

Ten Orphan Fairy Tales

by Elli Peonides.

Translated by Rosalind Lavington and Nicki Michael.

Once upon a time thousands and thousands of years ago, Old Father Fairy ^{Teller} Tale was carrying a sack of his stories from the Kingdom of Yesterday to the Kingdom of Today. As he was going up the Silent Mountain, a hole began to appear in the sack, and through the slit ten fairy tales fell to the ground. They rolled head over heels straight into the depths of time. Old Father Fairy Tale knew nothing of what had happened. In any case, he had ten thousand Fairy Tales in his sack. ^{Perhaps even thousands} ~~It wasn't just~~ twenty. The other stories had seen their sisters fall out, but were not able to say anything because they were on the Silent Mountain. So, when Old Father Fairy Tale arrived in the Kingdom of Today and opened his sack, it was too late. Besides, he had so much work to do, running from child to child, from book to book, sharing out his stories, that he couldn't bother his head over ten lost tales.

So those Ten Fairy Tales grew up by themselves like wild animals, without Grandfather Fairy Tale, without Grandmother Fairy Tale sitting at the hearth, without Fairy Godmothers floating on feathers, and without Kings on the throne. They were Ten Orphan Fairy Tales.

When the Ten Tales were a thousand years old, at just about the time when they should grow up into real Fairy Stories, they walked steadily away from the Silent Mountain and cast lots to decide where each of them should go to seek their fortune. And so began

The First Fairy Tale.

The First Tale drew the lot for the Valley of the Grey Swamp. She walked and she walked until she met a Blind Lizard.

"Where are you going to, my dear Fairy Tale?" asked the Blind Lizard.

"I'm going to look for my Happy Ending," said the Fairy Tale. "I'm one of the Ten Orphan Fairy Tales."

"Come, I'll show you the way," said the Blind Lizard. "Tread where I tread."

So the Fairy Tale followed him and they arrived at a ruined castle. There were broken stones and rubble with ten metre high weeds growing up in between. Out of the ruins flew a flock of wild birds. One of them, perching on the highest part of the castle, who seemed to be their leader, said

"Motherless tale from out of the blue,
Little Lost Tale, am I waiting for you?
I've waited here for years and years
In this castle falling about my ears.
For one to change our life must come
To settle here and make a home."

"Here we are!" said the Blind Lizard. "And if you're telling the truth and you really are an

Orphan Fairy Tale, then you'll find your happy ending here. It's been waiting for you secretly."

The First Orphan Fairy Tale replied "These ruins fill me with melancholy. They smell damp."

"In times gone by, there stood here the most magnificent castle in the whole valley," said the Blind Lizard. "And I was a most refined Lady Lizard. I sat in the sun every morning and every afternoon I took a little turn. Now look! Everything in ruins!"

"Well, first of all we'll have to rebuild the castle," said the Orphan Fairy Tale thoughtfully. "If you please, call the wild birds to me, for I have a plan."

The Blind Lizard called the wild birds. The Fairy Tale instructed them to gather up the building materials: sand, clay, and water. The wild birds began the task immediately. They collected piles and piles of earth and sand from the neighbouring hill, and they filled pails and pails of water from the nearby river.

After that the Orphan Fairy Tale called the bees, the lizards, ants, mice and all the other animals who lived in the ruined castle. They worked together as hard as they could, building day and night. The Orphan Fairy Tale gave the directions. The ants and bees brought the earth, the mice filled the buckets of water, and the lizards did the construction. Bluebottles, mosquitoes and maggots carried the sand high up, grain by grain. It was an enormous task, but there were millions of workers. Besides, there weren't any strikes, holidays, or tea breaks!

In one month and three days the castle was ready. It was a most magnificent castle, with thousands of doors and thousands of windows. The Orphaned Fairy Tale sat herself down and admired the castle. She admired it for a day, she admired it for two days, she admired it for three days. Finally she mused,

'A castle without people is like a Fairy Tale without a happy ending. Better it should be a ruined castle where the birds can roost. We must search for humans and bring them here!'

"The humans live in the middle of the Swamp," said the Blind Lizard, who could read thoughts just like all lizards. "Very slowly they have sunk into it one by one, because they have nothing better to do."

The Orphan Fairy Tale said: "So let us offer them something better to do. If you please, call the birds to me."

The Blind Lizard called the birds and then the Orphan Fairy Tale said,

"The humans need something better so that they will return from the swamp and settle here in the castle. We must give the castle to them. Only you can achieve this"

"Us?" cried the birds, "We have tried for a hundred years and we haven't achieved anything."

"You didn't try hard enough, " said the First Orphan Fairy Tale.

"Here's what you should do. Choose amongst yourselves the best songsters in the world. With these songsters you will make a choir, the most melodious chorus in the world. The choir will go and take its place around the Grey Swamp, and there you will sing the sweetest melodies in the world. You will do this every day for thirty days. When the thirty days are finished you will come back here so that I can tell you what to do next".

The birds went away and did everything which the First Fairy tale had instructed them to do. Whereas before the birds from the wild didn't know how to make any sounds but untrained squawks, now they

started practising throat exercises. They began to make tuneful notes: sweet and lovely trills. Then their leader chose the best songsters amongst them, with the most beautiful voices, and created the most melodious choir in the world.

The choir took up their positions around the swamp, and for thirty days from dawn 'til dusk they sang the sweetest melodies in the world. At the end of the thirty days the leader of the birds went to the First Orphan Fairy Tale and said to her:

"We've done exactly as you instructed, First Orphan Fairy Tale, and nothing has happened. The swamp is still a swamp and the humans are still sunk in it."

"It's difficult for the music to carry into the swamp," said the First Orphan Fairy Tale, "but not impossible! You must go and sing for another thirty days!"

After another thirty days the leader of the birds went back to the First Orphan Fairy Tale.

"The swamp is still a swamp and the humans are still sunk in it. Nothing has happened," he told her.

The First Orphan Fairy Tale was insistent. Another thirty days! The birds began to sing again. Nothing. Not a sign of a movement. The leader of the birds again said to the First Orphan Fairy Tale,

"It's unfair to make us strain our throats all this time! The swamp is dead!"

"You can't be certain," said the First Orphan Fairy Tale "we don't know what's happening under

the surface. The time has come to find out!"

She told the choir of birds to go and take their places ten metres away from the Swamp, and to start singing. The next day she told them to take their places another ten metres away from the Swamp. On the third day another ten metres. The same thing happened every day for thirty days. On the thirtieth day, hardly had the birds begun to sing when something stirred in the Swamp! It was a human head. First one then another. It was the humans pushing up out of the dark to see what was happening. The humans called out to the birds,

"Hey, you birds, come a bit closer so we can hear you. We're bored sunk down here in the Swamp. Your music is sweet and we like it. So come a bit closer ..."

But the birds pretended not to hear. Instead, singing all the time, they moved further away. Very very slowly the humans came out of the Swamp, and followed the birds. As they emerged they looked at each other and burst into laughter.

"What a sight you are! Your face is all slimey and grey!"

"What a sight! - your hair's all tangled up with weeds and water snakes!"

"Pooh! What a niff - just like bad fish!"

The First Orphan Fairy Tale approached the humans.

"Poor you" she said to them, "Come and look at yourselves in the mirror."

The humans looked at themselves in the mirror and got a great fright.

"How on earth has this happened to us? Quick! Bring some clean water so we can have a wash."

So they washed themselves one by one in the river, and dried themselves in the sun. Now that they were clean their eyes could open wide, and they began to look around. They examined the castle. They marvelled at the castle and made as if to go into it. But the First Orphan Fairy Tale stood in the doorway.

"Whoever wants to come into the castle must first buy an entrance ticket," she said.

"We haven't got any money," a tall man said.

"May I know what you did before you sank into the Swamp?" the First Orphan Fairy Tale asked him.

"I was the head cook in the castle"

"Then take your chef's hat and apron and run into the kitchen," said the First Orphan Fairy Tale.

The second one was a farmer, the third a teacher, the fourth a doctor. One by one the humans went about their work just as if they had never left the castle. Little by little they forgot the Swamp. The castle came back to life. Voices, songs, quarrels, all the bustle of human activity filled the castle just as before. And every morning the birds sang their songs from different balconies.

A long time went by in this fashion, but the First Fairy Tale was not content. She complained to the Blind Lizard.

"You told me that I would find my happy ending. But I don't see it anywhere."

The Blind Lizard whispered to her. "Shsh - I can hear footsteps. Someone got left behind. Go and take a look!"

The First Fairytale went back to the Grey Swamp. Coming towards her very very slowly, bent over her walking stick, was a little old lady, a hundred years old.

"How did you get left behind, Granny?"

"Ah, my child, it was a great effort for them to pull me out of the Swamp. I told them, 'leave me here! Where will you take an old lady like me?' But they insisted. 'Come with us', they said 'you can't live all by yourself!' Now everyone's got a job, and what can I do? Tell me, little one, what can an old lady like me do?"

"And what did you do when you lived in the castle, Granny?"

"I didn't have a job at all! I was useless then, and I'm just as useless now! All I did was sit down all day and tell stories to my little grandchildren. That's why I'm telling you its better for me to go back and throw myself into the Swamp. I'll always be useless!"

The First Fairy Tale knelt down in front of the old lady and, filled with joy, kissed her hands.

"Are you saying that that's not work, my dear Granny? But this is the most important work of all! You will sit on a golden throne and take your rest, and when the mood takes you, you shall begin telling your Fairy Stories. You will be my happy ending! A human can survive for a little while without bread and water, but not even for a second without a Fairy Tale!"

The First Orphan Fairy Tale curled herself up happily in the old lady's lap. The Blind Lizard sighed with contentment. Now at last she could lie down peacefully and sun her frozen body.

Everything had turned out as it should. The birds had found their voices, the castle its humans, the humans their jobs, and the First Orphan Fairy Tale her Happy Ending. Every evening in the castle at dusk, when the birds cease their singing, Granny begins to tell the Fairy Tale, who definitely isn't an orphan any more!

In time the Grey Swamp itself became a Fairy story. Nobody remembers any longer that the humans had sunk down into it. Nobody wants to remember the bad old days. Only the Blind Lizard, who remembers everything, nods her head with a knowing smile.

The Second Orphan Fairy Tale

The Second Orphan Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Yellow Desert.

She started her journey very very early, but she had a long way to go and got tired out. She sat down to rest next to an orchard. Coming from the orchard she heard voices. This Fairy Tale of ours pricked up her ears, and then she realised : the voices were tree voices!

The orange tree said:

“Just look at me laden with my golden fruit! Admire me!”

Then followed the fig tree:

“I bend with the weight of my fruit. How blessed am I !”

After a little while the apple tree sang her own praises:

“Bright red apples like fire! Who else has such quality or quantity?”

After a little while the olive tree started:

“My black eyed daughters! Everyone says how delicious they are! See how many I’ve got, tumbling onto the ground!”



There was also a pomegranite tree which only had one fruit in her topmost branches. The other trees were making fun of her:

“Ha, ha ! The pomegranite is such a joke, girls! In the spring she’s smothered with bright red blossom, and we really think she’s going to be

laden with fruit. Pooh! Then she succeeds in producing only one pomegranite! Look at it, ripening on the highest branch. What a joke!”

The pomegranite tree said nothing. She cradled and rocked her only child, ripening in her topmost branches: her own pomegranite.

“My pomegranite all rosy and all perfumed too,

You ripen my own heart, my love most true!”

The Second Orphan Fairy Tale jumped over the orchard wall, and went in.

“Who are you who comes uninvited into our orchard?” the tree voices asked her.

“I am a passing traveller. I’m hungry and I’m thirsty. Who amongst you, beautiful ladies, will give me a little of your fruit to eat?”

“My fruit is sour; I haven’t got any I can give you,” said the fig tree.

“My fruit is sharp”, said the apple tree.

“My fruit is bitter”, said the orange tree.

“My fruit is tart”, said the fig tree.



Then from her corner, very very timidly the pomegranite tree said:

“Here you are, traveller, take my fruit to sate your hunger and to slake your thirst”.

And she gave the Fairy Tale her one and only pomegranite.

The Fairy Tale took the pomegranite and said :

“You will hear from me again, good pomegranite tree!”



With the pomegranite in her hand the Second Orphan Fairy Tale went on her way towards the Yellow Desert. On the road she met a Postman with a bicycle.

“I am the Second Orphan Fairy Tale”, she said, “Perhaps you know whereabouts the Yellow Desert is ? I’ve got to look for my Happy Ending.”

“I’ve just come from there”, said the Postman, “Tut, tut! I’m sorry to have to tell you that Fairy Tales don’t go down well over there. You’d do better to look for your Happy Ending somewhere else.”

“Fairy Tales go down well everywhere,” said the Second Orphan Fairy Tale, somewhat offended, “Just tell me, if you please, where ^{the} Yellow Desert is.”

“Since you insist, take the third turning on your left, and after the hill there’s a dry river with the Bridge of Sighs going over it. It got that name because it’s falling down, and anyone who crosses it and gets to the other side, lets out sighs of relief! After that you go through the Way of Snakes. Instead of grass there, you’ll see poisonous snakes! Oh, Unfortunate Child, without a bicycle how will you get by? Well, be that as it may, if you do

succeed, that path will take you to the Yellow Desert. Best of luck to you!”

The Postman hurried off on his bicycle, for he had to deliver the post.

The Second Orphan Fairy Tale proceeded exactly as the Postman had told her. She took the third turning on the left going up the hill, she found the dry river bed and prepared to cross the Bridge of Sighs. And then she thought to herself, “ But this is a dry river bed, why should I go over a bridge which is just about ready to collapse? Let me go across the river on foot. That way it’s quicker and easier. Besides, you know, sometimes in dry rivers you can find nuggets of gold!”



So the Orphan Fairy Tale began to cross on foot. In the middle of the dry river she heard a booming voice:

“Who is it that dares to break the tradition of the Dry River of Sighs?”

“Me! The Second Orphan Fairy Tale! A practical fairy tale doesn’t hold with tradition! She forges ahead with daring and courage! You, Voice, where are you coming from?”

“I come from the depths of the Dry Mountain. You make me so angry I’m going to open my flood gates!”

And even before the voice had ceased she heard a rumbling. Wild waters poured from the depths of the Dry Mountain, cascading madly and filling the dry river bed. Along with the running waters came frogs, fish, and turtles, longing for a swim and to drench themselves again after so many long years. Now the dry river bed had been transformed into a deep and wide river. The Orphan Fairy Tale was scared out of her wits! She only just succeeded in getting to the other side. She was still running when she got to the Way of Snakes. There things got even worse! Snakes thrust their awful poisonous heads out of the dry grass.

