

# THE CLOGMAKER'S DAUGHTER

Once upon a time there was a poor clogmaker. He lived in the middle of a forest, and had nothing in the world but his auger for hollowing out wood, and his little hut. He had a great many children, and every year another child was born. On the birth of his thirteenth child he set off into the village to try to find someone to be its godfather. Before long he met the Lord of the forest, who was out walking.

“Good day, my friend the clogmaker!” he said.

“Good day, your honour,” the clogmaker replied.

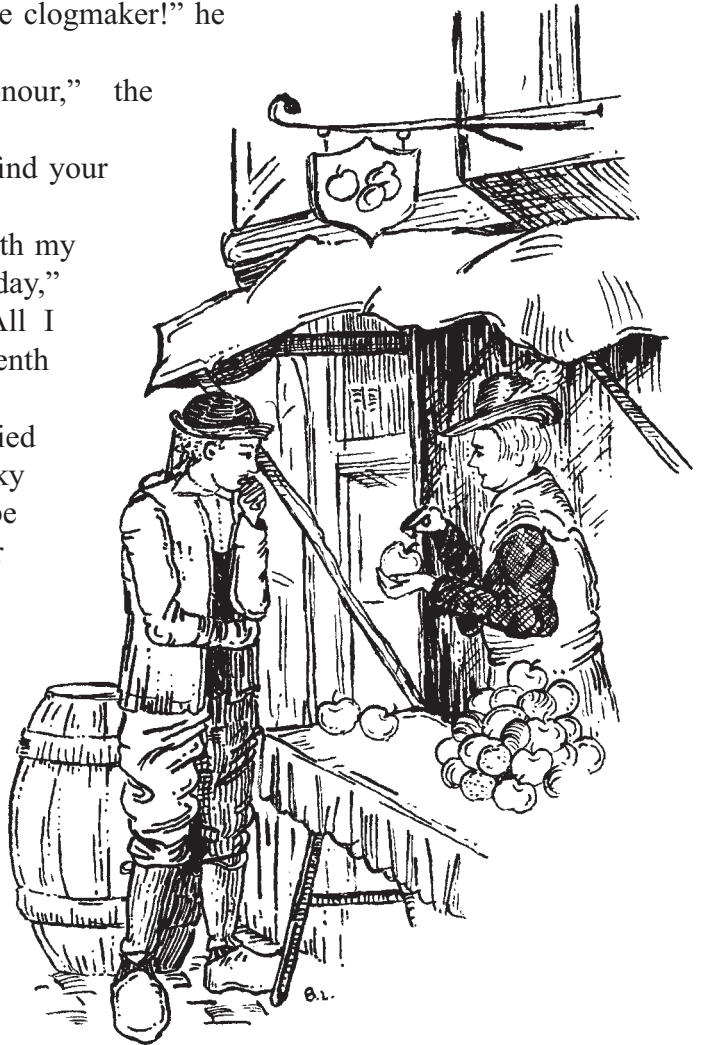
“Are you setting off to find your fortune?” said the Lord.

“Alas, I have not met with my fortune for many a long day,” replied the clogmaker. “All I get is children. My thirteenth was born last night.”

“Your thirteenth!” cried the Lord. “What a lucky number. I would like to be the godfather. Is it a boy or a girl?”

“A girl, your honour, as fair as an angel, with skin like the lily and cheeks like the rose,” said the clogmaker.

“Indeed? I would like to be not only her godfather but also her foster father. You and your wife will be allowed to see her whenever you wish.”



So it was that the clogmaker's thirteenth child went to live in the castle of the Lord of the forest. There was a splendid christening, and the little girl was given the name Simone. The Lord already had three sons, called Hervé, Iann and Stévan. They were still young, but growing as fast as oak saplings in a ditch in Brittany. They welcomed the clogmaker's child, and she soon became their beloved sister. The Lord did not tell them that the little girl was not his real daughter, and the four children grew up in the greatest happiness. Every day they went out driving or riding in the woods, hills and valleys, and every day the coachman had to clean the carriage and harness the horses. At last he lost his temper, and said that he was tired of working for a clogmaker's daughter.

"What do you mean?" said the children.

"Ask your father," said the coachman. Stévan ran to the Lord, and told him what the coachman had said.

"It is true," said the Lord. "Simone is of humble birth, but her goodness of heart and sweet temper make her worthy to be your sister."

"If Simone is not really my sister, then she can be my wife," said Stévan.

"Slowly, my son," said the Lord. "Hervé and Iann may feel as you do, and they are older than you are."

This proved to be the case. When Hervé and Iann learnt the truth, they also wished to make Simone their wife. They began to quarrel with each other, and the Lord of the forest had to intervene.

"Do not quarrel," he said, "I have a way to settle the matter. Here are a thousand écus each. Go out into the world, and whoever returns with the best present for Simone, may marry her."

"Very well, Father," said the young men. They set out, and soon arrived in Paris, the city of a hundred marvels. They each went their own way, and walked through the streets, looking about them with wonder. After a little while Hervé saw a large crowd gathered in front of a carriage-maker's shop. The most splendid carriages were for sale, and Hervé went up to the carriage maker to ask which was the most expensive.

"The most expensive carriage," said the man. "It is that little one in the corner. It costs a thousand écus."

Hervé looked surprised, and the carriage maker said:

"It is no ordinary carriage. It will take a man anywhere in the world in the blink of an eye."

"Indeed? Then I will buy it."

Meanwhile, Iann had entered a jeweller's shop. There were many beautiful rings, necklaces and precious stones for sale, and Iann looked at them all. In amongst them was a pair of spectacles made of plain metal.

"You must not judge by appearances," said the jeweller. "These spectacles are worth handfuls of those precious stones."

"Have they a special power?" asked Iann.

"They have indeed," said the jeweller. "Whoever wears them can see whatever he wishes, even if a wall is in between."

"I will buy them," said Iann. "Surely my brothers will not find so wonderful a present for Simone."

Meanwhile, Stévan had grown hungry and stopped at a fruit seller's stall. He asked the price of three rosy apples.

"A thousand écus," said the fruit seller. "There are no fruits like those in the world. They will cure anybody, even if they are at death's door."

"I will buy them," said Stévan.

The three brothers met together again, all very pleased with their presents.

"I wonder how Simone and our parents are faring," said Iann. "I will try out my spectacles."

He put on the spectacles and gave a cry:

"Oh brothers, we must go home! Our parents and Simone are very ill, and will soon be dead."

"Quick, get in my carriage," said Hervé.

In an instant, they arrived back at the castle in the forest.

"Never fear," said Stévan. "I will save Simone and our parents with my apples."

He gave each of his dying relatives an apple, and no sooner did it



## The Clogmaker's Daughter

---

touch their lips, but they stood up as healthy as before. However, after a little while the brothers began to quarrel.

Who had done the most to save Simone's life, and who had brought her the best present?

"Without my glasses you would not have known she was ill," said Iann.

"Without my carriage you could not have arrived in time," said Hervé.

"Without my apples, they would all be dead," said Stévan.

Their father decided to settle the matter.

"My sons, do not quarrel," he said. "It seems to me that only one of you has a right to Simone, and that is Stévan. Iann still has his spectacles, and Hervé still has his carriage, but Stévan has used his apples, and is as poor as before. To make up for their loss, he deserves the hand of Simone."

The young people praised the wisdom of the old man, and soon Stévan married Simone, the clogmaker's daughter. They lived for many years in the castle in the forest, and children and grandchildren sprang up around them, like little oak saplings about an oak tree.

*Told by Janton Métour, of Noyal-Pontivy*

