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## A NEW HISTORY OF BLUE BEARD.

WRITTEN BY

For the Amusement of Little LACK  
BEARD, and his PRETTY  
SISTERS.

Adorned with Cuts.

From Sidney's Press,  
NEW-HAVEN.  
1806

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## A New History of BLUE BEARD.



Once upon a time there lived, a great way off, an old man who had two daughters, the name of the eldest was Fatima, the youngest Irene. Irene was a very pretty girl, but Fatima was beauty itself; and so very good besides, that every body loved her: you may see her introduced to a gentleman, to whom she was going to be married, her father having given his consent, had not the fame of her beauty reached the ears of a very great man, I should have said tyrant, for he was a very cruel over-bearing nobleman, and had been married to several ladies, of whom nobody knew what was become: but as he was very rich, and lived in a grand castle, of which I here present you with the drawing; he some how or other, was never long without a wife. This nobleman, whose name was Abomelique, but generally called Blue Beard, on account of his beard being of that color, being determined to see her, under a pretence of business paid the father of Fatima a visit. Poor Fatima! she little thought the great Abomelique was come to her father's cottage on her account; but so it was, he came attended like a king, (you may see him in the picture) the father of Fatima standing at the door to receive him; as soon as he entered the house the old man entertained him in the best manner he could, and ordered his two daughters to dress themselves in their best, and wait upon him; who, being good girls, soon did as they were bid; no sooner did Blue Beard see Fatima than he fell violently in love with her. I should not say love, for it was that kind of love a wolf has for a pretty innocent lamb; so without any more ado, he told her father the reason of his coming, offering to make her his wife; and that himself, and his other daughter, should go and live with him at the Castle.

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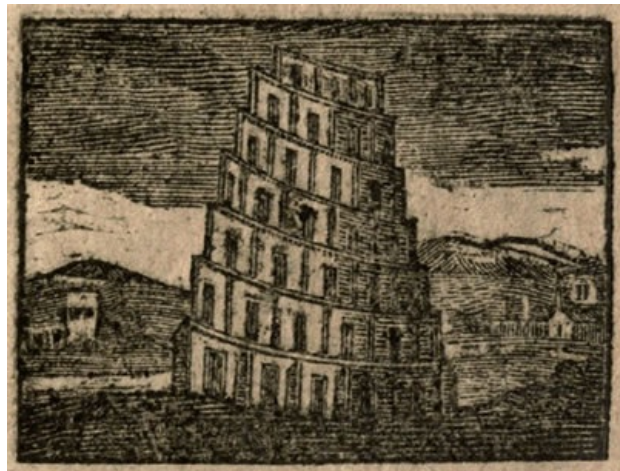
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The father was quite delighted with the offer, especially as Blue Beard told him he should be the master of all his slaves, and next himself in power. Irene too tho't she should like it vastly; "what a fine thing," said she to herself, "it will be to have fine rooms to walk in when the weather is bad, and gardens to range in when the weather is fine; well, I almost wish he had fallen in love with me, for I don't think the great Abomelique would be so ugly, if it was not for his monstrous great Blue Beard;" Such was the thought of Irene. As to poor Fatima she fainted away, which frightened Blue Beard, who would have been glad to have found her agreeable to his wishes, however with much ado they brought her to herself when Blue Beard left her, promising to come the next day, and fetch her in state to the Castle: after he was gone nothing ran in the father's head but how he should enjoy himself at the Castle. As to Irene, she could not help pitying her sister, who was in a sad taking.

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after he was gone nothing ran in the father's head but how he should enjoy himself at the Castle. As to Irene, she could not help pitying her sister, who was in a sad taking.

Fatima had a real love for Selim, to whom her father had promised his consent in marriage. You see promises with some, like pye-crust, is made to be broken. Ah! silly old man, you little think about the evil that hangs over your daughter's head. As Fatima knew she should be forced to go with Blue Beard, she wrote immediately to Selim. Now only think what a fine thing it is to be a scholar, for if Fatima could not have wrote to her lover, nobody else would have done it for her, and what would have been the consequence you will find by and by; so above all things learn to read your book, that your daddy and mammy may learn you to write too; well as soon as she had finished her letter, she gave it to a trusty messenger, who set off full speed and soon arrived at Selim's house. I must now return to Blue Beard, who could not get a wink of sleep all night, so much did he think of his intended bride: so, no sooner had the sun gilded the mountain's tops than he was up, and the procession was ordered to move towards the village; you can think what a fine sight it was, first came two trumpeters, then two kettle-drums, then two French horns, then two men with fine silken flags, then some of his black slaves armed with bows and arrows; next came the great Abomelique himself, riding on an elephant, under a fine silken canopy; next followed another elephant richly dressed, with a fine seat on his back, with a silken canopy over it, for Fatima and her sister; a fine Arabian horse followed, led by a black slave, for her father; a band of music following; then his slaves armed with bows and arrows, closed the procession. Blue Beard brought some fine clothes along with him for Fatima and her sister, which the father insisted upon her wearing. It was in vain for her to tell him she could not be happy, as her heart was given to Selim; he knew that Blue Beard was very rich, and like many others, he thought happiness consisted in wealth; so, says he, have him you must, and have him you shall: Abomelique, at the same time, took all manner of pains to please her; for, beside the fine clothes, he brought her jewels and diamonds in profusion, and promised she should want for nothing when she got to the castle.



