



# The Red Bull o'Norroway

adapted from The Goldenrod Fairy Book (ed. Esther Singleton, Dodd, Mead 1903)

ONCE upon a time there lived a King who had three daughters; the two eldest were proud and ugly, but the youngest was gentle and beautiful, and the pride not only of her father and mother, but of all in the land. It came to pass that the three Princesses were talking one night of whom they would marry. "I will have no one lower than a King," said the eldest Princess; the second said she would take a Prince, or a great Duke.

'Pooh, pooh!' said the youngest, laughing; 'you are both so proud; now, I would be content with the Red Bull o' Norroway.'

Well, they thought no more of the matter till the next morning, when, as they sat to breakfast, they heard the most dreadful bellowing at the door; and what should it be but the Red Bull come for his bride. You may be sure they were all terribly frightened at this, for the Red Bull was one of the most horrible creatures ever seen in the world. And the King and Queen did not know how to save their daughter.

At last they determined to send him off with the old henwife. So they put her on his back, and away he went with her till he came to a great, black forest, when, throwing her down, he returned, roaring louder and more frightfully than ever. They then sent, one by one, all the servants, then the two eldest Princesses; but not one of them met with any better treatment than the old henwife, and at last they were forced to send their youngest child.

On travelled the lady and the bull through many dreadful forests and lonely wastes, till they came at last to a noble castle, where a large company was assembled. The lord of the castle pressed them to stay, though much he wondered at the lovely Princess and her strange companion. When they went in among the company, the Princess espied a pin sticking in the bull's hide, which she pulled out, and, to the surprise of all, there appeared, not a frightful wild beast, but the most beautiful Prince. You may believe how

delighted the Princess was to see him fall at her feet, and thank her for breaking his cruel enchantment. There were great rejoicings in the castle at this; but alas! at that moment he suddenly disappeared, and though every place was sought, he was nowhere to be found. The Princess, however, determined to seek through all the world for him, and many weary ways she went, but nothing could she hear of her lover.

Travelling once through a dark wood, she lost her way, and as night was coming on she thought she must now certainly die of cold and hunger; but seeing a light through the trees, she went on till she came to a little hut, where an old woman lived, who took her in and gave her both food and shelter. In the morning the old wifie gave her three nuts, that she was not to break till her heart was 'like to break, and owre again to break'; so, showing her the way, she bade her farewell, and the Princess once more set out on her wearisome journey.

She had not gone far till a company of lords and ladies rode past her, all talking merrily of the fine doings they expected at the Duke o' Norroway's wedding. Then she came up to a number of people carrying all sorts of fine things, and they, too, were going to the Duke's wedding. At last she came to a castle where nothing was to be seen but cooks and bakers, some running one way, and some another, and all so busy that they did not know what to do first. Whilst she was looking at all this, she heard a noise of hunters behind her, and some one cried out, 'Make way for the Duke o' Norroway!' and who should ride past but the Prince and a beautiful lady!

You may be sure her heart was now 'like to break, and owre again to break,' at this sad sight; so she broke one of the nuts, and out came a wee wifie carding. The Princess then went into the castle, and asked to see the lady, who no sooner saw the wee wifie so hard at work, than she offered the Princess anything in her castle for it.

'I will give it to you,' said she, 'only on condition that you put off for one day your marriage with the Duke o' Norroway, and that I may go into his room alone tonight.'

So anxious was the lady for the nut that she consented. And when dark night was come and the Duke fast asleep, the Princess was put alone into his chamber. Sitting down by his bedside, she began singing:







‘Far have I sought ye, near am I brought to ye;  
Dear Duke o’ Norroway, will ye no turn and speak to me?’

Though she sang this over and over again, the Duke never awakened, and in the morning the Princess had to leave him, without his knowing she had ever been there. She then broke the second nut, and out came a wee wifie spinning, which so delighted the lady that she readily agreed to put off her marriage another day for it; but to the Princess came no better luck the second night than the first, and, almost in despair, she broke the last nut, which contained a wee wifie reeling; and on the same condition as before the lady got possession of it.

When the Duke was dressing in the morning, his man asked him what the strange singing and moaning that had been heard in his room for two nights meant.

‘I heard nothing,’ said the Duke; ‘it could only have been your fancy.’ ‘Take no sleeping draught tonight, and be sure to lay aside your pillow of heaviness,’ said the man, ‘and you will also hear what for two nights has kept me awake.’

The Duke did so, and the Princess coming in, sat down sighing at his bedside, thinking this the last time she might ever see him. The Duke started up when he heard the voice of his dearly loved Princess and, with many endearing expressions of surprise and joy, explained to her that he had long been in the power of an enchantress, whose spells over him were now happily ended by their meeting once again.

The Princess, happy to be the instrument of his second deliverance, consented to marry him, and the enchantress, who fled that country, afraid of the Duke’s anger, has never since been heard of from that day to this. All was hurry and preparation in the castle, and the marriage –which now took place at once– ended the adventures of the Red Bull o’ Norroway and the wanderings of the King’s daughter.