



# Tonight's Bedtime Story

Fairy Tales for Sleepy Children

presents

## Fortunatus

*From "The Fairy Book" by Miss Mulock*



In the city of Famagosta, in the island of Cyprus, there lived a very rich gentleman. His name was Theodorus: he married a lady who was the greatest beauty in Cyprus, and she was as rich as himself; she was called Graciana. They both had every pleasure that wealth could buy, and lived in the first style. Besides all this, the lady Graciana brought her husband a fine little son, who was named Fortunatus; so one would think nothing could have kept Theodorus from being the most happy person in the world. But this was not long the case; for when he had enjoyed all these pleasures for some time, he grew tired of them, and began to keep company with young noblemen of the court, with whom he sat up all night drinking and playing cards, so that in a few years he spent all his fortune. He was now very sorry for what he had done, but it was too late; and there was nothing he could do, but to work at some trade to support his wife and child. For all this the lady Graciana never found fault with him, but still loved her husband the same as before; saying, "Dear Theodorus, to be sure I do not know how to work at any trade; but if I can not help you in earning money, I will help you to save it." So Theodorus set to work; and though the lady Graciana had always been used only to ring her bell for everything that she wanted, she now scoured the kettles and washed the clothes with her own hands.

They went on in this manner till Fortunatus was sixteen years of age. When that time came, one day, as they were all sitting at dinner, Theodorus fixed his eyes on his son, and sighed deeply.

"What is the matter with you, father?" said Fortunatus.

"Ah! my child," said Theodorus, "I have reason enough to be sorry, when I think of the noble fortune which I have spent, and that my folly will force you to labour for your living."

"Father," replied Fortunatus, "do not grieve about it. I have often thought that it was time I should do something for myself; and though I have not been brought up to any trade, yet I hope I can contrive to support myself somehow."

When Fortunatus had done his dinner, he took his hat and walked to the sea-side, thinking of what he could do, so as to be no longer a burden to his parents. Just as he reached the sea-shore, the Earl of Flanders, who had been to Jerusalem, was embarking on board his ship with all his servants, to set sail for Flanders. Fortunatus now thought he would offer himself to be the Earl's page. When the Earl saw that he was a smart-looking lad, and heard the quick replies which he made to his questions, he took him into his service; so at once they all went on board. On their way the ship stopped a short time at the port of Venice, where Fortunatus saw many strange things, which made him wish still more to travel, and taught him much that he did not know before.

Soon after this they came to Flanders; and they had not been long on shore, before the Earl, his master, was married to the daughter of the Duke of Cleves. The wedding was kept with all sorts of public feasting, and games on horseback, called tilts, which lasted many days; and, among the rest, the Earl's lady gave two jewels as prizes to be played for, each of them the value of a hundred crowns. One of them was won by Fortunatus, and the other by Timothy, a servant of the Duke of Burgundy; who afterwards ran another tilt with Fortunatus, so that the winner was to have both the jewels. So they tilted, and, at the fourth course, Fortunatus

hoisted Timothy a full spear's length from his horse, and thus won both the jewels, which pleased the Earl and Countess so much that they praised Fortunatus, and thought better of him than ever. At this time, also, Fortunatus had many rich presents given him by the lords and ladies of the court. But the high favour shown him made his fellow-servants jealous, and one, named Robert, who had always pretended a great friendship for Fortunatus, made him believe that for all his seeming kindness, the Earl, in secret, envied him his great skill in tilting. Robert said, too, that he had heard the Earl give private orders to one of his servants to find some way of killing him next day, while they should all be out hunting.

Fortunatus thanked the wicked Robert for what he thought a great kindness; and the next day, at daybreak, he took the swiftest horse in the Earl's stables, and left the country. When the Earl heard that Fortunatus had gone away in a hurry, he was much surprised, and asked all his servants what they knew about the matter, but they all denied knowing anything of it, or why he had left them. The Earl then said, "Fortunatus was a lad for whom I had a great esteem; I am sure some of you must have given him an affront; if I discover it, I shall not fail to punish the guilty person." In the meantime, Fortunatus, when he found himself out of the Earl's country, stopped at an inn to refresh himself, and began to reckon how much he had about him. He took out all his fine clothes and jewels, and could not help putting them on. He then looked at himself in the glass, and thought that, to be sure, he was quite a fine smart fellow. Next he took out his purse, and counted the money that had been given him by the lords and ladies of the Earl's court. He found that in all he had five hundred crowns; so he bought a horse, and took care to send back the one that he had taken from the Earl's stable.

