

ШАРЛЬ ПЕРРО

THE STORY OF
BLUE-BEARD

Шарль Перро
The Story of Blue-Beard

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THE STORY OF BLUE BEARD

Once on a time there was a man who had fine town and country houses, gold and silver plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilt all over; but unfortunately, this man had a blue beard, which made him look so ugly and terrible, that there was not a woman or girl who did not run away from him. One of his neighbours, a lady of quality, had two daughters, who were perfectly beautiful. He proposed to marry one of them, leaving her to choose which of the two she would give him. Neither of them would have him; and they sent him from one to the other, not being able to make up their minds to marry a man who had a blue beard. What increased their distaste to him was, that he had had several wives already, and nobody knew what had become of them.

Blue Beard, in order to cultivate their acquaintance, took them, with their mother, three or four of their most intimate friends, and some young persons who resided in the neighbourhood, to one of his country seats, where they passed an entire week. Nothing was thought of but excursions, hunting and fishing, parties, balls, entertainments, collations; nobody went to

bed; the whole night was spent in merry games and gambols. In short, all went off so well, that the youngest daughter began to find out that the beard of the master of the house was not as blue as it used to be, and that he was a very worthy man. Immediately upon their return to town the marriage took place. At the end of a month Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey, which would occupy six weeks at least, on a matter of great consequence; that he entreated she would amuse herself as much as she could during his absence; that she would invite her best friends, take them into the country with her if she pleased, and keep an excellent table everywhere.

"Here," said he to her, "are the keys of my two great store-rooms; these are those of the chests in which the gold and silver plate is kept, that is only used on particular occasions; these are the keys of the strong boxes in which I keep my money; these open the caskets that contain my jewels; and this is the pass-key of all the apartments. As for this little key, it is that of the closet at the end of the long gallery, on the ground floor. Open everything, and go everywhere except into that little closet, which I forbid you to enter, and I forbid you so strictly, that if you should venture to open the door, there is nothing that you may not have to dread from my anger!" She promised to observe implicitly all his directions, and after he had embraced her, he got on to his horse and set out on his journey.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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