

The Two Magic Pearls

Diana, the fairy queen was very sick and was about to die. The whole Kingdom of the Fairies was in a state of great panic. Queen Diana lay on her bed, her wings drooping, her hands stretched open, her mouth half opened with her eyes closed. She had gotten sick at dusk, while she was dancing by the blue lake, and like a sputtering candle, she suddenly collapsed on the heart of a water lily.

A wave of shock and fear grasped the little fairies and about twenty of them flew to her aid and carried her gently on a water lily to their grotto in the mountain. This sad slow moving procession looked eerie under the pale light of the moon.

They gently put Diana on a bed of wild violets with her head under the sparkling pearl. The pearl had an odd shape. It looked like a huge tear dropped from the face of the moon. It was the fairies' most precious treasure, because of its magical powers. It seemed to send out warm and strong rays of light through the whole room, but the glazed eyes of the queen no longer noticed the beautiful gem.

Later that night, when the wind began to shake its violet scarf, some of the fairies carried their queen outdoors, laying her on the scarlet velvet of a huge iris. Then they danced around her and sang soothing lullabies, hoping to make her feel better. Diana smiled, and with trembling lips she murmured in a faint voice "Thank you". This little smile comforted the fairies and gave them hope that she might recover.

What the fairies did not understand was that behind Diana's sad smile, there was a will to live, but her weak heart was beating more and more slowly. Before long the queen grew so weak, that even the light of the moon would bother her. She was forced to go inside. From that night on, the little fairies stopped dancing. They just sat quietly in the grotto, their eyes fixed anxiously on the queen, as she lay on her bed, silent and without a stir.

When the grasshoppers begin to sing, and the frogs filled the marsh with their croaking, the wings of the fairy queen quivered a bit and her long silky eyelashes fluttered above her deep blue eyes. The fairies understood at once that the noise was bothering Diana, so they flew quickly to the grasshoppers and frogs and told them. "Ladies,' we beg of you to play your music more softly, so it doesn't disturb our queen. She is very sick, you know, and might even die."

Both the grasshoppers and the frogs stopped their singing. They were moved by this sad news, but they were flattered to have been called “Ladies”, and delighted that the fairies had spoken of “their music.”

“We’ll come back later to see how the queen is doing,” they softly whispered.

By nightfall, the whole neighborhood had heard that Queen Diana was sick. The frogs had told the robins, the robins had told the squirrels, and the squirrels in turn had told everyone else in the wood.

The following night a colorful parade of yellow and pink butterflies, of silvery moths, bright fireflies, green frogs, brown bats, soft fuzzy squirrels and other critters moved slowly along the rocky road leading to the fairies’ kingdom. They reached the small entrance to the cave. A fairy on guard duty stood in the doorway blocking their way “What do you want?” she said in a kind way.

“We want to see your queen please, even if it’s for a short while. We brought her some medicine,” they all said together.

“Please wait a minute,” said the fairy “I don’t know if the queen can see anyone tonight, she is still very sick, but stay here while I go and ask if you can come in.” she continued.

A few minutes later she came back, and with a sad tone in her voice she told them:

“My fairies sisters would like to thank you for your kindness, but Queen Diana is so weak that we must make sure that she doesn’t get worse, so she cannot have any visitors. We are sorry. However if you want to walk quietly by her bedroom door, you can get a glimpse of her as she is resting on her bed.”

Slowly the colorful procession filed by the queen’s door. The animals sensed the great sadness. As each one passed by the door, he dropped a grain or some spice on the floor. Grains and spices are excellent medicine for the animals of the forest, but certainly not for fairies. The cute mouth of a fairy is too small for that.

“Thank you for coming, and for bringing some of your own medicine” said the fairy on guard duty.

When the last visitor had gone, silence fell once again upon the cave, and the fairy on guard duty began to think about what to do for her queen. Her head ached with all sorts of ideas. She was a frail little fairy with big beautiful dreamy eyes, and small wings that resembled delicate lace dusted with gold. Her name was Sylvette. She was graceful and very bright. She had a heart of gold, which quivered

like a harp at the least bit of emotion. Because Sylvette was so sensitive she suffered much more deeply than her other sisters, and Queen Diana's illness just about broke her heart.

While the little fairy was deep in thoughts, the fullness of the moon suddenly appeared from behind a wisp of clouds. The face of the star seemed to smile at her. Suddenly Sylvette had a brilliant idea. Why not ask the moon to help? Yes, Madame Moon who has seen so many things during her long lifetime would probably know of a cure for her queen.

Sylvette stood up and raised her hands, and said:

"Oh silvery moon, way up in the sky

Please give us a tune that will fly

And bring from the Heavens the answer soon."

She waited for the answer, anxious and trembling. The moon sighed, and answered in a soft voice:

"I regret

O Sylvette,

I know no cure yet."

Sylvette's little hands dropped down with disappointment and she said out lowed: "Thank you just the same, I should ask the North Star to help. Who knows maybe he will know of a cure?"

Again she raised her voice into the deep stillness of the night and said:

"Oh clear and bright and brilliant star

We know who and where you are

Sparkling up there from ancient start

Come help and cure own queen's heart."

Then the North Star spoke in a deep and solemn voice:

"Although to you my light I send

With beams and pulse that do not bend

I only shine with hope above

That offers strength for fairy love.”

The last ray of hope faded away from the Sylvette’s heart. She slumped down on a mossy rock, hiding her face with her wings, and she began to cry.

At that very moment the wind appeared very quietly, so quietly that it sounded as if he was walking in velvet slippers. He was an old man, but young at heart. He loved Sylvette, and often played tricks on her. He had a great sense of humor, however he had the bad habit of surprising her from behind, and blowing air down her neck. Then he would laugh at his own pranks. Once again, he wanted to surprise her, having just come back from the North Pole. When he first saw her he thought she was sleeping, so he could catch her by surprise. He tousled her hair to tickle her. Sylvette had a big curl on top of her head in shape of a question mark, which he was fond of playing with it. He often made it dance on her forehead. “Peek-a boo, Sylvette,” he said.

Normally Sylvette welcomed his teasing with an impish giggle, but this time, her eyes flooded with tears and she began to cry. He wanted him to comfort her and not tease her. The wind was shocked when he saw her face. Was this his little care-free butterfly, his happy little flower?

“My child, oh my little child,” murmured the wind, with tears in his eyes.

“My old dad,” she stuttered.

The wind was not her real father, but she had called him dad ever since the night he told her how lonely he was and how he longed to have a friend. Sylvette’s heart was so moved by this confession, that she asked him right then and there if he wanted to be her father. She would always love him and keep him company, so he would never be lonely again. That made him so happy that he danced and chatted with her all night long. During the next ten days he sang his happiness down all the chimneys of houses, and all throughout the trees of the forests.

But now he was concerned. “What’s wrong with you, my little Sylvette? How can your old father help you and comfort you?” he asked the little fairy as he gently stroked her back and kissed her hair.