“We’re so hungry,” they cried, “We shall drink your blood!”

“I’ve got presents for you,” said the Orphan Fairy Tale “Sweet rubies: one for each of you,” and so saying she opened the pomegranite, took out some seeds and tossed them to the snakes. They pounced ravenously on the seeds.

The Fairy Tale made good her escape. Soon she arrived at the Yellow Desert. She took one look and froze: an endless stretch of dried earth without even a single scrubby bush for shade: not a tree nor a flower.



After she had looked more carefully, she saw people lying on the ground as if they were dead: young people, old people, children, lying on the ground under the burning sun, unconscious.

“Hey! I’ve got some news for you!”, she shouted, “The river is coming!”

“In how many hours?” asked a young man fading away near her.

“Soon, very soon, - in half an hour!”

“We’re finished ! Can’t you see - we can’t last,” the young man said to her, “We’re dying of thirst”



The Fairy Tale opened the pomegranite. From inside she took out thousands of seeds.

“Come on! Every one of you take a seed. It’ll keep you alive until the river arrives!”

The people opened their mouths. The Fairy Tale placed one miraculous seed in every mouth: first the children, next the youngsters, and then the older people. There were enough seeds, and more than enough. The people got up and thanked the Fairy Tale for giving them life.

“Don’t bother to thank me,” she replied, “just tell me, if you know, whereabouts I can look for my Happy Ending. I am the Second Orphan Fairy Tale, and I was told I should find it in the Yellow Desert.”



The people had no idea. Besides which, now they were busy. With the coming of the river they had to prepare their pitchers to collect the water.

They were running hither and thither with their heads full of their own

business. A clean sheet was beginning for them, and they didn't have any time for fairy tales! Our Orphan Fairy Tale sat down on a stone, full of woe. Then she noticed that a single seed remained inside the pomegranite: the last one. She picked it out and marvelled at it. It was transparent like rosy glass. And there, inside it, she spied her Happy Ending. It was a beautiful young girl in a pink dress, smiling.

“Retrace your steps!” the young girl said to her. “Go back to the pomegranite tree! You left her without a child and without helpmates. Take her the last seed to comfort her. Take her the last seed, so that I may be set free!”



Then our Fairy Tale remembered. She had promised the pomegranite tree that she would see the Fairy Tale again. So she tried to turn back. But now the river was a foaming torrent. The water had risen so much that the Bridge of Sighs was swaying back and forth, half destroyed.

“So what shall I do now?” the Fairy Tale said to herself. “I can't get across the water because the currents are too strong, or across the bridge because it's half collapsed. I must find a third way.”



Of course, Fairy Tales always find a third way out! And just at that moment a wild duck came up out of the river. She shook her feathers and spread them out under the sun to dry.

“Good Day to you, Mrs Duck,” said the Fairy Tale. “Where have you come from?”

“I have come from the North where it’s freezing cold, and I’m on my way South to warm up,” said the Wild Duck, “I just dived into the water for a bath.”

“Do you mean to tell me you can fly?”

“Just listen to her!” she said “-can I fly? Of course I can! Do you think I swam all the way here?”

“Well then, can you do me a favour? And you’ll see yourself in the list of Fairy Tale characters as well!”

“So I was right in thinking that you were a Fairy Tale,” said the Wild Duck. “I thought you were a bit peculiar: neither a ghost, nor a living person.”

“I’m a Fairy Tale, and more especially, an Orphan, and I’m in a hurry to find my Happy Ending, which is on the other side of the river. Perhaps you can get me there?”

“With pleasure,” said the Wild Duck, and courteously took the Fairy Tale on her back. In a trice she carried her over to the other bank.

“We learn by degrees,” said the Second Orphan Fairy Tale. “Next time before I set out, I’ll certainly bring feathers, a fish tail , and a bicycle!”

“A bicycle?” enquired the Wild Duck.

“That’s another story,” the Fairy Tale called out, running off. “Now I’m in a hurry. Goodbye, keep well, and thank you!”

She arrived at the Orchard just at the moment when the orange tree was counting her oranges in an attempt to get off to sleep. She was the last. All the others had counted their fruit, and counted it again. Only the poor pomegranite who had no fruit to count, was counting the stars in the heavens. But still she did not go to sleep.

The Second Orphan Fairy Tale ran up to her.

“Here you are,” she said, “With the fruit which you gave me an entire race of people was saved, and there’s still something left over. This belongs to you.” And she handed her the glossy pip. The pomegranite tree caressed it, kissed it, and buried it in the ground to sleep.

“In the spring,” she said, “ a little pomegranite tree will be born: my daughter and my sister. Together we shall bear a thousand fruits - ten thousand pomegranites!” and so saying the pomegranite tree immediately fell into a happy slumber.



The whole orchard was bathed in the magic of the night. Then the Fairy Tales' Happy Ending sprang out from under the ground, so beautiful in all her rosy pink.

“ You will no longer be an orphan, Second Fairy Tale” she said. “You have fulfilled your destiny. You found me. Now I shall show you the way into children's dreams.” She took the Second Fairy Tale by the hand and they journeyed down the path which leads into ~~the dreams of children.~~

children's dreams



The Third Orphan Fairy Tale

The Third Orphan Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Brown Mountain. The ascent was very difficult, and our Fairy Tale decided to use wings. So she went to the wing factory. She chose a pair of size seven which fitted her perfectly. She put them on and - brrrr- she was in the air. She thought it would be easy to find the Brown Mountain, but nothing is easy in Fairy Tales. In towns you find road signs which tell you where you want to go. On the sea there are ships and they have compasses. In the sky there are only different kinds of winged creatures: birds, insects, butterflies and bees. They were all in a hurry. She stopped a bee.

"Dear Madame, I know that you are much occupied, but may I take the liberty of begging your assistance? I'm the ^{Third} Orphan Fairy Tale, and I'm looking for my Happy Ending. The only thing I know is that it is to be found somewhere on the Brown Mountain. The bee shook her leg to get rid of the pollen sticking to it, flapped her wings, and without stopping for a moment replied to her,

"The Brown Mountain is towards the East. They say that not a living soul sets foot on top of it. Its peak inclines towards the Morning Star. Good luck to you, Fairy Tale, but I confess I don't envy you! I'm better off doing my daily duties. I know I have a house, I know I have food and I know who my ^{friends} helpers are. What on earth would do with an adventure!"

"Madame, I thank you, and I respect your opinion. Adventures are assuredly not for housewives. They are for people who love fairy stories."

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And so saying, the Third Orphan Fairy Tale continued her flight. She flew for three days and three nights towards the East, but she didn't see the Brown Mountain. On the fourth morning she stopped to rest in a pine tree. She sat in its branches and pulled out a Fairy Tale map. On that map were to be found all the magic places, and many more besides. She studied the map and came to the conclusion that the Brown Mountain was somewhere close by.

"Begging your pardon, but what are you looking for so long on your map?" the Pine Tree asked her.

"I'm searching for the Brown Mountain where I shall find my Happy Ending. I am the Third Orphan Fairy Tale you know."

"I see. I had heard talk of the Orphan Fairy Tales but I thought that they were only stories." said the Pine Tree. "When I was young, about two hundred years ago, a wise man came this way. He was

going up the Brown Mountain to study the Morning Star. He went in that direction, do you see? —  
Towards the East. I never saw him come back. Perhaps he got lost in the Black Hole Canyon, or  
perhaps he's still wandering around the mountain. I'm consumed with curiosity! Whilst I'm stuck  
down here, alas, I can never get to the end of any stories. That's what I complain about. I'm grateful  
to the birds though, they come every day to tell me stories."

"You like stories?" asked the Third Fairy Tale.

"What would my life be like without stories? - completely empty! Can you imagine what it's like to  
be always planted in the ground? Lots of people think that trees can't hear, don't want company, that  
they can't speak. Nonsense! If anyone needs company, surely it's a tree? Indeed, if you so wish, you  
who are an orphan, I would adopt you, so you would have a family, and I would have a Fairy Tale.

"That would be delightful," said the Fairy Tale, "Unfortunately, however, I must seek my Happy  
Ending on the Brown Mountain."

"I don't hold anything against you. I am an understanding tree. It would be so nice if I had legs or  
wings so that I could go with you. Anyhow, take two of my fir cones as a memento of me. Perhaps  
they will come in handy."

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The Fairy Tale thanked him courteously, picked up her wings, put them on, and went on her way. She  
flew for three days and three nights, but not a trace of the Brown Mountain did she see. On the third  
night whilst she was flying she fell asleep in the sky. It was just as well there was a downy cloud  
underneath her, or else she would have been collected up off the ground in a thousand pieces! So our  
Orphan Fairy Tale slept on, and in her sleep she heard her Happy Ending say to her,

"Without wings you will walk on the earth

if I am to be found.

People who look at the sky

Miss the pleasures of the ground."

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The Fairy Tale woke up at once with a start. She jumped off the cloud onto the ground and took off  
her wings. In front of her was a staircase which was so high it reached to the sky. She began to climb  
up counting the steps as she went. When she arrived a number one thousand and eighteen she stopped

to catch her breath. She looked around and what did she see? Everything was dark brown like chocolate: the stones, the rocks and the earth. So she had found the Brown Mountain! She was overjoyed and wanted to share her delight with somebody. But there was not a soul anywhere. Only stillness and absolute silence. The Orphan Fairy Tale's hair stood on end. She continued to climb up. When she'd gone another thousand and eighteen steps she stopped again. Even darker brown all around: bare rocks, no soil and no plants. She started up again, counting another one thousand and sixteen steps. There were only two left to get to the <sup>very top</sup> summit. But it was impossible to continue. A blinding light was streaming from the top of the mountain where it touched the Morning Star. Dazzled, the Third Orphan Fairy Tale went up one more step.

"Is there anybody there?" she called. "Please answer me!"

"No, there's nobody here. Mind your own business!"

"But my business is here! I'm the Third Orphan Fairy Tale, and I've been looking for my Happy Ending for days and days - Perhaps you've seen it?"

A head poked up from the summit. It was an old man with snow white hair reaching down to his feet, glistening like silver in the light from the Morning Star.

"You must be the Wise Man" said the Fairy Tale. "Forgive me for interrupting you..."

"Come here! I've been expecting you," said the Wise Man.

The Fairy Tale entered his laboratory. All around there were little jars, all kinds of apparatus and books.

"How did you know I was coming? Who told you?" enquired the Third Orphan Fairy Tale, "You're all alone here."

"Who told you that? I've got the whole world for company. Come and see!"

The Wise Man showed her a device. In it she could see the whole world: countries, villages, forests and lakes.

"I saw you when you were flying in this direction," the Wise Man told her, "Didn't you get my message to come on foot?"

"You sent me the message? But that .... that means that you must be my Happy Ending", said the Orphan Fairy Tale.

"You could say that if you like. Anyhow, here in this lofty emptiness there are only two things I desire: a leaf from a tree and a Fairy Tale. At least now I've got one," said the Wise Man.

"You've got both!" said the Third Orphan Fairy Tale, and gave one of her pine cones to the Wise Man. The Wise Man took the pine cone reverently, savoured it deeply, and his face lit up with joy.

"You have brought me the aroma of life, - thank you!" he said to the Fairy Tale. "I've been up here so long I've forgotten what pine cones smell like."

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He put the pine cone in a vase, and made for the door.

"Now come and see the Black Hole Canyon," he said to the Third Orphan Fairy Tale. The Black Hole was at the top of the mountain, like an awful mouth, gaping open. Just two metres further on the Morning Star was hanging glistening brighter than a diamond. The fairy Tale marvelled at it. The old man said dolefully,

"I've been here for years and years, and I still haven't succeeded in finding the secret of how to jump across this Black Hole to the other side, so that I can greet the Morning Star. Can you imagine how much I suffer? Me, the Wise Man, the scientist, just sitting here looking at it, and I can't even touch it! A thousand Wise Men have tried before me, but they didn't succeed either. They're all down there in the Black Hole Canyon. This is the reason why I've waited for you. Only in the company of a Fairy Tale can I leap across this gaping hole and get to the other side at last."

"Nothing easier!" said the Fairy Tale politely, and she opened her little fairy tale sack. From the sack she took out some magic thread like sun's rays made of silk. One end of these threads she tied securely to the Brown Mountain, and on the other end she knotted the other pine cone. She aimed at the Morning Star and threw the pine cone, trailing the threads onto a silver rock. The pine cone flew straight as an arrow towards the Star, drawing the magic thread ^{taut}taut. The Fairy Tale got onto the magic thread and fearlessly began to walk along it.

"Come, my Wise Old Man, follow me and don't be frightened. Greater acrobats than this Fairy Tale have yet to be born! Only don't look down into the Black Hole - you might get dizzy!"

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The Wise Old Man followed her, his silvery hair blowing in the wind above the Black Hole. Suddenly he slipped and would have fallen down in the chasm. Luckily the Fairy Tale was holding on to him. A

moment later they jumped onto the Morning Star. They're eyes were blinded. Then they heard sweet voices as if they were coming from a different world.

"Welcome to our star! Open our three gates and <sup>c</sup>ome in. Our table is laid and has awaited you for a thousand years!"

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They made a move forward, the Wise Man first, and the Fairy Tale behind. They arrived at a golden door. They opened it and went inside. The second door was bronze. They opened it and went inside. The third door was wood. They opened it and went inside. Beyond the wooden door there was a very long table. On it were laid golden plates, and cups and golden knives and forks. The old man sat down and the Fairy Tale sat down. Then they noticed that on the plates and serving dishes, instead of food there were precious stones: sapphires, rubies, diamonds and emeralds. And in the cups, liquid gold and silver ~~metal~~, instead of water.

"Enjoy your meal then!" they heard the sweet voice say.

The Wise Man tried to eat, but he couldn't. The stones sat on his stomach. Even though they were very precious, they were still stones! On the other hand, the Fairy Tale, just like all fairy tales, was able to eat them all. She chomped up the rubies with gusto, she chomped up the emeralds and sapphires, and she chomped up the diamonds, although they were a bit tough. She got up from the table glowing. She looked like the Morning Star.

"Good, we're full up! said the Fairy Tale and at that moment the Dawn of the Morning Star appeared, the one with the sweet voice.

She had golden hair, a golden dress, and sandals of satin.

"Thank you for your visit," she said to them, "And thank you for honouring our table."

"You must forgive me," said the Wise Man, "Being old my stomach isn't very strong."

"Apologies accepted, don't worry. You're the first visitor to my star. You can ask for whatever you desire."

The Old Man thought and thought again. He wanted to ask for something really worthwhile. First of all he thought of asking for power, but what use would power be to him up here on the summit? He thought of asking for company, but he already had his Fairy Tale. Better not to ask for company. He thought of asking for more time, but how many more years did he want to live? He was already bored.