After being dressed in a very grand manner she was put or rather forced into her seat on the elephant's back along with her sister Irene; the ladies round about, who came to the sight, could scarce keep from envying her, forgetting that very fine clothes may hide a very heavy heart, as it did now. No sooner was the company seated than the music began to play, and off the great Abomelique marched in triumph with his prize. Her lover Selim no sooner received her letter, than knowing no time was to be lost, went directly to his brother, who commanded a troop, who promised to assist him to the utmost, so it was agreed to muster their men, and to set off immediately for the father, and bring Fatima away: or, if Blue Beard had already got her, to force her from him, who by now had arrived at his Castle. Sure nothing could equal the rejoicings made to welcome her.—Blue Beard conducted her to a fine seat in a magnificent garden, where refreshments were placed and some of the females were ordered to dance to entertain her; but for all this she was still melancholy; as to her father he was as merry as a grig, pulling about the women, and driving about the men; and Irene would have been merry could she have seen her sister so. Blue Beard having a mind to leave her a little to herself, pretended he had business of the utmost importance to transact, told her he must leave her till the evening, giving her at the same time the keys of all the apartments of the Castle, telling her, as she was mistress of the place to go freely into any of them, except that room, the door of which was in the Blue Chamber; and of which this key, set with diamonds, opens the lock; upon your life don't go into that chamber, giving Fatima the keys; and then with a look that frightened her sadly, left her; as soon as he was gone, Irene cried, 'now is not that kind of him to give you the keys to go where you please?' 'No, my dear sister,' said Fatima, 'I had much rather he had kept them; you find I am forbid going into one room, did not you hear him say, my life depended on it.'



'I don't think anything of that,' said Irene, I long to see that chamber in particular; come don't mope so, if you had not seen Selim first, you might be very happy, for setting aside his beard I don't think Abomelique so very ugly; now as he won't be at home till evening, pray do let us go over the Castle, I long to have a rummage.' It was a long while before Irene could persuade her sister to go; however she agreed at length, and away they went; it would tire your patience if I told you all the fine things they saw, in one of the rooms there was a fine guitar hanging up, which Fatima took down, and began playing upon to divert her melancholy.

Irene would not let her sister play upon it long, for she was impatient to see the rest of the chambers, when at length they arrived at the blue one, this was the grandest of all, it was lined with looking glasses, ornamented with fine blue enamelled frames; here you might see yourself from head to foot; the mantle piece was supported by pillars of the finest blue china; and though it was called the Blue Chamber, it might as well have been called the Golden one as the floor was lined with it, two glass chandeliers hung from the ceiling by chains of gold. In short, nothing was wanting to make this the finest room that ever was seen: in the middle of this chamber stood the door of that they were forbid to enter: 'well, sister Fatima,' says Irene, 'I am quite delighted with this place, I should like to see the next chamber vastly, I dare say it must be finer still; come, what say you to it, shall we look at it? there is nobody here to see us, and you know we need not tell of ourselves.'

'Dear sister,' said Fatima, 'pray don't ask me, I dread the thought of it, let us be satisfied with what we have seen, and return; indeed I begin to be tired with the ramble we have had;' 'well, my dear sister, said Irene, 'we may not have such another opportunity a great while, if you wont go in, let us just open the door, and only look in, sure there can be no great harm in that.' 'I could like to please you,' says Fatima, 'but I am sadly afraid;' 'Pho!' cried Irene, 'don't be afraid before you are hurt; come, fear nothing.' Fatima, to please her, took the key all sparkling with diamonds, and put it to the lock, when the door flew open in an instant, and discovered such a dismal scene, that Fatima instantly fainted away, the walls were lined with the skeletons, and the floor was strewn with the limbs of the dead wives the cruel Blue Beard had already murdered, which were swimming in their blood, into which, when Fatima fainted, she dropt the key. At one end of this dismal room stood the figure of death holding a dart, and over him was wrote, in characters of blood, *The punishment of curiosity*. 'Mercy on me!' said Fatima, as soon as she recovered, 'what will become of me. Abomelique will surely find me out, and no doubt serve me as he has done the poor creatures we have just seen.'

