The Shepherd Who Married the King's Daughter

Once upon a time, there was a king who had a daughter so well-brought-up that she did not deny anyone, and he promised to give her in marriage to anyone who could make her say, "You have lied about that." As the princess was very lovely, men from all directions came to tempt her, but none succeeded.

A farm boy, whose name was Jean, said to himself:

"I must try, even if I can never have the princess."

He put on his Sunday best and went to the king's palace.

"Good day, Sire," he said to him.

"Good day, Jean," the king replied.

"Where is the princess?"

"She is walking in my garden. Do you want to make her say, 'You have lied about that?'"

"I don't know," he replied, "but I would like to talk to her."

"Go," the king said to him.

Jean went to the garden, and found the king's daughter:

"Good day, my princess," he said to her.

"Good day, Jean."

"Are you walking around the garden?"

"Yes, I am watching my father's bees."

"My father has some, too. He does not know how many hives he has, but he knows how many bees."

"I believe it," the princess replied.

"It's true, my princess. One day, he had them counted and missed one. He mounted his horse to search for his bee. He found it carrying a bucket of water in each wing. He took the buckets of water and put them on the back of the horse, but they cut our horse in two."

"I believe it, Jean."

"It's true, my princess. My father cut a stick from a hazel tree in half and tied his horse to both pieces. He let him in our meadow, and I stayed for a long time without seeing him."

"I believe it, Jean."

"It's true, my princess. At the end of seven years, when I returned, the hazel stick had grown so much that it climbed into the sky."

"I believe it, Jean."

"It's true, my princess. I climbed from its branches, collected hazelnuts in my pockets, and entered into Heaven. But, while I was there, the horse that was pasturing had moved, the trunk was no longer next to the hole through which I entered, and I remained in Heaven, without knowing how I would leave. I started to scream so loudly that all the saints had compassion for me."

"I believe it, Jean."

"It's true, my princess. The Holy Virgin was sifting buckwheat to make a cake. She braided me a rope with the grain."

"I believe it, Jean."

"It's true, my princess. I descended down the rope, but it wasn't long enough; it was more than forty feet too short. I let myself fall, and my head went into the earth between two pebbles. I never pulled my head out; I had to go to a nearby mill to search for hammers to break open the pebbles and retrieve my head. When I returned, there were crows about to eat it; I threw my hammers at them, and they flew away, their feathers heavier than your château."

"I believe it, Jean."

"It's true, my princess. While I was at the mill, they had just arrested a thief. I haven't told anyone about it but you, but it was your brother who was the thief."

"You have lied about that, Jean," the princess exclaimed. "I have no brother."

The king, who was listening to them, left his hiding place and said to Jean:

"You are clever, and you have succeeded: you shall have my daughter."

They were married, and they had a wedding unlike any that had been seen before or has been since.