

The Little Fairy Bell

CUT REP
CUT PIT
CUT TIP

Tristan took refuge in Wales,
in the land of the great Duke Gilain, who was young,
powerful and frank in spirit, and welcomed him no-
bly as a god-sent guest.

And he did everything to give him honour and joy;
but he found that neither adventure, nor feast could
soothe what Tristan suffered.

One day, as he sat by the young Duke's side his
spirit weighed upon him so that not knowing it he
groaned, and the Duke, to soothe him, ordered into
his private room his favourite toy, a fairy thing,
which pleased his eyes when he was sad and relieved
his own heart; on a table covered with rich, good
purple, valets placed his dog Pticru. This dog was a
magic dog; it had come to the Duke from the isle of
Avalon. A fairy had given it him as a love-gift, and

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no one can well describe its kind or beauty. Its hide was coloured with tints so marvellously distributed that one could not say of what colour it was: its neck at first appearance seemed whiter than snow, its rump greener than a clover-leaf, one of the flanks the red of scarlet, the other yellow like saffron, the belly blue like lapis-lazuli, the back rosy; but if one looked a long while, all these colours danced before the eye, changed, became in turn white and green, yellow, blue, purplish, dark or clear. At the neck, hung by a chain of gold, it bore a little bell; and that tinkled so gaily, and so clear and so soft, that as Tristan heard it, he was soothed, and his anguish melted away, and he forgot all that he had suffered for the Queen; for such was the virtue of the bell and such is property: that whosoever heard it, he lost all pain. And as Tristan stroked the little fairy thing, the dog that took away his sorrow, he saw how delicate it was and fine, and how it had soft hair like samite, and he thought how good a gift it would make for the Queen. But he dared not ask for it right out since he knew that the Duke loved this dog beyond everything in the world, and would yield it to no prayers, nor to wealth, nor to wile; so one day Tristan having made a plan in his mind said this:

"Lord, what would you give to the man who could rid your land of the hairy giant Urgan, that levies such a toll?"

"Truly, the victor might choose what he would, but none will dare."

Then said Tristan:

"Those are strange words, for good comes to no land save by risk and daring, and not for all the gold of Milan would I renounce my desire to fight him in his wood and bring him down."

"Then," said Duke Gilain, "may the God born of a Virgin be with you and preserve you from death."

Then Tristan went out to find Urgan in his lair, and they fought hard and long, till courage conquered strength, and Tristan, having cut off the giant's hand, bore it back to the Duke.

And "Sire," said he, "since I may choose a reward according to your word, give me Pticru, your little fairy dog."

"Friend, what have you asked? Leave it me and take rather my sister and the half of my land."

"Sire, your sister is fair and fair is your land; but it was to win your fairy dog that I attacked Urgan the Hairy. Remember your promise!"

"Friend," said the Duke, "take it, then, but in taking it you take away also all my joy."

Then Tristan took the little fairy dog and gave it in ward to a Welsh harper, who was cunning and who bore it to Cornwall till he came to Tintagel, and having come there put it secretly into Brangien's hands, and the Queen was so pleased that she gave ten marks of gold to the harper, but she put it about that the Queen of Ireland, her mother, had sent the beast. And she had a goldsmith work a little kennel for him, all jewelled, and incrustated with gold and enamel inlaid; and wherever she went she carried the dog with her in memory of her friend, and as she watched it sad-

TRISTAN AND ISEULT.


ness and anguish and regrets melted out of her heart.

At first she did not guess the marvel, but thought her consolation was because the gift was Tristan's, till one day she found that it was fairy, and that it was the little bell that charmed her soul; then she thought: "What have I to do with comfort since he is sorrowing? He could have kept it too and have forgotten his sorrow; but with high courtesy he sent it me to give me his joy and to take up his pain again. But it is unbecoming that things should be thus; Tristan, while you suffer, so long will I suffer also."

And she took the magic bell and shook it just a little, and then by the open window she threw it into the sea.

