter fairyland! She entered the hall and was gazing at a beautiful painting which hung there when, hearing footsteps, she turned about startled, because she knew she was being disobedient, altho' she saw no harm in it. She had thought of fairyland before and surely she had been right for here was the fairy prince!