“For myself, I have nothing to ask of you, Most High Dawn. My dream was to visit your star. Now that my dream has been fulfilled I can go down into the Black Hole, and join the wise men who came before me. But I have one wish to ask for the Fairy Tale. She is an orphan, and searching for her Happy Ending. My wish is that you should be her Happy Ending, to hold her close to you, to shine together every morning.” The Most High Dawn accepted immediately. She took her magic wand and touched the Fairy Tale lightly.

“From now on you’re my Fairy Tale, and from now on I shall be your Happy Ending.”

The Third Orphan Fairy tale settled down with the Morning Star. Every morning she shone and greeted her sisters wherever they might be. And if any one of us wakes up at first light, at the hour when the Morning Star arises for her early morning walk, you might see the Third Orphan Fairy Tale with wings and gold dust, greeting her sisters and greeting all of us.

The Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale

The Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Bright Blue Sea. The journey was easy because it was all down hill. In any case she knew that all rivers, streams and winter torrents eventually finished up in the Bright Blue Sea. She had taken with her all the things she might need for swimming and diving. So she stepped into a stream without a second thought, and trusted herself to the current. The stream wound through towns and villages, and all the time it flowed down happily rippling because it was a very rainy year. Finally it arrived at a Grey Sea. The Fairy Tale stepped out of the stream and approached a sailor who was sitting smoking on the quay, gazing out to sea.

"Ahoy there, Sailor, you can probably help me! I'm searching for the Bright Blue Sea," said the Fairy Tale. The sailor shook his head, inhaled the smoke from his pipe and said

"If you find it, you don't find it

If you see it, you don't see it."

"Beg pardon, Mr Sailor, but I can't understand what you're saying," said the Fairy Tale, "This is the first time I've been in these parts, you know. Please could you show me the wherabouts of the Bright Blue Sea?"

The sailor exhaled the smoke from his pipe, and pointed to the sea. The Fairy Tale persisted,

"But this isn't Bright Blue, it's Grey! How did it change colour?"

The sailor inhaled the smoke from his pipe and said

"We are all at fault

But we all say

We're always saying

It's not our fault"

And so saying the sailor exhaled the smoke from his pipe, and turned his head towards the ocean. It was quite clear that he wasn't in the mood for any more talk.

The Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale didn't insist. Every once in a while you come across people who don't love Fairy Tales. Anyway since this Grey Sea was the Bright Blue Sea that she was looking for, she took a dive, and went straight down into the deep. By her side a little orange fish winked at her.

"Hallo," he said to her, "where have you come from?"

“And where are you going?”

“I’m going to seek my Happy Ending. I am the Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale.”

“What luck! I know all about you orphans. First the mermaid told your story to the sea urchin. The sea urchin whispered it in the shell’s little ear, and immediately the shell told it to the starfish. The starfish sang it in the water concert, - so there - now you have it. Your story was such a delightful Fairy Tale that everyone learned it by heart and now they’re all singing it. Of course, you know, that every night, at midnight actually, all the species that live in the sea each sing a different song. We Little Orange Fishes prefer the song called “The Orphan Fairy Tales”. Hang on a minute and I’ll call my friends. Saying this the Little Orange Fish whistled to his friends. Immediately a whole shoal of Little Orange Fish were circling round the Fairy Tale. They all wanted to touch her because they didn’t believe that it really was the Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale. Several of them even asked for her autograph. The Fairy Tale much enjoyed their welcome, but sadly, she was in a hurry.

“Thank you very much for paying me such attention.. I never imagined that our story had reached down as far as the Bright Blue Sea. It seems that these days nothing remains a secret. I would like to stay here with you, swimming and tumbling and diving without a care in the world. It’s a shame that I have to hurry away. If I don’t find my Happy Ending soon I might just disappear, dissolving like the spray on the waves.”

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She promised them that once she had found her Happy Ending and become a permanent resident of the Bright Blue Sea, she would come and visit them again. The Little Orange Fish drew back and the Fairy Tale slid further into the deep. As she was diving down a naughty octopus blocked her way.

“Please don’t delay me,” said the Fairy Tale to the Octopus. But the Octopus was in the mood for playing games. He squirted a cloud of ink at her teasing and singing,

“Don’t delay me,

Search for us to see,<sup>1</sup>

We are near you

One and two and three!”

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And he began to wrap his tentacles around the Fairy Tale. Our Fairy Tale was all tangled up in the dark blue ink and twisting tentacles. She was about to get angry, but then she thought that Fairy Tales don’t

have the right to get cross. God forbid that Fairy Tales should get angry! Then the whole world would be turned upside down!.

"Little Octopus," she said to him, "Let me go and seek my Happy Ending. Afterwards I promise I'll come back and play skipping games with you. You can turn your tentacles one by one, and I'll jump eight times! After that we'll play hide and seek. You'll squirt your ink, and I'll search for you. I'll tease you and say,

"Octopussy where are you?"

Octopussy I am too.

There's one of you, but not three

Come and search for me to see!"

The Little Octopus got very excited. He squirted out a little bit more of his ink and burst into laughter when he saw how the Fairy Tale turned blue. Then the Little Octopus loosened his grip and let the Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale slip away.

"I'm letting you go, but don't forget to come back and play with me! If you do forget I'll report you to the Mermaid for telling lies!"

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With a single dive the Fourth Fairy Tale went even deeper. She stopped to rest on a rock. A black sea urchin stretched out his spines to bite her, thinking that she was something to eat.

"Leave me alone, Good Sir! Can't you see that I'm only a Fairy Tale?"

"And do you suppose I've got eyes to see that?" grumbled the Sea Urchin. "No eyes to see with, no feet to walk with, and no wings to fly with! I'm stuck on a rock waiting for something to come along which I can eat by spearing it with my spines. I'm the unluckiest creature in the world! I wait alone and I dine alone. Everybody avoids my spines, - they're frightened of me because I prick them. Maybe it's my own fault? - No, I was born like it! If only I were a nice soft sponge, or even an oyster or a muscle!"

Our Fairy Tale, who was soft hearted, felt sorry for the Sea Urchin, but unfortunately she was in a hurry.

"I have to go and seek my Happy Ending" she said to him. "However, I promise you that when I find it, I'll invite you to dine with me on lots of tasty things."

"Everybody says that, but they all forget me even before the day's out," said the Sea Urchin gloomily.

"But I don't blame them. Who would want to be friends with a thing like me - a miserable ball full of spines?"

"You musn't say such things again!" said the Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale. "Everyone has their good points. Now, - let's see - you could be a brooch to decorate the Mermaid's tunic."