'Come, dear sister,' said Irene, 'let us get away, I am very sorry I persuaded you to open the door;'—'Where is the key gone,' says Fatima, 'tis not in the door?' 'Perhaps it is dropt,' says Irene; and so it was sure enough, and what was worse, into the blood: she took it up, locked the door, and wiped the blood from off her hands, but in spite of all they could do, they could not wipe it from the key. Now you must know this key was the gift of a fairy to Blue Beard; and when poor Fatima found she could not clean it, she cried bitterly, and Irene could not help crying too. 'You know, my dear, 'tis a saying, one trouble seldom comes alone;' and that was the case now; for while they were thinking what they should do, a black slave entered to tell them Abomelique was returned, and expected them in the grand saloon. This was terrible news for Fatima, who gave herself up for lost; however, go she must.

'Now as they were going,' Fatima says to Irene, 'my dear sister, yesterday I wrote to Selim, and as I make no doubt but he received the letter, this day I hoped to see him; pray do you go to the top of the tower, and if he should be coming, beckon him with your handkerchief to make haste.' Away went Irene with a heavy heart; while Fatima, with a heavier one, went to meet Blue Beard; who, as soon as he saw her, cried out, 'Well Madam, how have you entertained yourself? don't you think there are sights in the Castle worth looking at?' 'Yes,' replied Fatima, sighing, 'there are indeed!'—'But why sigh, my love!' says Blue Beard, 'I hope you have not broke the order I gave you; come, give me the keys.' Poor Fatima with an aching heart, put her hand into her pocket, and pulling out the keys, gave them to him with a trembling hand.

Blue Beard was afraid something had happened by her trembling; he no sooner saw the blood on the key of the chamber he forbid her to enter, than his countenance changed, and he roared out in a voice like thunder, 'Ah! wretch, I see what you have been at; you have seen my former wives, who have forfeited their lives by their curiosity, and you shall now go and lay among them.'

So saying he seized her by the hair of her head: when, falling on her knees, she besought him to spare her life; but he was a monster not to be moved. When she found he was determined to kill her, she begged him to grant her a little time to say her prayers. He bid her go, but not be long or he would fetch her.

Getting up into her chamber, she called for her sister, and asked her if she saw any thing. 'No, dear sister,' said Irene, 'nothing but the dreary common and the sky.' 'Are you most done?' said Blue Beard; 'yes,' cried Fatima; when calling again to Irene, she said, 'sister, what do you see?' 'Nothing, dear sister, but a flock of sheep.' 'Are you not a coming?' said Blue Beard, in a surlier voice than before; 'yes directly,' said Fatima; when calling to her sister, she asked her if she saw nothing? 'yes,' cried Irene, 'I see a great cloud of dust, but it is a great way off.' 'If you don't come down,' Blue Beard roared out, 'I will fetch you;' 'coming,' cried Fatima: when calling again to her sister, she asked her what she saw? 'I see,' cried Irene, 'a number of horsemen riding full speed towards the Castle;' 'wave your handkerchief, dear sister, that they may make more haste, or I fear it will be all over with me.'

At this instant entered Blue Beard, and seizing her hair, began dragging her towards the Blue Chamber, while her shrieks were enough to pierce the heart of stone. He had not dragged her far before he heard the sound of feet on the stairs and as tyrants are always cowards, he stopt to listen.

He had not stopt long before Selim, (who had forced into the Castle) following the cries of

Fatima, rushed into the room, with his sword in hand. 'Villain,' said Blue Beard, drawing his scymater, 'what dost thou here?' 'Tyrant,' cried Selim, 'to punish such a monster as thou art.' They said no more, but at it they went. Despair lent courage to Blue Beard; love to Selim; while poor Fatima sat trembling on the floor. At length Selim prevailed: for running Blue Beard through the body, he laid him breathless on the floor.

He now went to Fatima, who was fainting, and taking her in his arms, carried her to the window to give her air.

In the mean time his brother had overcome the slaves, who were not sorry to hear of Blue Beard's death.

Selim took possession of the Castle, gave the slaves their liberty, and married Fatima. Selim's brother fell in love with and married Irene, and they all lived together happily.

Cruel Blue Beard being dead  
And those lovers in his stead,  
Time goes merrily along,  
Now a dance, and then a song:  
for whenever true love's found,  
Joy and pleasure will abound.  
By the poor around they're blest,  
By the rich around carest;  
Guilt may leave behind its stings,  
Nought but comfort virtue brings.



\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A NEW HISTORY OF BLUE BEARD \*\*\*

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