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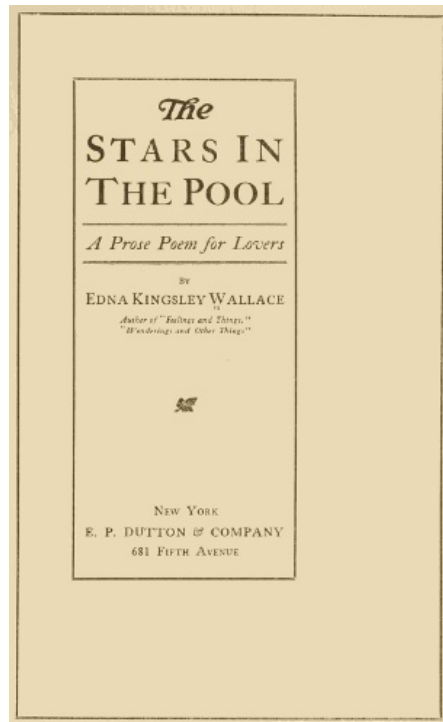
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THE STARS IN THE POOL



The STARS IN THE POOL

A Prose Poem for Lovers

BY

EDNA KINGSLEY WALLACE

*Author of "Feelings and Things,"
"Wonderings and other Things"*

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The Stars in the Pool

I.

The Castle



QIDMOST of a forest of weaving lights and shadows, of dreaming winds, and fragrance wandering, there stood a great white castle, fair, and gleaming in the sun. Massive it was, yet high as well, so that it caught all colours of the dawn and sunset, like unto some peak of snow, remote from men.

*Good King
Telwyn*

Within the castle dwelt the good King Telwyn, lord of all that forest realm, wherein at whiles were clearings, with orchards and vineyards, and fields of all manner of grain good for man and beast. And with the King was Ellaline, the Queen, beloved and beautiful, and mother of Roseheart, whom Telwyn her father, old and wise, knew for the tenderest thought of God in woman form.

*The Beauty of
Roseheart*

Fair as the dawn was Roseheart, and about her a freshness like that of babes. There was in her hair the ruddiness of tried gold, spun into a web to catch the sun. Like the sky in the East at twilight were her eyes, and the dark brows thereof as a flight of bird's wings. The mouth of her was crimson, and fresh, and young, and curved so tenderly withal, that none looking upon her might fail to love her with the love that leaps into the heart for all young things of fair seeming and promise.

The Isle of Lokus

Now upon a day came overseas to Telwyn's realm one like a young god invincible, Flame, son of Lokus, lord of a far island, wherein were fiery mountains having their roots in the sea. It was a land of wondrous beauty, but they that dwelt therein, rich though they were, for that the land was exceeding fertile, yielding in fullest measure the fruits of the earth, yet dwelt ever in danger betwixt the mountains and the sea. For there had been times when living fire had rolled down the mountains, and the earth had been shaken mightily, and the sea, in a huge wall of emerald, had fallen upon the land and overwhelmed it. And Lokus, giving thought to these things, had deep desire that the son of his heart should escape these dangers, and live out his years in peace and happiness. And for that the youth was ever of the mind to fashion of the clay of the earth whatsoever things he saw, and might in nowise be withheld from the cunning of his hands, it came into the mind of Lokus that it were poor kindness to the child of his love to constrain him to courts and statecraft. For Lokus remembered his own youth, and the struggle thereof, when that his father had denied him the life of his own gift, which, darkling long, now sought in the son of his body and spirit its life to the glory of God.

*Lokus
Remembereth his
Youth*

*The Gifts of
Flame*

Wherefore Lokus had called his son to him, and had bidden him to go straitly to the friend of his own youth, the wise King Telwyn, who would teach him somewhat of life and living in the great world. But more than for the ways and wit of men did Flame have thought for all things beautiful in form. Right well he loved to liven clay to semblance of young maids and children, mothers, and old men wise with living. Ever into their faces he put somewhat no other man might see in them. At whiles, shapes of beauty like to nought that he had seen swam before his vision, but swiftly they faded, and he rubbed his eyes, and looked as he were silly. Wherefore men called him Dreamer. Yet with all this had he little thought for what the Lord God had meant in the making of the world, being well content in this his youth that by the instinct of his fingers, and no thought withal, he could please the good folk with happy likeness of themselves. Tall and straight was Flame, with hair like fire seen through smoke, and with skin like ripe olives in the light of the going sun. Firm his mouth, and his brow both high and wide. In his eyes were all the changing lights and colours of the sea. And it was as if the salt sea were in his blood, so that when he flamed in the wont of youth and joy, it seemed like driftwood burning, leaping, flowering, in all the colours known of men.

*Flame and the
Salt Sea*

The Birth of Love

And Flame, son of Lokus, looking upon the Princess Roseheart, drew one great breath, and loved her with the love of a man's heart. And Roseheart, when she looked into the eyes of Flame, and his heart therein, knew him for her lord, and loved him wholly.

Wherewith, Telwyn the King, her father, seeing these things, pondered the youth, and

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when he had questioned him straitly, was in nowise loath that the thing should be. For Telwyn was a wise man and discerning, and found Flame a goodly youth, and nought against him for an husband to the Princess, his daughter. Then was their troth plighted, yet were they over young to wed, and Telwyn the King spake plain words to Flame, that it were well he should prove himself in some wise ere he should claim for bride the Princess Roseheart.

II.

The Pool



OW some way from the castle, deep in the forest, was set a Pool, so deep and still that in its depths was imaged all that bent above its brim—the fluttering leaves, and long-stemmed flowers, the flashing flight of birds, and white-winged argosies of cloud. And so shadowed it was, and so deep beyond depth, that he who looked as far as he might could see the stars of heaven mirrored therein.

*The Faces of
Love*

Daylong did Flame feed the hunger of his eyes on the beauty of his beloved, as clad in kirtle of forest-green, girt with gold, she knelt at the edge of the Pool, or laughing, chased the butterflies, to woo them to her lips and hair. At whiles deep quiet came upon them as they bent above the Pool, seeing nought of all it held save only the two faces of love that looked therein.

*Earthlove Sprite
Invisible*

Upon a day at the hour of golden noon, when all the land swam in a haze of beauty, a flickering brightness came and passed, when Earthlove, sprite invisible, touched with his lips these twain, and with a lilt of laughter rode away athwart a sunbeam. Thereafter did Flame kiss Roseheart long, upon the mouth, and trembling, gazed into her eyes that were like still pools, wherein was nought save his own image, more beautiful than life. And Flame's heart swelled within him, lordly-wise, for that he dwelt so in the eyes and the heart of his beloved. And in the eyes of Flame was nought save Roseheart imaged, but swaying as it were on a surging wave wherethrough ran all the changing lights and colours of the sea.

