

The Blue Bird

*again alone visible under
the big oak.)*

TYLTYL

It's this way, Mytyl. . . .

MYTYL

Where is Light? . . .

TYLTYL

I don't know. . . . (*Looking at the bird in
the cage.*) But the bird is no longer
blue! . . . He has turned black! . . .

MYTYL

Give me your hand, little brother. . . .
I feel so frightened and so cold. . . .

CURTAIN

The Blue Bird

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of NIGHT.*

*A large and wonderful hall of an austere,
rigid, metallic and sepulchral magnifi-
cence, giving the impression of a
Greek temple with columns, archi-
traves, flagstones and ornaments of
black marble, gold and ebony. The
hall is trapezium-shaped. Basalt
steps, occupying almost the entire
width, divide it into three successive
stages, which rise gradually toward
the back. On the right and left, be-
tween the columns, are doors of som-
bre bronze. At the back, a monu-
mental door of brass. The palace is
lit only by a vague light that seems to
emanate mainly from the brilliancy of
the marble and the ebony. At the
rise of the curtain, NIGHT, in the form
of a very old woman, clad in long,
black garments, is seated on the steps*

The Blue Bird

of the second stage, between two children, of whom one, almost naked, like Cupid, is smiling in a deep sleep, while the other is standing up, motionless and veiled from head to foot.

Enter from the right, in the foreground, the CAT

NIGHT

Who goes there?

THE CAT (*sinking heavily upon the marble steps*)

It is I, Mother Night. . . . I am worn out. . . .

NIGHT

What's the matter, child? . . . You look pale and thin and you are splashed with mud to your very whiskers. . . . Have you been fighting on the tiles again, in the snow and rain? . . .

THE CAT

It has nothing to do with the tiles! . . .
It's our secret that's at stake! . . .
It's the beginning of the end! . . .

The Blue Bird

I have managed to escape for a moment to warn you; but I greatly fear that there is nothing to be done. . . .

NIGHT

Why? . . . What has happened? . . .

THE CAT

I have told you of little Tytyl, the wood-cutter's son, and of the magic diamond. . . . Well, he is coming here to demand the Blue Bird of you. . . .

NIGHT

He hasn't got it yet. . . .

THE CAT

He will have it soon, unless we perform some miracle. . . . This is how the matter stands: Light, who is guiding him and betraying us all, for she has placed herself entirely on Man's side, Light has learned that the Blue Bird, the real one, the only one that can live in the light of day, is hidden here, among the blue birds of the dreams that live on the rays of the moon and die as soon as they set eyes on the sun.

The Blue Bird

. . . She knows that she is forbidden to cross the threshold of your palace, but she is sending the children; and, as you cannot prevent Man from opening the doors of your secrets, I do not know how all this will end. . . . In any case, if, unfortunately, they should lay their hands on the real Blue Bird, there would be nothing for us but to disappear. . . .

NIGHT

Oh dear, oh dear! . . . What times we live in! . . . I never have a moment's peace. . . . I cannot understand Man, these last few years. . . . What is he aiming at? . . . Must he absolutely know everything? . . . Already he has captured a third of my Mysteries, all my Terrors are afraid and dare not leave the house, my Ghosts have taken flight, the greater part of my Sicknesses are ill. . . .

THE CAT

I know, Mother Night, I know, the times are hard and we are almost alone in

The Blue Bird

our struggle against Man. . . . But I hear them coming. . . . I see only one way: as they are children, we must give them such a fright that they will not dare to persist or to open the great door at the back, behind which they would find the Birds of the Moon. . . . The secrets of the other caverns will be enough to distract their attention and terrify them. . . .

NIGHT (*listening to a sound outside*)

What do I hear? . . . Are there many of them? . . .

THE CAT

It is nothing; it is our friends, Bread and Sugar; Water is not very well and Fire could not come, because he is related to Light. . . . The Dog is the only one who is not on our side; but it is never possible to keep him away. . . .

(*Enter timidly, on the right, in the foreground, TYLTYL, MYTYL, BREAD, SUGAR and the DOG.*)

The Blue Bird

THE CAT (*rushing up to TYLTYL*)

This way, little master, this way. . . . I have told Night, who is delighted to see you. . . . You must forgive her, she is a little indisposed; that is why she was not able to come to meet you. . . .

TYLTYL

Good-day, Mrs. Night. . . .

NIGHT (*in an offended voice*)

Good-day? . . . I am not used to that. . . . You might say, Good-night, or, at least, Good-evening. . . .

TYLTYL (*mortified*)

I beg your pardon, ma'am. . . . I did not know. . . . (*Pointing to the two CHILDREN.*) Are those your two little boys? . . . They are very nice. . . .

NIGHT

This is Sleep. . . .

TYLTYL

Why is he so fat? . . .

NIGHT

That is because he sleeps well. . . .