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part the lovers could neither live nor die, for it was life and death together; and Tristan fled his sorrow through seas and islands and many lands.

He fled his sorrow still by seas and islands, till at last he came back to his land of Lyonesse and there Rohalt, the keeper of faith, welcomed him with happy tears and called him son. But he could not live in the peace of his own land, and he turned again and rode through kingdoms and through baronies, seeking adventure. From the Lyonesse to the Lowlands, from the Lowlands on to the Germanies; through the Germanies and into Spain. And many lords he served, and many deeds did, but for two years no news came to him out of Cornwall, nor friend, nor messenger. Then he thought that Iseult had forgotten.

Now it happened one day that, riding with Gor-

venal alone, he came into the land of Brittany. They rode through a wasted plain of ruined walls and empty hamlets and burnt fields everywhere, and the earth deserted of men; and Tristan thought:

"I am weary, and my deeds profit me nothing; my lady is far off and I shall never see her again. Or why for two years has she made no sign, or why has she sent no messenger to find me as I wandered? But in Tintagel Mark honours her and she gives him joy, and that little fairy bell has done a thorough work; for little she remembers or cares for the joys and the mourning of old, little for me, as I wander in this desert place. I in my turn, shall I never forget her who forgets me? Will I never find someone to heal me of my unhappiness?"

During two days Tristan and Gorvenal passed fields and towns without seeing man, cock or dog. On the third day, at the hour of noon, they came near a hill where an old chantry stood and close by a hermitage also. The hermit wore no woven habit on his back, but a goat-skin and some rags of linen. Prostrate on the ground he prayed Mary Magdalen to inspire him with salutary prayers. He bade the wayfarers welcome, and while Gorvenal stabled the horses, helped Tristan disarm, then laid out the food. He did not give them delicate viands, but spring-water and barley-bread baked in ashes. After the meal, the night having fallen and they having seated themselves about the fire, Tristan asked what wasted land that was, and the hermit answered:

"Lord, it is Breton land which Duke Hoël holds,

and once it was rich in pasture and ploughland, with mills here, apple-orchards there, and many small farms. But Count Riol of Nantes has wasted it. His pillagers have set fires everywhere and everywhere taken booty. His men will be rich a long while; but that is war."

"Brother," said Tristan, "why does Count Riol thus dishonour your lord, Hoël?"

"My lord, I will tell you the cause of this war. Know that this Count Riol was the Duke's vassal. And the Duke has a daughter, fair among all King's daughters, and Count Riol would have taken her to wife; but her father refused her to a vassal, and Count Riol would have carried her away by force. Many men have died in that quarrel."

And Tristan asked:

"Can the Duke continue to wage this war?"

And the hermit answered:

"Hardly, my lord; yet his last keep of Carhaix holds out still, for the walls are strong, and strong is the heart of the Duke's son Kaherdin, a very good knight and bold; but the enemy surrounds them on every side and starves them. Very hardly do they hold their castle."

Then Tristan asked:

"How far is this keep of Carhaix?"

"Sir," said the hermit, "it is but two miles further on this way."

Then Tristan and Gorvenal lay down, for it was evening.

In the morning, when they had slept, and when

the hermit had chanted, and had shared his black bread with them, Tristan thanked him and rode hard to Carhaix. And as he halted beneath the fast high walls, he saw a little company of men behind the battlements, and he asked if the Duke were there with his son Kaherdin. Now Hoël was among them; and when he cried "yes," Tristan called up to him and said:

"I am that Tristan, King of Lyonesse, and Mark of Cornwall is my uncle. I have heard that your vassals do you a wrong, and I have come to offer you my arms."

"Alas, Lord Tristan, go you your way alone and God reward you, for here within we have no more food; no wheat, or meat, or any stores but only lentils and a little oats remaining."

But Tristan said:

"For two years I dwelt in a forest, eating nothing save roots and herbs and venison; yet I found it a good life, so open you the door."

Kaherdin then said:

"Take him in, my father, since he is so brave, that he may share our fortunes and misfortunes."

