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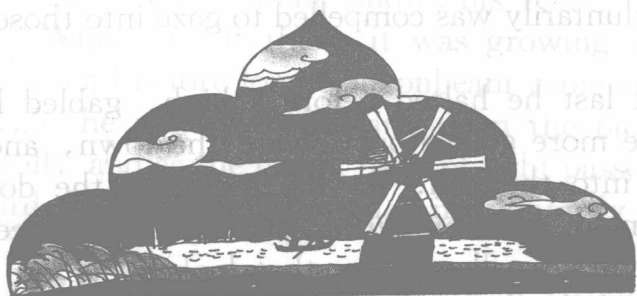
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THE OLD MAN

One afternoon in the late autumn a well-dressed old man was walking slowly down the road. He appeared to be returning home from a walk, for his buckle-shoes, which followed a fashion long since out of date,⁽¹⁾ were covered with dust.

Under his arm he carried a long, gold-headed cane; his dark eyes, in which the whole of his longlost youth seemed to have centred, and which contrasted strangely with his snow-white hair, gazed calmly on the sights around him or peered into the town below as it lay before him, bathed in the haze of sunset.

He appeared to be almost a stranger, for of the passers-by only a few greeted him, although many a

[1] long since out of date: 早已不时兴的。

one involuntarily was compelled to gaze into those grave eyes.

At last he halted before a high, gabled house, cast one more glance out toward the town, and then passed into the hall. At the sound of the door-bell some one in the room within drew aside the green curtain from a small window that looked out on to the hall, and the face of an old woman was seen behind it. The man made a sign to her with his cane.

"No light yet!" he said in a slightly southern accent, and the housekeeper let the curtain fall again.

The old man now passed through the broad hall, through a drawing-room, wherein against the walls stood huge oaken chests bearing porcelan vases; then through the door opposite he entered a small lobby, from which a narrow staircase led to the upper rooms at the back of the house. He climbed the stairs slowly, unlocked a door at the top, and stepped into a room of medium size.

It was a comfortable, quiet retreat. One of the walls was lined with cupboards and bookcases; on the others hung pictures of men and places; on a table with a green cover lay a number of^[1] open books, and before the table stood a massive armchair with a red velvet cushion.

After the old man had placed his hat and stick in a corner, he sat down in the armchair and, folding

[1] a number of = several.

his hands, seemed to be taking his rest⁽¹⁾ after his walk. While he sat thus, it was growing gradually darker; and before long a moonbeam came streaming through the window-panes and upon the pictures on the wall; and as the bright band of light passed slowly onward the old man followed it involuntarily with his eyes.

Now it reached a little picture in a simple black frame. "Elisabeth!" said the old man softly; and as he uttered the word, he was back in his youth.

THE CHILDREN

Before very long⁽²⁾ the dainty form of a little maiden advanced toward him. Her name was Elisabeth, and she might have been five years old. He himself was twice that age. Round her neck she wore a red silk kerchief which was very becoming to her brown eyes.

"Reinhard!" she cried, "we have a holiday, a holiday! No school the whole day and none tomorrow either!"

Reinhard was carrying his slate under his arm, but he promptly flung it behind the front door, and then both the children ran through the house into the garden and through the garden gate out into the meadow. The unexpected holidays came to them at a most happily opportune moment.

(1) take rest: 休息。

(2) before very long = after a short time, soon.

It was in the meadow that Reinhard, with Elisabeth's help, had built a house out of sods of grass.^[1] They meant to spend the summer evenings in it; but it still wanted a bench. He set to work at once; nails, hammer, and the necessary boards were already to hand.^[2]

While he was thus engaged, Elisabeth went along the dyke, gathering the ring-shaped seeds of the wild mallow in her apron, with the object of^[3] making herself chains and necklaces out of them; so that when Reinhard had at last finished his bench in spite of many a crookedly hammered nail, and came out into the sunlight again, she was already wandering far away at the other end of the meadow.

"Elisabeth!" he called, "Elisabeth!" and then she came, her hair streaming behind her.

"Come here," he said; "our house is finished now. Why, you have got quite hot! Come in, and let us sit on the new bench. I will tell you a story."

So they both went in and sat down on the new bench. Elisabeth took the little seed-rings out of her apron and strung them on long threads. Reinhard began his tale: "There were once upon a time three spinning-women..."^[4]

[1] had built a house out of...: 用……造成了一所房子。

[2] already to hand: 在手边。

[3] with the object of...: 目的在于……。

[4] There were ...spinning-women: 此系 Grimm 最有名的童话之一的起头一句。

“Oh!” said Elisabeth, “I know that off by heart⁽¹⁾; you really must not always tell me the same story.”

