



# Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

## The Violets of the Princes

*Louise M. Alcott*

Little Marianne had been in bed for a long time. She was sick and too weak to play. Her caregiver had fallen asleep next to her bed. Marianne looked around. What could she do? There was no one to entertain her. She had already read the books in her bookcase for the umpteenth time. She wasn't interested in them anymore.

Bored, she looked at the little bouquet of violets next to her table. It seemed like one of the violets was looking at her. She gently picked up the violet. It had a sweet, smiling face. Suddenly, she heard a soft voice. It was coming from the violet! The violet looked kindly at Marianne.

"Shall I tell you a story?" she asked.

"Well, I would love that," Marianne answered.

"I can tell you about the history of us violets if you'd like," said the violet.

"Oh, I would love that!" Marianne replied.

"It's the story of the princes and the violets."

Marianne lay down comfortably. The cat curled up in her arms.

"Once upon a time, there was a king with newborn twins. They were two extremely cute sons named Purple and Krip. But the king didn't take care of them. The queen had died at the birth of the twins. The king lost himself in reading books and drinking wine to escape his grief. The king refused to wear the color purple, something that was worn at that time to show mourning for a loved one who had died. The king continued to wear his green coat with his red hat.

The young princes were raised by a nanny when they were very young, and later the teachers took over.

Despite the sadness over the loss of their mother and the lack of love from their father, the princes were always kind, obedient, and friendly.



The king's subjects begged the king to look for a new queen. That would bring joy back to the land. But the king didn't make any effort.

One day a woman stood on the doorstep who had decided to marry the king. She wore purple clothing to show that she was mourning the death of the queen. She had two little daughters named Primrose and Narcissus. Those names were perfect for the girls who liked to wear clothes in a yellow color. The subjects were very happy with the arrival of the woman and her cute daughters. She was a beautiful woman to see, and she was also very friendly.

The king married her and let his wife rule the country. He didn't feel like doing it himself.

The new queen was at first very kind and friendly, but the power went to her head. She began to abuse her high position with laws that were only good for her own benefit. Her daughters sat next to her on the throne. The princes were allowed to sit at her feet.

The subjects and the people began to be annoyed by her selfish behavior and tried to warn the king. But the king didn't want to hear it and buried himself in his books and drank his wine.

The princes obeyed their stepmother and put up with the terrible remarks of their stepsisters. The young princesses also became very conceited.

The queen hoped that the king would die one day so that she would have the kingdom for herself. But then the two princes had to be gotten rid of. She had the two boys banished to a remote part of the palace. They were not allowed to be seen in public anymore. Adam, the palace gardener, took care of the boys. He taught the boys everything about plants, flowers, and gardening. They also learned to dance and make music.

On one day, the young princes began to yearn for more freedom. They begged the queen to let them speak to their father. The queen was shocked when she saw the boys. They were handsome and smart! That evening, she had the boys captured by soldiers. They were locked up in a tall tower where they received only a piece of bread with water daily. To explain their absence, she told the king that the boys had run away and that she had sent people to search for them. That was of course not true, but the king seemed not to care.

The boys stayed in the tower for a year. They were visited daily by birds that sang beautiful songs for them. That made their stay a lot more pleasant. But when the boys didn't receive any bread or water for a few days, they understood that it was intended for them to die of hunger.

"Now it's time to escape," said Prince Purple. "If no one comes to save us, then we have to do it ourselves."

They came up with a plan. With everything suitable in the tower, they made a long rope. With it, they climbed out of the tower.

Then they visited Adam who was very happy to see them. He advised the young princes to leave the country and return when they reached adulthood to reclaim the throne.

"But where should we live?" asked the princes. "We have nothing at all!"

Adam gave them clothes. "I also have some musical instruments here. You can make music and dance and earn money with it. I also give you some magic seeds. They will bring you luck. Plant the seeds when you are far enough away and have found a house. They are magic seeds. They will only sprout if they are planted by princely hands."

And so the two princes set off. They made music and earned enough money to get by. The joy the boys made was contagious. People were happy to pay for it.

Several years later, the princes had enough money to buy a house. They had come a long way from their father's kingdom by then. It was time to plant the seeds. The house was in a remote location where they could lead their life undisturbed. They lived on wild berries, nuts, fish, rabbits, and rye bread that they bought from an old woman who came to collect herbs.

It took a long time before buds appeared on the plants, and the boys sometimes doubted whether they were real magic seeds. "If we can't grow flowers, we'll make music for the next few years to earn a living. And when we are old enough, we will return to our kingdom and fight to rightfully reclaim the throne," said Purple.

