

FAIRY TALES OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

IN THE NURSERY

Hans Christian Andersen

Andersen, Hans Christian (1805-1875) - A Danish writer who is remembered as one of the world's greatest story-tellers. Although most of his poems, novels, and dramas have been forgotten, his Fairy Tales, (compiled 1835- 1872), have gained him lasting fame. In the Nursery - One of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales. Father, mother, brothers, and sisters have gone to the play, leaving Anna and her grandpapa at home to make their own play, "The Pipe-Head and the Good Head."

IN THE NURSERY

FATHER, and mother, and brothers, and sisters, were gone to the play; only little Anna and her grandpapa were left at home. "We'll have a play too," he said, "and it may begin immediately." "But we have no theatre," cried little Anna, "and we have no one to act for us; my old doll cannot, for she is a fright, and my new one cannot, for she must not rumple her new clothes." "One can always get actors if one makes use of what one has," observed grandpapa. "Now we'll go into the theatre. Here we will put up a book, there another, and there a third, in a sloping row. Now three on the other side; so, now we have the side scenes. The old box that lies yonder may be the back stairs; and we'll lay the flooring on top of it. The stage represents a room, as every one may see. Now we want the actors. Let us see what we can find in the plaything-box. First the personages, and then we will get the play ready. One after the other; that will be capital! Here's a pipe-head, and yonder an odd glove; they will do very well for father and daughter." "But those are only two characters," said little Anna. "Here's my brother's old waistcoat- could not that play in our piece, too?"

"It's big enough, certainly," replied grandpapa. "It shall be the lover. There's nothing in the pockets, and that's very interesting, for that's half of an unfortunate attachment. And here we have the nut-cracker's boots, with spurs to them.

Row, dow, dow! how they can stamp and strut! They shall represent the unwelcome wooer, whom the lady does not like. What kind of a play will you have now? Shall it be a tragedy, or a domestic drama?" "A domestic drama, please," said little Anna,

“for the others are so fond of that. Do you know one?” “I know a hundred,” said grandpapa. “Those that are most in favor are from the French, but they are not good for little girls. In the meantime, we may take one of the prettiest, for inside they’re all very much alike. Now I shake the pen! Cock-a-lorum! So now, here’s the play, brin-bran-span new! Now listen to the play-bill.” And grandpapa took a newspaper, and read as if he were reading from it: THE PIPE-HEAD AND THE GOOD HEAD A Family Drama in One Act CHARACTERS MR. PIPE-HEAD, a father. MR. WAISTCOAT, a lover. MISS GLOVE, a daughter. MR. DE BOOTS, a suitor.

“And now we’re going to begin. The curtain rises. We have no curtain, so it has risen already. All the characters are there, and so we have them at hand. Now I speak as Papa Pipe-head! He’s angry to-day. One can see that he’s a colored meerschaum. “‘Snik, snak, snurre, bassellurre! I’m master of this house! I’m the father of my daughter! Will you hear what I have to say? Mr. de Boots is a person in whom one may see one’s face; his upper part is of morocco, and he has spurs into the bargain. Snikke, snakke, snak! He shall have my daughter!” “Now listen to what the Waistcoat says, little Anna,” said grandpapa. “Now the Waistcoat’s speaking. The Waistcoat has a laydown collar, and is very modest; but he knows his own value, and has quite a right to say what he says:

“‘I haven’t a spot on me! Goodness of material ought to be appreciated. I am of real silk, and have strings to me.’ “- On the wedding day, but no longer; you don’t keep your color in the wash.’ This is Mr. Pipe-head who is speaking. ‘Mr. de Boots is water-tight, of strong leather, and yet very delicate; he can creak, and clank with his spurs, and has an Italian physiognomy-’” “But they ought to speak in verses,” said Anna, “for I’ve heard that’s the most charming way of all.”

“They can do that too,” replied grandpapa; “and if the public demands it, they will talk in that way. Just look at little Miss Glove, how she’s pointing her fingers! “‘Could I but have my love, Who then so happy as Glove! Ah! If I from him must part, I’m sure ‘twill break my heart!’ ‘Bah!’ The last word was spoken by Mr. Pipe-head; and now it’s Mr. Waistcoat’s turn:

‘O Glove, my own dear, Though it cost thee a tear, Thou must be mine, For Holger Danske has sworn it!’ “Mr. de Boots, hearing this, kicks up, jingles his spurs, and knocks down three of the side-scenes.” “That’s exceedingly charming!” cried little Anna. “Silence! silence!” said grandpapa. “Silent approbation will show that you are the educated public in the stalls. Now Miss Glove sings her

great song with startling effects: “I can’t see, heigho! And therefore I’ll crow!

Kikkeriki, in the lofty hall!’ “Now comes the exciting part, little Anna. This is the most important in all the play. Mr. Waistcoat undoes himself, and addresses his speech to you, that you may applaud; but leave it alone,- that’s considered more genteel.

“I am driven to extremities! Take care of yourself! Now comes the plot! You are the Pipe-head, and I am the good head- snap! there you go!” “Do you notice this, little Anna?” asked grandpapa. “That’s a most charming comedy. Mr. Waistcoat seized the old Pipe-head and put him in his pocket; there he lies, and the Waistcoat says: “You are in my pocket; you can’t come out till you promise to unite me to your daughter Glove on the left. I hold out my right hand.” “That’s awfully pretty,” said little Anna. “And now the old Pipe-head replies:

“Though I’m all ear, Very stupid I appear: Where’s my humor? Gone, I fear, And I feel my hollow stick’s not here, Ah! never, my dear, Did I feel so queer. Oh! pray let me out, And like a lamb led to slaughter I’ll betroth you, no doubt, To my daughter.”

“Is the play over already?” asked little Anna. “By no means,” replied grandpapa. “It’s only all over with Mr. de Boots.

Now the lovers kneel down, and one of them sings: “‘Father!’ - and the other, ‘Come, do as you ought to do,- Bless your son and daughter.’ And they receive his blessing, and celebrate their wedding, and all the pieces of furniture sing in chorus, “‘Klink! clanks! A thousand thanks; And now the play is over!’ “And now we’ll applaud,” said grandpapa. “We’ll call them all out, and the pieces of furniture too, for they are of mahogany.” “And is not our play just as good as those which the others have in the real theatre?” “Our play is much better,” said grandpapa. “It is shorter, the performers are natural, and it has passed away the interval before tea-time.”

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