They welcomed him with honour, and Kaherdin showed him the walls and the dungeon keep with all their devices, and from the battlements he showed the plain where far away gleamed the tents of Count Riol. And when they were down in the castle again he said to Tristan:

"Friend, let us go to the hall where my mother and sister sit."

So, holding each other's hands, they came into the women's room, where the mother and the daughter sat together weaving gold upon English cloth and singing a weaving song. They sang of Doette the fair who sits alone beneath the white-thorn, and round about her blows the wind. She waits for Doon, her friend, but he tarries long and does not come. This was the song they sang. And Tristan bowed to them, and they to him. Then Kaherdin, showing the work his mother did, said:

"See, friend Tristan, what a work-woman is here, and how marvellously she adorns stoles and chasubles for the poor minsters, and how my sister's hands run thread of gold upon this cloth. Of right, good sister, are you called 'Iseult of the White Hands.'"

But Tristan, hearing her name, smiled and looked at her more gently.

Now, Count Riol had pitched his camp three miles from Carhaix, and since many days Duke Hoël's men had not dared go beyond the barriers to assail him. But on the morrow, Tristan, Kaherdin, and twelve young knights left the castle and rode to a pinewood near the enemy's tents. And sprang from ambush and captured a wagon of Count Riol's food; and from that day, by escapade and ruse they would carry tents and convoys and kill off men, nor ever come back without some booty; so that Tristan and Kaherdin began to be brothers in arms, and kept faith and tenderness, as history tells. And as they came back from these rides, talking chivalry together, often did Kaherdin praise to his comrade his sister, Iseult

of the White Hands, for her simplicity and beauty.

One day, as the dawn broke, a sentinel ran from the tower through the halls crying:

"Lords, you have slept too long; rise, for an assault is on."

And knights and burgesses armed, and ran to the walls, and saw helmets shining on the plain, and pennons streaming crimson, like flames, and all the host of Riol in its array. Then the Duke and Kaherdin deployed their horsemen before the gates, and from a bow-length off they stooped, and spurred and charged, and they put their lances down together, and the arrows fell on them like April rain.

Now Tristan had armed himself among the last of those the sentinel had roused, and he laced his shoes of steel, and put on his mail, and his spurs of gold, his hauberk, and his helm over the gorget, and he mounted and spurred, with shield on breast, crying: "Carhaix!"

It was high time: Hoël's men already were falling back towards the gates. Then it was a sight to see, the mêlée of overthrown horses and wounded vassals, the blows dealt by the young knights, and the grass that underfoot grew bloody. In front of all, Kaherdin proudly had stopped, to meet the charge of a brave baron, the brother of Count Riol. They crashed with lowered lances. That of the man of Nantes broke off without unseating Kaherdin who with a skilful blow split his adversary's shield and plunged his polished steel up to the pennant into his side. Lifted from his saddle, the knight, unhorsed, fell to the ground. At the cry his brother gave, Count Riol came charging,

ein free, at Kaherdin, but Tristan came in between. So they met, Tristan and Count Riol. And at the shock, Tristan's lance shivered, but Riol's lance struck Tristan's horse just where the breast-piece runs, and laid it on the field.

But Tristan, standing, drew his sword, his bur-nished sword, and said:

"Coward! Here is death ready for the man that strikes the horse before the rider."

But Riol answered:

"I think you have lied, my lord!"

And he charged him.

And as he passed, Tristan let fall his sword so heavily upon his helm that he carried away the crest and the nasal, but the sword slipped on the mailed shoulder, and glanced on the horse, and killed it, so that of force Count Riol must slip the stirrup and leap and feel the ground. Then Riol too was on his feet, and they both fought hard in their broken mail, their 'scutcheons torn and their helmets loosened and lashing with their dented swords, till Tristan struck Riol just where the helmet buckles, and it yielded and the blow was struck so hard that the baron fell on hands and knees.