“Oh, father, our queen is so sick, and no one knows what to do with her, no one, not even the Moon, nor the North Star. I am afraid that Queen Diana will die.”

"I am sorry to hear this," said the wind "that's very sad." For a long time he was quiet, then finally he said: "We must find the best doctor to treat her"

Suddenly, he bounced up with such strength that even the stars were stunned, and all the leaves on the ground were carried away in a dizzying waltz.

"I have a great idea, my child, I have a great idea," he repeated with feeling.

He sat down next to Sylvette and told her of his plan.

"Listen to me," he said, "in the country where the sun sets, there is a very tall mountain all covered with wild trees. Well, one day when I was roaming through that forest, I discovered some tiny people, a tiny king and his tiny subjects, who were so small that I could have blown them up in the air like a bag of feathers. They say that these little dwarves are highly educated, and have made many discoveries. They hold the secrets for cures to all the world's diseases. Let's go ask them for their help."

Sylvette's face lit up, and she got up from her rock, and shouted:

"Of course. Let's go! Take me there now please, but give me a few minutes so I can tell the other fairies about this trip, I'll pack a bag and then I'll be ready."

Sylvette flew back into the cave. She told the fairies family that the wind was taking her to the kingdom of the tiny people who knew how to cure all diseases. The good news ran quickly through out the little Fairy Kingdom. Her sisters and brothers all agreed that she should leave as soon as possible, and bring back a remedy for the queen.

They all wanted to help Sylvette to get her ready for the trip, and they gave her advices, warning her of all possible dangers. They gave her a coat made of silvery fleece to keep her warm.

Before she left, Sylvette went to say goodbye to her sick queen and kissed her pale hands. She whispered to her: "I am going on a trip to bring you back your health, my Queen." A flash of hope came to the queen's eyes, as she managed a faint smile. It seemed to say "thank you." Sylvette, excited and happy as a lark, ran into the arms of the wind, who was patiently waiting for her. She sang to him:

"Oh, strong wind, hold me tight,
Close to you I know no fright

Keep on blowing with all your might

That our queen's illness may take flight."

The wind propped Sylvette on his back. Then, unfolding his gigantic gray wings, and vaulted like an arrow in the air. The trip made her dizzy, as they moved swiftly into the night. The cities, the villages, the forests, and the pastures below them resembled toys left behind on an immense carpet. The rivers seemed like silver threads woven in dark black hair.

The moon, which knew the purpose of their trip, showed them the way with her bright light. The stars also sent their brightest rays to help out. The wind's wings whistled as they flapped back and forward. The sudden rush of air woke up people below by surprise. They wondered why the wind howled in their chimney with such clash.

"Why such a windy storm?" they shouted.

At the time when the stars begin to fade away in the sky, Sylvette could see an enormous mountain far away in the horizon, covered by dense woods. As they got closer and closer to the mountain the wind became more and more excited.

"We are here, my little one!" he exclaimed.

Sylvette was out of breath, her red cheeks burning from their journey.

"Wow, we have traveled really fast," she said. "Now that we are here, how can we ever find these tiny people in such large mountain?"

"I am a little embarrassed," said the wind, "because I can't remember the exact place where these tiny elves live. Let's ask this old tree, he certainly would know."

Sylvette ran over to the big oak tree and perched herself on one of its branches. It was an enormous tree. It would have taken hundreds of fairies holding hands together to go around its trunk, she thought.

"Dear old and wise tree" began Sylvette, with a timid voice, "would you tell us where the little elves live, the ones who are so smart and know all life's secret and cures?"

The tree didn't budge. He seemed not to have heard a thing she said.

Suddenly, a multitude of birds woke up from their slumber and a smart and talkative humming bird started to chirp.

"You must speak louder, the old tree is hard of hearing," he said to her.

"That's true," shouted all the other birds in chorus.

“Thank you” said Sylvette. She repeated her question again, a little louder this time.

“He is very hard of hearing,” belted the pigeon.

“I really cannot scream any louder,” said Sylvette.

She turned and looked at her friend the wind who was laughing at her again.

“Just a minute, I’ll give you a hand,” he said. With a flap of his wing he shook a branch of the tree, waking the old giant. The tree snorted and grumbled, waking up from a very deep slumber.

“You fool, how you dare wake me up by shaking me like that,” the tree mumbled.

“You have a visitor,” explained the wind, “it’s a fairy, who has come to ask you something,” he continued.

“What did you say? A fairy? Where is she? I don’t see anyone here,” said the startled tree. Now all the birds cooed together and pointed to Sylvette with their beaks.

Sylvette was embarrassed to have caused such a commotion.

The tree tried hard to focus on her with both eyes and everyone became quite. The wind took it all in and smiled.

“I have never seen such an exquisite creature like this before,” the tree exclaimed. “What did you want to ask me, little fairy?” he continued.

“Mr. Tree,” Sylvette said politely, “do you know where the little elves who possess magic power live? I am told that they live around here.”

“Hum, my little child, ...How would I know? There are so many creatures running around my trunk, I could never remember where each one of them live. It would be great if I could tell you, but I am sorry, I can’t,” the old tree replied.

Sylvette discouraged let out a big sigh.

“We are getting no where with all your drivel, old tree,” said the wind.

As they were about to leave, the tree called them back, “Wait a minute, don’t give up so fast, be patient. I may not be able to help you, but I know someone else who can give you the information you need. A couple of storks live on my tallest branch. They know many more things than I do, because they travel so much. They are not home at the moment. They are taking their morning flight, but it won’t be too long before they’ll be back. Climb up and get in their nest and wait for them.”

With that Sylvette pulled herself up through the thick foliage of the tree and settled down in the stork's nest made of twigs and moss.

"I'll come with you," shouted the wind. With that he bounced right into the giant nest. While Sylvette and the wind waited for the storks to come home, the birds around them began to sing in a melodious chorus.

Sylvette understood that they were singing in her honor. She smiled and thanked them from the bottom of her heart. Then suddenly she saw a big bird flapping its wings in the distance. Sylvette shouted joyfully: "It must be them!"

"No, no, it's not them, hide quickly" whistled the wind. "It's a bird of prey."

The birds all fell silent at once, scared for their own lives. Our little fairy nimbly hid behind a large leaf. When the bird of prey circled the tree, looking for a victim with its cruel eyes, the wind blew so hard on him that it tossed him up in the air several miles away.

Now that the danger had passed, the birds begin to sing again. A hummingbird timidly jumped close to Sylvette, and with its little paws pointed to two tiny black spots in the sky. He was so proud and happy for he was the first one to see the storks in the sky.

"There is the stork family," he exclaimed. "I'll fly to meet them and tell them about your visit," he said with excitement.

A little while later, Mr. and Mrs. Stork landed near their nest, with the humming bird proudly sitting on Mr. Stork's back.

"Here they are," he said with pride in his voice, as though he was the one who carried Mr. Stork himself. "As I sat on father Stork's back, close to his ear I told him about every thing." The storks were pleasantly surprised to see such a pretty fairy smiling at them. As always, Mrs. Stork was the first to speak.