Accordingly Reinhard had to give up the story of the three spinning-women and tell instead the story of the poor man who was cast into the den of lions.

“It was now night,” he said, “black night, you know, and the lions were asleep. But every now and then⁽²⁾ they would yawn in their sleep and shoot out their red tongues. And then the man would shudder and think it was morning. All at once⁽³⁾ a bright light fell all about him, and when he looked up an angel was standing before him. The angel beckoned to him with his hand and then went straight into the rocks.”

Elisabeth had been listening attentively. “An angel?” she said. “Had he wings, then?”

“It is only a story,” answered Reinhard; “there are no angels, you know.”

“Oh, fie! Reinhard!” she said, staring him straight in the face.⁽⁴⁾

He looked at her with a frown, and she asked him hesitatingly: “Well, why do they always say there are? Mother, and Aunt, and at school as well⁽⁵⁾?”

(1) I know that off by heart: 我把这个记熟了。

(2) now and then: 时时; 时而。前面加 every, 语气重些。

(3) All at once: 这里等于 suddenly; all of a sudden.

(4) staring him straight in the face: 直视着他的脸。

(5) as well: 也; 还有。

"I don't know," he answered.

"But tell me," said Elisabeth, "are there no lions either?"

"Lions? Are there lions? In India, yes. The heathen priests harness them to their carriages, and drive about the desert with them. When I'm big, I mean to go out there myself. It is thousands of times more beautiful in that country than it is here at home; there's no winter at all^[1] there. And you must come with me. Will you?"

"Yes," said Elisabeth; "but Mother must come with us, and your mother as well."

"No," said Reinhard, "they will be too old then, and cannot come with us."

"But I mayn't go by myself."

"Oh, but you may right enough; you will then really be my wife, and the others will have no say^[2] in the matter."

"But Mother will cry!"

"We shall come back again, of course," said Reinhard impetuously. "Now just tell me straight out,^[3] will you go with me? If not, I will go all alone, and then I shall never come back again."

The little girl came very near to^[4] crying. "Please don't look so angry," said she; "I will go to

[1] at all: 完全; 全然。

[2] have no say: 不管; 不干预。

[3] straight out: 爽爽快快地。

[4] come near to: 几乎要。

India with you.”

Reinhard seized both her hands with frantic glee, and rushed out with her into the meadow.

“To India, to India!” he sang, and swung her round and round, so that her little red kerchief was whirled from off her neck. Then he suddenly let her go and said solemnly:

“Nothing will come of it,^[1] I’m sure; you haven’t the pluck.^[2]”

“Elisabeth! Reinhard!” some one was now calling from the garden gate. “Here we are!” the children answered, and raced home hand in hand.^[3]

IN THE WOODS

So the children lived together. She was often too quiet for him, and he was often too headstrong for her, but for all that^[4] they stuck to one another.^[5] They spent nearly all their leisure hours together: in winter in their mothers’ tiny rooms, during the summer in wood and field.

Once when Elisabeth was scolded by the teacher in Reinhard’s hearing^[6] he angrily banged his slate upon the table in order to turn upon himself the mast-

[1] nothing will come of it: 这是不会有什么结果的。

[2] pluck = courage, 勇气。

[3] hand in hand: 手拉手。

[4] for all that = in spite of that: 虽然有这种情形。

[5] stuck to one another: 彼此交情很好。

[6] in...’s hearing: 在……的听觉范围内。

er's wrath.^[1] This failed to attract attention.

But Reinhard paid no further attention to the geography lessons, and instead he composed a long poem, in which he compared himself to a young eagle, the schoolmaster to a grey crow, and Elisabeth to a white dove; the eagle vowed vengeance on the grey crow, as soon as his wings had grown.

Tears stood in the young poet's eyes: he felt very proud of himself. When he reached home he contrived to get hold of^[2] a little parchment-bound volume with a lot of^[3] blank pages in it; and on the first pages he elaborately wrote out his first poem.

Soon after this he went to another school. Here he made many new friendships among boys of his own age, but this did not interrupt his comings and goings^[4] with Elisabeth. Of the stories which he had formerly told her over and over again^[5] he now began to write down the ones which she had liked best, and in doing so the fancy often took him to weave in^[6] something of his own thoughts; yet, for some reason he could not understand, he could never manage it.

So he wrote them down exactly as he had heard them himself. Then he handed them over to

[1] turn upon himself the master's wrath: 将教师的怒气转移到他自己身上来。

[2] get hold of: 得到。

[3] a lot of = many.

[4] comings and goings: 来往; 交谊。

[5] over and over again: 一次又一次地。

[6] weave in: 掺入。

Elisabeth, who kept them carefully in a drawer of her writing-desk, and now and again of an evening when he was present it afforded him agreeable satisfaction⁽¹⁾ to hear her reading aloud to her mother these little tales out of the notebooks in which he had written them.

