



## Donkeyskin

### Description

*After Charles Perrault, version from contesdefees.com.*

Once upon a time there was the most powerful king in the land, as good in peace as he was terrible in war. His neighbors respected and feared him and the greatest tranquility reigned in the kingdom. His wife was so loving and witty, that if the king was happy as a ruler, he was even happier as a husband. They had a daughter, and as she was very nice and beautiful, they were comforted by the fact that they had no other children.

The palace was vast and magnificent. Everywhere there were courtiers and servants. The stables were full of beautiful horses and ponies. But they were most famous for housing a donkey. This famous donkey had the privilege that what he ate came out transformed into sparkling gold coins. This was a big part of the kingdom's fortune.

But one day, the happiness of the royal couple was disturbed by a serious illness from which the queen suffered, which worsened despite the use of all the sciences and the wisdom of the doctors. The patient understood that her last hour was approaching and she said to the king:

-Before I die, I would like to ask you that if you remarry...

-Never! Never! » cried the king, sobbing.

-I know that your love for me is irreplaceable, but I want you to swear to me that you will only remarry if you find a woman who surpasses me in beauty and wisdom.

The king swore with tears in his eyes, and soon after, the queen died, and the despair of her husband was immense. The grief somewhat upset his reason, and a few months later he called before him all the young women of the court, then those of the city and then those of the country, saying that he would marry the one who was more beautiful than the dead queen; but as no one could be compared to her, he chose none. The king finally showed clear signs of madness, and one day declared that the princess, who was indeed more beautiful than her mother, would become his wife. The courtiers made him understand that such a marriage was impossible because the infant was his daughter, but as it is

difficult to make a madman listen to reason, the king did not want to hear anything and shouted that they wanted to deceive him because he had no daughter.

The poor little princess, frightened by her father's madness, had tears in her eyes when she went to her godmother, the most powerful fairy in the kingdom. When she saw her, the fairy godmother cried out:

-I know what brings you to me. Your father's madness is such that you must not refuse him openly. Tell him that before accepting to be his wife, you demand a dress the color of the sky. As it does not exist, he will not be able to give it to you and will have to abandon his horrible project.

The princess followed the fairy's advice, and the king called all the dressmakers in the kingdom and told them he would hang them if they did not make a sky-colored dress. Driven by fear, they set to work, and two days later, the princess had the dress. With tears in her eyes, she was forced to admit that her wish had been granted. Her godmother, who was in the palace, said in a low voice:

-Now ask for a dress brighter than the moon. He will not be able to give it to you and will have to abandon his horrible project.

As soon as the princess asked for it, the king called the embroiderers of the palace and told them:

« I want a dress brighter than the moon in four days. »

Four days later, the infanta received the dress that eclipsed the brightness of the moon. When the godmother saw it, she whispered in her goddaughter's ear:

-Ask him for a dress brighter than the sun. He will not be able to give it to you and will have to abandon his horrible project.

The king called a rich diamond cutter and ordered him to make a dress of brocade and precious stones, threatening to have his head cut off if he could not fulfill his wishes. Before the end of the week, the infanta had the dress, and when she saw it, her despair was great because it was brighter than the star of the day. Then her godmother said to her:

-As long as he has the donkey that produces gold coins, he will be able to satisfy all your demands. Ask him for the donkey's skin, he needs it so much that he will not be able to fulfill your wish and will give up.

The infanta did as the fairy advised, but the king ordered without hesitation that the donkey be killed, skinned, and the skin brought to the young woman, who was desperate because she did not know what to ask for. Her godmother encouraged her by reminding her that there was nothing to fear as long as she was healthy, and then she told her to flee alone and in disguise to a distant kingdom.

« Here is a box where we will put all your dresses, your jewels, your mirror, diamonds and rubies. She said.

I give you my wand: if you keep it in your hand, the box will always remain hidden under the ground; when you want to open it, touch the ground with the wand and immediately the box will appear. So that no one recognizes you, cover yourself with the donkey's skin and no one will believe that a beautiful princess is hiding under such a horrible disguise.

The princess followed her godmother's instructions and walked away from her father's castle. As soon as the king noticed her absence, he became very angry and sent messengers to find her.

As for the princess, she continued on her way, asking for alms from everyone she met and stopping at every house to ask if they needed a maid; but her appearance was so horrible that no one wanted to take her on. She kept walking, farther and farther; and finally she came to a farm whose owner needed a pig keeper, to scrub them, sweep them, and clean their bowls. In the kitchen, the servants made fun of her and treated her badly. They renamed her Donkey Skin and everyone called her that now.

