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Princess Bluegreen Of The Seven Cities

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Once upon a time in the lost kingdom of Atlantis there ruled a king whose name was Graywhite. He had married the beautiful Queen Rosewhite. They lived in a magnificent palace, but it was a sad place because there were no little children in it.

"There are plenty of babies in the homes of the poor peasants who can scarcely find food for them," mourned King Graywhite. "Why is it that I, the ruler of this vast rich kingdom, can have no child to inherit my wealth and my domains?"

"Women in tiny hovels have their arms full of rosy dimpled darlings," sighed Queen Rosewhite. "Why is it that I, the queen of this magnificent palace, can have no baby of my own?"

Queen Rosewhite passed her days and nights in weeping, while King Graywhite grew ugly and cruel to his subjects. Once he had been the kindest ruler in the world.

Things went on like this for several years. Queen Rosewhite's lovely face grew pale and wan, and her beautiful eyes became so sad that it hurt the hearts of her faithful subjects. The king's face lost its expression of jolly kindness and became sour and cruel. They offered prayers and solemn vows before all the holy shrines in the whole kingdom of Atlantis, but no child was born into the royal palace. King Graywhite grew so harsh and ugly to his subjects that the entire kingdom offered prayers and vows, too. As things were, life was not worth living in the kingdom of Atlantis.

In front of the royal palace there was a beautiful terrace where King Graywhite and Queen Rosewhite had loved to walk in the days before they had grown cross and sad. One night when they were sitting upon the terrace enjoying the fresh soft evening air and the bright starlight there suddenly appeared a dazzling light which almost blinded them. Queen Rosewhite covered her face with her hands and the king bowed his proud head upon his breast.

"Do not fear to look at me," said a gentle voice.

King Graywhite and Queen Rosewhite glanced up. They saw a tiny fairy standing before them with a circle of bright light dancing about her.

"King and Queen of Atlantis," said the gentle voice. "You shall have a child, a

little daughter, prettier than the sunlight. I have heard your prayers and vows, but I have also heard the prayers and vows of your poor subjects, too."

The glad news had brought a happy light into Queen Rosewhite's beautiful eyes, but now it faded out and a look of fear crept in. It had hurt the queen's loving heart to have her husband so cruel to his subjects. She often had told him that punishment would surely come upon him because of his harsh deeds.

"When the little princess is born," went on the fairy's voice, "I shall take her away from you for twenty years. No harm will come to her. I shall hide her away from you and all the world within seven beautiful cities which I shall construct in the loveliest part of your whole kingdom. Around these seven cities I shall place strong walls. At the end of twenty years, if your heart, King Graywhite, is free from sin and you have made proper restitution for all your wrongdoing, you shall receive the princess into your arms."

"Twenty years is a long time," said King Graywhite sadly. Tears were running down Queen Rosewhite's cheeks and she could not speak.

"You must wait until the twenty years are over," continued the fairy. "If you attempt to enter the strong walls before that time you shall fall dead and your kingdom shall be consumed by fire. Swear to me now in the presence of your faithful queen that you will not try to enter these strong walls which I shall construct about the seven cities."

"I swear it," said the king in a voice which trembled as he solemnly lifted his right hand.

The vision disappeared as suddenly as it had come, and King Graywhite and Queen Rosewhite sat alone in the bright starlight on the terrace before the royal palace.

"Have I been dreaming?" asked the king.

"It was not a dream," replied the queen.

Time passed and a beautiful baby daughter was born to the king and queen of Atlantis. They gave her the name of Princess Bluegreen. There was great rejoicing throughout the entire kingdom. Her birth was celebrated by lavish feasts and gay songs and dances.

When the little Princess Bluegreen was only three days old she disappeared from the royal palace. She had been carried away by the fairy to the seven cities which had been constructed to receive her.

Years passed. Every day the king and queen received reports from the fairy. They heard that the little Princess Bluegreen was well, and that each hour she grew lovelier. Sometimes there was almost joy in the palace when King

Graywhite chuckled over the quaint sayings of the little princess which were repeated to him, and the queen heard with a tender smile of the tiny blue slippers and the green parasol which the fairy had given her. That day Queen Rosewhite bought new slippers for many little maids in the city.

As time went on, however, the royal palace of Atlantis grew almost as sad as it had been before the Princess Bluegreen had been born. Only to receive reports of their daughter was not enough to make the king and queen happy. They longed to see her with their own eyes and to clasp her in their arms.

