I. With the Count of Flanders

The Kingdom of Cyprus\(^1\) is an island situated close to where the sun rises from the sea: a delightful, merry, fertile island, full of all kinds of fruits, and known to many who have landed and passed some time there on their journey to Jerusalem, in the Holy Land. It contains a splendid city, Famagusta, which was once the seat of a noble burgher of ancient lineage. His parents had left him much money and property, so that he was very rich and powerful; but he was also very young and of a careless disposition. He had taken but little notice of how his parents had saved and increased their money, and his mind was wholly preoccupied with the pursuit of honour and physical pleasures. So he maintained himself in great state, jousting, tourneying and travelling around with the King’s Court, and losing much money thereby. His friends, soon noticing that he was in danger of losing more than his means could bear, thought of giving him a wife, in the hope that she would curb his expenditure. When they suggested this to him, he was highly pleased, and he promised to follow their advice; and so they began to search for a suitable spouse.

Now there was a noble burgher in the city of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, where the King usually held court. This burgher had a beautiful daughter called Graciana, and she was married to the youth, Theodore, with no inquiries made as to what kind of a man he was – such was his reputation for wealth and power. The maiden was brought to him in great splendour, and a spectacular wedding took place – it being the custom for the rich to

---

\(^1\) Cyprus ceased to be an independent kingdom in 1489, passing into the hands of the Venetian Republic. The last King of Cyprus died in 1473.
make especial display of their wealth and magnificence on such occasions. When the wedding festivities were over, and the guests had returned to their homes, Theodore took the maiden to wife and lived with her in great happiness and virtue, to the deep satisfaction of his friends, who believed that they had performed a virtuous deed by taming the wild Theodore with a wife – for they did not realise how difficult it is to change one’s nature. In time, Graciana became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son before a year had followed the wedding, to the delight of all around her. This son was baptised and christened Fortunatus.

But Theodore began to revert to his old habits: jousting, riding with a large retinue, buying expensive horses, and frequenting the King’s Court; and he left his wife and child on their own without so much as a by-your-leave. One day he would sell a tithe, the next day he would pawn a landed property; and he did this so often that in time he had nothing left to sell or hock. Having completely wasted the time of his youth, he became so poor that he could no longer retain a servant or a maid, and the good lady Graciana had to cook and wash herself, like a poor serving-woman.

And one day, they were sitting at table, about to eat, and willing enough to be merry if they had the means. The son sat before the father, and the father looked at the son in great earnest; and he began to sigh from the bottom of his heart, for his son was now nearly eighteen years old and could barely read or write a name. He was, however, skilled at hawking and all the other arts of hunting, and these served as his pastime.

“Dear father, what is wrong?” he asked. “Why are you so sad? I’ve noticed that you become sad when you look at me. So I beg you, father, to tell me if I’ve angered you in any way? Or don’t I live my life as you would wish? Please let me know, for I want to live as you would wish me to.”
“My dear son,” said the father, “my grief is no fault of yours. Nor can I blame anyone else; for the pain and troubles I must endure are all of my own making. When I think of the honour and possessions that were mine—and which I have so wastefully squandered! My parents had faithfully saved them for me, and I should have followed their example, for the dignity of our lineage. But I did not do that; so when I look at you, and reflect that I can neither help nor advise you, I am troubled with such a heavy burden that I can find neither rest nor relief by day or night. Also, there is my abandonment by those with whom I so generously shared my all; I am no longer a worthy guest in their eyes.” And so he complained of his lot with a heavy heart.

The son was disturbed by his father’s distress and said: “Oh, dear father, don’t feel so sad, and stop worrying about me. I’m young, strong and healthy, I’ll seek service in a foreign land. There’s a lot of happiness in the world, and I hope to God to find my share. You have a graceful master in our King, and if you serve him well, he won’t abandon you or my mother, not before the end of your days. And don’t be ashamed of what necessity compels you to do. Don’t worry about me, you and my mother have done enough for me by bringing me up. For that, I thank you greatly, and I’ll pray to God for you for the rest of my life.”

With these words he stood up, took his hawk, and walked out of the house. At the sea-shore he considered what he could do to stop himself being a burden to his father. And as he walked to and fro along the shore, he noticed a galley in port; this galley was from Venice, and it contained pilgrims who had travelled to Jerusalem, including the Count of Flanders, two of whose servants had died during the journey. The Count had no
further business with the King, and the patron was ready to leave – the horn was being sounded to summon all passengers on board, for the galley was about to set sail –, so he and many other noblemen were heading towards the ship in time to embark. Seeing this, the dispirited Fortunatus thought: ‘If I could only find service with this lord, and travel so far with him that I shall never return to Cyprus – I’ll ask him if he needs a servant.’ Then he walked towards the group and, doffing his hat, bowed very gracefully, by which the Count could see that he was no peasant’s son.

“Merciful lord, I have heard that Your Grace has lost servants – does Your Grace not require another one?”

“What are your skills?” replied the Count.

“I can hunt and hawk, and I know all the other skills of the wood. I can also ride a horse and handle arms.”

“You would certainly be suitable – but I come from a distant land, and I fear you would not wish to leave Cyprus.”

Fortunatus replied: “Gracious lord, you could not travel so far that I would not wish it were four times the distance.”

“What wages must I give you?”

“Gracious lord, you must give me nothing. As I serve, so reward me.”

---

2 Captain of a Mediterranean vessel.
The Count was very pleased with the youth’s words and said: “The galley will depart immediately. Are you ready?”

Fortunatus cried, “Yes, lord!,” then he threw the hawk perched on his hand into the air, and let it fly away. Thus did he step into the galley as the Count’s servant, without the blessing or leave of his mother and father, and with little money. He left the land behind and, with a following wind, arrived in a short time in Venice. The Count, having previously seen the sights, did not wish to remain there, for he desired to be back home among his friends. It had also been his intention, if God’s help enabled him to return from Jerusalem, to marry the daughter of the Duke of Cleves, a young and very beautiful girl; and all the arrangements had been made, pending his return. Therefore his desire to return home burnt all the more fiercely; so he equipped himself, and bought horses, beautiful gold jewels and velvet garments, and everything else required for a prestigious wedding. Although the Count had many servants, only Fortunatus could speak Italian; and he being highly skilled at bargaining with the merchants, the Count was greatly pleased and grew very fond of him. Noting his master’s favour, Fortunatus applied himself with ever-increasing industry to his service. He was always the last with his lord at night, and the first by his bed in the morning; the Count took note of this dedication, and when he discovered that some of the new horses he was dividing among his servants were ill and worthless (as is usually the case whenever a large number of horses are sold), he made sure that Fortunatus received one of the best. This greatly annoyed the other servants, who began to hate the youth. “Just look!” they would whisper to one another, “the Devil has shit this Italian on us.” For they all believed that, because he could speak Italian, he was a native of that country – although he was by birth a Greek. Nevertheless, they had no choice but to watch him as
he rode with their lord, and no one dared to criticise or slander him before the Count.

Now the Count arrived home in great joy, to an honourable reception from his people, for he was very dear to them, being a God-fearing Count who loved his subjects. And as he stepped ashore, his good friends and liegemen came and received him handsomely, praising God that he had completed such a blessed journey; then they began to speak with him about the wedding. With a broad smile he requested them to lose no time in making the final arrangements; and several days later, he was married to the Duke of Cleves’ daughter. A great and sumptuous wedding festival was held, about which much could be written, for many princes and lords came to attend. There were fiercely competitive jousts, and other knightly exercises, all performed before the beautiful noble ladies whom the princes and lords had brought along. Now, however many pages or other servants these noblemen had brought in attendance to the wedding, not one of them gave greater pleasure to lords and ladies – in service and carriage – than Fortunatus. When they asked the Count where his courteous servant came from, he replied that he had met him when returning from Jerusalem, and he told them how Fortunatus was so skilled a hunter that the birds in the air and the beasts in the wood were all afraid of him; moreover, he knew how to serve, and how to respect each person’s rank. These commendations induced many princes and lords and ladies to present Fortunatus with gifts.
Once the princes and lords had finished jousting, the Duke of Cleves and his son-in-law the Count decided to award two prizes to the lords’ servants in attendance; these were to divide into four groups, two of which would joust for the first prize on one day, and the other two for the remaining prize on the following day, each prize being worth 100 crowns. The servants were pleased, and they harboured hopes of winning the money. There were 80 of them in all, so 40 fought on each day, among them Fortunatus, who carried with him his lord’s blessing. On the first day, one of the Duke of Brabant’s servants, Timothy, won the prize; and Fortunatus was the victor the day after. When his fellow-jousters and the far more numerous group of non-combatants saw this, they were deeply displeased, and to a man they asked Timothy to challenge Fortunatus to a joust and set his winnings against the “Italian’s”; they would all and severally be in his debt. Timothy simply could not refuse the request of so many good companions, and he duly challenged Fortunatus to a contest for the overall prize, who did not hesitate to agree. The lords heard of this contest with great pleasure.

And so they armed themselves at once and went to the combat-ground. The joust began: each rode manfully at the other until, on the fourth joust, Fortunatus sent Timothy sprawling the length of a lance behind his horse, and so won the 200 crowns. Then, for the first time, real envy and hatred
were aroused, especially among the Count of Flanders’ servants; but the Count was delighted that one of his servants had been victorious, and he thought that all of his retinue would share this delight and prefer their companion’s victory to that of a stranger. For he knew nothing of the hatred his servants bore Fortunatus, nor did anyone dare to tell him.

Now there was an old, cunning man among them, called Rupert. He told his fellows that, for 10 crowns in ready money, he would undertake to cause Fortunatus to ride hurriedly away of his own accord, without taking leave of his lord or anyone else; and he would do this in such a fashion that none of the servants would fall under suspicion. As one, they cried: “Oh Rupert, if you can do that, what are you waiting for?” He replied: “I cannot do it without money. Let everyone hand me half a crown, and if I do not get rid of him, I’ll give each of you a whole crown in return.” They all readily agreed, and those who did not have any money at hand borrowed from others. In this way 15 crowns were raised and handed over to Rupert, who said: “Now no one must say anything to him; and make sure you act in all things as you have done previously.” They all promised to do this.

And so Rupert began to befriend Fortunatus; he spoke to him very amicably, telling him the old histories of various countries, and how one lord had conquered another’s land. Although Fortunatus had a benevolent lord, with whom he could stay for the rest of his life, Rupert thought it necessary that he learn about past events. He also revealed many secrets to Fortunatus, and introduced him, to his great delight, to comely women; and wherever they went, he would send out for wine and such sweetmeats as he knew were fit for such occasions. Fortunatus was greatly praised for his wealth and noble nature, which he could well endure; and it seemed that everyone wished to stand in his favour. Whenever they returned from their courting,
he would open his wallet to pay his share of the expenditure, but Rupert would not accept anything, saying that Fortunatus was dearer to him than any of his brothers, he would willingly bestow on him everything he had – and many more flattering words. He was well aware that Italians are reluctant to part with money, and he thought that he could not give a greater proof of loyalty to Fortunatus than by meeting his expenses. And they continued to live in this vein until Rupert’s money had almost run out.

Now the Count’s other servants saw these two living so lavishly, and they said to one another: “Is Rupert trying to rid us of the Italian? If he were over the sea in Cyprus and heard of such a lifestyle as he is now leading, he would waste no time in thinking a way over here. Rupert has not fulfilled his promise, and he must give us 30 crowns – even if he doesn’t have a penny to his name.” Hearing these words, Rupert mocked his comrades, saying: “If I didn’t have your money, how could I have a good time?” But when the money had all been spent, then late one evening, with the Count and his wife being at rest, and there being no cause to stand service, Rupert appeared in Fortunatus’ room and began:

“Our lord’s Chancellor, a good and favourite friend of mine, has told me something in confidence within this last hour; and although he expressly forbade me to reveal it, as I value his friendship, yet I cannot keep it from my good and generous friend – for it is a matter that may well concern you.

“As you know, our lord has taken a noble and beautiful wife, who has many beautiful ladies and maidens in her chamber. Now, he has somehow been struck by the notion that his wife, and these maidens, are in danger from the young chamber-boys who serve them. Although he hopes that the women have too much regard for their honour to even consider a disreputable act, he is only too aware of the blindness and madness of love,
and how difficult it is to quench this flame once it has been lit; only death can separate two faithful lovers. To prevent this, he has resolved – acting on advice which concurs with his own opinion – to ride to Louvain tomorrow, where he will settle some affairs of the greatest importance with the Count of Luxembourg-Saint Poll. He will be taking all his servants along, to appear in the utmost splendour; for he knows that the Count will do likewise. And while he is there, he will have the women’s four servants castrated, whether they like it or lump it. He knows a stout fellow in Louvain who will do this secretly; and he will order this man to collect three or four stout lads and occupy four peasants’ huts in a secluded spot. Then our lord will send his servants in this man’s direction, one each day, with a horse to bring to his wife; and this fellow will be lying in wait for each servant in the morning so he can capture him and forcibly cut off both appendages – let there be no misunderstanding – both testicles. Every care will then be taken to heal them; they will want for nothing. And they shall tell no one, not even one another; then they will be taken home to the women’s apartments, where they will serve the ladies as previously.

“He will tell his wife this and pledge her to secrecy – for he knows that she will then tell her first maid, who will pass this on, and so on – until all the women know. In this way, our Lord hopes to close entry to love in the ladies’ quarters; he knows that no woman can look kindly on a castrated or sackless man, for this runs sharp counter to her nature.”

Fortunatus gave a violent start on hearing this and asked if Rupert knew an exit out of the city? If so, could he please show him it so that he could flee this instant, rather than await his lord’s resolve. “Even if he gave me all he possessed, and made me King of England, I wouldn’t serve him for another day. So help me, dear Rupert, to escape.”
Rupert replied: “Fortunatus, my friend, the city is totally secure, and no one can enter or leave until early morning, when matins are sounded: then the Porta de Vacha – that is, the Cow Gate\(^3\) – is the first gate to be opened. But, my dear Fortunatus, if I was in your position, I wouldn’t swim against the tide; you would be a made man for life. So I’d consent without giving it a second thought.”

“If anyone desires that, then may God grant him his wish!” cried Fortunatus. “But I won’t hear of it, and if I were given the choice between being castrated and made the King of France, or being an ungelded beggar until my dying day, I wouldn’t need anyone’s advice: I’d become a beggar, and never lie in the same spot for two nights.”

“I’m sorry that I disclosed this affair to you, as we’re going to lose you,” sighed Rupert. “I had rather set my hopes on our living as brothers and passing our time together. But as you’re determined to leave, write to me to let me know where you’ll be; that way, I can write back when our lord has found his quota of eunuchs, and you can return. I don’t doubt for a second that you’ll find you have a merciful lord.”

“Don’t write to me. Don’t wait for me,” Fortunatus said hastily. “I’m never returning to the court as long as I live. And I must ask you not to tell anyone I’ve left until I have three days’ riding behind me.”

“I promise you security,” replied Rupert. Preparing to take a sorrowful leave of his friend, he lamented: “May the Grace of God, the pure heart of the blessed Virgin Mary and the blessing of all the saints lead you, accompany you in all that you do, and protect you from all sorrow.” Thus they parted.

\(^3\)“De boeuerie poorte’ – one of the old city-gates.
What good words come from false hearts! Oh Judas, how many descendants you have!

It was around midnight. All were asleep – save Fortunatus. There was no sleep in his head; an hour seemed the length of a day to him; he was in constant dread of the Count hearing of his intention to escape and having him imprisoned. So he waited with sweat and fear until the break of day, whereupon he sprang out of bed, put on his boots and spurs, took his hawk and hound, as if he were going hunting, and rode hurriedly away. Such was his haste that if one of his eyes had fallen out he would not have stopped to pick it up. When he had ridden ten miles he bought another horse, sending back to the Count horse, hound and hawk, so that he had no cause to pursue him; and then he continued on his way.

The Count was greatly surprised at Fortunatus’ sudden departure without leave, for he had neither shown him any ill-will nor given him a reward for his service. So he asked his servants all and severally if they knew the reason for his departure; they all replied that they did not, swearing that they had done him no harm. The Count then went to the Ladies’ Chamber and questioned his wife and her maids. They replied that they knew of no insult or actual harm offered to him; on the contrary, he had been happy when he left them the night before, and had been telling them about
his land, the clothes the women there wore, and other habits and customs. “And he said this in such bad German that we couldn’t suppress our laughter! And when he saw us laughing, he joined in; and laughing he left us.”

“I do not know the truth as of yet,” said the Count, “but I shall know it. And if I discover that one of my retainers is responsible, he will account to me for it. Fortunatus would not have left without cause. He earned around five hundred crowns during his time here; and I did not think that he would ever leave. However, I understand that he is not of a mind to return, for he has taken all his belongings with him.”

When Rupert heard of his lord’s great grief, he was afflicted with fear, and anxious in case one of his companions might reveal the truth; so he went to each and every one, beseeching them to keep their counsel. They earnestly assured him of their silence, but were curious to know what trick he had used to make Fortunatus depart so suddenly and as if he were guilty of some reprehensible deed. One of them was especially insistent with his questions; and as he would not desist, Rupert finally replied:

“As Fortunatus had told me about his father – how he served at the King of Cyprus’s court and fell to poverty – I told him that an express messenger was on his way to the King of England to inform him of the King of Cyprus’s death, the two being close friends. This messenger had told me that the King, while in good health, had knighted his father Theodore and conferred on him the estate belonging to Count Anselm of Terazino, who had died without heirs, thus leaving his estate to the King. Theodore was the first to supplicate the King for this, and it was immediately granted to him and his heirs, then confirmed with letter and seal.
“He didn’t seem to believe me, saying merely, ‘I hope things are going well for my father.’ But then he rode away.”

The other servants said to one another: “How could he have been so unwise! If he had told our lord that such fortune had come his way, he would have had him fitted out with style and dignity, and sent three or four of us with him, and he’d have departed with great honour and enjoyed our lord’s favour all his lifelong days.”

II. Fortunatus in London

Now let us leave the Count and his servants and hear what happened to Fortunatus after he bought a new horse, having returned the old one to its owner. In constant fear of pursuit, he galloped ever faster until he arrived in Calais. Once there, he boarded a ship for England; his dread of castration was so great that he did not feel safe on this side of the sea. Arriving in England with a great sense of relief, he began to regain his spirits, and cheerfully journeyed to the capital, London, a centre for merchants from all over the world.

A richly-stocked galley had recently arrived from Cyprus, and among the many merchants on board there were two youths who had been sent over by their rich fathers and entrusted with much expensive merchandise. This was their first time abroad and they knew only so much about how to behave and handle themselves in foreign lands as they had heard from their fathers; yet their sires had given them wise instruction – had they but followed it! Once the galley had been unloaded and custom duties paid to the King, the youths began to sell their merchandise, receiving in this way great quantities of coin, to their delight; it was a new experience for them to walk around with ready cash. Fortunatus met these youths, and they accorded one
another a convivial reception in a foreign land. They became good friends, and soon fell in with a gang of rascals who were past masters at supplying, for a price, comely women, gaming and revels. And so they lived joyfully enough; when one was given a beautiful lover, another wanted a prettier one – no matter what the cost. This went on for half a year, and then their money began to run out, one having incurred even greater losses than the other.

Fortunatus had the least to lose and so was the first to go broke. Everything he possessed, and then all the proceeds of the youths’ trade in London, was squandered on comely women, who shared it with their knaves. Although the three Cypriots had no money left, they thought that their lovers would still admit them, enjoy their company, and show the generosity that they would have shown. However, their hopes came to nought, for they found the door locked, and mocking female voices called down from a window:

“Come back when you’ve got some more money. If you don’t get any more, then clear off to your ships and sail back to wherever you came from.”

Their knaves, who had previously attended to the youths, addressing them as ‘Sir,’ began to mock as well.
“What sort of a Sir are you?” one asked the youth who had lost 2,000 crowns on his girl. “Is that all the money you had? Just what did you hope to achieve with that?”

“What sort of a Sir are you, if you think we should have you endlessly hanging around for the sake of 2,000 crowns?” another chipped in.

A third turned on Fortunatus. “What a thickhead you are! You had only 500 crowns – why didn't you invest them in other merchandise, instead of passing them on to foolish women? If you’d handled your affairs well, they’d have lain with you for next to nothing.”

Meanwhile, all the Cypriot merchants had finished trading and the patron had set a day for their return. The order went out to all these merchants to load their cargoes, so the two youths went back to their lodgings to check their accounts. They saw that they had received much money, and what they should have purchased with that money, according to their fathers’ instructions – but there was no money left. It had all been given for wet sugar. And if the original sum had been larger, there would still have been nothing left. They returned home with empty hands, and although I do not know what kind of reception they were given by their fathers, I am sure it was not warm, for they did not bring back a good account.

Alone and penniless, Fortunatus thought: ‘If I had two or three crowns, I would go to France. I might find a lord there.’ So he ran back to his girl and appealed to her for the loan of two or three crowns so he could go to a cousin in Flanders who had 400 crowns, and he could bring these back. Then they could have a good time.

She said: “If you know where to get money, you can do it without bothering me.”
Now that he realised that there was no money to be had here, he thought: ‘If I had my money once more, I wouldn’t give it to her to keep’. “Darling,” he began, “at least send for some wine! Let’s have a drink together.”

“Go, take him a pot of beer,” she told her maid, “and let the ass swill.” Thus did she show him her gratitude.

Being thus abandoned, Fortunatus thought: ‘I must find someone to serve until I’ve gathered together a few crowns’. And the next morning, he walked to a square in Lombard Street where a multitude of people met to do business. He asked if anyone was in need of a servant, and he was hired by a rich Florentine merchant, one Geronimo Roberti. This merchant required a large retinue for purposes of trade, and so moved around in great state. He promised Fortunatus two crowns a month and took him home, where he straightaway began to serve at table. Observing him, the master of the house realised that his new servant was no stranger to honourable people, and so he sent him on an errand. Now, ships were unable to come within 20 miles of the city, congregating instead in the mouth of the Thames; and Fortunatus was sent there with wares to load, and orders to supervise the unloading of arrivals, which duties he carried out in exemplary fashion.

There was a young Florentine, named Andrea, a rich man’s son. His father had entrusted him with a great store of goods and sent him to Bruges in Flanders, but within a short space of time he had squandered the lot. Nor did he stop at this. He took up more money by bills of exchange, writing to his father that he would send him a great store of merchandise at a large profit. The good father believed this and paid for his son, so much and so long until he had nothing left; and still he was waiting for the wares his son was supposed to send him. He will no doubt have a long wait, for the rogue
had totally ruined himself and his father – as do many sons in whom their fathers place too much faith and trust.

And when Andrea had not so much as a bean left, having totally lost all credit among the merchants, and also among the whores and knaves, so that no-one was willing to give or lend him even a penny, he thought he would return to Florence, where he would find and leech some old widow. And as he was travelling homewards, he arrived in a French town named Tours, in the Touraine. Having heard from his innkeeper that there was a rich nobleman from London in prison, he said: “My dear host, may I not see the prisoner?”

“I’ll certainly take you to him,” replied the innkeeper, “but he’s fettered so fast that he’s a pitiful sight to behold.”

Andrea had a good command of English. When the prisoner asked him where he came from, he replied: “I’m a Florentine on my way back to my city.”

“Do you perhaps know Geronimo Roberti in London?” inquired the prisoner.

“Oh yes, I know him well,” said Andrea. “He’s a good friend of mine.”
“Dear Andrea, let your journey to Florence wait. Go to London, to Geronimo Roberti, and tell him to help to get me freed from here. He knows me and he knows what I am worth. I rode out in the King’s service, thinking that my friend the King would have me released from here; but he refuses to do this, for he says that he gave me large wages – four crowns a day to equip two horses – and he asks: ‘Why did he not ride around in a wider circuit to escape falling into the enemy’s hands?’ And then: ‘It is not fitting for a King to ransom a prisoner, for if such a prisoner is valued at a thousand crowns, then the King must pay ten thousand crowns to free him.’ Because of this they will not free me, and this cannot last much longer. I am losing my body; my thighs are falling away, as you can see. Now tell Geronimo Roberti to help to have me released. They had valued me at two thousand crowns, but because I have been so scorned and neglected, I think they would take less – especially if they saw that foreigners wanted to ransom me. I hope that I could be brought away from here for a thousand crowns at best – tell that to Geronimo, and tell him this, too, that he will be repaid threefold for what he spends on me. And so, dear Andrea, show energy and zeal in this affair, and I promise and swear to you that I shall give you 500 crowns and procure you a good position. Also, tell my friends that you have been here with me, and that they are to stand surety for me to Geronimo.”

Andrea told the prisoner that he would faithfully do his utmost in this concern, and he then sped to London, where he delivered his message to Geronimo Roberti, who lent a ready ear, and craved assurance that he would receive three crowns in return for every one. Now he knew fine well that Andrea was a rogue; nevertheless, he said to him: “Go to his friends and the King’s Court, and if you can find a guarantor then I’ll lend the money.”
Andrea sought out the prisoner’s friends and told them of the state he was in, and how he was held in biting chains. However, the matter did not seem to touch them deeply, and they directed him towards the King or his counsellors, to repeat his tale there. But when he arrived at Court, and failed to make any headway in his business, he heard that the King of England had given his sister in marriage to the Duke of Burgundy,\(^4\) to whom he was due to send gifts, which he had barely finished assembling, for they were presents of great value. He had entrusted these to an upright nobleman, who lived with his wife and child in London. But when Andrea heard at Court that the nobleman had such valuable items in his keeping, he soon found out his company, and he told him how he had heard that the King wished to send him with expensive gifts to the Duke of Burgundy. He would cordially request if it were possible to let him see them, for he was a jeweller, and he had heard in Florence that the King was enquiring after valuables; he had travelled all this distance in the hope that the King would buy some of his wares. The good nobleman said: “Wait until I have finished here. Then come with me and I shall show you them.”

And when he had finished, he took Andrea home with him. It being past midday, he said: “Let us dine first, to avoid my wife’s displeasure.” So they sat at table together, where the Florentine was treated with honour, for an extremely long time; for it is the English custom to spend at least two hours over a meal, especially when they have guests. Now when they had eaten and made merry, the nobleman led Andrea to his bedroom. Opening up a beautiful coffer, he placed the jewels into a wooden casket and let his guest look his fill. There were five in total, worth over 60,000 crowns, and

\(^4\) Margaret of York, daughter of King Edward IV, married Charles the Bold of Burgundy in 1468. Edward, who was renowned for his generosity, sent four magnificent jewels to Charles in Ghent.
the longer you looked at them, the more pleasing they seemed to the eye. Andrea lavished praise on them and said: “I have a number of jewels which, if set like these, would put many a gem to shame.” The nobleman heard this with pleasure, thinking: ‘If he has expensive jewels, that is more for our King to buy.’ As they returned to the Court, Andrea said: “At midday tomorrow you will dine with me at Geronimo Roberti’s house, and I’ll show you my jewels”; and the nobleman was pleased.

Then Andrea went to Geronimo Roberti and said: “I’ve found a man at the King’s Court who I hope will help us to achieve the captive’s release, and you will receive good and certain security on the King’s account.” Geronimo was delighted, and so Andrea continued: “Prepare tomorrow’s meal all the more sumptuously, and I’ll bring him to dine with us.” And this was done.

