



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Daughter Of The King Of Naples

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There was once a king who had an only son. The years passed by and he did not marry, so one day his father called him before him and said:

"The time has come when you should marry, my son. You are now at the age when you should no longer wait to choose your bride. Why is it that you have not already done this?"

The prince replied:

"I will wed no one except the daughter of the king of Naples."

"Do you know that the king of Naples has a daughter?" asked the father.

"No," answered the son. "I do not know."

"I should advise you to find out whether or not the king of Naples happens to have a daughter before you decide to marry her," remarked the king dryly.

"That is good advice," replied the prince. "I thank you."

Accordingly, he asked everybody he met whether the king of Naples had a daughter. There was no person to be found who knew anything about it.

"You'll have to go to Naples to obtain this information," advised the king. "It is a long journey, but if you are determined to marry nobody except the daughter of the king of Naples there seems to be no way except to go there and learn whether or not he has a daughter."

Accordingly, a ship was prepared and the prince sailed for Naples. It was a difficult, stormy voyage, but finally they arrived safely. The moment they landed the beggars came crowding about them. The prince distributed alms among them most generously.

Then he asked: "Does any one know whether or not the king of Naples has a daughter?"

There was nobody who knew. Finally, however, an old woman said that once she passed by the royal palace and there was a beautiful face at the window.

"I think that perhaps this was the daughter of the king of Naples, but I do not know," she added.

"Go at once and find out," ordered the prince. "You shall be richly rewarded."

The old woman hastened to the royal palace. She saw the same lovely face at the window which she had seen before.

"Lovely lady, I want to talk to you!" she called out.

Now it happened that day that the princess was feeling decidedly bored and out of tune with life. It looked like an interesting diversion to talk with the old woman. Thus it came to pass that she opened the window graciously.

"What do you wish, good mother?" she asked.

"Are you the daughter of the king of Naples?" questioned the old woman.

"I am," replied the princess.

"May I come some day to sell you pretty things?" asked the old woman.

The princess appointed an hour the next day when she might come with her wares. Then the old woman hurried back to the waiting prince.

"The king of Naples has a daughter!" she cried. "A very beautiful daughter, too!"

The prince showered the old woman with gold. He was so delighted that at last he had found this out that he could well afford to be generous.

The old woman thanked him. "I did something else for you, kind sir," she said. "I made an appointment to see the princess to-morrow. I am going to the palace at four o'clock to sell pretty things to her."

"Well done, good mother!" cried the prince, again thrusting his hand into his purse. "Let me go in your place!"

The old woman gladly consented, and the prince dressed himself as a peddler. The next afternoon at four o'clock he went to the palace of the king of Naples.

"It is a peddler with many interesting wares for sale," said the servant who answered his knock. "He speaks of an appointment with your Royal Highness."

"Yes," said the princess. "A peddler was to come to-day at four o'clock with pretty things for me to buy."

Accordingly, the prince was admitted to the presence of the daughter of the king of Naples. If she were surprised to find the peddler a handsome young man instead of the old woman with whom she had talked the day before she did not show it.

"What lovely things you have!" she cried as she examined the tray full of ribbons and beads and trinkets.

She selected a number of the wares and then she asked, "What is the price of these?"

The prince would not set a price.

"If your Royal Highness is pleased with these," said he, "I have many more things at home which you will like even better. I'll bring them to you to-morrow."

"That will be splendid!" cried the princess. "Come again to-morrow at this hour."

The next day the prince again dressed himself as a peddler, but underneath the outer garments he wore his own rich clothing. When he was admitted to the royal palace he laid aside his peddler's disguise and stood before the princess looking like the true prince he was. He was very handsome in his rich suit of crimson velvet, with his hat with the long plume in his hand. The princess was so surprised that she turned pale.

"Who are you?" she cried. "You surely are not the peddler who came here yesterday!"

The prince smiled into her eyes, and, even without the peddler's garments which were rolled up on the tray, she would have recognized him.

He told her of the quest which had led him there, and she admired all the patience and diligence he had shown in finding out her existence. When he asked her to marry him at once, she readily consented. They planned that she should steal down the staircase at night and go away with him on his ship.

All this sounded very romantic to the daughter of the king of Naples. She had never dreamed that a thing like this would ever happen. All her life she had been so closely guarded that stealing out of the palace and sailing away in the prince's ship seemed the most wonderful thing in the world.

The next night had been agreed on, and long ahead of the appointed hour the prince sat on horseback at the foot of the stairway down which the princess would steal. He was very weary with all the excitement of the past three days, and as he waited he fell asleep. A robber passed by and saw his sleeping form hanging limply on the saddle.

"I'll gently deposit him on the ground and get away with his horse and saddle," thought the thief, as he stopped and regarded the horse with a critical eye.

Just then, however, he saw something which made him change his mind about hurrying away after he had deposited the prince's sleeping form beneath a tree. There was the loveliest maiden he had ever seen creeping silently down the stairway. She came straight up to him.