As the weeks and months and years rolled by without seeing the little princess, King Graywhite resumed his cruel treatment of his subjects. He was growing old and his nature grew sour with the years. Queen Rosewhite tried to reason with him.

"We must bear this thing with patience," she told him. "We brought it upon ourselves."

The king kept raging against the fairy and did not notice Queen Rosewhite's politeness in saying "we" instead of "you." It was the king who was responsible for all the cruelty. Good Queen Rosewhite had never had a cruel thought in her whole blameless life.

At last the day of the eighteenth birthday of the Princess Bluegreen grew near.

"Are you sure that it is not eighteen years which the fairy said, instead of twenty years?" asked King Graywhite querulously.

Queen Rosewhite assured him that it was twenty years as he well knew. The king's anger broke out fiercely.

"I will no longer be kept from my daughter!" he cried.

"Would you break the vow which you solemnly made to the fairy in my presence?" asked Queen Rosewhite trembling. She had never dreamed that he would dare to break it. Now, however, she was thoroughly frightened at the thought which came to her.

"I'll break that foolish vow!" shouted the king savagely.

Tears rolled down the cheeks of good Queen Rosewhite.

"No good will come of this," she mourned. "Be prudent, dear king. It is only two years more which we have to wait."

"The last two years will be the hardest ones of all!" raged King Graywhite. "I cannot endure it!"

That very day he started to prepare the army for the expedition to the Seven

Cities, amid the queen's lamentations and in spite of her fears and warnings.

"Be wise and patient, dear king. Give up this wild expedition," were her last words to him; when, at length, all the preparations completed, he set out with his great army upon the dangerous quest of the seven cities surrounded by their strong walls in the loveliest part of the whole kingdom of Atlantis.

King Graywhite marched on and on. It was a long and perilous journey and the army suffered many hardships on the way. It seemed as if they would never arrive, but at last they drew near to what everybody knew to be the most beautiful part of the whole kingdom, where the fairy had taken the Princess Bluegreen to conceal her.

Storms raged; lightning flashed; ominous roarings and rumblings sounded from the depths of the earth.

"Let us hasten back to the royal palace before it is too late," besought the generals of King Graywhite's army.

"On! On!" cried the king. "Do you think I would abandon this expedition now?"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a huge rock fell from its place near where he stood and rushed away down the mountainside. The earth trembled violently beneath their feet. Fearful rumblings and roarings sounded all about them.

"On! ON!" shouted the maddened king.

Before them rose the great walls which the fairy had built around the seven cities. Within these walls was the Princess Bluegreen radiant with the beauty of her eighteen winters and summers passed in peace and happiness under the watchful care of the kind fairy. The thought of her thrilled the heart of King Graywhite.

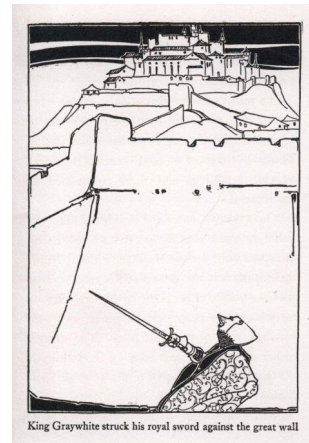
"On! On!" he shouted to the generals about him.

"On! On!" they, in turn, passed the word along to the trembling soldiers which composed the royal army.

With the fearful sounds and shakings about them, the poor men heartily wished they were safe at home. They rallied, however, for a final charge and swept up to the walls which surrounded the seven cities.

King Graywhite struck his royal sword against the great wall. At that moment the walls fell. The earth beneath their feet rose. Great flames swept up towards the sky and rushed over the land, sweeping everything before them. Then the sea raged over the earth in violence until it had covered the whole kingdom of Atlantis.

The fairy's curse had been fulfilled. The king was dead. His kingdom was consumed by fire.



When at last the waters grew calm again all that remained of the great rich kingdom of Atlantis was the group of nine rocky islands which to-day is called the Azores. In the largest of these islands, St. Michael, there is still an enchanted spot called Seven Cities. Great wall-like mountains tower toward the sky. In the crater valley amid the wall-like mountains there is a lake of green and one of blue. The blue lake is where the beautiful Princess Bluegreen left her little blue slippers, they say, and the green lake is where she left her lovely green parasol.

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