At meal-time on the following day Andrea brought the man. Before they sat down to table he told Geronimo to make little mention of the prisoner, for the matter must be kept secret. So they ate and made merry for a long while, and when the meal was over, Geronimo went to his counting-room. Then Andrea said to the nobleman: “Come up with me to my chamber and I’ll show you my jewels.” They went up to the chamber above the hall in which they had eaten, and as they entered, Andrea, making as if to open a large chest, drew a knife and stabbed him to the ground. He then slashed the nobleman’s throat, prised from his thumb a golden ring, in which his insignia were magnificently engraved, and took the keys from his belt. Racing to the nobleman’s house, Andrea told his wife: “Lady, your husband has sent me here to request you to send him the jewels he showed me yesterday. As proof, he sends you his ring and seal and the keys to the chest that contains them.” The woman believed his words and opened the coffer,
but the jewels were not there. There were three keys; she opened all the compartments, but still found nothing. The woman gave the keys and ring back to Andrea and said: “Go and tell him that we couldn’t find them, and he must come himself and have a look.” Andrea was frightened out of his wits at having committed such an evil crime and yet not having acquired the jewels; he wanted to be away with them at once.

But while he had been making his way to the nobleman’s house, back at Geronimo Roberti’s, blood had begun to trickle through the floorboards into the dining-room. Seeing this, the master hastily called the servants and said: “Where is that blood coming from?” Running upstairs, they came across the good nobleman lying dead on the floor. They were shocked to the bone and, for sheer terror, at an utter loss for what to do.

And as they looked at one another in desperation, the scoundrel arrived, out of breath and looking dreadful. “Oh, you rogue!” they yelled at him, “what have you done, murdering this man?” He replied: “The villain was going to murder me, because he thought he would find costly jewels on my person; I preferred killing to being killed. So keep your mouths shut, and make no alarm; I’ll throw him down the privy and hurry away. And if anyone enquires after him, you say: ‘Once they had eaten, they left the house together, and since that time none of us has seen any sign of them.’” The rogue Andrea did as he said: he threw the corpse into the privy and then hasted night and day to escape the land, not daring to linger in any place for fear of being pursued and punished for his heinous crime. Speeding to Venice, he hired himself out as a rower on a galley destined for Alexandria, where he had no sooner arrived but he renounced the Christian faith. There the villain was treated well, and he was immune from punishment for his
misdemeanour; and if he had murdered a hundred Christians, his safety would still have been assured.

While these events were taking place, Fortunatus was not in London, but had travelled in Geronimo Roberti’s service to the town of Sandwich, where he supervised the loading of his master’s wares onto a ship. Now when he made his way back to London, having executed his duties as commanded, and he walked into his master’s house, he was not greeted or welcomed as warmly as on past occasions when returning from an errand. It also seemed to him that his master, the servants and the maids were in much lower spirits than when he had left. Deeply concerned, he asked the housekeeper what had happened in the house in his absence to make everyone there so sad. The good old housekeeper (who the master was very fond of) said to him: “Fortunatus, don’t let it worry you. Our master has received a letter from Florence with news of a close friend’s death, and that’s why he’s grieving so. He isn’t closely enough related to him to have to wear black, but he would rather have lost a brother than this good friend.” Fortunatus left it at that, refrained from further questioning, and joined his master in mourning.

Now when the nobleman had not returned home by nightfall, nor sent his wife a message, she was surprised, but said nothing. When there was
still no sign of him the next morning, she sent a kinsman to the King’s court to enquire after her husband: had he been sent away in the King’s service? If not, where was he? When the news spread that the nobleman was missing, the King’s Counsellors were amazed that he had not turned up at Court. The tale soon reached the King’s ears, and he commanded: “Go to his house at once and see if he has the jewels away.” For the King was strongly of the opinion that he had absconded with them; although he knew this nobleman to be an upstanding character, he thought that the precious wares had made him a villain. And then the matter came out, so that everyone asked one another if they perhaps knew of the nobleman’s whereabouts? But no-one had any news of him to give. So the King sent post-haste to the wife to inquire after and seek the jewels; although he held the man dear, most of his queries were concerned with the gems. From this we can see that, when money arrives, love leaves.

The wife answered: “Today is the third day since I last saw my husband.”

“What did he say when he left you?” they asked.

“He was going to eat with the Florentines, and he sent one of them here with his seal and keys to take the jewels over to him. He was in Geronimo Roberti’s house, where they have many splendid jewels that they wanted to value against these. So I took him to my room and opened up the coffer, to which he had the key, but we didn’t find what we were seeking. The man had to leave without the gems, which he was reluctant to do, and he urged me to search closely; but we couldn’t find them.”

They asked if her husband had a secret coffer; she replied that he had no other, “for he laid all his wealth, his letters and his seal in this one. The
jewels were there as well, but they aren’t there any longer; if they had been, I would have sent them to him.”

When the messengers heard this, they broke all the chests, coffers and boxes open, but all to no avail. The lady suffered a sharp fright at having this violence done to her in her own home; the King’s messengers were also frightened at not being able to find the man or the valuables. When they made their report to the King, he missed the jewels more than the money they had cost, for such treasures are not to be found for sale; it does not matter how much wealth you possess. Neither the King nor his counsellors knew how to proceed in the concern; but they concluded that Geronimo Roberti and his household should be apprehended and made to account for the nobleman.

This happened on the fifth day after the murder. The bailiffs waited until dinner was being eaten, then they burst into the house and found all the household together: two masters, two scribes, a cook, a stable-lad, two maids and Fortunatus – nine people in all. They were taken to prison, placed in separate cells, and severally asked what had become of the two men. Every one of them immediately replied that both men had left after finishing their meal, and since that time they had neither sight nor sound of them. Not satisfied with this answer, the bailiffs took the keys from the masters and servants and went to the house, where they searched the stables, the cellars, and the vaults, in which the merchandise was stored. They looked everywhere, thinking to find the man’s buried body, but their search was fruitless.

Now just as the bailiffs were about to leave, there was one of them who carried a large, burning lantern, which he had used to examine the dark corners, without having yet found anything of relevance. This man yanked a
handful of dry straw from a bed, set it alight, threw it down the privy, and bent forward. And he saw the nobleman’s feet and ankles sticking up. “Murder, foul murder!” he roared, “the man’s lying here in the privy!” So they broke the privy open and dragged the man out, all grimy, and with his throat slashed. Then they laid him in the open street before Geronimo Roberti’s house, filthy and stinking as he was; and when the English caught wind of the vile murder, such a hue and cry was raised against the Florentines and the Lombards that they had to make themselves scarce, and hide behind lock and key, for if any of them had been seen in the streets he would have been battered to death by the common man. The foully-reeking corpse was left in the open street until the third day, to put the Lombards to grief and shame.

The news swiftly reached the King and the judge, whereupon the order was given that master and servants should be tortured, wracked and excruciated to discover the true details of the man’s death; each prisoner was to be tortured alone, and his confession was to be taken down exactly; and it was of prime importance to enquire after the jewels. So the executioner came, seized the master first, and tied him to the torture-bench; and he began to wrack him severely, so that he reveal who had murdered the man and why they had killed him, and where the King’s jewels were. The good Geronimo could mark only too clearly, from the executioner’s impetuousness and the fierce torments being laid on him, that the murder which had taken place in his house, without his connivance, had been discovered; and he was saddened to the heart. But seeing that it could not be helped, he began to recount all that had come to pass: how Andrea had requested him to prepare a good meal, for he wished to bring a nobleman as guest, who would help him to effect the release of a nobleman lying prisoner in Tours. “I did this
with good intent, for the love of my gracious lord the King and of the whole land; and I did not know otherwise. After dinner, I sat in my counting-room, writing, and I took no further heed of them. When I had finished, I left the room, and it was then that I saw blood running down from the guest-room into the dining-room. I was deeply shocked, and I sent my servants upstairs to take a look. They told me what was there, but I had no idea how this had happened. At that moment the scoundrel Andrea came running in, and I took him to task about the murder. He said that the man was going to kill him, but God gave him the luck to strike the first blow; he then lifted the man up, cast him in the privy, and fled that very instant. And I have no knowledge of where he has come.”

And as Geronimo said, so said all the others under torture, except Fortunatus; however brutally he was wracked, he confessed nothing, for he was totally ignorant of the affair, not having been in the house when these events had taken place. When it proved impossible to learn the location of the jewels, the King became angry; and he ordered that they all be hung, and bound in iron chains so that no one could take them down, nor would they soon fall down. He had a new gallows erected between the city and Westminster, which is the site of a beautiful palace with the King’s council chamber and of a large, splendid cathedral; more human traffic passes between the city and the palace than in the rest of the capital. And to this spot Geronimo Roberti and all his household were taken. The executioner began with the two maids, burying them alive beneath the gallows, and then turned to the master; next came the servants, beginning with the most senior. Fortunatus saw all this unfolding, and as far as he knew, he was about to be hung as well; and he thought: ‘Oh God, had I stayed with my pious lord the
And when the cook was being led up the ladder – he was the last, apart from Fortunatus – he was an Englishman, and he cried out in a loud voice, so that many spectators heard, that Fortunatus knew nothing about the affair. Although the judge knew that he was innocent, he wanted to have him hung; and he was of the opinion that, if Fortunatus were released, he would have the life beaten out of his body anyway. But the judge was eventually persuaded not to have him executed, for this man was not a Florentine, and he was innocent; so he told Fortunatus: “Now get out of this land at once, or the alley-women will batter you to death.” He provided two lads to lead him to the water; and Fortunatus travelled over field and flood, and made his way out of the land.

After Geronimo and his servants had been gibbeted, the King let the populace plunder the merchant’s house (his counsellors having already removed the best items). A great amount was taken, and it was finders’ keepers; no one was to be taken to account. When the other Florentines and Lombards heard about this sacking, they were sorely afraid for their belongings and their lives, and they sent the King sacks of money so he would grant them safe-conduct; after all, they were not guilty. So the King
was moved to graciousness, and he gave them a safe-conduct, which enabled them to circulate and buy and sell as previously.

Now you may be wondering why the honest Geronimo Roberti and all his servants were hung so shamefully, when they were all innocent and deeply saddened at what had happened. Yet this is no cause for wonder, the reason being that Imperial Law states that no one may keep silence about a murder; anyone who conceals, or helps to suppress it, and does not reveal it as soon as possible, is effectively in league with the man whose hand did the deed. And from this cause the good Geronimo and his servants came out of their lives and temporal possessions.

A long while after, the King was still eager to know where the jewels were, and he would willingly have given piles of money to discover the truth. So he had it proclaimed that anyone who could provide information on their whereabouts would receive 1,000 nobles; and letters were sent to many Royal courts, princes and lords, and rich and mighty towns, enquiring whether anyone had offered such jewels for sale. Yet the search still remained fruitless, which aroused much curiosity, for everyone would only too readily have laid hands on the reward.

This impasse remained until the nobleman’s wife, having observed the Trental, began to lay aside more and more of her sorrow with each passing day. She invited her friends and neighbours over; among them was a woman who had been widowed shortly before, and she said: “If you follow me, I’ll teach you to get over your husband’s death in no time. Make your bed in another room – if you don’t want to do that, at least move it to a new position. And when you lie down at night, then think of a handsome young friend you’d like to have to husband, and speak your displeasure: ‘The dead
to the dead, and the living together’. That’s what I did when my husband died.” The noble lady replied: “Oh, my good friend, my husband was so dear to my heart, I can’t forget him so soon.”

But she had taken close note of her friend’s words; and the moment the ladies left the house she began to tidy up her bedroom, having her husband’s chests and boxes removed and replaced with her own, and his bedstead moved to a new place. When the bedstead was shifted, there, underneath the bed, and against a post, was the coffer with the jewels. The woman recognised it, and lifted it up; then she ordered the rearrangement of the rooms to continue as it had begun, and sent for one of her kinsmen. She told him how she had found the jewels without difficulty; but if she had not decided to move the bed, they would have lain undisturbed for a long time yet, for no one had thought to seek them there. And she desired his advice on how to handle the matter. He was pleased to hear that the jewels had been found, and he said to her: “You wish my advice, and so I shall recommend what seems best to me: namely, that you take the jewels this instant to the King. I shall accompany you, and we shall make means to be brought before the King himself, where we can personally deliver the jewels into his hands, and tell him the truth about how you found them; and you will submit yourself to his bounty for the finder’s reward. For if the jewels were withheld from the King, with a purpose to extort a large reward; or if they were sent abroad to be sold, the news having travelled through every land that the King has lost these particular items: when they were located, all those involved would lose their lives and goods, and the jewels would be returned to him anyway.”

5 Thirty days of mourning.
The woman was well content with this advice, and attiring herself splendidly – but also as befits a woman in mourning –, she went with her kinsman to the Palace and desired admittance to the King. Being informed of this, he granted her an audience in his chamber. When she came before the King, she fell down on her knees, showing due reverence through a gesture that became her well, and in which she was well-versed, and she said: “My gracious Lord King, I, your poor servant, come before your mighty Majesty to inform you that the jewels you had in keeping in my house, which my late husband was entrusted to deliver to my Lady the Duchess of Burgundy – that I have found these jewels today, in my bedroom. They were behind a bed-post; when I was moving the bed I came upon the coffer, and the moment I found it I made haste to deliver it into your hands.” And with these words she handed him the coffer. The King opened it and found, to his delight, every jewel in its rightful place; and he ordered that they should find their appointed end. He was greatly pleased with the diligence the woman had shown in entrusting the jewels to none but him alone, and he thought it only meet and proper that he reward her and compensate her sorrow; her good husband had, after all, lost his life on account of these gems. So he summoned to court a young nobleman, who was very handsome and well-formed, and he said: “I have a request to make you, which you should not refuse.” The youth replied: “Gracious lord, you should not entreat me, but command me; and I shall be obedient to your behest.” Then the King called for a priest, and then and there, in his presence, he gave the youth in marriage to the woman and loaded her with gifts; and the couple lived in great joy with one another. The woman went to her friend and thanked her profusely for the counsel she had given to move the bed, for: “If I hadn’t heeded your words, our lord the King
wouldn’t have his jewels, nor would I have a handsome young husband. So it is good to follow the advice of the wise.”

III. The Choice in the Wood

You have heard how Fortunatus left London and what fearful straits he was in. Now listen to what befell him thereafter. Having no money left, he hurried to get away from the English, and he soon arrived in Picardy, where he was only too ready to serve, but he could not find a master. Pressing further on, he arrived in Brittany; it is a strong land, with many towering mountains and deep forests. And as he was travelling through, he found himself in a large, wild wood, like the Bohemian or Thuringian forests. When Fortunatus was some distance inside, he lost his way, and walked all day without being able to get out. With the falling of night he came upon an old hut in which glass had been made many years before. He was greatly relieved, for he thought he would find people inside, but there was no one. Nonetheless, he spent the night in the miserable hut, all hungry as he was, and in fear of the wild beasts that have their home in the forest; and he lay in hard longing for the day, hoping that God would help him out of the wood before he died of hunger. And when dawn began to break, Fortunatus raised himself up and set off at a rapid pace; but instead of following a diagonal
course, as he should have done, he headed straight on along the length of the forest, and for all his walking, he could find no way out. So he passed another day with a heavy heart; and when night began to fall, he felt thoroughly weak and exhausted, for he had not had a bite to eat in two days. Then he chanced upon a fountain and lapped the water up, and this helped him to regain some strength.

And as Fortunatus was kneeling by the fountain, the moon began to shine strongly; and then he heard a loud crackling in the forest, and the growling of bears. He knew he could not stay where he was, and also that there was no point in running away, for the wild animals would soon catch him up. So he thought it best to climb a tree; next to the fountain there was a tall one with many branches, and he clambered up this. Looking down, he could see all species of wild beasts coming to drink, and beat and bite one another, and indulge in all kind of fierce frolics; but among them was a half-grown bear, who winded Fortunatus, and began to climb the tree. Fortunatus was deeply alarmed, and he scrambled further and further up, with the bear following close on his heels. But when Fortunatus could climb no higher, he lay down on a branch, drew his sword, and stabbed the bear in the head, giving him numerous wounds. The bear was roused to fury, and it lifted its front paws off the tree to pummel its attacker; but having lost its hold, it fell backwards through the branches with many loud snaps, and landed so hard on the ground that the crash resounded through the wood. When the other wild animals heard the heavy fall, they fled as fast as they could. Now they had all gone, except for the fallen bear; it lay beneath the tree, too badly hurt to move from the spot, but not quite dead.
Fortunatus sat in the tree and did not dare come down; but his eyes began to grow so heavy that he was afraid of dropping off to sleep and falling out of the tree, thereby laming or killing himself. So, with a pounding heart, he worked his way down, gripped his sword, and plunged it into the bear. Placing his mouth to its wounds, he sucked the warm blood, which restored some of his strength, and he thought: “If I had a fire now, I’d soon fend off my hunger.” But the need to sleep was so pressing that he lay down beside the dead bear and was out like a light; and he slept soundly. When he awoke, he opened his eyes to see that dawn had broken, and a beautiful woman was standing before him.

He began to glorify God, saying: “Oh almighty God, I speak my thanks and Your praise, for that I have seen a human being before I died.” Then he said: “Dear Lady, dear Maiden – I do not know how to address you – I beseech you, for the love of our Lord, that you help me by advising the way out of this wood; for today is the third day of my wandering around this forest without tasting food.” And he told her about his encounter with the bear.

She asked: “Where are you from?”

“I am from Cyprus,” he replied.

“What are you doing in these parts?”
“I have been driven by poverty to wander here and seek provision from God, hoping He will grant me sufficient fortune to make a living.”

And she said: “Fortunatus, fear not. I am Lady Fortune; and through the influence of the heavens, the stars and the planets, I have been granted six virtues which I can in turn bestow on others – one, or two, or more – according to the hours and government of the planets. They are: Wisdom; Riches; Strength; Health; Beauty; and Long Life. So choose one from the six, and do not be long choosing; the hour for conferring Fortune is nigh at an end.”

And he did not deliberate long, but said: “Then I desire Riches, that I shall always have sufficiency of money.”

At once she drew forth a purse, gave it to Fortunatus, and said: “Take this purse; and whenever you reach inside, you will find ten gold pieces current in the land you are in, wherever you may be. And the purse will hold this virtue for your life and the lives of your next, legitimate heirs; no longer. If it comes into other hands during this time, it will still have this virtue and power. So let it be dear to you, and take close care.”

As hungry as he was, Fortunatus felt full of strength from the purse and the hope it gave him. “Most virtuous of ladies,” he began, “now that you have endowed me so laudably, it is but fitting that I be obliged to do
something for you, so as not to forget the benefit you have conferred on me.”

The maiden spoke very graciously to Fortunatus: “Since you are so willing to requite the kindness that has come your way through me, I shall commend three tasks to you, which you must perform for my sake on this day every year for the rest of your life. You should celebrate this day, abstain from sexual relations, and, in whatever land you may find yourself, seek out a poor man with a daughter of marriageable age, who would like to provide her with a husband but is prevented by poverty. You should clothe her honourably and delight daughter and parents with the endowment of 400 gold pieces in the coin of their land. In memory of the pleasure I have given you today, give pleasure to a poor maiden every year.”

“Most virtuous of maids,” replied Fortunatus, “have no doubt that I shall never forget to carry out these tasks with due honour every year, for I have taken them to heart and imprinted them into unforgettable remembrance.” But above all else, Fortunatus’s thoughts were occupied with finding the way out of the wood, so he said: “Beautiful lady, advise me now, help me out of this forest.”

Lady Fortune said, “Your losing your way in this wood, which you construed as a stroke of ill fortune, has turned to your advantage.” And she told him, “Follow me.”

Then she led him crosswise through the forest to a beaten path and said: “Walk straight ahead down this path, do not turn around, do not look to see what becomes of me; and if you do this, you will soon come out of the wood.”

Fortunatus did as the Lady advised, hurrying down the path as fast as he could, and so came out of the wood. And before him he saw a large
house; this was an inn where those who were about to walk or ride through the forest would stop to eat. As Fortunatus drew nearer, he sat down and pulled the gift-purse from his bosom, intending to test the truth of the maiden’s words, and to see if he would have anything to pay his charges; for other money had he none. So he reached into the moneybag, and drew out 10 crowns; and when he saw them, you may take my word that he was thoroughly thrilled. Entering the inn with delight in his heart, he told the host to lay down some food, for he was ravenously hungry; and if he served him well, he would be well paid for his trouble. The innkeeper was well pleased with these words and respectfully brought his guest his best fare. After satisfying his hunger, Fortunatus stayed in the inn overnight, and the next morning, sating and refreshing himself. Then he settled his reckoning to his host’s liking, and set out on his travels once more.

IV. The Count of the Wood

Now there was a small town and a castle two miles from the wood, where lived a Count who was known as The Count of the Wood. He had jurisdiction over the region of the wood, at the Duke of Brittany’s behest. Fortunatus walked into the best inn, bade the keeper serve up his choicest fare, and asked him if he knew of any fine horses for sale. “Why yes,” he said, “there’s a foreign merchant arrived here only yesterday with 15 handsome horses, and he’s on his way to the wedding the Duke of Brittany will be celebrating with the King of Aragon’s daughter. Our Count wants to give him 300 crowns for three of the horses, but he won’t accept less than 320; and these 20 crowns are the bone of contention.” Fortunatus slinked into an empty room and counted 600 crowns out of his purse; after putting
them back in, he returned to the innkeeper and asked: “Where is the horse-dealer? If they’re really so fine, I would like to have a look at them.”

“I’m afraid he won’t let you see them,” said the innkeeper. “Our Lord the Count was barely able to prevail on him to let him see them.”

“If I like the horses, I may well dare to buy them before the Count does.”

The innkeeper thought that Fortunatus was speaking in jest, for there was great wealth in his talk, but his clothes were shabby, and he had arrived on foot. But he took him to the horse-dealer nonetheless, and spoke so far with the man, that he let Fortunatus see the horses, and rode them before him. Although Fortunatus was highly pleased with all fifteen, he wanted only those three that the Count wished to have. Knowing that the dispute was over 20 crowns, he at once took out 320 crowns, handed them over, and ordered the horses to be brought to his inn. Then he sent for the saddler and instructed him to spare no expense on saddles and riding equipment. After this, he ordered the innkeeper to help him find two servants who could ride; he would pay them well.

While Fortunatus was handling matters in this fashion, the news of his purchase of the horses reached the Count. He was deeply displeased, and he roundly cursed himself, for he liked the horses greatly, and should not have lost them for the sake of 20 crowns; moreover, he wanted to ride to the wedding festivities, and to be seen there. In his anger he sent one of his servants to the innkeeper to inquire what kind of man this was who had bought the horses out of his hands. The innkeeper replied that he did not know this man; he had come to his inn on foot and poorly-clad, and had said: ‘Serve me well, and I’ll pay you well.’ He continued: “I took such a shine to his appearance, that when he had eaten his first meal, I didn’t set a
second down before him until that one was paid for.” The servant was angry with the innkeeper for accompanying the stranger to buy the horses. He replied, “I acted as a good innkeeper should – doing anything for his guest that may be done with honour. He asked me to go with him; I didn’t think he could afford a donkey.”

The servant came to the Count with this tale. When the Count heard that the stranger was not of noble blood, he furiously cried to his men: “Go and seize this man. He has stolen the money, or robbed or murdered someone!” So they laid hands on Fortunatus, conveyed him to a bad prison, and asked him where he was from.

“From Cyprus, a town called Famagusta.”

The Count was pleased to hear that he came from such a faraway land. They asked who his father was.

“A poor nobleman.”

They asked where all his coins came from, to make him so rich.

“The money is mine; I trust I’m not obliged to say where it comes from. And if there is anyone who accuses me of having done him violence or an injustice, I’ll justify myself to him before a Court of Law.”

“You’re yapping won’t help you,” said the Count. “You will tell me where you got that money.”
And he had him dragged to the place where dangerous types were tortured and had him winched up into the air. When Fortunatus saw the turn events had taken, he was shocked to the marrow; nevertheless, he resolved to die sooner than reveal the secret of the purse. And as he hung there, loaded with heavy weights, he said that he would answer their questions if they set him down. When his feet touched the ground again, the Count said: “Now be quick, and tell me where you got all those lovely crowns.”

Fortunatus recounted how he had lost his way in the forest, and wandered for more than two days without a morsel of food passing his lips; “and when, through God’s mercy, I came to the end of the wood, I found a purse containing 610 crowns.”

“Where is the purse that held these crowns?” asked the Count.

“When I had counted the money, I poured it into my moneybag and threw the empty bag into the river that flows before the wood.”

“Oh you rogue,” said the Count, “so you wanted to estrange me from my possessions, did you? Well, lend an ear to this: you have forfeited your life and your goods to me, because everything in the wood belongs to me – it is my personal property!”

“Merciful lord,” said Fortunatus, “I knew nothing about your jurisdiction. I just took it for a gift from God and blessed Him.”

“I don’t give a damn that you didn’t know,” retorted the Count. “Didn’t you hear? He who does not know must ask. In short, prepare yourself: today I’ll take your goods, and tomorrow your life.”

Fortunatus thought: ‘Poor me! When I had the choice of one of the six gifts, why did I not choose wisdom instead of wealth? I wouldn’t now be in so terrifying and desperate a predicament.’ And he began to make all sorts of promises: “Dear lord, share mercy with me! How would my death
profit you? Take your property that I found, and leave me my life, and I’ll faithfully remember you in my prayers for the rest of my days.”

The Count was reluctant to spare his life, for he feared that Fortunatus would spread the tale of the treatment he had received at his hands wherever he came, which would ruin his reputation among the princes and lords. Yet he was moved to mercy, and so before dawn the next morning he had Fortunatus shown the town-gates and made to swear that never again, as long as he lived, would he set foot on the Count’s land. Fortunatus did this, secretly pleased at his escape; for if the Count had learnt the truth, he would not have been released. The servants suggested to the Count that he give the man a crown for food, but he refused point-blank: “He learnt how to beg before he found that purse; he may now resume that career.” Then, scorning the law, he confiscated the three horses and the money from Fortunatus; and there are many others who unlawfully rob people of what is rightfully theirs. His name was Artelin, Count of the Nundragon Wood.

V. Lupoldus

Now when Fortunatus was free, he did not dare to dip his hand into his purse to take money for food, but went begging for two days; he was afraid that he would be imprisoned again, if it were discovered that he had money. And he arrived at the port of Nantes, the capital of Brittany, where a great crowd of princes and nobles was assembled, in attendance on the Princess. They were passing their time in jousting, dancing, and every pleasurable and delightful recreation. This was a sweet sight to Fortunatus’s eyes, and he thought: ‘Now I have and I own as much ready money as the whole assemblage – but I cannot use it as I wish. I mark only too well: they have lands and liegemen; what they command, their vassals must execute.
Whereas if I were to act like them, it might not be to everyone’s liking, and I would have no one to lend me support.’ Therefore he said to himself: “it does not become me to act the junker here, or to swan around in splendour.” He felt in his mind the treatment the Count of the Wood had accorded him – giving him innocent to torture.

Nonetheless he bought two fine horses and engaged a servant; he apparreled himself and his man very stylishly, and he had the horses exquisitely attired. Then he rode into the best inn in Nantes, intending to witness the wedding celebrations to the end, for he saw that the festivities would be splendid, and many princes and lords would be riding thither. There is no need for me to detail the magnificence of this event; after all, nowadays one sees so many petty burghers throwing weddings at which they cannot parade enough extravagance, and spending so much as they will later come to regret. But the Duke held a superb wedding, which lasted for six weeks and three days following the arrival of the Princess. Need I describe the majesty of her reception? She came by sea, accompanied by many large sailing-ships and galleys; and a host of ships was sent out to receive her with honour. But she was greeted with even greater honour and ceremony, by her lord and husband and by other princes and lords, when she arrived on land.

