# The fairies of Caragonan

Once upon a time a lot of fairies lived in Mona.One day the queen fairy's daughter, who was now fifteen years of age, told her mother she wished to go out and see the world.The queen consented, allowing her to go for a day, and to change from a fairy to a bird, or from a bird to a fairy, as she wished.When she returned one night she said:"I've been to a gentleman's house, and as I stood listening, I heard the gentleman was witched: he was very ill, and crying out with pain.""Oh, I must look into that," said the queen.So the next day she went through her process and found that he was bewitched by an old witch. So the following day she set out with six other fairies, and when they came to the gentleman's house she found he was very ill.Going into the room, bearing a small blue pot they had brought with them, the queen asked him:"Would you like to be cured?""Oh, bless you; yes, indeed."Whereupon the queen put the little blue pot of perfume on the centre of the table, and lit it, when the room was instantly filled with the most delicious odour.Whilst the perfume was burning, the six fairies formed in line behind her, and she leading, they walked round the table three times, chanting in chorus: "Round and round three times three, We have come to cure thee."At the end of the third round she touched the burning perfume with her wand, and then touched the gentleman on the head, saying:"Be thou made whole."No sooner had she said the words than he jumped up hale and hearty, and said:"Oh, dear queen, what shall I do for you? I'll do anything you wish.""Money I do not wish for," said the queen, "but there's a little plot of ground on the sea-cliff I want you to lend me, for I wish to make a ring there, and the grass will die when I make the ring. Then I want you to build three walls round the ring, but leave the sea-side open, so that we may be able to come and go easily.""With the greatest of pleasure," said the gentleman; and he built the three stone walls at once, at the spot indicated.II.Near the gentleman lived the old witch, and she had the power of turning at will into a hare. The gentleman was a great hare hunter, but the hounds could never catch this hare; it always disappeared in a mill, running between the wings and jumping in at an open window, though they stationed two men and a dog at the spot, when it immediately turned into the old witch. And the old miller never suspected, for the old woman used to take him a peck of corn to grind a few days before any hunt, telling him she would call for it on the afternoon of the day of the hunt. So that when she arrived she was expected.One day she had been taunting the gentleman as he returned from a hunt, that he could never catch the hare, and he struck her with his whip, saying "Get away, you witchcraft!"Whereupon she witched him, and he fell ill, and was cured as we have seen.When he got well he watched the old witch, and saw she often visited the house of an old miser who lived near by with his beautiful niece. Now all the people in the village touched their hats most respectfully to this old miser, for they knew he had dealings with the witch, and they were as much afraid of him as of her; but everyone loved the miser's kind and beautiful niece.III.When the fairies got home the queen told her daughter:"I have no power over the old witch for twelve months from to-day, and then I have no power over her life. She must lose that by the arm of a man."So the next day the daughter was sent out again to see whether she could find a person suited to that purpose.In the village lived a small crofter, who was afraid of nothing; he was the boldest man thereabouts; and one day he passed the miser without saluting him. The old fellow went off at once and told the witch."Oh, I'll settle his cows to-night!" said she, and they were taken sick, and gave no milk that night.The fairy's daughter arrived at his croft-yard after the cows were taken ill, and she heard him say to his son, a bright lad:"It must be the old witch!"When she heard this, she sent him to the queen.So next day the fairy queen took six fairies and went to the croft, taking her blue pot of perfume. When she got there she asked the crofter if he would like his cows cured?"God bless you, yes!" he said.The queen made him bring a round table into the yard, whereon she placed the blue pot of perfume, and having lit it, as before, they formed in line and walked round thrice, chanting the words: "Round and round three times three, We have come to cure thee."Then she dipped the end of her wand into the perfume, and touched the cows on the forehead, saying to each one:"Be thou whole."Whereupon they jumped up cured.The little farmer was overjoyed, and cried:"Oh, what can I do for you? What can I do for you?""Money I care not for," said the queen, "all I want is your son to avenge you and me."The lad jumped up and said:"What I can do I'll do it for you, my lady fairy."She told him to be at the walled plot the following day at noon, and left.IV.The next day at noon, the queen and her daughter and three hundred other fairies came up the cliff to the green grass plot, and they carried a pole, and a tape, and a mirror. When they reached the plot they planted the pole in the ground, and hung the mirror on the pole. The queen took the tape, which measured ten yards and was fastened to the top of the pole, and walked round in a circle, and wherever she set her feet the grass withered and died. Then the fairies followed up behind the queen, and each fairy carried a harebell in her left-hand, and a little blue cup of burning perfume in her right. When they had formed up the queen called the lad to her side, and told him to walk by her throughout. They then started off, all singing in chorus: "Round and round three times three, Tell me what you see."When they finished the first round, the queen and lad stopped before the mirror, and she asked the lad what he saw? "I see, I see, the mirror tells me, It is the witch that I see,"said the lad. So they marched round again, singing the same words as before, and when they stopped a second time before the mirror the queen again asked him what he saw? "I see, I see, the mirror tells me, It is a hare that I see,"said the lad.A third time the ceremony and question were repeated. "I see, I see, the mirror tells me, The hares run up the hill to the mill.""Now", said the queen, "there is to be a hare-hunting this day week; be at the mill at noon, and I will meet you there."And then the fairies, pole, mirror, and all, vanished and only the empty ring on the green was left.V.Upon the appointed day the lad went to his tryst, and at noon the Fairy Queen appeared, and gave him a sling, and a smooth pebble from the beach, saying:"I have blessed your arms, and I have blessed the sling and the stone. "Now as the clock strikes three, Go up the hill near the mill, And in the ring stand still Till you hear the click of the mill. Then with thy arm, with power and might, You shall strike and smite The devil of a witch called Jezabel light, And you shall see an awful sight."The lad did as he was bidden, and presently he heard the huntsman's horn and the hue and cry, and saw the hare running down the opposite hill-side, where the hounds seemed to gain on her, but as she breasted the hill on which he stood she gained on them. As she came towards the mill he threw his stone, and it lodged in her skull, and when he ran up he found he had killed the old witch. As the huntsmen came up they crowded round him, and praised him; and then they fastened the witch's body to a horse by ropes, and dragged her to the bottom of the valley, where they buried her in a ditch. That night, when the miser heard of her death, he dropped down dead on the spot.As the lad was going home the queen appeared to him, and told him to be at the ring the following day at noon.VI.Next day all the fairies came with the pole and mirror, each carrying a harebell in her left-hand, and a blue cup of burning perfume in her right, and they formed up as before, the lad walking beside the queen. They marched round and repeated the old words, when the queen stopped before the mirror, and said:"What do you see?" "I see, I see, the mirror tells me, It is an old plate-cupboard that I see."A second time they went round, and the question, was repeated. "I see, I see, the mirror tells me, The back is turned to me."A third time was the ceremony fulfilled, and the lad answered "I see, I see, the mirror tells me, A spring-door is open to me.""Buy that plate-cupboard at the miser's sale," said the queen, and she and her companions disappeared as before.VII.Upon the day of the sale all the things were brought out in the road, and the plate-cupboard was put up, the lad recognising it and bidding up for it till it was sold to him. When he had paid for it he took it home in a cart, and when he got in and examined it, he found the secret drawer behind was full of gold. The following week the house and land, thirty acres, was put up for sale, and the lad bought both, and married the miser's niece, and they lived happily till they died.

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