"Rise if you can, vassal," cried Tristan to him, "it was an evil hour that you came into this field; you must die." Riol regained his stand, but Tristan struck him down once more with a blow that split the helm, and it split the headpiece too, and touched the skull; then Riol cried mercy and begged his life, and Tristan took his sword.

It was just in time, for from all sides the men of Nantes were charging to the rescue of their lord. But already their lord had surrendered.

So he promised to enter Duke Hoël's keep and to swear homage again, and to restore what he had wasted; and by his order the battle ceased, and his host went off discomfited.

Now when the victors were returned Kaherdin said to his father:

"Sire, keep you Tristan. There is no better knight, and your land has need of such courage."

So when the Duke had taken counsel with his barons, he said to Tristan:

"Friend, you have won my love, for I owe you my land, but I shall be quit with you if you will take my daughter, Iseult of the White Hands, who comes of Kings and of Queens, and of Dukes before them in blood. Take her, she is yours."

And Tristan answered:

"I will take her, Sire."

Ah, my lords, why did he speak that word? That word cost him his life.

So the day was fixed, and the Duke came with his friends and Tristan with his, and before all, at the gate of the minster, Tristan wed Iseult of the White Hands, according to the Church's law.

But that same night, as Tristan's valets undressed him, it happened that in drawing his arm from the sleeve they drew off and let fall from his finger the ring of green jasper, the ring of Iseult the Fair. It sounded on the stones, and Tristan looked and saw it.

Then his heart awoke and he knew that he had done wrong. For he remembered the day when Iseult the Fair had given him the ring. It was in that forest where, for his sake, she had led the hard life with him, and that night he saw again the hut in the Wood of Morois, and he was bitter with himself that ever he had accused her of treason; for now it was he that had betrayed, and he was bitter with himself also in pity for this new wife and her simplicity and beauty. See how these two Iseults had met him in an evil hour, and to both had he broken faith!

Now Iseult of the White Hands wondered to hear him sigh, lying at her side. A little shamed she said at last:

"Dear Lord, have I hurt you in anything? Why do you not give me even a single kiss? Tell me the manner, that I may know my fault, and I will make all amends that I can."

But Tristan answered: "Friend, do not be angry with me; for once in another land I fought a foul dragon and was near to death, and I thought of the Mother of God, and I made a vow to Her that, delivered from the dragon through Her courtesy, would I ever wed, for one year I would abstain from embracing and kissing my wife."

"Since that is so," said Iseult, "I will gladly endure it."

But when in the morning the servants put the wimple of the married woman on her, she smiled sadly and thought how little right she had to this head-dress.

Kaberdin

Several days afterward, Duke Hoël, his seneschal, his huntsmen, Tristan, Iseult of the White Hands and Kaherdin together left the castle to hunt in the forest. On a narrow path Tristan rode to the left of Kaherdin who with his right hand led by the rein the palfrey of Iseult of the White Hands. Now the palfrey stumbled in a puddle of water. Its hoof splashed water so rudely under Iseult's clothing that she was drenched and felt coldness above her knee. She gave a light cry and spurring her horse forward laughed so loudly and clearly that Kaherdin, galloping after her and having caught up with her, asked:

"Fair sister, why do you laugh?"

"It was a thought which came to me, fair brother. When that water splashed me, I said to it, 'Water, you

older than ever was the bold Sir Tristan.' That was why I laughed. But I have already said too much, brother, and repent me." Astonished, Kaherdin entreated her so keenly that at length she told him the truth about her marriage.

Tristan caught up with them and all three rode in silence as far as the hunting-lodge. There, Kaherdin called Tristan aside and said to him:

"Sir Tristan, my sister has confessed the truth about her marriage to me. I took you for my peer, and as my comrade. But you have betrayed your faith and shamed our family. From this time forth, if you do not give me satisfaction, know that I challenge you."

Tristan answered him:

"It is true, I have come among you to your misfortune. But learn of my unhappiness, fair sweet friend, brother and comrade, and perhaps your heart will be appeased. Know that I have another Iseult, fairest of all women, who for my sake has suffered and still suffers many a pang. Of a truth, your sister loves me and does me honour, yet for the love of me the other Iseult treats, with even more honour than your sister treats me, a dog which I gave her. Come, let us quit this hunt; follow where I shall take you; I will tell you of my misery."