Seven years had gone by. Reinhard was to leave the town in order to proceed to his higher education. Elisabeth could not bring herself to think⁽²⁾ that there would now be a time to be passed entirely without Reinhard. She was delighted when he told her one day that he would continue to write out stories for her as before; he would send them to her in the letters to his mother, and then she would have to write back to him and tell him how she liked them.

The day of departure was approaching, but here it came a good deal more poetry found its way into⁽³⁾ the parchmentbound volume. This was the one secret he kept from Elisabeth, although she herself had inspired the whole book and most of the songs, which gradually had filled up almost half of the blank pages.

It was the month of June, and Reinhard was to start on the following day. It was proposed to spend one more festive day together, and therefore a picnic was arranged for a rather large party of friends in an adjacent forest.

[1] afforded him agreeable satisfaction: 使他称心如意。

[2] could not bring herself to think...: 她心里不敢往……上面想。

[3] found its way into = got into; went into.

It was an hour's drive^[1] along the road to the edge of the wood and there the company took down the provision baskets from the carriages and walked the rest of the way. The road lay first of all^[2] through a pine grove, where it was cool and darksome, and the ground was all strewn with pine needles.

After half an hour's walk^[3] they passed out of the gloom of the pine trees into a bright fresh beech wood. Here everything was light and green; every here and there^[4] a sunbeam burst through the leafy branches, and high above their heads a squirrel was leaping from branch to branch.

The party came to a halt^[5] at a certain spot, over which the topmost branches of ancient beech trees interwove a transparent canopy of leaves. Elisabeth's mother opened one of the baskets, and an old gentleman constituted himself quartermaster.

"Round me, all of you young people," he cried, "and attend carefully to^[6] what I have to say to you. For lunch each one of you will now get two dry rolls; the butter has been left behind at home. The extras^[7] every one must find for himself. There are plenty of

[1] an hour's drive: 乘车一小时。

[2] first of all: 首先。

[3] half an hour's walk: 步行半小时。

[4] every here and there: 到处; 随处。

[5] came to a halt = stopped, 停下来。

[6] attend carefully to...: 用心听……。

[7] the extras: 吃面包时调味的食品, 如果酱之类。

strawberries in the wood — that is, for any one who knows where to find them. Unless you are sharp, you'll have to eat dry bread; that's the way of the world all over.^[1] Do you understand what I say?"

"Yes, yes," cried the young folks.

"Yes, but look here," said the old gentleman, "I have not done yet. We old folks have done enough roaming about in our time,^[2] and therefore we will stay at home now, here, I mean, under these wide-spreading trees, and we'll peel the potatoes and make a fire and lay the table,^[3] and by twelve o'clock the eggs shall be boiled.

"In return for all this^[4] you will be owing us half of your strawberries, so that we may also be able to serve some dessert. So off you go now, east and west, and mind be honest.^[5]"

The young folks cast many a roguish glance at one another.

"Wait," cried the old gentleman once again. "I suppose I need not tell you this, that whoever finds none need not produce any; but take particular note of this,^[6] that he will get nothing out of us old folks either. Now you have had enough good advice for

[1] the world all over: 全世界。

[2] in our time: 在我们年幼时。

[3] lay the table: 摆好餐具; 准备开饭。

[4] in return for...: 为报答……。

[5] mind be honest = remember to be honest, 千万记住要忠实; 不许作伪。

[6] take note of...: 注意……。

today; and if you gather strawberries to match^[1] you will get on very well^[2] for the present at any rate.^[3]

The young people were of the same opinion, and pairing off in couples set out on their quest.^[4]

“Come along, Elisabeth,” said Reinhard, “I know where there is a clump of strawberry bushes; you shan’t eat dry bread.”

Elisabeth tied the green ribbons of her straw hat together and hung it on her arm. “Come on, then,” she said, “the basket is ready.”

Off into the wood they went, on and on, through moist shady glens, where everything was so peaceful, except for the cry of the falcon flying unseen in the heavens far above their heads; on again through the thick brushwood, so thick that Reinhard must needs^[5] go on ahead to make a track, here snapping off a branch, there bending aside a trailing vine. But ere long he heard Elisabeth behind him calling out his name. He turned round.

“Reinhard!” she called, “do wait for me! Reinhard!”

He could not see her, but at length^[6] he caught sight of^[7] her some way off struggling with the un-

[1] to match: 此外。

[2] get on very well: 过得很好。

[3] at any rate: 无论如何; 至少。

[4] set out on their quest: 出发寻找。

[5] must needs: 必须。needs 为 adverb。

[6] at length: 终于。

[7] caught sight of...: 看见……。