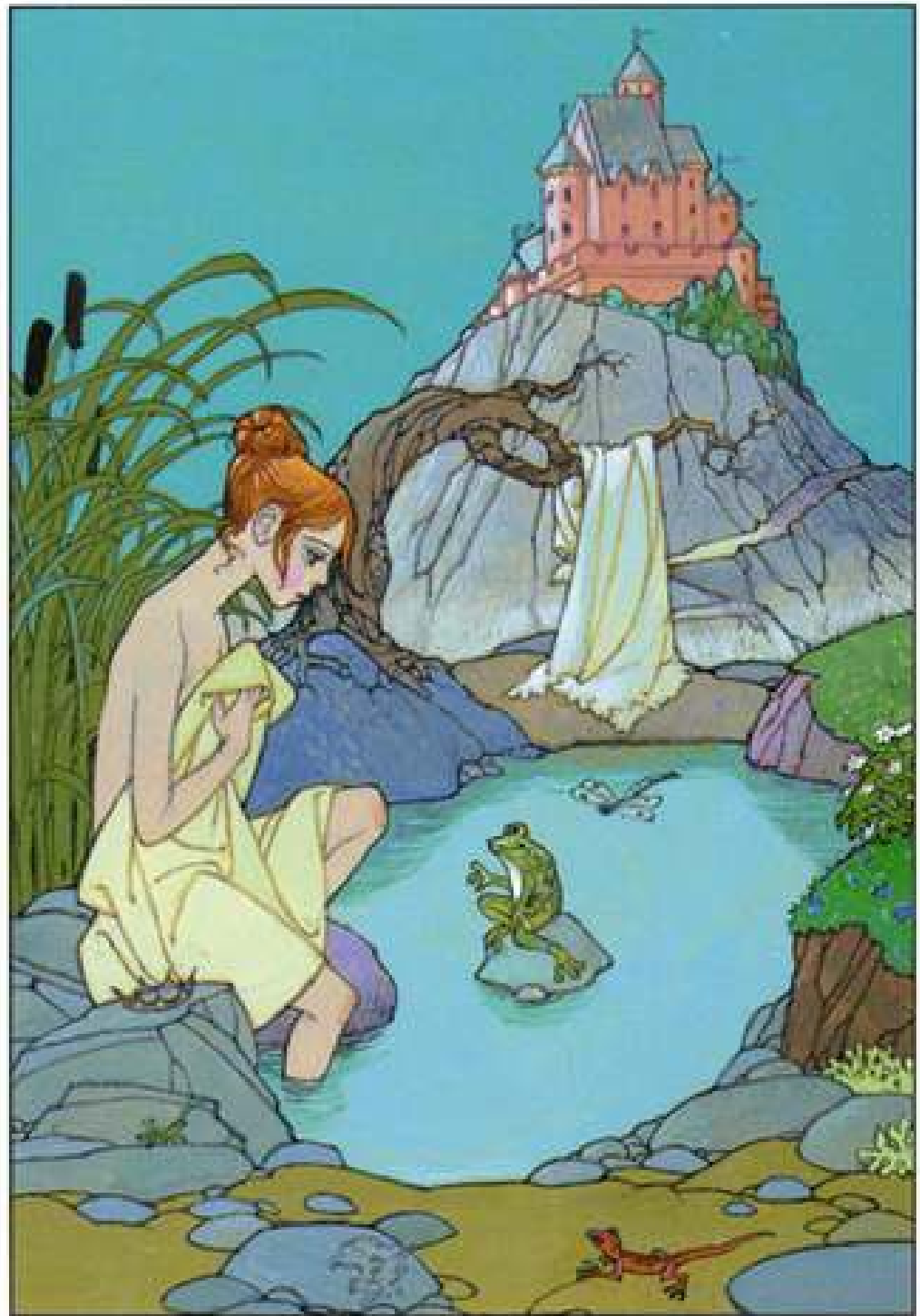


Once upon a time there lived a King and Queen, who said to each other every day of their lives, "How I wish we had a child!" and yet they had none. But it happened once that when the Queen was bathing, a frog came and said to her,

"Your wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has gone by, you shall bring a daughter into the world."