"Do you really think so?" said the Sea Urchin longingly, "Oh, but then I must clean myself up so as to be ready!"

~~~~~

The Fairy Tale left the Sea Urchin to his toilette, and took a dive towards the sea bed. There were some rocks there, like great mountains covered with seaweed, sponges and coral. The Fairy Tale slid down the soft seaweed and went through a crack in the rock. She found herself in a cave full of stalactites in peculiar shapes resembling trees, castles, flowers and fairy-like human shapes

"Is there anybody here?" enquired the Fourth Fairy Tale. The rock shook. Thousands of little fish swam towards her and behind them came a big fat green turtle.

"So you've come at last!" wheezed the turtle sternly.

"Are you talking to me?" the Fairy Tale replied unsure.

"Of course to you! My mistress has been waiting for you here for three hundred years!"

"But may I ask who your mistress is?"

"So now you pretend you don't know! Give me patience! Whilst you've been away the sea has been on the verge of turning black! Come on, follow me quickly and stop this chattering!" And with a backwards flip of his fat body the turtle turned, sending up thousands of little bubbles. The fish followed suit, and yes, at the back, the Fairy Tale. They passed a stalactite shaped like a church, and then another like a pumpkin, and lastly a tall and straight one like a Cypress tree. Suddenly the turtle stopped.

"This is where we leave you to your Happy Ending," he said, and swam up to the roof of the cave along with the thousands of little fish.

The columns resembled a royal palace. The stalactites and stalacmites formed themselves into fantastic furniture, chandeliers, and rich decorations. On a stone couch in the middle of the cave, lay a mermaid.

From the middle down she was a fish; from the middle up a most beautiful maiden.

"Come closer, Fourth Fairy Tale, I've waited for you for so long!"

"Are you, by any chance, my Happy Ending?" asked the Fairy Tale.

“Perhaps, perhaps not. You’ve begun a lot of things, and I don’t know whether we’ll be able to carry them to a successful conclusion.”

“I beg your pardon! But you well know many obstacles are set in the path of a Fairy Tale.....

But tell me, I beg of you, what do you want me to do?”

Then the Mermaid explained to her.

“For many years now people have learned other languages, and have forgotten the language of the seas.

It’s so unfair! We’ve tried so hard to explain to them that enough is enough, - that they must not go on

polluting our Bright Blue Sea, because it’ll change colour. They didn’t understand, and so now it’s

happened, and our Bright Blue Sea has turned into the Grey Sea. Little by little it will turn black, and

when that happens nothing can save us! We shall all die of suffocation, all squashed flat down here;

fishes, octopuses, and every living thing! And after that it will be the turn of the stupid humans,

because, you know, the Bright Blue Seas are their lungs. So that’s why I’ve been waiting for you.

Although I said that humans can’t remember the language of the sea any more, perhaps the language of

Fairy Tales can help them. Even if we could find just one of them who could speak your language, Little

Fairy Tale, maybe we shan’t lose everything!”

“I know someone who understands what you’re talking about, even though he hardly spoke to me at all,” said the Fairy Tale, - “the sailor with the pipe!”

“In that case let’s go at once,” said the Mermaid, “Every moment we lose is precious!”

The Sailor was smoking his pipe and gazing at the open sea mournfully. The Fairy Tale came up out of the sea and shook the water off herself.

“Mr Sailor Sir, the Mermaid invites you to dinner,” said the Fairy Tale, “to talk about the the Bright

Blue Sea, she says. She would have liked to have come herself to invite you personally, but as you

know she finds it awkward. Her tail gets in the way. So she sent me as her messenger - and I see you

have a boat!”

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Without uttering a word, the sailor jumped into his boat. The Fairy Tale directed him to the stalactite

palace. Fish, octopuses, and cuttlefish peeped out from behind the rocks. The Mermaid had laid out a

table fit for a king, and put the Sailor in the place of honour at her right hand, the Fairy Tale on her left.

When they had eaten and were satisfied, she broached the subject of the Sea. The Sailor agreed to help

her. So they put together a plan which they called ‘Concerning the Bright Blue Sea’. The Sailor, the

Mermaid and the Fairy Tale worked for many hours cleaning up the sea. They met with lots of difficulties and enemies. But they had lots of helpers too; fish, shellfish, poets and children. From ashen black little by little the sea turned grey, and after that from grey to green, from green it turned dark blue, and, at last it turned Bright Blue. When they had analysed its blueness at the Laboratory of the Deeps and found it transparent, the Fairy Tale went back to her jolly games. First she went to the Sea Urchin who was waiting patiently all cleaned up. She pinned him on the Mermaid's tunic just like a brooch, and he sighed happily. It was the first time anyone had given him a place of such esteem. Then Our Fairy Tale went to the Little Octopus and played skipping and hide and seek with him just as she had promised. Last of all she went to the Little Orange Fish. And when she had fulfilled her promises she went back to her Mermaid Happy Ending.

"You and me, My Little Fairy Tale," the Mermaid said, "We shall protect the Bright Blue Sea."

She gave her a dolphin as a horse, and appointed her as the Guardian of the Bright Blue Sea. Woe betide anyone chucking rubbish into the water! Our Fairy Tale immediately threw her net over them, and locked them up!

And what became of the Sailor? Well, they held elections and he became Mayor of the Bright Blue Sea. When the Council meets, on his left he has the Deputy Mayor, and on his right the Fourth Orphan Fairy Tale, who follows him, unseen by anyone else. But we say that fish, shellfish, poets and children can see her!

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The Fifth Orphan Fairy Tale

The Fifth Orphan Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Ice White Mountain. She dressed herself up in a fur coat, tough boots, and a woolley hat and mittens. A Fairy Tale musn't catch cold, even if she is an orphan! She knew that the North Wind blew towards the Ice White Mountain. So our Fifth Fairy Tale lay in wait all dressed up in her winter clothes, and as soon as the North Wind appeared she leapt out and jumped on his back.

"Please take me with you, for we're going to the same place," she begged him.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the North Wind, "Even if I didn't want to, you're already riding on my back! Hold on tight then and snuggle up. Off we go!"

Our Fairy Tale held on tight and snuggled herself up as the wind rushed howling on.

Wherever they went on the way he snatched up chimney pots, umbrellas, newspapers, hats and caps, story books for the winter, smoke from lighted fires, and children's letters to Santa Claus.

"Hold the letters tight so you don't lose them," said the North Wind to the Fifth Fairy Tale. They're the most precious of all the ^{goods} stuff we're carrying."

The Fairy Tale clutched the sack of letters to her chest. They flew swiftly on like this for a long while, and the further North they went, the more the land below grew paler until it was a white as a sheet.

"Have we got to the Ice White Mountain yet?" asked the Fifth Fairy Tale. She very much wanted to stretch her legs.

"Not yet," said the North Wind, and slowed down.

"You're at the Frozen Lake. If you want you can stretch your legs for a bit here."

The North Wind stopped, the Fairy Tale hopped off onto the Frozen Lake, and put the sack full of the childrens' letters down on the ice, so that she could rest for a bit.

"No! Not on the ice, no!" shouted the North Wind. But it was already too late.

Suddenly she heard a snap, and the ice broke. A shaggy hand poked out of the Frozen Lake, and before you could say knife, it snatched the sack full of the childrens' letters. Then, immediately the hand, along with the sack, sank back into the Frozen Lake and was lost!

"Oh what a terrible thing, the childrens' letters have gone!" howled the North Wind.

"The Ice Dragon has grabbed them! Every year he lies in wait to steal them, so the children can't tell Santa Claus what presents they want. And now this year he's done it! What will the children do now, without their presents?"

The Fifth Fairy Tale was really upset. It was her fault the childrens' letters were lost.

"I'll go and get them" she said. "Everybody should take responsibility for their own mistakes!" And before the North Wind could stop her, she'd made a hole in the crack in the ice just where the Ice Dragon's hand had disappeared. It really was freezing in there, and if she hadn't have been wrapped up in her hat and coat the Fifth Fairy Tale really would have caught a dreadful cold!

The Ice Dragon was all shaggy and had an ugly snout. He ran like a gazelle laughing wildly, and the ice squeaked under his feet.

"Stop, stop!" the Fairy Tale shouted at him. "If you want to see yourself as one of the magic characters in the tale of the Ice White Mountain, stop! I'm not the North Wind, - I'm the Fifth Orphan Fairy Tale!"

The Ice Dragon stopped.

"You're just making it up about putting me in your list of magic characters," he said,

"You Fairy Tales are always telling stories! You have princes and kings, fairy godmothers and beautiful maidens as your characters, but dragons are always left out!

“You’re wrong! Proper Fairy Tales always have one or two dragons amongst their characters,” said the Fifth Orphan Tale, “Me, honestly, several times I’ve put four dragons in my characters.”

The Dragon hesitated a bit.

“You’ll put me in?”

“Of course I’ll put you in!”

Even though I’m nasty and frightening?”

“You’re worse than that! Just give me back the sack of childrens’ letters. What do you want with them anyhow, seeing you can’t read?”

“Nothing - I’ll throw them on the fire to warm me up.”

“That’s a laugh!” said the Fairy Tale, - “an Ice Dragon who wants to get warm? Maybe you’ve turned into a Butterbaby, and you need warming up?”

She really annoyed the Dragon. There’s nothing worse you can say to a pedigree dragon than ‘Butterbaby’. He roared fearsomely and his snout looked even more horrible.

“Look at you! Now you look even nicer! What can I do with you, Dragon dear?

I don’t want any more beauties. I’ve got beautiful maidens, handsome princes and fairy godmothers. I need ugly ones, terrifying dragons and witches, to make the characters inviting. All the time you hang on to the childrens’ letters you lose your horrible looks. You’ve begun to look like a child yourself, - a sweet little dragonlet, and rather ordinary, like rice pudding!”

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The Dragon began to think hard. He didn’t want to be sweet. Either he was a Dragon, or nothing. He had boasted to the Frozen Lake that he was its most terrifying lord and master.

"Take them!" he said to the Fifth Fairy Tale, and threw down the sack of childrens' letters.

"But be sure to put me in your characters looking like this. With my long arms and big ears and horrible mouth. Look at my teeth!"

"I've already put you in my characters" said the Fairy Tale. "You're the best of the ugly ones - the star of the terrifying characters!" And seizing the sack of letters, our Fairy Tale leapt out of the Frozen Lake. Just in time. Soon she would have been a Frozen Fairy Tale.

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The North Wind had gone a little further. He was spinning round like a whirlwind forever on the same spot.

"Come on, Fairy Tale! I'm huffing and puffing round the same spot waiting for you" said the North Wind. "Come on, hold tight, and soon we'll get to the Ice White Mountain. First stop Dwarf Town. I'll leave you here to seek your Happy Ending. I'll go on to Santa Claus's house so I can give him the sack of letters. New Year's Day will soon be here!

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They arrived at Dwarf Town just when it was time for dinner. Our Fairy Tale got down, thanked the North Wind and knocked on the first door. The door was opened by a dwarf no taller than a hand's span.

"Perhaps my Happy Ending is here?" asked the Fairy Tale. "I'm the Fifth Orphan Fairy Tale you know, and I'm searching for it.

"She's not here, but she should be somewhere around here" replied the dwarf, "I saw her footprints in the snow this morning. Come along in, you're welcome to have

something to eat and take a rest. Night has fallen. Tomorrow morning we can all search together.

The Fairy Tale came into the dining room. Around the table there were eighteen dwarves, all exactly the same. You could only tell the difference between them by their caps, all of which were a different colour. Mr White had a white one, Mr Black a black one, Mr Yellow a yellow, Mr Red, red, and so on. They seated the Fairy Tale at the head of the table, sucked up their soup, and afterwards sat round the fire. They roasted chestnuts and told stories to while away the long night. That evening the Fifth Fairy Tale heard eighteen stories about dwarves and caps.

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At exactly ten o'clock the grandfather clock struck, and immediately all the dwarves stood up. The Fairy Tale bid them goodnight eighteen times, and they all fell into a deep sleep. Outside the snow fell in flakes as big as popcorn.

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The next morning the eighteen dwarves went out to help the Fifth Orphan Fairy Tale find her Happy Ending. Because they were very very small, the dwarves got lost in the snow, and you could only see their coloured caps running hither and thither. All at once Mr Green called out

"Here everyone! I've found footprints!" They all ran over and saw some footprints made by the soles of enormous feet.

"Oh my goodness! These are the footprints of Mrs Polar Bear" said Mr Yellow.

"Let's follow them and see where they go" said Mr Grey.

"Maybe Mrs Polar Bear will lead us to the Orphan Fairy Tale's Happy Ending," said Mr Crimson.

So the eighteen dwarves and the Fifth Fairy Tale followed Mrs Polar Bear's footprints right the way to the furthest part of Dwarf Town. There, all glistening, the Ice White Mountain rose up to a great height. Mrs Polar Bear's footprints stopped at the foot of the Ice White Mountain.

"That's a funny thing" said Mr Red, "the footprints disappear here."

"It could mean one of two things," said Mr Orange, "Either Mrs Polar Bear put on wings and flew off into the sky ..."

"Or some sort of secret door opened in the Ice White Mountain." finished off Mr Blue.

"We've not got far to go then" said Mr Black.

So they began to search round and round the Ice White Mountain, all the different colours of their caps fluttering round like butterflies against the white.

"Hey! Come here! I think I've found something!" said Mr Violet. And they all ran towards a split in the ice.

"Everyone push! One, two, three! The Fairy Tale helped as well as they began to push with all their might against the ice. Suddenly the ice went 'crack' and opened. As quick as possible the Fairy Tale and six of the dwarves went into it. Mr Red, Mr Yellow, Mr Green, Mr White, Mr Pink and Mr Grey. The others were left behind, because immediately the split closed up again.

The Fairy Tale who was not afraid went first, and the six dwarves followed her. Now Mrs Polar Bear's footprints clearly seemed to point downwards. There was an enormous chasm in the ice.

"Is there anybody here?" enquired the Fifth Fairy Tale. "Please help me find my Happy Ending!" But instead of an answer she heard a low groan.

“Who’s that groaning ?” enquired the Fifth Fairy Tale. Thereupon she saw Mrs Polar Bear lying deep down in the ice. She really was as white as snow, and the Fairy Tale could only make out her nose and eyes. But such enormous sweet eyes!

“Mrs Polar Bear, is it you groaning?”

“Who else is as unhappy as me?” groaned Mrs Polar Bear, “I’m the last one left! All my family, parents brothers and sisters, and my children have turned into thick fur coats for rich ladies! I’ve given up all hope , - leave me to die in peace!”

The Fifth Fairy Tale realised immediately that Mrs Polar Bear was her Happy Ending.

“But hope is never lost for ever, Mrs Polar Bear. Me too, I’m looking for my Happy Ending. Maybe you are my Happy Ending?”

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Mrs Polar Bear glanced up and saw the Fairy Tale. The six dwarves had scrambled down just above her so that their caps shone against the snow like a technicoloured bunch of grapes. Mrs Polar Bear smiled.

“How lovely you are, all bunched up together,” she said “I’d certainly like to have some companions as well, - would to God I could be your Happy Ending!”

“You’ll be my Happy Ending from this moment on ! We must celebrate!” the Fairy Tale shouted with joy.

“You’re welcome to come and eat supper with us,” said Mr Red.

“We’ll have honey and nuts, like Polar Bears love!” said Mr Green.

“And we’ll roast chestnuts on the fire!” said Mr White.

“And we’ll have ice cream as well!” said Mr Pink.

“Be quiet - you’re mistaken,” Mr Grey corrected him, “Ice cream is for the summer.

Now we have walnut cake.”

"Oh yes, walnut cake."

"We shall play the lute and the mandolin and the mouth organ! We'll sing and we'll dance!"

Mrs Polar Bear looked at them greatly moved. The Fairy Tale lifted her gently into her arms.

"Come, Mrs Polar Bear, and we'll all look for someone of your own. It can't be that there's not even one of your own kind on the whole of the Ice White Mountain!"

"We'll write to Santa Claus and ask him to bring a Mr Polar Bear for Mrs Polar Bear at New Year" Mr Red suggested with a twinkle in his eye.

"And what's more, we'll write asking him to put in prison everyone who wears a fur coat made of Polar Bear skin!"

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With her Polar Bear Happy Ending and her following of eighteen dwarves the Fifth Fairy Tale went back to Dwarf Town. They ate, drank, danced and sang, and afterwards the Fifth Fairy Tale sat down to prepare her list of characters for the Tale of the Ice White Mountain. Just as she had promised, first and foremost of the terrifying characters she put in the Dragon from the Frozen Lake. Next the dwarves, of course, and then all the souls that live on the Ice White Mountain. Mrs Polar Bear watched over her Fairy Tale like a mother over her baby. And when she had finished her work, everyone sat round the fire and waited for Santa Claus to come down the chimney. He brought eighteen caps, one for each of the dwarves because last years' had worn out. He also brought a handsome Mr Polar Bear for our Mrs Polar Bear. So the Fairy Tale had two Happy Endings, and even more - all the little polar bears from the Polar Bears' marriage.

### The Sixth Orphan Fairy Tale

The Sixth Orphan Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Red Volcano. Her mission was the most dangerous, but she had the stomach for it. Now, anybody who says that they're not afraid of fire and lava is telling lies, even if it is a Fairy Tale whom fire can't burn and whom lava can't melt. However, the Sixth Fairy Tale was of the opinion that Fairy Tales should take on their own shoulders all the things which other people dare not do. As she was leaving she took with her two very important safeguards; a bottle of water, and the Stone Flower. The water was for when she felt thirsty, and the Stone Flower was so that she would never forget her purpose: to find her Happy Ending.

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The ^{Stone} Stone Flower had a sad history. She was born on the Red Volcano a thousand years ago. She had soft petals, and small embroidered leaves. Hardly had she opened her eyes to the light, before she managed to say a 'Good Morning', when the Red Volcano erupted. The Fire Monster hidden in its bowels flowed out, shooting flames from his mouth, and shooting stabbing needles from his eyes. He rushed down the slope where the little flower was enjoying the sunshine without a care in the world. He seized her and his lava oozed round her. And she, from being soft and silky, instantly turned into a stone and collapsed injured onto the slope of the volcano. She stayed there alone weeping silently for a thousand years. Winds, lost kites, and storks carrying babies in their beaks passed above her head, the stone flower down below. Then, one day a witch gathering magic herbs saw the little flower all alone as she was, felt sorry for her, and sent her to the Sixth Orphan Fairy Tale along with a note saying, 'Carry me and safely keep,

When Happy Ending you do seek.

Your own luck will come to you

And the freedom you are due.'

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And to tell the truth, the Stone Flower became the most steadfast advisor to the Sixth Fairy Tale. Every time she went the wrong way, the Stone Flower trembled as if she were saying, 'Not that way, go the other way!'

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When she arrived at the Red Volcano the Sixth Fairy Tale saw a great crowd had gathered.

"What's happening, what's going on?," she asked a little old woman.

"Oh what a dreadful thing has befallen us!" the little old woman moaned.

"The Fire Monster with his three heads and six tongues has snatched away our most beautiful children - a hundred boys and a hundred girls. He's taken them into the depths of the volcano. And amongst them is Sweet Tongue who sings like a nightingale. To set them free he says we have to bring him the green emerald from Medusa."

"Is Medusa the one with snakes on her head instead of hair?"

"That's the one! Oh if only it weren't that wild monster. On top of her head amongst the snakes there's an emerald as big as an egg!" said the little old woman, "That's the egg the monster wants before he'll let the children go."

"Fairy Tales aren't afraid of snakes!"

"But there are her terrible eyes too. They turn anyone they see to stone!"

“Not a problem! Fairy Tales don’t turn to stone unless they’re pretend tales. You’ll have the emerald by tomorrow!”

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Immediately all the childrens’ families and friends fell down on their knees in front of the Fairy Tale.

“Oh bring us the emerald that’ll set the children free, and we’ll make an icon of you and worship you!” they said.

“I’m simply and solely a Fairy Tale, although unfortunately an orphan. I’m not a potentate or king that you should make an icon of me to worship. I’m looking for my Happy Ending, but if I can help, I won’t say no. The only thing is, if you know whereabouts Medusa is to be found, tell me, so I can save some time!”

They told her that Medusa had her house on the Slippery Crag where no man’s feet had ever walked , but only eagles and vultures. The Sixth Fairy Tale, as we have said, wasn’t afraid of anything. So she started off for the Slippery Crag. She walked all night long across steep and sharply pointed rocks. In the morning she met with a most beautiful white horse, grazing right on the very edge of the Crag. On his back he had a pair of wings.

“Aren’t you afraid of falling off that rock?” the Fairy Tale asked.

“Me - afraid? Can’t you see the wings on my back! If I want to I can stand on the air!” neighed the horse proudly. “I’m called Pegasus. Have you never heard of me? - Pegasus, son of Medusa and Poseidon, the God of the Sea.”

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The Fairy Tale approached the horse and stroked his wings.

"I'm the Sixth of the Ten Orphan Fairy Tales" she said, "And I'd give anything for you to take me for a flying ride!"

"Nothing easier!" said Pegasus. "I need to take some air - I've gone a bit stiff. Jump up on my back, then. The only thing is, I need a poem before I can take off!"

"A poem? I don't understand"

"Other horses eat hay. I eat verses. I am the horse of poetry. Do you understand now?"

If you want to fly high, prepare your lines, Dear Little Fairy Tale!"

The Fairy Tale didn't have any. As we have said, for safeguards she only had the Stone Flower and the bottle of water. She hadn't brought any poems. More fool her, since everyone should have one or two good poems handy! The Stone Flower trembled as if she wanted to help the Fairy Tale. And to tell the truth, she did. The Fairy Tale suddenly remembered two children's ^{verses} poems. She's heard them being said by infants in school as she was passing by.

" ' My little moon, all aglow

Shine on me so I can go

Off to school where I must know

All my letters learnedly

And things of God so heavenly' "

Pegasus became stronger.

"Come on then, Little Fairy Tale, we're going up! "

Our Sixth Fairy Tale didn't lose a second. She leapt onto his back, and he leapt up with a flap, opening his wings wide.

“Another poem, so I can go higher,” Pegasus said. The Fairy Tale tried hard to remember one. No luck! Then the Stone Flower trembled again, and the Fairy Tale recited,

“ ‘Verses are much happier when
Children’s lips are reading them.
Very different and much better
When children’s lips pronounce the letters.’ ”

Pegasus enjoyed these lines and got stronger. He reached as high as the clouds.

“Now that I’m feeling stronger, I can, if you wish take you to my home on the star Pegasus. You’re a Fairy Tale, aren’t you? For a Fairy Tale the star Pegasus is just a big step away!”

“Hmmm, does your mother live there too? I’d really like to meet her,” said the Fairy Tale as if she didn’t know.

“If you prefer we can go to Mother’s for some refreshment,” whinnied Pegasus.

“She lives on the Slippery Crag. Only I must warn you that she’s not always very hospitable.”

“We must take her a present,” said the Fairy Tale, “It doesn’t do to go on a visit with empty hands”

“What will you take her? The only things she likes are snakes” laughed Pegasus.

“So, snakes it is then!” said the Fairy Tale, and dismounted.

She went onto the rocks to collect the snakes. With the bottle and water as bait she collected ten. The poor things came to drink the water, and then she pounced on them.

She tied them up like a bunch of flowers. She remounted Pegasus and they went on their way. Pegasus alighted on some rocks in front of a cave.

“Well, here we are!” he said, “Be careful not to slip. Mother’s washing her wig again!”

Medusa was sitting in front of her cave. She had laid her snakes out in rows and was combing them. On her head, instead of hair, she had other snakes all with their mouths open at the ready. On the middle of her head glowed a deep green emerald as big as an egg, in amongst the snakes with their open mouths.

“Mother, I’m bringing you a visitor,” neighed Pegasus. She’s an Orphan Fairy Tale.

What have we got to entertain her?”

“Apart from snake venom, nothing,” Medusa grumbled. “Besides, as you can see, I’ve just washed my other wig. I’m rather tired and I can’t busy myself with entertaining”

“Oh, you needn’t do anything. Fairy Tales eat very little, even when they’re orphans,” said the Fairy Tale. “Here you are, take your present!” The Fairy Tale held out the snakes for Medusa. She went mad with joy!

“Now I’ll have three wigs. My first one is almost worn out!”

Then Medusa noticed the Stone Flower.

“Who turned the flower to stone?” she demanded.

“The Fire Monster” said the Fairy Tale.

“He’s stealing my job from me!” Medusa said, and shook with anger. “Only I should turn people to stone with my stare. Since when has a stupid monster stolen my art?

Hang on, little flower, while I turn you back again this minute!”

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Then Medusa took the Stone Flower, and held her in front of her eyes and stared at her for a long time. After that she whispered magic words, and blew on the flower with all her might. The Stone Flower rocked a little in the palm of Medusa’s hand, shook

out her petals and stood up straight. Her petals became moist and alive as if she'd only just opened.

The Fairy Tale was delighted. The Stone Flower bent over and gracefully kissed Medusa's hand.

"I took you for a thoroughly bad person," she said to her, "but the good you've done for me shows that you've got some heart. I was trapped in stone for a thousand years and I was jealous of the living creatures that passed me by. There I was, stuck fast, and totally forgotten. Thanks to the Fairy Tale I know what the world is like, and thanks to you I know what life is like!"

"Stay with me so you can keep me company. I get bored all alone in the wild," said Medusa. "My son Pegasus gallops about the sky collecting verses. Stay and keep me company, flower, so that we can chat. I'll give you a proper name; 'Flower of the Mountain'."

"I'll stay so long as the Fairy Tale doesn't mind," replied the Flower.

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To tell the truth the Fairy Tale didn't want to lose her flower, but on the other hand she couldn't take her by force. So she said to Medusa,

"With pleasure! Let my flower stay with you to keep you company. I shall go and seek my Happy Ending and then I shall have company too."

"Thank you. Now what can I do for you? Tell me whatever you want, and you shall have it."

"I like your emerald. Perhaps I can borrow it for a while?"

"Here you are - have it! It's too heavy for my head anyway!"