Tristan turned his horse's head and gave spur. Kaherdin galloped after him. Without speaking they rode into the forest depths. There Tristan laid bare his life to Kaherdin. He told him how, on the high sea, he had drunk love and death; about the treachery

of the barons and the dwarf; of the Queen lea to the stake, delivered to the lepers, and of their loves in the wild forest; how he had given her back to Mark, and having fled her, had wished to love Iseult of the White Hands; and how he now knew that he could neither live nor die without the Queen. Kaherdin was silent and astounded. He felt his anger sinking against his will.

"Friend," he finally said, "I hear wondrous words and you have moved my heart to pity, for you have endured pangs from which God save one and all of us! Let us go back to Carhaix: three days hence, if I can, I will tell you my mind."

Within her room at Tintagel, Iseult the Fair sighed for the sake of Tristan, calling him in her heart. To love him always, she had no other thought, no other hope, no other wish. All her desire was in him, and for two years now she had not heard from him. Where was he? In what country? Was he even alive?

Within her room at Tintagel Iseult the Fair sat singing a song she had made. She sang of Guron taken and killed for his love, and how by guile the count gave Guron's heart to her to eat, and of her woe. The Queen sang softly, catching the harp's tone; her hands were cunning and her song good; she sang low down and softly.

Then came in Kariado, a rich count from a far off island that had fared to Tintagel to offer the Queen his service, and several times since Tristan's leaving he had sought her in love. But the Queen repelled his

ad ces, calling them folly. He was a comely knight, vain, proud, eloquent, but a hero oftener in the chambers of the women than in battle. He found Iseult as she sang and laughed to her:

"Lady, how sad a song! as sad as the osprey's; do they not say he sings for death? and your song means that to me; I die for you."

And Iseult said: "So let it be and may it mean so; for never come you here but to stir in me anger or mourning. Ever were you the screech owl or the osprey that boded ill when you spoke of Tristan; what news bear you now?"

And Kariado answered:

"You are angered, I know not why, but who heeds your words? Let the osprey bode me death; here is the evil news the screech owl brings. Lady Iseult, Tristan, your friend, is lost to you. He has wed in a far land. So seek you other where, for he mocks your love. He has wed in great pomp Iseult of the White Hands, the King of Brittany's daughter."

X And Kariado went off in anger, but Iseult bowed her head and broke into tears.

i.e. NOT BERNARD

On the third day, Kaherdin called Tristan:

"Friend, I have taken counsel in my heart. Yes, you have told me the truth, the life you live in this land is frenzy and madness, and no good can come of it for either you or my sister Iseult of the White Hands. Hear what I propose. We will travel together to Tintagel; you will see the Queen and learn whether she still regrets you and is faithful to you. If she has

forgotten you, then perhaps you will hold in great fondness my sister Iseult, the Fair, the Simple. I will follow you: am I not your peer and your comrade?"

X "Brother," said Tristan, "well has it been spoken. 'The heart of a man is worth all the gold in a country.'"

X Soon after Tristan and Kaherdin donned the cords and cowls of pilgrims, as though they intended to visit the graves of saints in distant lands. They said farewell to Duke Hoël. Tristan took Gorvenal, and Kaherdin a single equerry. Secretly they fitted out a ship and all four sailed towards Cornwall. The wind was light and favourable to them, so that they landed one morning before daybreak not far from Tintagel, in a lonely cove close by the castle of Lidan. There doubtless Dinas of Lidan the good seneschal would receive them and conceal their coming.

At daybreak the four companions were climbing towards Lidan when they spied coming behind them a man travelling their road at the slow gait of his horse. They took cover and the man passed without seeing them, for he slumbered in his saddle. Tristan recognized him:

"Brother," he whispered to Kaherdin, "it is Dinas of Lidan himself. He is asleep. Without doubt he is returning from his friend's house and still dreams of her: it would not be courteous to awake him, but follow me at a distance."