"I'm ready, beloved," were her words.

The robber silently lifted her behind him on the horse's back and together they rode away.

"Where is your boat?" asked the princess after they had ridden together for some time without speaking.

"So it is a boat which the fair lady is looking for," thought the thief. "I was expecting this good horse to carry us the whole distance. A boat is a bit difficult to arrange, but it can be done if necessary. There ought to be a boat around somewhere for me to steal."

He left the daughter of the king of Naples on the shore while he went to steal a boat. When he returned the light shone upon his face and the girl thought that he did not look the same as the day before.

"Of course, I've seen him only twice," she told herself in an effort to gain assurance. "It must be the prince, my own true love."

"Here is our boat," said the robber, and together they embarked.

As the morning light shone upon the robber the princess saw that he was not in the least like the prince who had come a-peddling. The robber laughed.

"Does my lady know with whom she is going away?" he asked.

"I thought I was going with the prince who is my lover," she replied, bursting into bitter tears.

Running away was not half so romantic and delightful as she had pictured it. She heartily wished that she were back in the royal palace.

As for the prince, he soon awoke and looked about the palace garden where he was lying under the tree.

"How did I get here?" he asked as he rubbed his eyes sleepily.

There was none to tell him, so he decided that his horse must have thrown him off and run away.

"It is queer that my fall did not awaken me," he said to himself. "It is a bit awkward to lose my horse. However, if the princess only keeps her promise and comes to me we shall manage to get to our ship somehow."

He waited very patiently for a time and then he began to fear that the princess had repented of her promise to run away. He did not give her up, however, until it was almost daylight. Then he sorrowfully returned to his waiting ship.

"I have at least found out that the king of Naples has a daughter and that she is the most beautiful princess in the whole world," he said. "If she prefers not to have a run-away marriage it will doubtless be better for me to sail home and tell my father to make arrangements with the king of Naples for our wedding. There are some advantages in this more dignified method."

Thus it happened that the prince sailed away for his own country, never dreaming that the princess had kept her promise to steal down the stairway in the night and that she was then in the hands of the wicked robber.

The daughter of the king of Naples sobbed and cried so loud when she found that it was not her own prince with whom she was sailing that the robber became quite disgusted with her.

"I thought you were a pretty little maid," he said, "when I first saw you, but now I've changed my mind about you."

Indeed no person with good eyesight would have called the princess pretty at that moment, with her face all red and swollen with much weeping.

The robber decided that he did not want to bother with her any longer, so he landed in the country of the Junqueiras and left her there. The princess wandered about the place until night came without seeing a single soul,—nothing but the sea, sky and rocks.

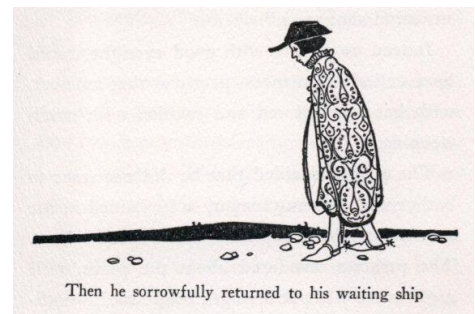
She was really, however, not far from the hut in which there lived the wife and daughter of a poor fisherman. In the stillness of the night they heard a cry.

"Some one is in trouble outside, mother," said the daughter.

"Perhaps the pirates have come and by this cry are trying to lure us out," answered her mother cautiously. There were often pirate ships which stopped there. The daughter listened carefully.

"No, mother," she insisted. "I'm sure this is a girl's cry."

The two women opened their door and crept out in the darkness. The sobs of the princess soon led them to the place upon the rocks where she lay crying as if her



heart would break. They lifted her tenderly and carried her home.

The fisherman's daughter gave the princess some of her own clothes to wear and they lived together as if they were sisters. Together they did all the work of the little house and the princess was too busy to weep. Sometimes, however, she cried in the night when the fisherman's wife and daughter were asleep. She wept for her lost love and for the royal palace of the king of Naples which had always been her home.

Now it happened that the prince's ship encountered a great storm and was driven about by the sea. At last it was blown by the gales to the land of the Junqueiras.

The prince saw the fisherman's daughter and the princess standing on the rocks by the sea. He stared hard at the princess. Then he spoke in a voice which shook.

"You remind me of some one I used to know," he said. "Tell me your name, I pray you, fair maid."

The princess looked down at the garments of the fisher maid which she wore. She blushed. The prince she had recognized the very moment she had seen him.

"I am the daughter of the king of Naples," she said.

The fisherman's daughter stared at her in amazement.

"She is no king's daughter!" she cried. "She is a poor abandoned maid who came to us out of the sea. We found her upon these very rocks. It is my own dress that she is wearing. A king's daughter, indeed! She is no more the daughter of the king of Naples than I am!"

But the prince had taken the daughter of the king of Naples in his arms. As soon as they returned to the palace their wedding was celebrated with great joy and they lived together as God lives with the angels.



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