Fortunatus observed all of this with delight. Now it was his habit to ride towards the Court, leaving nothing behind in the inn. This was not to the innkeeper’s liking, for he did not know Fortunatus, and he was afraid that he would ride off without paying, as had often happened to him in the past; and this still occurs at such festivities. Therefore he said to his guest: “Dear friend, I don’t know you. Be so good as to pay me every day?” Laughing, Fortunatus replied: “Dear host, I shall not ride away without paying!” Then he drew 100 shining crowns out of his purse, gave them to
the innkeeper, and said: "Take this, and when it seems to you that I, or whoever is with me, has used up more than this amount covers, then I shall give you more. You need not show me any reckoning." The innkeeper took the money with delight; and from that moment on, he treated Fortunatus with the greatest respect. Whenever he met this guest, he would doff his cap; he placed him among the best seats at table; and he moved him to a better chamber.

And when Fortunatus, some nobles and other gentlemen were at their food, many kinds of poem-reciter and minstrel would come to the high table to entertain the sitters, and to earn some money. Now on one occasion an old nobleman appeared and bewailed his poverty to the lords. He said that he was a noble born of Hibernia; he had been on the wander for seven years and had passed through two Empires and twenty Christian Kingdoms, which was as much to say as all the Kingdoms in the Christian world. Having travelled to the bottom of his purse, he requested that they provide him with the means to return to his homeland.

There was an Earl at the table. He asked the man, "What are the names of all these Kingdoms?"

The good nobleman counted them off, one after the other, and continued, "Every Kingdom has three or four Duchies, and temporal and
spiritual lords owning land and lieges; and I have visited all. Where a land has its own, distinctive tongue, I have grasped enough of the language to communicate what is expedient. I also have in writing the name of each King whose Court I visited and the distance between the Kingdoms.”

“I wish that I had been at all those places with you,” said the Earl, “and that I had returned. And I think it not unlikely that anyone who wished to visit every country would need a great deal of fortitude and money.”

“Yes, my Lord,” replied the good nobleman, “you see both good and evil, and you have to overnight in many squalid inns and suffer deep humiliation.”

The Earl gave him four crowns and declared that the old man could stay for the duration of the festival, if he wished, and he would cover his expenses.

The good nobleman thanked him warmly, but said that he was longing to return home to his friends; he had been long away. And he gave profuse thanks for the gift. Now Fortunatus had been listening closely to the old nobleman’s words, and he thought: ‘If this man became my servant, and led me through various countries, I would reward him generously.’ So as soon as the meal was done, he sent for the old man to come to his chamber, where he asked him his name.

“Lupoldus,” was the reply.

“I understand that you have travelled far and seen many Royal Courts. Now, I am a young man, and I would like to travel while I am young and able. And if it pleased you to be my guide, I would furnish you with a fine horse and hire you a personal servant, and I would hold you as a brother. Furthermore, I would award you a wage as substantial as you desired.”
“I could certainly bear being treated with respect and given sufficient money,” said Lupoldus. “But I am old; I have a wife and child, who have had no news of me for years, and natural love is pulling me towards them, to breathe out my life with my loved ones.”

“Lupoldus, if you consent to execute my intention, I shall go to Hibernia with you; and if your wife and child are still alive, I shall endow them richly. And when our journeying is over, and we have returned with God’s help to Famagusta, in Cyprus, I shall provide you with your own house, maid and servant, if you decide to wind down your life with me.”

Lupoldus thought: “The young man is promising me much. If I could only be certain… how good it would be to find such fortune in my twilight years.” And although he doubted that Fortunatus could cover the costs, for he knew all too well the expenses that such travel incurred, he said: “I shall comply with your will, on condition that you have the means to make good what you promise, and you do not undertake this enterprise unless you have a great supply of ready money; for without money, it cannot be accomplished.”

“Have no fears,” replied Fortunatus, “I know how to raise enough money in every land we visit. Therefore plight yourself to be my companion and to complete the journey with me.”

“Then give me your assurance that you will fulfil what you have promised me.”

And they both made solemn and binding pledges, to the effect that neither would desert the other under any circumstances.
Once this had been finalised, Fortunatus drew out 200 crowns and handed them to Lupoldus with the words: “Go and buy two handsome horses, and spare no expense; also hire yourself a servant, and if he is not satisfactory, then hire another. And when you run out of money, I shall supply you with more, so as not to leave you empty-handed.”

Lupoldus was more than satisfied with this; considering it to constitute an auspicious beginning, he made his preparations with great zeal. Fortunatus did likewise, engaging two servants and a serving-lad, so that there were six in all in the company; and having reached agreement on the route they would follow through the various lands and kingdoms, they set off for the Holy Roman Empire.

VI. Travels through Europe and Purgatory

Soon they were riding through Nuremberg, Donauworth, Augsburg, Nörlingen, Ulm, Constance, Basle, Strasbourg, Mainz and Cologne, and much could be written about this, for there are more than 100 cities in the German lands subject to one Emperor, from which you realise that it would take an age to survey them all. The travellers headed for the most famous ones, the diocesan centres, and viewed all the sights, Fortunatus taking down exact notes all the while. The shortest road from Nuremberg to Cologne is
no more than 270 miles, or eight days on horseback; but it took our
travellers a season, what with the time they spent riding from one city to
another; and they travelled in this fashion through other Kingdoms, spending
more time here, and less there, according to the greatness of the city.

From Cologne, they rode the 225 miles to Bruges in Flanders, then
embarked on a four-day journey by land and sea to London, the capital of
the English King. Nine days later they were in the Scottish capital,
Edinburgh, from which it was six days’ travelling to Lupoldus’s hometown
in Hibernia. He requested that Fortunatus ride there with him, and his wish
was granted. Arriving in his hometown of Waldrick, Lupoldus found his
wife and children as he had left them, but a son had taken a wife, and a
daughter a husband; all were delighted at his return. Ah God, but they were
not rich; and Fortunatus marking this, he gave Lupoldus 100 nobles to make
sumptuous preparations, stating that he would come along and share their
merriment. Lupoldus then arranged a splendid feast and invited his children,
in-laws and good friends; and Fortunatus held lavish court, extending his
generosity to all the townsfolk. He made merry with them and, when he had
done eating, he called Lupoldus over and informed him: “It is time to be
taking leave of your wife and children. Take these three bags, each of which
contains 500 nobles [one noble is worth more than two-and-a-half Rhenish
guilders], and give one to your wife, to your son, and to your daughter, as a
parting-gift, so that they do not lack provision.” Lupoldus was glad at heart
and praised his generosity; and you may rest assured that his wife and
children were highly delighted, and that their farewells to Fortunatus and
Lupoldus, as they rode away, were all the fonder.
Now Fortunatus had heard that the town with St Patrick’s Purgatory was two days’ ride away, so he said: “If it be no further than that, we shall go there.” And he began to place real faith in the powers of his purse, which showed no lack, no matter how lavishly he disbursed. So it was that they rode with light hearts to the town of Pettigo, which has a large abbey; and inside this building, behind the main altar, is the door admitting entrance to the dark cave known as St Patrick’s Purgatory. As no one is allowed inside without the Abbot’s leave, Lupoldus visited him to request permission, and it was granted. The Abbot asked where the master was from. “Cyprus,” came the reply, and the Abbot understanding that Fortunatus came from a distant land, he invited him and his men to table. Fortunatus accepted this invitation as a mark of great honour, and he arrived with a barrel of the best wine he could find, which he presented to the Abbot; it was received with heartfelt gratitude, for wine is extremely expensive in those parts, and little of it found its way to the Abbey, except what was used in the divine service. When they had finished eating, Fortunatus began: “My dear sir, if it does not run counter to your dignity, I would wish to know the reason why people say that St Patrick’s Purgatory is to be found here.”

“The story is this,” said the Abbot. “Many hundreds of years ago, this area, now home to a town and a House of God, was a wild and desert land. Not far from here there lived a monk called Patrick, a truly holy man, who would walk into that wilderness to practise penance. One day, he discovered this cave, which is especially long and deep; and he wandered so far inside that he lost the way back out. So he fell down on his knees and besought God, if it did not go against His divine will, to help him out of the cave.

---

6 Legend had it that a cave in County Donegal was St Patrick’s Purgatory. Augustinian monks made the area a place of pilgrimage; when news of their extortion reached Rome, the Pope banned visits to the area.
And while he was imploring God with deep reverence, he heard a miserable yammering some distance behind him, as of a great company of people, which frightened the living daylights out of him; but with God’s direction, he found the way out. So he gave heartfelt thanks to Heaven, and made his way back to his monastery; and his piety was more fervent than before. And whenever he wished to do penance, he would go to this cave. He then built a chapel beside the cave face, providing the holy with a place of refuge; and with time the Abbey, and then the town, followed.”

“The pilgrims who come here, whom you allow to enter the cave, what do they say when they come out?” asked Fortunatus.

“I do not ask anything, of any of them,” said the Abbot. “But some say they have heard cries of misery, while others heard and saw nothing but felt themselves shaking all over.”

“I have come a long way,” said Fortunatus, “and if I do not visit this cave, I shall lay myself open to reproach: so I will not hence without having entered Purgatory.”

“As you wish to enter, do not go too far in; there are many side-passages, making it all too easy to lose your way. I can remember this happening to some people, whom we did not find until the fourth day.”

Fortunatus asked Lupoldus if he wished to accompany him. “Yes, I shall go with you, and I shall stay by you for as long as the Lord lends me life,” was the reply; and Fortunatus was gratified.

So early the next morning, the two of them went to Confession and received the Holy Sacrament, necessary preliminaries to entering the cave; for it has been consecrated by St. Patrick, and whoever spends a night inside is granted remission for his sins. Then the monks opened the doors to the cave for them, and they entered, walking down as into a cellar; and the
moment that anyone steps inside, the priests give him their blessing and close the door, which they do not open again until the same time on the following day.

After descending sharply for some time, Fortunatus and Lupoldus reached a point where the ground levelled off. Taking each other’s hand, so as not to be separated, they advanced through the darkness, thinking to reach the end of the cave and then return. After a while, they found a steep declivity before them; so they decided to retrace their steps and head for the cave-doors. But they could not find them, and they walked until they grew weary; then they sat down to rest, and waited for the monks to call from the doors, hoping to find their way out by following the sound. They felt distinctly uneasy; they could not tell whether they had been inside for an hour or a year. Now when the time came to open the doors, the monks called out – but the two adventurers were too deep inside the cave to hear, and the doors were closed. Fortunatus and Lupoldus wandered here and there, not knowing how to help themselves. They felt quite weak with hunger and, falling into utter despondency, began to compose themselves for the visit of death.

“Oh Almighty God,” said Fortunatus, “now come and grant us Thy aid, for gold and silver are worthless here.” And they sat down in
desperation, hearing and seeing nothing. On the third morning, the priests
opened the doors and called out; receiving no reply, they closed them, went
to the Abbot, and told him the sorrowful news – sorrowful with especial
regard to Fortunatus, who had gifted them such excellent wine. The
strangers’ servants were running around in distraction, heavily agitated for
their missing masters. Now the Abbot knew an old man who, many years
before, had measured the caves with string; so he sent for him and asked him
if he could bring the men out. Fortunatus’s servants promised him 100
nobles.

He said, “If they are still alive, I’ll bring them out.” And he gathered
up his equipment and entered the cave.

Now you may be wondering, “Why didn’t anyone go in with a light or
a lantern?” Well, you must know that the cave would admit no kind of light
at all. So the old man fastened one end of his string to the wall, then
searched one cave after another until he found them. They were delighted to
see him, for by this time they were almost fainting with weakness. He
instructed them to hold on to him, like the blind holding on to the seeing,
and then he followed the string back. So with the help of God and the old
man, they returned to the land of the living, to the Abbot’s great relief; he
would have been most reluctant to lose these travellers, for fear that no more
pilgrims would come, and he and his house-of-God would lose this revenue.
Fortunatus’s servants informed him of their promise to the old man,
whereupon he paid the 100 nobles – and more – and thanked him warmly.
Then he had a sumptuous meal prepared at his inn and invited the Abbot and
the entire Brethren; and praising God that he had escaped such dire peril, he
gave the Abbot and the monastery 100 nobles to pray for the weal of his soul.
So they took their leave of the Abbot and embarked on the homeward leg of their journey. The lands beyond Hibernia being too wild to permit further travel in that direction, they rode back to Calais, then on to Saint-Josse-sur-Mer in Picardy. The next stop was Paris, and then it was on to Bayonne, Pamplona (the seat of the King of Navarre), Saragossa, the capital of the Kingdom of Aragon, Burgos and the Shrine of St. James at Compostella. After this they passed through Cape Finisterre, Lisbon, Seville, the heathen kingdom of Granada, Cordoba, and back through Burgos and Saragossa to Barcelona. Thirty miles from Barcelona there lies a nunnery on a high mountain, called Montserrat, where our dear Lady lies in grace; and many scribes could be employed to write a full account of the miracles that have occurred there. From Barcelona their road led to Toulouse in Languedoc, where four of the Apostles lie at rest – a place of abounding grace – and then to Perpignan (the capital of Rousillon), Montpellier, and Avignon, a huge city that belongs to the Pope and houses the most beautiful palace and castle in the world. Nearby is the port of Marseille, with its King; and four miles from this town St. Mary Magdalene rests in peace. Aix-en-Provence was the next port of call, then the road led to Geneva, Genoa, Rome, the Kingdom and city of Naples, and over the sea to Palermo, the capital of the Kingdom of Sicily. Then the travellers tracked back to Rome and made for Venice, their sights set on Jerusalem. From Venice they took in Dubrovnik, Corfu, Methoni, Heraklion, and Rhodes, and so on to Nicosia. And then they entered the Holy Land, riding through Jaffa on their way to Jerusalem, before visiting the Convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. A six-day journey through the desert led to Cairo, the seat of the Sultan;

\footnote{Montserrat is actually famous for a 12\textsuperscript{th}-century statue of the Virgin Mary, ‘La Morenata’ (known in English as ‘The Black Virgin’).}
from here they journeyed up the Nile for four days to Alexandria, and so arrived in Venice.

VII. Death in Constantinople

Now that the travellers were in Venice, they were on course to journey through every Kingdom; but while they were resting there, the news reached their ears that the Emperor in Constantinople, who was approaching his dotage, wished to have his son crowned Emperor and handed the reins of government before he died. The Venetians, being reliably informed of this, had prepared a galley and an Embassy with many exquisite jewels to present to the new Emperor; so Fortunatus went and bought a passage for himself and his retinue, and sailed with the Venetians to Constantinople. So many strangers had come pouring in to the city that there were no lodgings to be had; the Venetians were allotted a house to themselves, but they would admit no foreigners, so Fortunatus and his men had to search far and wide for an inn. He finally found an innkeeper (who was a thief) and booked a room. Every day they went to watch the festivities, and to enjoy the great splendour on show, about which much could be written.

But I shall concentrate on what happened to Fortunatus. When he left for the festivities every day with his men, they locked the door to their
chamber, and thought that their belongings were perfectly safe. The innkeeper, however, had a secret entrance to Fortunatus’s room: where the large bedstead skirted a wooden wall, he could remove a plank and replace it afterwards, with no one being any the wiser. He entered and left by this means while Fortunatus and company were attending the spectacles, and rummaged through their travelling-bags, but without finding any money. Surprised at this, he thought: “They must carry their money around sewn inside their jerkins.”

After several days had passed, they paid the innkeeper what was outstanding. He kept a close eye on who was giving the money out, and saw Fortunatus bringing it out from under the table and then giving it to Lupoldus to settle the dues. Fortunatus had ordered his old servant not to be frugal when paying a host, but to give him what he demanded; and Lupoldus obeyed, to the innkeeper’s delight. But he still was not satisfied, for he wanted everything – the money and the purse.

Now that day was approaching on which Fortunatus had promised to find a husband for a pauper’s daughter and endow her with 400 gold pieces in the local currency. So he asked the innkeeper if he perhaps knew of an impoverished, God-fearing man with a marriageable daughter for whom he was too poor to find a husband. “If you do, then bring that man to me, and I shall provide his daughter with an honourable dowry.”

“Yes, I know more than one,” replied his host, “and tomorrow I’ll bring you a pious man, who’ll come to you with his daughter.” And Fortunatus was content.

But his host was thinking: ‘I’ll steal their money tonight, while they still have it. If I wait any longer, they’ll soon have spent the lot.’
That night he crept through the hole, and while they were all sleeping soundly, he searched all of their clothes, thinking to find patches full of money in their jerkins. But when his hopes were dashed, he cut Lupoldus’s purse free and found a good 50 ducats inside. Then he cut Fortunatus’s purse loose; but when he squeezed it, the purse seemed to be empty, so he flung it away, under the bed. Then he snipped off the three servants’ purses, found a little money inside, and opened the door and windows to make it look as if thieves had clambered in from the alley.

When Lupoldus woke up and saw the open door and windows, he scolded the servants for leaving the room so negligently and causing their masters such anxiety. They started from their sleep, and each one denied having done this. Lupoldus was alarmed; and looking immediately down at his purse, he saw the severed stumps hanging from his belt. He called to Fortunatus, saying: “Sir, our room is open to the city, and your money has been stolen from me.” Then the servants cried that they had been treated in the same way. Fortunatus made a grab for his jerkin, and finding that the Purse of Fortune had been cut off, he was deeply shocked – indeed, so heavy was the shock that he fell down in a swoon and lay as one dead. Lupoldus and the servants were panic-stricken, and in sorrow for their master; they did not know the magnitude of the loss he had sustained. They poured water over him, and rubbed him, until he returned to his senses. And while they were given to fear and trembling, the innkeeper walked in, with amazement written all over his face, and he asked them what they were doing. They replied that all their money had been stolen from them.

The innkeeper said, “What kind of people are you? Aren’t you in a securely-locked chamber? Why weren’t you more careful?”
“We locked the door and the windows,” they replied, “and here they are open.”

“You should check to see that you haven’t robbed one another,” admonished the innkeeper. “There are many strangers here. I don’t know what they’re capable of.”

But seeing how wretched a state they were in, he walked over to Fortunatus and observed the total alteration in his appearance. “Have you lost a lot of money?” he asked.

They replied that the amount was not great.

“Then how can you be so distraught over the loss of a handful of cash? You were about to give a poor daughter a husband; save this money and spend it on yourself.”

“I care more for the purse, than for the money I have lost,” replied Fortunatus in a tiny voice. “There’s a small bill of exchange inside which wouldn’t be worth a penny to anyone.” When the innkeeper saw Fortunatus so despondent, he was moved to pity, scoundrel though he was; so he said, “Let’s see if we can’t find the purse. No one would draw any pleasure from an empty moneybag.” Then he told the servants to start searching; and one of them, crawling under the bed, cried out: “There’s an empty purse here.” And he brought it out, handed it to his master, and asked if it were the right one.

“Let me inspect it, to see if it is the one that was cut from me,” said Fortunatus. He found that it was his purse, but he was afraid that the abscession might have deprived it of its virtue. Yet he did not dare to reach inside in front of others; he would have been sorry if anyone else had come to learn the secret, and he feared losing the purse along with his life. So he slid into bed – everyone could see what a feeble-minded state he was in –
and opened the purse beneath the covers. Reaching inside, he found, to his deep delight, that it still possessed its full power. But the shock he had received had been so severe that he could not regain his colour or strength so soon; and he remained bed-bound the next day.

Thinking to comfort him, Lupoldus said: “Oh sir, don’t take it so to heart! We still have handsome steeds, silver chains, gold rings and other jewels; and although we have no money, we shall help you home with God’s assistance. I have passed through many kingdoms with an empty purse.” He thought that Fortunatus was a man of great wealth in his homeland, so that if he could return there safely, no loss was irreplaceable. But Fortunatus said in a faint voice: “He who loses his possessions loses his reason. Wisdom is to be chosen before wealth, strength, health, beauty and long life, for no one can steal it from you.” Then he fell silent. Lupoldus could make nothing of these words, for he did not know about the choice in the wood; but he refrained from asking any more questions, believing that Fortunatus was raving. By dint of their attentions, and by bringing him to eat, his servants helped him to come to himself and regain his colour; and his spirits began to rise.

But when night fell, he ordered his servants to buy lights and to leave them burning all night long; and they were all to lie down beside their naked swords as protection against another robbery. This was done. Fortunatus had new, much stronger straps fitted to the Purse, and for the rest of his days he never again let it hang from his jerkin, but kept it so close to his chest that no one could purloin it.

The next morning he and his men rose early and went to the Church of Saint Sophia, where there is a beautiful chapel consecrated to the honour of Our Dear Lady. He gave the priests two guilders to sing a service in
adoration and veneration of Our Dear Lady, concluding with the song of praise ‘Te deum laudamus.’ When the service and hymn were over, Fortunatus went with his servants to the square where the merchants and moneychangers plied their trade; and once he was there, he ordered the servants home to prepare the meal and attend to the horses. Then he gave Lupoldus money, saying: “Go and buy five good new purses, and I shall go to my moneychanger to obtain some currency. I can have no pleasure, if we do not all have money at hand.” Lupoldus did as he was ordered, and brought back five empty purses. Fortunatus placed 100 ducats in one and gave it to Lupoldus to spend on provisions, instructing him to spare no expense; when this store ran out, he would replenish it. Arriving back in the inn, he gave each of the servants a new purse, with 10 ducats inside, and told them to be merry, but also to be solicitous that the injury of the other day should never befall him again. They thanked him profusely and said that they would take close care.

After pouring 400 guilders into the fifth purse, Fortunatus sent for the innkeeper and said to him: “As I told you before, I would like to confer a dowry on a pious man’s daughter of marriageable age.”

“I know more than one, and I’ll bring one such man here presently, together with his daughter, for your inspection.” Then the innkeeper called on this good man and told him how he had a rich guest at his inn; and if the man called his daughter and came with him, it would be to his advantage.

The daughter’s father was a cabinet-maker, a pious, rough soul. He replied: “I’m not taking my daughter anywhere. He may want to use her to her dishonour, and then buy her a dress. That would help neither her nor me. Tell him if he wants to do her a good turn, he should come to us.”
The innkeeper fumed at this reply and thought that Fortunatus would be displeased too; but on hearing this, he gave a broad smile and said: “Take me to this man.”

So Fortunatus went with his host and Lupoldus to the cabinet-maker’s house, where he began: “I have heard that you have a daughter of marriageable age. Tell her to come here, together with her mother.”

“What do you want with them?”

“Call them hither. It will make their fortune.”

The cabinet-maker called for the mother and the daughter, and they soon appeared, deeply embarrassed at their ragged clothes. The daughter stood behind the mother to hide her homely attire.

“Young lady, step forward,” said Fortunatus.

She was a beautiful, well-formed woman. He asked the father how old his daughter was.

“Twenty,” the parents replied.

“How could you let her reach this age without having found her a husband?”

The mother could not wait for the father to open his mouth, but said: “She was old enough six years ago, but we had nothing to give her as a dowry.”
“If I were to give her a good dowry, do you know a suitable man?” asked Fortunatus.

“I know enough of them,” said the mother. “Our neighbour has a son who is sweet on her, and if she had any money he’d take her willingly.”

“How do you like your neighbour’s son?” Fortunatus asked the girl.

“I do not choose to like. I will marry whomever my mother and father give me. I will not choose for myself, though I should die a spinster.”

The mother could keep silence no longer: “Sir, she’s lying! I know that he dotes on her, and she loves him with all her heart.”

Fortunatus sent the innkeeper to fetch the youth, who proved on arrival to have a pleasing appearance. Then he took the purse with 400 ducats, poured them out onto the table, and said to the youth, who was also twenty years old: “If you wish to marry this lady, and lady, if you wish to marry this man, then I shall provide the money for the dowry.”

“If you are in earnest,” commented the youth, “then, for my part, all is in order.”

“And my daughter’s agreeable too,” the mother blurted.

Then Fortunatus sent for a priest to wed the couple, before their mothers and fathers, so that he knew it was a real wedding; and he gave them their dowry, and 10 ducats to the bride’s father for clothes for himself and his wife, and a further 10 ducats for the nuptials. They were all happy to the heart, and they thanked Fortunatus, and praised God, with warm sincerity. “God has sent this man from Heaven!” they exclaimed.

The wedding over, they returned to the inn. Lupoldus was amazed at his master’s generosity and the ease with which he had spent so much money, when he had been thrown into distraction at the theft of a mere handful. The innkeeper was deeply nettled at not having found the purse
with 400 ducats, even though he had rifled all their baggage, and he grumbled to himself: “If he’s got so much to throw around, I’ll have to try harder to help him empty his pockets.” Now he knew that they left a large candle, which they had had specially made, burning all night. So when they had gone out to the Emperor’s festivities, he crept into their room, bored holes into the candle, poured water inside, and covered the holes up; thus arranging matters so that the candle would extinguish itself after burning for two hours.

The end of the festivities was fast approaching. The innkeeper thought that Fortunatus would not be staying beyond this, and he had no time to lose; so he resolved on doing his guests an injury that very night when their light had gone out. That evening he gave them the best wine in his cellar and joined in their merry-making, thinking that they would soon fall into a strong sleep, as often happens after heavy drinking. Eventually they went up to their room, put their night-light in order, laid their naked swords by their side, and thought to sleep secure from care; which they did.

The innkeeper, however, was not asleep, but was contemplating the execution of his resolve. When he saw that the candle had gone out, he crept through the hole; coming upon Lupoldus first, he began to rummage around beneath his head. But Lupoldus was not sleeping; and he kept a sharp sword lying, unsheathed, on the sheets beside him. He hurriedly grabbed this sword and hewed at the thief. The innkeeper ducked, but not enough; and the blade tore such a deep gash in his throat that he said neither “Oh” nor “Ow”, but just fell down dead.
Lupoldus angrily called the servants and asked, “Why did you put the light out?”

They answered, one and all, that they had done no such thing.

“Now one of you go and fix a light, while the rest of you stand at the door with your naked swords and let no one out. There is a thief in the room.” The first servant ran out and soon returned with a light. Lupoldus commanded: “Lock the door fast, so the thief will not escape us.” Then they began to search, and coming to Lupoldus’s bed, they found the innkeeper lying dead with an opened throat. When Fortunatus heard this, as you can well imagine, he suffered the shock of his life.

“Oh God, why did I ever come to Constantinople?” he cried. “If we lost all our possessions, that would be a trifling matter – for now every one of us can wave goodbye to his goods and his life as well! Oh, Almighty God, come to the aid of these poor souls, for no one else is able or willing to help us; we are strangers here, and we may well state our good name, rank and pedigree, but we shall not be believed. If we offer them a bribe, they will think: ‘They have forfeited their lives. Once we take those, their money is ours – so we shall get our hands on it anyway.’”

Master and servants stood looking at the corpse, trembling with terror and unable to utter a word. Fortunatus was the most terrified, for he
remembered how he had fared in London, when the nobleman was murdered in the house in his absence, and he was innocent and ignorant of the deed. He turned to Lupoldus: “Alas, what an evil turn you have done us by killing the host! If you had just given him a serious wound, and not struck him down dead, then with the help of God and gold, we would have gained respite for our lives.”

Lupoldus replied, “It was night; I did not know what I was striking. I lunged at the thief whose hands were scuttling under my head, and who had robbed us once before. That is the man I felled, and if it be God’s will that the guise in which he met his death should become known, then we need not fear for our goods or our lives.”