The Blue Bird

TYLTYL

And the other, hiding himself? . . . Why does he veil his face? . . . Is he ill? . . . What is his name? . . .

NIGHT

That is Sleep's sister. . . . It is better not to mention her name. . . .

TYLTYL

Why? . . .

NIGHT

Because her name is not pleasant to hear. . . . But let us talk of something else. . . . The Cat tells me that you have come here to look for the Blue Bird. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, ma'am, if you will allow me. . . . Will you tell me where he is? . . .

NIGHT

I don't know, dear. . . . All I can say is that he is not here. . . . I have never seen him. . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes. . . . Light told me that he was here; and Light knows what she is say-

The Blue Bird

ing. . . . Will you hand me your
keys? . . .

NIGHT

But you must understand, dear, that I cannot give my keys like that to the first comer. . . . I have the keeping of all Nature's secrets and I am absolutely forbidden to deliver them to anybody, especially to a child. . . .

TYLTYL

You have no right to refuse them to Man when he asks you for them. . . . I know that. . . .

NIGHT

Who told you? . . .

TYLTYL

Light. . . .

NIGHT

Light again! Always Light! . . . How dare she interfere, how dare she? . . .

THE DOG

Shall I take them from her by force, my little god? . . .

TYLTYL

Hold your tongue, keep quiet and try to be-

The Blue Bird

have. . . . (To NIGHT) Come,
madam, give me your keys, please. . . .

NIGHT

Have you the sign, at least? . . . Where is it? . . .

TYLTYL (*touching his hat*)

Behold the Diamond! . . .

NIGHT (*resigning herself to the inevitable*)

Well, then . . . Here is the key that opens all the doors of the hall. . . . Look to yourself if you meet with a misfortune.

. . . I will not be responsible. . . .

BREAD (*very anxiously*)

Is it dangerous? . . .

NIGHT

Dangerous? . . . I will go so far as to say that I myself do not know what I shall do when certain of those bronze doors open upon the abyss. . . . All around the hall, in each of those basalt caves, are all the evils, all the plagues, all the sicknesses, all the terrors, all the catastrophes, all the mysteries that have afflicted life since the beginning of the world. . . . I have

The Blue Bird

had trouble enough to imprison them there with the aid of Destiny; and it is not without difficulty, I assure you, that I keep some little order among those undisciplined characters. . . . You have seen what happens when one of them escapes and shows itself on earth. . . .

BREAD

My great age, my experience and my devotion make me the natural protector of these two children; therefore, Mrs. Night, permit me to ask you a question. . . .

NIGHT

Certainly. . . .

BREAD

In case of danger, which is the way of escape? . . .

NIGHT

There is no way of escape.

TYLTYL (*taking the key and climbing the first steps*)

Let us begin here. . . . What is behind this bronze door? . . .

The Blue Bird

NIGHT

I think it is the Ghosts. . . . It is long since I opened the door and since they came out. . . .

TYLTYL (*placing the key in the lock*)

I will see. . . . (*To BREAD*) Have you the cage for the Blue Bird? . . .

BREAD (*with chattering teeth*)

I'm not frightened, but don't you think it would be better not to open the door, but to peep through the keyhole? . . .

TYLTYL

I don't want your advice. . . .

MYTYL (*suddenly beginning to cry*)

I am frightened! . . . Where is Sugar? . . . I want to go home! . . .

SUGAR (*eagerly, obsequiously*)

Here I am, miss, here I am. . . . Don't cry, I will break off one of my fingers so that you may have a sugar-stick. . . .

TYLTYL

Enough of this! . . .

(*He turns the key and cautiously opens the door. Forthwith, five or six GHOSTS of*

The Blue Bird

strange and different forms escape and disperse on every side. MYTYL gives a scream of affright. BREAD, terrified, throws away the cage and goes and hides at the back of the hall, while NIGHT, running after the GHOSTS, cries out to TYLTYL.)

NIGHT

Quick! Quick! . . . Shut the door! . . .
They will all escape and we should never be able to catch them again! . . .
They have felt bored in there, ever since Man ceased to take them seriously. . . . *(She runs after the GHOSTS and endeavours, with the aid of a whip formed of snakes, to drive them back to the door of their prison.)*
Help me! . . . Here! . . .
Here! . . .

TYLTYL *(to the DOG)*

Help her, Tylô, at them! . . .

The Blue Bird

THE DOG *(leaping up and barking)*
Yes, yes, yes! . . .

TYLTYL

And Bread, where's Bread? . . .

BREAD *(at the back of the hall)*

Here. . . . I am near the door to prevent them from going out. . . .

(One of the GHOSTS moves in that direction and he rushes away at full speed, uttering yells of terror.)

