

The Pigeon with the Ruby Collar



A Story For and About
Princess Jocelyn Anne

By Marti Fischer
Illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerg

I know a princess. Her name is Jocelyn Anne.
She is descended from a distinct line of kings.



When we were very small
we lived in neighboring
castles and played
together every day chasing
through the formal
gardens and making mud
pies behind the graceful
fountains, and every night
we played hide and seek
among the endless
passages and columns and
curtains and tapestries.



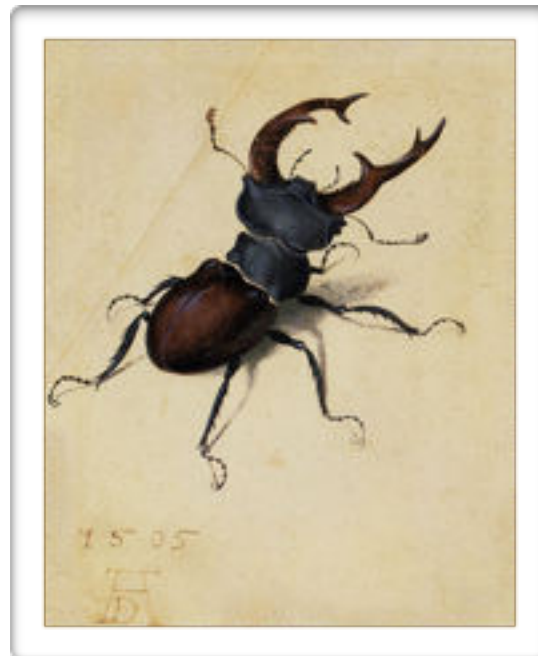
To signify her royal birth, pinned to her cloak was a ruby that shined while we hid in the curtains and watched the feasts, preferring for ourselves food stolen from the servants' kitchens, eaten in secret together.



One endless waning afternoon, the Princess brought a little jewelry box down the servants' stairs under her wrap, and we went directly to the third storeroom and cloistered ourselves into the window behind a barrel with a stub of a candle and a couple of apples to establish our treasure on which our future kingdom would be based.



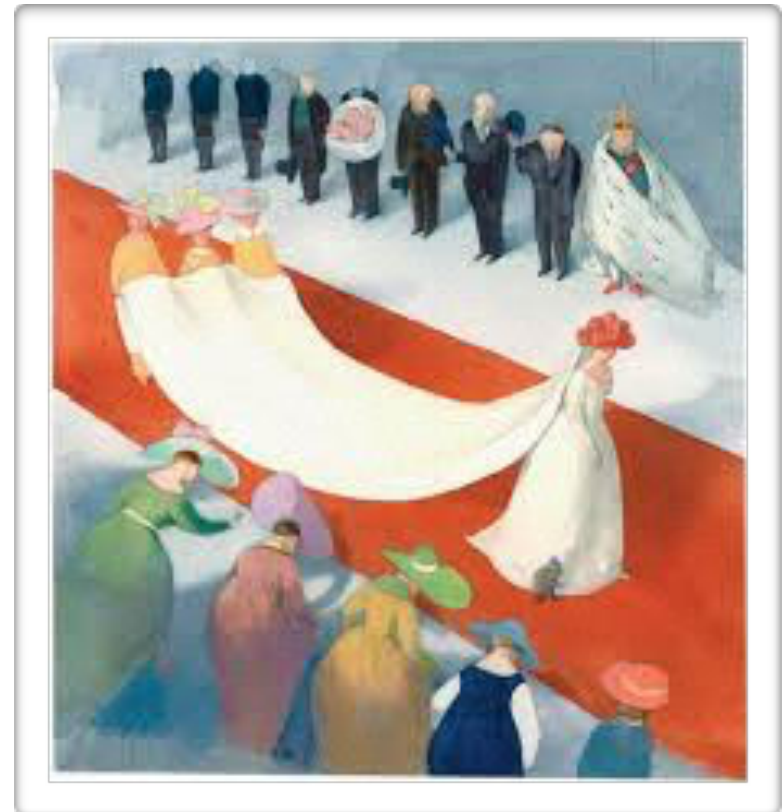
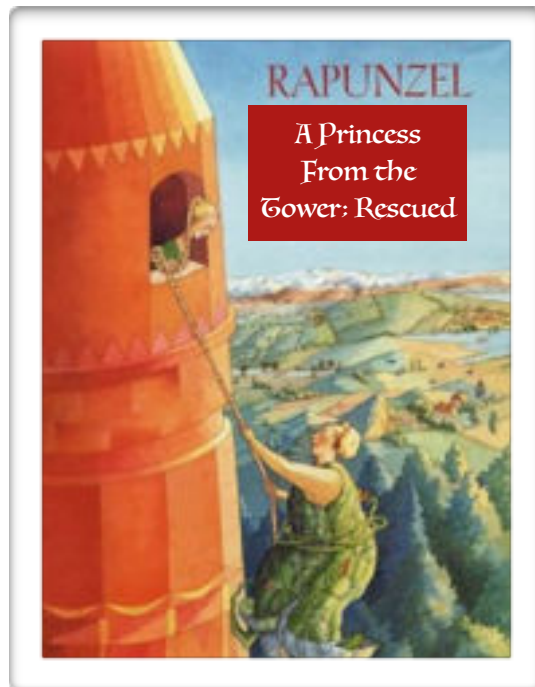
We were of different minds on the topic of treasure, the Princess, a young lady, and I, still something of a rough sprout of a boy. We were, however, democratic and enlightened about it. A number of insect carcasses I offered were gently refused, however, one or two more spectacular beetles were admitted.