"We are very happy to be at your service, dear little fairy. You came just at the right time, since we are going to pick up our son Drake from the Kingdom of the Elves today. He has been there for several weeks recovering from a broken leg. He broke his leg, trying to leave the nest too soon. The elves are treating him well there you know. Don't you agree husband?"

"Yes, yes that's true," replied Mr. Stork casually, as he folded one of his legs under his big wing.

“I thank you, Ladies of the Stilts,” said Sylvette, unaware that it was not their real name, but a nickname used by the other birds for them. “I would love to come with you, if you would allow me to,” she continued.

The storks winked at each other, because Sylvette had called them “Ladies of the Stilts.” Then Mr. Stork said: “If you are ready wife, we can leave right away. I will carry the little fairy on my back.”

“Oh, thank you!” said Sylvette, and with that, she climbed carefully on the stork’s smooth back and held on tight.

“Bon voyage and good luck,” yelled all the birds together.

“I will blow a stream of jet air to help you,” said the wind.

The storks flew for a long long time without ever making a stop. When they reached the banks of a roaring mountain stream, mother Stork said: “We will follow the course of this mountain stream, and when it narrows down to a little trickle of water, that will mean that we are there.”

It was getting colder and colder, as the temperature dipped down to zero.

“This must be the top of the mountain, covered by the snow,” said Mrs. Stork. A white blanket of snow covered the ground and water. Soon they could only see a thin trickling of water.

“This is the origin of the mountain stream, so we must be very close,” said father Stork. They could see at a distance a bare round spot, with just one enormous tree. It was even bigger than the oak tree where the storks lived.

“I recognize the place,” said the wind, “now I remember this is where the elves live,” he continued.

“You are right,” the Mrs. Stork exclaimed, “your memory is good.” The two storks landed like airplanes returning to their airfield.

The wind told Sylvette that he had done his job and now that it was up to her to plead her case for her queen’s remedy. He promised her that he would wait for her outside, and that he hoped to bring her back to the Kingdom of the Fairies with some good news.

“Thanks for your help. See you soon,” said Sylvette.

Father Stork knocked three times at the rough tree bark with his long beak. After a few minutes our travelers heard a slight rustling coming from inside. A little door opened from the bark of the tree,

and a tiny little elf appeared at the door of this mysterious dwelling. He wore a white suit with red piping, a green pointed hat covering half of his curly blond hair and a blue apron, which was decorated with small white rabbits. He also had a blond curly beard.

“Hello, Paul” the storks said as they bowed with their beak, in a gesture of polite greeting.

“By Thunder, here are Mother and Father Stork! I bet you have come to pick up your son, isn’t that right? Your young man is completely healed, you can come and see him for yourself.” Then Paul looked at Sylvette, and seemed visibly moved by her beauty.

“Whom did you bring up this time?” he stuttered

“I am Sylvette of the Fairy Kingdom, from the land where the sun shine brightly. I am glad to meet you Mr. Paul. The wind spoke to me about your wisdom and your great knowledge of science. That’s the reason that I am here so I can consult your famous doctor about our sick queen. Perhaps he can give me some advice and find a cure for her.”

“So that that’s what a fairy looks like.” Paul said, “Welcome dear Sylvette, please come in. I will take you to meet our king right away” he continued

Then he turned to the storks and said to them. “Please wait here a few minutes, I will bring your son over to you.”

Sylvette thanked the storks for their help and then followed the little elf inside the tree.

She found herself in a circular room. Paul pushed a gold button and the door closed behind them. It was very dark inside, so Paul turned on a flashlight. He pushed a second button, which opened a trap door on the floor, revealing a deep and dark hole.

“Don’t be scared, dear Sylvette,” he said, “Just follow me, but please be careful, because the ladder is very steep and it drops down quickly.”

They started to go down. Sylvette wasn’t scared because she had complete confidence in the kind Paul. When they reached the bottom of the ladder, Sylvette found herself in a long hallway. The walls were decorated with statues, made of gold and silver in form of flowers, and animals. The floor was paved with shining white stones, and the light from above created whimsical shadows on them. A purple velvet curtain woven with golden crowns hung at the end of the hallway. “It’s the throne room,” Paul whispered to her.

Sylvette's heart skipped a beat. The elf spread opened the curtain, to let her into a magnificent spacious room, where the floor and ceiling were made of carved crystal. There were sparkling lights all over. The throne stood in the middle of the room, carved in a polished wood inlaid again with gilded flowers and animals. The armrests were made to look like two solid gold rabbits running in a race. The steps to the throne were decorated with statuettes of forest animals, their heads facing toward the throne, as though they were listening to the king.

Sylvette saw the king sitting on the bottom step. Next to him sat another elf. Both seemed engrossed in a deep discussion about plants and spices, which they had scattered on the floor. The second elf was feverishly leafing through a huge parchment book written with a strange alphabet. Sylvette thought it was unusual to see his majesty the king in such a casual position. The king was just as lively, as was his companion. His white silk cap stood askew on his left ear, under a gold crown. His splendid gray beard spread out like a fan on his lap. His blue eyes were full of kindness. His suit and white velvet coat were trimmed with mink. This impressed Sylvette. The other elf seemed much younger and yet more serious and mature. His eyes were hidden behind thick glasses. His face showed the type of man he was, a man obsessed by the thirst for knowledge and the desire to solve problems. His shoulders slumped under the heavy burden of this commitment. He had personality and charm. His clothes were similar to Paul but minus the apron.

Both the king and his companion were so engrossed in what they were doing, that they never heard Sylvette and Paul come in. Sylvette observed them, unnoticed. Paul knocked three times on the paneling to announce the fairy's visit.

"Yes," said the king turning his head toward them. As soon as he saw his guests, he promptly stood up, straightened his cap and crown and looked at the fairy with great interest.

Paul respectfully saluted him and said:

"Noble King Philip, here is Sylvette, of the fairy race, from the other side of the mountain. She has come to ask us for help and advice for her sick queen."

Sylvette in turn bowed to the king, and said: "That's the truth your majesty, the wind spoke so highly of your great wisdom and great knowledge, that I have come with a heart full of hope that you might help me find a cure for our queen."

"Perfect, perfect," said the king in a kind way. "Please sit down, Sylvette. It would give me great pleasure to help you, my dear fairy."

The other elf seemed anxious to leave, and get back to his books and plants.

“Hold it! My dear Gordon, don’t leave us yet, we need you!”

The king introduced him to Sylvette as the wise and famous Dr. Gordon. “I can tell you that he has cured many sick patients.”

Gordon bowed respectfully, and said: “I am always happy to help others, and would be very glad and willing to help you. The king can vouch for that.” His voice was deliberate, and controlled.

“Perfect, perfect,” approved King Philip. The king turned to Paul and gave him an order. “Well then, my Major Domo, bring us some nectar, and some fine cakes, since our fairy must be hungry after her long trip.”

