

AYLCEE TARHA

A TALE OF YESTERYEAR 1

Tale 1

Tale 2

Tale 3



Éditions Aylcée-Tarha@Aylcée-Tarha Éditions

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Children: (under parental supervision)

- Clara, a Witch's Love, fantasy tale
- Clara and the Stone Circle, fantasy tale
- The Feudal Trio, The LMJ1, fantasy tale
- The Elemental Peoples, collection of tales

Teenagers: (under parental supervision)

- Dualities, romance novel
- The Elemental Peoples, collection of tales

Adults:

- Dualities, romance novel
- Epidamos, fantasy novel
- Feudalities, heroic fantasy novel
- Liberties, heroic fantasy novel

Free

Children

- Tales of Yesteryear 1, 3-Story Collection
- Tales of Yesteryear 2, 2-Story Collection
- Advent Farandole, Calendar
- Little Stories, Collection of Tales
- Cocotte's Great Adventures
- Unwanted Stories

Teenagers

- Tales of Yesteryear 1, 3-Story Collection
- Tales of Yesteryear 2, 2-Story Collection
- Lost Stories, Collection of 5 Short Stories

Adults

- Lost Stories, Collection of 5 Short Stories
- The Unexpected Dinner
- The Elevator
- Predictions

DEDICATION

These tales are taken from a collection of short stories: Tales of Yesteryear, to create free downloads for children (specifically ages seven to ten). Each tale is complete and unpublished.

This text can be downloaded FREE of charge directly from my website by adults, parents, family members, friends, etc., who remain solely responsible for opening the minds of their offspring (specifically, those between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, in their teens).

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ANAÏS AND HIS DREAM

Once upon a time, a little girl named Anaïs had just moved into a small hamlet in Brie, near Paris.

What a change for her! She came straight from the south of France! Not the same mentality either! Tough for her!

There were a few differences: the cooler climate (that was nice: finally no more sweat or odor under the armpits) and the language (strange words)! She had a beautiful sing-song accent but the children in the schoolyard bothered her because of it. She fought against this discrimination, luckily she had character! She was punished but too bad, she wouldn't let it happen!

Even though Mom tried to console her by telling her that it wasn't serious, that she had to learn patience, it was just nonsense!

She couldn't wait to get home for summer vacation. She was counting down the days to see her southern friends again!

She was a good student, and because of this disenchanting school routine, she was getting nervous. But, despite these linguistic incidents accompanied by related peremptory remarks, she had playmates (uprooted from regions of France like her) and... lovers!?! She didn't really know what to think because they chatted among themselves in a dialect she didn't really understand, beware.

Were these guys serious or not, were they making fun of her by any chance? She thought it was complicated, right now!

During the end-of-year holidays, a time of intense joy, A wonderful phenomenon happened: the snow was falling heavily!

All morning of that December day, it had snowed in large flakes. They fluttered from side to side across the fields.

Being an active and imaginative little girl, she wanted to model a beautiful snowman. She began by making a large snowball for its head and rolled a mass of snow to build its body. She did it step by step: she saw it big in her thoughts. Seeing it was one thing, but making it was another. She succeeded after enormous efforts in the snow that continued to fall around her.

Luckily she was well equipped: ski outfit with fur-lined boots, hood, hat, scarf and gloves!

She blushed, stung by the cold air surrounding her nose and cheeks. Her dog frolicked in the winter whiteness.

She piled them on top of each other and placed his head on them: a carrot (taken from the pantry) for his nose, a gray hat and scarf (from Papa) to protect him from the cold, two Christmas baubles (swiped from the tree) for his eyes, a thick, leafy oak branch she'd found broken in the garden to decorate it with, and in his mouth, a long red candle. He looked great, that man now!

She had placed him on the side of the road, near the mailbox, so he wouldn't get bored, alone outside in this cold.

As soon as he finished, several kittens greeted him! He seemed to be chatting with them and leading the game: night fell!

The little girl went back inside the house, happy to have created this ephemeral masterpiece. She knew it wouldn't survive the thaw. Through the window, she saw that it had made some winged friends: tits, sparrows, robins, starlings. She closed the ruffled curtain and the heavy double curtains, delighted and relieved for the rest of her night. She went to shower and make herself comfortable.

She played board games with her brother, read a comic book, and colored greeting cards for her family.

She had dinner and watched a little television: it was time to go to bed, brush her teeth and finally go to sleep!