"The old woman is very curious about our garden and the plants we are growing here," said Krip. "I told her that we don't know ourselves, but if the flowers come, she is welcome to look. She knows a lot about plants. If these plants can help to heal the sick, that would be a great reward. Even if we don't earn anything with it."

"You're right, brother," replied Purple. "I would rather make people happier than be a king!"

The next morning, everything was in bloom. They were violets, but they were more beautiful than ever seen before. It seemed like they had little faces, half sad, half happy.

"What can we do with the violets and how can they bring us luck?" Purple wondered.

"We will sell them," said Krip. "They are so wonderfully beautiful and special. They will certainly bring in a lot of money."

"They are beautiful!" they heard the old woman say behind them.

"We did it!" said Purple, and he picked a flower to give to the woman.

"I can read plants," said the old woman. "And these flowers tell me a sad story." She turned the flower a few times with her bony fingers. "I see five petals. This big golden petal sits alone on a double green seat. The two smaller yellow petals with a small edge of purple are on either side. But these two purple petals only have one green seat, although they are more beautiful than the other petals. And in the middle, I see a little man in green with a red cap. He's in the warmest, safest place. He has a bag of seeds that will ripen if he wants to give the sun access to his heart."



The boys smiled, but said nothing. It was their own sad history that was written in the magic flowers.

"They will sell well," continued the old woman. "They bring out the good in people. The whole world needs that. You can earn a fortune with them."

The next few days, the violets sold well at the market. Although the boys looked poor, they radiated something special. Everyone wanted to buy them. Doctors bought the flowers to encourage their patients. Sad people bought them to cheer up. Even bad people bought them because the sweet faces never reproached them, arousing better feelings in their bad hearts.

The queen and her daughters also wanted the flowers. The queen lived in fear. The people didn't like her and started to rebel because she didn't take care of the poor. Primrose and Narcissus had brought the flowers because they wanted to possess everything that was new and beautiful, no matter what the cost. Even the king received a bouquet of violets beside his bed. He noticed them too, especially because they bore the name of his deceased queen: Viola.



Meanwhile, the two princes traveled the world. They sold flowers in the summer and sang and danced in the winter. They preferred to do that in prisons, hospitals, and poor neighborhoods. There they left not only happiness but also

money, and then slipped away quietly without waiting for thanks.

The boys felt free. "I wouldn't want to be locked up in a palace and forced to follow all sorts of rules," they exclaimed. "But if we can help the poor in our kingdom find work, then we will do that. We have saved enough money. Let's go back to our kingdom in silence, hoping that our father will want to see us this time. No one needs to know who we are. We will call ourselves the Merciful Brothers."

And so they disguised themselves in brown monk robes with a large hood pulled over their heads and entered their father's kingdom. They sought out Adam. He was very happy to see the brothers and very proud of them. The princes stayed with him. From that house, the brothers helped the poor in various ways throughout the day. They put violets everywhere, bringing happiness and peace to many homes.

In the meantime, the queen was in mortal fear of her misdeeds, and the king was very sick. She was very afraid that the people would rebel, so she had the Merciful Brothers come to the palace. No one recognized the two princes. The queen begged the Brothers for help. She realized that her desire for power and wealth had made her a bad person. She wanted to show remorse.

"If you really regret it, try to make up for all the harm you've done," said Prince Purple. "Have compassion for your people and start helping them. Make sure they can trust you. Then you will be safe and happy."

"Yes, I want to, and I will!" the queen cried.

"That's a beautiful story," said Marianne.

"Don't forget what there is to learn from it, dear," said the flower. "Learn to have patience and make your own little kingdom a loving, happy place. Learn from everything around you, even if it's just something small like a violet."

Marianne smiled and took the flower in her hand. She felt a sense of peace and comfort from the flower's words. She knew that she could make her own world a better place by being kind and patient with those around her.

As she walked back to her village, Marianne thought about the Merciful Brothers and how they had changed their kingdom for the better. She realized that even small acts of kindness and generosity could make a big difference in people's lives.

When she arrived home, Marianne went straight to her garden and began to tend to her flowers. She thought about the lessons she had learned from the story and how she could apply them to her own life.

From that day on, Marianne made a conscious effort to be kinder and more

patient with those around her. She shared her flowers with her neighbors and helped those in need. Her small acts of kindness spread throughout the village, and soon everyone was happier and more content.

As the years passed, Marianne's garden grew more beautiful and bountiful. People came from far and wide to see her flowers and to hear her stories of the Merciful Brothers. Marianne was grateful for the lessons she had learned and the happiness she had brought to others. She knew that she had made her own little kingdom a better place, just as the Merciful Brothers had done for their kingdom.

---

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.

Instagram: @ririro\_reading · Pinterest: [pinterest.com/ririrocom](https://pinterest.com/ririrocom)