He rejoined Dinas, softly took his horse by the bridle and walked noiselessly by his side. At last a mis-

step of the horse awakened the sleeper. He opened his eyes, saw Tristan, hesitated.

"It's you, it's you, Tristan! God bless the hour in which I see you again: I have long awaited it!"

"Friend, God keep you! What news can you give me of the Queen?" "Harsh news, alas. The King loves her and would have her happy, but since your exile she languishes and weeps for you. But why go back to her? You do not seek your death and hers? Tristan, have mercy on the Queen, leave her be!"

"Do me this favour, friend," said Tristan. "Hide me at Lidan, take her my message, and bring it about that I see her once again, one single time!"


"I am sorry for my lady," Dinas responded, "and I will not take your message unless I know that she has remained dearer to you than all other women."

"My lord, you can tell her that she has remained dearer to me than all other women, and it will be the truth."

"Well then, follow me, Tristan; I will help you in your design."

At Lidan the seneschal harboured Tristan, Gornaval, Kaherdin and his squire, and after Tristan bit by bit had told him the story of his life, Dinas travelled to Tintagel to learn the doings of the court. He learned that three days hence, Queen Iseult, King Mark, all their train, their equerries and their huntsmen intended leaving Tintagel for the castle at White-Lands, where the great hunts awaited them. Then Tristan gave his ring of green jasper to the seneschal and the message he was to deliver to the Queen.

Dinas of Lidan

XI inas accordingly returned to Tintagel, climbed the stair and entered the hall. Under the canopy King Mark and Iseult the Fair sat over a game of chess. Dinas seated himself on a stool beside the Queen, as though to observe her play, and twice, pretending to point out moves to her, he posed his hand on the chess board: the second time, Iseult perceived on one of his fingers the jasper ring. Great joy immediately overwhelmed her. Lightly she jarred Dinas' arm, so that several pawns fell in a heap.

"Look, seneschal," said she, "you have disturbed my game, and in a way that prevents my resuming it."

Mark left the hall, Iseult repaired to her chamber and had the seneschal called to her:

"Friend, you bear a message from Tristan?"

TRISTAN AND ISEULT

"Yes, Queen, he is at Lidan, hidden in my castle."

"Is it true that he has taken a wife in Brittany?"

"Queen, they have told you the truth. But he swears that he has not betrayed you; that not for a single day has he ceased cherishing you above all women; that he will die if he does not see you again, only one time: he adjures you to consent to it, by the promise you gave him the last time he spoke with you."

Iseult was silent for a while, thinking on the other Iseult. At length she answered:

"Yes, the last time he spoke with me, I said, I well remember, 'If ever I see the ring of green jasper, neither tower nor stronghold, nor royal prohibition will keep me from doing the will of my friend, be it wisdom or folly. . . .'"

"Queen, two days hence the court is to leave Tintagel for White-Lands; he instructs you that he will be concealed along the route in a thicket of thorns; he summons you to take compassion on him."

"I promised: neither tower, stronghold nor royal prohibition would keep me from doing the bidding of my friend."

The day after the morrow, while all Mark's court prepared to leave Tintagel, Tristan and Gorvenal, Kaherdin and his squire put on their helmets, took their swords and shields and by hidden ways stole towards the appointed spot. Through the forest two roads led to White-Lands: one broad and beaten, over which the cavalcade was to pass, the other rocky and neglected. Tristan and Kaherdin posted their squires

DINAS OF LIDAN

on the latter: they were to await them at this spot with their horses and shields. They themselves slipped through the brush and hid in a thicket. On the road, Tristan laid a branch of hazelwood bound with a shoot of woodbine. Soon the cavalcade appeared down the road. It was led by the attendants of King Mark. In fine array there advanced the heralds and the marshals, the cooks and the cup-bearers; then came the chaplains, then the masters of the hounds with beagles and greyhounds on the leash, then the falconers bearing the birds on their left wrists, then the huntsmen, then the knights and the barons: they trotted by arranged in double file, and it was a fine sight to see them, richly mounted on horses caparisoned in velvet sewn with goldsmith-work. Then King Mark passed and Kaherdin marvelled to see his counsellors about him, two on one side, two on the other, all clad in cloth of gold or scarlet.