She flung open her upstairs bedroom window, making her brother groan at the icy draft, to say goodbye to her snow buddy one last time. She was about to blow him kisses from her fingertips, when... she was dreaming, it couldn't be... she imagined her hero Peter Pan... there, chatting amicably with... **HER** Snowman!!! Hers!!! Hers!!!

Tinker Bell was there too, fluttering around the trio, finally landing on the end of the red candle!!!

The magic illuminated each of them with a halo of fairy dust. What a mischievous, frail, laughing little creature he was!

Flying in her meadow green dress, identical to her super eyes every graceful witch. She knew she was pretty, fine and so slender!

Smiling and curious, Anaïs fixed her gaze on the moon, three-quarters full, all white in the sparkling blue night, dotted with blinking stars. She observed it better and then distinguished a shape that she knew well from having read and seen it. What did she see?!... It was incredible! Oh yes! The famous pirate ship of... Captain Hook!!! Oh yes! A crazy

ideal was coming to life before her so wonderfully!

Suddenly, Anaïs realized that her chance was here, right here.and now! She will never experience such an adventure again!

Her perception of the gap between dream and reality will logically fade over time. Suddenly, she called her handsome hero!

Will he finally come to her, on her windowsill? She was like crazy, in full swing, excited, overexcited!

She had been waiting for her Prince Charming for so long, this green elf! He was so present, there, within her reach. She did so much that he pricked up his ears, then his head, and saw her, stunned. What a joy to see him so close! Only, he could clearly hear her but didn't come to the edge of her window! It was far too frustrating for her. What to do in this case? It was such a delicate situation. She thought very quickly.

Quickly even and... Eureka: she suddenly had the solution! She will certainly be cold and have a cold, no big deal, and too bad!

She reacted by putting on her bright red fleece dressing gown and putting a red and white bonnet on her head, mischievous!

Opening both doors in this freezing weather, at the risk of catching a serious illness, she placed herself in her space of real dreams. Leaning too far, she almost found herself down in the brambles of the rosebushes: she just caught herself on the edge, continuing to call her hero. The latter, finally! Nose in the wind, joined her in front of the doorframe. He didn't

give her time to say anything: oh no!

Bending over her, he gave her two big kisses on the cheeks and... flew off after a little wave goodbye to...

Slip away as quickly as he had come! She was shivering all over, closed the window and her curtains, and then went to bed.

This one was cozy, waiting patiently for her. She slept indreaming of princes, wizards, elves, Peter Pan! When she woke up the next morning, she thought of her frozen man, saying, 'Good morning! Do you have anything to tell me this morning?' She went down to the kitchen to have breakfast, eager to talk to her snowman. He surely had some stories to tell her! Surely he did!

She stood up eagerly and dressed comfortably so that she was facing him, surrounded by birds and kittens.

As if he were the messenger of the night, the guardian of childhood dreams, the one through whom anything can happen, anything remains possible!

She almost slipped on the steps, still frozen in the morning, holding on to the wooden banister at the last minute. She had the impression, but was it really? He tensed (the branch was resting on the mailbox), half-opening it to... 'Oh! an envelope for **ME**!?! Who could have written to me last night?!' She opens the envelope and finds inside... a hastily scribbled note from... Peter Pan! 'Oh, he wrote to me:

'My Little Darling, don't wait for me, ever! Your child's heart could suffer. I'm just a dream! I love Freedom, Adventures, Life and Emotions too much, WASH your pretty eyes! I can't stay still and stay in one place! Tell your children my story one day so I will always live in you! See you soon in your

dreams! Tender kisses from your beloved: Peter Pan.'

The snowman lived no more than a day, melting in the weak rays of the setting sun...

The kittens were jumping and meowing around him, celebrating his impending end, all overjoyed to have been so present!

The birds accompanied him on his final melting: on the branch, on the hat, on the carrot, on the balls, on the candle, on the scarf, on the branch, on the mailbox. He was treated to the melodious songs of field birds! What a charming farewell for such a handsome snowman! His Tara who licked him, barking and jumping too, scaring away birds and kittens! What a beautiful animal celebration!

As for Anaïs, she often looked through the windows at night to catch a second glimpse of her dear hero...

May she live again, as he promised, only in her many dreams! Perhaps one day soon?...

Will she see the pirate ship again, that of Captain Hook with the boarding of Peter Pan's ship, sailing in the immensity of the skies?!... Or Tinker Bell fluttering around the Lost Boys, pointing her nose at Neverland!... Peter Pan will remain forever in her thoughts... in her mind... as he was, a long time ago...