On Sundays, she could rest, because as soon as she had finished her chores, she entered the cabin that had been assigned to her; once the door was closed, she took off her donkey skin, put on her hair, adorned herself with her jewels, put on the moon dress, the sun dress or the sky dress. She looked at herself in the mirror and was happy to see herself young, white, pink and more beautiful than the other women. These moments of joy encouraged her to face the hardness of her work and she waited patiently for the next Sunday.

The farm where Donkey Skin lived belonged to a very powerful king, who raised rare birds and exotic animals. The king's son would often come to the farm when he returned from hunting, and rest with his companions while having a drink. The prince was very proud and handsome, and when Donkey Skin saw him from afar, her heart began to pound and she thought to herself:

-His manners are noble, his face is handsome, his appearance pleasant. Blessed is the woman who will receive his love!

One day the prince stopped at the farm, and wandering through the yard to examine the birds and animals, he came upon the miserable room where Donkey Skin lived, and hearing a noise, he began to look through the keyhole. As it was Sunday, he saw the pig keeper dressed in gold and diamonds, more beautiful than the sun. The prince admired her, dazzled, unable to contain the beating of his heart. The rosy white of her complexion, the contours of her face, her fresh youth, all mixed with a certain air of grandeur heightened by modesty, drove the prince crazy with love.

Three times he raised his arm to break down the door, but as many times the fear of being in front of a fairy held him back, and he withdrew thoughtfully into his palace. Since then, he sighed day and night, avoided all amusements, even hunting, and lost his appetite. He asked who was this admirable beauty who lived at the back of a farmhouse, at the end of a dreadful alley, in which darkness was complete in broad daylight, and was told that her name was Donkey Skin, because of the fur she wore around her neck; adding that it was enough to look at her to be cured of love, for she was uglier than the most horrible of beasts.

No matter what people told him, he would not believe them, for the image of the princess was

engraved in his heart. The queen, who had no other son, wept when she saw him wasting away. In vain she asked him what his illness was, for the prince was speechless, and the only thing he managed to tell her was that he wanted to eat a pie made of donkey skin. The queen did not know who her son was talking about, and having asked, they answered:

« Goodness Madam! » The donkey skin is an ugly black mole more disgusting than the dirtiest kitchen boy.

– That doesn't matter, cried the queen; since the prince wants a pie made by her, let her make it for him at once!

The mother loved her son extraordinarily, and if he had asked her for the moon, she would have tried everything to bring it to him.

Having received the order for the pie, Donkey Skin took flour, salt, butter and fresh eggs, and locked herself in her room. She cleaned her face, hands and arms, put on a silver apron and began her pie. While she was working, one of her beautiful rings slipped off her finger and fell into the cake without her realizing it. When the king's son ate the pie with great appetite, he almost swallowed the ring. Fortunately, he noticed it by its glittering emerald, and admired the narrow gold ring, which marked the slender shape of his beautiful owner's finger.

Crazy with joy, he put the ring in his pocket and never took it off. But his illness worsened and the doctors consulted said that he was lovesick. His parents decided to look for a wife for him, but the prince said:

« I will marry only the young lady on whose finger this ring will pass. »

Great was the surprise of the king and queen when they heard such a strange request, but as the prince's condition was very serious, they did not dare to offend him and immediately announced that the young woman to whom the ring would go would marry the prince, even if she was not of royal blood.

All the women of the kingdom arrived to try on the ring, the princesses, followed by the duchesses, marquises, countesses and baronesses. None of them had a finger fine enough. The women of more modest means were no more fortunate. All the servants of the kingdom failed. All except one, who had not been sent for, because the prince was told that it was not worth trying.

-Why not? » exclaimed the prince.

They all smiled, but the prince added:

– Send for this Donkey Skin!

Spreading the rags and the old donkey skin, he uncovered a small hand as fine as ivory, slightly pinkish; they made the test, and the ring fitted on his finger immediately, to the great astonishment of the courtiers. The prince then removed the donkey skin and had to cover his eyes to sustain the glitter of the sun's robe and admire the beauty that had appeared before him. Large almond-shaped blue eyes, a gentle gaze, full of majesty, blond hair reminiscent of the sun's rays; her waist was incredibly slim; her diamonds dazzled and her costume was so rich that it was beyond comparison. Everyone

applauded, especially the ladies, and the king and queen were delighted to discover their son's fiancée.

Orders were immediately given for the wedding to take place and the king invited all the neighboring monarchs, who left their kingdoms, some riding on large elephants, others on horses harnessed with gold and silver, and some embarked on boats that had purple lamps. But if all the princes competed in luxury to show their power, none equaled the father of the young bride, who had finally come to his senses. His surprise was great and his joy even greater when he found his daughter, whom he embraced with tears of joy; and great was also the prince's surprise to know the origin of his bride. At that moment, the godmother appeared, explained everything that had happened, then the wedding was celebrated and everyone lived happily.

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