“Oh, we shall not be able to make a thief of the innkeeper!” cried Fortunatus. “His friends will not allow it. Neither words nor money can help us now.”

In his distraught frame of mind, Fortunatus was thinking: ‘If only I had a loyal friend to whom I could entrust my purse and divulge its secret. Then when we were imprisoned and we told the truth of the matter, and they found so little money on us, the loyal friend would appear and offer the judge a generous sum. I have no doubt that the judge would take four or five thousand ducats and let us away with our lives.’

But then he thought: ‘Whomever I entrust with the purse will grow so fond of it that he will not return it to me; he will rather make generous presents to the judge, so that he make haste and plait our limbs on the wheel, for heinous murder must not remain unrevenged. And he will say that it would be disgraceful and iniquitous for anyone to claim that guests who murder their host should not be broken on the wheel.’ In this way, Fortunatus discovered in himself that it was impossible to give the purse to
anyone else, and he began to raise fervent cries to Heaven from the bitter bottom of his heart.

When Lupoldus had surveyed the terror and anxiety on the faces of his master and the servants, he said: “How faint-hearted you are! Grief will get us nowhere. The deed is done; we cannot return life to the thief; so let us use our reason to see us through this predicament.” Fortunatus admitted that he knew no counsel to give; and he wondered why he had not chosen wisdom instead of wealth, for then he would have known what to advise. So he told Lupoldus to impart any wise counsel he might have, for their need was pressing.

“Then follow me and do as I tell you,” said Lupoldus, “and with God’s help I shall bring us from here with our bodies unscathed and our effects untouched, and without meeting any obstacles.” They were pleased with these comforting words. Lupoldus commanded: “Now be quiet – let no one make a sound – and quench the light.” And he took the dead innkeeper on his back and carried him into the backyard, where there was a deep well by the stables. He threw him head-first into this well, and its water was deep enough to cover the corpse from sight. No one heard or saw this, for the time was midnight.
Returning to Fortunatus, Lupoldus said: “I have disencumbered us of the thief, in such a wise that it will be a good while before anyone finds him. As I do not doubt that he did not inform anyone of his intention to rob us, no one will know that we have done him an injury. So be happy.” Turning to the servants, he said: “Go and prepare the horses, and see that you sing, and talk about pretty girls, and let none of you sport a long face; we shall act likewise. As soon as day breaks, we shall ride away and put six hours between us and the city; and if we had killed the old and young Emperors of Constantinople, we would still make our escape.”

Fortunatus heard these words with pleasure, and he began to show more gaiety than he felt. Once the cheerful servants had groomed the horses, they called the inn’s serving-lads and maids and sent for malmsey, which is good there. When everyone had drunk their fill, the lads and the maids were given a ducat each, and the whole company was in high spirits. “We hope to return in a month’s time,” said Lupoldus, “and then we shall really make merry together.” Fortunatus spoke to the inn-servants: “Relay our thanks to our host and hostess. Tell them I would have had some malmsey brought up to their bed, but I thought them rather in need of rest.”

With such jocular words did they mount their steeds, and they rode full gallop towards Turkey, afraid all the while of pursuit. But no-one rode after them; and they did not ask any questions about the innkeeper. And so they arrived in the Turkish Emperor’s land, in a town called Craiova. In this town the Emperor has a dignitary whose duty it is to supply Christian merchants or pilgrims with an escort, whether they were travelling towards the Court or elsewhere over his lands. Lupoldus was aware of this, so on arrival he went to visit this dignitary and said that they were five pilgrims who desired safe-conduct and the accompaniment of a trucheman. “I’ll give
you all the safe-conducts you want, as long as you hand me four ducats; and I’ll have one ducat, and provisions, from every servant.” Lupoldus was slightly reluctant, but he bit his lip and handed over the money. Then the dignitary gave him a signed safe-conduct and sent them to a knowledgeable man; and he considered them to be well provided-for.

So they rode through Turkey. When Fortunatus saw that his cause for care was over, and the shock he had suffered in Constantinople had worn away, his spirits rose and he began to bandy jokes with his companions. Arriving at the Emperor’s Court, they witnessed his enormous wealth and innumerable army; and he was amazed that one man could call so many people to his service. Among them, to his great displeasure, were many renegade Christians. So they did not tarry at the Court, but travelled through Wallachia, both Lesser and Greater, where Vlad Dracul rules, then Bosnia, Croatia and Dalmatia. Then they passed through Budapest, Cracow (the seat of the King of Poland⁸), Copenhagen, Stockholm and Bergen before returning through Sweden and Denmark to Prague.

While travelling through all the lands and kingdoms, Fortunatus had observed and marked their customs, traditions and beliefs, and he had written a short book, in which he registered the names and dominions of all the Kings, Dukes, Counts and Barons, with details of the holdings, of lands and liegemen, of the princes of the cloth – the bishops, abbots and prelates – whom he had seen. He completed this book with assiduous industry and with the help and advice of Lupoldus, who had previously journeyed through all of these lands. Fortunatus had also managed to obtain an official reception from each King, at which he was presented with a memento; and he held these gifts dear, not for their material value, but because he had
earned them himself, and acquired them in person. So he brought them home and gave them pride of place.

Riding out of Prague, he headed for the Duchy of Saxony, then for Franconia. Anyone with experience of travel may well be thinking that Fortunatus would have required a good escort, had it become known that he was carrying so rich a purse – especially in the lands where groups of impoverished knights and footpads roam. But God gave him the good fortune to pass through unscathed, and he arrived in Augsburg. In that city he displayed great friendship to certain merchants, whom he accompanied to Venice, paying their charges; and in a few days, they arrived. As he rode into Venice, he was glad at heart, and he thought: ‘Here, there are many rich people; here, you may open your money to view.’ So he enquired after jewels of the purest water, and a great number were brought before him, many of which caught his fancy; and the merchants who offered these did not walk away unrewarded. Through these transactions the Venetians gained a great amount of ready money, and Fortunatus was held in high esteem. Now he was well aware that he had owned hardly any household goods or clothes when he had sailed from Famagusta, leaving his father Theodore and his mother Graciana behind in bitter poverty. So he had himself tailored with splendid and fashionable garments, and he purchased all household necessities twice over. Then he hired a galley and returned, with his effects, to Famagusta, fifteen years after his departure. On his arrival, he learnt at once that his father and mother had died, and he was plunged into grief.

---

Warsaw became capital of Poland in 1815.
VIII. A Wife for Fortunatus

Now Fortunatus rented a mansion, where he transferred his movables; and taking more servants and maids into his employ, he began to keep house in sumptuous style. Everywhere he met with a dignified and flattering reception, although many people wondered where he had gained such great wealth – for it was generally known that he had left the island in deep indigence. Then he bought his father’s house, and many others adjoining, and had them demolished to make room for a magnificent palace. He had this exquisitely ornamented, using the knowledge of decorated edifices he had acquired on his travels. Beside it he founded a beautiful minster, around which he had thirteen houses built, and he endowed it with a provost and twelve canons, who were to sing and chant at service; and he settled annual revenues of 300 ducats on the provost and 100 ducats on each canon. When a canon died, the remainder were to elect another; and when the provost left this life, his successor would be chosen by the Pope. Fortunatus had the minster embellished with every kind of ornamentation, and he provided tithes and annuities for its perpetual increase. Then he ordered the construction of two monumental tombs inside; his mother and father he had exhumed from their resting-place and interred in one, while the other was to await him and his heirs.
Now when the palace and the minster were finished and furnished according to his instructions, Fortunatus surveyed them with deep satisfaction, and he thought: ‘Such a palace requires respectable inhabitants.’ Thus did he resolve to find a wife; and when his will became known, there was great excitement. Everyone, rich or poor, noble or burgher, who had a pretty daughter, had her arrayed and bejewelled as well as his means would allow; and everyone thought, ‘You never know, God could lay the luck on my daughter as soon as on anyone else’s.’ It was seen that there was immense wealth to be had, and every father wished to lead his daughter to its source; as a result, many daughters were attired in gorgeous apparel which they would otherwise have had to long do without.

And while all these people were busy with their preparations, there was a Count Nimian, not far from Famagusta, who had three daughters of surpassing beauty. The King advised the Count to propose his daughters to Fortunatus; if it pleased him, he would speak on their behalf. The Count was not very powerful, yet he replied: “Sire, if he desires one of my daughters, and you are advising me to accept him, remember that he owns neither land nor lieges. He may have had a great store of ready money, but as you can see he has built a great deal away, to no purpose; just so could he lose possession of what he has now, and spend his way to poverty, as his father did before him. It takes no time at all to fritter away heaps of ready money.”

The King told the Count: “I have heard from eye-witnesses that he owns a store of magnificent jewels sufficient to buy a Comity, and yet he has placed none for sale. I have also heard much about his travels through many lands and kingdoms. And I shall tell you this about him: had he not known how to bring his affairs to a successful conclusion, he would not have
constructed so tremendous a palace or such an awe-inspiring minster, which he has honourably endowed with perpetual tithes and annuities. So my advice would be that, if the idea pleases him, you give him one of your daughters. If this meets with your approval, then I shall do my diligence to forward this marriage; Fortunatus pleases me greatly, and I would rather see him with a wife of noble birth than with some peasant’s daughter. I would be annoyed if a low-born woman were to possess and have her home in his palace.”

On hearing the King express such approval of Fortunatus, the Count said: “Gracious Majesty, it is plain from your words that you would draw pleasure from my giving one of my daughters to Fortunatus. Please exercise absolute dominion over all that I have, my person and my possessions.”

When the King heard the Count’s mind, he said; “Send your daughters to the Queen my wife, and I shall prepare them in the hope that one will attract his liking. I shall allow him the choice of any one of the three; and I shall bear the charges of the wedding for you, and if there are further expenses, they will be met by me, for you have entrusted me with absolute power over your person and possessions.”

Count Nimian thanked the King and, declaring his obedience to His Royal Majesty’s will, took his leave. He rode home to his wife, where he recounted his conversation with the King. She was highly pleased, but her pleasure was tempered by her conviction that Fortunatus was not noble enough, and by his having the choice of the three daughters; for one of them was especially dear to her. The Count asked her which one she meant, but she absolutely refused to tell him. However, she followed his will and prepared their daughters, giving them a duenna, serving-boys and maids, as was meet for their noble estate. And so the maidens arrived at the King of
Cyprus’s court, where they and their retinue were received with honour by the King and Queen. There they were instructed in Court etiquette and aristocratic affairs, in which they had previously received a grounding. The maidens were extremely beautiful, and their beauty increased with each passing day. When the King thought it time, he sent Fortunatus a stately embassy requiring his presence at Court, with no reason being given for the summons. But Fortunatus knew that he had a gracious master for King, so he hurriedly arrayed himself and rode in high spirits to his Lord, who received him with every mark of honour.

“Fortunatus, you are my liegeman, and I think that you should follow my advice, for I have your best interests at heart. I have heard about the magnificent residence and minster you have had constructed; and now, you have a mind to take a wife. Being concerned that you would choose someone not to my liking, I intend to confer on you a noble spouse, so that you may father a noble line.”

“Gracious Majesty,” said Fortunatus, “it is true that I am of the will to take a soul-mate. And now that I understand that Your Majesty will show me the grace, kindness and favour to provide me with one, I shall make no further inquiries, and worry my mind no more, but shall place my unswerving faith and trust entirely in Your Majesty.”

Having heard the answers of Fortunatus and Count Nimian, and having the governance of the daughters, the King thought: ‘I can make a good marriage here.’ So he told Fortunatus: “I have three beautiful young ladies, all Countesses through both father and mother. The eldest is eighteen years old and is called Gemiana; the second one is seventeen, and Marsepia is her name; and the third daughter is thirteen, and she is called Cassandra. I
shall grant you the choice of any one of these three; I shall also allow you
the choice of seeing them one after the other, or all three at one time.”

Fortunatus did not need long deliberation, but replied: “Gracious
Majesty, as you have given me such a choice, I request that I may see all
three standing together and hear each one speak.”

“It shall be as you wish,” said the King. And he ordered the Queen to
prepare the women and her maids, for he was coming to their apartments,
and he would be bringing a guest. The Queen did as commanded with no
little zeal, for she understood the import of the message; and when the time
seemed right to the King, he motioned to Fortunatus and made to leave.

“Kind Majesty, if you have no objections, permit this old servant of
mine to accompany us.”

The King gave his consent, and so, with old Lupoldus, they arrived in
the women’s chamber, where the Queen and her Maids-of-Honour rose to
receive them with due ceremony. Then the King sat down, and Fortunatus
stood at his side.

“Let the maidens Gemiana, Marsepia and Cassandra come before
me,” said the King. And the three daughters stood up and walked across the
room. Before they reached the King, they curtsied thrice, then knelt down
before him, with becoming ease and grace. His Majesty bid them rise, and they duly obeyed; then he turned to the eldest maiden, Gemiana:

“Tell me – would you rather be with the Queen, or with Count Nimian, your father, and the Countess, your mother?”

“Gracious Majesty,” she replied, “it does not become me to answer the question. If I had to choose, I would not use my will, but would be obedient to the behest of Your Majesty and my father.”

Then the King asked the second daughter, “Marsepia, tell me truly: who is closer to your heart – the Count, your lord and father, or the Countess, your lady and mother?”

“Oh Your Majesty, it does not become me to answer this question. I love them both with all my heart. If one were more dear to me than the other, it would pain my heart to know this; and were my mouth to announce it, I would be deeply ashamed. For they both could not be truer parents.”

And the King looked at the third and youngest. “Cassandra, answer me this. If a glittering ball were held at our Palace, full of Princes and Lords, and noble ladies and maidens, and your parents were present, and the one said, ‘Daughter, join the dance,’ but the other said, ‘Do not’ – whose command would you obey?”

“Most Gracious Majesty, your eyes tell you how young I am, and wisdom does not come before years; Your Majesty, in his great wisdom, can recognise and gauge the desires of youth. It does not befit me to make a choice, for giving preference to one parent would annoy the other, and this I would be most reluctant to do.”

“But if you had to choose?” the King asked.

“Then I request a year and a day for reflection and the advice of the wise, before I answer the question.”
The King left it at that and probed Cassandra no further. After taking his leave of the ladies, he returned to his quarters, followed by Fortunatus and Lupoldus, and when they were in his chamber, he told Fortunatus: “You wished to see and hear the three daughters, and I have given you more than you desired. You have seen their carriage and gait and heard them speak at sufficient length. Now which one would you like to take to wife?”

Fortunatus replied, “Gracious Majesty, all three please me so well that I do not know which one to choose. I request that Your Majesty grant me a short time to consult with my old servant Lupoldus.”

“Feel free to do so,” said the King.

So the two retreated to a quiet place. “You have seen and heard the three daughters as well as I have,” said Fortunatus. “Now you know that no man is so wise in his affairs as never to have to ask advice. So I am asking you to give me your counsel, as truly as if your soul were at stake.”

Lupoldus started with shock at the weight of this admonition and said: “Sir, it is not for me to advise in this matter. We often find that what delights one man will not at all please his brother; one man likes to eat meat, another man fish. So no one can advise you but you yourself; you are the one who will have to bear the burden.”

“I know that, and I am aware that it is I, and no other, who is taking a wife,” said Fortunatus, “but I would like you to open your secret heart to me, for you have had so much trade with mankind that you can judge the true self from the external appearance.”

Lupoldus was still reluctant, for he feared that his choice might not concur with his master’s, thus causing him to lose his favour. So he said: “Sir, all three pleased me greatly. I diligently scrutinised each one in turn,
and judging from appearances, I believe them to be sisters or cousins. I could find no mark of faithlessness in them.”

“But which one would you advise me to take?”

“I do not wish to be the first to choose, and nor should you; it would be unbearable if our judgements did not agree. So take this chalk and write on the table in your corner, and I shall write in the other corner.”

Fortunatus was pleased with this suggestion, and they wrote their opinions down. And when each had read what the other had written, they both found the name, ‘Cassandra.’ Fortunatus was glad that they had lighted on the same daughter; and Lupoldus was more pleased, that God had put it in his mind to think of the maiden whom his master liked the most. Now that they were of one accord, Fortunatus returned to the King and declared:

“Gracious Majesty, your Royal Self having vouchsafed me a choice, which shall induce me to deep gratitude and unwavering servitude to Your Grace, for I consider myself unworthy of such a choice, which I have done nothing to earn – an omission I have every intention of remedying – it is my wish that you give me Cassandra.”

“As you wish, so shall it be,” said the King. And he sent for the Queen, enjoining her to bring Cassandra along; which was done. Then he summoned his chaplain and had them joined in wedlock. Cassandra was disgruntled at being married without her parents’ presence or knowledge; but the King wished it so. And when the ceremony was over, the other court ladies and the bride’s sisters came to wish her luck. The sisters were weeping sorely, so that Fortunatus asked what was the cause of their tears; being informed that they were the bride’s full sisters, he went over to comfort them, saying: “Do not grieve; your displeasure will soon turn to delight.” And he sent to Famagusta for the jewels he had brought from
Venice. The two best ones he presented to the King and Queen, then he gave others to the bride and her sisters, and bestowed lavish gifts on all the ladies of the Queen’s apartments; which they received with profuse thanks.

Then the King sent for Count Nimian and the Countess. When Fortunatus heard this, he prepared Lupoldus, giving him a thousand ducats to pour into the Countess’s lap with the message that this was a gift from her son-in-law to raise her spirits for the wedding festivities. Now the Countess was vexed at Fortunatus having chosen her youngest daughter, for she was her favourite; but when Lupoldus poured the gold into her lap, she allowed her ill-humour to depart. And she and the Count thenceforth equipped themselves with liveried servants, carriages and all the other paraphernalia of nobility. On arriving at the Court, they were received with honour by the King, before being wined and dined in such royal style that Count Nimian observed to the Countess: “Wife, we have been here often before, but never have we been offered such honour. We should exalt and revere God for the grace He has conferred on us in giving us so benevolent a King and, through our daughter Cassandra, such a mighty son-in-law.”

Now that they had arrived, the King declared to Fortunatus: “I want to make the arrangements for your nuptials, and I wish them to be celebrated here.”

“Your Majesty, allow me to celebrate them in my new house in Famagusta,” pleaded Fortunatus. “It has not yet been blessed, or borne witness to joy.”

“My intention was to save you and Count Nimian the expense,” said the King.

“No amount of expense can drive me to regret or repentance,” replied Fortunatus, “and I request that Your Majesty come in person to Famagusta
with the Queen and your whole Court. Although I cannot offer you and your retinue honour to match your worth, I can assure Your Grace that you shall not want for anything, any more than you do here.”

When the King heard Fortunatus striking such an opulent strain, he thought: ‘I would like to see this establishment’. “As you wish,” he proclaimed. “Ride home and set everything in order, then I shall arrive with the Queen, and bring you your wife, father- and mother-in-law, and a numerous train.”

Fortunatus happily thanked the King and said: “You will not have long to wait. All will be ready in three days.” Galloping home to Famagusta, he bought everything that was lacking. Now it was not strange for the King to come to Famagusta, for he often held Court there; so he rode in with a great entourage to a warm reception from his people – as is only right and fitting.

The town now played host to great merriment, with dancing, singing, and the strains of melodious strings. The second that one dance came to an end, another was struck up; and so the entertainment continued throughout the night. Then the beautiful maiden Cassandra lay with Fortunatus in the
ornate new palace built to delight the fancy; all who walked through its doors marvelled at the exquisite decoration they found.

Now although the bride’s mother saw the stamp of luxury all around, she was still discontented at Fortunatus owning neither land nor liegemen, and she mentioned this to her husband. Count Nimian replied, “Do not worry; I believe that our daughter will be honourably maintained.” And early the next morning the King and the bride’s parents came to discuss the Morning Gift. “I have neither land nor lieges,” began Fortunatus, “so I shall give you five thousand ducats. With this, you can buy a castle and estate, so that your daughter is well provided for.”

“I know what to do in this matter,” said the King. “The Count of Ligorno is here; he has fallen on hard times and needs ready money. He owns a castle and bourg, called L’arcobaleno (that means ‘The Rainbow’s End’) three miles hence, and we shall buy this off him, land, vassals, and chattels.” Then the Count was summoned, and they bought the castle and bourg off him for seven thousand ducats. Fortunatus gave Lupoldus the key to a chest in his bedroom, and when he came back down, the money was counted out and the title deeds handed over. Then the Count of Ligorno yielded his jurisdiction to Cassandra before the King, and he renounced for ever his claim to the said castle and bourg. The sale was a popular topic of discussion. One man said, “It’s worth ten thousand ducats,” while another remarked, “If I had so much money, I wouldn’t spend it on that.”

But when the deal was done, the bride’s mother finally found content. She dressed for church – the minster Fortunatus had had erected and exquisitely decorated, at no distance from his palace – and when the service

---

9 *Morgengabe*: A gift to the bride from her husband on the morning after the consummation of their marriage.
was over, the King, the bride and bridegroom, then the descending gradations of rank, proceeded to the palace for a banquet. The sumptuousness of the feast could be described at length – for everyone knows that money makes money, and the man of means can live in the lap of luxury and enjoy a sweet and dreamless sleep. The festivities epitomised joyful extravagance; no half-measures were taken.

Amid the merriment, Fortunatus was thinking how to prevent the time from seeming long to the King and Queen. He decided to award three jewels, each of which would be won after three days’ jousting: the first was worth 600 ducats, and was for the knights and nobles; the next jewel, 400 ducats in value, was for the burghers; and the final one, priced at 200 ducats, was for all the mounted servants, whether they belonged to the lords or the town. It can be taken as read that everyone did his utmost and strained every sinew to be the best, to earn fame in the eyes of the beautiful ladies and maidens present, and to win the valuable jewel. Two or three jousts would be followed by a dance here, and a meal there. Fourteen days passed in a whirl of merrymaking, then the King would stay no longer; and as he rode away, many guests accompanied him. Fortunatus would have liked them to have stayed longer, especially his father- and mother-in-law; but they were eager to be away, for they saw the huge expenses he was incurring, and they feared that he would end up buying poverty. When the King departed, Fortunatus rode out with him some distance from the town; and he thanked his lord for doing him the honour of attending his wedding revels. Then he took a humble leave of the King and the Queen, of Count Nimian and the Countess his father- and mother-in-law, and of all the company; and after thanking many in the entourage for having attended his nuptials, he rode home to his fair Cassandra.
Now that all the strangers had departed, Fortunatus invited all the burghers to a new festival, which lasted eight days; and it earned him the favour and goodwill of the whole town of Famagusta. And when this entertainment and high living had run its course, Fortunatus wished to settle down to a restful life. He said to Lupoldus: “My good friend, let me know your desire. I shall give you three options; choose whichever you will, it will be granted. If you want home, I shall provide you with four servants to escort you there with honour, and give you spending money for the rest of your days. If you want to stay here in Famagusta, I shall buy you a house, supply you with three servants and two maids to attend to you, and see that you want for nothing. Or if you wish to remain with me in my palace and have all your needs met as well as I myself – whichever you choose, it will be yours, and the deed shall honour the word.”

Lupoldus thanked him for the great deference shown, and for the choice he had been offered; he had never deserved of God or of his master that he should meet with such honour and benevolence in his old age. “There is no riding home for me,” he said, “I am old and weak, and could perish on the way. Even if I did make it home, Hibernia is a rough, hard land which does not give growth to grapes or any of the other fine fruits I have grown accustomed to here; I would die. And there is no question of my living in your palace; I am old and ill-shaped, while you have a beautiful wife, with many pretty maids and handsome servants to entertain you. I would be a nuisance to everyone, for the presence of youth is not always pleasing to the aged – although I do not doubt your virtue or benevolence. So I shall choose, by your leave, to be established in my own house, where I can end my days. But I earnestly request that this will not entail my exclusion from your love or your counsel, the while that God grants us life.”
Fortunatus assured him of this, and he sought his counsel as long as Lupoldus lived. And so he bought him a house, engaged servants and maids, and allocated him a monthly allowance of a hundred ducats. Lupoldus was delighted that his days of waiting service\textsuperscript{10} were over. He went to bed and rose at any time he wanted; he ate and drank as early or as late as he listed – and good luck to him! Yet he still went to church every morning, where Fortunatus could witness the depth of his devotion. Now when Lupoldus had lived this honourable life for half a year, he fell into a fatal illness. Many doctors were sent for, but none could help him; and the good Lupoldus died. Fortunatus was deeply grieved, and he had his friend ceremonially interred in his minster grounds.

\section*{IX. Two Sons, and a Hat, for Fortunatus}

Fortunatus and his wife Cassandra, living together in bliss and enjoying life’s plenty, prayed devoutly to God to grant them progeny. For he was only too aware that the purse would lose its power if he did not produce legitimate issue; but he said nothing of this to Cassandra, only telling her how dearly he would like to have heirs by her. And as God hearkens to all sincere prayers, so he heard this: Cassandra became pregnant and gave birth to a son, to the delight of his father and many others, who was baptised Ampedo. Soon afterwards Cassandra became pregnant again and brought forth another son, who was joyfully baptised Andolosia. They were two handsome, well-formed boys, and Fortunatus and his beloved wife raised them with constant diligence and love; yet Andolosia was always somewhat more forward than his brother Ampedo, as we shall see later.

\textsuperscript{10}The phrase “uff den dienst warten” (Roloff 96) reminds us that much of a servant’s time was spent waiting for orders.
Although Fortunatus would have liked more heirs by Cassandra, she had given birth for the final time – to her great sorrow, for she would dearly have welcomed a daughter or two.

Now when Fortunatus had been with Cassandra for twelve years, and he saw that there was no hope of increasing his issue, he became restless in Famagusta, despite having every form of entertainment at his fingertips – going for walks, riding on handsome steeds, luring, hunting with hounds, and hawking. Recollecting that he had traversed all the Kingdoms of Christianity, he was seized with the longing to pass through all the heathen lands before his death, especially Prester John’s Land of Upper, Middle, and Lower India. So he said to his wife Cassandra:

“I have a request to make you. I am of a mind to go on a journey for some time, and I would like you to grant your consent.”

She asked where he was thinking of going; he replied that his intended journey could not be completed in less than three years. Cassandra blanched, but thought that his words were not spoken in earnest.

“And where could you go where you would find more pleasure and delight, and a more comfortable home, than here with your wife and children? You may well come into a place where you are not so fortunate.”
“I am not going away for the sake of pleasure, or luxury, or material profit,” said Fortunatus. “I have seen half the world, and now I want to see the other half, even if it costs me my life. I cannot clear my head of this wish. So give me your consent, for no one can prevent this but God and Death.”

When Cassandra realised that he was in deadly earnest, the colour flew from her face, and she began to beg him to leave his resolve, which he would come to regret. When he went on his previous journey, it was through Christian lands, and he was young and strong with great powers of endurance. These had now gone; age cannot do what comes easily to youth. “And you have grown accustomed to a restful life – why do you wish to expose yourself to the false heathens? Every day you hear about them showing Christians neither faith nor favour, for it is in their blood to take a Christian’s life and possessions whenever they can.”

Then she flung her arms very tenderly around his neck and said, “Oh my darling Fortunatus! Oh my loving and loyal husband, joy of my heart, trust of my body and soul – I beg you, for the honour of God and the sake of the Virgin Mary, to respect me, your poor wife, and your dear children, and to throw this intended journey out of your heart and mind and stay here with us! And if I have annoyed you in any way, or done anything to displease you, please give me to understand what; I shall henceforth be more prudent, and it will never happen again.” And she shook with the depth of her tears.