CHRISTINE AND HIS ANGEL

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Christine!

Her hair was always tangled, her feet were forever wet, and her head was full of adventures. She had very beautiful, light green eyes that looked very far, ever further and further! She was part of a large and beautiful family in a tiny hamlet, located in the middle of the countryside in southwest France. She had toys, but what she was interested in was making her parents angry!

She had a great gift for it!

They asked her to be quiet, she escaped through the window! They told her to do her lessons, she forgot the notebook to learn! In short, she was a real little rascal! Her poor parents no longer knew what to do for or against her! Everything revolved around her! There was something stupid done, there was no need to look far because it was her, still her, always her!

There was one stupid thing to do, it was **SHE ! ! !**

One day, they had had enough! They made a serious decision: things had to change, and quickly, very quickly indeed!

It must be said in their defense that they had really tried everything! In a calm manner, the moral was passed, said the psychologists, are you joking, or what! In any case, yes, perhaps, not with her! Oh no, never! In a more authoritarian manner, with punishments to boot, and even then. She practically laughed in their faces, that big nasty girl! Nothing affected her, she didn't give a damn!

There was also the period of the slap, the little slap on the

fingers to tell him to stop, and this at the time of the stupidity: she told them it didn't hurt! They put her in the corner, silently and without doing anything, she stuck her tongue out at them: she was truly beyond redemption! They then told her to put her nose to the wall, she laughed!

A female demon inhabited it!

The entire range of restrictions had been implemented and dissected: no notable results had been recorded. A list of the best specialists had been reviewed: their analysis had ended in failure. The older siblings were no longer there: they had professional, social, or sporting commitments that required them to be apart from each other. On the phone, it was yes, yes, and bang, it was starting again!

The relatives, blowing from one side, allowed themselves to strike a thunderclap: the pension! They inquired and...

They visited several educational establishments likely to help educate this permanent rebel.

They eventually settled on a distant boarding school that offered a wide range of artistic activities: they just wanted her to be comfortable in herself so that she could be better off with them.

This will be their special Christmas surprise for her!

Nothing, absolutely nothing, seemed to have any hold on her!

If only she didn't have what she needed, but the opposite was happening! Christine had a tendency to exaggerate, to amplify, to magnify a simple fact into a phenomenon, even a little more! She broke a glass, it wasn't her! Even if it was in front of them: a shameless lie! So, seeing this, why did she make them so angry, so stressed, nervous, irritated? No one knew!

Did she even know: **SHE ? ! ! !**

Nothing foreshadowed this feeling, quite the contrary!

She had the talent for destruction on a small, medium and large scale: toys, books, trinkets, furniture, clothes, shoes, immediate environment, was she doing it on purpose?!

She caused discord wherever she went: at home, at school, at sports, while shopping... She touched everything: stealing things that her parents didn't want to buy her.

When will this stop?

She had had a good education, but that was how it was: she had the gift of exasperating, surprising, astonishing, and confounding her parents. Despite everything, she was a good student who loved school and brought home good grades in her report card. All subjects were respected and marked very highly except... discipline! She could have made the honor roll, but that was a total disservice to her.

She was incredibly lucky to have everyday happiness: health, parents, family, home, pets...

She had enough to eat, enough to dress well or wear shoes to suit her taste, books she wanted, toys she ordered, games she hoped for, music related to her current desires, a big screen television, a computer in her room, a red and white smartphone with its case... and above all, love, attention, listening, joy in abundance!

So what was he missing?

But that evening, when she left school, she certainly wasn't expecting this surprise!!! Oh no, that's for sure!

The surprise was huge!!! **Oh la la la la la!!!**

She waited, obviously wishing for something...But what?

In one of her many dreams, she had intense virtual nocturnal activity; she had seen or imagined a strange angel, a phenomenal, atypical character, extraordinary in his own right! And she remembered the next morning when she woke up that she had asked to see this strange interlocutor! He looked like her physically: it was her as a boy! That had upset her a lot, all the same!

She who believed herself and above all wanted to be the only example!

For once, it was a failure! It really irritated him!

She was lost in tumultuous thoughts, paying little attention to what was going on around her. She seemed emotionally unbalanced, and none of her little onesclassmates wouldn't have bothered her at the risk of being rejected. She was in a bad mood because she didn't have the feeling that she would win. And tonight, tonight...

Hewas there, just a few steps away from her! Incredible...