The king, the fairy and the doctor sat on red silk pillows. Gordon said in a solemn and commanding voice:

“I can certainly help your queen because I have recently discovered a remedy, which is so sensitive, so gentle and benign, that it is bound to work on the most delicate of patients.” Sylvette noticed how very sure of himself he was. Sylvette did not like conceited people. She thought that only a humble person could treat her queen.

“Could you tell me what is the nature of your queen’s illness?” he asked.

“I am not exactly sure,” replied Sylvette, embarrassed to be so ignorant.

“Well” said Gordon,” slowly “I will need to examine the patient myself.” Then he rubbed his beard nervously.

“That settles it,” replied King Philip. “I give you full permission to leave our kingdom to visit the queen. But how will you go? Can you fly like the fairy?” he continued.

“No, I can’t fly,” sighed Gordon, a little jealous of Sylvette’s lacy wings. “I have often dreamed to be able to fly like a bird, but I don’t have wings like fairies.

“It’s a long trip. How about using a pair of reindeer?” proposed the king.

“The trouble is that we must cross an ocean,” said Sylvette sadly, “and that’s impossible to do with a reindeer.”

“Cross an ocean?” asked Gordon. A gleam of surprise flashed in his eyes, and his face tensed up with the new thought of having to cross an ocean. Sylvette tried to understand the feelings that touched

the soul of the scientist. For a while they were silent, thinking about a way to bring the good doctor to see the queen.

Paul entered the room, carrying a silver tray holding three tiny gold goblets, a tall mug and a bowl filled with delicious pastries.

“My dear Paul, we have a serious problem, a real predicament,” said the king, “Gordon here has to go to the land of the fairies, but he doesn’t know how to get there, and he must also cross an ocean. Can you see a way that he could do this? He has no wings like the fairy.”

“He has to go to the land of the fairies,” repeated Paul slowly, as he lay down the tray.

“It’s very simple! All you have to do is ask the storks to lend a hand to fly him there. They are used to traveling long distances. They will not turn us down, at the moment since we have treated their son so well.”

All thought that this was a great idea. The king tapped Paul’s shoulder and said to him: “My old man you are a whiz. Our Gordon is so used to solving complicated problems, but he can’t find solutions for easy ones. Yet, here Paul is not a scientist, he can solve practical problems. Yes, the storks will do it. I would never have thought of it myself.”

“Thank you Paul, for your wonderful advice,” said Gordon, as he shook the hand of his companion vigorously.

“Come now, let’s have a toast to Queen Diana,” exclaimed King Philip. “Wait a minute, Paul doesn’t have a goblet. Never mind, he can drink from mine,” said the king.

After the king drank, he passed the goblet to Paul, who drank from it, blushing with pleasure and confusion.

“Sire, you really honor me,” he stammered.

Sylvette thought that it was marvelous that a king showed such kindness to a simple subject. When they had drunk enough, Philip turned to Paul, and said: “I want you to send our best messengers pigeons to the stork’s nest right away, to ask them to come here this evening, as soon as the first star appears in the sky. It’s better that you leave at night, so Gordon’ the trip remains a secret. Go and ask the basket maker, John of the Field to weave a little basket of willow, and make sure that it’s very comfortable and big enough to hold both Sylvette and Gordon. Finally you must tell all my subjects that there will be a party this afternoon in honor of Sylvette. There is so much joy in my heart that I absolutely wish to share it with every body else.

Tell Chef Pierre to prepare the most succulent dishes. Fetch Solfegio and Solfegia, and tell them to play the catchiest tunes for music. If I left anything out Paul, I am sure that you will think of it. Just do what needs to be done.”

“Yes, Sir, I’ll do it right away,” said Paul. He bowed down very low, and skipped out of the room.

“My good king,” said Sylvette blushing, “you do too much for a simple fairy like me.”

“Not at all, my little one,” said Philip, “we always welcome an excuse to give a party in the Kingdom of Elves, and I am the first one to enjoy it. Even though I am an old man, my heart is as young as a spring bird’s.”

Gordon was caught daydreaming. “Wake up Doctor. If I were you I would get my medicine kit ready to go, so you can be free to enjoy the party.”

Gordon nodded in agreement, bowed down deeply to the king, and left the room without saying a word.

Both the king and Sylvette followed him with their eyes. They were amused at the way he carried his heavy medicine bag. He was bent over from its weight. Sylvette thought that he looked like a mail man carrying a big bag of mail. He seemed also to carry the entire world’s trouble on his shoulders. Sylvette’s eyes never left him and his mysterious kit until he disappeared behind the purple drapery.

The king invited his little visitor to have the grand tour of his palace. He wanted to show off its beauty and its many sculptures. Meanwhile, the elves were quickly transforming the throne room into an enchanted room for the party. They hung flower garlands everywhere, and wreaths covered with morning glories and ribbons. The ceiling was studded with crystal lamps, which shined like fire roses. The fragrance of the resin from the evergreen dispersed in the room. They placed large soft pillows around the walls where the elves would sit, and long boards on sawhorses to act as tables. They left enough space in the center of the room to allow for the entertainers.

When everything was ready, the king entered the room accompanied by Sylvette. The elves had left them alone in the rooms. Then Philip rang a gold gong, and two elves appeared right away, one was holding a violin and the other a flute. They both bowed deeply in front of their sovereign, and then sat down on the steps of his throne.

“This is Solfegio and that is Solfegia,” said Philip.

Philip once again banged the gong. With that the musicians began to sing a melody. The drapery was raised slightly and a never-ending file of elves came in jumping. They danced in front of the king and

Sylvette. They shook their red caps and they bowed a thousand times.

“This is our Welcome Dance,” explained the king.

Sylvette accustomed to the graceful dances of the fairies was amused by the red caped elves hopping, skipping, and kicking up their legs. She found this very funny, but did not want to offend her host, so she kept a straight face.

Gordon entered the room quietly, hoping that no one saw him, but Sylvette noticed him right away. She wondered if he would be part of this unusual show. He is much too serious for that type of celebration, she thought to herself.

She blushed when the king invited him to come close, and pointed to a seat right next to her. She was glad for that, and her heart skipped a beat.

After the dance, the elves sat on their pillows and were served special dishes. They ate until their bellies were full and round. They kept glancing at Sylvette with amusement and surprise, since she hardly touched any of the food. She had a very frail stomach, and ate like a little bird. Beside she was so engrossed by every thing that going on in front of her eyes, that she wasn't hungry.

At the end of the meal, the king got up and said:

“Dear Sylvette, we hear that the fairies are remarkable dancers. In this field there are non-to equal you. I beg of you in the name of all here to let us see you dance. It would make us happy!”

“Yes, yes, please dance for us,” the elves yelled all together.

All eyes were on her and that made her uncomfortable. Then her eyes met up with those of Gordon, who seemed to encourage her to dance. She got up, stepping to the center of the room, she began by singing the fairies' spring song, which they perform at night during the month of May. Slowly her wings began to quiver to the rhythm of the melody. Then her whole tiny and graceful body danced to her own tune and finally her feet left the floor.