“My darling wife,” said Fortunatus, “do not take it so badly. It is only for a short while, then I shall safely return. And I promise you now that never again shall I part from you as long as God lends us life.”

“If I were certain you would make it back, I would quite happily await your return; if you were going anywhere other than those dangerous regions
where infidels are constantly thirsting for Christian blood, it would not be so hard to bear.”

“None can prevent this journey but God and Death,” Fortunatus declared. “When I depart, I shall give you enough money for you and the children to enjoy comfort and ease for the rest of your lives, in case I did not return.”

When Cassandra saw that no amount of pleading could help, she said: “My dearest husband, if there is no other way, if you want to be so far away from us, then so be it; but come back to us all the sooner, and do not let the faithful love you have shown us up to now fade from your heart. We shall pray for you day and night, imploring God to grant you health, peace and fair weather, and to ensure you the goodwill of all those through whose hands and power you pass.”

“Now God grant that this prayer take effect,” said Fortunatus. “I trust God that I shall return earlier than I had planned, and I hope, with His help, to make a quick and happy end to my journey.”

Fortunatus wasted no time in having a sturdy galley constructed, and while it was on the stocks, he summoned merchants and sent them out to buy all kinds of merchandise that would serve him well in heathen lands. He then considered what present he could bring to the Sultan, for he knew that all the nationalities who visited Alexandria took extravagant gifts along, especially the Venetians and Florentines, who brought gold-embroidered lengths of velvet and a fabulous array of silken garments in satisfying abundance. So he quickly sent for some master goldsmiths and commissioned a sumptuous travel-cabinet of silver and gold, together with everything one could or would wish to use: goblets, cups, bottles, bowls, plates, dishes, spits, gridirons and pothooks – all gilded, inside or outside, as
occasion demanded. And when the galley was ready, he had it loaded; then he completed his preparations, took his leave of his wife and sons, sat down and headed in God’s name for Alexandria.

Now the Alexandrians have an ancient custom which dictates that whenever a ship can be seen approaching in the distance, they send a boat out towards her to inquire where she is from and what is her business, and the answers are relayed to the Sultan. When a ship enters the port, no one may disembark until he has received a written safe-conduct; after Fortunatus was handed this, he and his merchants stepped onto dry land. The heathens wanted to know who the master of the galley was, so he told them that his name was Fortunatus, from Famagusta in Cyprus, and he was the sole master. Then Fortunatus requested to be brought before the Sultan, for he had brought him a gift. The Sultan’s servants were busy to help him to bring, for it happens at every Court that the man who comes to give is quickly admitted, whereas he who wants to take must stand long before the door. After entering the Palace, Fortunatus had a large and handsome side-board set up, and on it he laid the precious articles, which were costly and fair to behold; then he waited for the Sultan. When the Sultan arrived, he was amazed at the number and the beauty of the valuables; and believing that they had been brought for sale, he inquired of Fortunatus what price he
placed on the cabinet. Fortunatus wished to know if the Sultan liked the precious items: “Greatly,” he said. Content with this reply, Fortunatus asked the Sultan not to refuse him the honour of accepting them as a present. The Sultan marvelled that a single merchant should make so munificent a benefaction, which he valued at some five thousand ducats, and he thought to be far beyond the bounty of a major commune, such as Venice, Florence or Genoa. But he accepted the gift, with the reservation that it was too much not to requite, and so he ordered that Fortunatus be given one hundred lading of pepper, equal in total value to the cabinet.

Now when the Venetian, Florentine and Genoan factors, then resident in Alexandria, heard that the Sultan had given so costly a present to Fortunatus, who had just arrived there for the first time, when they had presented him with valuable gifts once, and sometimes twice, a year, and abiding in his realm, brought much advantage to him and the whole land; yet he had never once given anything, great or small, to their states or their people: then their resentment was aroused. Moreover, Fortunatus was too free with his money in his dealings: his merchants sold all their wares for a cheaper price than they, and bought for a higher. This did hard damage to their trade, and they feared that greater injury would arise from the wares and spices he was loading at Alexandria to bear into Christian lands. So they held counsel, day and night, to devise a cause of his disgrace before the Sultan and his viziers, so that he be no longer held in principal favour. And they sent great gifts to the Admiral, the Sultan’s second-in-command, with a request that he not look so kindly on Fortunatus and his men, but have them beaten and robbed, and shown every dishonour; which they themselves would have done, this behaviour being in their nature, had they not feared punishment from the Admiral. But Fortunatus became aware that they hated
him, and intended to make the land so unbearable for him that he should never feel the wish to return. So what he did was this: when the four conspiring nations – the Venetians, Genoese, Florentines and Catalonians – sent the Admiral ten ducats, Fortunatus would send him thirty. This was an even game for the Admiral, who took the money from both parties and kept them both content; but he did more to serve and please Fortunatus, for he wished that more of his kind would frequent Alexandria.

Now when Fortunatus had been there several days, maintaining himself in honourable state, the Sultan invited him and several merchants from the galleys to a splendid feast, it being his custom to invite to table the owner of every galley about to depart. He was also invited to be the Admiral’s guest, and more often than was customary; and he was shown greater honour than had ever been shown to a galley-owner. Then the four nations really began to scowl and grumble, for they saw that their presents had been given in vain. The time came for the galleys to leave Alexandria; no ship arriving there with merchandise dares tarry longer than six weeks, regardless of the success of its trading. Fortunatus was well aware of this – he had, indeed, based his venture around this schedule – and he now made another merchant patron in his place, and ordered him to sail the galley with its load of merchants and wares, in the name of God, to Catalonia, Portugal, Spain, England and Flanders, where they were to buy and sell to increase their profit; which he expected them to do, for they carried a valuable cargo. Then he urged the new patron to remember to return with the galley to Alexandria after two years; on no account must they neglect to do this, for he intended to wander in foreign lands for that length of time before returning to Alexandria. If they did not find him there as arranged, they were no longer to count him among the living, and they should deliver the
galley with its cargo to his wife Cassandra and his sons, in Famagusta. The patron promised this, and then the ship set sail; and their adventures would be long in the telling.

Fortunatus, alone now, went to the Admiral and requested that he acquire for him from the Sultan an escort around his land, a trucheman, and a passport to the princes and lords of the lands he wished to visit, such as the Persian Empire, Cathay and Prester John’s Land, and all those domains bordering these realms. The Admiral procured splendid letters of commendation for him, and he supplied him with guides who knew the paths and roads, and were well-versed in the local tongues; but all at Fortunatus’s expense. Yet Fortunatus was delighted with this, and more than happy to defray his own costs, for no sum could ever sadden him. Then he prepared himself and his escort lavishly; whenever he was told that such-and-such was necessary, or would be of service on the journey, he would command its purchase and pay in ready money. And he soon earned the affection of all those with whom he had dealings, for he treated them with deference; where one guilder would have sufficed, Fortunatus gave two.

So he set out. At first, he came to the Persian Empire; passing through this, he arrived in Cathay, land of the Great Khans. Then he travelled through the desert to Prester John’s Kingdom, which comprises three lands, each one of which is called India: Upper India, which is excessively hot; Middle India, which is somewhat cooler; and Lower India, where it is so cold that the rivers freeze at night, in winter and in summer. These three Indias, including islands and dry land, are so huge that Prester John has seventy-two kings under him, each one the ruler of a great land and multitude, and of mighty castles and cities. The sheer enormity of the Indias beggars belief, for as the written records tell us, they cover a greater expanse
than the Persian Emperor’s land, the Great Khan’s Cathay, the Sultan’s and the Grand Turk’s Empires combined; yet these are four mighty potentates, each holding greater wealth than all the Christian Princes – the Pope and the prelates – and all Kings and temporal Princes put together. A unique and lengthy book could be written on the wonders, traditions and tales of these lands; and anyone with an enquiring mind should read John Mandeville’s book, as well as the writings of others who have traversed that part of the world and noted down the customs, beliefs and social conditions prevalent in each land.

You may be wondering, when Earth holds these enormous lands, which are home to magnificent lords, exotic fruits, and great riches, why more Germans do not go there? Well, the lands are so far away from us, and the roads are so treacherous, running through mountains and wildernesses filled with murderers and thieves; no one wants to risk his skin. Moreover, not everyone has enough money, unlike Fortunatus; I have little doubt that there is many a proud man to be found who, if he possessed Fortune’s purse, would not stay at home, but would journey from one land to another, until he had covered the whole of the Earth. You may also be wondering why the people in India and other lands do not visit us. The reason for this is the
rumours they have heard of how different our lands are, how our country is full of cold weather and poor fruits. Some fear that they would die on the spot, while others have come to the conclusion that they would be held as fools for leaving a land of plenty to find a wasteland. They are also aware of the perils of the journey.

Now when Fortunatus had passed through these lands, he still was not satisfied; he wished to reach the land where pepper grows. So he sent Prester John beautiful gifts which were strange to his lands, and sent presents to his chamberlains as well; and he asked for guides and a written pass to Lombok. His request was granted, and he was escorted to the sea, and then taken by ship to the wild bushland called Tobar, the only place in the world where pepper grows. Having seen all this, and being unable to go any further, Fortunatus thought of his beloved wife Cassandra and his two sons; and his heart began to beat for home. So he turned around and headed homewards, riding back through those foreign lands he had not encountered on the outward leg of his journey. He passed through deserts to the tomb of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, and then through more sandy wastes to the Holy City, Jerusalem. Still having two months to spend before his galley arrived in Alexandria, he thought of riding back to Cairo to thank the Sultan for his guides and letters, which had proved extremely useful. But the Sultan had moved on by another route to Alexandria, so Fortunatus followed at speed. There he visited his good friend the Admiral, who was pleased to see him and showed him great honour for having displayed such knightly daring and traversed such distant lands.

He had been in Alexandria for eight days with an exotic menagerie, his eyes on the sea, when his galley arrived and was escorted into the harbour. Although Fortunatus had not been with them, they had tripled the
value of his wares. He was delighted at this, and he was especially pleased to see his men safe and sound; moreover, they brought him letters from his beloved Cassandra informing him that she found herself in good health and their sons were flourishing. Then Fortunatus told his merchants to make a quick end of their trading, for he was sorely wanting home; which they did, cutting the cost of their merchandise. St. Nicholas helps the trader who sells at low prices, and he who buys at the asking price will not grow old concluding the transaction: so, whereas others’ ships lie in Alexandria for six weeks before they can finish trading, Fortunatus’s merchants had settled their affairs in half the time, after hearing their master’s will.

The Sultan, hearing of Fortunatus’s impending departure, did not want him to leave without having shared his table, and so he invited him for the evening before he was set to sail for Famagusta. Fortunatus could not refuse, so he told his men to board the ship and to sail it into the open sea; as soon as the meal was over, he would join them. “So let everything be made ready; and see that you have your hands on the halyard”. The men did as they were instructed.

Then the Admiral came to collect Fortunatus, and they repaired to the Sultan’s Palace, which was situated on a hill and afforded a prospect over the entire city towards the wide and endless sea. Fortunatus was received with honour, for he was no stranger to the Sultan; when asked how he had fared in foreign climes, he told his host everything and thanked him profusely for the letters he had granted him, by power of which he had been received with deference and given much assistance by all the lords. Without them, he would never have managed to complete his journey. The Sultan was pleased to hear this, but if I may just add my voice for a brief second here: Fortunatus’s purse bought as much favour as the letters brought. So
they conversed, and the meal passed in great splendour, for you may expect such mighty rulers to live in perpetual magnificence – especially the Sultan, who had one thousand five hundred mamelukes to serve him at table.

When the meal had been consumed, and the mamelukes were standing to attention in the hall, together with renegade Christians to the number of twelve hundred, Fortunatus remarked to the Sultan that, if it would not incur his displeasure, he would like to disburse ten dules (a pilgrim’s coin, worth three-quarters of a Rhenish guilder) to each mameluke. The Sultan replied that he would let it pass. Then Fortunatus called them up, one after the other, and the cook and the cellarer came too; and his hands bobbed in and out of his Purse, which he held below the table to hide from view. If seen, it would have been instantly recognised as a Purse of Fortune, for a hundred purses could not have contained half the money that Fortunatus disbursed in so short a time. And when he had given to everyone, the Sultan was astounded at his carrying such a weight of gold; and he took Fortunatus’s open-handedness towards his mamelukes for a mark of great respect.

“You are a man of honour,” he said, “and it is fitting that you be shown honour. Come with me; I shall show you something of mine.”

And the Sultan led him to a stone tower with many vaults. In the first vault there were heaps of silver treasures and silver coins, lying like corn or oats poured out on the floor. The next vault housed golden gems and many large chests overflowing with golden coins; in the following one, there stood large chests that were packed with all kinds of decorative and exquisite jewellery, such as the Sultan would wear when he wished to appear in all his pomp and glory: countless rubies, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and shining pearls. In particular there were two golden candlesticks crowned with two huge carbuncles, so beautiful and bright that they shone like
burning candles in the dark. Fortunatus was amazed at this, for he had never imagined that a King could possess so many priceless articles; and he gave warm voice to his admiration. When the Sultan heard his delight, he said: “I have one more treasure, in my bedroom, which is dearer to me than everything you have seen.”

“What could possibly be so magnificent?” asked Fortunatus.

“You shall see.” And the Sultan led Fortunatus to his large and well-appointed bedroom, with all of its windows overlooking the sea. Bending over a chest, he brought out a thoroughly run-of-the-mill, bare felt hat, such as wandering monks tend to wear. Then he said: “This hat is dearer to me than all the treasures you have seen, for they can be replaced; but I do not know how to find another such hat.”

“Your most revered Highness,” said Fortunatus, “if it did not displease you, I would dearly like to know what virtue the hat possesses to make you esteem it so highly.”

“I shall tell you,” the Sultan declared. “It cost me a fortune – more than your loaded galley is now worth. It has the virtue of transporting whoever puts it on to the place he wishes to be. This is a greater pastime than all my gold and gems! When I send my servants out on the hunt and the whim takes me to be with them, I put my hat on, wish myself there, and – there I am! Wherever a wild beast may be in the wood, I can wish myself beside it, then drive it into the hunters’ hands. When I am facing hostilities and my soldiers are in the field, I can wish myself by their side; and whenever I want, I can return to my Palace, where all my riches could not bring me.”

“Is the master still living who made it?” asked Fortunatus.
“I do not know. In the town of Salamanca in Spain, where necromancy is taught at the University, there was an erudite Doctor in the Black Arts. I showered him with gifts and sent him home with every mark of honour. Whether he yet lives – I do not know.”

Fortunatus was thinking: ‘If the Hat could only be mine! It would be the ideal companion for my Purse.’ So he said: “It strikes me that if the Hat has so much power, it must weigh a great deal, and press down hard on the wearer’s head.”

“It is no heavier than the next hat,” said the Sultan. After telling Fortunatus to take off his cap, he himself placed the hat on his head, and asked: “Is it not true that it weighs no more than any other hat?”

“Indeed, I would never have thought it would be so light – or you so foolish as to put it on my head.” And Fortunatus wished himself in his galley with his men, where he instantly appeared. At once he ordered the sails to be hoisted, for they had a strong following wind to speed them away.

X. The Death of Fortunatus

When the Sultan realised that Fortunatus had stolen his dearest treasure, he stood at the window, watched the galley sailing away, and did not know what to do. Then he ordered all his men to hasten after Fortunatus
and bring him back in chains; he must lose his life for having robbed and deceived him. They set off in pursuit, but by the time their ships were ready the galley was out of sight. Now it is easier to find someone in the wildest wood on Earth than on the wide sea; and when they had sailed after the galley for several fruitless days, they began to fear attack from Catalanian pirates. As they were not armed for a fight, they did not wish to bite the fox; so they turned around for home, where they told the Sultan that they had not been able to overtake the galley. And he was sorely saddened. But the Venetians, Florentines and Genoese were delighted to hear that Fortunatus had made off with the Sultan’s most-prized treasure: “How must the Sultan and the Admiral be feeling,” they said amongst themselves, “they couldn’t pay him enough honour, and now he’s repaid them with interest! We’re safe from him now – he won’t come back and hit our trade so hard with undercutting and overpaying again.”

The Sultan dearly wanted his treasure back, but did not know how this could be effected. He thought: “If I send the Admiral or one of my princes to Cyprus, the Christians would not welcome them, and they could be taken prisoner on the way.” Then he decided to send an Embassy to Fortunatus, and turned to the leader of the Christians in Alexandria – for every Christian nationality there has a consul, and these representatives elect a consul general. The Sultan sent for this man, a Venetian named Marcholando, asked him if he would perform his will by accomplishing a journey, and acquainted him with the details; Marcholando replied that he was willing to travel anywhere in his service. Then the Sultan had a ship prepared and crewed with Christian sailors; and he ordered the consul general to sail to Famagusta and persuade Fortunatus to send his hat back, for he had shown him it in good faith, and he would receive it back with gratitude. In addition,
he commanded Marcholando to promise a handsome reward, and to stand
security for his master, who would send an argosy full of exotic spices in
return for the hat. But if this availed nothing, then he was to lodge a
complaint with the King of Cyprus, Fortunatus’s superior, and petition him
to induce his vassal to send back the treasure with which he had so
dishonestly abducted. Marcholando promised to be diligent and true in his
charge; and the Sultan supplied him with luxuriant attire and a profusion of
all he would need for the journey, pledging him a harvest of wealth if his
mission was successful.

The Sultan was so distraught at the loss of his hat that sleep forsook
him, to the grief of his mamelukes. They had praised Fortunatus to the skies
when he had pressed gold into their palms, but now that he had upset their
lord they said he was the biggest villain alive on Earth and, to a man, they
swore that if they could get their hands on him they would eat his heart raw.
So Marcholando set sail and arrived in Famagusta ten days after Fortunatus.

You can visualise, no doubt, the reception Fortunatus was given by
his beloved wife Cassandra, and the joy he experienced at his coming safely
home. The whole town rejoiced with him, for many of the people had
friends in Fortunatus’s company, who had made substantial profits. The
man who has plenty, and can bask in luxury, finds happiness much more
easily – and the townspeople were certainly no exception to this rule.

When Marcholando disembarked, he was amazed at the joy that
reigned in the town. Fortunatus, hearing that an Ambassador from the
Sultan of Alexandria had arrived in Famagusta, guessed at once the reason
for his visit, and he rented luxurious apartments for the Ambassador, which
he had equipped with all that was necessary, at his own expense. And when
Marcholando had been in Famagusta three days, he sent to Fortunatus,
saying that he had a message to deliver to him; and he was immediately
granted an audience. So he arrived in the beautiful palace, where he began
thus: “The Sultan of Babylon, Lord of Cairo and Alexandria, sends you,
Fortunatus, his greetings through me, Marcholando, and entreats you to
oblige him, and to make a good messenger of me, by sending his treasure
back with me.”

Fortunatus replied, “I am amazed that the Sultan was so naïve, when
he told me the hat’s virtue and placed it on my head with his own hands.
Moreover, such a sweat broke out on my brow that I shall remember my fear
until my dying day – for my galley stood in the open sea, and if I had missed
it when I wished myself on board, I would have lost my life, which I value
more highly than the Sultan’s Kingdom. For this reason, I am of a mind not
to relinquish the hat as long as I live.”

Hearing Fortunatus speak in this vein, Marcholando thought that he
would weaken his resolve and change his mind with the promise of lucre.

“Fortunatus, take my advice. What use is the hat to you? I will bring
it about that you and your children receive something far superior to, far
more useful than, that shabby little headwarmer. If I had a sackful of hats,
and every one possessed the same virtue as yours, I would give them all
away for a third of what I can procure you. If you crown my mission with success, I promise you – I give you my solemn word – that the Sultan will load your galley with exquisite spices such as pepper, ginger, cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon, to name but a few. A hundred thousand ducats’ worth all told. Moreover, you are under no obligation to part with the hat until you have been paid and you have the galley, with its cargo, safely in your hands. If you give your approval, I myself will sail to Alexandria on your galley and bring it back to you loaded, placing my trust in you to return my gracious lord the Sultan’s treasure to me when I have delivered to you that which I have promised. I know for a fact that no one else in the whole wide world would pay a third of what the Sultan is offering for this hat; he wants it so badly because it belonged to him.”

When Marcholando had finished speaking, Fortunatus replied: “So that we do not bandy many words in vain: your friendship, and the Sultan’s, would mean a great deal to me, but let no one think of removing the hat from my keeping. I have another treasure which is close to my heart, and the two must remain by me as long as I live.”

Marcholando asked if there was nothing more to be said? Nothing at all to be said or thought, answered Fortunatus, and if he had any other business he was free to pursue it. Marcholando did not want to leave without having accomplished the task with which the Sultan had entrusted him, so he rode to Fortunatus’s superior, the King of Cyprus, and laid a complaint against him. Then he solicited the King to make Fortunatus return what he had dishonourably taken without leave, for if this restitution did not take place, he was afraid that a mighty war would ensue. They had long enjoyed the fruits of peace as good neighbours, and the cordial relationship benefited both; war entailed a heavy outlay and untold damage,
and he should do everything in his power to prevent this, for it was the duty
of a King to maintain his Kingdom and his subjects in peace, as far as this
lay in his power. The King replied: “I have princes and lords below me, and
as I command them, so do they have their own will. But if the Sultan wishes
to lodge a complaint against Fortunatus, he may deal as he wishes; I would
that justice be done.”

When Marcholando heard his King being denied recourse to law, it
became only too apparent to him that a heathen will win little from a
Christian in a Christian land; and he saw no point in prolonging his stay. So
he rode back to Famagusta, had his galley made ready, and was wanting
away; when Fortunatus was so generous as to invite him to be his guest. He
lavished every care and attention on the Ambassador, showered him with the
finest gifts, and filled his galley with quality foods and wines. Then he said:
“I bear no enmity towards you for your having delivered the Sultan’s
message; and I hope you will not think unkindly of me for not returning him
the hat. No heathen can hold a Christian dear, or grant him any favours; and
if the hat were mine but in the Sultan’s possession, then there is no way that
he would send it back, and his councillors would advise him not to, just as I
am advised.” Marcholando thanked Fortunatus for the honour shown and
the presents conferred, and said that it was obvious that he could not achieve
his end for love nor money; he would suggest to the Sultan that he pursue
the matter as he thought fit. Then he sailed away without that for which he
had been sent; and Fortunatus let him leave, far from inquiring whether he
had angered the Sultan, for he would not be setting foot in his land again.

Now Fortunatus, having travelled to satisfaction through the whole
world, more or less, lived in a manner befitting his station. He concerned
himself with the upbringing of his sons, engaging servants to teach them
knight’s play – namely, jousting and tourneying – and to practise with them all the arts of the profession. The younger son showed a strong inclination for this, and bore himself like a man; so that Fortunatus arranged many tournaments in Famagusta, and his younger son always won the prize. “Andolosia is an honour to our land!” was the universal cry, and this occasioned much joy to his father.

So they lived, as happy as the day is long, and Fortunatus spent many a merry day with his hat, his hawk, and his beloved wife Cassandra. But then, after many years of blissful content, with no cloud to darken their days, Cassandra fell into a heavy and fatal illness, and no doctor could save her. No money was spared, but it was all to no avail, for there was no way with her but death; and so, with little delay, she yielded her soul. Fortunatus had her laid to rest like a Queen; he had loved her dearly in life, and he showed his love after her death. Happiness passed from his mind, and he found pleasure in nothing; although his good friends and companions tried to cheer his mood, calling on him and urging him to ride, hunt or hawk with them, as he had formerly done, their supplications had no effect. He sat alone and sorrowed for his beloved wife. And as he sat, on his own, he addressed himself in this wise:

“Oh Fortunatus, how can all your money serve you now? What help is the Sultan’s greatest treasure, the heart-dear possession you withheld from him? You have crossed through all Earth’s Kingdoms, and now you wait for death to come and take you any hour, as he carried off my darling wife, who was not ready for his coming! Oh stern, grim Death, how can you be so hard and so severe as to know no mercy? Neither gifts nor courage help against you. Nor young nor old, nor rich nor poor, nor healthy nor infirm, is
safe from your embrace, neither in castles on the topmost peaks, nor in the deepest valleys.”

And so he reflected on the certainty of death and the uncertainty of its timing. As he buried himself in grief, no one could free his mind from fancies of fatality, and he fell into a hard illness – consumption – which lessened his body every day. When he felt the sickness spreading through his body he sent far and near for the best doctors to be had, whom he gave and promised a great store of money for their help. They were not able to give him any comforting assurances of restoring his health, but stated that they would do their best to prolong his life for as long as possible; they spent a great deal of time and effort, and their patient spent a great deal of money. But Fortunatus felt no improvement, and he realised that he lay in the grip of Death, from which there was no escape.

And as he lay on his bed, approaching to death, he sent for his two sons, Ampedo and Andolosia, and said to them: “You see, my dear sons, that as your mother, who brought you up with so much care, has departed with death, so now the time has come for me, too, to part from this world, and that with little delay. And so I shall instruct you on how you should conduct yourselves after my death, so that you will continue in honour and wealth, as I have until the end of my days.”
Then he told them about the two magical items he possessed: the purse, and the virtue it held only for as long as they lived; and the hat, its power, and the shipload of wealth the Sultan would have exchanged for it. Then he commanded them not to separate the two; furthermore, they must tell no one about the purse, and let no one become so dear to them as to invite their confidence. Even if they found wives whom they loved with all their hearts, they were to hold their tongues. For if one person were to learn of its existence, others would soon get to know. “And if the news leaked out, you would be pursued morning, noon and night until they could dispossess you of the purse. You must know that I have had it for sixty years, and in all that time I have never mentioned it to a soul; you are the first to hear of it from my mouth. Be cautious, for if you lose the purse, it will never find its way back to you. And to fall from great wealth into poverty would be a heart-rending affliction.

“I have one more instruction for you, my dear sons: to honour the Lady who gifted me this luck-bringing purse, you shall henceforth observe the first day in June every year. On this day, you shall abstain from conjugal rights, and from extra-marital affairs, and find a poor daughter whose parents do not have the means to bring her to matrimony. Then you will endow her with four hundred gold pieces in the currency of her land. I swore to do this on receiving the purse, and I have constantly honoured my vow.”

Fortunatus had few words in him after this; and after receiving the final sacraments, he yielded his soul. Then his sons had him interred with great ceremony in the glorious minster he himself had founded: there was a long service, many masses were sung, and many alms were given; and if the
King himself had left this life, the obsequies could not have been more splendid.

ANDOLOSIA

I. Travels in France and Spain

Now hear how Ampedo and Andolosia, the two sons of Fortunatus, fared with the two magical treasures. When their lord and father died, they wore their grief and observed mourning for a year, like dutiful sons. And while Andolosia was living a quiet life, not daring to participate in jousts or other courtly pastimes, he came across his father’s books. When he read them, and learnt how many Christian kingdoms and heathen lands his father had passed through, he was filled with such delight and desire that he fixed on the earnest resolve to travel.

So he went to see Ampedo. “Dear brother, what are we doing here? Let us travel and strive for honour, following in our father’s footsteps! If you haven’t yet read about all the distant lands he travelled across, then read now.”

Ampedo answered his brother good-naturedly: “God speed the man who wants to travel. But I have no desire to, for I could easily come to a place where I am not so well-off as I am here. I shall stay put in Famagusta, and conclude my days in the beautiful palace.”

“If you’re of that mood and mind, then let’s share out the treasures,” said Andolosia.