It was also true that it was the middle of the holiday season, when miracles could happen without warning! But even so, she was stunned! She opened her eyes wide, unable to believe her sight or her hearing... The surprise was in front of her!!! And it was tonight that Christine's parents were going to tell her something important!!! 'I have to calm down first!'

So many twists and turns in one evening!

And not the least!!!

Suddenly, she realized that it was a sign from heaven and that her few prayers had been heard. She was talking to the

sky, to the sun, to the moon, to the stars, to God?!, to the angels, saints, animals, trees, flowers, stones. She told them stories that she invented as her emotions, her desires, her adventures arose... So **he** was there! There, very close, so close!

He was there: just for her!

He had leaned against the school fence, right next to the entrance gate: he was waiting calmly for her to come towards him!

But the most extravagant and surprising thing was that apparently no one else saw him except her!

She was the only one who felt it, who distinguished it, who perceived it!

It was a terribly strange situation.

'If I talk to him, they'll think I'm crazy! And if I don't talk to him, he might be offended! What should I do?'

As she pondered, she walked over to him, suddenly having an idea. She had to make the other schoolchildren believe that she was reciting a very personal prayer to HER angel! As Christmas was approaching, no one would see any harm in it! Proud of her brilliant idea, she reached his height, half-chanting her witty speech:

He smiled at her even wider, she had won!

She did so, saying things like, 'I want to be wiser with my parents, I must be more respectful with others, I must not answer back and forth. Hello, my angel, how are you today?' The angel in question understood, smiled, and detected her strategy. Then he followed her and was silent until they were alone, near the edge of the woods.

'She's a real naughty girl, she looks so much like me!'

He was dressed in gray from head to toe, in a three-piece suit and gold-rimmed glasses: he looked very intellectual! In his hand, he held a bag filled with... by the way, what was it filled with? The girl had no idea. He saw the sideways glance Christine gave him and smiled even more, without saying anything. He knew what she was thinking, pondering, reflecting, wondering:

'That satchel looked pretty heavy!'

The baggy satchel was very heavy because it folded up to carry it, to move it... He blew like a real forge bellows against the slight rise of the path, bringing it to his house. This forest path, running along the edge of the wood, wound along the surrounding field fences. A moment more and she would ask him for its contents: she was very curious! He smiled at the good trick he was going to play on her!

Unable to bear it any longer, at the last bend, she turned sharply towards him and asked him what he was carrying, dragging him.

He stopped, sweating and panting, then laid it at his feet.

Forbidden that he put it in front of her, she was suddenly afraid.

His hands were sweating despite the biting winter cold. He suddenly raised his head and opened his mouth to reveal the secret of the famous bag. The cold wind surprised him, and he searched for words:

'Christine, smart girl, here is my message!'

He stopped, swallowing a little freezing air and continued:

'Dear little one, this bag is heavy with every stupidity or bad word muttered, almost unintelligible uttered between your teeth, thought spoken inwardly, wickedness that you have

been able to accomplish during your nevertheless so short life! Know that this will haunt you throughout your life! Realize the weight of your mistakes, your lies, your clumsiness or your barbs! And you're only seven years old!

He fell silent, resuming his speech, looking annoyed.

'I am here today to offer you this very cumbersome bag that you will open every time you have said or done something bad. You will put inside the bad action of the moment and it will be weighed down by this sin. On the other hand, conversely, if you are wise, if you respect others, it will become lighter: the day when there are only beautiful ideas inside, you will discover a real treasure! Here it is, yours now!'

From now on, it will be up to you!

And, handing her the famous jute bag, he left like a fading cloud, with a final wave of his hand, an engaging smile on his lips, he disappeared. Alone on the road, full of good will, she tried to move it, even just a little: nothing. She tried to lift it, nada, nothing either. She couldn't do it, even sticking out her tongue to incorporate her natural strength.

It was proving to be far too heavy for her!

'What to do?!'

She couldn't bring herself to leave him outside. She had a new idea: take the wheelbarrow and come get him and bring him inside the barn.

'Yes, it was THE ideal solution!'

She immediately ran, relieved of an enormous weight, and made the return journey: she suffered on the way, pulling or pushing, because it was really very, very heavy!

All his energy went into it, but there it was, done and done well!

She succeeded after immense struggles! With courage and perseverance, she took it down from the wheelbarrow and hid it under an old blanket, which was lying on the ground. She gave him one last sad look and left him in the cool of the building. She put the wheelbarrow away as if nothing had happened until then. Neither seen nor known!