He then set off for Calais, crossed the Channel, landed safely at Dover, and went on to London, where he soon made his way into genteel company, and had once the honour to dance with the daughter of a Duke at the Lord Mayor's ball. This sort of life, as anybody may well think, soon made away with his little stock of money. When Fortunatus found that he had not a penny left, he began to think of going back again to France, and soon after went on board a ship bound to Picardy. He landed in that country, but finding no employment he set off for Brittany, when he lost his way in crossing a wood, and was forced to stay in it all night. The next morning he was little better off, for he could find no path. So he walked about from one part of the wood to another, till at last, on the evening of the second day, he saw a spring, at which he drank very heartily; but still he had nothing to eat, and was ready to die with hunger. When night came on, he heard the growling of wild beasts, so he climbed up a high tree for safety, and he had hardly seated himself in it, before a lion walked fiercely up to the spring to drink. This made him very much afraid. When the lion had gone away, a bear came to drink also; and, as the moon shone very bright, the bear looked up, and saw Fortunatus, and straightway began to climb up the tree to get at him.

Fortunatus drew his sword, and sat quiet till the bear was come within arm's length; and then he ran him through the body. This drove the bear so very savage, that he made a great spring to get at him; but the bough broke, and down he fell, and lay sprawling and howling on the ground. Fortunatus now looked around on all sides; and as he saw no more wild beasts near, he thought this would be a good time to get rid of the bear at once; so down he came, and killed him at a single blow. Being almost starved for want of food, the poor youth stooped down, and was going to suck the blood of the bear; but looking round once more, to see if any wild beasts were coming, he on a sudden beheld a beautiful lady standing by his

side, with a bandage over her eyes, leaning upon a wheel, and looking as if she were going to speak, which she soon did, in these words: "Know, young man, that my name is Fortune; I have the power to bestow wisdom, strength, riches, health, beauty, and long life; one of these I am willing to grant you—choose for yourself which it shall be."

Fortunatus was not a moment before he answered: "Good lady, I wish to have riches in such plenty that I may never again know what it is to be so hungry as I now find myself." The lady then gave him a purse, and told him that in all the countries where he might happen to be, he need only put his hand into the purse as often as he pleased, and he would be sure to find in it ten pieces of gold; that the purse should never fail of yielding the same sum as long as it was kept by him and his children; but that when he and his children should be dead, then the purse would lose its power.

Fortunatus now did not know what to do with himself for joy, and began to thank the lady very much; but she told him that he had better think of making his way out of the wood. She then directed him which path to take, and bade him farewell. He walked by the light of the moon, as fast as his weakness and fatigue would let him, till he came near an inn. But before he went into it, he thought it would be best to see whether the Lady Fortune had been as good as her word; so he put his hand into his purse, and to his great joy he counted ten pieces of gold. Having nothing to fear, Fortunatus walked boldly up to the inn, and called for the best supper they could get ready in a minute; "For," said he, "I must wait till tomorrow before I am very nice. I am so hungry now, that almost anything will do." Fortunatus very soon ate quite enough, and then called for every sort of wine in the house, and drank his fill. After supper, he began to think what sort of life he should lead; "For," said he to himself, "I shall now have money enough for everything I can desire." He slept that night in the very best bed in the house, and the next day he ordered the finest victuals of all kinds. When he rang his bell, all the waiters tried who should run the fastest, to ask him what he pleased to want; and the landlord himself, hearing what a noble guest was come to his house, took care to be standing at the door to bow to him when he should be passing out.

