PRETTY GOLDILOCKS, AND OTHER STORIES FROM THE FAIRY BOOKS

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Pretty Goldilocks, and other stories from the fairy books by Andrew Lang

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ANDREW LANG

PRETTY GOLDILOCKS, AND OTHER STORIES FROM THE FAIRY BOOKS



PRETTY GOLDILOCKS

AND OTHER STORIES

FROM THE FAIRY BOOKS

EDITED BY

ANDREW LANG

WITH A COLOURED PRONTISPIECE AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY J. FORD

REISSUE

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PRUPERTY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

PRETTY GOLDILOCKS

Once upon a time there was a princess who was the prettiest creature in the world. And because she was so beautiful, and because her hair was like the finest gold, and waved and rippled nearly to the ground, she was called Pretty Goldilocks. She always wore a crown of flowers, and her dresses were embroidered with diamonds and pearls, and everybody who saw her fell in love with her.

Now one of her neighbours was a young king who was not married. He was very rich and handsome, and when he heard all that was said about Pretty Goldilocks, though he had never seen her, he fell so deeply in love with her that he could neither eat nor drink. So he resolved to send an ambassador to ask her in marriage.

He had a splendid carriage made for his ambassador, and gave him more than a hundred horses and a hundred servants, and told him to be sure to bring the Princess back with him. After he had started nothing else was talked of at Court, and the King felt so sure that the Princess would consent that he set his people to work at pretty dresses and splendid furniture, that they might be ready by the time she came.

Meanwhile, the ambassador arrived at the Princess's palace and delivered his little message, but whether she happened to be cross that day, or whether the compliment did not please her, is not known. She only answered that she was very much obliged to the King, but she had no wish to be married.

The ambassador set off sadly on his homeward way, bringing all the King's presents back with him, for the Princess was too well brought up to accept the pearls and diamonds when she would not accept the King, so she had only kept twentyfive English pins that he might not be vexed.

When the ambassador reached the city, where the King was waiting impatiently, everybody was very much annoyed with him for not bringing the Princess, and the King cried like a baby, and nobody could console him. Now there was at the Court a young man, who was more clever and handsome than anyone else. He was called Charming, and everyone loved him, excepting a few envious people who were angry at his being the King's favourite and knowing all the State secrets. He happened one day to be with some people who were speaking of the ambassador's return and saying that his going to the Princess had not done much good, when Charming said rashly:

'If the King had sent me to the Princess Goldilocks I am sure she would have come back with me.

His enemies at once went to the King and said: 'You will hardly believe, sire, what Charming has the audacity to say—that if he had been sent to the Princess Goldilocks she would certainly have come back with him. He seems to think that he is so much handsomer than you that the Princess would have fallen in love with him and followed him, willingly.' The King was very angry when be heard this.

'Ha, ha!' said he; 'does he laugh at my unhappiness, and think himself more fascinating than I am? Go, and let him be shut up in my great tower to die of hunger.'

So the King's guards went to fetch Charming, who had thought no more of his rash speech, and carried him off to prison with great cruelty. The poor prisoner had only a little straw for his bed, and but for a little stream of water which flowed through the tower he would have died of thirst.

One day when he was in despair he said to himself:

'How can I have offended the King? I am his most faithful subject, and have done nothing against him.'

The King chanced to be passing the tower and recognised the voice of his former favourite. He stopped to listen in spite of Charming's enemies, who tried to persuade him to have nothing more to do with the traitor. But the King said:

'Be quiet, I wish to hear what he says.'

And then he opened the tower door and called to Charming, who came very sadly and kissed the King's hand, saying:

'What have I done, sire, to deserve this cruel treatment?'

'You mocked me and my ambassador,' said the King, 'and you said that if I had sent you