



Once upon a time there lived in Brittany a tailor, called Job. He had a merry face, and pleasant manners and was a favourite with everyone. In particular there were many girls who would gladly have become his wife. Although he was only a tailor he had stitched and cut enough cloth to earn a fortune, and he had built himself the largest house in the village. Opposite this house there lived a young seamstress called Jeanneton. She was modest and kind hearted and, apart from Job, there was no one so skilled with a needle.

One day Jeanneton was sitting at her window, sewing, when she saw Job crossing the field. She thought that she would like to marry him, and the feeling grew from year to year. At last she went to him and told him her wish.

“Very well,” he said, “I feel the same for you as you feel for me. I will gladly marry you – but on one condition. They say you are the best seamstress in the country; well, I have here a little cap, and I would like you to make me one just like it.”

So saying he drew forth a baby’s bonnet. It was so beautifully embroidered that it could have been the work of the fairies.

“I was asked to make one the same, but try as I might, it is too hard for me.”

“I too will try,” said Jeanneton, “and if God so wills, I shall succeed.”

She set to work at once, but although she used the fairest threads, and embroidered the daintiest flowers and patterns, she could not make a cap like the original. She stitched at it day and night, and tired out her eyes, but all in vain. She began to despair and to think the task was impossible. One night she was stitching at the cap when to her surprise, someone stepped down out of the fireplace. It was a great nobleman, dressed in clothes that sparkled with gold and precious stones.

“Do not be afraid, young woman,” he said. “I do not wish to harm you. Tell me, why are you working so hard at this late hour?”

“Oh, my lord,” said Jeanneton, “I have been very foolish. I promised to make Job the tailor a cap like this, and a month has passed and I have done nothing.”

“A cap like that?” said the nobleman. “Nothing could be easier. See here,” and he pulled from his pocket a cap exactly like the original.

“Please, my lord,” said Jeanneton, “give me that cap – it means everything to me.”

“Willingly, if you will be my wife.”

“I cannot lie to you, my lord,” said Jeanneton. “I love Job, the tailor. I have promised to be his wife, when this work is completed.”

“Very well,” replied the stranger, “I will respect your feelings. You shall have the cap, on one condition.”

“What is that?”

“You must remember my name all year, and when I return, in twelve months time, you must tell me what it is. If you fail, you will have to come away with me.”

The conditions did not seem difficult and Jeanneton agreed.

“My name is Jebedic le Ribet,” said the nobleman. “In a year’s time you must return to this place, and tell it to me. Till that time live happily with Job the tailor.”



So saying he disappeared, without opening either door or window.

Jeanneton picked up the cap he had left and saw, with wonder, that it was the very image of the original.

The next day she ran with the cap to Job, and showed it to him.

“See, the work is finished!” she said.

“Then we can be married without delay,” said Job. “I am proud to become the husband of such a marvellous needlewoman.”

So the young couple were married, and lived together in the greatest contentment. They were so happy that Jeanneton forgot all about the nobleman.

At the beginning of the tenth month she remembered him, but alas! she could not recollect his name. She became very sad and Job asked her what was

the matter.

“Do not cry, Jeanneton,” he said, “tailors are clever fellows. I will call them all together and I promise you that they will find the name you are looking for.”

The tailors from ten miles around came to help Job. They searched the woods and moorland for news of the nobleman; but they could learn nothing of him. Soon the year was nearly at an end and Jeanneton was growing more and more afraid; when only three days were left, Job and his friends decided to make a final effort. They all set out in different directions and one of the tailors entered a large wood. As he walked through it he saw a beautiful white hare.

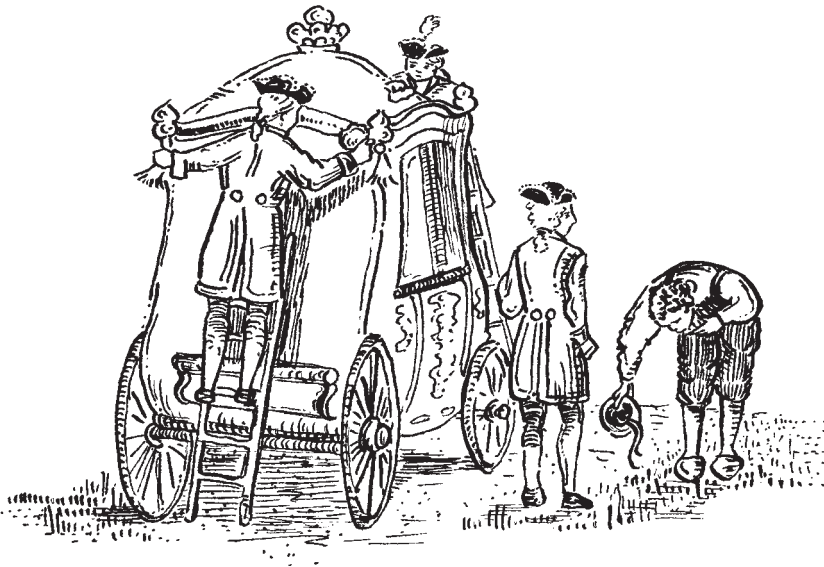
“If I catch that hare I can take it back to Jeanneton,” he thought. “It might make her less unhappy.”