*The Old Gray
Woman*

But when it was some while since these things had befallen, the dusk was come, all suddenly, and there passed strangely over the Pool a shivering, and from it rose a mist that hid it. The heart of Flame was troubled, and lifting his eyes to see what was toward, he saw before him momentarily a figure of sorrow, Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, whose eyes were as misty pools at twilight, her hair as cobwebs matted, and her garments as the wings of the dusk. Yet upon her, nathless, was a wistful beauty as of moonlight, wherein were all things wondrous.

Of Sorrow

"Behold!" said Flame in wonder to the maid Roseheart, but she was in fear of somewhat that was as a thing known and not known, and would not look, but turned her face to his breast. And Flame spoke unto the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, saying, "Gray One, I pray thee, what wouldst thou?"

She answered, and her voice was as the winds of autumn, through bare branches: "I am Sorrow, and the Way of Destiny, and the Shadow of Things to be. The flower fadeth, and the flesh falleth away as a garment, but the seed and the soul shall not perish, except the seed fall on barren ground, and the soul feed upon the body alone. Ponder ye these things in your hearts." And in a breath she was gone, leaving upon them a chill as of the winter death.

*The Way of
Destiny*

Wherefore was Flame of grievous mind for that he did not understand these things. And Roseheart clung to him weeping, the while he gave her such sweet comfort as he might. Long he looked upon her in wonder, at the spun gold of her hair, the white shining about her brows, her deep, still eyes wherein was nought but his image, her mouth fashioned to joy and love, and her slender body, curving to the grace of womanhood. And once again Earthlove, sprite invisible, touched him, and stung him, and his heart surged with love of the maid, and his man's desire grew great within him.

*Earthlove Once
More*

She stirred, and looked into his eyes, and shrank away, for therein was that which affrighted the peace of her soul. Looking, she saw not only her fair face, but her whole white body, drifting in the sea-surge of his eyes, wherein were all the changing lights and colours of the sea.

*Sea-Surge and
Fire-Bloom*

And the soul of Roseheart was faint with the far music of the sea-surge that was the soul of Flame. Yet being but a young maid, she was in fear also, saying, "Flame! Thou dishonourest me!" and freed herself, and sped away fleetly.

And upon the youth was shame, but a new strength therewith, so that he refrained him from following her, and cast himself upon the ground and wept, for that he had affrighted the innocence of Roseheart whom his soul loved. And a great cry for succor grew in him, and he prayed full heartily to the Lord God that He would show him His will.

*Senta the
Radiant One*

Thereafter, feeling a presence, he looked up, and his eyes were blinded with a great light, and he covered his eyes, and bowed his head. Before him, in garments more shining than the noonday sun, stood Senta, the Radiant One. She spake, and her voice had the beauty of the sea in storm, when sudden sunlight, flaming from the West, gives rainbow colours to the flying foam: "Hearken, Flame, to the voice of Vision, which the Lord God put into thy soul when thou wast born. From this day forth shalt thou rest not, but follow thy dream through all the earth and across the seas. At the last shalt thou find that thou seekest, for so is it written, but thou shalt not know the manner of thy finding, nor may I tell thee. Sleep."

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The Vision

And upon Flame came sleep as the sleep of the sea at sunrise, midmost of the summer, whenas the glory of the sky is a great magic in the sea, swinging as a censer to and fro, that the Lord God may be honoured of the wonders He hath made. Now the dream of Flame was a dream of womanhood—of women beautiful as dawn or flowers, of women whose fair seeming covered evil, women good and women false, maids and mothers and harlots, drifting, thronging, clamouring, praying, fawning, passing—until at last came one clad in shining garments, fashioned full seemly, of white silk that flowed and clung, revealing gracious lines of her form who walked stately-wise, with little children about her knees. And Flame saw that her form was radiance, and her eyes were stars, but he might not discern the fashion of her face for the light thereof. And he was sore troubled that the seeming of her face was withholden from him, for he knew in his soul that he had somewhat to do with her.

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*The Woman of
Radiance*

Came once more the voice of Senta the Radiant One: "Flame, Maker of Images, attend my words. This woman shalt thou seek throughout the world, forasmuch as she is the dream of dreams in thy soul. In the fullness of thy manhood shalt thou fashion her in pure marble, and she shall be called Mother of Men. As for thee, thou shalt be called the Giver of Dreams. Awake."

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Mother of Men

And Senta the Radiant One, passing, gathered to her breast with one swift motion the sprite Earthlove, that had revealed to her Flame and Roseheart in their need to be taught the wisdom of life which they knew not.

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*Senta Taketh
Earthlove*



ND when that Senta had taken Earthlove unto herself, and had passed, the evening was come, and there were stars a-many in the depths of Pool. Therewith, looking upon them, a great peace came upon Flame, and being weary, he laid himself down that he might sleep and be refreshed. And as he slept, he dreamed of that woman whose form was radiance, and whose eyes were stars. And his fingers stirred, and sought to fashion out of the earth her form of beauty; but all crumbled under his touch, and he might not.

*Dreams and
Awakening*

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*The Queen and
her Women*

When the morning was come, and upon all things lay new freshness as of the world's beginning, the youth Flame arose and stripped him, and plunged his body in the Pool that sleep might be shaken from him. Whereafter he got him to the castle, and when that he had stayed his hunger with bread and new milk, asked that he might have speech with his troth-plight, the Princess Roseheart. Then a serving-man led him through many halls to a great room wherein with their women sat Roseheart and the Queen her mother.

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*Beauty Added
unto Beauty*

And there, in seemly raiment of soft colours, crimson, and the brown of old wood, and fresh green, the women sat before their looms, and their frames wherein rich broidery grew under their white fingers. And over all was sunlight, a flickering whereof was made by blown vines without the casements, which were open to the morn. There was the whisper of silk, and much babble of talk, after the fashion of women working. Shuttles flew in the looms, and white arms wondrous fair in motion drew forth long silken threads, being wrought into fine stuffs, to the end that beauty might be added unto beauty.

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*Roseheart is
Troubled*

Queen Ellaline sat very still in the midst of these her women. Of delicate fashion she was, and gentle. Her eyes were widely set, and blue, and mother-sweet, and her hair was silvering with the caress of the years. And she was sad in the midst of sunshine, forasmuch as she was troubled at the mien of the maid, her daughter, who sat with drooping head and still hands. And in good sooth, the heart of the Princess was heavy within her, and no little in fear. Nightlong had she seen the vision of Flame, in whose eyes like the sea lay her white body floating. Never before since he had loved her had she seen aught but her soul's self therein, and she was troubled.