And as the frog foretold, so it happened. The Queen bore a daughter so beautiful that the King could not contain himself for joy, and he prepared a great feast. Not only did he invite his relations and friends, but also the wise fairies, that they might be kind and favorable to the child.

There were thirteen wise fairies in his kingdom, but as the King had only twelve golden plates for them to eat from, one of them had to be left out. However, the feast was celebrated, and as it drew to an end, the wise fairies came forward to present their gifts. One bestowed virtue, one beauty, a third riches, and so on, whatever there is in the world to wish for.



And when eleven of the wise fairies had said their say, in came the uninvited thirteenth, burning to revenge herself, and she cried with a loud voice,

“When she is fifteen, the Princess shall prick herself with a spindle and shall fall down dead.”

And without speaking one more word she turned away and left the hall. Everyone was terrified at her saying, when the twelfth fairy came forward, for she had not yet bestowed her gift. Though she could not do away with the evil prophecy, yet she could soften it, so she said:

“The Princess shall not die, but fall into a deep sleep for a hundred years.”

Even so, the King ordered that all the spindles in his kingdom should be burnt up.

The young girl, whose name was Rosamond, grew up, adorned with all the gifts of the wise fairies; and she was so lovely, modest, sweet, and kind and clever, that no one who saw her could help loving her.



It happened one day, the Princess being already fifteen years old, that the King and Queen went out, and the girl was left alone. She wandered about the castle into all the nooks and corners, and into all the chambers and parlors, till at last she came to a little door, with a rusty key sticking out of the lock. She turned the key, and the door opened, and there in the little room sat an old woman with a spindle, spinning flax.

“Good day,” said the Princess, “what are you doing?”

“I am spinning,” answered the old woman.

“What thing is that that twists round so briskly?” asked the girl, and taking the spindle into her hand she began to spin; but no sooner had she touched it than the evil prophecy was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with it. In that very moment she fell back upon the bed that stood there, and lay in a deep sleep.



This sleep fell upon the whole castle. The King and Queen, who had returned and were in the great hall, fell fast asleep, and with them the whole court. The horses in their stalls, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons on the roof, the flies on the wall, even the fire that flickered in the fireplace became still, and slept like the rest.

Then all around that place there grew a hedge of thorns, thicker every year, until at last the whole castle was hidden from view, and nothing of it could be seen except the weather vane on the roof.

Many a long year afterwards there came a king's son into that country who heard an old man tell that there should be a castle standing behind the hedge of thorns, and that in it a beautiful enchanted Princess named Rosamond had been sleeping for a hundred years, and with her the King and Queen, and the whole court.



The old man had been told by his grandfather that many kings' sons had sought to pass the thorn hedge, but that they had been caught and pierced by the thorns, and had died. Then said the young man, "I am not afraid to try. I will get through and see the beautiful Rosamond."

When the Prince drew near the hedge of thorns, it was changed into a hedge of flowers, which parted and bent aside to let him pass, and then closed behind him in a thick hedge. When he reached the castle yard, he saw the horses and hunting dogs lying asleep, and on the roof the pigeons were sitting with their heads under their wings. And when he came indoors, he saw in the hall the whole court lying asleep, while above them, on their thrones, slept the King and the Queen.



All was so quiet that he could hear his own breathing; and at last he came to the little room where Rosamond lay. And when he saw her looking so lovely in her sleep, he could not turn away his eyes. He stooped and kissed her, and she awoke, and opened her eyes, and looked very kindly on him.

And she rose, and they went forth together, and the King and the Queen and whole court woke up, and gazed on each other with great eyes of wonderment. And the horses in the yard got up and shook themselves; the hounds sprang up and wagged their tails; the pigeons on the roof drew their heads from under their wings, looked round, and flew into the field; the kitchen fire leapt up and blazed.

Then the wedding of the Prince and Rosamond was held with all splendor, and they lived very happily together for the rest of their lives.