She washed her hands at the courtyard tap, then picking up her schoolbag, she smoothed out the wrinkles in her trousers. She opened the door to her house and said kindly, 'Hello, Dad, Hello, Mom!' in a very small, somewhat hesitant voice. Her parents turned to her at the same time, their faces questioning. They were anxious: they looked at her, surprised that she was saying hello to them... so gently, too!

They responded with the love they had within them for her.

'Good evening, your school day must have been excellent!'

They still kept their frowns on, wanting to show her that they were still angry with her. Then, suddenly, a small miracle happened: Christine came to them and gave them a big kiss! This kiss was filled with so many beautiful resolutions that they completely relaxed and held out their arms to her. Without saying anything, outside, there was a slight shudder and an Angel passed over their home!

They were united again, a real family!

There was much friction and irritation on both sides, but they were so united in their true love that everything ended well, with laughter and good humor. A joy returned to these rural places. The little girl was tenacious in her passions, her desires, and her daydreams. She fully intended to achieve her goal: to completely empty this container! She had this fixed idea, being very strong-willed.

Every day, a prayer to help you stay on track!

'Beautiful Angel, I've learned my lesson, oh yes!'

That evening, in particular, remembering her childhood misdeeds, she was passing into adolescence, they were happy and stunned by this direct change made in their daughter that they did not have it in mind to throw a dampener on the party. She would have deserved it yet, she was also trying to capture positive waves emitted by her guardian, this angel with the golden pearl gray. He had known how to react brilliantly, facing herself.

When she decided on her own, she had an enormous reservoir of human values, fruitful exchanges and love.

His parents thought about giving him a nice punishment as they should have and especially could have demanded, they had promised him.

A tacit agreement had been reached, a truce: a few more days to wait to celebrate this family celebration.

Retirement was fast approaching and she didn't know it!

Affirmative and joyful omens were being put in place with balance and optimism. What beautiful serenity!

The Christmas miracle had worked!

Finally: she intercepted real earthly life:

be at peace with your soul!

Made of little things that, put together, made a whole!
Mutual support, a look, a joke...

Her parents, however, placed a large brown envelope for her

at the foot of the Christmas tree: it was the boarding school file, ready to be sent! They had enclosed a note with the inscription: 'This is what you narrowly escaped, show yourself worthy or it will cost you! We made several copies in case you slip up, which we do not want. With all our love, Mom and Dad.'

She took a cold shower and watched them, under her long eyelashes.

She thought she had done well to change, to fall into line. She smiled at them through her tears. She had just received a masterclass that she understood today.

That year, the bag from the barn was integrated into his room inside his wardrobe, then his chair, and gradually, with tiny steps, became lighter and lighter. It became lighter thanks to favorably positioned actions. The second Christmas went very well, no more nasty words or bad gestures towards others!

Little Christine had grown wiser, quietly, almost without realizing it! She was becoming helpful and reliable. She was a pretty little wild child who loved to roam the countryside, discovering spots with mushrooms and wild berries, or talking to animals, flowers, stones, and... her guardian angel. He gave her good advice that she tried hard to follow.

A shining little sun From an intrusive little girl, she was born a fulfilling teenager!

One bright summer day, her Angel asked her to bring him the bag, which she did immediately. She was curious by nature and was very surprised by his request, but with many conflicting emotions, she presented it to him and awaited his verdict. The Angel reached out his hand towards him and wanted to open it. He quickly unlaced it, but she held his hand back for a moment, moved and worried. A distraught little girl...

Then a tear escaped her eyelids and rolled unchecked down

her cheek. He then handed her a pearl-grey handkerchief, as grey as himself, and let her wipe it away. She had an attitude of true piety, intense without flattery. She blew her nose gently, as if not to disturb the other. She came to her senses, asking him the question that had been burning on her lips:

'Angel, oh my Angel, why today in particular?'

He smiled at her again and replied warmly:

'Little Christine, have you forgotten your own name day?'

Then he unclipped the zipper and nothing escaped: the bag was empty of all her sins! She had succeeded, yes she triumphed! With joy, she began to spin around, to jump, to dance, to hum! Her heart light again, she could feel happy, truly happy! He then held out his hands to her and looked at her one last time (for he too had finished his work!):

'Christine, great Christine, we have reached the end of the road. But before leaving for good, I must first give you **THAS** final reward!'

The teenager gave him a beautiful look, smiling:

'But my Angel, I have already received it! The love of my parents and my family is eternal and enough for me!