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And now Flame, son of Lokus, lord of that far isle of sea-surge and fire-bloom, entered in courtly wise this room of work and idleness, of gayety and gossip, and of love perplexed. In reverent greeting did he kiss the hand of Queen Ellaline; then turning him to the Princess Roseheart, he took both of her white hands in his, seeking to look into her eyes. And soon,

*Roseheart is
Troubled*

for her love of him she might not refrain, and bravely gave them to his seeing. And for that she was shamefast, in the way of a maid, she looked as one that saw not. But in the eyes of Roseheart, he who loved her saw as he was wont only the image and seeming of himself. And he was sorrowful therewith, forasmuch as he had thought mayhap to find in the eyes of his love the twin stars of the woman of his dream. But the thing was not. And remembering the Radiant One, and the things that she had said, he knew that, will-he, nill-he, he must fare forth in quest of that woman whose form was radiance, and whose eyes were stars—her from whom he should fashion his Mother of Men.

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Mother of Men

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Then spake Ellaline, the Queen, with quiet voice, saying, "What wouldst thou, Flame, son of Lokus? My daughter Roseheart hath seeming of some ill-hap with which thou hast to do."

*Flame Speaketh
Plainly*

Therewith did Flame drop the hands of Roseheart his love, and standing before the Queen her mother, he spake on this wise: "I know not what this thing may be, but somewhat hath been laid upon my will, so that choice it hath none. Wherefore, though thy daughter Roseheart is as the blood of my heart to me, and fain would I take her to wife straightway, yet first must I go across the sea, and through all the earth, until I find a certain woman whose form is radiance and whose eyes are stars, that I may fashion of her in pure marble a Mother of Men that shall fulfill the dream of my soul. Not of my willing is this thing laid upon me. But the Lord God when I was born put into my soul the vision, and into my hands the cunning to fashion the shape of my vision. Therefore must I go, and abide the will of the Lord God lest He destroy me. Whether I shall return I know not, for many will be the perils of the way, but in my heart meseems I know that I shall return and take to wife the maid Roseheart, whom in all honour I love and cherish."

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*The Pain of
Roseheart*

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Hearing these words at the last, Roseheart found somewhat of courage beyond that she had had, and looked into the eyes of Flame. Therein was no longer her own white body, as she had feared to see, but the noble form of a woman whose white silken draperies flowed and clung, whose form was radiance, and whose eyes were stars. With her were little children. And Roseheart, gazing, beheld the form of radiance, and the faces of the children, as somewhat known, and not known, and in her heart was a white stillness, and no anger that Flame would leave her to seek this woman, but only the pain of longing, and a meekness like that of Mary, the Blessed Mother.

A White Stillness

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*Flame, His
Farewell*

Flame, pitiful of the still sorrow of Roseheart, clasped her to his breast, and kissed her thrice upon the forehead. But the Lure of the Way of Life was upon him, and turning strongly from the maid and the Queen, her mother, he said: "Good greeting must I give you, from the heart, and long farewell, for that I must be about the business the Lord God hath set me. But ere I go, I would see Telwyn, and speak with him of that I have to do."

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IV.

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*Flame, His
Farewell*



LL silently they three together sought Telwyn, the King, but now returned from the hunt, and sitting at meat with his men in the great banquet hall of the castle.

King Telwyn

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A mighty man of sorts was Telwyn. Fierce in war, yet had he also a great love of peace, of beauty, of mirth and joy, and of his food and wine. Also had he great discernment for the true things in the hearts of men. Wherefore, seeing sorrow and heaviness in the faces of the three whom he loved, who would have speech with him, he bade his men-at-arms and serving-men depart.

*The King
Pondereth*

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When that he had listened all quietly to the words of Flame, there first came anger into his heart, and a mist upon his sight, for that Roseheart, his daughter, who was as the remembered joy of his youth, should be in woe for the going from her of Flame, Son of Lokus, to follow the gleam of stars in the eyes of the woman of his dream. Yet was Telwyn proud, and would constrain no man to take unready his daughter Roseheart; and just, for that he remembered what he had said to the youth, that it were well he should prove himself somewhat ere he should take the maid in marriage. Therefore with a mighty intake of the breath, and closing the lids of his eyes, wherein were lightnings, King Telwyn spake on this wise, his voice as the voice of far thunders: "Flame, son of Lokus, thou grievest the heart of Telwyn, father of Roseheart, for that thou puttest the maid in sorrow for thy going. Yet am I a man, and know the heart of a man in youth. Fain would I give thee of the wisdom I have learned, but that may not be. In pain and struggle shalt thou come to thine own wisdom, which is for thee alone, so that no man may give it thee, but thou must win it. Yet since thou hast won a maid to her promise, it were meet that thou shouldst go thy ways carefully, bravely, and in good faith, that thou mayest return in honour.

*Telwyn
Admonisheth
Flame*

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Telwyn

I charge thee, see thou to these things lest the vengeance of Telwyn find thee out, though thou wert in the uttermost parts of the earth. Lend not thy soul to wine to make a mock of, nor to false women that they may break it. Bear thou thyself with modesty; give of thy strength and wit to whomsoever hath need of them. Cheat no man of his due in any wise,

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*Admonisheth
Flame*

remembering that so thou wouldst cheat thyself of thy birthright, which is to be one with truth and right in so far as thou canst attain thereunto. Thou art the son of Lokus, and art bound to carry his name and blood in honour. I have spoken. Farewell."

V.

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*Ellaline
Distraught*



OW was Ellaline, the Queen, fair distraught, for that she understood not her own mind in the matter. And her heart was as water with pity of the maid, and as a sting her tongue, whenas she thought of the going of Flame, for that to her seeing he had put an affront upon their house. Yet might she not speak in wrath, when Telwyn her husband had spoken in quietness. And there came upon her a trembling lest she speak, and Telwyn's displeasure come upon her.

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*Ellaline
Beholdeth Wur*

Wherefore, turning to flee away, lest speaking she do wrong, Ellaline the Queen saw some way off in the hall a figure of sorrow, Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows. And being in eld, well she wot that in the coming of Wur was sign that the Lord God was minded to send upon their house sorrow and the winds of destiny, and that not for her love and grief might these things be stayed in anywise. Wherewith she kissed the maid her daughter tenderly, as in farewell, and fled away straitly, weeping. And Roseheart was white and still.

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*The Strength of
Flame*

When Flame turned him to the Princess Roseheart, fain would she have had him kiss her upon the mouth, but he would not, seeking her brow instead, in all tenderness. And piteous was the face of the maid, that Flame whom she loved denied her. But the eyes of Telwyn marking the thing, it seemed good to him that Flame turned him from the lips of his love. Well did the King know the hearts of men, and right heartily did he hold in scorn those who had not the wit to fear such things as betray men unto weakness.

