



The fairies

Description

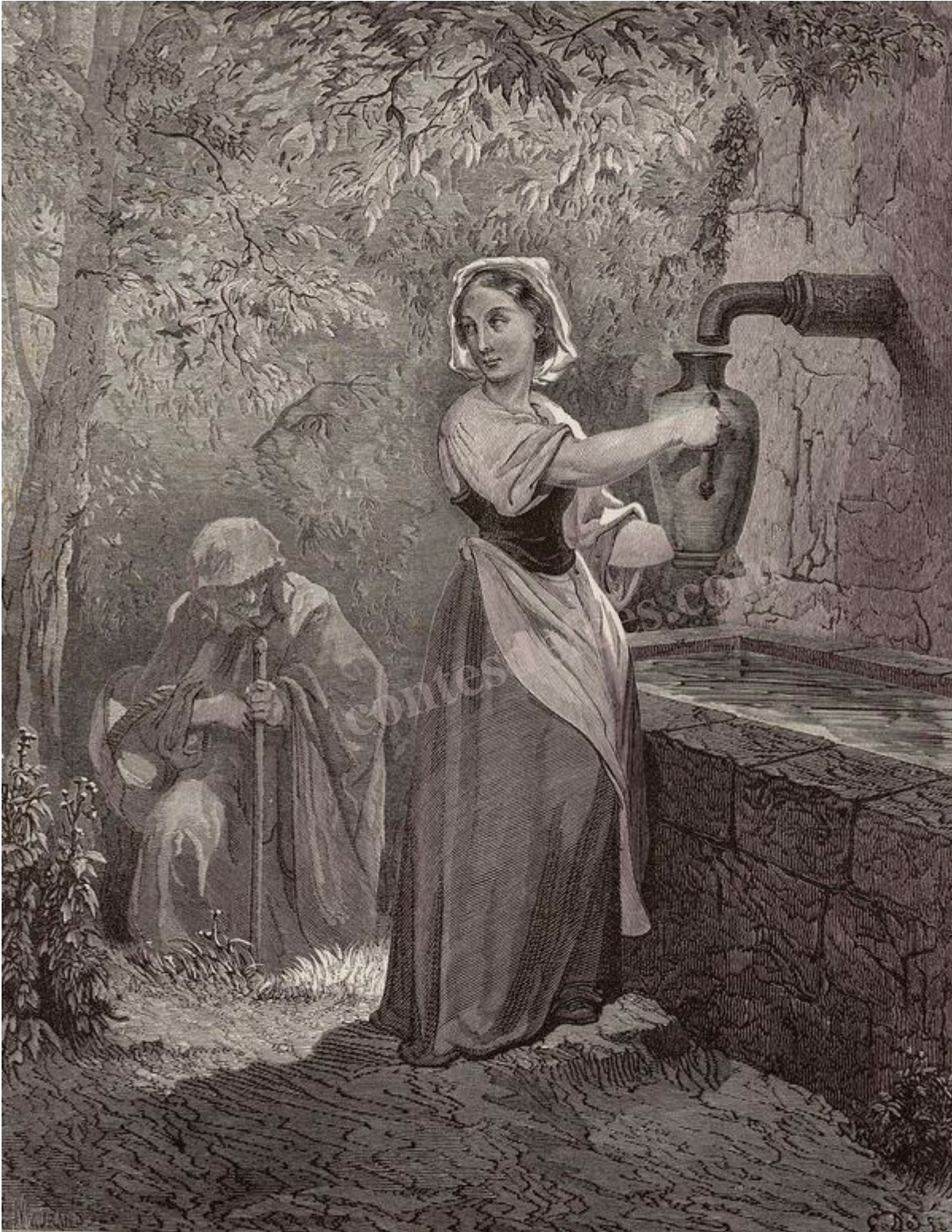
Perrault's tale, modernized in 1902 by Pierre Féron and in 2021 by Contesdefees.com

Told by Sophie de Pas

Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters: the elder resembled her so strongly in mood and face, that, whoever saw her, saw the mother. They were both so unpleasant and proud that one could not live with them. The youngest daughter was the true portrait of her father in gentleness and honesty. As one naturally loves his fellow man, this mother was crazy about her elder daughter and at the same time had a terrible dislike for the younger one. She made her eat in the kitchen and work constantly.

Among other things, the poor child had to go twice a day to fetch water half a mile from the house and bring back a large jug full of it. One day while she was at the fountain, a poor woman came to her and asked her to give her a drink.

The girl said to her, « Yes, my good mother, » and immediately rinsed out her pitcher and drew water from the most beautiful spot in the fountain and presented it to her, still holding the pitcher so that she could drink more easily. The good woman, having drunk, said to her: « You are so good and so honest that I cannot help but give you a gift; for it was a fairy who had taken the form of a poor village woman, to see how far the honesty of this young girl would go. I give you as a gift, » continued the fairy, « that for every word you say, either a flower or a precious stone will come out of your mouth. »



When this girl arrived home, her mother scolded her for returning so late from the fountain.

« I beg your pardon, mother, » said this poor girl, « for having delayed so long; » and as she said these words, two roses, two pearls and two large diamonds came out of her mouth.

What do I see here! » said her mother, amazed; « I think that pearls and diamonds are coming out of

her mouth. (This was the first time she called her daughter).

The poor child naively told her everything that had happened to her, but not without throwing an infinite number of diamonds.

Really, » said the mother, « I must send my daughter there. Fanchon, you have seen what comes out of your sister's mouth when she speaks; wouldn't you like to have the same gift? You only have to go and draw water from the fountain, and, when a poor woman asks you for a drink, you will give her some honestly. – That's all I need, » replied the sister, « to go to the fountain! – I want you to go, » said the mother, « and right away.

She went, but grumbling. She took the most beautiful silver bottle that was in the house. No sooner had she arrived at the fountain than she saw a beautifully dressed lady come out of the wood and ask her for a drink. It was the same fairy who had appeared to her sister, but who had taken on the air and clothes of a princess, to see how far this girl's dishonesty would go.

– I have come here, » said the proud brute, « to give you a drink! I have brought a silver bottle just to give Madame a drink? Go ahead, take it and drink!

– You are hardly honest, » said the fairy, without getting angry. Well, since you are so unhelpful, I give you the gift that for every word you say, either a snake or a toad will come out of your mouth.

When her mother saw her, she called out to her: « Well, my daughter!

– Well, my mother! » replied the wicked sister, throwing two vipers and two toads at her.

– O heaven, » cried the mother, « what do I see here? It's your sister's fault: she'll pay for it; and immediately she ran to beat her. The poor child ran away and went to save herself in the nearby forest.

The king's son, who was returning from hunting, met her and, seeing her so sad, asked her what she was doing there all alone and what she had to cry about!

« Alas! Sir, it was my mother who drove me out of the house. »



The king's son, who saw five or six pearls and as many diamonds coming out of her mouth, asked her to tell him where they came from. She told him her whole adventure. The king's son, considering that such a gift was worth more than anything that could be given in marriage to another, took her to the palace of the king his father, where he married her.

As for her sister, she made herself so hated that her own mother chased her out of her home, and the

unfortunate woman, after having run around without finding anyone who would receive her, went to die in a wood.

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