Fortunatus asked the landlord whether any fine horses could be got near at hand; also, if he knew of some smart-looking, clever men-servants who wanted places. By chance the landlord was able to provide him with both. As he had now got everything he wanted, he set out on the finest horse that was ever seen, with two servants, for the nearest town. There he bought some grand suits of clothes, put his two servants into liveries laced with gold, and they went on to Paris. Here he took the best house that was to be had, and lived in great pomp. He invited the nobility, and gave grand balls to all the most beautiful ladies of the court. He went to all public places of amusement, and the first lords in the country invited him to their houses. He had lived in this manner for about a year, when he began to think of going to Famagosta to visit his parents, whom he had left very poor. "But," thought Fortunatus, "as I am young and have not seen much of the world, I should like to meet with some person of more knowledge than I have, who would make my journey both useful and pleasing to me." Soon after this he met with an old gentleman, called Loch-Fitty, who was a native of Scotland, and had left a wife and ten children a great many years ago, in hopes to better his fortune; but now, owing to many accidents, was poorer than ever, and had not money enough to take him back to his family.

When Loch-Fitty found how much Fortunatus wished to obtain knowledge, he told him many of the strange adventures he had met with, and gave him an account of all the countries he had been in, as well as of the customs, dress, and manners of the people. Fortunatus thought to himself, "This is the very man I stand in need of;" so at once he made him a good offer, which the old gentleman agreed to, but made the bargain that he might first go and visit his family. Fortunatus told him that he should. "And," said he, "as I am a little tired of being always in the midst of such noisy pleasures as we find at Paris, I will, with your leave, go with you to Scotland, and see your wife and children." They get out the very next day, and came safe to the house of Loch-Fitty; and in all the journey, Fortunatus did not once wish to change his kind companion for all the pleasures and grandeur he had left behind. Loch-Fitty kissed his wife and children, five of whom were daughters, and the most beautiful creatures that were ever beheld. When they were seated, his wife said to him, "Ah! dear Lord Loch-Fitty, how happy I am to see you once again! Now, I hope we shall enjoy each other's company for the rest of our lives. What though we are poor! We will be content if you will but promise not to think of leaving us again to get riches, only because we have a noble title."

Fortunatus heard this with great surprise. "What!" said he, "are you a lord? Then you shall be a rich lord too. And that you may not think I lay you under any burden in the fortune I shall give you, I will put it in your power to make me your debtor instead. Give me your youngest daughter, Cassandra, for a wife, and accompany us as far as Famagosta, and take all your family with you, that you may have pleasant company on your way back, when you have rested in that place from your fatigue."

Lord Loch-Fitty shed some tears of joy to think he should at last see his family again raised to all the honours which it had once enjoyed. He gladly agreed to the marriage of Fortunatus with his daughter Cassandra, and then told him the reasons that had forced him to drop his title and live poor at Paris. When Lord Loch-Fitty had ended his story, they agreed that the very next morning the Lady Cassandra should be asked to accept the hand of Fortunatus; and that, if she should consent, they would set sail in a few days for Famagosta. The next morning the offer was made to her, as had been agreed on, and Fortunatus had the pleasure of hearing from the lips of the beautiful Cassandra, that the very first time she cast her eyes on him she thought him the most handsome gentleman in the world.

Everything was soon ready for them to set out on the journey. Fortunatus, Lord Loch-Fitty, his lady, and their ten children, then set sail in a large ship: they had a good voyage, and landed safe at the port of Famagosta. There, however, Fortunatus found, with great grief and self-reproach, that his father and mother were both dead. However, as he was an easy-tempered gentleman, and had his betrothed Cassandra and her whole family to reconcile him to his grief, it did not last very long; the wedding took place almost immediately; so they lived all together in Famagosta, and in very great style. By the end of the first year, the Lady Cassandra had a little son, who was christened Ampedo; and the next year another, who was christened Andolucia. For twelve years Fortunatus lived a very happy life with his wife and children, and his wife's kindred; and as each of her sisters had a fortune given her from the purse of Fortunatus, they soon married very well. But by this time he began to long to travel again; and he thought, as he was now so much older and wiser than when he was at Paris, he might go by himself, for Lord Loch-Fitty was at this time too old to bear fatigue. After he

had, with great trouble, got the consent of the Lady Cassandra, and made her a promise to stay away only two years, he made all things ready for his journey; and taking his lady into one of his private rooms, he showed her three chests of gold. He told her to keep one of these for herself, and take charge of the other two for their sons, in case any evil should happen to him. He then led her back to the room where the whole family were sitting, embraced them all tenderly one by one, and set sail with a fair wind for Alexandria.