*The Going of
Flame*

Thereafter did Flame get him thence right speedily, to take ship for far countries.

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The maid Roseheart covered her eyes that she might not see the going of her beloved. And she wept full sore, and when Telwyn the King would have comforted her, Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, came unto her pitifully, and took her from the arms of her father, and folded her mantle about her, and led her away all gently. And yielding his little maid unto Wur, whom well he wot of old, the King was shaken in grief, that the thing must be and nought might stay it.

VI.

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*Roseheart and
Wur*



AYLONG and nightlong the maid clung to Wur and to none other, and the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, whose voice was like unto the winds of Autumn, made sad music of the days and ways of men. Ever she spake, telling tales of sorrow, whereunto Roseheart listened, saying in her heart, "There is no sorrow like to mine, who am a widow before I am wed."

*Roseheart Wakes
Weeping*

Yet there was, withal, in the tales of Wur, a gray beauty that melted the heart of the maid, even in despite of her own grief, to a vague and terrible longing to learn what lay at the heart of life. Nightlong did Wur watch over her, and the maid dreamed in sorrow, to wake weeping.

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The Face of Grief

So for a space was grief bitter in the maid, and grievous was the hurt of all things, for that Flame whom she loved had gone his ways from her. Then on a day, for pity of the grief wherewith she suffered, a longing grew in her to look upon the face of her sadness in the Pool in the forest. Thither she went, therefore, with Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, and leaned over the Pool in the wont of her old fashion. And as with sore pity of herself she looked into the Pool, upon the face of grief that was hers, she saw that in her eyes, which aforetime had held nought save the face of Flame, was an image that blotted out all else. Semblance it had of an image of Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, whose hair was as cobwebs matted, whose eyes were as misty pools at twilight, and whose garments were as the wings of the dusk. Yet as the maid looked more nearly, she saw that the form had only the seeming of Wur, and was in good sooth that of Roseheart herself, stricken in grief to the likeness of Wur.

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Arising in wonder she turned her to look upon Wur, and in the face of the Old Gray Woman of Shadows she saw strangely the semblance of herself, Roseheart. And at the horror and mystery of this thing which she might not understand, the maid shrieked with terror. And when the Old Gray Woman would have folded her in her arms to quiet her, the maid would not, and shrank away, and prayed for help to the Lord God that she might have comfort.

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*There Came a
Radiance*

And there came a radiance, growing ever brighter, until Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, might not stay, but fled away before that which was more shining than the noonday sun. And Roseheart was ware of a presence she might not see for the brightness.

*The Coming of
Senta*

Then spake Senta, the Radiant One, the Voice of Vision, unto the maid Roseheart, full gently, yet in the manner of one who may not be gainsaid: "Roseheart, beloved of Flame, who shall be called Giver of Dreams, lift up thy heart. Well hast thou learned the lore of sorrow that Wur hath taught thee, and these things it is needful that thou shouldst know. But too much hast thou made thyself one with sorrow, to the end that it hath grown dear to thee. This thing may not be. Pity that seeketh not itself makes pure the heart of man, but pity of thyself for thine own woe is another matter, whereto thou must look else will thy sorrow destroy thee. Thou shalt arise, therefore, and go unto thy father Telwyn the King, and thy mother, the Queen Ellaline. Sore have been their hearts that thou wert in grief. It should be thy task rather, to bring them joy who are stricken in years.

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*Vision and
Dreams*

"But since joy is not made of nought, and since there is now in thee sorrow alone, I say unto thee, go thy ways among the people of thy father the King, and of thy grief make garments of joy to cover the nakedness of the poor withal. Take to them that are sick the flowers of thy kindness, that shall be as the snowdrops blossoming under the mantle of the winter of thy grief. Look into the eyes of the old and find patience, and into the hearts of the children and find hope. Tend thou the bed of pain, and ease the woe of the sons of men in such measure as thou mayest. Therewith shall all things befall thee as the Lord God desireth. Unto me, Senta, it is vouchsafed to give thee vision, and a dream, even as I gave these things unto Flame, thy beloved. Sleep."

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The Starry-eyed

And Roseheart laid her down in the deep sleep as of a rosebud in the sun at mid-day, when life in a great tide flows and greatens, to the end that the rose may be full-blown. And the dream of Roseheart was on this wise: There was a woman in shining garments, fashioned full seemly of white silk that flowed and clung, revealing gracious lines of her form who walked stately-wise, with little children about her knees. Her form was radiance, and her eyes were stars. And in the fashion of her seeming, and in the faces of the children, was somewhat as it were a thing known and not known. Then beheld Roseheart the seeming of Flame, her beloved, looking in joy and reverence upon this woman whose form was radiance, and whose eyes were stars.

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And Senta the Radiant One said unto Roseheart: "Behold and see if this be not she whom thou didst look upon at the last in the eyes of Flame whom thou lovest." And it was so, and Roseheart marveled.

*The Heart of the
Maid*

Whereafter Senta bade her awake, and she awoke and pondered these things what they might mean. And in the heart of the maid there grew and strengthened the desire and the will to be as that woman of her dream, whose beauty was as music under the moon, and in all reverence beloved of her troth-plight, Flame. Thus are women ever, in their deep need to be in all ways that they may, the desired of their lord.

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VII.

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*Roseheart Gives
Greeting*



WHEN all things had become clear to Roseheart she arose swiftly, and went unto Telwyn the King, and the Queen her mother. And upon her face was a shining which was the shining of her soul. And she said unto them, "I give you greeting, my father and my mother."

The Going of Wur

And looking upon her they were glad exceedingly, and exchanged looks the one with the other, for that the face of Roseheart was no longer gray with grief.

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First answered Ellaline, saying, "Greeting to thee, my daughter. Where now is Wur, that thou hast the look of happiness?"

Sudden wonder made wide the eyes of Roseheart. "In good sooth I know not," she answered. "I have not seen her at all any more since the coming of the Shining One."

Telwyn the King leaned him forward in eagerness, asking, "The Shining One? What meanest thou?"

*Roseheart, Her
Task*

Into the face of Roseheart came the far, wondering look of children, but in her heart was a song. "I know not," she made answer, "unless it was an angel of the Lord God, to shew me the things that I must do, and that which I must become." Herewith the voice of the maid

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grew wondrous sweet. "Of my garment of sorrow must I make raiment of joy to cover the nakedness of the poor. To the sick must I take the flowers of kindness that are now as snowdrops blossoming under the mantle of the winter of grief. I am to look into the eyes of the old and find patience, and into the hearts of children and find hope. And I am to tend the bed of pain, and ease the suffering of the sons of men in such measure as I may, that all things may befall me as the Lord God desireth."