NIGHT *(to three GHOSTS whom she has seized by the neck)*

This way, you! . . . *(To TYLTYL)* Open the door a little. . . . *(She pushes the GHOSTS into the cave.)* There, that's it. . . . *(The DOG brings up two more.)* And these two. . . . Come, quick, in with you! . . . You know you're only allowed out on All-hallows. . . . *(She closes the door.)*

TYLTYL *(going to another door)*

What's behind this one? . . .

NIGHT

What is the good? . . . I have already told

The Blue Bird

you the Blue Bird has never been here.
. . . However, as you please. . . .
Open the door, if you like. . . . It's
the Sicknesses. . . .

TYLTYL (*with the key in the lock.*)
Must I be careful in opening? . . .

NIGHT

No, it is not worth while. . . . They
are very quiet, the poor little things.
. . . They are not happy. . . . Man,
for some time, has been waging such
a determined war upon them! . . .
Especially since the discovery of the
microbes. . . . Open, you will
see. . . .

(TYLTYL *opens the door quite
wide. Nothing appears.*)

TYLTYL

Don't they come out?

NIGHT

I told you they are almost all poorly and
very much discouraged. . . . The
doctors are so unkind to them. . . .
Go in for a moment and see for your-
self. . . .

The Blue Bird

(TYLTYL *enters the cavern
and comes out again im-
mediately.*)

TYLTYL

The Blue Bird is not there. . . . They look
very ill, those Sicknesses of yours. . . .
They did not even lift their heads.
. . . (*One little Sickness in slippers, a
dressing-gown and a cotton nightcap
escapes from the cavern and begins to
frisk about the hall.*) Look! . . .
There's a little one escaping. . . .
Which one is it? . . .

NIGHT

It's nothing, one of the smallest; it's Cold-
in-the-Head. . . . It is one of those
which are least persecuted and which
enjoy the best health. . . . (*Calling
to COLD-IN-THE-HEAD*) Come here,
dear. . . . It's too soon yet; you must
wait for the winter. . . . (*COLD-IN-
THE-HEAD, sneezing, coughing and
blowing its nose, returns to the cavern
and TYLTYL shuts the door.*)

The Blue Bird

TYLTYL (*going to the next door*)
Let us look at this one. . . . What is in
here? . . .

NIGHT

Take care! . . . It is the Wars. . . .
They are more terrible and powerful
than ever. . . . Heaven knows what
would happen if one of them escaped!
. . . . Fortunately, they are rather
heavy and slow-moving. . . . But we
must stand ready to push back the
door, all of us together, while you
take a rapid glance into the
cavern. . . .

(TYLTYL, *with a thousand pre-
cautions, opens the door
ajar so that there is only a
little gap to which he can
put his eye. He at once
doubles his back against the
door, shouting.*)

TYLTYL

Quick! Quick! . . . Push with all your
might! . . . They have seen me!

The Blue Bird

. . . They are all coming! . . . They
are breaking down the door! . . .

NIGHT

Come, all together! . . . Push hard! . . .
Bread, what are you doing? . . .
Push, all of you! . . . How strong
they are! . . . Ah, that's it! . . .
They are giving way! . . . It was
high time! . . . Did you see
them? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, yes! . . . They are huge and awful!
. . . I don't think that they have the
Blue Bird. . . .

NIGHT

You may be sure they haven't. . . . If they
had, they would eat him at once. . . .
Well, have you had enough of it?
. . . You see there is nothing to be
done. . . .

TYLTYL

I must see everything. . . . Light said
so. . . .

NIGHT

Light said so! . . . It's an easy thing to

The Blue Bird

say when one's afraid and stays at home. . . .

TYLTYL

Let us go to the next. . . . What is in here? . . .

NIGHT

This is where I lock up the Shades and the Terrors. . . .

TYLTYL

Can I open the door? . . .

NIGHT

Certainly. . . . They are pretty quiet; they are like the Sicknesses. . . .

TYLTYL (*half-opening the door, with a certain mistrustfulness, and taking a look into the cavern*)

Are they not there? . . .

NIGHT (*looking into the cavern in her turn*)

Well, Shades, what are you doing? . . .

Come out for a moment and stretch your legs; it will do you good. . . .

And the Terrors also. . . . There is nothing to be afraid of. . . . (*A few SHADES and a few TERRORS, in the*

The Blue Bird

shape of women, shrouded, the former in black veils and the latter in greenish veils, piteously venture to take a few steps outside the cavern; and then, upon a movement of TYLTYL's, hastily run back again.) Come, don't be afraid. . . . It's only a child; he won't hurt you. . . . (*To TYLTYL*) They have become extremely timid, except the great ones, those whom you see at the back. . . .

TYLTYL (*looking into the depths of the cave*)

Oh, how terrifying they are! . . .

NIGHT

They are chained up. . . . They are the only ones that are not afraid of Man. . . . But shut the door, lest they should grow angry. . . .

TYLTYL (*going to the next door*)

I say! . . . This is a darker one. . . . What is here?

NIGHT

There are several Mysteries behind this one. . . . If you are absolutely bent