“No, you wish to overrule our father’s command? Aren’t you aware that his last will was that we should not, on any account, separate the two valuables?”
Andolosia replied, “I don’t care about that; he’s dead, I’m alive; and I want to share.”

“Then take the Hat and go wherever you will,” said Ampedo.

“You take it yourself and stay here,” rejoined Andolosia.

And they could not come to an agreement, for they both wanted the Purse. Finally, Andolosia said: “Dear brother, I know how we can resolve this; according to our father’s advice, we should share our division with no one. So let’s fill two chests with gold from the Purse, and you keep them here; they will more than meet your needs. You also keep the Hat – it’ll give you many happy hours – and leave the Purse to me. I’ll travel and strive for honour for six years, and when I return, the Purse will be yours for six years. In this way we can own and enjoy it in common.”

Ampedo, who was a kindly soul, let it pass as his brother suggested; and when Andolosia understood that he was going to be allowed to depart with the Purse, he was happy with all his heart. He began his preparations, hiring strong servants and buying handsome horses; and he had a cart constructed, which was to follow in his train and bear his jousting equipment and other courtly paraphernalia.
Then he took his leave of Ampedo and rode out of Famagusta with forty smart menservants on prancing chargers, all dressed in his livery. His first stop was at the King of France’s Court, where he joined the company of nobles, counts and barons. Being prodigal, and having an accommodating disposition, he was held in high regard by the majority; and he served the King as if he were his hired man. While he sojourned there, it so happened that a tournament was held, with jousts, wrestling and leaping, and Andolosia came first in every event, so that his praise was cried abroad. After the jousting, it was customary to hold a ball for the noble ladies; Andolosia was invited to this and given the first dance. The ladies enquired after his name and land, and were informed that he was called Andolosia from Famagusta in Cyprus, and he came from a noble line. Then they began to single him out for attention and to flirt with him; and he was not slow to return the compliment. And the King invited him to table.

Andolosia, seeing that his appearance and society were pleasing to the nobility, invited them, and all their wives, to be his guests. He provided them with a splendid banquet, which delighted the noble ladies and convinced them that he was born of noble lineage. In the midst of their merriment, there was a nobleman at the King’s Court whose wife was a paragon of beauty; her appearance far surpassed that of all other women. This nobleman was Andolosia’s jousting-partner, and there was no one to match them for skill. His wife captivated Andolosia, who began to woo her assiduously, promising her a thousand crowns if she would spend one night with him. The wife thought that a thousand crowns were soon earned, but her honour prevented her from complying, and she told her husband. He said: “Oh wife, the thousand crowns would be handy, we could really use them – but it is best not to do this, for honour takes precedence over riches.
“I know what we can do,” he continued. “We have a beautiful, shapely neighbour, an accommodating companion, who refuses her body to no one if the price is right. How if you were to tell her about the proposal that has been made you, which you do not dare undertake, for your husband is a stickler for honour and you would fear for your life?”

The woman followed her husband’s instructions and spoke to their neighbour: “So that is what has occurred. If you wish to take the matter on, I will see to it that you take my place, in my house, and you will lie with the nobleman who is here at the moment and is good with his lance. He offered me a thousand crowns for spending a night with him; if you do this for me, I’ll give you a hundred.”

The good neighbour said: “I don’t care much about that – I would lie with such a man for nothing. But I’m afraid that if I went through with this, you wouldn’t give me the hundred crowns, but would send me away with one or two, because of my low station.”

“I’ll give you the hundred crowns up front, before you earn them,” the wife assured her.

She was satisfied with this, and said that if the lady arranged the preparations, she would oblige her with great gusto. The lady told her husband how she had won their neighbour over to her will, and he expressed his contentment.
Then Andolosia came up to the lady and urged his suit in true lover’s fashion, mentioning the thousand crowns. She replied: “If you are not merely fooling, then come to me tomorrow night and bring the money with you; for tomorrow my husband rides out in the King’s service.”

Andolosia was overjoyed, and he regarded the expense as a mere trifle. So the following night he sneaked away from his men, bearing the thousand crowns, and crept alone to the lady’s house, where she was waiting for him. She received him with the money, which was in a bag, and she did not count it out, for she could tell by the weight that all was in order. Leading him to her room, she told him to get into the bed and not make a sound; she would join him presently. Then she hurriedly sent for her neighbour and gave her a hundred crowns. The good lass had really spruced herself up with clean and sweet-scented hands and other enticements, for she was well versed in the ins-and-outs of these affairs. And as they lay together in vigorous joy, Andolosia believed himself to be in the arms of his jousting-companion’s wife. But when the good young lady heard how deeply she pleased Andolosia, and how wonderful he thought her, it struck her as unfair that the lady should pocket nine hundred crowns, while she had no more than one hundred. So she disclosed the deception, and when Andolosia heard how he had been cheated, he did not care about the money he had expended, but he was afraid that the affair would spread throughout the city and he would become a laughing-stock for having let himself be tricked by two women. So he stood up and gave the lass another hundred crowns, and returning to his inn, he woke all his servants up and ordered them to make ready: he was about to ride away. ‘From now on, I’ll be on my guard against the tricks of faithless women’, he thought; and he rode away from Paris, without blessing, without leave, in a black mood.
And when he had a day’s ride from Paris behind him, the affair still preyed on his mind; so he sent a servant to the woman he had lain with to give her another two hundred crowns and the instruction to prosecute the nobleman’s wife before the King or parliament. She should tell them that the lady had unlawfully appropriated money – to the sum of nine hundred crowns – which was not hers by right; it belonged to the neighbour, as the reward for her services. The good neighbour promised the serving-lad that he would soon hear how she had prosecuted the affair with a vengeance. So the two women went to law and expended as much money as they had received, and then more; the case was grist to the mill for the advocates, clerks and procurators, for the greatest part of the money ended up in their hands.

As Andolosia rode away from the King of France’s court, he thought: ‘At least the false women didn’t cheat me out of the Purse’. And he resolved to cast the matter from his mind and to think of a way to restore his spirits.

He rode without stopping to the King of Aragon’s Court, and from there he continued on to Navarre, Castille and Portugal. It were a long process to write of his chivalric behaviour at each Royal Court: his jousting exploits, his chivalric deportment, and, in particular, his lavish expenditure to maintain a stately equipage. Afterwards he arrived before the King of Spain, a mighty monarch who held great court and was waging war at that time against the King of Granada, a heathen land bordering his realm, and against the King of Damascus in Barbary, who was also a heathen King. When Andolosia came there, he was strongly attracted to the people and their customs; for the Spaniards are exceedingly proud, even though their skin is black or brown. Then he dressed himself, his servants, and his horses,
after the fashion of the land; and he penetrated the circle of nobility, attaining the position of servant to the King. He launched himself into tournaments and pursued all knightly sports, distributed prizes, and extended invitations to the noble ladies, whom he wined and dined superbly. When the King rode out against his enemies, Andolosia hired a hundred mercenaries at his own expense; and he served the King so diligently that he won his deep affection, for in every battle he would be in the foremost press, where he performed many manly deeds, so that the King dubbed him knight.

There was an old Count who had an only daughter at Court. The King wanted Andolosia to marry this daughter, so he could make him a Count in the father’s place; but Andolosia refused, for the Count’s daughter did not attract him – she was not pretty – and he was perfectly indifferent to the promise of wealth and a comity, for he possessed Fortune’s Purse. And when he had spent several years with the King, Andolosia found that time began to hang heavy on his hands, especially as there were no beauties at the Court to take to bed or heart. So he asked the King for leave to depart, which was graciously granted; and the King decorated him with his livery\(^{11}\) and told him that whenever he returned, Andolosia would find him a well-disposed lord and master.

Then Andolosia sought out a sturdy ship and hired a crew to take him and his to England, and to be well recompensed for their efforts; and he took his leave from many whose close acquaintance he had made. Some members of the Court were overjoyed at his departure, for they no longer had to witness his luxurious lifestyle; and many were sad, having enjoyed his favours. So he sailed away and came with a fair wind to England, to the

\(^{11}\) Here: as a sign that Andolosia belongs to the privileged few and is exempt from many duties.
great city of London where the King holds court. He rented a stately mansion, had all necessities bought to excess, and began to live like a Duke, inviting the nobles at the King’s Court to guest, loading them with presents, and earning their favour. Once again, he jousted, tourneyed, and performed the deeds expected of a knight in more accomplished a fashion than anyone else, which led both women and men, nobles and commoners, to award him the prize. The King and Queen often saw, with their own eyes, Andolosia giving proofs of his manliness, and they approved of his bearing; and the King asked if he would like to belong to his Court. Andolosia replied that he would willingly serve him with body and goods.

II. Agrippina

Now when he was at Court, it so happened that the King of England marched out against the King of Scotland. Andolosia joined his army at the head of a great host assembled at his own cost, and performed so many knightly deeds that he was extolled above all others. Although it cannot be denied that there is no race on Earth prouder, haughtier and less willing to acknowledge the merit of others or concede them honour than the English, yet they spoke great praise of Andolosia for the extreme valour he had displayed in battle. Nevertheless, they maintained that it was still a shame
that he was not an Englishman, for they believe that there is no greater race on Earth than their own.

The war having been brought to a successful conclusion, everyone returned home. Andolosia came to London once more and was received with honour by the King. After several days had passed, and the mercenaries had dispersed in part, the King invited Andolosia to guest and placed him at a table alone with the King, the Queen and their only daughter, called Agrippina, who was one of the most beautiful women to be found in the world, and so white and delicate that she had been likened to a former Princess of England, the fair Amelia. She was seated opposite Andolosia at table, and when he saw her he thought that an angel sent to Earth by God could not be more perfectly formed, and he was inflamed with a passionate love; his heart was seized with so deep a lust that he could neither eat nor drink. He flushed, then blanched, in the manner of the truly ardent lover; and the Queen clearly descried that he had received the Angel of Love. When the King addressed him, he could form no answer; and then Agrippina threw him a look that fanned the flames of his desire and led him to believe that she returned his love, which was however far from the truth. During the meal there was much lute-music and recitation of pleasant verses, as is the custom at the tables of lords, but Andolosia had paid scarcely any attention to this, all of his thoughts being fixed on Agrippina. When the meal was done, he found his way home loaded with love, his burden tied on more

---

12 This is a reference to Rudolf von Ems’ 13th-century verse-tale of love and adventure, *Willehalms von Orlens und Amelies*, one of the most widespread German texts of the Middle Ages. Ems’ poem, edited by Victor Junk (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1905), is available online through the University of Heidelberg. The author of *Fortunatus* may have encountered it through a 15th-century prose redaction, which was printed in Augsburg in 1491.
tightly than a package of pepper to a sorely-laden camel plodding from India to Cairo.

And when he was alone at home, he thought: ‘I would to God I were of royal descent! Then I’d serve the King so loyally, and stand so in his confidence, that he’d have to marry the fair Agrippina to me. What more could I ask for than so beautiful a wife? But though my birth is not high enough, yet I cannot help but strive for her favour and court her love – may I be served as God wills!’ Then he began to joust intensely, and to fling himself into other knightly pursuits, for he knew that the Queen and her daughter were watching. So he hunted after honour with all his might, and on one occasion invited the Queen, the Princess and all the noble ladies at Court to a marvellous meal. The King was told about this repast, how Andolosia had presented the Queen and Princess with precious gifts, and how their maids and chambermaids had also felt the full force of his generosity. This had been done to procure Andolosia a warmer reception at Court, and it worked; when he visited next, he was admitted to the Queen and the lovely Agrippina, to his no small delight. On one such visit, the King said to him: “I have heard from the Queen and the other ladies that you invited them to a feast fit for a King. Why did you not invite me?”

“My most gracious King,” said Andolosia, “if Your Majesty would not scorn my hospitality, I should be delighted.”

“Then invite me; I shall come tomorrow and bring ten people with me.”

Highly contented, Andolosia hurried home and gave his servants great sums of money to buy the best provisions they could find. He also ordered the cook to concoct the most mouth-watering meal his hands had ever prepared, and not to omit anything for the sake of saving money.
All was made ready, and the King came, with counts and lords, at the arranged time. The whole company were astounded at the manifold courses of the choicest foods and at the rare wines that were provided. The King thought: ‘This Andolosia can spend without regret – yet he owns no land nor vassals. I must do something to teach him that he is not as powerful as he thinks’. So one morning soon after, the King sent a message to Andolosia, saying that he would dine with him that day. Pleased to receive this news, Andolosia sent his servants out to buy all that was needful. Now the King had forbidden, on pain of loss of body and goods, the sale of wood, and wooden items such as ships, to Andolosia. So when the servants had bought all the victuals, and the cooks were ready to boil and roast, there was no wood. Andolosia sent men out to buy houses, ships or fences, whatever they could get hold of, so that the food could be cooked. But no matter where the servants went, they could not find anyone willing to sell. On learning this, Andolosia realised that it was the King’s commandment; so he sent in haste to the Venetians, who have warehouses in London, and bought cloves, nutmeg, sandal and cinnamon off them. These were then emptied onto the floor and set alight, and the food was cooked over this fire.

When meal-time came round, the King thought that the food could not possibly have been prepared. Nonetheless, he rose, assembled the lords who had accompanied him to the previous feast, and rode towards Andolosia’s lodgings. And as they approached the house, they were met by such an excellent and savoury aroma that they were struck with astonishment; and the nearer they came, the stronger this aroma grew. The King asked if the meal was ready, and he was told yes, the cooks were boiling and roasting with pure spices; which surprised him somewhat. And if Andolosia had served the King sumptuously at the previous feast, he now supplied him and
his men with yet more magnificent provision; and once all the food had found a home, the King’s servants and his companions’ serving-lads came with five hundred horses to escort him home. When they arrived, Andolosia said: “Gracious Majesty, if you have no objections, I should like to give ten crowns to every one of your men.”

“If you want to hand out money, that’s fine by me,” replied the King.

So the servants were all summoned to a room where Andolosia was standing by the door, and he gave every man ten crowns; the servants were delighted, and they all began to praise Andolosia. Once this was over, the King rode home; and when he arrived back in his palace, he began to wonder where Andolosia’s great wealth came from, for a King with land and lieges were unable to maintain so lavish a lifestyle. And while he was wondering, in walked the Queen; so he told her about the splendid meal Andolosia had given him, cooked with pure spices in the stead of wood, and the ten crowns he had handed to each one of his servants. He could not imagine whence Andolosia had so much money; there was no stinting, yet time seemed only to increase his extravagance. The Queen said:

“I know no one who could discover the truth as soon as Agrippina. He has taken such a shine to her that, rest assured, whatever she asks him, he will tell her.”

“If I could learn the truth… I’d dearly like to know! I think he must scoop it from a fountain. If I knew where this was, I’d be there myself,” mused the King.

“I’ll do my utmost to get to the bottom of this,” said the Queen; and returning to her chambers, she summoned Agrippina for a talk in private. After telling her about Andolosia’s lavish mode of living, she continued: “The King and I cannot understand where all his money comes from, for he
has neither land nor lieges. Now everything about him tells me that he is obsessed with you, and the next time he visits, I’ll allow you more time to converse with him, to see if you can get him to reveal the source of his wealth.”

“I shall certainly try,” promised Agrippina.

So when Andolosia made his next appearance at Court, he was received most handsomely, and admitted to the ladies’ quarters, to his great delight; and it was arranged that he should talk in private with Agrippina. When they were alone, she began: “Andolosia, everyone is saying that it was most honourable of you to regale the King in such grand style and reward all his servants so bountifully. But tell me: aren’t you afraid that, one day, your money will run out?”

“Dear lady,” he said, “while I breathe, I cannot want for money.”

“Then it is meet and proper that you say prayers for your father, who has left you such a store.”

Andolosia replied, “I am as rich as my father, and he was never richer than I am now. But his cast of mind was such that he could take delight only in visiting foreign lands; whereas my pleasure lies with beautiful ladies, in earning their love and favour.”
“Now you have been at Kings’ Courts, where there is always a host of beautiful women. Have you perhaps seen anything that takes your fancy?” asked Agrippina.

“I have served at the Courts of six Kings, and I’ve seen many beautiful ladies and maidens; but none of those women can begin to compare with you for beauty, elegant deportment and exemplary conduct. Your virtues have set my heart burning so fiercely with love that I cannot help myself, I must reveal to you the great and unspeakable love I bear for you. I’m fully aware that I can’t reasonably expect you to return my ardour, for I was not born into the high nobility. And yet love, which conquers everything – love presses me so hard that I cannot stop myself, I must ask for your love; and if you do not refuse me, then whatever you ask of me will be granted.”

He had not long to wait before Agrippina replied: “Andolosia, be honest with me. Show me where all your wealth originates. If you do this in good faith, and do not deceive me, then I shall comply with your desire.”

When Andolosia heard these words, his heart skipped a beat, and with a careless mind and joyful heart he cried out: “Dear Agrippina, I’ll trust you with the truth you wish to know! But give me your word and your faith.”

“Oh Andolosia my dearest, do not doubt my love or my word; what I promise with my lips, you shall experience in deed.”

At these kind words, Andolosia said to the beautiful maiden, “Now hold out the lap of your skirt,” and pulling out Fortune’s Purse, he showed it to the Princess, and said: “While I have this Purse, I have no end of money.” And he counted out a thousand Crowns into her lap, saying: “These are a gift for you. And if you want more, I’ll tell you more. Do you believe that I’ve told you the truth?”
“I see and acknowledge the truth,” she replied, “and now your expenditure amazes me no longer.”

“Now fulfil your faith to me, as I fulfilled mine.”

“I shall do that, my darling Andolosia. Tonight the Queen will lie with the King, and I shall arrange with my lady’s-maid for you to lie with me. I cannot bring this to pass without her; you will have to seal her lips with gold.”

Andolosia promised to do this and to come that night. As soon as he had gone, Agrippina ran to the Queen with the thousand Crowns in her skirts and told her with great delight how she had discovered Andolosia’s secret, and the promise she had made him, and the prospect she had given him for that night. The Queen was highly pleased, for she was a cunning woman, and she asked her daughter:

“Can you remember the shape of the Purse, and its colour and size?”

“Yes,” said Agrippina.

Then the Queen sent for a bag-maker and had him make a purse which exactly resembled Andolosia’s. It was also softened, to give it the appearance of age. After this she ordered her physician to prepare a sleeping-draught – a drink strong enough to sink a man into a sleep as deep as death for seven or eight hours. When the potion was ready, it was borne to Agrippina’s chamber, and the lady’s-maid received instructions to give Andolosia a good reception when he came that night and then to conduct him to Agrippina’s chamber. The Queen would send her daughter to him, and once they were together, the lady’s-maid was to present them with sugared sweets with golden icing, then give him the draught; and she was to take care to pour it into Andolosia’s goblet.
And as all things were arranged, so they came to pass. Andolosia came quite surreptitiously and was led into Agrippina’s chamber; soon the lady herself appeared and sat down with him, and they spoke to one another very cordially. Then no shortage of confections were brought in, and drinks were poured. Agrippina said to Andolosia: “I bring you a drink of friendship” (that is the custom in those lands), and he drank to do her will; and she brought him one cordial after another until he had drunk the whole draught. As soon as he had finished, he sat down heavily, sank to the ground, and fell so fast asleep that he was insensible to what followed. Agrippina was on him in a flash, tearing his jerkin open and severing the Fortunate Purse from his body, before sewing the other purse in its place. Oh Andolosia! What an unequal exchange!

Early in the morning Agrippina brought the Purse to the Queen, who tested its power and, finding no end of gold coins, took her gold-filled skirts to the King. She told him how they had dealt by Andolosia; he asked her to induce Agrippina to give him the Purse, for she might lose it. The Queen tried, but Agrippina refused; so she asked her daughter to give it to her, but Agrippina refused this request as well, remarking that she had risked her life to obtain it, for if Andolosia had woken up while she was busy about him, then “he would have beaten me to death, and with justice.”

When Andolosia had slept off the draught, he woke up and looked around him, and he saw no one save the old lady’s-maid. He asked her what had become of Agrippina.

“She has just arisen; my good lady the Queen has sent for her. Oh sir, you were out like a light! I tried for long to wake you, but I couldn’t rouse you to pleasure and sport with Agrippina. In fact, your sleep was so sound
that if I hadn’t been able to sense your breath, I’d have counted you among the dead.”

When he heard that he had overslept Agrippina’s love, Andolosia began to swear and to curse himself with the most terrible oaths his mind could devise. The old lady’s-maid attempted to pacify him, saying, “Sir, don’t take on so. What didn’t happen last night will come to pass hereafter.”

“May God light a plague on you, you old procuress! Why didn’t you wake me up? In all my life, I’ve never slept so deeply that I wouldn’t have woken had anyone so much as prodded me.”

She said and swore that she had tried, and gave him good words, for he had handed her two hundred Crowns on the previous night; and with these good words, she ushered him out of Agrippina’s bedchamber, and out of the King’s palace. So Andolosia came home to his men, not as merry of mood as he was want to be, and fretting at the thought of having overslept Matins. He did not yet know that he had also overslept fortune and felicity.

### III. Hatless in Hibernia

The King, knowing that Agrippina had the Purse, mused: ‘Andolosia may have more of these virtuous Purses. If that was his only one, then he’s an utter fool for taking so little care of it that a pretty woman can ease it from his possession.’ He set great store by the Purse, thinking: ‘Now money will never fail me, and I need not give my daughter a dowry; she can provide for herself quite honourably. But how am I to discover if Andolosia has any more of these purses?’

So he sent him a message, saying that he would ride out on the following day and he wished Andolosia to join the party; before that, however, the King desired to dine with him. Hearing this, Andolosia replied
that the King should not make requests, but command him at all times as his servant: he would always find him willing. When this came to the King’s ears, he thought: he undoubtedly has more purses.

Andolosia summoned one of his servants, to whom he usually gave three or four hundred crowns to keep a good house, and told him to prepare a sumptuous meal, for the King was coming to dine. The man said:

“Sir, I’m afraid that I don’t have enough money. This’ll cost a lot.”

Andolosia, who was still in a black mood, opened his jerkin and pulled out his purse, with a view to counting out four hundred crowns. But when he put his hand inside, after his accustomed fashion, it closed on air. He raised his eyes to the heavens, he looked from one wall to the other, he turned the purse inside-out – there was a distinct absence of money.

And he realised that Agrippina had duped him. He fell, as you can well understand, into a foul mood. For the first time, he was plunged into fear and want, and he thought of the advice that his father had given him and his brother in good faith on his deathbed, namely to tell no one of the Purse as long as they lived; for the moment that another learnt of its existence, they would lose it. And this had, alas, come to pass. Andolosia also realised that the King’s message was meant to mock him, and there was no hope of demanding the return of the Purse; he could expect nothing from the King but disgrace, ignominy and derision. In his heart’s pain it seemed that he could take no better course than that of riding home to his brother: ‘and I’ll be an unworthy guest, returning without the Purse’. Having made this resolve, he called for all of his servants and delivered the following speech:

“It’s now nigh on ten years since you entered my service. I have maintained you honourably and let you suffer no lack. I am in debt to none; you have all been paid in advance. The time has now come when I can no
longer hold court as I have been accustomed to, and I can no longer be a lord, not your’s, not anyone’s. Now every one of you has a stout horse and good armour, but there is one more trifle that I would like to share with you.”

And turning to his treasurer, he said: “Now count. How much cash do you have?”

The treasurer told a hundred and sixty crowns. There were forty servants, and Andolosia gave two crowns to each, saying: “These crowns, and the horse and armour, are my gift to every one of you, and I pronounce you free, released, and discharged from the vow you made me. Let each one of you provide for himself as he knows best from now on, for I cannot remain here any longer, and I have no money beyond that which I have shared with you.”

When he had finished speaking, the servants were grievously shocked; they looked at one another, amazed that so luxurious a mode of life and so grand a figure should disappear in one night. Then one of them spoke out: “Our dear, faithful master, if anyone has done you some injury, give us to understand who it was for he must die by our hands, even if it was the King himself, and we should all lose our lives for it.”

“No one is to fight for my sake,” replied Andolosia.

They said, “Well, we don’t want to part from you. We’ll sell our horses, armour, and all we have, and not leave you.”

“I thank you all, my dear, dutiful servants, for the offer. When fortune returns to me I shall repay your loyalty. But do as I said and saddle my horse for me at once; I will not have anyone riding or walking with me.”

The servants were sad, and deeply pitied their worthy master, with whom they had enjoyed such good cheer; and they lamented among themselves with tears in their eyes while they brought him his horse. Then
Andolosia took his leave of each man in turn, mounted the horse, and rode as fast as he could to his brother Ampedo in Famagusta.

And when he arrived at the beautiful palace, he knocked on the doors and was admitted at once. Ampedo heard that his brother had come home, and he was delighted; he thought that now he could have his pleasure of the Purse and no longer have to scrimp as he had been doing for ten years. So he went to his brother and received him with great joy, then asked why he came alone and where he had left his retinue.

“I have dismissed them all, and I praise God that I am come home.”

Ampedo asked, “Dear brother, what has happened to you? Tell me, for it pleases me little that you are come alone.”

Andolosia said, “Let us eat first,” and when the meal was over they retired to a room, where Andolosia began to speak with a humble voice and a sorrowful air: “Oh, my dearest brother, I’m afraid that I must be the herald of bad news, I have done us a grievous injury. I’ve lost our fortunate Purse. Ah God, it hurts me to the heart; but I cannot, alas, change what is done.”

Ampedo was shaken to the core, and he swayed on the point of swooning; with heartfelt misery he asked, “Was it wrested from you by force, or did you lose it?”

“I ignored the command our faithful father gave us when he departed this world and I disclosed the secret of the Purse to a loved one. And as soon as I revealed it to her, she stole it from me – which I had not expected of her.”

“If we had followed our father’s instructions,” said Ampedo, “we wouldn’t have separated the two treasures. You would go and visit foreign countries! Well, just look at the success you have met with, and the profit they’ve brought you.”

“Oh, dear brother,” sighed Andolosia, “it hangs so heavy on my heart that I fear my days are almost done, and I am almost past caring.”

Hearing these words, Ampedo attempted to comfort Andolosia: “Dear brother, don’t take it so hard to heart. We still have two chests crammed with ducats; and we have the Hat, we’ll write to the Sultan, and he’ll pay us handsomely for it. We may not have the Purse any longer, but we still have enough money to lead the rest of our lives in honourable state. There is no point in thinking after things that can’t be recovered.”

Andolosia replied, “It’s hard to let go of your belongings, and so it is my wish that you give me the Hat; I have hopes of using it to regain the Purse.”

“It is said that when a man loses his possessions, he loses his wits as well; and I can see that this is the case with you. Having lost us the Purse, you now want to lose us the Hat as well. But I won’t grant you my will and favour to take it away from here; you are, however, welcome to use it for recreation.”

‘Then I’ll just have to leave without your permission’, thought Andolosia.
"Now, my dear, faithful brother," he began, "as I have been guilty of folly, from this point on I shall live according to your will." And he sent the servants to the forest to prepare for a hunt, saying that he would soon follow. Once they had gone, Andolosia said: "Dear brother, lend me our Hat. I want to go to the forest."

Ampedo readily brought him the Hat, and the second he had it in his hands he left the forest and the hunters to each other and wished himself in Genoa. He asked after the most precious jewels in the city and had them brought to his inn, where he examined them closely, placed them on a handkerchief as if about to weigh them – and disappeared. And as he had done in Genoa, so he did in Florence and Venice, collecting the most expensive jewels in the city without paying a penny. And then he went to London.