*Telwyn
Perceiveth*

[55]

Into the face of Telwyn there came a tenderness like that of women, and in his voice were the tears a man may not suffer in his eyes. "Great is the joy in my heart," he said, "for that thou art indeed become a woman. And well I wot that the Lord God is with thee, that thou knowest these things of wisdom."

*The Queen
Speaketh*

[56]

And Ellaline, looking into the face of her daughter, drew her to her heart, and spake on this wise: "Deep grief has it been to me that in thy pain I might not help thee, but must leave thee to the care of Wur, that woman of sorrow. Nathless have I prayed for thee without ceasing. Blessed be the name of the Lord God that He hath found the Way for thee."

*Telwyn and
Roseheart*

[57]

Now on the morrow when Telwyn the King went among his people, to see that all was well, and nought amiss that might be set right, he put Roseheart his daughter upon a white palfrey; and himself upon a mighty red horse, led her whithersoever he went, that she might see all things in the wisdom and tenderness newly come to her. And from his deep eyes like the caverns of the sky, he watched her, as pity grew in her, and knowledge, and quick device of succor. Daylong they rode, at the noontide having bite and sup with a woodcutter and his wife, newly blessed with a fine man child. And Roseheart, taking the child in her arms, laughed and wept that he was so small and sweet, and for that he clung to her, and turned to her breast. And when the shadows grew long, and they set their faces toward the castle, the maid was sore weary, but she knew it not, for the pity in her, and the thought of all awry in the world that must be set right.

*Roseheart
Steadfast*

[58]

And it befell that she dreamed that night of a babe that lay upon her breast, and so sweet it was, that she woke weeping for very joy.

Thereafter daily the maid went forth with the King her father, or at whiles with the Queen her mother, whenas she was wont to say unto Telwyn with sweet gravity, "This is a matter for women, of which thou knowest nought."

*Her Need and
Desire*

[59]

And the King smiled in his beard at the woman-ways of her. But hours there were when that Roseheart was a-weary, and an-hungered for Flame, her troth-plight lord. Yet always, remembering her dream, she arose from grief, and with the trouble of others, and what she might do for them, filled the emptiness of her heart. And so great was her need and desire to become as the woman of the great dream, that slowly as a slender moon fills with silver, or a rosebud greatens to fullness, did Roseheart the maid grow in fashion and seeming and good sooth toward the very truth of her desire, to be as that woman whose form was radiance and whose eyes were stars.

VIII.

[60]

*Thrice Bloomed
the Rose*



HRICE the snowdrops came and went, thrice bloomed the rose; thrice the harvest ripened to the scythe, and winter flushed to spring, and Flame, son of Lokus, was not yet come from overseas to claim his promise of his troth-plight maiden.

*Flame
Journeyeth*

[61]

Long had he wandered from land to land, seeking ever the shape of his dream. Ever he made forms of beauty with his hands, whatsoever he saw, and men marveled thereat, so cunning-true they were, and skillful. And everywhere was he tempted with all manner of lures to flesh and spirit that he forsake his dream and take his ease and pleasure like other men, but he would not. And it befell that on a day when he was riding through the forest, he came upon a carle that beat a woman, his wife. And Flame was wroth with the carle, and fell upon him in fury, that so he should misuse the strength that God had given him. And the anger of Flame was as the strength of ten men, but when he had the throat of the man in his fingers, and would have slain him, all suddenly his anger was not. And in good pity of the fellow that he was yet in youth, he loosed him, and admonished him, and went his ways. And the strength of the man that he had spared to God's good life was added to his own strength.

*He Groweth in
Strength*

[62]

And with his good strength of the body was come strength of his soul also. Wherefore, when in his wanderings he came upon a fair land wherein was much kindness, and after a while that land, which had an aged king, was threatened by savage men from wild forest land beyond, he girded on his sword and led the people in war that they might put to confusion the savage men who sought to slay them, and take their fat lands, and the homes where they were born. And when their enemies were driven out, the old King embraced with tears him who had risked his life for them, and besought him, saying, "Flame, son of

He Serveth Need

[63]

Lokus, what wouldst thou? Whatsoever thou ask, that will I give thee." And Flame, with a look of far horizons in his eyes that were like the sea, answered him on this wise: "God be gracious to thee for thy kindness, but it is I who am in thy debt, for that I have learned the sweetness of giving myself wholly, even unto death, if need be, that innocent folk should not suffer, nor evil prevail. I am a selfish man, thinking little enough of other folk, as I go my way dreaming, and that now I have seen somewhat other than that is a mercy of the Lord God."

He Fareth On

[64]

And though the people clamoured that he should stay with them, he went his way, and came into a new land, and dwelt there for a time. And being comely, with grace and courtliness in his mien, and the beauty of the sea in his eyes, when he looked eagerly into the faces of women, seeking his dream, many were sick with love of him. And they made devices that he should tarry with them, some in innocence and good faith, as a maid may, and some fawning, and whispering black words to the youth and heat of his blood.

Of Black Words

[65]

Of these last there came betimes a witch-woman, who discerning with cunning the eyes of Flame that they were like the sea, made herself as a moon-woman, that he should follow her. And Flame, looking upon her, whose face was as silver, felt somewhat surge within him answering her desire. And the woman glided before him until they were come into the desert.

*The Moon-
Woman*

And when the moon-woman moved not so swiftly, but lingered, and Flame would have touched her, she laughed, and would and would not, and reaching for her, he stumbled, and fell upon the ground, yet held her fast. And the night was black upon them.

[66]

When the early morning was come, Flame turned him from the moon-woman exulting that now at last he had drunk of the cup, desire whereof had tormented him. But as he turned, some way off in brightness stood Senta the Radiant One. And she drew near, and spake not, but shed her light, without pity, upon the moon-woman. And Flame saw that she was not beautiful, but a hag, and her face of silver the face of leprosy, white and horrible, and as old as the world. And he looked about him, and saw in the desert the bones of men. Then did he cry out in fear, "I am in the place of the dead!"

*The Face of
Leprosy*

[67]

And he rose up swiftly and fled away till he was come to the edge of the desert, and thence into a gentle land, of murmuring streams, and trees on the which was fruit of divers kinds, and good to the taste. And after that Flame had drunk of the waters, and eaten of the fruit, the Lord God was pitiful of his shame and weariness, and he slept.

*Cometh the
Dream*

Sleeping, once more he dreamed of that woman of radiance, starry-eyed. But whereas aforetime he might not see the fashion of her face, it was now revealed to him in the seeming of his troth-plight maiden, glorified. Now was the rose full blown, the child become a woman, in strength, and tenderness, and wisdom, and her beauty was as music under the moon. Then unto him in his dream spake the Voice of Vision on this wise: "Now that thou hast proved thyself in turning thee from the place of the dead, shalt thou have fullness of life, withal. Thou hast looked upon death in battle, and feared not, for that thou sawest therein that life which is greater than thine own life; and thou hast looked upon that life which is sin, and hast seen therein the death of the spirit. Wherefore arise, and go straightway to claim the maiden Roseheart for thy wife, that the true life of body and spirit may be fulfilled unto thee. And whatsoever thou fashionest with thy hands, that shalt thou fashion also with thy heart and soul, in the light of the vision the Lord God hath given thee. Arise."