She sang about the little flowers that are the first to bloom early April, and then she became a little frisky butterfly flying from flower to flower attracted by their perfume. She imitated the flight of the majestic dragonfly, skimming its reflection in the water, or the active bee gathering the nectar from the crimson peonies. She also sang praises to little birds and flew like them around the garlands. Finally she wanted to honor her friend the wind, as he kissed flowers and put them to sleep. She became the flower herself waiting to be kissed. Then like a butterfly falling asleep, her movements slowed down, and her wings folded back. She landed on the floor like a snowflake falling on the ground.

The Elves let out a long-held sigh and none of them dared to speak.

Sylvette bounced back up again to her seat like a little frightened bird. The king thanked her profusely.

While she was dancing, Sylvette did not dare look at Gordon, yet she thought of him the whole time. She was hoping that he would approve of her dancing. Was her dance up to his standard? Did she sing well enough? Her uneasiness had made her voice trembled, had he noticed it?

When Solphegio and Solphegia sang again, only then Sylvette dared to look at Gordon. She saw that the eyes of the doctor shined like stars misted with tears.

Gordon bowed to her and said: "It was charming, Sylvette. Thank you." Then he gently shook her hand. She felt like her heart skipped a beat again.

After the singing, King Philip spoke again: "Now then Sylvette, it's Gordon's turn to play the violin. He is an excellent musician, and he will end the party with one of his brilliant performance. Dear doctor play on."

Gordon came out of his daydream, glanced briefly at the elves. He approached Solphegia who handed him a violin.

He closed his eyes and placed the violin tenderly under his chin and then began to play the most melodious tunes. He put his whole soul into playing. He wanted to express his love for all living creature, and all that is kind and beautiful. He played the violin like no one else, creating music for the angels. The tunes expressed compassion for all those who suffered, and a desire to heal those who are sick and relieve their suffering.

Very soon the melancholic music was replaced by, a happier beat, like the ringing of crystal bells.

Sylvette felt then that Gordon had been inspired by her own impish dance and that he was playing just for her. Then suddenly the music stopped. There were loud knocks at the door. Paul run out to see whom it was.

"It must be the storks. Now my Children it's time for you to start on your journey." said the king.

Gordon put down his violin to pick up his medicine bag, then he slipped a few vials in his belt. Sylvette was sad to have to leave, but she said good-bye to the elves and promised them that she would come back.

The king accompanied the travelers to the door. Father Stork was waiting for them and bowed deeply to the doctor.”

“I am happy to be of service to you, Doctor Gordon, I want to pay you back for all the kindness you gave our son. His mother is watching him at the moment. I alone will carry you on this trip. Shall we go now?”

Sylvette and Gordon nestled on the two red silk pillows in the bottom of the little basket made especially for them. The elves attached the basket to the stork. The travelers said goodbye to the king, and then father Stork rose high in the sky with his precious load.

Sylvette stood up and called to the wind:

Come, kind father wind!

Carry off your child

On your swift wing!

Blow hard, blow hard!

“Here I am, replied the wind. I am ready to help take you to your queen again my child. Were you able to get help and advice for her?”

“Yes father, as you can see I am bringing back Doctor Gordon himself who no doubt will cure Queen Diana.”

“Very well! Very well! Off we go,” belted the spirited wind, forming a jet stream for this light crew.

Sylvette and Gordon were silent for a while as they sat side by side. They both stared at the sky filled with stars. Down below, the earth silence reigned mysteriously.

“Doctor Gordon,” said the fairy all of the sudden.

“Yes, Sylvette?”

“I have the greatest confidence in you!”

The wind smiled but spoke not a word. They traveled for a long while, and finally they could see the ocean and Gordon leaned over board. He had never seen an ocean before. His eyes shine with great admiration. He could not contain his excitement:

“Oh, Sylvette, look at the silver crest of the waves! Isn't nature beautiful!”

Then they were quiet again, both deep in their own thoughts. From time to time Gordon would look down at the earth, with eager eyes to capture all that was new and marvelous for him. Sylvette did not want to disturb her companion, because she thought that the thoughts inside his head were probably more beautiful than words.

When the stork finally landed, there was great deal of celebration at the kingdom of the fairies. Ever since Sylvette had gone the little fairies were anxious for her safe return. Some of the fairies had even climbed to the top of the highest tree to watch for her arrival. Now they were relieved, to see that Sylvette had brought back with her a competent doctor. His medicine bag he was carrying reassured them that he would cure their queen.

They welcomed the travelers warmly, but did not want to appear too exuberant in front of the foreign scientist. They took Sylvette apart and asked who he was and where he came from and whether they could trust him.

“Of course you can trust him!” She answered. “He is the famous Doctor Gordon, the most erudite man of the entire elf race. He is extremely kind and loyal. He will cure the queen for sure.”

The fairies were so glad to have him that they showered him with attention. They prepared him a warm bath made with rose water, rubbed his back, and offered him their best drinks and food. Then they took him to see the queen.

Gordon examined the patient who lay still and thinner than ever. He frowned, and tried to assess the situation.

“Why does he look at Diana in such a stern and mean way,” one of the fairies whispered to Sylvette.

“He is not being mean, he is only concentrating on her illness,” She replied. With great respect, Gordon opened the queen's lips and dropped a few drops of a ruby red liquor into her mouth, then he took a piece of silk cloth and wet it with the elixir and applied to her heart. He repeated this same treatment several times throughout the day and throughout the night. He told the fairies that were present: “At the moment your queen is in a deep sleep, which may last for days. When she wakes up she will be either completely healed or she will die.”

The fairies never left her bedside. They were anxiously watching for her to wake up. From time to time Doctor Gordon would resort to the mysterious bottle to try to revive the queen. Then the breathing of the patient became more peaceful.

One night when Gordon and Sylvette were taking a short stroll, the queen slowly sat up from her bed of flowers looking bewildered. Her eyes brightened, and her cheeks blushed like the petals of a rose.

“My children she said to her fairies, I have just had a horrible nightmare, which really frightened me. I was sailing on green water, when suddenly my wings became as heavy as blocs of stones, so heavy that I abruptly drowned. Thousand sea weeds grabbed me and dragged me down to the bottom of the water, a deadly silence reigned around me then all of the sudden I felt a burning liquor touch my lips, and a warm and pleasant heat rekindling my heart.. My wings got lighter and I could feel myself rising to the surface. And then I woke up. I am so happy that this horrible nightmare is over.