~~~~~

Medusa took off the emerald and gave it to her. The Fairy Tale kissed the flower and said goodbye to Medusa, climbed on Pegasus's back and flew off to the Red Volcano. Now she had with her the bottle of water, and instead of the Stone Flower, the Green Emerald. They arrived at night. There was nobody about. Everybody had gone home to weep for their children whom they believed lost. Pegasus dropped our Fairy Tale on the rim of the Volcano and flew off to his star for a sleep. The Fairy Tale put on clothes that could withstand the heat of the lava, hid the water under her cloak, and rushed inside, gripping the emerald. From far below she heard a lovely voice singing. "Monster of the Red Volcano, where are you? Come on, I've brought you your emerald. Now give me back the children!" said the Fairy Tale.

"Who's there? Who has dared to venture into my magma? Who's interrupted my fiancée's singing?" said the voice of the Monster.

"Somebody different, - a Fairy Tale! Here you are, take your emerald! Now I hope you'll get a bit nicer and not want any more young men or women to be your slaves."

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The Monster appeared. Even the Fairy Tale who had seen dragons, wild beasts, and fiends was scared as soon as she saw the Monster. Three heads, and each one had two mouths, and from each mouth poked out a flaming tongue. From his eyes, needles shot out that stabbed anything standing in front of them.

"Oh my!" said the Fairy Tale, "I'll put you down as the most terrifying of my characters! Here you are, take your emerald, and hand over the children you've got locked up." The Monster took the emerald and examined it closely. "This is it," he said.

"This is my emerald and that vile Medusa stole it from me. Now you've brought it

back to its father," he said tenderly, as if he were talking to his child. He kissed it, and then put it on top of one of his heads.

"How do I look? It suits me! Shall I wear it for my wedding?" he asked the Fairy Tale.

"What?" Who's the woman who would ever have you with such a terrifying face? "

"The sweetest voiced of all! Come and listen to her. Do come into my palace."

The Monster led our Fairy Tale to the depths of the Volcano. The flames and lava didn't reach that far. There the Monster had his palace, all made of diamonds and rubies that shone bright red. In one corner of the palace the two hundred girls and boys were gathered. They were all kept bound hand and foot, apart from one girl who was standing in the middle of the room.

"You're very lucky," said the Monster, "The Fairy Tale has come to set you free.

She's brought me back my emerald. You can all go except Sweet Tongue. She's going to be my wife. She shall live with me for ever and ever in my palace so that she can sing to me."

Then a brave young man stood up and said

"None of us will go unless Sweet Tongue comes with us! All or none!

"In that case, - none!" snorted the Monster. " You'll be my slaves. In any case it's not easy to find any servants down here. You'll clean and you'll sweep and you'll see that the flames and lava are white hot. Little by little you'll grow three heads, and each one will have three mouths with tongues that throw fire. You'll be little monsters just like me!"

The wretched children were terrified.

The Sixth Fairy Tale listened carefully. There was only one way to escape from slavery - by a trick!

"Mr Monster," she said sweetly, "you musn't get so worked up! It's not good for your skin. Look, we Fairy Tales always find ways out of difficult situations. Do you know what I'm holding?"

"What is it?" said the Monster, "It's a bottle!"

"But do you know what's inside it?"

"It's water isn't it? Tip it out quickly! Don't you know water isn't allowed here? Fire and water don't mix at all! Tip it out I tell you!"

"But this isn't ordinary water! It's the water of eternal life. Whoever drinks it lives for ever!"

"Forever? Give it to me at once!"

The Fairy Tale went up close to the Monster, and with one quick movement threw the water from the bottle into the six mouths. Immediately the flames died, and black smoke came out of the mouths. The Monster roared. Then our Fairy Tale threw the remaining water into his eyes. The needles shrank. The Monster fell writhing onto the ground. The Fairy Tale removed the chains from the children, and pushed them towards the door, protecting them from the lava with her special clothes. The boys and girls went outside. All except Sweet Tongue.

"I'll go out with you, Sixth Orphan Fairy Tale. I've been waiting for you."

"Maybe you're my Happy Ending?" asked the Fairy Tale.

"I believe I am," said Sweet Tongue. "Every morning I comb my hair and sing, and Fairy Tales come out of my mouth."

"Come, Sister mine," exclaimed the Sixth Fairy Tale joyfully. "Our friends are waiting for us outside. We two shall do lots of things together!"

They were the last to go outside. They were greeted with clapping. And there the Sixth Fairy Tale settled down for ever and ever. The Monster never appeared again.

Sometimes in the evenings they hear him writhing about shut up in his flaming furnace.

The Seventh Orphan Fairy Tale

The Seventh Orphan Fairy Tale took the road that led towards the Concrete City. She wasn't particularly happy. At the time when the Ten Orphan Fairy Tales were drawing lots to decide where each of them should go to seek their Happy Endings, the Seventh Fairy Tale wished that a magical place would fall to her, a fairy tale place, like the Ice White Mountain, the Red Volcano, or the Bright Blue Sea. Instead the worst place fell to her : the Concrete City. She knew there were lots of people there, jostling each other along the way, running as fast as they could, or hiding in their houses, like cages one on top of the other. Fairy Tales love the open air, forests, mountains, seas and rivers, and they look for mystery, they want witches, fairy godmothers, frightening dragons and monsters, so that in the end good can triumph over evil. A Concrete City holds none of these things, unless you imagine the chimneys that poke up into the sky belching out black smoke are witches, or unless you imagine that all those nasty T.V. ariels which sprout up from rooves, are forests.

Be that as it may, a Fairy Tale is obliged to seek her Happy Ending wherever it is to be found, even in a Concrete City where T.V. ariels sprout up from rooves instead of forests and flowers.

So the Fairy Tale set off with a heavy heart. From a long way off she could make out the dead weight of the cloud hanging over Concrete City like a cotton mattress. She continued towards it, but she didn't know where to begin. She thought to herself that you could get lost more easily in a big city than in a desert. She circled round the tower blocks for some time when suddenly she saw an open window where the curtain had blown outside. The Seventh Fairy Tale was excited. It was as if a sign had been sent to her. She grabbed the curtain at once, and jumped into a child's bedroom. She smelt medicine. A pale little girl was asleep in bed. The Fairy Tale touched the little girl lightly on her forehead and felt that she was burning. Instantly she understood that the Little Girl would take her to her Happy Ending.

"Good Morning, Little Girl," she said, "I'm the Seventh Fairy Tale. I believe you sent for me, - and here I am!"

At once the Little Girl opened her eyes.

"I knew you'd come! Every day I sent you messages in my sleep, and when I was awake. My little toy hare was always telling me that you'd get lost somewhere in the world, but I knew you'd come! The sun's rays that shine every morning on my window pane whispered it to me, and every night the

moon smiled at me and said 'Your Fairy Tale will come, the Orphan one, and you will guide her to her Happy Ending' And in the middle of the night when I couldn't sleep, the stars in the sky sang to me and said

'Your Fairy Tale will come to you

The Fairy Tale an orphan too.

Open the window and in she'll come

Out of the sky (around the sun)

A Happy Ending calls for her

And you'll find it along with her.

Open the glass,

That she may pass!

It's because of this I always wanted my window open, day and night, summer and winter - because I knew you'd come, my Fairy Tale!"

"So now I have come! Are you going to take me to my Happy Ending?"

The Little Girl lifted the velvety hare which was lying by her side, and asked him,

"Little Hare, what shall we do now? The Fairy Tale I've been waiting for has come, and she wants me to take her to her Happy Ending."

The Little Hare twitched his ears and nose, and said in a serious voice,

"I wouldn't say no to a stroll."

"You're right," answered the Little Girl, "It's very tedious pinned to this mattress. But how shall I walk? The doctors tell me that my legs won't hold me - I'm paralysed!"

"Oh, don't worry about that!" laughed the Seventh Orphan Fairy Tale, "Fairy Tales find a way! They walk.... what am I saying? They run without legs. In any case, look, we've got the curtain....."

"But my mother will come to find me in bed. She'll cry!"

"The form of your sleeping body will be there. She'll see it, but the real you will be with me."

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So saying, she took the curtain and spread it out on the air like a carpet. She gently lifted up the Little Girl who was holding the Little Hare tight, and laid her down on top of it.

"Off we go, then!" said the Fairy Tale, and the Little Girl clapped her hands with glee!

They flew up like this for a long time above the Concrete City. They saw all the people through the windows; some working, some doing exercises, others cooking, and others sleeping.

"Fairy Tale, how will you find your Happy Ending among so many people? There are lots and lots of them, thousands, maybe millions!"

"Don't worry, - it'll send me some sort of signal," said the Fairy Tale.

"And what if it's lost it's way?"

"It'll send me a message by a bird."

"But the birds have left the city. They were frightened by the noise and flew further away."

"My Happy Ending will find a way. Fairy Tales' Happy Endings always find a way!"

"And what if somebody sees our curtain and pulls at it? We'll fall to the ground in smithereens!"

"Ah, Little Girl, don't worry! Wherever there are Fairy Tales children aren't in danger of coming to grief. Nobody can see us. People only see what they want to see, - we're invisible!"

So the three of them flew onwards on top of the curtain for many hours; the Fairy Tale, the Little Girl, and the Little Hare. All of a sudden they saw a big house all painted white.

"What a lovely house!" said the Little Girl, "Maybe your Happy Ending is in there? Shall we go and take a look?"

Invisibly they entered the house. The opulence dazzled them; crystal, silver, velvets and porcelain.

"Surely your Happy Ending will be here, - a Fairy Tale Happy Ending!" said the Little Girl. "Just look at the wealth and beauty. Surely these people must be happy!"

"Humph! You're wrong, Little Girl! Wealth isn't always a sign of happiness. But let's go and take a look!"

They walked from room to room. Not a soul appeared. At the end of a corridor, hunched over a desk, they found a gentleman. In front of him he had a computer, and a great pile of papers which he was studying.

"Good Morning to you, Sir" said the Fairy Tale politely. "Am I disturbing you?"

The Gentleman didn't hear her at all. He continued to study, to write, and to do sums.

"Excuse me, Sir, I'm the Seventh Orphan Fairy Tale, and I'm searching for my Happy Ending - perhaps you've seen it?"

"Err - What?" said the Gentleman abstractedly, "Oh, no! Nobody's been here for years. I'm absolutely alone."

"You live by yourself in all this great house?"

"And where should I go? It's my house. As you can see I'm comfortable here: easy chairs, twenty bathrooms, and thirty bedrooms. I've got a swimming pool, although I don't swim because I'm allergic to the water. I've got about forty servants; gardeners, chauffeurs and secretaries. Really I've got everything I need, and plenty of money to buy whatever I might want. But still, I feel that I'm missing something, - I don't know quite what. That's why I'm studying these papers."

"Your're searching though papers to find what you're missing?" the Fairy Tale asked.

"Yes, of course! These papers are an inventory of all my belongings; houses, companies, and everything else. That's why I'll find what I'm missing there."

"Perhaps your missing a Fairy Tale?"

"Oh, I didn't think of that!" said the Gentleman, "Maybe, maybe not. I'll study my papers to find out."