[68]

*The Voice of
Vision*

[69]

With a great cry of joy he awoke, and strength was fulfilled to him as it had been a fountain, ever leaping and ever renewed. Wherewith straightway he arose, and girt up his mantle for the journey, that swift might be the way of his going.

*Strength
Fulfilled*

[70]

IX.

[71]

Flame Returneth



NTO the days of three moons he journeyed, over land and sea, and at last he was come into the country of Telwyn, wherein were peace, and good harvest, and labour for all that would. And while he was yet some way off, upon a hill, he saw that the people were gathered together in a great meadow, and there rose to him on the wind a great song of joy that they were singing. And drawing near he saw that some of the people were playing at games in the meadow, quoits and bowls, and other games of skill of divers kinds, with trials of strength and daring for the eager blood of youth. And there were horses a-many, and on them men laughing and jesting, and there were women and children, some hundreds, clad in fluttering garments of all the colours of joy.

*The People at
Games*

[72]

In the midst of the throng there sat upon a dais a woman in shining raiment of cloth of silver, broidered with roses that had caught their colour from the rose tint of her face. And her hair of spun gold was bound with a silver fillet, fashioned in all delicacy, and colored to

The Day of Joy

[73]

the semblance of the roses that were in the pattern thereof, with leaves cunningly wrought of green gold. Standing beside her was a young page clad in crimson who carried a tray whereon were ribbands of bright colours, the which the Princess Roseheart, for she it was in the shining raiment, did upon those who were victors in the games and contests.

*The Morning of
Life*

Great was the pride of the people that the Princess had come amongst them in their merrymaking. Long had she been with them in sorrow and service, but not before this day in the joy of the morning of life, and they deemed it of good augury for her happiness.

[74]

Cometh Flame

Now when Flame, yet some way off, saw that the woman in shining raiment was the beloved of his soul, Roseheart, his heart leapt within him, and there was upon his limbs the speed of light. But betimes it came to him that travel was upon his garments, and that it were not fit he should dishonour his troth-plight maiden by coming before her eyes in aught unworthy. Wherefore he turned him aside from the meadow, and made such haste as he might toward the castle midmost of the forest.

[75]

*Sea-Surge and
Fire-Bloom*

When he was come thither, he found therein only a few old serving men and women, for that all others were making holiday in the meadow, the King, Telwyn, and the Queen Ellaline, as well as the humblest folk in the castle.

And Flame got him right speedily to the great room that had been for his sleeping aforetime. There, as of old, was a great chest wherein were the garments he had brought with him from his home, the isle of sea-surge and fire-bloom. Therefrom he chose raiment of rich silk wherein leapt and flickered all colours as of driftwood burning—copper, and blue, and green, and rose, and violet—with a broidered cloak of velvet like clear flame. And he did on a sword the hilt whereof was wrought in divers hues of pure gold.

[76]

The Silken Tent

And when all was done, and in the wont of youth he looked upon his likeness in a mirror of silver that was there, he laughed in his heart for that he was young and comely, and for that he was now returned to the home of his heart.

Then with all speed he betook him thence to the great meadow. And when he was come thither, he saw that a little way off at the edge of the forest was a silken tent that was like a purple iris, so beautiful it was, and that thereunder were King Telwyn and Queen Ellaline, looking upon the pleasure of their people.

[77]

Of Queen Ellaline

And Flame saw that whereas the Princess Roseheart had been in the midst of the crowd when first he had seen her, she was now with her father and mother, the King and Queen, under the canopy, that had been set in a mossy glade flecked with sunlight and shadow, and glad with delicate flowers. The maid stood at the side of the Queen her mother talking shinningly of all that had befallen that morning. And the Queen Ellaline, most fair indeed to look upon, in thin silk of silver-grey, wherethrough showed under-silks of blue and violet, smiled happily at the life and eagerness of the maid her daughter.

[78]

Of Greetings

And when the people saw that Flame, the son of Lokus, was come once more, from overseas, to claim his troth-plight, the Princess Roseheart, they pressed upon him clamouring, glad with great joy that the youth was grown a man, in full stature of strength and bravery. And Flame returned their greetings in all courtesy and kindness, but ever his eyes turned whither his heart drave, toward the tent like an iris, whereunder, like one dreaming, stood the woman of his heart and his dream, now motionless, with her soul in her eyes.

[79]

*A Silver Trumpet
Singing*

And when King Telwyn made sure that the figure of flickering beauty that burned its way through the crowd of the people was Flame, son of Lokus, and none other, his heart was as a harp, swept with chords of joy and questioning, of fear, and a nameless pain that now mayhap he must give his little maid, that was as the remembered joy of his youth, to the clasp of a man, in whom should be her life thenceforward. But the heart of Queen Ellaline was as a silver trumpet singing, that the maid her daughter was now to live the life of a woman, giving her life to a man, that it should be greatened unto her, and to the world.

[80]

X.

[81]

*The Humility of
Pride*



OW when Flame was come before the King and Queen and the Princess Roseheart, he was filled with the humility of those who have great pride, insomuch that he fell upon his knees before them to beg that which aforetime he had asked as in the ignorance of a child. But ere he could speak, King Telwyn put forth his hand and raised him, saying, "Flame, son of Lokus, thou art a thousand times welcome. Hearty greeting we give thee, in good faith that thou hast returned in honour."

*The Return In
Honour*

[82]

Then spake Flame on this wise: "Greeting from the heart I give thee. Meseems my heart will burst with the fullness of my joy that I am come once more to the home of my love, to look upon her beauty, and to give into her keeping all that I have, and all that I am, for she

is the soul of my soul."

*The Eagerness of
Flame*

Then, bethinking himself that he must remember in courtesy to put before his own desires that which was due to others, he made obeisance to the Queen, Ellaline, who greeted him with kindness, asking him whether he had had food and drink since his journey.

[83]

"Nay," he said, "how should that have been, when I was so much more an-hungered to see quickly the face of my beloved?" And he turned him to his love, Roseheart, standing very still, with her soul in her eyes.

*The Woman of
Stars*

With quick woman-wit then did Queen Ellaline motion the serving men that they should draw the curtains of the tent, themselves standing without. And the King and Queen withdrew also, that the lovers might be alone. Whereupon Roseheart, her silver cloak falling from her, stood forth to Flame as that woman whose form was radiance, and whose eyes were stars, she that was clad in shining raiment, fashioned full seemly of white silk that flowed and clung, revealing gracious lines of her form, who walked stately-wise, with little children about her knees.