Just then, Gordon and Sylvette came into the grotto. Sylvette was dumfounded to see the queen sitting on her bed conversing in an animated way. Her lips begin to tremble and she started to sob with joy. Her sobs were making her feel better, and the anguish she had had was replaced by a great happiness. She kneeled by Diana, and kissed her hands. She told her queen about everything that had happened, and especially the generous role that Gordon had played in her recovery. She told her about his great skill as a doctor, as well as his dedication to her. She ran to fetch the doctor and pulled him over to the queen’s bed. Gordon always a serious person, looked very moved. He said nothing, but big tears like pearls could be seen in the corner of his deep-set eyes. It was catchy, and soon after all the fairies hid their faces with their wings so they too could cry with happiness, unnoticed.

Then the queen bent over and cordially kissed the elf’s bearded cheek. She thanked each and everyone there.

“Dear doctor, “she said, “I hope that you will not leave any time soon. I want to organize a big party for you, which will last for several days and several nights. You will be our guest of honor.”

Gordon was pampered like a king. He never grew tired of watching the fairies perform their graceful dances by the light of the moon. For several days, he lived in a wonderful real world of fairyland.

The day came when he needed to go home, and once again the storks were called to bring the doctor back to the land of the elves. It was the wind that went to get the tireless birds. Sylvette, needed only to go outside and yell:

Oh, kind Wind

You must fly

Through mountains and plains

Gordon, the wise doctor

To his homeland.

A rustling in the trees announced the arrival of the Wind: "Here I am, at your service! I will go and get the storks for you."

Meanwhile Gordon was in a quandary as to what to do. He was looking down at his curved pointed shoes, because Diana had asked him what gift he would like to take home which would make him happy.

"Oh, no gift" he had replied to her.

"Yes, Yes, she had insisted, I will not let you go without a gift," said Diana.

Gordon was even more confused because he did not dare ask her what he really wanted most. He would not deprive her of the most beautiful object there.

She insisted that he told her what he wanted. She noticed that Gordon' eyes were fixed on their wonderful pearl.

"I can give you anything here except this the pearl."

She looked with admiration at the splendid jewel, which shed light all through the grotto, and had secret power.

"It's precisely what I want," said Gordon " I knew, you could not part with it, but I don't want it for myself, I want it for my king. I so much wish that our throne room be lit up with something other than those smoking resin torches. Don't think of it anymore. I should not have talked about it."

Diana looked straight in front of her, calm and pensive. Then she said: "Listen to me, my kind Gordon. I cannot give you this pearl, because it cannot leave the kingdom of the fairies. It is our talisman

(lucky piece), but I can provide you with a similar pearl if you can wait.”

“A similar pearl?” asked Gordon with surprise.

“Yes,” said the queen. “It’s a secret, but I will tell you, if you promised not to tell anyone about it”.

“I swear on the head of my king.” said Gordon.

“Well here is the story. This marvelous pearl is almost one hundred years old. It is the very precious fruit of a magical acanthus, it is the only one in the whole world. The fairies have discovered this plant, and have taken care of it every day so it will grow up healthy. It’s our biggest wealth, our most jealously guarded treasure. The acanthus produces only one fruit a century, and the fruit is the pearl that you want.”

“This is a wonderful story,” said Gordon, anxious to hear more.

“The hundred years are almost up,” continued Diana “and the flower has bloomed, and I will give you the new pearl since you have been so kind to us, dear Gordon.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you,” said Gordon.

“Come with me I will show you the acanthus.”

They walked in silence through a dark gallery where stalactites pillars looked like organ pipes. The light of the moon shined on them. They reached a terrace surrounded by sharp rocks.

“Now you can see it. Tell me what do you think of our treasure?”

Gordon was simply mesmerized by the beauty of this magical flower. Its center was of crimson velvet.

“How can a purple flower produce such a snow white pearl like this?”

“ Yes, it’s unusual, but true. Soon the flower will close up for good, and your pearl will mature slowly.”

“Would it be possible for Sylvette to bring it over to me?” Asked the good doctor

“Certainly. I promise you, that she will be the one to bring it to you.” said the queen.

The next night the stork came to pick up Gordon. Thanks to the wind the famous doctor of science went back to his own kingdom.

After a few months, Queen Diana harvested the splendid fruit of the acanthus with her own delicate hands, and the following night there was another great party to celebrate. It was decided that

Sylvette would leave the very next day to bring the pearl to Gordon.

The precious jewel was wrapped in a white silk purse, which was hung around her neck. Sylvette's heart beat fast when the wind, once again took her on his strong wings and carried her to the elves' mountain.

The wind shared her happiness, with so much that enthusiasm, that it caused turbulence. He skipped and somersaulted. At one time he even hurled the little fairy toward the moon, saying. "Moon why don't you catch her?"

Sylvette laughed so hard that she had tears in her eyes. Her cheeks were pink with happiness. She glided through the air, her wings deployed, her little curls dancing on her forehead. Her coat swelled around her and the silk purse jogged and jiggled like little bells.

"Please stop little father, or I may lose the pearl," she said

With that, her hands reached for the purse. Then the little fairy let out a sharp shrill, so sharp that the wind lost his breath: "What's the matter? Are you hurt?"

"My pearl! My pearl! I have lost it!" screamed the poor soul. Her eyes showed her fear. She began to sob so hard that her whole little body shook.

The wind was angry with himself and he said in a deep voice: "I am really sorry. It's my fault! Instead of acting like a mad man I should have carried you and the precious pearl like a fragile flower." He sighed.

"No, it's my fault," cried Sylvette. "I acted like a nitwit when I dropped the purse. I should have held it with both hands. It's terrible, what shall I do now?"

They both landed on a tree, and Sylvette continued to moan hopelessly.

The wind turned around in circle, while repeating: "I am nothing but an idiot!" In the palaces as well as in humble homes, people woke up and sat up in their beds saying: "Listen how the wind howls. It's sounds like a hurricane."

"I must go back to see the queen and tell her what has happen," said Sylvette

She tried to get up, but her legs were trembling so hard that she fell back on the branch, where the wind had placed her. He picked her up so carefully, that it looked as though he was carrying a snowflake about to melt, then he flew her back to the fairies.

The unexpected return of Sylvette without the pearl, disappointed her people. She no longer acted as the light hearted and smiling fairy, but instead, Sylvette was pale and frightened, just clutching on to the empty purse.

“What happened?” the queen asked her anxiously.

Sylvette didn't dare answer. She looked at Diana with agonizing eyes. There was a long silence. All the fairies' eyes were asking her the same question silently. Sylvette wanted to speak, but no words came out of her mouth. Only her looks spoke of her suffering.

No one said a word, but she could sense disappointment. Sylvette would have preferred harsh a punishment. The disappointment and accusing looks of her queen stirred up such a sense of guilt that she decided to run away.

When she left her home, the wind met her at the door and carried her in his arms. He rocked her the whole night whispering comforting words. By morning Sylvette's grief had calmed down, and she said to her companion: “What are we going to do now? Do you think that we have any chance of finding the pearl?”

“Of course we do! We will look for it together from North to South, from East to West. During the days we will search together, and at night while you sleep, I will continue to search. Do we agree?”

“Certainly father. We will find it! If we fail, I will never be able to face the sad stare of my queen” she continued.