The Princess was generous with her jewelry box – not the real one, of course, which was kept by the Queen in a great chest in the Princess's apartments, from which the Queen personally selected the jewels the Princess would wear in the evening when coming down from her tower for dinner. But the Princess had this personal jewelry box, a dainty one of her own, where she was allowed to keep pieces of broken and loose stones from lost history from all over the world, and from these she bestowed several gems to our joint treasure. Really, these did lend an air of distinction to my beetles.



While we examined our treasures before we blew the candle out, the Princess commanded, "Tell me the story." She thought a minute. "Only, put in a slain dragon. There must be one princess rescued from the tower. And a grand wedding at the end." She thought again, and added, "There must be no frogs of any description."



"I've told you and told you," I said, rolling my eyes and then shutting them, and clapping the treasure box shut with my grimy hand that was not holding a half-chewed apple, "it isn't that kind of story at all."



"Well, just make it that kind of story then," she sniffed, "and hush, they'll hear us." She looked away from the crack between the curtains and then looked me over. "And wipe your nose."

I obeyed, using my sleeve with thoroughness. But we were discovered and taken to the nursery for supper, and the story was never told. This was because it hadn't happened yet.



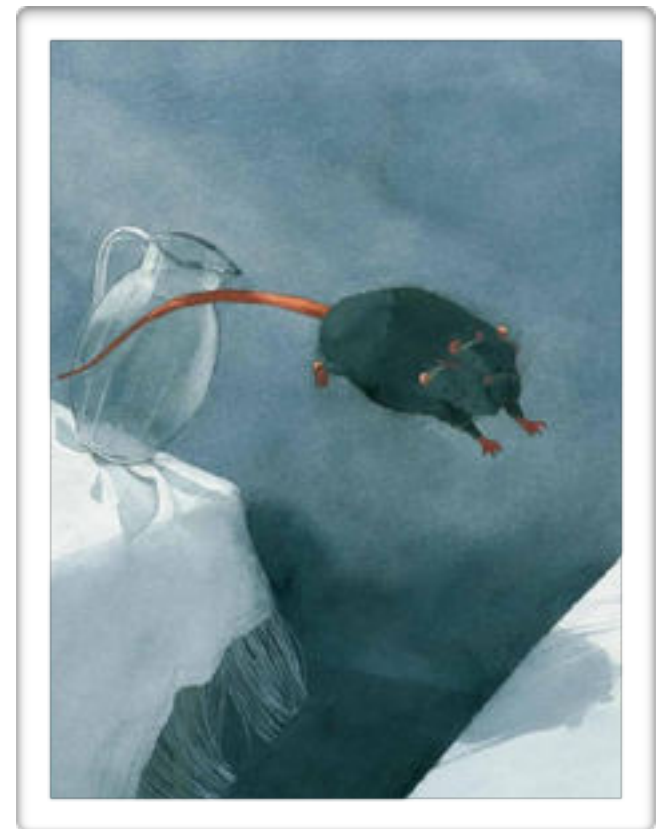
When it was time for the court to disperse, Princess Jocelyn Anne went to her room in the Castle's tower, and I went home to mine, which was next door but far, far away.



