



Bluebeard

Description

Original version of the book *Les Contes de Perrault*, original texts modernized by Pierre Féron (canon), Casterman, 1902

Illustrations by Gustave Doré, 1901

Once upon a time there was a man who had beautiful houses in the city and in the country, gold and silver dishes, embroidered furniture, and carriages all gilded. But, by misfortune, this man had a blue beard: it made him so ugly and so terrible, that there was nobody who did not flee from him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of quality, had two daughters. He asked her for one in marriage. They both did not want to marry him, as they could not bring themselves to take a man with a blue beard. What disgusted them even more was that he had already married several women, and that no one knew what had become of these women.

The Bluebeard, in order to get to know them, took them, their mother and three or four of their best friends to one of her country houses, where they stayed for eight whole days. They went for walks, went hunting and fishing, danced and feasted, and ate. Everything went so well that the youngest daughter began to think that the master of the house was a very honest man. As soon as we were back in the city, the marriage was concluded.

After a month, the Bluebeard told his wife that he was obliged to travel to the provinces for at least six weeks on a matter of consequence; that he asked her to be well entertained during his absence; that she should bring her good friends; that she should take them to the country, if she wished; that she should treat them well everywhere. Here, » he said, « are the keys to the two large storage rooms; here are the keys to the gold and silver dishes, which are not used every day; here are the keys to my safes, where my gold and silver are; here are the keys to the cassettes, where my gems are, and here is the master key to all the apartments. As for this little key here, it is the key to the cabinet at the end of the large gallery of the lower apartment: open everything, go everywhere; but, as for this little cabinet, I forbid you to enter it, and I forbid you to do so in such a way that, if you should happen to open it, there is nothing that you should not expect from my wrath. »

She promised to observe exactly all that had just been ordered, and he got into his carriage, and set out on his journey.

The neighbors and good friends did not wait to be sent for to go to the young bride's house, so eager were they to see all the riches of her house, not having dared to come there while the husband was there, because of his blue beard, which frightened them. They immediately went through the rooms, the cabinets, the wardrobes, all more beautiful and richer than the others. They then went up to the furniture depositories, where they could not sufficiently admire the number and the beauty of the tapestries, the beds, the sofas of the cabinets, the pedestal tables, the tables and the mirrors where one could see oneself from the feet to the head, and whose borders, some of ice, others of silver and gilded vermeil, were the most beautiful and the most splendid that one had ever seen. They did not cease to exaggerate and to envy the happiness of their friend, who, however, did not amuse herself to see all these riches, because of the impatience which she had to go to open the cabinet of the low apartment.

She was so anxious with her curiosity, that, without considering that it was dishonest to leave her company, she went down by a small concealed staircase, and with such haste that she thought of breaking her neck two or three times. Having arrived at the door of the cabinet, she stopped there for a while, thinking of the prohibition that her husband had made to her, and considering that it could happen to her misfortune to have been disobedient; but the temptation was so strong, that she could not overcome it: she thus took the small key, and opened the door of the cabinet while trembling.

At first she saw nothing, because the windows were closed. After a few moments, she began to see that the floor was all covered with curdled blood, and that in this blood were the bodies of several dead women tied along the walls: they were all the women whom the Bluebeard had married, and whom he had slit one after another. She thought she would die of fright, and the key of the cabinet, which she had just removed from the lock, fell from her hand.

After having recovered her senses a little, she picked up the key, closed the door, and went up to her room to recover a little; but she could not do it, so much she was moved.

Having noticed that the key of the cabinet was stained with blood, she wiped it two or three times; but the blood did not go away: she washed it, and even rubbed it with sandstone, but there was still blood, because the key was fairy, and there was no way to clean it completely: when one removed the blood on one side, it came back on the other.

The Bluebeard returned from his journey that very evening, and said that he had received letters on the way which told him that the business for which he had gone had just been concluded to his advantage. His wife did all she could to show him that she was delighted with his prompt return.

The next day, he asked her for the keys; and she gave them to him, but with such a trembling hand, that he guessed without difficulty all that had happened. He said to her, « Why is the key of the cabinet not with the others? – It is necessary, she said, that I left it up there on my table. – Do not fail, said the Bluebeard, to give it to me soon.

After several postponements, it was necessary to bring the key. The Bluebeard, having considered it, said to his wife: Why is there blood on this key? – I don't know, » replied the poor woman, paler than death. – You don't know! » said the Bluebeard, « I do know. You wanted to enter the cabinet! Well, madam, you will enter and take your place with the ladies you saw there.

She threw herself at her husband's feet, weeping, and asking his forgiveness, with all the marks of true repentance, for not having been obedient. She would have softened a rock, afflicted as she was; but the Bluebeard had a heart harder than a rock. It is necessary to die, madam, » he said to her, « and right now. – Since it is necessary to die, » she answered, looking at him with eyes bathed in tears, « give me a little time to pray to God. – I will give you half an hour, » said the Bluebeard, « but not a moment more.

When she was alone, she called her sister, and said to her, « Sister Anne, for that was her name, please go up to the top of the tower to see if my brothers are not coming; they promised me that they would come to see me today; and if you see them, signal them to hurry. – Sister Anne went up to the top of the tower, and the poor afflicted woman cried out to her from time to time, « Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anything coming? – And Sister Anne answered her: I see nothing but the sun that powders, and the grass that greens.

However, Bluebeard, holding a large cutlass in his hand, shouted with all his strength to his wife: Come down quickly, or I will go up there. – One moment more, please, » answered his wife, and immediately she shouted softly: « Anne, my sister Anne, don't you see anything coming? – And sister Anne answered: I see nothing but the sun that powders, and the grass that greens.

Come down quickly, » cried the Bluebeard, « or I'll go up there. – I'm going, » answered the woman, and then she shouted: « Anne, my sister Anne, don't you see anything coming? – I see, » answered Sister Anne, « a big dust coming from this side... – Are they my brothers? – Alas, no, Sister: it is a flock of sheep...

Don't you want to come down? » shouted the Bluebeard. « Just a moment more, » answered his wife, and then she shouted: « Anne, my sister Anne, don't you see anything coming? – I see, » she answered, « two horsemen coming from this side, but they are still far away... God be praised! » she cried a moment later; « they are my brothers. I beckon them while I can to make haste.

The Bluebeard began to shout so loudly that the whole house shook. The poor woman went downstairs and threw herself at his feet, all distraught and disheveled. It's no use, » said the Bluebeard, « you must die. Then, taking her with one hand by the hair, and with the other raising the cutlass in the air, he was going to cut her head off. The poor woman, turning towards him, and looking

at him with dying eyes, begged him to give her a little moment to collect herself. « No, no, » he said, « commend yourself to God; » and, raising his arm...

At that moment, there was a loud knock at the door, and Bluebeard stopped short. The door was opened, and immediately two horsemen entered, who, putting their swords in their hands, ran straight to the Bluebeard. He recognized that they were his wife's brothers, one a dragoon and the other a musketeer, so he immediately fled to save himself; but the two brothers pursued him so closely that they caught him before he could reach the staircase. They put their swords through his body and left him dead.

The poor woman was almost as dead as her husband, and did not have the strength to get up and embrace her brothers.

It so happened that the Bluebeard had no heirs, and so his wife remained the owner of all his property. She used part of it to marry her sister to a gentleman, another part to buy captainships for her two brothers, and the rest to marry herself to a very honest man, who made her forget the bad time she had spent with the Bluebeard.

date créée

29/01/2023

Auteur

cdf

contesdefees.com