The next day, when the sun rose, they started for the search and at night the wind hummed a lullaby to put the young fairy to sleep. As soon as Sylvette was asleep, he put her on the center of a freshly opened water Lilly, and then started on his mission.

Not far from where the fairy was, a bird with golden feathers who was singing his heart out. He was praising the sun. No one knew what country he came from, or what his race was. He lived alone and didn't care to socialize with other birds. He only lived for the sun. He followed the daystar in his course from morning to night, and he celebrated his light and heat. That is why they called him the Firebird. Some of the birds considered him as a sort of their king, and they liked him a lot. On the other hand those who were jealous of him, called him 'The Crazy Singer.'

One night after the sun had long disappeared behind the horizon of the purple mountains, the Firebird was still singing to the full moon.

All of the sudden the serenade stopped. The Firebird had noticed two little lights in the dark grass. Anything that shined attracted him, because it reminded him of his friend, the sun.

It looked like sparkling stars, he thought, I want to see this close up. He jumped down a few branches, and discovered that those sparkling stars were two big eyes with pearly tears. The eyes belonged to a very tiny face marked with sorrow, framed by two most beautiful laced wings. They were prettier than those of any butterflies he had ever seen.

The Firebird came down the tree and settled near this mysterious being. "You are the most beautiful thing I have ever seen, after the sun, naturally," he said. "Who are you?"

"I am a fairy and my name is Sylvette?"

"Why are you looking so sad, little fairy? Very soon the sun will come up and all in nature will be happy again, bright and golden."

"It's not the sun I want pretty bird. I have lost the most precious thing that I was trusted with, and I am looking for it everywhere I can. I haven't a faintest clue as to where it might be hiding."

Two big tears ran down Sylvette's cheeks.

"I am very sorry to hear this. If your fine wings allow you to fly why don't you come up in my nest? It is warm and pleasant. You can tell me all about your bad luck. Maybe I can help you."

Sylvette climbed into the white padded nest. Once comfortably snuggled, she related her tale of misfortune. The Firebird listened to her with compassion, and with the tip of her wings wiped Sylvette's tears. It tickled the little fairy, who started to laugh through her tears.

When she finished telling her tale, the Firebird said: "I will help you, little one. I will ask the sun to assist us with his sunrays. They are very strong and can penetrate the darkest corners, and the deepest holes. So don't give up yet.

His kindness moved Sylvette so much that she kissed her new friend in a gesture of gratefulness. From that day on they became good friends.

The Firebird soon realized that the task he took on, was more difficult than he thought. There were just so many places where the pearl could have fallen. It might have fallen on the green moss, on a thatch of a roof, on leaves in the forest, on the water of a river, in a wheat field or inside a chimney fire. Who knows?

Every evening Sylvette would come and ask him for the results of his search. She was hoping in her heart that there would be a miracle.

She herself kept looking, some time the wind would accompany her, but most of the time he would go alone, stricken by guilt feelings.

When the fairy seemed too discouraged, the Firebird would sing to her the most beautiful songs of his repertoire. Sometimes, a jealous robin would interrupt his singing and tried to charm her himself.

One day when the birds had a meeting the robin said: "I would like to know who is this mysterious being, who visits the Firebird every night."

"It must be a fairy," said the hummingbird. "One of my cousins told me about it."

"That's a disgrace," exclaimed the crow. "Can't you see that? Now 'The Crazy Singer' is entertaining a fairy! This conceited bird always thinks that he can get away with this. I would never think of doing something like that."

Out of spite, the shrew crow decided spread rumors. Once and for all he would dishonor this pretentious bird in front of all the animals.

The next morning, the crow flew near the Firebird's nest: "May I be of some help, Madame Crow?" asked the Firebird in a most friendly way.

"Yes, I want you to kick the fairy out of your nest," said the crow. "It's not right for us to associate with fairies. No bird with any self-respect would lower himself to have such bad company."

Then she, pinching her lips, held her nose high in the air and grumbled to herself.

"I give you a lot of trouble," said Sylvette completely stunned. "I do not wish to create any problems for you."

The Firebird burst out laughing:

"You certainly are not causing any trouble for me. Can't you see that the crow is simply jealous of me? You should not worry about people like that."

Yet the volatile black bird, put fear in the spirit of Sylvette, and each time she went to visit her friend, her heart would beat so hard, as if she had committed a crime, and yet she knew she was innocent, the poor Sylvette.

Days passed on and every morning the Firebird would sing his welcoming hymn to the sun, asking him to help him to find the pearl for his little friend.

One day the bird's prayer was answered. A ray of sun darted like an arrow on the ground. The bird followed the ray of sun and with great surprise noticed that it penetrated the corolla of a Lilly.

O miracle, a splendid pearl was shining at the bottom of the spotless calyx. The Firebird ran to the flower and asked her with a shaking voice:

"Tell me noble flower, does this pearl belong to you?"

The Lilly bent his head graciously and said:

"No this pearl fell recently from this tree right into my calyx. I have no idea where it comes from."

"Well then, that's the one." cried out the bird. "It's Sylvette's pearl. Oh, worthy flower, allow me to bring it back to the fairy who had lost it, and who is desperately looking for it. This should make her so happy."

"I am happy to be able to make someone else happy again. Please bring it back to her along with my compliments," said the kind Lilly.

The flower bend over her calyx and the pearl gently rolled on the ground. The Firebird was beside himself with happiness. He took the pearl in its beak, and he flew like an arrow to his nest.

He celebrated this happy occasion with triumphal melodies. His cheerful chirps pirouetted in the pure air. And his little heart beat so fast it almost burst.

All the birds around wondered why the Firebird showed so much cheerfulness. Once again the horrible crow was piquet:

"What is it with this jabbering about a pearl," she said to her neighbor. "I am sure that he stole it! In any case he deserves a good lesson."

With this the crow flew to the Firebird's nest. As she flew past an open window she noticed a golden ring sitting on a little dish on the window ledge. She quickly entered the room and snatched the ring with her mouth, without any compulsion. "I will teach him to steal pearls," she growled.

As soon she reached her Firebird's nest she began to accuse him.

“Where did you steal this jewel?” she said to the Firebird in an aggressive way. The Firebird was still in his state of bliss, so he just looked at her with a sense of pity. “You think that you are so smart Mrs. Crow. Where did you get this ring? I guess that’s what makes you think that other people steal jewelry”

The crow lost her temper and took off screaming with a voice that sounded like rusted lock of an old iron gate.

“ I will tell everybody that you are the thief. It’s my duty to do so, you dirty thief,” she continued her insults.

A few minutes later, the cuckoo visited the Firebird.

“From what nest did you steal the magnificent egg?” he asked him.

“First of all this is not an egg, it’s a pearl. And just because you steal other bird’s nest, you imagine that I do the same. I guess?” replied the Firebird forcefully.

“Why do all the birds gang up against me?” he thought, I have done nothing wrong, except help someone, my little friend Sylvette.

Next, the Farmer’s peacock came along, proud and majestic.