The cortege of the Queen now followed. At its head came the laundresses and the chamber-maids, then the wives and the daughters of the barons and the counts. These passed in single file, escorted each by a young knight. Finally there advanced a palfrey ridden by the loveliest woman Kaherdin ever had laid eyes on: she was beautifully made of body and face, with falling hips, well-defined eyebrows, laughing eyes and tiny teeth; a gown of red samite covered her; a string of gold and jewels bound her smooth brow.

"It is the Queen," whispered Kaherdin.

"The Queen?" said Tristan. "No, that is Camille, her maid."

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There followed on a grey palfrey another lady, whiter than snow in February, redder than roses; her bright eyes sparkled like stars reflected in a fountain.

"Now I see her, there is the Queen!" said Kaherdin.

"Ah, no," said Tristan, "that is Brangien the Faithful." *WOOD BINE - BANGING HAPPINESS*

But at once the road grew bright, as though the sun suddenly had shone out through the foliage of the great trees, and Iseult the Blonde appeared. Duke Andret, whom God damn, rode by her side.

Instantly from the thorn-copse there rose the songs of white-throats and skylarks, and Tristan put all his tenderness into these melodies. The Queen understood the signal of her friend. On the ground she perceived the branch of hazelwood about which the woodbine tightly clung, and thought in her heart: "So is it with us, friend: neither you without me nor I without you." She reined her palfrey, dismounted, went to a hackney that bore a shrine inlaid with jewels; therein on a purple carpet crouched the dog Pticro. She took it in her arms, petted it with her hand, stroked it with her ermine mantle, played happily with it. Then, having replaced it in its house, she turned towards the thorn-copse and said aloud:

"Birds of this wood, who have rejoiced me with your songs, I take you into my service. While my lord Mark rides to White-Lands I shall sojourn in my castle of St. Lubin. Birds, attend me thither: this evening I will richly recompense you as good minstrels."

Tristan heard these words and rejoiced. But Andret

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the felon was troubled. He helped the Queen into her saddle and the cortege drew away.

Now hear a sorry tale! While the royal cortege was passing, far off on the other road, where Gorvenal and Kaherdin's squire guarded their masters' horses, there passed an armed knight named Bleheri. From afar he recognized Gorvenal and Tristan's shield: "What do I see," thought he, "that is Gorvenal and the other is Tristan himself." He spurred his horse towards them and cried "Tristan!" But the two squires already had turned bridle and were flying. Launched in pursuit of them Bleheri repeated:

"Tristan, hold, I conjure you, by your prowess!"

But the two squires would not turn about. Then Bleheri cried:

"Tristan, hold, I conjure you in the name of Iseult the Fair!"

Thrice he conjured the fugitives in the name of Iseult the Fair. It was in vain: they disappeared, and Bleheri only captured one of their horses, which he took with him as his prize. He reached the castle of St. Lubin at the moment the Queen descended there. And, having found her alone, he said to her:

"Queen, Tristan is in this country. I saw him on the rocky road which leads from Tintagel. He took to his heels. Thrice I cried to him to stop, calling on him in the name of Iseult the Fair; but he had taken fright, he did not dare await me."

"Fair Sir, what you are saying is falsehood and folly: how should Tristan be in this country? How

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would he have fled before you? How would he not have drawn up, conjured in my name."

"Nevertheless, Lady, I saw him, so well that I captured one of his horses. You can see it, all caparisoned, down there, in the open."

But Bleheri saw Iseult wax wroth. It pained him, for he loved Tristan and the Queen. He left her presence, sorry that he had spoken.