Because our castles were far apart, we asked a pigeon to exchange our messages by flying from one castle to the other.

We fitted the pigeon with a collar that had a secret compartment to hold our stories for one another. So we would always know it was the royal messenger, we fastened the ruby from the Princess's cloak to its collar.

But troubled times were coming: our Castles were shifting alliances to and against each other; great upheaval was moving across the land. Princess Jocelyn Anne and I were going to be next in line to rule our castles, and each of us was in danger. In a time like that, in a night of heartbreak, and just as I had released The Pigeon with the Ruby Collar with a new message to the Princess, I was taken by guards to a cell in the basement with a single high window where the rain came in. Princess Jocelyn Anne was hidden in the tower, and her rooms were closed and locked.



The pigeon found no open window in Princess Jocelyn Anne's rooms, and waited the whole night with his message. In the morning he flew back to my rooms, but no window was open there. He flew back and forth, and



back and forth, and one of my father's hunters shot at him with an arrow, striking his wing and making him fall to the ground. When the hunter saw the ruby collar, he knew this was a special pigeon, and he and his wife put The Pigeon with the Ruby Collar in a nice cage and nursed it back to health. Since the times were troubled, they

kept the bird a secret. They let it out to fly every evening, not knowing that it went to our bedroom windows looking for us, and flew sadly home to the hunter and his wife every night.

And years went by ...

Princess Jocelyn Anne in her tower and I in a cellar. Without the royal messenger, and with no news of each other, each of us believed the other was gone forever.



When the troubles were over, Princess Jocelyn Anne kept to her rooms in the tower. She grew to become a beautiful princess who was famous for alleviating pain. Every evening she would dress in a new beautiful costume, and she would come down to the dining hall to fanfare. Everyone loved Princess Jocelyn Anne. After dinner she would restore to health the sick people and animals that gathered in the courtyard to see her.



After a while, however, she would grow pale and the King would carry her up to her room in the tower, where she would put on her nightdress and send for her mother, the Queen. Together they would listen to the King tell them wonderful stories about the King of Kings and knights in shiny armor.



And then Princess Jocelyn Anne said her prayers and
Slept until the next morning.