“What’s this big to do about a pearl?” he snorted with disdain. It’s worth less than a feather of my tail.” He fanned out his tail and strutted out.

“Fine then do take your feather and train somewhere else!”

A cackling chicken approached him and said: “What’s this all about? Come now if this robbery was about a fat worm or a grain of corn then that would be worthy news to us!”

Then the cat looked at the nest and said: “I would prefer to eat the bird than the pearl.”

Meanwhile back in the courtyard, a big bulldog was pulling on his chain, not on account of the pearl, but because all the farm animals were on edge, and he wanted to be part of that too.

Finally the pigs got into the act too. They did not quite understand what a pearl was, so they asked in a heavy and ignorant way: “What is a pearl? Can you eat it? Can you find it in our manure?” That’s all they really wanted to know.

This was the last straw for the Firebird. He had heard enough criticism and nasty remarks to make him very angry. Now it was his turn to reply.

“Just because you are unkind yourselves, you see evil every where! I did not steal this pearl, but I found it in the heart of daisy, and I will return it to its rightful owner. Now all of you get out of here. I have nothing in common with you!”

As soon as the animals heard the word “daisy”, they turned around and went looking for the flower. The nasty crow pulled all of her petals, in hope of finding another pearl. The chickens pecked her stem. The pigs sniff her, and the poor white flower shuttered. Finally the cat bounced on her like a tiger, and her fragile stem broke.

When the Firebird saw the animals’ savage attack on the most beautiful flower in the garden, he went into a rage, and his golden eyes sent out sparkles of anger.

With the strength of a hawk, he thundered down on these delinquents, and with his razor sharp beak struck wildly at the animals. He was in such a state of anger that he never even saw the boy coming toward him. All of the sudden, oh horror, he found himself caught by boy’s nervous hands which squeezed him so hard it almost strangled him. The Firebird had been captured!

Fear totally paralyzed him. Then he heard him yell: “ Sister, I have caught the most beautiful bird.” No matter how hard our little frightened friend tried to free himself, he was unable to do so. They held him tight and clipped his wings. He would never fly away again. To make things worst they locked him up in a cage, which was soiled with droppings of previous birds. To frighten him more a big black spider came inside and began to weave her web above his head.

The poor bird almost went mad trying to fly from one side of the cage to another using up his last bit of energy left. He banged his head, and injured his wings. Then he fainted on the floor of his prison, stunned by his suffering.

When the silence of the night settled down on the world, the Firebird, decided that death would be his only deliverance. All was lost for him, it was over. Sylvette would probably fly over his empty nest, never knowing what had happen to him. The pearl was probably stolen, or kicked under in the dirt by the pigs. The sun would never see his singer again. He would never fly again or whistle again, he thought.

Two sad days went by. Now the bird so weak, he lost his appetite. He didn’t even care when the boy and his sister tried to feed him.

He felt so depressed that he didn’t even notice the big black spider anymore. Outside the sun was still shining. The sun had no idea what had happen to his little admirer.

Then suddenly, voice of the boy stirred him out of his sadness. He heard him say:

"I have broken into the nest of the crows here little sister, here is your ring, which I found in his nest. I also found a very shining marble, but I dropped it while I was playing on my harmonica. It was a most beautiful marble."

These last few words made the Firebird jump up. It took the big spider by surprise, which accidentally ripped her web to shreds.

A little girl's voice spoke up gently: "Thank you, little brother. But you must not break into nests, and you should never have captured this little golden bird. I feel sorry for him, the poor soul! He neither wants to eat or drink. I am afraid that he'll die."

"I will hang his cage outside, so he can get some fresh air," she continued

Not too long after, the sun sent a beam of light to the cage.

The bird's trembling body revived under the warm caresses of his friend the sun, and a little spark sprung from his lackluster eyes.

The pearl must still be around. It must be near by. If only Sylvette or the wind could come now, our sick bird thought, but he saw no movement in the trees announcing their visit.

When the sun went down that night, and everything was calm, the Firebird, began to sing timidly, trying to cheer himself up.

"Dear Firebird!" said a voice.

Our prisoner leaned his head against the bars of the cage, to see where the voice came from. Again he heard the same call. It seems to come from a clump of wild violets. He could see their sweet faces looking up at him. He was moved because it was the first friendly words he had heard in a long while.

The little flowers continued to whisper.

"We know where your pearl is..."

His heart began to beat fast and hard.

"Where is it?" he asked.

"Shush, don't talk!" said the fairy.

The Firebird recognized Sylvette's voice and let out a frantic trill. His hope revived. Then he heard a rustling of leaves in the trees. It was the wind. The graceful figure appeared from the middle of the weeping willows by the stream. It was Sylvette!

Within a few minutes the fairy was by his cage, murmuring "My poor little bird, how awful you look and how sorry I am that I have caused you to suffer so much."

"Calm down, Sylvette. I am fine, don't fuss over me please, the important thing at hand is to find the pearl, and I think that the violets know where it is."

"The pearl? They know where it is."

"Go see the violets, they will tell you where you can find your treasure."

"Over here." whispered the violets.

Sylvette who had lost all hope of ever finding the pearl, couldn't run fast enough to go and see the violets.

"Hi there, Sylvette" she heard them calling to her, "we have found your pearl and put it in a safe place for you. Look, it's right here!" they continued.

She gently separated some of the leaves, and to her great and happy surprise the pearl appeared in the greenery.

Sylvette picked it up with her trembling hands. Once again she admired its radiance and beauty. She clasped it close to her heart, relieved to have recovered the most precious treasure ever entrusted to her. Her friend, the wind, sang his happiness in the bush, and even the violets had tears of joy rolling down their petals.

Sylvette turned to the wind and this time in a loud and clear voice said:

"Blow good wind, blow again

Bring the Firebird and me

By land and by sea

To the kingdom of Fairies"

And so the wind took them in his protective arms and flew them back to the grotto. Queen Diana received them with open arms, and within minutes the whole kingdom heard that Sylvette was back with the pearl. Needless to say there were shouts of joy. They were curious to know who was that charming bird with her who cast bright light into the grotto. Sylvette introduced him as her savior and friend Mr. Firebird.

The whole kingdom partied for many days. They never tired of dancing and singing. Then one day Sylvette, packed up the pearl in a silk purse again and her friend the wind took her to the Kingdom of the Elves. They had learned their lesson. They would take extra care to deliver the pearl safely to the good doctor. She never let go of the pearl until she placed it into his trembling hands.

Doctor Gordon was overjoyed to see the little fairy again. Most of all he was delighted to be able to offer the magic pearl to his king.

The king thanked the fairy with all his heart. This magic pearl not only radiated warm and light in a room, but it could also send beams of light across the ocean carrying both the picture and the voice of a person. Now both the Kingdom of the Elves and the Kingdom of the Fairies had the ability to communicate with each other long distance. Sylvette went home, to live with her own people, but she knew too that she would talk and see Gordon everyday.

The End