Now Andolosia knew that Princess Agrippina went to church, so he hired a stall on the adjoining street and laid his jewels out on display. Presently Agrippina came along, with many knaves and maids before and behind, including the old lady’s-maid who had given him the stupefying potion. He knew them all, but they did not recognise him, for he was wearing a false nose, which was so large and bizarre that his own mother
would not have known him from Adam. When Agrippina had passed by, he
picked up two glittering rings and presented them to the two old lady’s-
maids, who he knew to be Agrippina’s constant companions and counsellors,
and he asked them to be so good as to persuade the Princess to invite him to
her palace; he would bring with him jewels of such exquisiteness that he was
certain they had never seen the like. They promised to bring this to pass;
and when Agrippina came home from church, they showed her the two
pretty rings and told her about the adventurer.

“When he gives you two such beautiful rings, I can well believe that
he has precious jewels,” said the Princess. “Send for him to come here, for I
long to see his wares.” Once he was summoned, the stranger did not take
long to arrive, and he was conducted to Agrippina’s antechamber, where he
set out his wares. Agrippina surveyed them with delight, and she began to
haggle over the ones she liked best. There were some jewels there worth a
thousand crowns, and others whose value was far greater; but she did not
offer him even half their worth.

“Gracious Princess,” said the stranger, “I have heard that you are the
richest Princess in the whole of the world, and so I have sought out the most
beautiful jewels under the sun to bring to Your Majesty. But you offer me
far too little, far less than they cost me. Do not make my time of no
moment; I have journeyed long towards you with the constant dread of being
murdered for the sake of these jewels. Gracious Princess, lay together those
you like, and we shall see what loss I can accept.”

Then she selected her favourites, some ten gems of varying size, and
the adventurer calculated their value at five thousand Crowns. She did not
want to meet this amount; Andolosia thought, ‘I don’t want to wrangle with
her – just let her bring the Purse…’, and so they agreed on for four thousand
Crowns. The Princess carried the jewels to her chamber in her skirts, took the Purse out of a chest, fastened it tightly to her girdle and came through to pay the stranger.

He slowly edged his way towards her, and when she began to count out the money, he threw his arms round her, grasped her tightly, and wished the two of them in a wild, uninhabited desert. No sooner had he made the wish than they flew through the air to a wretched island off the coast of Hibernia, where they found themselves sitting in the shade of a tree which bore many beautiful apples.

And as the Princess sat under the tree, with the gems in her skirts and the Purse on her girdle, she looked up and saw the shining apples. Then she cried to the adventurer: “Ah God, tell me where we are and how we came here. I feel so weak; if you could give me one of those apples, so I may refresh myself.”

Hearing this, Andolosia laid the remaining gems in her lap and placed his hat on her head, so that it would not impede him while he was climbing. Then he clambered up the tree and started to look for the choicest apples. Agrippina, sitting under the tree without the least idea of what was happening to her, exclaimed: “Ah, would to God I were back in my bedchamber.”
And no sooner were the words out of her mouth than she was flew through the air and arrived, without a scratch, in her bedchamber. The King, the Queen and all the courtiers were truly delighted, and they asked her where she had been. She replied that she did not know; so they asked where the stranger was, who had abducted her. Agrippina said, “I left him up a tree. Don’t ask me any more, I must rest; I feel so weak and so weary.”

IV. Apples, Horns and a Hermit

Now let us return to Andolosia, sitting up the tree, and having just seen Agrippina disappear with the Purse, the Hat and the jewels he had gathered in three great and mighty cities. As you may imagine, he was shocked beyond measure. Climbing slowly back down, he looked at the tree, and he said: “Cursed be the tree, the fruit it bears, the man who planted it, and the hour in which I came here.”

Then he looked all around, but he did not know where he was, or which direction would lead him to human society; and so he began to swear and imprecate: “Cursed be the hour of my birth, and every day and hour of my life. Oh, grim Death, why did you not throttle me before I fell into this desperate plight? Cursed be the day and the hour when I first set eyes on Agrippina! Oh, Almighty God, how wondrous are Thy works; how can it be that nature has the power to conceal so false and faithless a heart beneath such a beautiful exterior? If I had seen into that false heart when I stared at that perfect countenance, I would have avoided this misery.”

And he wandered hither and thither, grumbling and muttering: “I wish to God my brother was with me in this wilderness; I would choke the life from him then hang myself from a tree with my belt. With our deaths, the
Purse would lose its power, and that old fiend the Queen and falseheart Agrippina would no longer have their pleasure of it.”

And as Andolosia strayed, now here, now there, night came and darkness fell; unable to see anything, he laid himself down beneath a tree and rested awhile. However, he could not sleep for fear; there seemed no other prospect than death in the desert and dying without extreme unction. There were no paths around, no trace of anyone having trod this ground for years; and he lay as one in despair, almost desiring death.

When day broke, Andolosia arose and, of necessity, continued to wander. But there was still no sight or sound of anyone as he came to a tree with unusually shiny red apples. Now he was sorely and grievously hungry, so he threw a stone at the tree, knocking two large apples to the ground. He resumed his journey, eating as he walked; and once he had eaten both, two long horns, like a goat’s, grew on his head. When he felt the horns, and saw them on his shadow, he lowered his head and charged the tree, thinking to butt them off. But it was all to no avail; so he ran around under the horns, crying: “Poor, miserable man, poor, unhappy wretch that I am! How can it be that Earth holds so many people, yet there is not a single soul here to point me back to civilisation?” And he yelled out: “Oh Almighty God! Oh Queen of Heaven, Virgin Mary! Come to my aid in my hour of direst need!”
His pitiable laments were heard by a wood-brother, a hermit, who had been living in the wilderness for thirty years without clapping eyes on another human being. Walking towards the sound, he came upon Andolosia, and said: “Oh, you poor man, who brought you here? Or what do you seek in this wilderness?”

Andolosia replied, “Dear Brother, I’m sorry I ever came here, for things have gone hard with me.”

And he was about to begin his story, but the hermit had no ears for it: “I’ve neither seen nor heard a human being in thirty years, and I dearly wish you had not come here.”

“Dear Brother, I am ravenous – have you anything to eat?”

The wood-brother took him to his hermitage, where there was neither bread nor wine, and nothing but fruit and water, on which he subsisted. But seeing see that this fare was not for Andolosia, he told his guest: “I shall direct you to where you can find sufficient food and drink.”

“Dear Brother, what can I do about these horns? People will regard me as a sea-monster.”

The hermit led him down a narrow path.

“Dear son,” he said, breaking two apples off a tree, “take these and eat them.”

No sooner had Andolosia eaten the apples than his horns completely disappeared; and he asked how it was possible that he could grow horns, then lose them, in the twinkling of an eye.

The hermit said: “The Creator, who fashioned Heaven and Earth and all that they contain, also conceived and created these trees and endowed them with the gift of bringing forth such fruit. Their like is not to be found on the face of this Earth, other than in this wilderness.”
“Dear Brother, allow me to pick a few of these apples and take them with me.”

“Dear son, take what you will. Do not ask me; they are not mine. I own nothing but a poor soul; and if I can return it to the Creator who gave me it, my struggles in this world will have been worthwhile. It is written on your face that your mind is enveloped in temporal affairs and heavily laden with the burden of transitory concerns. Fling them out and turn to God; or you will suffer a great loss for the sake of a little pleasure in this short, ephemeral life.”

Andolosia did not at all take these words to his heart, but thinking only of the great loss he had incurred, he picked some of the apples which made the horns grow and some of those which made them disappear. Then he asked the hermit for the sake of God to show him the road to food, for in two days he had eaten nothing but four apples, “and if I found some more apples, or any other fruit, in this wilderness, I would not dare bite into them.”

The hermit took him to a path and said: “Now go straight down this path, and you will come to a broad river, which is an arm of the Spanish Sea. If the river is in spate when you arrive there, wait; the tide will recede. As soon as this happens, cross and head for the high tower you will see before you, and waste no time in crossing; if the tide catches you, there will be no escape. When you come to the sea, a short distance away, you will find a good village with bread, meat and other foods for the body.”

Thanking the Brother deeply and heartily, Andolosia took his leave and did as instructed. He crossed the river unscathed, passed by the tower and arrived in the village, where he ate and drank and restored his body with strength; for he had been feeling weak and dulled. Now that he was himself
once again, he asked for the shortest way to London, and he was told that it was a great distance away; as he was still in Hibernia, he would have to travel through Scotland to reach England, and London was a long way from the Scottish border. Andolosia was disgruntled at this, for he would not have imagined himself to be even ten miles away. He was also concerned about the apples he was carrying; if he were to be long on the road, they might get bruised or begin to go bad. When the villagers saw how anxious he was to reach London, they pointed him in the direction of a nearby port which traded with England, Flanders and Scotland, and where he would find a ship affording him passage.

Andolosia soon rose up and walked to this port, where he had the good fortune to find a ship from London. He hired a passage and enjoyed a smooth journey, arriving safe and sound in the great city. Once there, he limed one of his eyes and wore a wig, so that he was totally unrecognisable. Then he hired a bench and set himself up before the church that Agrippina frequented; and after laying the apples on a clean white cloth, he began to cry out: “Apples from Damascus!”

Whenever he was asked how much they cost, he replied, “Three crowns! Three crowns an apple!”, and they walked on. Of course, Andolosia would have been sorry if they had purchased any of the apples.

In time the Princess came along, with her maids, her servants, and her lady’s-maids. Again he cried, “Apples from Damascus!”

“How much for one?” asked the Princess.

“Three crowns.”

“What is so special about them that you sell at so high a price?”

“They give a person beauty and sharp understanding.”
When the Princess heard this, she ordered her lady’s-maids to buy two. The purchase completed, Andolosia cleared away his wares, not wishing to sell to anyone else. Agrippina returned home, and it was not long before she ate both apples; and as soon as she had eaten them, two large horns grew on her head with a severe pain that made her retire to her bed.

When the horns had shot up to their full height, and her headache had eased, she rose up and walked towards her mirror; and on seeing the two tall and hideous horns on her head, she fell on them with her hands, thinking to tear them off – but they would not move. Then she screamed for two of her maids; and when they saw the Princess, they started back and made many crosses in the air before her, as if she were the Prince of Darkness. Agrippina was speechless with shock.

“Oh Your Majesty, what has happened?” they asked. “How has your noble person come to be marked by such a deformity?”

She replied that she did not know. “I hold it to be a plague from God, or it was caused by the apples from Damascus the untrue grocer was selling. Help me try to remove them.”

The maids pulled with all their might, but the horns would not move. So they brought a rope, tied it to the horns, threw it over a beam and pulled down to raise her into the air. Then they swung from her ankles, hoping to rip the horns off her head. Agrippina suffered this with great patience, but when she realised how firmly set the horns were, and that all their efforts were unavailing, she grew progressively desperate:

“Oh, miserable creature that I am! What use is my being a King’s daughter now? What good is it that I am the richest woman on Earth and have the Prize of Beauty over my sex? Now I resemble a senseless beast! Why was I ever born? If no one can help me remove these monstrosities,
I’ll drown myself in the Thames” (that is a large and busy river which flows past the Palace), “for I cannot be seen.”

One of her senior lady’s-maids began to comfort her: “Princess, you should not despair. If those horns can appear just like that, then you may rely on their disappearing just as suddenly. You should make your devotions to our dear lady Westminster, worker of wondrous miracles, and to St. Thomas at Canterbury, sending offerings that they may intercede with God to restore you to your natural state. Additionally, there are many skilled and highly-learned doctors in London; it is most probable that they will know, or can find in their books, what causes these growths and how they can be expelled.”

Agrippina was pleased with this advice and said: “Tell no one about this; and if anyone asks for me, say I am indisposed and will admit no one.”

Then she had expensive golden offerings prepared and sent away, and her old lady’s-maid asked the doctors if there were any means to drive away the two horns a relative had grown? The doctors were astounded at this, and every one of them eagerly desired to see the invalid.

“You can’t see this person unless you know how to help them. And anyone who can do this will be amply rewarded,” said the lady’s-maid.

Not one of them had the courage to venture a remedy, for they had never heard or read of this affliction, nor seen such a phenomenon. So they all refused their services, and the lady’s-maid, disgruntled and despairing of a doctor, prepared to return to the Court with less favourable news than she had hoped to bear.

In the meantime, Andolosia had disguised himself as a doctor, with a tall red cap and a scarlet robe; he had also assumed a huge nose and applied some face-paint. He came up to her and said:
“Dear attendant, I notice that you have entered the houses of three doctors: have they given you the advice you were seeking? Do not be angry at my asking; I too am a doctor of medicine. If you have a pressing concern, you may reveal it to me; it would have to be an exceptionally strange or severe ailment for me not to know how, with the help of God, to drive it away and return the patient to health.”

The lady’s-maid thought that the doctor had been sent her by God, and she told him how a person of note had incurred a peculiar affliction: two long horns, like a goat’s, had shot up on their head, causing concern beyond the expression of words.

“If you can help, you will be well rewarded, for they have no shortage of money and goods.”

Dr. Andolosia laughed warmly and said: “This illness is known to me, and I know the art of making the horns disappear painlessly. But it will cost a hefty sum, for the ingredients are extremely expensive. I also know the reason why such horns as you describe spring up.”

“Dear doctor, what does cause such monstrous growths?”

And the doctor with the large nose replied: “They are caused by one person committing an act of gross disloyalty to another person and taking great delight in their wickedness. Because they do not dare display this delight in public, it must break out somehow; and that man can count himself lucky when it pushes forth on top – for if it pressed out anywhere else, he would die. Many people have died with no visible sign of illness, and no one knew the cause of death; until the body was cut open and horns were discovered inside which, not having been able to find the proper exit, fatally transfixed the heart or another organ. It is not yet two years since I was at the King of Spain’s Court, where a powerful Count had a beautiful
daughter with a graceful physique, who had grown two tall horns; I removed all trace of them, when all the other doctors had given up in despair.”

The lady’s-maid asked where his house was; she would soon come to visit him.

“I have no house as of yet; I arrived here only three days ago. I am lodging at The Swan, you may inquire after me there. I am known as The Doctor with the Big Nose.”

The lady’s-maid hastened back with unspeakable delight to the despondent Agrippina and said: “Gracious Princess, be of good cheer, for help is at hand.” She recounted how three doctors had left her without comfort, and how she had then found one who promised deliverance; and she told her about the Doctor with the Big Nose, who knew how to cure her as he had cured a Countess: “He also gave me the reason why such horns sprout up, and I can well believe it.”

The sad princess lay on her bed, downcast and so fiercely ashamed that she would not look at herself, nor allow her maids to see her. And she said to the lady’s-maid:

“Why didn’t you bring the doctor with you, when you know how badly I want to be freed from these horns? Go this instant and fetch him, and tell him to bring what he needs and spare no expense. Take him a hundred crowns, and if he requires more, then give him as much as he wishes.”

The lady’s-maid changed her clothes to avoid recognition and made her way to The Swan, where she found the doctor. Giving him the hundred crowns, she said: “Now be diligent. You must come to the person I’m going to take you to only at night, and you must not mention this to anyone; their own mother and father know nothing about this affair.”
“Rest assured that the secret will not pass my lips; and I shall accompany you,” said the Doctor. “But first I must go to the apothecary’s and buy the necessary ingredients. You may either wait here or come back after two hours.”

She said she would wait, for she did not dare return without him.

And The Doctor with the Big, Monstrous Nose went to an apothecary’s and bought a little rhubarb, which he used, with sugar, to coat half an apple. After adding many appetising delicacies, he bought a small tin of fragrant ointment and some musk. Then he returned to The Swan, and the lady’s-maid led him under cover of night to the Princess, who was lying behind the bed-curtains. She received him with the faintest of voices, as though she were terribly weak.

“Good day to you, dear lady,” said the doctor. “With the help of God and my art, all will soon go well with you. Now sit up straight and let me grasp and examine your affliction; this will help me to help you.”

Agrippina flushed with shame at being seen with the horns; but she sat up on the bed. The doctor took a firm grip of the outgrowths and pronounced:

“We need a pelt-bag made of monkey-skin for each horn, and the skin must be warm, for I am going to salve the horns.”
The lady’s-maid gave the order for an old Court ape to be killed and flayed. The skin was brought and two bags made from it after the doctor’s instructions; then he salved the horns with monkey-lard – a special remedy for such afflictions. After he had salved her, he pulled a pelt-bag over each horn and said:

“Gracious Lady, what I have just done to the horns will soften them, so that they can be removed by bowel movements. To that end I have brought you a sweetmeat: eat it, then have a short nap; and when you wake up, you will perceive the improvement in your condition.”

Agrippina behaved as a patient bent on a return to health: when the doctor gave her half an apple (one of those which made the horns disappear), she ate it and fell asleep. Then the rhubarb began to work its effect in her body and drive her to the privy. When she had returned to her bed, the doctor declared:

“Now let us see if the medication has worked any good.”

And he lifted the pelt-bags up from the top: the horns had shrunk by a quarter. Agrippina was so bitter an enemy to the horns that she would not touch them; but on being told that they were disappearing, she reached up and discovered that they had indeed become smaller and shorter. Delighted, she requested that the doctor keep doing his utmost to complete the cure.

He said, “I shall return tomorrow night and bring what is required,” and went to the apothecary’s again. Then he had coated half an apple, but with a different flavour from the previous time. At night he was conducted to the Princess’s chamber, and he feigned ignorance of his surroundings. Andolosia did as he had done on the previous night, but had the bags made smaller to fit the horns; and after he had given Agrippina the sweetmeat, and she had slept and then dropped her stool, they found that the horns had
shrunk to half their original size. Her previous delight was as nothing to what she felt now; and she asked the doctor not to slacken his efforts, but to expedite the cure – his pains would be well rewarded. He promised to do his best.

The third night was a repetition of the two preceding. As Andolosia sat by Agrippina, he thought: ‘I wonder what reward she intends to give me? Even if she hands over two or three thousand Crowns – a handsome remuneration for any doctor of medicine – the amount is trifling when set against what she stole from me. Before I remove the horns entirely, I’ll talk with her and tell her my mind. If she refuses to do my will, I’ll make her a sweetmeat to return the horns to full size. Then I’ll travel to Flanders and send her the message that, if she wants them removed, she must come to me and bring what I demand. When she wakes up I’ll say to her: Dear lady, you can plainly see how your condition is improving. But the hardest and most demanding part of the cure is the removal of the base of the horns from the brain-pan; it requires various refined and special ingredients, which cost a great deal. If the expense should occasion reluctance on your part, I shall have to leave things as they stand. Perhaps you are thinking of sending me away with a paltry fee because I am but a doctor of medicine; now you must know that I am also a Doctor of the Black Arts, and I have invoked the Evil Spirit to advise me what reward I should demand. He told me that you have two magical possessions – a Purse and a Hat – and I am to request one of these; and he pronounced that you would give me the Hat. In addition, you should provide me, every year, with enough money to live like a lord’.

While he was formulating this resolve, the lady’s-maid appeared with a light to see how the Princess was; she was still asleep. The doctor’s cap had slipped from his grasp when he took it off, and now, as he bent forward
to pick it up, he saw the Wishing-Hat lying under the bed, at the front. No one had paid it any attention, for they did not know its power; nor did the Princess know that it was this Hat which had brought her home from the wilderness. If she had known this, there is little doubt that she would have hung it on a different nail!

The doctor sent the lady’s-maid away to fetch a tin of medicine; and when she was gone, he hurriedly and jubilantly snatched up the Hat and hid it under his robe. ‘If I could only make the Purse mine as well’, he thought. Then the Princess awoke and dressed herself. When the doctor pulled the pelt bags off, the horns were no more than stumps, to Agrippina’s great joy. The lady’s-maid whispered to her: “One more night and you’ll be back to your old self. Then we’ll be spared the sight of the ugly doctor with the monstrous nose – he could put you off men for good.”

Now that Andolosia had the Hat, he abandoned his intention of describing himself as a double Doctor. “Dear lady,” he began, “you can clearly see how effectively my remedies are working. But the most demanding stage of the treatment is the expulsion of the horns from the brain-pan, which requires rare ingredients, and if I cannot find them here, I shall have to travel for them, or send another doctor – whom I would instruct
in the matter – to fetch them. The expenditure will be great. So I would like
to know what reward you will give me when the horns are completely
removed and your head is as smooth as ever.”

The Princess remarked, “I have found your art to be skilled and
efficient, and I request that you help me and spare no money.”

“You say I should not be sparing with money,” replied the doctor,
“but I must be, for I do not have any.”

Although she possessed the inexhaustible Purse, Agrippina was shy of
spending money. She walked leisurely over to the chest beside her bed,
wherein was contained her most precious belongings, including the Purse,
which was fitted with a strong strap; and taking it out, she tied it around her
waist, walked to a table in front of a scenic window and began to count.
When she had told three hundred Crowns, the doctor put his hands inside his
robe, as if reaching for a purse to hold his fee; and shaping as if to take the
money, he threw his cap off, donned the Hat, grabbed the Princess and
wished himself in a wild, uninhabited wood. His wish was instantly fulfilled,
and the old lady’s-maid ran to the Queen to tell her that Agrippina had been
abducted once again. She related the history of the horns and the doctor.
The Queen, her mother, was startled, but thought: ‘As she came back soon
the last time, so may she make a speedy return again. Besides, she has the
Purse with her, so she can pay people to help her home’.
V. Sister Agrippina

But when she had waited all day and all night, and there was still no sign of Agrippina, the Queen, as a mother, began to feel in her heart that she had lost her beautiful daughter. She went with a heavy heart to tell the King the full tale.

He said: “Oh, that’s a wise doctor – the wisest of his profession! It’s none other than Andolosia, whom you so falsely deceived. I perceive that whoever bestowed that good fortune on him also endowed him with the wisdom to regain the Purse should he come from its possession. Fortune willed that he, and none other, have the Purse; and if Fortune had so willed, then I, or the next man, would also have such a Purse. There are many men in England but only one King – and I am he. Such is the lot granted me by God and Fortune. And it is Andolosia’s lot to be the sole possessor of this purse; if we only had our daughter again!”

“Your Majesty, be so good as to send out messengers to try to discover where she is before she is reduced to poverty and misery,” pleaded the Queen.

“I’m sending no messengers out. We would be held in disgrace for not having taken better care of her.”

Andolosia, alone in the wild, uninhabited wood with Agrippina, flung the doctor’s robe to the ground, threw the loathsome nose away, and stepped roughly towards the Princess. She recognised him at once, and the shock shot through every limb, rendering her speechless. For his eyes were rolling in his head, he was gnashing his teeth, and he gave the appearance of being ready to strike her to death. Drawing a knife, he hacked her girdle off – his hurry was too great to untie it – and separated the Purse, rudely flinging the
girdle far away. Then he opened his jerkin and laced the Purse to its accustomed place.

Agrippina, watching all this, trembled like an aspen in the wind. Andolosia spat out in his fury: “You false, deceitful woman, now you’re in my hands, now I’ll share with you the good faith you shared with me when you cut my Purse away and sewed an impotent one on in its place! Now you can see that it’s back where it belongs; now try asking your mother and old lady’s-maid for help and advice, and snap your fingers for a sparkling drink to dupe me with! And even if both those fiends were here with you, all their arts would never help you to take the Purse from me again!

“Oh Agrippina, how could you have it in your heart to show such bad grace to me, who was so faithful to you! I would have shared my heart, my soul, my person and possessions, with you. How could you have it in your heart to drive so manly a knight, who jousted and tourneyed every day for your sake, to such extreme poverty, without showing me the slightest sign of pity? The King and Queen mocked and made carnival fun of me, and the memory still rankles in my heart, for the evil you did me drove me to despair. I was about to hang myself when Mary, Mother of God, came with Grace to my aid against pernicious temptation; and I shall serve her faithfully until the closing of my days. If I had proceeded, you would have been the cause of my losing life and soul, honour and possessions. And when you had the virtuous Purse in your power, and you were told that I was poorer than a church-mouse, and had had to ride away on my own after having dismissed all my servants, you were reluctant to send me a small sum to help me home to my friends with some honour intact. Now speak your judgement: is it not right and proper that I should show you the mercy you showed me?”
Agrippina was filled with terror and did not know what to say. Looking up to Heaven, she nervously began to speak: “Rigid and virtuous knight, Andolosia, I confess that I have behaved harshly and dishonourably towards you. I beg you to make allowances for the diffidence, ignorance and recklessness which Nature has given in greater degrees to women, both young and old, than to the male sex. Do not force this matter to a bitter conclusion, but lay down your anger at this poor girl; return good for evil, as becomes a just and honourable knight.”

“The injury, disgrace and grief you have occasioned me are still so alive in my heart, that I cannot leave you unpunished.”

“Oh Andolosia, reconsider! People would speak great dishonour of you if you harmed a poor woman whom you held prisoner in a desert. Without doubt, every mention of this would be ignominious to your knighthood.”

Andolosia replied, “Well, I shall resist my anger, and I give you my word as a knight that I shall injure neither your honour nor your body. But you have a keepsake from me, and you must keep it till the grave, to hold me in your mind.”

Agrippina had been in such dire fear for her life that she had completely forgotten about the horns on her head. But once Andolosia had guaranteed her life and honour, she recovered her composure, and said: “I wish to God I were free of these horns and back in my father’s palace.”

Hearing her make a wish, Andolosia suddenly noticed the Hat lying on the ground beside her, so he ran over, snatched it up and tied it tight to his belt. Agrippina could see from this that he was held the Hat especially dear, and it was the agent by which means she had twice been carried off. Fuming at herself, she thought: ‘You had both the treasures in your keeping
and you couldn’t hold on to them’. But she hid her anger from Andolosia and asked him very sweetly to remove the horns and take her home to her father.

“In short,” he said, “the horns have a home on your head for life. But I shall willingly take you within sight of your father’s palace; I am never setting foot inside there again.”

She asked him a second time, then a third. But in vain.

When Agrippina saw that no amount of pleading could mollify him, she said: “If I must then bear these horns and look misshapen, I do not wish to return to England, or be seen by anyone who knows me – father, mother or anyone else. So take me to the End of the World, where none will recognise me.”

“There is nowhere you would be better off than with your father and mother, the King and Queen,” said Andolosia.

But she would not agree. “Take me to a nunnery, so I can live apart from the world.”

“Is that what you desire? Are you in earnest?”

And she said, “Yes.”

Then he put on the Hat and took her to Hibernia, close to the End of the World, and little distance from St. Patrick’s Purgatory. They arrived in an isolated field, where there was a large and stately nunnery which admitted only ladies of noble birth. Leaving Agrippina sitting alone in the field, Andolosia entered the convent and sought out the Abbess. He told her that he had brought a noble and honourable maiden, beautiful and healthy, but with growths on her head which made her too ashamed to live among her friends: “So she wishes to be where no one knows her. And if you accept her, I shall pay for her maintenance threefold.”
“The fee is two hundred crowns, for I provide every lady with a maid and supply all that she needs. So if you want to pay this threefold, bring her here.”

He soon returned with Agrippina, who thanked the Abbess for her reception with such modesty, and dropped so graceful a curtsey, that the Abbess knew her to be of noble lineage; and she felt sad that this beautiful girl should bear those cursed horns on her head.

“Agrippina,” she said, “is it your wish to make this convent your home?”

“It is, dear Abbess,” said Agrippina in the humblest of voices.

