

Bringing the Fairies to Broadway

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how to make monsters, or rather, being obstinate, he only would make monsters. So there he was, with his means of livelihood gone. A day or two he staid in his room like a wounded animal, savage and despondent. Gutsh, father of monsters, and the flock of "left overs" seemed evil reminders of the ugliness of the world. On the third day, came a cautious rap on his door.

"Well?" he grumbled.

Amelia appeared, waxen and fragile, in a loose gingham dress, though it was the day before Christmas. A sickly ray of light straying through the high window, fell on the menacing army of imps. Amelia shrank against the door, clutching the knob.

Emmanuel Fink would not acknowledge even to himself how glad he was to see her. He who hated the world and the people in it, accepted suspiciously this first stray human bit of youth offered him. He had eaten nothing but bread and cheese twice a day. He was hungry.

"Mr. Fink," said Amelia, absent-mindedly patting Gutsh. "Why don't you make something pretty?"

"Eh what?"

HER thwarted feminine instinct pierced timidly through starved inexperience. "Something pretty . . . not that they're really ugly," she added politely.

"But they are. . . hideous," said Old Fink decidedly. "That's why I made 'em."

"Oh!" She looked bewildered.

"They're like people's souls—ugly and mean, like the thoughts people hide," burst forth Old Fink vindictively. "Child, where everything's fine and rich on the surface, the people are all slick enough, and bowing and scraping. That's only show. Nonsense, hypocrisy," he screamed, growing very excited. "Scratch the surface. . . scratch it. You'll find things like my monsters there. . . envy and selfishness and hate, I tell you. Look at me. Nobody's ever done me a good turn. Nobody's ever cared whether I lived or died."

"A lady in the street, once gave me five cents and a rose," ventured little Amelia.

"Humph!" grunted Fink. "I'll bet the rose was faded."

"It was," acknowledged Amelia sadly. "But I put it in water and kept it a day or two anyway."

"Don't tell me. . . They're a lot of heartless hypocrites. Something pretty. . ." he sniffed. "You tell me to make something pretty. Well, what?"

"Fairies!" said Amelia unexpectedly.

"Fairies!" Fink actually laughed. "I've never seen one, nor have you. How can you suggest such a thing?"

"I can imagine," cried Amelia eagerly. "We had a lodger once who had a little girl, and the little girl had a fairy story book. I peeked at some of the pictures."

"So you want me to make fairies?" Fink meant his voice to sound sarcastic. Meanwhile he roved about the room, glaring at his monsters who simpered and leered back at him. Indeed they were not pretty.

"I'll strike a bargain with you," he said at last. "Describe a fairy and I'll make it."

AMELIA, perched on the bed, held three monsters in her lap, caressing them. She thought a long while. "They're little," she began.

"So are they," he pointed to the floor.

"Fairies are littler. And pretty."

"Humph!"

"And. . . kind."

"Little, pretty and kind. So that's your idea, is it?" Ill-naturedly, Emmanuel Fink grabbed a knife from the table, and jabbed at a piece of wood.

"The lady who gave me the rose had a fairy face. . . kind of smily with a dimple."

Fink started to shape the piece of

wood. The child watched him, passionately absorbed in the deft movements of his fingers. He loved the work. There was no doubt of that. He loved to feel the knife whittle and cut and shave; he loved to smooth the surfaces, to see a form grow. His eyes became intent and bright. He bent his head lower and pressed his lips together, and through clenched teeth hummed a tuneless air.

"Wings?" he spoke for the first time in half an hour.

Amelia clapped her hands. "Oh yes. . . wings."

The fairy was finished. A charmingly carved bit it was, dainty and perfect of shape, a tiny being with elfish face, and draperies, and wings.

"Now the paint brush." He ordered Amelia about, without looking at her.

"Here Mr. Fink. How beautiful!" A skilful dab of pink, of blue, of gold, and the thing was done.

"How simply beautiful!" sighed Amelia.

The old man looked gratified, forgot his bread and cheese, forgot his hunger, his loneliness. He only rose once from his chair, to light the candle that burned in feeble rays. He worked on squinting, until his eyes smarted so that he had to stop. He had made a dozen fairies, all little and pretty and kind, with wings painted gaily.

"Now what are we going to do?" asked Amelia sighing ecstatically. Her peaked face was pink; her hands, eager little claws, played gently with the fairies.

Fink sat frowning. All of a sudden he stretched his cramped arms and leaned forward excitedly. "I tell you what. . . I tell you. . . we'll put 'em in a basket and go out and sell them ourselves. And if anyone buys 'em, we'll get us a real Christmas dinner. . . turkey and pie."

Amelia's little face clouded wistfully. "Sell them?"

"I'll make you others," said Fink hastily, and counted them. "Twelve fairies! Let me see. . . say twenty-five cents each. That's three dollars. We can have a fine dinner for three dollars."

Amelia gazed at him rapturously. "Oh Mr. Fink. . . really?"

"We'll start right away. Go get your coat, and find me a basket."

"Mama's out, too," cried Amelia, "so I can go. And I think there's a basket in the cellar."

"Hurry up then," Fink put on his old hat, his old muffler and coat, and counted the fairies once more.

Amelia, a little shawl over her head, another shawl over her shoulders, came back presently carrying a comfortable looking basket.

"Well, well," exclaimed Old Fink importantly, patting her arm. "What a clever little girl!" Then with the fairies carefully arranged in the basket, the two stole from the room, and like thieves tiptoed down the stairs.

IT was snowing. Old Fink shivered as the scurrying snowflakes settled gently over his shoulders. "I'm afraid for the fairies," he said.

"Let's cover them," suggested Amelia anxiously.

"Then no one would see them," answered Fink, shivering—and Amelia shivered too. They walked quickly past Third Avenue, and Fourth Avenue on to Broadway, where in the full glitter of brilliant come and go, they sought to sell the fairies. But they were both timid.

Fink carried the basket and Amelia clung to his arm, and neither really knew how to go about selling the fairies.

No one seemed to want to buy; no one indeed paid any attention to the forlorn couple. It was everyone for himself.

Meanwhile it grew darker. The snow whirled in madder flakes, as if in a last crazy dance. The air iced. Lights bobbed out like great orange jewels. People hurried faster and faster, their arms full of bundles.

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