The Gentleman bent over his papers again. He began his sums and writing. The Fairy Tale winked at the Little Girl

"Come on, let's go! - my Happy Ending isn't here!"

They flew off again sitting on the curtain. They went on for hours, until it began to get dark. Then suddenly, down below on the road, they saw an old beggar. He was blind and in rags. In front of him was a paper on which was written,

'Blindness is my lot

But blind I'm really not.

Hands good or bad I know

Hands bad or good will show'

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The Fairy Tale gently landed the curtain next to the beggar. People were coming and going around him, busy with their own affairs. Nobody took any notice of the Little Girl sitting on the pavement beside the beggar. Some threw coins absentmindedly into the small plate in front of him.

"Hallo, Grandpa!" said the Fairy Tale "I've brought you some friends."

"Friends are not friends for me any more, - they're all snares and delusions!" said the Old Man.

"Oh, don't say that, Gramps!" said the Little Girl, and took the Old Man's hand and kissed it.

The Old Man began to cry.

"I had a little granddaughter just like you, and I lost her," he said sadly.

"Where do you live, Grandpa?" asked the Little Girl.

"I had a palace, and I lost it. Now my home is in the rubbish dump."

"Don't you have any friends, - somebody who loves you?"

"When I was rich I had hundreds of friends and relatives. Now I've lost them all!"

"You've got me for a friend," said the Little Girl.

"And me!" said the Hare

"And above all, me!" said the Fairy Tale. "I'm an orphan Fairy Tale you know, looking for a father. I'm searching for my Happy Ending. Would you like to be my Happy Ending?"

"I'm old, tired and sick, Dear Fairy Tale. I can't be a Happy Ending for you. If I had security then perhaps. I remember when I was little I liked Fairy Tales a lot. I had a grandpa too who told me one every night. It was in the countryside where we lived.... I knew so many fairy tales!"

"So now you're a grandpa yourself, you must tell fairy tales yourself!" said the Little Girl.

"And who will listen?"

"Me! I long for a fairy tale person to tell me fairy tales whilst I'm stuck in bed every day. Come with us, - I'll help you to remember your grandpa's fairy tales!"



With many thanks the Old Man accepted. What had he to lose? Only his rags, hunger and cold. He got onto the curtain with the Little Girl, the Hare, and the Fairy Tale, and immediately they took off. As they were flying by the white house, they saw the Gentleman through the window, still hunched up over his desk, studying his papers.

"I know that man," said the Old Man. "He was the one who stole my house, my wealth and my happiness. He was my business partner, and he left me broke. He took everything. Just look at my house, with the thirty bedrooms and forty servants, and crystal and silver ... Stop, Fairy Tale!"

"Lets go and talk to him," said the Fairy Tale.

They went in through the window. The Gentleman raised his head. His eyes were shining.

"I've found what I was missing!" he said, "- friends and loved ones! Come on, I'll lay the table, as I said - I've got plenty of room for everyone."

The Fairy Tale signalled for the Old Man to go closer to the Gentleman.

"Hello," said the Old Man, "do you remember me, partner?"

At first the Gentleman hesitated, then he flung his arms round the Old Man.

"I was searching everywhere for you to say that I was sorry, but I couldn't find you anywhere."

"Where did you look for me? I sleep in the rubbish dump, - you sleep in my bed...."

"But now you'll come here with me. What's mine is yours, because I wronged you."

The Old Man smiled.

"It's too late now. I don't need anything. I have become the Seventh Fairy Tale's Happy Ending. I also have a granddaughter to care for. You can have your wealth for company!"

The Gentleman knelt down in front of the Old Man.

"I implore you, don't abandon me! What's the use of money without anyone to share it with?"

"Take a walk to the rubbish dump and you'll find plenty of beggars. Share it with them!" said the Old Man. "If you like you can take my pitch. And if you're very patient, perhaps you'll find your own fairy tale as well to keep you company."

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So saying the Old Man turned to his friends. He got back onto the curtain and they flew far away.

Now the Concrete City looked quite different at night with all the lights; as if it were enchanted, like a fairy tale. They went back to the Little Girl's bedroom. Nobody had noticed anything different, not even her Mother who came in with her meal.

"Come, my child, eat your dinner," she said lovingly.

"Heavens! I'm as hungry as a wolf!" after a while the Little Girl said, hugging her. "Can I have a bit more to eat?"

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Her Mother was overjoyed, and went out to get some more food. The dear Old Man and the Fairy Tale were hiding behind the curtain. They tried some tasty morsels too. They really were ten times more delicious after their stroll!

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**The rest of the Fairy Tales – Jan. 2004.**

**The Eighth Fairy Tale**

The Eighth Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Paper (White?) World. It was the most complicated journey of all, even though it looked easy. Her lot clearly told her “The Eighth Fairy Tale will find her Happy Ending in the Paper World. It’s close by yet far away. It’s everywhere and yet nowhere. It’s easy and yet needs work.”

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With only these words for help, the Eighth Fairy Tale started her journey to find her Happy Ending. Her first stop was a school. She thought to herself that you could find lots of paper in a school. ‘Paper World’ must mean papers. The teacher was teaching arithmetic; two plus two makes four, and such like. The Fairy Tale sat down to listen, but she got bored. She knew things aren’t always like that; that’s to say that two plus two don’t always make four, especially in fairy tales. But she was patient, and when the lesson ended she went to the teacher privately.

“Good morning to you, I’m the Eighth Orphan Fairy Tale. I don’t know whether you’ve heard of me?” she began.

“Sit down. May I offer you a coffee or an orange squash ...?” said the teacher.

It was plain that he didn’t understand what he was talking about, for it’s well known that all types of liquid give Fairy Tales indigestion.

“I’m looking for my Happy Ending, you know, which is in the Paper World. Have you seen it by any chance?”

“Hmm – me? – not at all, but we can ask the children. We haven’t got any thieves here, so you needn’t worry Unless maybe, some stranger came this way, saw it and stole it. Is it big? How much is it worth? Does it fit into a pocket? ”

The Fairy Tale thought that she was wasting her time. The teacher was all in a fog when it came to Fairy Tales.

“Leave it. It doesn’t matter. I must be going,” she said.

But for the teacher it was well nigh impossible to let her go.

“Since you have a suspicion that it fell out here.... The thing you’ve lost What was it?”

“My Happy Ending.....”

“Ah yes.. Since you suspect that someone has stolen it, you must search very hard. Our school, you know, has a good reputation and it’s the best school in the whole region. Our pupils never play truant, we finish our work on the dot, and things never get lost.”

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And so saying the teacher rang a bell. A young girl came in at once.

“This is our first year Prefect,” said the teacher, “she will help you. Both of you go along to the children and ask each of them in turn, about ... something .....um ... her Happy Ending that she’s lost. She’s looking for it in the Paper World..... Have I got it right? Me, I’m sorry, I’ve got lots of demanding work to keep me busy. I’ve got a parents’ meeting, a staff meeting, I’ve got .... Good morning!”

The Fairy Tale left the room with the first year Prefect. She turned and said to the Fairy Tale with a grin,

“I recognise you, in spite of your dress. Aren’t you the Eighth Orphan Fairy Tale? Come on, I’ve been waiting for you. Let’s go to my class!”

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They went along to the little ones in the first form. They all stood up happily. They welcomed the Fairy Tale and hugged her and kissed her. They cheered altogether, clapping their hands. When they sat down the teacher opened a book and the children began to chirp like birds. They recited songs, poems, and then Fairy Tales. The Fairy Tale was very pleased. This was her world.

“Might you be my Happy Ending, perhaps?” she asked the teacher.

“Me? - I don’t think so, but then again, how would I know if I were?” she laughed.

“Let’s say that I’m just one of your Happy Endings.”

“Do you mean to say that I’ve still got lots of other journeys to make?”

“The only thing I can say is that I will help you”.

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The teacher suggested that the children play hide and seek. It was a very strange hide and seek. They hid their books under their desks! Then their teacher asked them,

“Now children, who can tell me where your fairy stories are?”

The children pointed underneath their desks.

“And if I took the books and threw them out of the window, you wouldn’t have any fairy stories any more.....?”

“We’d go and fetch them,” said a small boy.

“And if I threw them into the sea....?”

“Then we’d get other ones,” said another small boy.

“And if we threw all of those into the sea...?”

“Then fairy story writers would write some more,” said a third small boy.

Our Fairy Tale understood. She’d find her other Happy Endings somewhere in an office where they write fairy tales.

Happily she said goodbye to the teacher and to the small boys, and spread her wings to fly off to another place. She was in such a hurry that she got all tangled up in a tree. The first form children burst into laughter. They could see her through the window. "I'll come back to you again soon," said the Fairy Tale as she flew away, "as soon as I find my other Happy Endings. We'll play hide and seek ...."

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The second stop for our Fairy Tale was an office. A Gentleman with Glasses sat in front of lots of papers. He was writing then tearing up the paper, writing and tearing up the paper.

"Good morning," said the Fairy Tale, "I'm introducing myself to you. I'm the Eighth Orphan Fairy Tale and I'm looking for my other Happy Ending. Maybe you've seen it?"

"Where have you come from? Are you one of mine, or are you a stranger?"

"I told you. I'm an orphan and I'm searching for my second Happy Ending. I found my first Happy Ending in a school ..."

"Ah yes, you're for adoption. Could you wait, please?"

The Fairy Tale looked all around. There were lots and lots of fairy tales there, but they weren't finished. One didn't have a head or legs. Others didn't have lips and couldn't speak. The fourth had a mouth, but shut tight so it couldn't smile. The fifth was scary and the others were afraid of it. All of them, every last one had something wrong with it. They were thrown on the papers, heaps of papers, on the floor and in drawers.

"Ouff!" said the Gentleman with the Glasses at last, "I can't find the ending, overwhelmed as I am with fairy tales. Now, tell me then. You're an orphan and you want to be in a book with all the others?"

“I want to find my second Happy Ending, that’s what I want. And if my Happy Ending is to be found in a book, I haven’t got any objection”

“Hmm, this is something we need to talk about. As you can see I write fairy tales. I should be very happy to adopt you and put you in a book; in other words to become your second Happy Ending, like you said. But I’m thinking, wouldn’t it be very boring for you between the pages? You have learned to roam around free. In a book it will seem as if you’re in prison, - you’ll get really fed up!”

Our Eighth Fairy Tale didn’t know what to decide. True enough she didn’t like the darkness and squeezing in a book.

“I’ve got a suggestion,” said the Gentleman with the Glasses, “If you like you can go in for a little while, and if you don’t like it you can come out again.”

The Eight Fairy Tale agreed. She joined the other fairy tales belonging to the Gentleman with the Glasses. For the first few days there was a lot of discomfort, machines and type setting whilst the book was born. Then more discomfort in boxes, journeys by car and into the book shop. The Fairy Tale got to know a lot of people there; fairies from fairy tales, poems and legends. It was nice there, and she like it. And so it was that being very sociable she made a lot of friends. Her first and best friend was the fairy tale Snow White. Night after night they talked together, because they were right next door to each other on the shelf. Her second friend on the other side was Sweet Pea. A little further on was the Little Prince, and furthest away with her red hood and the wolf, was Little Red Riding Hood.

Now the Eighth Orphan Fairy Tale didn’t feel that she was so much of an orphan. It was as if she had found a family. But something was still missing. She felt squashed

amongst all those papers. She asked Sweet Pea who was, as we have said, her closest friend,

“You fairy tales in books, what do you do when you get fed up?”

“Good question,” said Sweet Pea, “But some of us are lucky, we don’t stay long on the shelf. I don’t want to boast, but me personally, you’ll see, I’ll be gone in a couple of days. Children love me, and I know their mothers do, and they’ll take me.”

“They’ll take you where? You’ll have to forgive me, but as you know I’m an orphan and I don’t know....”

“They’ll take me home. They’ll ‘buy’ me, as they say.”

“And what will they do to you there at home?”

“Poor you! You really are in the dark! They’ll read me, and give me life. I’ll become a real live, much loved fairy tale.”

~~~~~

The Eighth Fairy Tale listened carefully. She’d like it very much to go to somebody’s home herself, with a Mother and a child to read her, so she’d be a real live much loved Fairy Tale. This way she’d find a third Happy Ending. So as soon as the opportunity arose, as soon as a Mother touched her lightly, she tried to attract her attention. She wiggled her body, puffed herself up, put on a little colour, and finally began to sing softly,

“Please I beg you look at me,

I’m an orphan, plain to see.

A home is what I really long for

So I won’t wander like a beggar.”

The other fairy tales around her grew angry. This wasn’t a proper way to get chosen by someone!

“Listen,” said the Little Prince sternly, “We’re friends, but what you’re doing isn’t right. You can’t persuade Mothers and children to take you just because you say you’re an orphan! What does orphan mean? The rules of the Paper World say that if you’re truly deserving, then definitely someone will find you and bring you out of hiding.”

“Oh, forgive me. I’m really sorry,” said the Eighth Fairy Tale, “I didn’t know your rules.”

And so she sat back politely squeezed into her corner. The other fairy tales left one after the other. Sweet Pea, just as he had predicted, left first. The Eighth Fairy Tale was very sad for she missed his company, his jokes and fun. He was her first friend and she felt lonely without him. She thought about giving up, but her other friend, The Little Prince, advised her to be a bit patient.

“If you go now you’ll miss your turn,” he said to her, “You’ll see, someone will find you and take you away.”

So the Eighth Fairy Tale stayed and waited there on the shelf squeezed between the other books and fairy tales. Then suddenly one day she heard a cheerful sound.

“Mummy, this one here, I want this fairy tale. We had it in my class at school, my teacher told it to us.”

It was a little boy from the first form where the Fairy Tale had first visited and played hide and seek with the teacher. His mother took the Eighth Fairy Tale off the shelf, and put it in the Little Boy’s hands.

Our Eighth Fairy Tale was overcome with delight, and quickly said goodbye to the other fairy tales.

“Until we meet again,” she whispered.

“Say some nice things about us where you’re going, so we don’t get left on the shelf too,” a little fairy tale who was new on the shelf called to her.

“I’ll do whatever I can,” promised our Eighth Fairy Tale as she settled cosily in the arms of the Little Boy.

That evening in the Little Boy’s bed as they were talking, the Eighth Fairy Tale asked him,

“Little Boy, maybe you’re my third and best Happy Ending?”

The Little Boy laughed.

“And what does it mean, that I’m your third and best Happy Ending? How funny you are, Fairy Tale!”

The Eighth Fairy Tale didn’t ask another thing. She was warm and comfy in the Little Boy’s bed. They went to sleep together, and then still together, they found themselves back in the Paper World again, journeying through other magic worlds. Certainly for now he was her third Happy Ending. The next day they went to class and played hide and seek with the children.

And they lived well and we live better, as they say. (And they all lived happily ever after?)



The Ninth Fairy Tale

The Ninth Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Green Jungle. It was a difficult but beautiful Journey. First stop the River of Crocodiles. As she tried to cross it, a fat crocodile who was basking on the bank stopped her.

“Where are you off to, if you please?” said the Crocodile.

“I’m going to the Green Jungle. I’m searching for my Happy Ending.

“In order to go into the Green Jungle you must have a license,” said the Crocodile,

“Entry is not permitted to anyone who comes from the civilised world. Your civilisation gives the Jungle a headache.”

“But I’m nothing but a Fairy Tale, and an orphan at that! I don’t come from the civilised world, I come from the depths of time, and I’m searching for my Happy ending as I told you.”

“But me, I’m under orders to take a bite out of anyone who dares to cross the river. So don’t blame me if I bite you!”

The Crocodile was a bit of a numbskull, and he didn’t understand about Fairy Tales.

“You said that anyone going into the Jungle needs a license.”

“Certainly, a license from the King of the Jungle, personal, with a seal.”

“And where shall I find him, please?”

“In the Jungle, of course!”

“But how shall I get into the Jungle if it’s not allowed?”

“I don’t know. That’s your problem!”