Then Iseult wept and said, "Unhappy woman; I have lived too long, since I have seen the day when Tristan makes game of me and reviles me! Formerly, if conjured in my name, what foe would he not have faced? He is bold of body: if he fled before Bleheri, if he did not deign to stop at the name of his friend, ah, it is because the other Iseult possesses him! Why did he return? He had betrayed me and wanted to shame me besides. Was he not satisfied by my old sorrows? Then let him return, reviled in his turn, to Iseult of the White Hands!"

She called Perinis the Faithful and told him the news which Bleheri had brought her. She added:

"Friend, find Tristan on the rocky road which leads from Tintagel to St. Lubin. Tell him that I do not salute him, and that he should not make bold to come near me, for I will have him driven off by men-at-arms and valets."

Perinis set out on the quest and at last found Tristan and Kaherdin. He gave them the Queen's message.

"Brother," cried Tristan, "what are you saying? How could I have fled before Bleheri, since as you see,

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we have not even our horses? Gorvenal and the squire are guarding them, we did not meet them at the trysting-place and we are still searching for them."

At this moment Gorvenal and Kaherdin's squire returned and told of what had happened.

"Perinis, fair sweet friend," Tristan said, "go back quickly to your lady. Tell her that I send her greetings and love, that I have not failed in the loyalty I owe her, that she is dearer to me than any other woman; tell her to send you back to me bearing her regards; I will wait here till you return."

Perinis accordingly went back to the Queen and repeated to her what he had seen and heard. But she did not believe him:

"Ah, Perinis, you were my counsellor and my confidant, and my father destined you for my service even as a child. But Tristan the sorcerer has won you with his lies and his gifts. You also, you have betrayed me: get you gone!"

Perinis knelt before her:

"Mistress, I hear bitter words. Never in my life have I felt greater anguish. But I do not care for myself: it is for you I sorrow, mistress, who are doing injustice to my lord Tristan, and who will regret it when it is too late."

"Get you gone, I do not believe you! You too, Perinis, Perinis the Faithful, you have betrayed me!"

Tristan waited long for Perinis to bring him the forgiveness of the Queen. Perinis did not come.

At dawn, Tristan wrapped himself in a wide ragged mantle. In spots he painted his face with

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^{red}vermilion and walnut-stain, to make it resemble that of a sick man ravaged by leprosy. In his hands he took a hanaper of grained wood for the collection of alms, and a leper's rattle. He entered the streets of St. Lubin and disguising his voice, begged of all passers. If only he might see the Queen!

At last she came from the castle; Brangien and her women, her valets and her men-at-arms accompanied her. She took the road to the church. The leper followed the valets, shook his rattle, begged in a miserable voice:

"Queen, be good to me; you do not know the need in which I am!"

She knew him by his fair form, by his stature. All of her trembled, but she refused to look at him. The leper implored her, and pitiful it was to hear him. He dragged himself after her:

"Queen, if I dare come close to you, be not wroth: have pity on me, for I have deserved that you have."

But the Queen called the valets and the men-at-arms:

"Drive off this leper!" she said to them.

The valets shoved and struck him. He beat them off and cried:

"Queen, have mercy!"

And Iseult laughed aloud. Her laughter rang even as she entered the church. Hearing her laugh, the leper drew away. The Queen took several steps forward in the nave of the minster; then her limbs gave way; she fell on her knees, with head to the pavement, and outstretched arms.

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That very day Tristan took leave of Dinas in such downcast mood that he seemed to have lost his mind, and his ship set sail for Brittany.

Alas, before long the Queen repented. When she learned from Dinas that Tristan had left in such dejection, she began to think that Perinis had told the truth; that Tristan had not fled, when conjured in her name; that she had most unjustly driven him away. "What," thought she, "I have driven you away, Tristan, friend! Henceforth you will hate me, and never will I see you again. Never will you know of my repentance, even, nor what punishment I shall impose on myself and offer you as a small proof of my remorse!"

From that day, to punish herself for her error and her folly, Iseult the Fair put on a hairshirt and wore it against her skin. *MORTIFICATION*