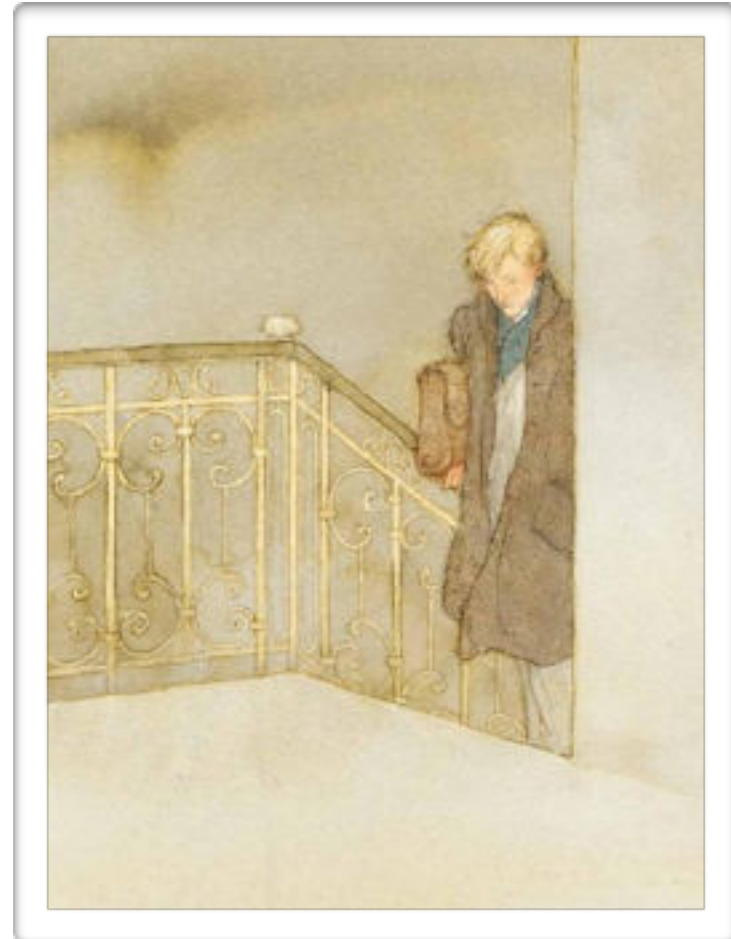


While Princess Jocelyn Anne is in her room in the tower, everyone who visits over the age of 11 who doesn't approach those stairs with a little reverence, who does not first ask one of Princess Jocelyn Anne's attendants, who does not find themselves quieted on the way, who does not adjust their sensibility on the way up to the mysterious purpose

of that room, who does not wait in the outer alcove until a sentry looks up at them and invites them in, must be stopped at, or returned to, the second landing of the tower stair. I have put two chairs there, and some appropriate reading and an interesting globe. The children of course can play with some tin soldiers or something quietly by the window.

Meanwhile, when I came into my inheritance my soldiers rescued me from the dungeon. I was a second son and so no threat to the new king and was restored to my home. However I had developed sun-sickness from living in a cell in a dungeon and would never again see the light of day lest it kill me.

Nevertheless, I participated in the king's council and wrote books in my study on government and war.