Then the Angel kissed her affectionately and vanished into the warm afternoon air. He had just earned his passage to the next level of his angelic hierarchy. He had supported this human because he had sensed astronomical potential in her. He hadn't been mistaken! They had made a fantastic team. A final sound of wings and Christine was alone in her bucolic setting, which she would never leave again.

When she returned to her parents' home, she had a divine surprise: all her brothers and sisters were waiting for her in her little room, there to wish her a wonderful birthday!

'This is my second reward! For bringing you all together!'

She let herself be kissed, drawn into the turmoil of the embraced arms... finally...

Happy ! ! !

Whatever one's religion, atheism or current of thought, the valiant positive heart is in the well-foundedness of things, this is what Christine reveals to us here in this strange true story: if she succeeded, why not you? Or you and your dear parents? Love is in all material things, you just have to extract it and put it back in the right place, that of the heart that she must never leave!

Christine, throughout her life, offered her free time to others, while working to make her family estate accessible to all nature lovers, exploiting her land in various ways, it was her personal way of doing good, in unconditional love.

Find yours with strength and joy then inject all your energy
into it!



ROSINE AND THE LUMBERJACK

Once upon a time, there was a man living deep in the woods, alone in his isolated cottage. He had everything, but he had nothing left.

Well sheltered from the wind by the branches of the oaks, this haven of peace was located within a clearing. Around the protective walls, mushrooms abounded at the foot of brambles and wild berries. He was a young lumberjack who had work but who had just lost his wife to a serious illness. Sadly, they had no children, and now he felt very lonely at times.

Luckily for him, he had a lot of orders from morning until evening, not seeing the time pass.

But he had been used to seeing his wife in the morning and in the evening at supper, waiting for her, to hope for it, to cry for it.

The company of a woman, a girl, would have taken his mind off things, would have helped him bear this loss more gently. When his grief inevitably returned to him, he wept and prayed, holding his head in his hands. He had loved that woman so much, and she had abandoned him to his sad fate. Then, he began to dream of a brand new marriage and a more complete happiness: having children!

One day when he felt even more lonely than other days, he came across a very, very, very old lady on the way.

She was bent over by the weight of years, accompanied by a black cat, all black, very black. In the villages, in the towns, everywhere she went, she was called a witch, either out of fear, ignorance, or cowardice: but everyone came to ask her advice about her herbal decoctions, her remedies, or her potions. She was as well known as she was maligned, but she didn't care.

She had a reputation for goodness behind her, that was enough for her: healer, nurse, midwife, herbalist despite the derision she was subjected to. Human stupidity was the worst societal scourge. Seeing her approach with small, tiny steps, he waited for her, sitting on a tree stump, showing her a spot nearby. She smiled at him reservedly, almost shyly, asking if he didn't have some water.

He handed her a goatskin gourd, watching her drink calmly. She thanked him, saying in a clear voice:

'Kind woodcutter, what a sad face you have! You should be happier: you look well-fed and well-clothed, you have more work than you need, and your cabin looks like a properly maintained home for a single man. Yes, I learned of your loss and am sorry for you, but life must go on with its course, and you are a good match. Is there no more room in this big, generous heart, or have you not yet found or looked for someone nearby? You are a good person and have a position in society, however!'

He turned to her, taken aback by her frankness, thinking with

relief that she was not lacking in relevance or finesse, and answered her straight away:

'I don't really have time to flirt with all the orders I have to fulfill! I'm not complaining at all, this work fills me with joy, I'm independent and everyone listens to me.' He blushes in spite of himself, so much does he want to remain humble. 'I wouldn't really know how to court, so much time has passed... I was so young then and fiery despite my shyness.'

His name was Séraphin and he had stayed in the country, he had met his wife Dorothée on the benches of the school: she was small and he was big, he already protected her, instinctively. 'I would like to have a nice wife who will bear me children and who will wait for me in the evening when I come home to chat by the fire, in front of a good bowl of steaming soup with a loaf of bread, cheese or jam.'

He was deep in his gloomy but nevertheless positive thoughts about an uncertain, somewhat nebulous future.

A long sigh escaped him, making his broad shoulders shudder.

Lady Amelia heard the echo of the sorrow of this solitude and declared to him serenely, choosing her words well:

'I like your speech and I'm going to get you a young lady I know who lives in a neighboring village. Wait for me at this same place in two days, at the same time, I will be accompanied by your new wife. She will be kind, be just as kind, you will get along. Have confidence in me and in my judgment, you will not lose out, believe in my experience.'