He set off after it and followed it through thickets and gorse, until he reached the mouth of a cave. He plunged into it and along a tunnel that led down into the earth. At last he came out before a magnificent castle. The sun was rising and a crowd of grooms were cleaning a coach in the courtyard. It was richly painted and decorated with gold.

The tailor went up to them, his hat in his hand.

“Might I ask why you are making these preparations?” he said.

“Of course. Tonight our master rides to the world above. He is going to carry away a young woman and make her his wife.”



The tailor thought to himself: “Aha! this is the man for whom I am searching!”

“Is your master rich?” he asked.

“I should think so! He owns all the gold mines in the earth.”

“Indeed? And what is the name of such a wonderful man?”

“You must be a stranger not to have heard it: his name is Jebedic le Ribet.”

“Jebedic...Jebedic what?”

“Jebedic le Ribet.”

“Thank you gentleman,” said the tailor. He raised his hat politely and hurried away.

“That is certainly the name I am looking for,” he thought. “Now I must not forget it.”

He said it over and over as he ran along; “Jebedic le Ribet, Jebedic le Ribet.” Suddenly he caught his foot in a fox’s set, and fell to the ground. He cried out and rose painfully to his feet.

“Jebe-, Jeb-” he said, but could go no further. “Never let it be said that a tailor has been defeated,” he cried, “I will go back to the castle!”

He hurried back and arrived when the grooms were harnessing four horses to the carriage.

“I came to see what horses could be good enough for such a carriage,” he said. “What fine animals – their master must be very proud! By the bye, what was his name? I have forgotten it.”

“Jebedic le Ribet, Jebedic le Ribet,” said the grooms together.

“I am very grateful to you,” said the tailor and once more hurried away.

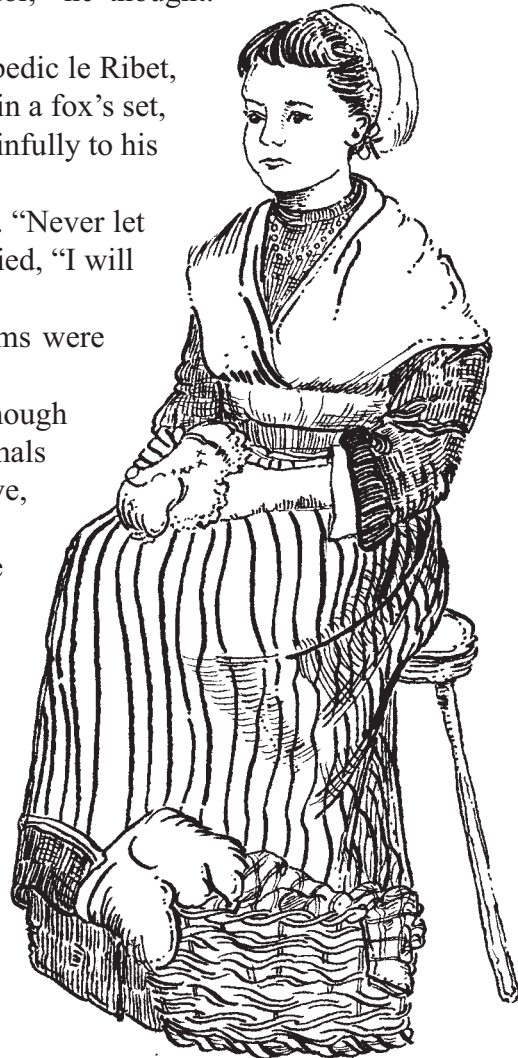
This time he did not forget the name. He arrived at Job’s house on the last day, a few minutes before midnight. Job and Jeanneton and the tailors were gathered about the fire.

“Have you met with any luck?” cried Job.

“Yes – I think I have found the right name,” said the tailor.

“What is it?” asked Jeanneton.

“Jebedic – Jebedic le Ribet.”



“Yes, that is the right name; thank you, thank you: you have saved me,” said Jeanneton. “Now the stranger can come if he wishes.”

At the stroke of midnight the stranger arrived. There was a sound of bells, wheels and snorting horses. The door swung open of its own accord and the nobleman entered the room.

“Good evening, good evening, Jebedic le Ribet,” said Jeanneton in a gentle voice. “You see I have not forgotten the name of my kind benefactor.”

The nobleman uttered a terrible oath and turned, banging the door behind him. It broke into a thousand pieces and they heard the carriage drive away.

Job and Jeanneton rejoiced at their escape, and lived happily together for the rest of their days.

*Told by Jean-Mathurin Cadic, rector of Bieuzy*