~~~~~

We know well that Fairy Tales don’t give up, even when confronted by numbskulls like the Crocodile. The Ninth Fairy Tale realised she’d have to find some other way to

cross the river. Further down there was a Blind Mouse. He was collecting stores for the winter. He was wearing dark glasses because the sun bothered him.

“Hallo,” said the Fairy Tale, “please could you show me the way to the King of the Jungle? I’ve got to get a license to enter the Jungle.”

“I’m very happy to point it out, but you’ll need a guide. Unfortunately I won’t be able to accompany you. I’m looking for winter stores, and my time is limited. Please, come this way.”

X The route which the Blind Mouse showed her was a bit narrow. In fact it was a hole which <sup>led</sup> lead deep into the ground. However such things held no difficulties for Fairy Tales. Our Fairy Tale squeezed herself up and shrank into a ball, so small that she was like a walnut, and rolled into the hole. But it was very very dark in there. She couldn’t see the nose on her face, as they say.

? “Hey, Mr <sup>B</sup> blind Mouse, have you got a little light?” she called. But the Blind Mouse didn’t hear her. He’d already gone looking for his supplies.

> So the Fairy Tale went on blindly in the Blind Mouse’s tunnels. She went for many miles without meeting a soul; only tree roots and seedlings which blocked the way every so often. After a while she got fed up and began to say to herself,

x } “How did I get tangled up in the hole, ~~me,~~ a fairy tale! ”

“A fairy tale? Really, you, a fairy tale, <sup>Y</sup> you honour our humble world?”

It was a tiny voice somewhere quite close.

“Who is it? Who’s speaking so close to me?” asked the Fairy Tale.

“A caterpillar, as small as a worm. I’ve never seen a fairy tale until now. It’s an honour for me.”

X “And you can’t see one now either it’s so dark!” said the Ninth Fairy Tale, “The Blind Mouse showed me the hole and after that nothing! I was walking blindly, and got lost in corridors and galleries. I must go to the King of the Jungle to get a license.”

“Oh, how careless!” said the Caterpillar, “The Blind Mouse often makes mistakes like that. Because he doesn’t like the light he believes everyone prefers to be in darkness! I’ll show you the way myself. Follow me!”

~~~~~

Our Fairy Tale felt the Caterpillar’s body; soft and damp. She followed him and soon she found herself outside in the light. The Caterpillar stopped.

X “There, now you’re close. The King will receive you no matter where he is. You must
f forgive me, but I have to return to my house, it doesn’t ^{do} so to linger in a strange place.

X In the Jungle there are many dangers – birds and lots of other things. And a little caterpillar, alone and helpless, you understand, could become a snack! Goodbye, and if you find a little corner in your list of characters, fit me in somewhere. All our fairy tales forget us caterpillars. Perhaps it’s because they believe that we can’t speak, can’t hear, and we can’t see, down there deep in the ground where we live. Yet we know how to do all those things, and we feel them, like any living thing. And I’m not ashamed to say that we are just as hard working as everyone else. Thanks to us the earth breathes, ^W without us it would die of suffocation. Oh, I’m talking too much. I do beg your pardon! My sadness overcame me. We are an unjustly treated species.

X Adieu, Fairy Tale, and have a good time, wherever you’re going!”

X The Fairy Tale felt for him. She made a note of the name ‘caterpillar’ in her list of characters. She would put him in at the first opportunity. He was so very polite!

Now, for certain she was walking in the Jungle. The vegetation became very dense like real jungle. She made progress with difficulty. Suddenly a monkey dropped out of a tree right in front of her.

“Oh! You gave me a fright!” said the Fairy Tale, “But please, tell me where is the King of the Jungle? I must get a license.”

“Hee, hee, hee! A license for what?”

“A license to enter the Jungle.”

“Hee, hee, hee! But you’re in the Jungle already!”

“Yes, but I haven’t got a license.”

Hee, hee, hee! That’s exactly what the King will ask you the moment he sees you.

And when you say ‘I haven’t got a license’ he’ll eat you up!”

“Your King eats fairy tales?”

Hee, hee, hee! He eats whatever he comes across.”

“But what shall I do then? I want to find my Happy Ending. Give me some advice, Monkey!”

“Hee, hee, hee! I don’t know. Ask the Elephant. He’s big, he’s got big feet, he’s got big ears, and a big nose. He should have a big brain, and luckily for you he hasn’t got a big mouth, hee, hee, hee, or big teeth, hee, hee, hee!”

“You’re right! I’ll go and ask him.”

The Elephant was grazing in a clearing.

“Good morning to you, Mr Elephant, have you perhaps seen my Happy Ending? I’m the Ninth Fairy Tale.

The Elephant turned round with difficulty to see who was speaking to him. He lifted his trunk high, and then let it down as if he were saying hello.

“Hello, and welcome to the Jungle. Fairy Tales seldom come all this way to us.”

"I drew a lot. We're ten Fairy Tales you know, and we're all searching for a Happy Ending. It seems to me that my Happy Ending is round about here somewhere.

Perhaps you could help me?"

The Elephant scratched his forehead with his trunk and said philosophically,

"For each and all, one fate is hidden:

Some to be crowned and some louse ridden.

But if you want advice from me,

Go on and soon the storm will catch, you'll see!"

He didn't get to the end, for a great storm began which drenched everyone. The Fairy Tale hid under the Elephant to keep dry. It was an excellent shelter, as if it were a strong concrete ceiling. As soon as the rain stopped, the Fairy Tale asked again,

"Have you seen my Happy Ending at all, Mr Elephant?"

The Elephant raised his trunk high like a politician speaking on a platform and said,

"I have seen it, but it did not see me.

For my trunk it wouldn't pay one p,

It went in the direction of the King

Without a word to me or saying anything"

"What do you mean to say, Mr Elephant? - That my Happy Ending came this way and went to the King? Please tell me, where can I find this famous King of the Jungle?"

"Wherever you are, you'll hear him. His roars shake us every morning, and always saying the same thing 'I'm the King, I'm the King'. He feels insecure. He believes everyone and anyone is plotting to kick him off the throne. Pooh! Let him think what he wants!"

~~~~~  
At that moment she <sup>actually</sup> heard for real a terrifying roaring which shook the whole jungle.

“So what did I tell you?” said the Elephant, “He’s off again! Ok, ok, we know you’re the King. For goodness sake shut up! Phew!!”

The Fairy Tale went in the direction of the place where she had heard the noise. After a while she saw the famous lion with his golden mane, sitting down so he could practice his roaring.

“Good morning, Your Majesty. My respects to you,” said the Fairy Tale humbly.

“Where have you sprung from? You’re not one of my subjects,” growled the lion imperiously, shaking his mane.

“No, I’m the Ninth Fairy Tale, searching for my Happy Ending”

“Pooh!” said the lion with a certain contempt.

“I heard that ... you saw it...I mean .. my Happy Ending.”

“A King doesn’t see anybody. Other people see the King. This person you’re talking about, your Happy Ending, yes, she saw me. She asked a favour of me.”

“A favour? - what favour?”

“She wanted to ask for a license for some orphan so she could enter the Jungle.”

“She made the request for me – looking after me! I thank you, my King, for granting the license.”

“Who said I granted her the license? I can do without all the orphans starting to run around in the Jungle.”

Without saying another thing the Lion sharpened his claws, and brushed his teeth, obviously so that he was ready for action. The Fairy Tale thought of his big insides. She must bluff!

“What a shame I have to go now,” she said, “You know, Your Majesty, you will be first on my list of characters. Kings always go first in my world. Even though you

don't want me, I'll find my Happy Ending somewhere else, not in the Jungle. Good day!"

Saying this, the Fairy Tale made a deep bow in front of the King and pretended that she was going far away.

"Hang on a moment!" called the Lion, "What list are you talking about? I don't understand."

"Goodness! A real fairy tale has her list, her cast as they say, the characters, the heroes, the goodies, the baddies. But why am I telling you all this? I must hurry up and leave your Jungle. Forget me!"

"Well, if it's like that, take the license! 'Residency of the Jungle Establishment'

Only, I must be the first to see <sup>your</sup> you list, to approve your cast."

"Marvellous!" said the Fairy Tale joyfully, "Now tell me, where is my Happy Ending?"

"Go down there and you'll find her."

Our Fairy Tale went in the direction in which he pointed. Just as she was going through the undergrowth she heard a whisper right next to her.

"The Jungle is green and green am I.

Come, my Fairy Tale, close to my eye."

The voice was her Happy Ending. The Ninth Fairy Tale felt as overjoyed as a child who has lost its mother and then found her again.

"Where are you, my Happy Ending? – Are you invisible?"

"Invisible I am not

If you think a lot

All look to no avail

Think, my Fairy Tale!"

She heard the voice so close! She pushed aside the branches of a tree so she could get by. Then suddenly the Fairy Tale understood. The voice came from inside the tree. Her Happy Ending was inside a tree.

“I should have realised it,” said the Fairy Tale, “my dear Happy Ending is inside a tree!”

“It’s me, and I am. Imprisoned in here I’m waiting for you to set me free.”

“What must I do?”

“Scratch a lucky number on the trunk.”

The Fairy Tale scratched the number 304.

“Now you say the words ‘I want’ three hundred and four times.”

The Fairy Tale did as her Happy Ending bid her. Immediately the trunk opened and there appeared a staircase leading downwards. Our Fairy Tale went down three hundred and four steps, and was faced by a door. She knocked, and it opened all by itself. Then our Fairy Tale saw in front of her a little black girl dressed in bright green.

“Well, my Ninth Fairy Tale, I the Daughter of the Jungle will be your Happy Ending, and you are the one who set me free,” said the beautiful Black Girl. “Right now my mother the Jungle is waiting for us to make her look like a fairy tale!”

~~~~~

The Ninth Fairy Tale went out with her happy Ending for a tour around the Jungle.

Everyone greeted them with respect. Big animals like elephants, giraffes, apes, leopards, rhinoceros, as well as little ones like mice, butterflies, lizards, caterpillars, the all hoped to be heroes in a fairy tale.

“Slow down! One by one!” shouted the Fairy Tale, writing down her list.

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## The Tenth Fairy Tale

The Tenth Fairy Tale drew the lot for the Vault of Heaven. At first she didn't want to go.

"It's too far!" she said again and again, grizzling, "Who knows how freezing it is so high up there?"

Well, she was the littlest as well as the most spoilt, saying her silly things.

"Come on!" her sisters said to her, "Get ready! - Your Happy Ending is waiting for you - Don't be so lazy!"

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Each of the other Nine Fairy Tales had already started their own journeys. One by one they left. When she was all alone, she didn't like it, and thought that she'd have to travel high and low for her Happy Ending. Since she was a bit lazy she wanted to find the quickest way to get up to the Vault of Heaven. And the quickest way was to get on a sunbeam! In order to find a stray sunbeam the Tenth Fairy Tale hid herself and waited. Hardly had the sun peeped over the mountain, when our Fairy Tale hastily snatched a golden sunbeam!

"Now I've got you, will you take me to the Vault of Heaven?"

"But I've just come from there, and how shall I get back there now? I have to wait until my Father the Sun, sets."

"I'm sorry, but it's impossible for me to wait even for a second! You know very well that a second makes lots of light years. Do me this kindness, Sunbeam; take me to the Vault of Heaven. My Happy Ending is waiting for me and I've been delayed. I'm the last Orphan Fairy Tale. All my other sisters have already found their Happy Endings, and are living happily ever after. Only I am waiting around as an orphan still."

~~~~~

'The Golden Sunbeam relented. He was soft hearted by nature. To tell the truth, he already liked the Fairy Tale, daring and dashing as she was.

"Come on then," he said to her –"before they get news of us. Get on quickly and we'll be off! Let's hope my sisters don't see me!"

So the Fairy Tale climbed on the glistening Sunbeam, and his cloak spread out like a fan as they flew towards the sun.

"What I'm doing is harmful and wrong," said the Sunbeam. "My father, the Sun, will go out of his mind if he finds out! Just think what would happen if all my sister sunbeams turned back to the sky early! What would happen? Dark shadows would fall on the whole of creation! The trees and the flowers wouldn't bloom, and the birds wouldn't sing. It would put everyone to sleep! I've done this because I like you. That's why I'm doing you a favour- turning round – look! Where I was before is now in darkness."

~~~~~

No mistake, a profound darkness hung over the places where the Sunbeam was before. The people who were ready to go to work, went back to bed, yawning. Cockerels which had begun to crow, shut up, and alarm clocks which had begun to buzz, stopped immediately.

~~~~~

The Tenth Fairy Tale was having a great time.

"Goodness, just look! They think it's night time!"

"Don't waste time! - Tell me, where do you want to start?" asked the Sunbeam as he dashed towards the heavens. It was scattered with stars, each one brighter than the other. The Fairy Tale was confused, and didn't know which out of so many to choose.

"Lets see – that one – the little one that shines like a diamond!" she said.

“That’s Adamantine,” said the Sunbeam, “He’s called that because, like you said, he shines like a diamond. And here we are!”

“Have we arrived already?” wondered the Fairy Tale.

“You forget, as sunbeam travels faster than anything else. Hello, Adamantine, I’ve brought you a visitor. She’s the Tenth Orphan Fairy Tale.”

“Hello,” said Adamantine, “I’m sorry, your visit was unexpected, and I haven’t managed to smarten myself up – please forgive me. Look how bedraggled I am! Oh that your visitor should see me in such a mess! I must just powder my face with a little silver dust.”