With this hope, Seraphim did not see the next two days pass.

His mind was at work: exhausted, he had barely lain down when he fell asleep. He went to the meeting at daybreak and at the appointed time, her heart knotted with emotion and anxiety, a bouquet of wild flowers in one of her large hands.

Old Lady Amélia was also there, and as promised, in the company of a very young girl with a... repulsive appearance. 'This young girl's name is Rosine.'

She was of average height, talented in needlework and cooking in the broadest sense of the term. Her face was covered in pustules, her humped back, and her bowed legs highlighted all the deformities she unfortunately possessed. Her flaming hair, her shy smile, and her intense blue eyes were her only adornments of physical beauty. Her heart was pure.

The witch, having noticed his startled backward step, looked at him and said to him simply:

'Do you still want to get married, have a nice wife in your home, and children soon? Or do you no longer trust me, you man of little faith?'

The woodsman he had become met her inquisitive gaze and remarked that he was very happy to meet his future young wife, whom she had just introduced to him here. He was not a bad man at heart. His heart did not want to harm the innocent child who had been sitting without word to say, eyes looking into the distance at the stump of the fallen tree.

Like any marriageable girl, there was a dowry involved, along

with financial and real estate benefits, a fair share between the two parties. At that time, the agreement was signed with a handshake. She had enough to provide for her own home, but as a woman, she was obligated to marry. She would be protected by him, while saving her reputation. He would secure her by directing her life.

She will give him children and him his home. She will invest in his fiefdom and work for its daily upkeep.

The negotiations completed, Rosine left for her future husband's house and quietly undressed. She scanned the interior of the house, not feeling out of place. 'I'll be happy here, with this gruff but kind man,' she thought, reassured. He looked at her as little as possible or only surreptitiously, wondering how he was going to manage to have beautiful children with this... ugly man! Fatalist, he scratched his head.

His generosity returning, he scolded himself and called himself a bad man for having had such a wicked and malicious idea. Lady Amelia returned late that afternoon with a priest to officiate and two friends who served as occasional witnesses. The bride and groom exchanged vows and then, out of modesty, kissed her forehead as a kiss. They clinked glasses and then all returned to their homes.

They found themselves alone: she in her beautifully crocheted white dress and he rocking from one foot to the other.

He suddenly remembered something urgent that needed to be finalized immediately for an important client, who was pleased with this subterfuge.

He gestured broadly toward their room, then nervously stepped back, leaving her alone in the doorway. She took off her wedding dress and put on a nightgown.immaculate lace nightgown and then told herself that he would return shortly. She occupied her mind as best she could and, by dint of waiting for him, she finally fell asleep, exhausted with emotion, appeased in spite of everything. But he did not come all night!

She found him in the morning, sprawled on the table, stinking of alcohol. She remained silent, thinking.

At the noise she made in the kitchen, he woke up and looked sheepish, facing her, serene and reassured.

In the bright sunlight outside, he realized he was late for work and would have to work twice as fast to catch up. He tried to smile at her but only managed a sneer he knew was ridiculous, further embarrassing him. She handed him her satchel filled with her lunch and her leather water bottle. He was left speechless, bewildered!

He almost ran away from home, so surprised was he that she had prepared his lunch. All morning, he cut, sawed, and chopped without taking a single moment's rest, except to eat a bite. He didn't expect what he discovered!

He had barely opened his bag when he smelled a delicious aroma escaping from it! Would he have the courage to open it? He was really hungry! He sat down and opened it, bending over:

'Come on! What's the risk? Just enjoying yourself, come on!'

He leaned over and...

He took the delicately wrapped cloth and, before her wide-open eyes of astonishment, pulled out a piece of golden, still-hot roast! From another, he extracted a warm, crusty loaf, a piece of cake with apples, all washed down with a pitcher of red wine to warm her body. She hadn't left anything out, everything was there, even the napkin, the tablecloth, the glass and the cutlery!

'What an organized woman I've met!'

After such a meal, he continued his hard work even more vigorously and, on the way back, he found himself humming!

Near his log cabin, he thought he saw a wonderful young girl, and he stopped, amazed by this apparition, just a few steps away from him. He then reached out to make sure he wasn't having a vision, taking her by the waist and then kissing her, when... she turned around, stunned but delighted, revealing to him... the side of her unattractive face, pockmarked all over. He suddenly turned pale as a sheet!