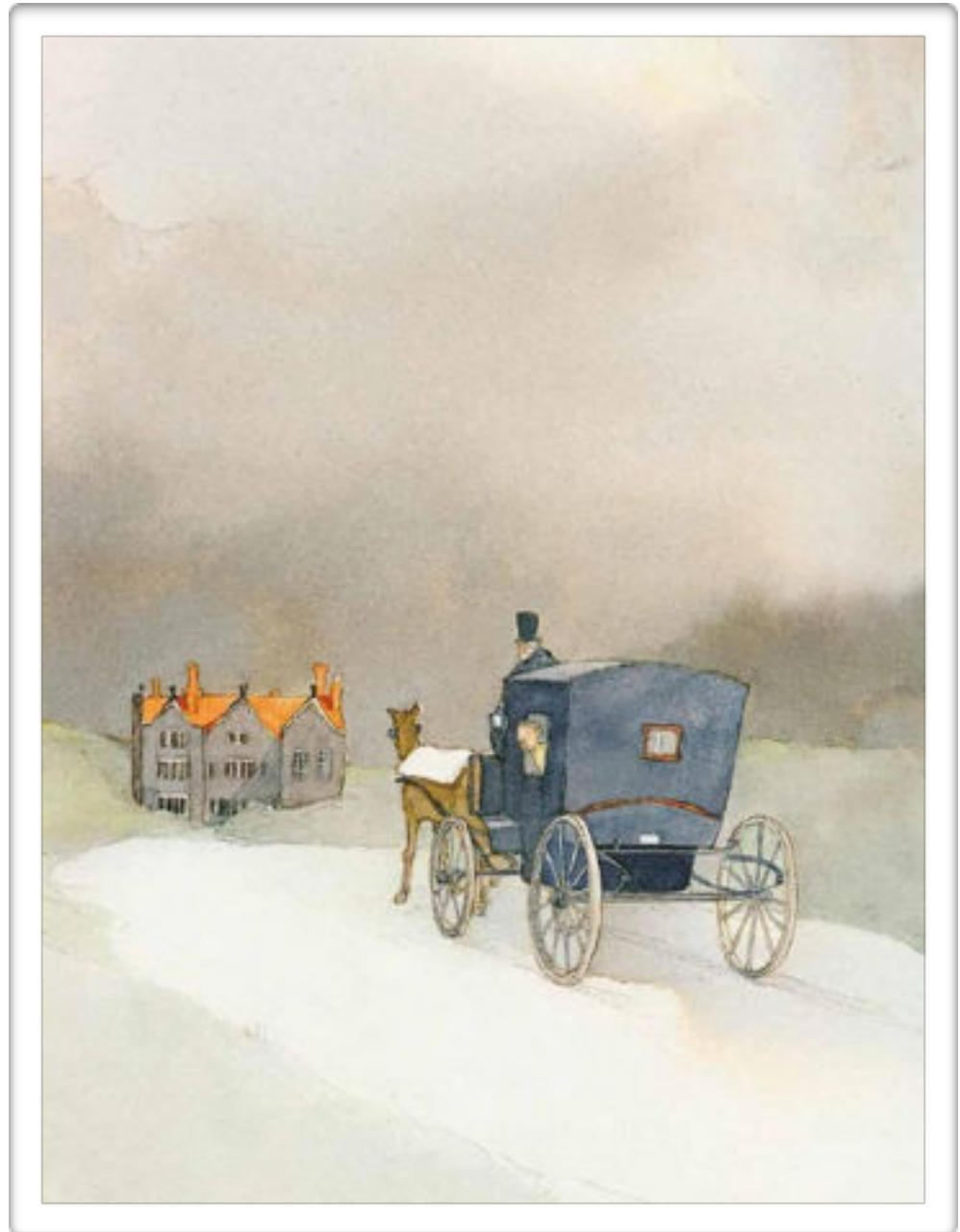
One evening at sundown I opened my window for the first time in a long, long time. Suddenly The Pigeon with the Ruby Collar and a crippled wing flew in and flapped to rest on my desk where I was preparing for the king's council. Inside the secret compartment was a letter from Princess Jocelyn Anne, asking if I was well. I wrote back using the royal messenger that I was all right, except for my sun-sickness and that I missed the light of the day.



The Ruby Collar

The Pigeon with the Ruby Collar flew back with a message from the Princess. She commanded that I was to come to her Castle with haste.

I traveled a very long distance to her castle in a carriage with the shades drawn down to keep out the sun.





Upon announcing my arrival, Princess Jocelyn Anne came down from her tower, as she does every evening. And moved from compassion, she embraced me, at long last, and invited me to take my own place in the Good. For Princess Jocelyn Anne is life-giving Goodness, which is Love. There is no difference, and its source is the Creator who lives forever.



She knows what to do and
to say to help me see the
sun myself; which is to
dwell with all of my might
in the Good, which is also
Love.

By her presence, she beckons me and all of her household into our own places within the Goodness. And this calls us to work and dance and live in the sun, to have joy again instead of fear.





We continue to keep each other's secrets through
The Pigeon with the Ruby Collar and the
messages he delivers from her castle to mine and
back to hers.

We have come to understand the
Good in each other, and by this to
better understand ourselves, and
care for each other again as we once
did when we were very young.





Once a year I travel to visit the Princess in her room in the tower and to talk, and the light of the fire and a lamp, like the sun, can be seen from her window for miles.