[84]

*Flame Falleth
Upon His Knees*

And upon the sight of Flame was a mist, and when it had passed and he looked again, the little children were not as they were living, but like wraiths of divers colours, making as it were a rainbow in the midst whereof stood one still a maid. And Flame fell upon his knees, and called upon her name. And she set her two hands upon his head, and lifting it gently, looked down into his soul. And when they had come to understanding on this wise, she gave her hands into his, and lifted him up. And he drew her to his heart, and kissed her on the mouth, wherewith she was all a woman, and clung to him, saying with little broken cries, "It hath been so lonely without thee—I love thee so!"

[85]

The Finding

Remembering the pain and struggle of his quest, Flame cried out, "Wherefore did I go from thee?" Yet even as he spake, right well he knew how it had been needful that all things should have befallen them as they had done.

[86]

Then did the face of Roseheart grow wistful-sweet, and she asked, "The woman of thy dream—didst thou find her?" And Flame answered, "Aye, I have found her. Dost thou not know? Thou thyself art that radiant woman, starry-eyed. I know not what hath befallen thee, save that the starry heavens, that look upon all things, have made thine eyes their dwelling-place."

Beyond Self

Whereupon Roseheart, his beloved, chided him on this wise, with a laughter that was of the soul, and naught unkind in it: "My happiness is so deep, I needs must laugh at thee. Meseems the truth is that aforetime thou sawest only thyself in mine eyes, and that now thou hast learned to look beyond thyself. And thus it hath been with me also. Once I saw not anything but myself in thine eyes, but now therein I see ships and far countries, and the forms of beauty that thou hast dreamed, and those which thou shalt create in the years to come. When first I saw in thine eyes that woman of thy dream, of whom thou hadst spoken, sorrow and humility were heavy upon me, for that I understood not why there should be aught in thine eyes but thy love, Roseheart. But there came a time—" She was silent for a moment that she might hear the music of the remembered vision. "Have I grown like her—in good sooth?" she whispered.

[87]

*The
Remembered
Vision*

[88]

"Thou art she," answered Flame, "the soul of my soul."

"And what of thee?" whispered Roseheart. "What hast thou learned of life in thy far countries?"

*The Feast is
Spread*

Whereupon he answered, as the Voice of Vision had told him, "I have looked upon death for right's sake, and seen therein the life greater than mine own life; and I have looked upon the life which is sin and have seen therein the death of the spirit. I have much to tell thee, for that there must be nought but truth between us."

[89]

Then did King Telwyn himself draw the curtains of the tent and look within, smiling. "Flame, son of Lokus, the feast is spread for thee, though well I wot thou knowest not if thou art hungry. But time and enough will there be for talk with thy speech-friend and troth-plight maiden, when thou hast eaten thy meat, and refreshed thee from thy journey. Wherefore come now, the both of you, and shew yourselves unto the people, that all may rejoice."

[90]

*Feasting and
Laughter*

Thereupon did Flame, son of Lokus, lead forth his troth-plight maiden Roseheart, to a great table that had been spread under the trees, with a silken cloth, and great dishes of silver and gold, whereon were roast flesh, and new bread, and green things steaming and savoury, and fruits of divers sorts, good to the taste and beautiful. And there were flagons of wine, crimson, and of the colour of corn, and of brown like the leaves of autumn.

*Flame Speaketh
Modestly*

Then was there feasting and laughter, and Flame, son of Lokus, told many tales of far countries—of strange customs, and cunning of husbandry and handicraft; of wars and the courts of Kings; of mightily mountains, of great seas and the storms thereof, wherein he himself had laboured mightily with the men of the ship that they should not perish all.

[91]

*The Queen
Taketh Note*

And for that all he spake on these matters was shrewd and well taken, and modest withal, King Telwyn, listening, marked with gladness the manhood that had come to this youth of the isle of sea-surge and fire-bloom. And he was right well pleased, also, that the troth-plight of his daughter was returned with clear eyes and noble bearing, and courtesy and readiness for all that made speech with him.

[92]

And Queen Ellaline, in the wont of elder women, had eyes to the way of Flame with his wine, the which he took gladly, as becomes a man, but not overmuch; and she was content. Roseheart, sitting beside her mother, the Queen, had thought for none but her troth-plight lord whom she loved; yet marked with pride his thought and courtesy for all that sat at meat with them. There was that in her which remembered with joy and tenderness how that he had thought aforetime only of themselves and their love; but now was she proud that her lord was become a man among men, for well she knew that with all he said and did in any wise, there ran always the music of his joy in her, and the love of his soul for hers.

*Roseheart Hath
Pride*

[93]

XI.

[94]

*The Shadows
Grow Long*



OW when they had eaten and drunk their fill, and had had much talk withal, the shadows had grown long, and bird-song rippled the air in the wont of sundown. Wherefore King Telwyn bethought him how it would be pleasant that the four of them, the Queen, the Princess Roseheart, and her troth-plight lord, Flame, should walk in the forest for a space, ere yet they returned to the castle. But Queen Ellaline said to him, "Nay, my lord, shall not thou and I return to the castle alone? Well I wot these twain have much to say, each to the other. Were it not well that they should walk apart in the forest in the cool of the evening, if that be their wish?"

*Queen Ellaline
Speaketh*

[95]

And King Telwyn smiled thereat, saying, "Well, well! Certain it is that I am but a stupid man, and thy woman's wit in the right of it." And therewith he bade the young pair go apart as they wished for the space of an hour or two.

*Flame Showeth
Gratitude*

But ere they went their ways, Flame raised to his lips the hand of the Queen, and kissed it, forasmuch as he was grateful to her exceedingly that she had had thought and remembrance of the need of young lovers to be alone together.

[96]

Whereafter, the King and the Queen having turned their steps to the castle, Flame and the Princess Roseheart wandered in sweet content in the path that led to the Pool, where aforetime they had found their love and their destiny.

*Roseheart
Radiant*

And when they were come thither, they found there, fluttering like butterflies in a shaft of sunlight that came under the trees and among the stems thereof, children that sported about the Pool. And these, forsaking their play, clamoured about the Princess Roseheart, in sweet rivalry of her love and her touch. And forasmuch as his beloved stood now in the shaft of sunlight, radiant, starry-eyed, with little children about her knees, Flame, the Giver of Dreams, worshiped her in his soul, and stooped him to the earth that he might seize the clay thereof, and mixing it with water from the Pool, fashion the likeness of her. But though mightily he strove, the cunning of his hands was withholden from him, and he might not.