At the image so beautiful of the first, seeing the second so ugly, he lost his pride and made such a leap that he saw her cry with spite and sorrow. He felt horribly guilty about it, handing her a handkerchief instammering out a few flat apologies. She thanked him between two sobs that pierced the tender heart of this great giant. He took her and held her in his muscular arms to reassure her, rocking her gently.

They needed each other so much, both of them starving for tenderness and love!

Her hair smelled of the sweet scent of the fields during the harvest. It was almost alive, long and curly in places: he

began to think that the other half of his young bride's face was returning to its former self... but before what?! He suddenly froze: he was superstitious like everyone else in this corner of the earth and thought that... perhaps... she was the victim of a spell!

A magician jealous of her beauty: she told him no!

Without revealing his ideas but thinking about them more and more, he inquired as soon as day broke about this the next day, from Dame Amélia.

She knew more than she should have known about the fate of his wife Rosine. He called out to her in the middle of a wheat field, where she was gathering plants for her drinks: when he was in front of her, at her height, he asked her bluntly to tell him the story of her life, wanting to know what had been so sad that she had burst into tears, in front of him. This had intrigued and shocked him.

Lady Amelia kindly replied that she was an orphan and that she had taken her in after the death of venerable ancestors, not long ago. She had been looking for a solution when they had crossed paths, but she didn't know any more. Back where he had started, he set off again and finished his work quite late that evening.

He came home all sore and aching, his mind a little numb from the exertion. She massaged him learnedly, calming him down.

He was visibly disturbed by this secret, this mystery, this enigma, this hidden worry, this pitiful heritage, this family legacy.

During her journey through the surrounding area, Rosine wandered around their home: she spotted the areas with

porcini mushrooms or morels, red berries or blackberries and ventured into the old vegetable garden where she unearthed herbs for cooking but also for infusing. She better organized the barn for tools and the storeroom for the pantry, finding a shed at the bottom of the garden with a washhouse near a river.

Further on, an orchard of berries: apricots, mirabelles, plums, hazelnuts, and acorns. She also found truffles! While rummaging, she heard the melodious song of birds.

Rosine had a consistent mind and saw below her fenced meadows that depended on her husband, emanating from his previous wife. She would put two horses there to pull the cart and a herd of cows for milk and cheese, then sheep to have enough to make wool and spin with a distaff. She knew how to card, wash, and weave.

No one knew who she really was: she was the only daughter of disenchanted but well-off nobles.

She will teach her children what it takes to remain as self-sufficient, independent and free as possible!

She identified a pond where she could put ducks, geese, and pigs: a small stone building could serve as their living quarters. She lived behind other dwellings where she would install the chicken coop, two goats, and two sheep: the nursery. She would later consider hiring two donkeys to carry the bundles of wood. She would have to arrange this as soon as Dame Amélia gave her her dowry.

She will thus be independent of her husband and will manage her savings. She was there, back home when...

He pushed open the front door and saw her as she should have been, gazing at her dazzled, her beautiful face reflected in the glow of the flames dancing in the hearth! She was a

fairy, a goddess, an admirable young woman who had no flaws... At his noise, she raised her face and turned her face towards him, he received the full force of the ugly and swollen image but restrained himself with an immense gift of tact and... love?!

'Yes, he loved her, that was it, he loved her!'

He felt such a pull towards her that he could not restrain himself from taking her in his powerful arms, squeezing her until she was so tight that she could not breathe. She made a gesture of her head that momentarily brought her hair back to the most unattractive part of her face: the miracle happened, he forgot everything that wasn't them and brought his lips close to hers! They kissed for the first time and it was magical, unreal, irresistible, sensual!

As soon as he touched her lips, there was a whirlwind that surrounded them and restored all her radiant beauty to the beautiful young lady who placed her fingers on her cheek, which had become perfect again.

The entire magic of an evil man faded in a flash, the spell was lifted, having fallen irrevocably: from that embrace, they loved each other for life and had many children, as beautiful as their mother and as strong as their father..

Their marriage was a success thanks to a duo of fighters: he continued his trade as a lumberjack while ecologically exploiting his forest shares and expanded thanks to his two sons who became carpenters and blacksmiths. She, through her dowry, established her rural world, helped by her three daughters: one a cook, another a herdsman, and the last a weaver.

Rosine particularly liked going to the market to sell her produce in order to reinvest, constituting a dowry for each daughter of marriageable age!

The wheel of eternal renewal was positioned!