When Fortunatus came to this place, he was told it was the custom to make a handsome present to the sultan; so he sent him a piece of plate that cost five thousand pounds. The sultan was so much pleased with this, that he ordered a hundred casks of spices to be given to Fortunatus in return. Fortunatus sent these straight to the Lady Cassandra, with the most tender letters, by the same ship that brought him, which was then going back to Famagosta. Having stated that he wished to travel through his country by land, he obtained from the sultan such passports and letters as he might stand in need of, to the other princes in those parts. He then bought a camel, hired proper servants, and set off on his travels. He went through Turkey, Persia, and from thence to Carthage; he next went into the country of Prester John, who rides upon a white elephant, and has kings to wait on him. Fortunatus made him some rich presents, and went on to Calcutta; and, in coming back, he took Jerusalem in the way, and so came again to Alexandria, where he had the good fortune to find the same ship that had brought him, and to learn from the captain that his wife and family were all in perfect health. The first thing he did was to pay a visit to his old friend the sultan, to whom he again made a handsome present, and was invited to dine at his palace. After dinner, the sultan said: "It must be vastly amusing, Fortunatus, to hear an account of all the places you have seen; pray favour me with a history of your travels." Fortunatus did as he was desired, and pleased the sultan very much by telling him the many odd adventures he had met with; and, above all, the manner of his first becoming known to the Lord Loch-Fitty, and the desire of that lord to maintain the honours of his family. When he had ended, the sultan said he was greatly pleased with what he had heard, but that he possessed a more curious thing than any Fortunatus had told him of. He then led him into a room almost filled with jewels, opened a large closet, and took out a cap, which he said was of greater value than all the rest. Fortunatus thought the sultan was joking, and told him he had seen many a better cap than that. "Ah!" said the sultan, "that is because you do not know its value. Whoever puts this cap on his head, and wishes to be in any part of the world, will find himself there in a moment."

"Indeed!" said Fortunatus; "and pray, is the man living who made it?"

"I know nothing about that," said the sultan.

"One would hardly believe it," said Fortunatus. "Pray, sir, is it very heavy?"

"Not at all," replied the sultan; "you may feel it."

Fortunatus took up the cap, put it on his head, and could not help wishing himself on board the ship that was going back to Famagosta. In less than a moment he was carried on board of her, just as she was ready to sail; and there being a brisk gale, they were out of sight in half an hour, before the sultan had even time to repent of his folly for letting Fortunatus try the

cap on his head. The ship came safe to Famagosta, after a happy passage, and Fortunatus found his wife and children well; but Lord Loch-Fitty and his lady had died of old age, and were buried in the same grave.

Fortunatus now began to take great pleasure in teaching his two boys all sorts of useful learning, and also such manly sports as wrestling and tilting. Now and then he thought about the curious cap which had brought him home, and then would wish he could just take a peep at what was passing in other countries; which wish was always fulfilled: but he never stayed there more than an hour or two, so that the Lady Cassandra did not miss him, and was no longer made uneasy by his love of travelling.

At last, Fortunatus began to grow old, and the Lady Cassandra fell sick and died. The loss of her caused him so much grief, that soon after he fell sick too. As he thought he had not long to live, he called his two sons to his bedside, and told them the secrets of the purse and the cap, which he begged they would not, on any account, make known to others. "Follow my example," said he: "I have had the purse these forty years, and no living person knew from what source I obtained my riches." He then told them to make use of the purse between them, and to live together in friendship; and embracing them, died soon after. Fortunatus was buried with great pomp by the side of Lady Cassandra, in his own chapel, and was for a long time mourned by the people of Famagosta.

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