



# Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

## Cilla and the Dwarf

*Abbie Phillips Walker*

Once upon a time there lived a king who had a very beautiful daughter, and her suitors came from far and near.

Among them was a dwarf with a huge head and a very long nose. Of course, no one expected the Princess to marry the ugly creature, but the dwarf did, and when the Princess refused he flew into a rage and said he would have her in spite of all she said.

At last the Princess gave her hand to a prince, but the night the wedding was to take place the Princess was nowhere to be found. They hunted high and low all over the palace, but no trace could they find of her; even her wedding-dress disappeared, too. The Prince was in despair and wrung his hands and cried out he would give to any one who would find the Princess half of his fortune.

The King also said he would give half of his kingdom to the one who would bring back the lost Princess.

Now, there was among the servants a little kitchen-maid named Cilla, who loved the Princess because she always spoke kindly to her, and when she knew her mistress was lost she resolved to find her at any cost.

So one night when all the people in the palace were sound asleep Cilla stole out and went to a witch who lived in the woods and asked her to help her to find the Princess.

"I can only help you a little," said the witch, "as she is in the power of one who is more powerful than I am, but this much I can do: Here is a bean that will do magic work if used in the right way; whether it will help you to find your Princess I cannot tell. The dwarf has carried her off, and where he is I do not know."

Cilla said she would take the bean. She thanked the witch and started off through the woods to look for the dwarf, for she was sure he must live in a cave.

For days she wandered until she was in the deep forest, and at last she came to a high rock over which she could not climb.

Cilla sat down and leaned against the rock to rest, when, to her surprise, she heard the sound of weeping. She looked all around, but could see no opening except a big crack in one side, and this was too small for her to get through.

She was just about to call out and ask who was inside weeping when she heard some one coming through the bushes.

Cilla ran behind the rock and watched, and in a minute the dwarf came bounding out of the bush and briers.

He carried in his hand an iron bar, and with this he opened the crack in the rock, which was a door, and entered the rock, leaving the door open behind him.

Cilla was a very brave girl or she would have stayed where she was, but no sooner had the dwarf disappeared than she ran in after him.

He was standing beside a poor, half-starved-looking little white rabbit, and Cilla heard him say, "Do you consent or will you starve?"

The little white rabbit only blinked and turned away, and then Cilla saw something that made her start, for hanging on a ragged bit of rock was the wedding-dress the Princess was to have worn the night she disappeared.

Cilla did not wait to see more. She dashed toward the dwarf and grabbed him by his long nose, and, giving it a hard twist, she cried out: "Where is my mistress, you wretch? Where is she, I say?"

A very strange thing happened when Cilla gave the long nose a twist; the dwarf howled like the sound of thunder, and instead of the dwarf there stood before Cilla a huge toad that hopped away so fast she could not see where it disappeared.

"You poor half-starved little rabbit," said Cilla. "I wish I had something to give you to eat, but I must hunt for my mistress first, for I know she must be here."

Then Cilla thought of the bean. "I'll give you this," she said to the rabbit. "I am sure I shall have no use for it."

When the rabbit swallowed the bean Cilla's eyes popped wide open, for there stood her mistress, safe and sound.

"Oh, Cilla, you have saved me! How ever did you think of twisting his nose?" asked the Princess.

"Because it looked as if it were made to be twisted," said Cilla, "but how did you know the bean would change you back to your own form?"

"I didn't, but I was hungry; that dreadful dwarf was trying to make me say I would marry him by starving me. Some powerful witch had given him the form of



a dwarf, and if he could get a princess to marry him she would change him into a man,” said the Princess.

“Was he a toad at first?” asked Cilla.

“Yes, it seems he was a toad in the cave of a powerful witch, and for something he did for her she made him a dwarf; then he wanted to become a man, and the witch told him if he would marry a princess and take her into the palace to live she would grant his wish.

“He told me this before he had me changed into a rabbit, for he first carried me off to the cave of this witch, who lives somewhere in this forest, and I think we better hurry away before the toad gets to her and tells her I have escaped.”

It took a long time to get out of the forest, but Cilla and the Princess found the way and the Prince and the King told Cilla she should have the promised reward.

“Now, what would I do with all that gold and half of a kingdom?” asked Cilla. “All I ask is to have a nice little cottage and a cow near by the palace where I can see my mistress every day.”

Of course Cilla’s wish was granted, and there she lived and was happy, for she married the King’s gardener and became the mother of many boys and girls who never tired of hearing how their mother rescued the Princess from the bad dwarf.

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