“What’s the point, Adamantine? You’re the brightest star in the heavens.”

“I am, I know. But that’s not just by luck. Do you know how much buffing, how much work it takes to keep my face dazzling? Aah! I’m dead tired! See how much silver dust I use? Whole tons! – No, nothing’s easy when you’re a star, especially the brightest! Do you see that one there, - the little boy star? As soon as he was born he began to adorn himself and puff himself up. He spies on me to see how I shine my face. He says dreadful things – that he wants to be brighter than me! That’s why it takes hard work to remain at the top.”

~~~~~

Sighing deeply, Adamantine began to rub and polish his face.

“Perhaps, - perhaps my Happy Ending is here?” asked the Fairy Tale bashfully, but Adamantine didn’t hear her at all. Now he was throwing handfuls of silver powder on his face and dusting off with a fluffy cloud.

“Let’s try Flamer,” said the Sunbeam. “Perhaps he’s noticed your Happy Ending.”

The star Flamer was burning up all over as if he had a very high fever.

“Good morning to you, Flamer. How are we today?” The Sunbeam came to the point immediately. “Our Fairy Tale is looking for her Happy Ending, and I’m asking you whether she’s come this way?”

“A little water, please! – I’m dying of thirst,” stammered Flamer. “I’m all burning up – please, have you got a little water?”

“Bother! I didn’t think of it. You see I left home in rather a hurry, and didn’t bring anything with me.”

“Nobody thinks of me, - and I’ve got such a thirst! Other stars have rivers, lakes and seas, but only flames.”

“If I’d found my Happy Ending I would have asked her to come and quench your thirst, Flamer,” said the Fairy Tale.

~

She got on the Sunbeam again and they carried on. The third star was as soft as a cloud. He was called Chillyfluff. The Sunbeam landed on him carefully, so as not to break him.

“I’ve got a friend here, Chillyfluff,” he said, “It’s the Tenth Orphan Fairy Tale, who’s looking for her Happy Ending. Perhaps you’ve seen her somewhere?”

“Good question,” said Chillyfluff, “Do you think I’m like other people and I’ve got the time to see who goes by me? I worry all day about how to keep my body together so that it won’t burst into bubbles. Everything bad happens to me. I’m all air and water. I’m freezing cold!”

“Flamer is on fire with the heat, and Chillyfluff is tortured with cold. Why don’t you get together? I think you’d suit each other,” said the Fairy Tale. “Flamer would warm you up and you could cool him down with some water. I’ll write it down in my notes so’s not to forget. If I find my Happy Ending I shall ask her to arrange it.”

~~~~~

The Sunbeam hurried up, for he had to get back. For sure his father the Sun would be beside himself with anger. The Sunbeam had turned everything upside down.

“Tenth airy Tale, you’re so slow!” said the Sunbeam, “If you don’t hurry up I shall make you go back. I can’t see your Happy Ending here amongst the stars.”

“And that one, the big one there, the one that looks like a balloon?” asked the Fairy Tale.

“Good heavens! – That’s the Moon! Didn’t you recognise her?”

“She seems different to me so high up here. Let’s go over there!”

“Very well, I’ll take you there, but then I must leave immediately. Moon and Sunbeam don’t mix! But even if your Happy Ending isn’t here either, at least you can take a moonbeam for the rest of your journey.”



And so it was. With one hop the Sunbeam disappeared and the Fairy Tale was left all alone in the Vault of Heaven. In front of her was the Moon, all round and pale and smiling.

“Greetings! – Welcome to you – come over here so I can welcome you properly, my dear Fairy Tale. You must be tired from your journey!”

“But do you know me?”

“The Moon knows everything. At the hour when everyone is asleep my rays reach into the dark corners and learn all their secrets.”

“So then you’ll know about my Happy Ending. Perhaps you’ve seen her? Maybe she’s come by here?”

The Moon smiled enigmatically and said,

“Your Happy Ending passed this way

I saw her close by

And some words did I say.

I know where her street is

I know where her yard

And for you to see her

You needn't work hard."

"Why do you torment me, my Dear Moon?" complained the Fairy Tale. And the

Moon burst into laughter.

"As you have heard, Tenth Fairy Tale, I love riddles as much as you love magic. If you solve three riddles you'll find your Happy Ending. Do you want to try?"

What could the Tenth and last Fairy Tale do? She accepted.

"The first riddle:

In a cradle like a fairy

Which afterwards turns green

Brown on the outside

And white inside is seen.

A wooden box when ripe it'd like

To taste the box you'll strike!

What am I?

The Fairy Tale thought and thought, and at last said,

"An almond!"

"Well done, Fairy Tale, - you've got it! Now for the second riddle.

Wheels it has not

But yet it runs.

It always goes down

And never returns.

No price has it got

It loves life a lot

And costs not a jot!

What am I?"

The Fairy Tale thought and thought, and at last said "Water!"

"Well done, Fairy Tale, you've guessed it! And now for the third riddle:

When you're sad or when you're gay

Without a bed it's restful all day

It's not for sale, but it can be bought

And if you don't like it

It can be changed without thought!

What am I?

The Fairy Tale thought and thought and at last she said, "I don't know"

"Come on! – One more try, my dear little Fairy Tale," said the Moon. The Fairy Tale tried and tried again, but it was still no good.

"What a shame, dear Moon, I came all the way up here, and I've got to go back down to earth without finding my Happy Ending. And the Vault of Heaven will still not have any fairies – what a shame!"

"Goodness! Whoever said anything about you going back to the earth? We want you here. Come here, and I'll take you to your Happy Ending."

"Without solving the riddle?"

"Without solving the riddle."



The Tenth Fairy Tale's Happy Ending was sitting knitting with magic needles and fairy tale thread. Her hair was like moon dust and her eyes were like stars. She got up immediately and ran towards the Fairy Tale.

"Come here, Fairy Tale mine! How I've waited for you!" she exclaimed hugging her.

"I've knitted you a tunic made of sky so you can wear it and not get cold."

~~~~~

It was very beautiful and the Fairy Tale was delighted. But deep down inside her stayed the question of the Moon's riddle.

"What is it, my little Fairy Tale, that makes you sad?" asked her Happy Ending.

"The Moon's riddle is eating me up. I solved the first one and I solved the second one but I couldn't find the answer to the third and best. I am a Fairy Tale from a good background, even though I'm an orphan, and I'd don't like being indebted to anyone."

"You're worried about that, my Fairy Tale?" said her Happy Ending. "Tell me the riddle, and I'll see if I can solve it." The Fairy Tale repeated it:

When you're sad or when you're gay

Without a bed it's restful all day

It's not for sale, but it can be bought

And if you don't like it

It can be changed without a thought!"

"Music!" said the Happy Ending immediately.

"Oh so easy, - and I got foxed and didn't get it!" said the Fairy Tale. "Thank you, my dear Happy Ending. I'll run and tell the Moon," said the Fairy Tale.

"Stop! Before you go I'll tell you a riddle so you can pay back the Moon. The Moon's mad on riddles!"

"Tell me, tell me!"

“It’s like a ball, but it doesn’t roll.

It has no wings, but yet it flies

It isn’t a light but yet it’s bright.

Everything can see it - hills and valleys too.

What am I?”

It didn’t take our Fairy Tale much thought to find the answer. I wonder if the Moon will find the answer as easily? Well anyhow, from that moment on the Dear Moon and the Tenth Fairy Tale had found the most enthralling game for whiling away the long hours up there in the sky. They make up riddles and throw them from one to the other like magic balls. Often Flamer, Adamantine, Chillyfluff and lots of other stars who met the Fairy Tale along the way, joined in.

Everyone down here on the earth, who has eyes to see further than the end of their nose, on the night of the full moon can look up at the sky and catch a glimpse of some small balls flying from one star to another. They’re not balls, they’re the riddles we spoke of before.



The Fairies' First Conference

Just like all families who get together every so often to celebrate Christmas or Easter, or some other family occasion like a wedding or a baptism, so, after a while the Ten Orphan Fairy Tales decided to meet again for their first reunion. The place was to be the foot of the Silent Mountain. It was a difficult place to meet for they were obliged to keep their lips sealed until all of them was gathered. But as we know, fairies often choose the hard way.

The Eighth Fairy Tale was the first to arrive. The Paper World where she had settled down was best suited for journeys. Has Ha! A book can be squeezed into a handbag, the bag in a car, ship or plane, and before you can say knife you can get to the edge of the world. As soon as she got to the Silent Mountain, the Eighth Fairy Tale jumped out of the book, had a good stretch to get the feeling back into her limbs, and settled down without a word to wait for the others.

After a short while, the Third Fairy Tale arrived. She had tumbled down the Brown Mountain and her clothes were all smothered in chocolate colour. So she gave them a good shake, greeted her sister by winking happily, and the two of them together waved at the next one in the distance, who was just arriving.

It was the Seventh Fairy Tale who came from the Cement City. She kept on blowing off the exhaust fumes which had settled on her without saying a word because, as we have said, she was on the Silent Mountain. So she sat down beside the others and waited for the rest of them.

In a little while the First and Second arrived. They had met one another on the way and came on foot together. The Grey Valley where the First was, and the Yellow Desert where the Second went, were in the same direction. They seated themselves in silence, and so these two waited for the others.

The Fourth arrived all wet. As we know, she lived in the Bright Blue Sea, and the Eighth, bright red, for we know she lived in the Red Volcano. The Fifth who lived on the Ice White Mountain arrived frozen, and the Ninth who lived in the Green Jungle was covered with buzzing flies. Last of all the Tenth Fairy Tale who lived in the Vault of heaven, arrived riding on a moonbeam and panting.

They counted themselves silently, and confirmed that nobody was missing. Then huddling themselves together in a bunch they went down to the Valley of Talking. They couldn't stand the silence a moment longer; as if they were dumb. They has so much to say; joys and sorrows to share. Hardly had they arrived at the Valley of Talking when they started talking all at once, thus beginning what they called their Conference. They talked about their Happy Endings and the people they had got to know. They spoke of the difficulties the Fairy Tales had encountered everywhere on their journeys, as well as the adventures and the pleasures. After a few minutes the Seventh Fairy Tale threw in an idea.

“What would you say, sisters, if this our first reunion were to be a ‘Conference of Changing Places?’ I’d like to suggest that we should exchange our Happy Endings, and the places we live in, for a little while. So, for instance, though I’m happy with my Little Girl in the Cement City, all the time I dream about seeing some other places, like the Vault of the Heavens, or the Bright Blue Sea. Why live pinned down in the same old place all the time?”

“Seventh makes sense!” said the Fifth Fairy Tale. “Me too, I think it’s wonderful to live with the dwarves and Mrs Polar Bear, but how can I say it? - The cold gets me down. Just for a change I’d very much like to go to the Red Volcano for a short while.”

“I offer it to you for a month or longer!” said the Sixth Fairy Tale, “I’d be happy on holiday on the Ice White Mountain or in the Grey Valley.”

“And me – I’d like a story in the Paper World,” said the Third Fairy Tale. “I’d get to know other Fairy Tales and the world of books generally. It would cheer up my Wise Man too, there on the Brown Mountain.”

“Well then, if you want, come at once!” said the Eighth Fairy Tale. “In exchange I’d be happy to take a dive in the Bright Blue Sea!”

“And me,” said the Second Fairy tale, “A trip in the Green Jungle would give me a lot of pleasure. I like the Yellow Desert, but it palls a little when you live there all the time.”

To cut a long story short, the Ten Fairy Tales had come to a unanimous decision: to change places for a short while.

They talked about every detail. They examined it from every angle, they weighed it up in their fairy scales, and at last decided on their exchanges, each having a free choice, and not drawing lots this time.

The First Fairy Tale who suffered from rheumatism as a result of the damp in the Grey Valley, preferred the Brown Mountain, with the Wise Man and the Morning Star.

The Second who was tired of the Yellow Desert, as we have said, chose a visit to the Jungle.

#The Third decided to leave the Brown Mountain for the Paper World of a book. She wanted to get to know new people and new fairy tales.

The Fourth from the Bright Blue Sea said she wanted to go to the Yellow Desert. She wanted to dry her body out a bit, and to have a break from the games with the little fish and octopuses.

#The Fifth who had frozen on the Ice White Mountain, chose the Red Volcano so she could warm up a bit, and also hear Sweet Tongue sing.

#The Sixth who had almost evaporated as she came out from the Red Volcano said she wanted the moisture of the Grey Valley along with the company of the Birds' Choir.

The Seventh had grown tired of the noise in the Cement City and so preferred the quiet of the Vault of Heaven and the riddles the moon asked.

The Eighth who had gone numb squashed in the Paper World, decided to go and take a dive in the Bright Blue Sea to get the life back in her limbs.

The Ninth had grown tired of the luxuriant growth and the heat of the Jungle, and so decided on the refreshing quiet of the Ice White Mountain and the companionship of Mrs Polar Bear and the dwarves.

#The Tenth who lived in the Vault of Heaven, missed human company and so she preferred the Cement City with the Little Girl and the Old Man.

So then, the topic of the first Conference - Changing Places – had been implemented in a trice without passports, I.D. cards, voting and such like. The exchange visits were not to last for long – just until the next Conference.

The problem however, was quite different. What with the discussions in the Savannah of Speech the Fairy Tales were swept along, each one saying her bit, and lots more besides. When you find Ten Fairy Tales together, especially sisters, and orphans what's more, disaster happens, my friends! They had talked so much that they had run out of words! On the last day of the Conference they opened their mouths and instead of words out came meaningless croaks. As you can well imagine, a Fairy Tale could suffer nothing worse than this: that words should have left her. That's why we say, 'What's left of a Fairy Tale if the words are missing?'

The matter was serious, and so before they separated they decided that it was necessary that the next Conference should be called 'The Conference for Collecting Words'. They issued a special proclamation, which from top to bottom read; 'Whosoever amongst mortals or immortals, whosoever amongst witches and fairy godmothers, whosoever amongst wizards, children, writers and royal subject, whosoever has words to spare, must shut them in a box and tie it up with a yellow ribbon. One of the Ten Fairy Tales will shortly arrive at your door. She will give the secret knock ten times, and you will deliver the sealed box to her. The words shall be transported by hand with every due care to the Second Fairy Tale Conference, the subject of which shall be 'The Collecting of Words', (date and time to be decided). Whosoever collects the rarest words for them shall be awarded the Nobel Prize for Fairy Tales, which is a visit to the world of the Ten Fairy Tales.'

With this proclamation the end of the First Conference of Orphan Fairy Tales' was announced. Now all of them eagerly await the second one!