“And will you be obedient to me, and chant in the choir at matins and all the other services? If you cannot perform a task, will you learn how to do it? That is all that our Order requires. Anyone who wishes to enter another Order, or to take a husband, is free to do so. But the money given for her maintenance will never be returned.”

Agrippina replied: “Dear lady, for my part, the venerable traditions and customs of your honourable convent shall not be altered or broken.”

Then Andolosia paid the Abbess six hundred crowns and recommended Agrippina to her care; and she expressly promised to do her utmost, being delighted to have received so much ready money. So
Andolosia took his leave the Abbess, who was a Countess by birth; and she told her new charge: “Go and escort your friend out.”

When they were at the doors, Andolosia said: “Agrippina, God bless you, and may it be His will that you long remain in health and acquire eternal bliss in this convent.”

“May it be so. Amen,” she said, then burst into tears. “O rigid, virtuous knight, now you have accomplished your unbending will on this poor girl. Now the year is long, there are many days, and the hours are unequal; and I have sincere faith in God that there will yet come a happy hour when your noble heart will be moved to charity, and your mind and mood given to mercy. At that time remember me, your prisoner in this desolation; display pity towards me, and release me, for I can serve neither God nor the world, so averse am I to these horns.”

These words found Andolosia’s heart, and he could give no reply. Then, saying “God’s will be done,” he went his way.

Agrippina sadly shut the doors and returned to the Abbess, who gave her a chamber and a serving-maid to serve her. All alone, she served God to the best of her powers, although she did not have a mind for prayer.

VI. A Royal Wedding in Cyprus

Having parted from Agrippina, Andolosia was a happy man. He put his Hat on and wished himself from one land to another, until he arrived in Bruges; and in this city, where obliging ladies and many other kinds of recreation are to be found, he dispelled the discontent he had been under. And he appointed himself in honourable attire, bought forty mettlesome steeds, and took many sturdy lads into his service, whom he clothed in his livery. Then he began to joust and pursue knightly pastimes once again; and
he rode through Germany, viewing the beautiful cities of the Holy Roman Empire, before heading for Venice, Florence and Genoa, where he sent for the dealers whose jewels he had purloined and paid them in ready money.

Then, with his horses and his servants, he joyfully sailed to Famagusta and rode home to his brother, who received him handsomely, being highly glad to see Andolosia riding in such lordly state. After they had eaten, Ampedo took his brother into a chamber and asked him how he had fared. Andolosia narrated how he had lost the Hat as well as the Purse, at which Ampedo was so thunderstruck that he fell down in a swoon. Andolosia poured water over him, and when Ampedo had returned to his senses he proceeded to tell him how he had lost both treasures, but regained them afterwards through cunning: ‘So don’t be so despondent.’ And he unbound the Purse from his jerkin, took the Hat out of a gripsack, and laid them out before Ampedo, saying: ‘Dear brother, now take both treasures and fare well with them! Enjoy yourself to your heart’s content! I wish you joy of them with all my heart, and I shall raise no objections.’

Ampedo replied, ‘I want nothing of that Purse, for he who carries it must bear fear and anxiety at all times. I have read about the pain and distress it caused our father of blessed memory’

These words were music to Andolosia’s ears, and he thought, ‘If he had taken the Purse in his hands, it would not have been long before I had to ask for it back. And now, without further ado, it’s mine’. He did not dare tell his brother how he had bought exquisite jewels without paying, lost Purse, Hat and jewels in one blow – and in a wilderness to boot, where there was nothing to eat or drink –, or how he had wished to throttle him before hanging himself. ‘Better not to mention that,’ he thought, ‘the shock might kill him, or plunge him into a grave illness’.
So Andolosia began to make merry with jousts, and he organised dances to give pleasure to all. He was generosity personified, so that the whole town sang his praises; everyone revered him, and the common people asked him to be with them always.

When he had been in Famagusta for some time, he rode with his retinue to the King’s Court, some sixty miles away, to divert himself there. The King and his courtiers received him with distinction, and His Majesty asked where he had been all this time. Andolosia told of the many Kingdoms he had passed through. The King then asked him more questions than he would have put to another, for Andolosia was his subject, and his father Fortunatus had also found special favour at Court; and he wondered if he had not lately been in England.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” replied Andolosia.

“The King of England has a beautiful daughter, an only child, called Agrippina. I had wanted her as a wife for my son, but I have been informed that she has disappeared. Tell me: have you heard any news of her? Is she still missing, or has she been found?”

“Your Majesty, I can certainly inform you on this matter. He does indeed have a beautiful – an extremely beautiful – daughter, who has been transported to Hibernia by a necromancer’s arts. She is residing there in a convent for noble ladies, where I conversed with her a short while ago.”

“Could she not be brought back to her father?” asked the King. “I am old, and I would dearly like to settle my son on the throne before my death.”

“Gracious Majesty, for your sake and for your son – who is deserving of every honour – I shall essay what I can in this affair. With God’s help, I should soon return her to her father’s palace.”
The King requested that Andolosia do this and spare no expense; he and his would enjoy the royal favour and gratitude.

“Your Majesty, prepare a distinguished Embassy and send them out a fortnight after I leave; they will find the Princess in her father’s palace in London. If the King promises her to your son, he will send her to you with honour.”

“Andolosia, my good friend,” urged the King, “be sure to make a success of this matter. I shall be sending an Embassage in great pomp and splendour; let their journey not be made in vain.”

“Have no fear. Order your son’s portrait painted, and send it with the Embassy; you will see that it will please the King and Queen and make them all the more eager to wed their beautiful daughter to so handsome a youth.”

When the Prince heard of the planned transaction, he made his way to Andolosia and urged him to work in earnest to bring the affair to a successful conclusion; he had heard a great deal about Agrippina’s beauty and perfection. Andolosia promised to do his utmost, and taking his leave, he rode back to Famagusta with his retinue. He asked his brother to lend him the Hat, saying that he would soon return; and Ampedo was agreeable. Then he ordered his bursar to be generous to his servants, for they should make merry while he was away.

So Andolosia took the Hat, travelled from one land to the other, and wished himself in the wilderness with the magic apples. The trees were full of fair fruit, but he could not tell which apples were which, and he was reluctant to eat one. However, he did not want to leave without the means to release Agrippina from her horns. So, after due consideration, Andolosia reached for an apple, ate it, and a horn grew on his head; then he ate another, and the horn disappeared. Filling his pockets with some of both kinds, he
atravelled to the convent and knocked on the doors. He was presently admitted, and arriving before the Abbess, he asked for Agrippina, for he wished to have a word with her. The Abbess, recognising him, was only too happy to summon her charge; but when the Princess arrived, she received Andolosia badly, for she did not know the reason for his visit, and she was frightened.

“Dear lady, allow Agrippina to hold some private converse with me,” said Andolosia.

She willingly gave her assent, and Andolosia withdrew with the Princess to a quiet place.

“Agrippina, do you still loathe those horns as deeply as when I took my leave of you?”

“Yes. The longer I bear them, the harder I hate them,” she said.

“If you were free and rid of them, where would you like to be?”

“Where should I wish to be but in London with my dear parents the King and Queen?”

“Agrippina, God has hearkened to your prayer. Your wish will be granted.”

Then he gave her half an apple to eat and told her to rest awhile; and by the time he roused her, there was no trace of the horns. The maid she had been allotted plaited her hair and dextrously arranged her head-dress; then they came before the Abbess. At the sight of Agrippina in her complete beauty, the Abbess called all the nuns out of their cells to witness the miracle that had effected so sudden a transformation. The nuns were astonished that she had become free of the horns in so short a time, but Andolosia said:

“Do not be amazed. God can do anything; nothing is impossible to Him. So you see: when He means well by somebody, no one may harm
them. Agrippina is a Princess, born of the blood, and I shall deliver her to her mother and father. Before a month has passed, she will be married to a young Prince – the most handsome youth alive on Earth.”

Agrippina listened closely to his words.

Then Andolosia gave the Abbess and the nuns a hundred crowns as a parting present, with expressions of his gratitude for their honourable maintenance of the Princess, and Agrippina thanked them very decorously. They took their leave, and once they were in the field, Andolosia equipped himself with the Hat and bore the Princess to the street before the King of England’s palace – for he shied away from entering the place where he had been the victim of such great infidelity. Then he returned to his brother and servants in Famagusta.

The King, the Queen and their entourage were overjoyed to find that Agrippina had come back; they hosted a tremendous feast and had their daughter exquisitely attired in gorgeous and luxurious garments. In their midst of their merriment, a herald announced to His Majesty that the King of Cyprus’s messengers were on their way with a large cavalcade, and they had been sent to ask him to give Agrippina’s hand in marriage to the young Prince of Cyprus.
When the Embassy arrived in London, they were given an excellent reception and provided with luxurious accommodation, where their every need was catered for. After four days the King sent for them, and they rode to the Palace arrayed in brilliant clothes, each according to his rank. There were a Duke, two Counts, and numerous knights and squires. They began to discuss the wedding. When the Queen understood that Agrippina’s hand was being courted, she was sorely reluctant to marry her beautiful, beloved daughter, to lose her to a distant land, and to a man who could be hunchbacked, lame or blind. When her laments reached the Cypriots’ ears, they requested the King to send for the Queen. The royal couple now being together, the Embassy produced the portrait of the Prince. The King asked if this was a true likeness? if the Prince was really so handsome? The envoys swore an oath that he had a much finer figure, was very tall and upright, and no older than twenty-four; and the King and Queen were content.

The Queen now took the portrait to Agrippina and told her how it was intended to give her to this Prince, who was even more handsome in the flesh. With Andolosia’s words fresh in her memory, Agrippina trusted the painting as a likeness and promised obedience to whatever decision the King and Queen should make. Having heard their daughter’s sentiments, the King and Queen discussed the matter further with the Cypriots, until the arrangements for the wedding were finalised. Then the King had many ships loaded with provisions and manned with expert sailors, and the Princess attired in magnificent robes and jewellery, as befits a mighty King with a care for his honour. Agrippina was to be accompanied by many proud nobles, in particular a Count who had long since been a pirate; and the King threw a banquet for the company before they set sail.
When the ships were fully laden and ready to depart, the noble Princess took her leave of the King her father and the Queen her mother: “My gracious Lord King, and my gracious Lady Queen, may Almighty God in Heaven and his virtuous mother Mary have you in their care at all times and grant you health and long life.”

Then she knelt before her father, and sighing deeply, with tears in her eyes she said: “I request your blessing; for now I must part from you, and I know that I shall never see you or my mother again.”

“Agrippina, my dearest daughter,” said the King, “may the blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shield you from sorrow. And may the Holy Trinity grant you, and all who aid you, peace, health, long life, prosperity, and the goodwill of all men.”

The Queen could wish no more but: “May this come to pass. Amen.”

Then Agrippina stood up and walked, with her train, to her ship; and a large crowd followed to escort her to the sea, many of whom were sorrowful that the beautiful Princess was leaving and they should set eyes on her no more. Now when Agrippina and her retinue had boarded, the crew hoisted sail, and they set off in the name of God. He granted them good weather and a fortunate journey; whoever wishes to travel from England to Cyprus must cross the Spanish Sea, which is one of the cruellest of all water-passages, yet they came unharmed, with God’s help, to Cyprus.

When the beautiful young Princess Agrippina and her attendants arrived, safe and sound, they were met by a welcoming-party arranged by the King of Cyprus: a Duchess, four Countesses and many noble ladies, with their male equivalents, who executed their duties with fitting propriety. A banquet was held, with sumptuous dishes and vintage wines, and there was plenty for hosts and guests alike. Everyone, young and old, was happy that
their Prince was going to have such a beautiful wife. Then many horses, wagons and carts were made ready, and ceremonious leave was taken.

Agrippina came to Medusa, where the King was holding court. He had assembled the mightiest nobles, male and female, in his whole Kingdom; and however splendid the reception at Famagusta had been, that at Medusa was ten times more dignified and laudable. The Queen rode towards Agrippina with a handsome train in stately apparel, followed by the Prince with a company in full armour that sparkled like mirrors in the sun. When the Prince greeted Agrippina, she recognised him from his portrait; and she thanked him with a smiling countenance and graceful gestures. Then they rode in great joy to the King’s Palace, which was majestically adorned with every kind of decoration, and the festivities began. The King’s Princes and Lords came riding up with great gentility, and all bore splendid gifts to present to the King, of a value to meet their means.

The wedding celebrations continued for six weeks and three days. Much were to write about the regality of the wedding-procession, the feats and displays, and the presents given to the Princess! But among the gifts was a shipload of malmsey and muscatel from Candia, courtesy of Andolosia, which was lapped up like wine from the Kehlheim slopes; there was enough to last the length of the revels and beyond.
And all the while the festivities lasted, the princes and lords did nought but joust, tourney and pursue courtly pastimes: the King and the Dukes jousted on the first day, the Counts, Barons and knights the day after, and the squires and servants on the third day. And every night, at the dance, Agrippina would crown the champion of the day with a handsome wreath; so that every competitor felt his courage stirred, and he gave his all to hunt honour and be rewarded by the beautiful Princess.

VII. The Tragical Death of Andolosia

Among the competitors was Andolosia; and whenever the Counts, Barons and knights jousted, he rode to the lists in more splendid armour than everyone else, apart from the King, who he made no attempt to equal. He was always the best in all the knightly sports, and he was often awarded the prize. Now it so happened that on one occasion, Andolosia surpassed his previous accomplishments, producing his best at the last; yet that night the prize, which in all fairness should have gone to him, was awarded, as a mark of honour, to Count Theodore, who had accompanied the Princess from England. Andolosia paid no heed to this and willingly conceded the Count the honour he had been shown. But the murmur ran that Andolosia’s prize had been wrongfully given to Count Theodore, and this reached the
Englishman’s ears. A fierce hatred of Andolosia secretly flared up in his heart, but he did not know how he could do him disgrace and damage. Although his heart, mind and mood were bent on revenge, he was a stranger in Cyprus, and he owned no land, nor a castle, nor vassals. Now there was another Count at the royal wedding, a pirate by the name of The Count of Limassol, who owned a castle on an islet not far from Famagusta. Theodore sought out his society; ‘Birds of a feather flock together,’ they say, and the proverb found corroboration in this instance, for one villain discovered another.

Theodore told his companion that he was annoyed, for there was a man called Andolosia, who lived a lavish and arrogant lifestyle, but was not of noble birth. He had a high income of honour, being accorded more respect than Counts and others of good birth - yet he owns neither lands nor lieges. Was Limassol not always infuriated by this?

“Yes,” growled The Count of Limassol, “it infuriates me and many other nobles. But he is held in such high favour by the King, to whom he lends and gifts whatever he is asked; and the King reaps bitter enmity from his nobles for the preference he shows this man.”

Count Theodore exclaimed, “It surprises me that you, and others of your station, can tolerate this, and that you don’t have him killed. If I knew how to do away with him, he would never confound another Count or nobleman at the King’s Court.”

Each understood the other’s will; and they concerted the following plan: when the wedding festivities had run their course, and Andolosia was riding back towards Famagusta, they would surround him, take him prisoner, and stab his servants to death. He would then be removed from the King’s Land to Limassol, where the Count owned a strong castle; and they would
torture and torment him until he gave them enough money to maintain a mode of life on a par with his for luxury.

And it so happened that the utterly unsuspecting Andolosia was attacked as he rode home from the festivities by the two Counts and a hired company, and all his servants were cut down. He was captured and taken to the castle on the islet of Limassol, where he was guarded so closely that escape was impossible. He offered his guards great wealth if they would help him escape, but they did not dare trust him, suspecting that, once he was free, he would not give them a penny; and he did not dare show them the Purse, for fear that they would take it only to refuse their aid. His plight was desperate.

The news reached the King that Andolosia’s entire retinue had been butchered and no one knew whether their master were dead or alive, imprisoned or free. Nor did anyone know who had perpetrated this atrocity, but Turkish marauders were suspected. The two guilty Counts rode back to Court and kept their counsel.

Meanwhile, Ampedo had been informed of Andolosia’s disappearance. He at once sent messengers to Court to request the King to help him recover his brother. The King replied that he was grieved at Andolosia’s
misadventure, and he had no idea where he was or if he were still alive. But he would leave no stone unturned in his search, and if he were able to discover Andolosia’s whereabouts, he would consider no price too great to free him – should it cost him half his Kingdom. Receiving this message, Ampedo thought that his brother had been abducted because of the Purse, and he would be racked and tortured until he disclosed the secret of the Hat: then his tormentors would lay their heads together to acquire the second treasure as well. “Never, by no means, shall that happen,” growled Ampedo; and in a fit of fury, he grabbed the magic, unique Hat, hacked it to shreds, and flung the pieces into the fire. And he stood over it until it had burnt to ashes and he was sure that no one could ever again enjoy its use.

Ampedo was continually sending messengers to the King, but however many he dispatched, not one returned with news of his brother. This caused him such depression and sorrow that he fell into a fatal illness. No doctor could help him, and he died. Neither the beautiful palace nor his money could help him.

After several days had risen and set, the two Counts, hearing how the King grieved for his dutiful knight Andolosia, feigned heavy sorrow. The King had it proclaimed that anyone who could bring certain news of Andolosia’s whereabouts would receive a thousand Ducats, whether he were alive or dead. A wave of enquiries followed, but all were fruitless; those who knew, and had abetted, did not dare reveal the truth for fear of losing their lives.

In the meantime, The Count of Limassol took his leave of the King and returned to his castle, where he found Andolosia sitting in a deep dungeon, his wrists and ankles tightly clamped in stocks. On seeing the Count, his face brightened, and he began to plead with him to show mercy
and help him regain his freedom. He did not know whose prisoner he was, or why he was being so cruelly constricted. If he had done anyone an injustice, he would make amends for it and put his person and possessions at the injured party’s disposal.

“Andolosia,” said the Count, “you have not been brought here to be released. You are my prisoner, and you will tell me the source of the money you expend throughout the year. And you’ll do that now, or I’ll torture you until you’ll be happy to tell me.”

Andolosia felt sick with shock; all hope drained away, and he was lost for words. Eventually he said: in his house, in Famagusta, there was a secret ditch, which his father had shown him on the point of death; and however much money he withdrew from this ditch, it never became empty. If the Count took him, as a prisoner, to Famagusta, he would show him. But this did not satisfy Limassol; and taking Andolosia out of the stocks, he began to excruciate him. He laid some savage torments on his prisoner, who suffered them long and held to his initial statement. But at last the tortures were so severe that he could bear the pain no longer, and he told the Count about the Purse. Limassol quickly seized the Purse, tested it, and found that he had
spoken the truth; then he had poor Andolosia placed back in the stocks, and
commended him to his trustiest servant.

The Count of Limassol now sent money to his debtors to settle his
accounts, and victualled his castle, before repairing with a happy heart to the
King’s Court, where he sought out his companion, Count Theodore, and was
accorded a joyful reception. They exchanged many words, true to form, and
Limassol related how he had dealt by Andolosia – wresting the Purse from
his possession through torture and holding him in pinching chains.

“I don’t like this,” said Count Theodore. “He would be better dead
than alive. I have heard at Court that he is a Doctor of Necromancy and can
travel through the air. There is the danger that he will escape and spread
word of his treatment at our hands, and then we shall lose the King’s favour
– and maybe our lives.”

“He is sitting so straitly chained that he cannot do us any harm,”
replied The Count of Limassol.

And they both took their heart’s fill of money out of the Purse. Each
would dearly have liked to have the magical treasure in his power; but they
came to the agreement that each should keep it for six months in turn, and
the guardian was to ensure that the other suffered no shortage of money. The
Count of Limassol, being the senior, was to take first possession.

Although the two Counts had money enough, they did not dare to
spend too lavishly or maintain too extravagant a state, for fear of arousing
suspicion. And they passed their days in great content, except that Count
Theodore was plagued by the thought that Andolosia were better dead than
alive, for he dreaded the loss of the Purse. He also harboured the intention
to ride away with the Purse, and far enough away to escape the reach of the
King and The Count of Limassol, once it was in his keeping. So he asked
Limassol to lend him one of his servants and write a letter granting him admission to Andolosia. The Cypriot Count did as requested, giving him man, letter and money. Then Count Theodore took his leave of the King and Queen, claiming that he wished to take a look at His Majesty’s lands; and so he galloped to the islet of Limassol, where he was conducted to the castle and then the dungeon that held Andolosia. When he walked in, poor, disconsolate Andolosia, whose arms and legs had half wasted away by this time, took comfort; he imagined that The Count of Limassol had sent Count Theodore to set him free, and he thought, ‘Now that they have the Purse, they won’t ask any more of me’.

Count Theodore began: “Now tell me, Andolosia – do you have any more purses like the one you gave my companion? Come on, give me one.”

“Gracious Count, I have no more. If I had another one, it would not be refused you.”

“People say that you are a Doctor of Necromancy, who can travel through the air and invoke the Devil. Why don’t you invoke him now to help you out of here?”

“Oh, gracious Count, I can’t do it, I’ve never been able to do it! All I did was divert myself with the Purse, which you now possess. As God and the world are my witness, I yield it to you and your companion, and I’ll never again lay claim to it; and I beg you, for the honour of God and his virtuous mother Mary, that you help this poor, miserable man out of this cruel prison. Don’t let me die a wretched death here, not having been confessed, not having received the Holy Sacrament!”

“Will you now have a care for the health of your soul? Why didn’t you earlier, when you paraded your arrogance and haughtiness before the King and Queen, showing all of us dishonour? Where are they now, all the
beautiful ladies you served with such assiduity? Those who awarded you the prize, call on them to help you now.

“But I perceive that you wish to be released from this prison; do not worry, I shall soon help you out.”

Taking Andolosia’s guard to one side, he offered him fifty ducats to strangle the prisoner. The guard refused: “He’s a good man, and he’s so weak that he’ll die soon anyway. I won’t load myself with that sin.”

“Then give me a rope; I shall throttle him myself. I am not leaving until he is dead.”

Again, the guard refused; so Count Theodore unbuckled his belt and wrapped it around wretched Andolosia’s neck. The prisoner, who sat with his ankles and wrists in the stocks, could not move; and the Count twirled the belt around his sword-hilt, thus garrotting good Andolosia as he sat, and gave the guard money to dispose of the body. After this, Count Theodore did not make long market in the castle, but rode back to the Royal Court, where he was well received. And he sought out his companion The Count of Limassol, who asked him how he had fared and how he liked the islet of Limassol and the land of Cyprus.

Very much, was the reply; then they withdrew, and The Count of Limassol asked how things stood with Andolosia.

“They stand so that he’ll never harm us again.” Count Theodore joyfully exclaimed. “I killed him with my own hands. I could find no rest until I knew for certain that he was dead – as I know now.”

He thought he had acted wisely – Ah God, he did not know the evil he had worked!

For three days they did not have recourse to the Purse; and when the third day came to an end, the first half-year was over, and it was Count
Theodore’s turn to possess the treasure. With a spring in his step he went to his companion The Count of Limassol and told him to fetch the Purse, take out all the money he would be needing, and then hand it over: it was his turn now. The Count of Limassol raised no objections, and after expressing his readiness to comply, he said:

“When I take the Purse in my hands, I pity Andolosia. I wish you had not killed him; he would soon have died by himself.”

“Dead men wage no wars,” said Count Theodore.

And they retreated to a chamber where The Count of Limassol kept the Purse in a chest. He took it out and placed it on a table, and Count Theodore picked it up. He tried to count out money, as he had previously done, but there was nothing inside. The two Counts did not know that the Purse had lost its power with the deaths of Ampedo and Andolosia; if they had known this, they would have held Andolosia in honour and treated him kindly, to prolong his life, or at least have filled a chest or two with gold to keep themselves in wealth for the rest of their lives.

Each Count looked at the other. Then Theodore spoke with grim fury:

“O you false Count. So you thought to deceive me, passing off an ordinary purse for the magic one? On no account shall I accept that from you. So bring me the Purse of Fortune, and be quick about it!”

Limassol replied that it was the Purse he took from Andolosia; he had no others. How it had come to lose its power, he did not know. But Theodore would not be satisfied with this; his anger turned to rage, and he cried: Limassol wished to make him the victim of his villainy, but he would never succeed. And he drew his sword.

Seeing this, The Count of Limassol also drew, and they both began to hew at one another so fiercely as to deal death. At the clamour they made,
their servants burst into the chamber; and seeing their masters lunging at one another, they ran in between and separated them. But before the two were parted, Count Theodore had given The Count of Limassol a mortal wound; when they saw this, the Cypriot’s servants seized the Englishman. The King was informed of the fight between the two Counts, who had been so close as to be joined at the hip; and he commanded that both be arrested and brought to him in chains at once so he could examine them on the cause of their disagreement. When moves were made to obey the King’s messenger, it was realised that the Count of Limassol was too seriously wounded to be taken anywhere, so Count Theodore was brought before the King on his own.

The King soon learned that Andolosia’s Purse was the cause of their estrangement, and he hurriedly sent for the executioner to extort, before witnesses, the full and exact details of the case. Then Count Theodore was tortured and brutally pained until he had to confess to garroting Andolosia with his own hands in the dungeon; and he disclosed the whole plot, from beginning to end.

When the King heard how they had handled good Andolosia, he was sad to the heart and furious at the murderers. Without longer consideration, he pronounced his right and judgement: both Counts must be strapped to the wheel. It did not matter how ill the Count of Limassol was; even if he were dead, he was to be taken to the place of execution and tied to the wheel. As the judgement was passed, so was it executed: both murderous Counts were broken, thus meeting the end they merited for their treatment of loyal Andolosia. So they died because of the Purse, having had their pleasure of it for but a short time.
The King then sent men to occupy the islet of Limassol, with its castles, towns and villages, and in particular the castle where good Andolosia had been held prisoner. All the men and women who were guilty of knowing of the murder and keeping silence were seized and hung without mercy from its walls. Having discovered that Andolosia’s corpse had been deposited in a ditch not far from the castle, the King had it lifted out and honourably borne to Famagusta in a flambeau-lit procession. There the body was laid to rest in the magnificent cathedral his father had founded and endowed; and a stately memorial service was held on the seventh and thirtieth days after his burial, with many masses sung for his soul, as though for a member of one of the highest and mightiest families in the Kingdom. In attendance were the King, the Prince, the Queen, and Princess Agrippina, who deeply mourned the loss of faithful Andolosia. As neither he nor Ampedo had left an heir, the King took possession of the magnificent palace, and found great abundance of money, jewels, and sumptuous furnishings inside. Into this palace moved the Prince; and he held court in Famagusta until his father’s death.
Epilogue

From this history is to be noted: if young Fortunatus had desired and chosen Wisdom from Lady Fortune in the wood, instead of the Purse of Riches, it would have been granted him in abundance, and no one could have stolen this treasure from him. Through this wisdom and intelligence he would have gained temporal goods, an honourable sustenance, and extensive possessions. But because, at that time in his youth, he preferred wealth and worldly goods, for the sake of pleasure and sensual appetite – and many others would undoubtedly desire such a Purse above a world of intelligence – he brought much bitterness and gall on his own and his sons’ heads. All was milk and honey for a short while, but the ending was such as you have heard.

So anyone who faces such a choice need not reflect for long: follow reason, ignore forward folly, and select wisdom before wealth. This is what Solomon did, and it made him the richest King on Earth. But there is the real concern that Lady Fortune, who deals such choices and bestowed the Purse on Fortunatus, has been hunted from our lands, and is to be found in this world no longer.

- End -

13 The epilogue was omitted as early as the second edition (1518). It was almost certainly not written by the author; it may have been added, with the foreword, by the printer, Johann Otmar.