[97]

*The Dusk
Cometh*

Then the children, seeing it was late, flitted away to their homes, and the sunlight grew faint and fainter, until the dusk was come, all suddenly. And as the twain stood a little apart, each from the other, there passed between them, as she had been a night-moth, Wur, the Old Gray Woman of Shadows, whose eyes were as misty pools at twilight, her hair like cobwebs matted, and her garments as the wings of the dusk. And momentarily there was upon them a chill as of the winter-death.

[98]

Hand in Hand

Then did Flame know in his heart that he must tell his white-souled love, Roseheart, of the moon-woman in the desert. And his heart shook at thought of her grief and trouble thereat. But being a true man, and strong for the more part, he knew that it were an ill thing to set forward the time of saying that which must be said. Therefore he took his love by the hand, and led her to a mossy bank, whereupon they sat them down, hand in hand. After a little he said: "There is a thing that I must tell thee, but because thou art a maid and innocent, I know not if thou wilt understand."

[99]

*Flame
Confesseth*

And seeing his trouble she answered him gently: "Meseems thou couldst not do anything I would not understand." Drawing her close within the shelter of his arms he said, "Thou believest that I love thee as my heart's blood?"

[100]

"Verily," she made answer, "that must I needs believe, else could I not wed thee." Then because he was silent a space, as one thinking, she said, "What is it that thou wouldst say to me?"

*Speech Faileth
Him*

With quick words then he spake on this wise: "Know then that there was a woman—a witch that made herself as a woman of moonlight, beautiful exceedingly, that I should follow her. And forasmuch as mine eyes and my blood are as the sea, I might not refrain, for my weakness, but followed her as the sea the moon. And we came into the desert, and there remained for a space." Then did the speech of Flame fail him, for that he knew not how to say that which must be said.

[101]

And Roseheart looked upon him shrinkingly, and put away his arms, and rose, and stood

away from him. And in her eyes that had held stars, there came a mist, as when the heavens grow dull with that which is not storm, but more like to sickness. "And thou—" she whispered, "didst thou give thyself to this woman?" "Yea, but in the way of the flesh only," he answered, shamefast. "I know not if a maid can understand."

Then was Roseheart silent a space, whereafter she said slowly, "Meseems that therein lay the sin of what thou didst. Hadst thou given thyself body and soul, thy sin against me had been greater, but methinks then would it have been less against the Lord God, whose gift of life thou hast dishonoured."

Then spake Flame eagerly, "But I told thee she was a witch-woman. Thou rememberest the Radiant One?"

"Aye." The Princess Roseheart was grave and sorrowful. "When that I turned me away from the moon-woman I saw the Radiant One, and she came and said naught, but shed her light upon the woman, and I saw that she was not beautiful, like the moon, but a hag, and leprous. Wherefore, looking about me I saw the bones of the dead. And I rose and fled away from that place."

"Thou didst well."

Then was Flame filled with terror that though she spake in all gentleness, his love Roseheart was become as a stranger to him. Straightway he went to her, saying, "Canst thou not forgive?"

"I know not," she made answer, with the weariness of one in mortal pain.

Then he sought to put his arms about her, and draw her to him, but she looked at him as one in surprise, and therewith he feared to touch her. And he fell upon his knees, and buried his face, shamefast, in the hem of her garment, and wept that he had so wounded her whom his soul loved. With all gentleness she put him away from her, and went apart. And her eyes were dry, but her heart bled, so that she was as one sick unto death.

Her thoughts pricked her with torment, that her lord whom she had worshipped kneeling, as is the wont of women, was proven but a weak creature on whom she might not lean for strength, for that he had it not. And it was bitter to her that he whom she had thought to be a man such as the Lord God had meant in the making of the world, had been but as a child, or blind, that he had been deceived by the moon-woman. Wherefore her heart, that had shrined a god, was now empty.

XII.



OR some while did Flame lie upon the ground as one dead, but presently his manhood arose and stood before the Princess Roseheart, saying, "Then wilt thou send me from thee?"

And looking upon his manhood, that would face what must come to it, she saw therewith somewhat that wrung her heart, the look of a little child, with wistful eyes, and mouth that quivered. And she saw that his need of her was greater than it had been aforetime, as of a child for his mother. Wherewith into her heart that had been empty of all things whenas the god might dwell there no longer, there came a new sweetness it could scarce hold, so great was the flood thereof. And through her body and her soul the sweetness surged, so that there remained no bitterness at all, but a great gladness, as of the singing of many waters in spring. In her face was the look as of a young mother looking upon her first man-child that she hath borne in pain with thanksgiving.

Flame, looking upon the glory that was her face, fell at her feet, crying, "Thou wilt forgive?"

And she lifted him up, and drew his head to her breast, saying the while little words of love and comforting. Whereafter, he stood straight before her, and they looked each into the other's eyes as they had been spirits out of the flesh.

And there came a shining round about them, that was brighter than the noonday sun, for that Senta, the Radiant One, was come and stood near them. And Flame saw that in the face of his love was somewhat that had not been there before, for the beauty whereof his soul sang. As one in a dream he stooped him to the earth once more to take of the clay thereof and fashion her his Mother of Men.

But ere he might do the thing he would, Senta the Radiant One drew near, and spake unto them, and her voice was as the music of a mighty pine-wood raising to heaven a paeon of triumph in a great wind of spring, with the voices of children therethrough, like little singing streams. And the words of Senta were these: "Joy to you that ye have learned somewhat whereof life and love are made! Roseheart, beloved of Flame, son of Lokus, now

Love art thou become in very truth a Mother of Men in thy woman's soul, for that thou hast learned the meaning of love, which is to minister, to suffer, to understand, and to forgive. And thou too, Flame, hast learned of it, insomuch that love constrained thee in the pride of thy manhood to become as a little child that thou mightest be forgiven. But stay thy hand, even yet, until thou hast taken the maid to wife, and made her in good sooth a mother of men according to the flesh. Then only shalt thou be given fullness of vision, and shalt fashion her in pure marble to be as a dream forever in the hearts of men."

[111]

*The Sign and
Symbol*

With the passing of Senta, the Radiant One, was full evening come. And Flame, Fashioner and Giver of Dreams, led the Princess Roseheart, his love and troth-plight maiden, to the brink of the Pool, in wonder beyond speech, and a silence as of music. For the Pool held deep within deep; and far beyond their two faces of love, they beheld as in the night blue of heaven, the stars that the Lord God had set therein to be a sign and symbol unto men of the things beyond the flesh.

And here ends this story of
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Transcriber's Note:

Title page spelling of "auther" was corrected to "author."

Page 16 "s e -surge" was corrected to "sea-surge."

Page 29 "He He" was corrected to "He."

Archaic spellings, syntax and other anomalies remain as in original.

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