

The Blue Bird

MYTYL (*stroking the CAT*)
My poor Tylette, did he really? . . .
Where were you? . . . I did not see
you. . . .

THE CAT (*hypocritically*)
Mummy dear, I was wounded at the first,
while attacking that horrid Pig, who
wanted to eat you. . . . And then the
Oak gave me a great blow which
struck me senseless. . . .

THE DOG (*to the CAT, between his teeth*)
As for you, I want a word with you pres-
ently. . . . It will keep! . . .

THE CAT (*plaintively, to MYTYL*)
Mummy dear, he's insulting me. . . . He
wants to hurt me. . . .

MYTYL (*to the DOG*)
Leave him alone, will you, you ugly
beast?

(*They all go out.*)

CURTAIN

The Blue Bird

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*Before the Curtain.*

Enter TYLTYL, MYTYL, LIGHT, the DOG,
the CAT, BREAD, FIRE, SUGAR,
WATER and MILK.

LIGHT

I have received a note from the Fairy Béry-
lune telling me that the Blue Bird is
probably here.

TYLTYL

Where? . . .

LIGHT

Here, in the graveyard behind that wall.
. . . It appears that one of the dead
in the graveyard is hiding it in his
tomb. . . . We must find out which
one it is. . . . We shall have to pass
them under review. . . .

TYLTYL

Under review? . . . How is that done? . . .

LIGHT

It is very simple: at midnight, so as not to

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disturb them too greatly, you will turn the diamond. We shall see them come out of the ground; or else we shall see those who do not come out lying in their tombs. . . .

TYLTYL

Will they not be angry? . . .

LIGHT

Not at all; they will not even know. . . .

They do not like being disturbed, but, as it is their custom, in any case, to come out at midnight, that will not inconvenience them. . . .

TYLTYL

Why are Bread, Sugar and Milk so pale and why do they say nothing? . . .

MILK (*staggering*)

I feel I am going to turn. . . .

LIGHT (*aside to TYLTYL*)

Do not mind them. . . . They are afraid of the dead. . . .

FIRE (*frisking about*)

I'm not afraid of them! . . . I am used to burning them. . . . Time was when I

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burnt them all; that was much more amusing than nowadays. . . .

TYLTYL

And why is Tylô trembling? . . . Is he afraid, too? . . .

THE DOG

I? . . . I'm not trembling! . . . I am never afraid; but if you went away, I should go too. . . .

TYLTYL

And has the Cat nothing to say? . . .

THE CAT (*mysteriously*)

I know what's what. . . .

TYLTYL (*to LIGHT*)

Are you coming with us? . . .

LIGHT

No; it is better that I should remain at the gate of the graveyard with the Things and the Animals. . . . Some of them would be too frightened and I fear that the others would misbehave. . . . Fire, in particular, would want to burn the dead, as of old; and that is no longer done. . . . I shall leave you alone with Mytyl. . . .

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TYLTYL

And may not Tylô stay with us? . . .

THE DOG

Yes, yes, I shall stay; I shall stay here! . . .

I want to stay with my little god! . . .

LIGHT

It is impossible. . . . The Fairy gave formal orders; besides, there is nothing to fear. . . .

THE DOG

Very well, very well, it makes no difference.

If they are vicious, my little god, all you have to do is this . . . (*he whistles*) and you shall see. . . . It

will be just as in the forest: Wow!

Wow! Wow! . . .

LIGHT

Come, good-bye, dear children. . . . I shall not be far away. . . . (*She kisses the*

CHILDREN.) Those who love me and whom I love always find me again. . . .

(*To the THINGS and the ANIMALS*)

This way, all of you. . . .

(*She goes out with the THINGS and the ANIMALS. The*

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CHILDREN remain alone in the middle of the stage. The curtain opens and discloses the next scene.)

SCENE 2.—*The Graveyard.*

It is night. The moon is shining on a country graveyard.. Numerous tombstones, grassy mounds, wooden crosses, stone slabs, etc. TYLTYL and MYTYL are standing by a short stone pillar.

MYTYL

I am frightened! . . .

TYLTYL (*not too much at his ease*)

I am never frightened. . . .

MYTYL

I say, are the dead wicked? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, no, they're not alive! . . .

MYTYL

Have you ever seen one? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, once, long ago, when I was very young. . . .

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MYTYL

What was it like, say? . . .

TYLTYL

Quite white, very still and very cold and it
didn't talk. . . .

MYTYL

Are we going to see them, say? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, of course, Light said so. . . .

MYTYL

Where are they? . . .

TYLTYL

Here, under the grass or under those big
stones. . . .

MYTYL

Are they there all the year round? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes.

MYTYL (*pointing to the slabs*)

Are those the doors of their houses? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes.

MYTYL

Do they go out when it's fine? . . .

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TYLTYL

They can only go out at night. . . .

MYTYL

Why? . . .

TYLTYL

Because they are in their shirts. . . .

MYTYL

Do they go out also when it rains? . . .

TYLTYL

When it rains, they stay at home. . . .

MYTYL

Is it nice in their homes, say? . . .

TYLTYL

They say it's very cramped. . . .

MYTYL

Have they any little children? . . .

TYLTYL

Why, yes; they have all those that die. . . .

MYTYL

And what do they live on? . . .

TYLTYL

They eat roots. . . .

MYTYL

Shall we see them? . . .

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TYLTYL

Of course; we see everything when I turn
the diamond.

MYTYL

And what will they say? . . .

TYLTYL

They will say nothing, as they don't
talk. . . .

MYTYL

Why don't they talk? . . .

TYLTYL

Because they have nothing to say. . . .

MYTYL

Why have they nothing to say? . . .

TYLTYL

You're a nuisance. . . .

(A pause)

MYTYL

When will you turn the diamond?

TYLTYL

You heard Light say that I was to wait until
midnight, because that disturbs them
less. . . .

MYTYL

Why does that disturb them less? . . .

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TYLTYL

Because that is when they go out to take the
air. . . .

MYTYL

Is it not midnight yet? . . .

TYLTYL

Do you see the church clock? . . .

MYTYL

Yes, I can even see the small hand. . . .

TYLTYL

Well, midnight is just going to strike. . . .

There! . . . Do you hear? . . .

(The clock strikes twelve)

MYTYL

I want to go away! . . .

TYLTYL

Not now. . . . I am going to turn the dia-
mond. . . .

MYTYL

No, no! . . . Don't! . . . I want to go
away! . . . I am so frightened, little
brother! . . . I am terribly fright-
ened! . . .

TYLTYL

But there is no danger. . . .

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MYTYL

I don't want to see the dead! . . . I don't
want to see them! . . .

TYLTYL

Very well, you shall not see them; shut your
eyes. . . .

MYTYL (*clinging to TYLTYL's clothes*)
Tyltyl, I can't stay! . . . No, I can't pos-
sibly! . . . They are going to come
out of the ground! . . .

TYLTYL

Don't tremble like that. . . . They will
only come out for a moment. . . .

MYTYL

But you're trembling, too! . . . They will
be awful! . . .

TYLTYL

It is time, the hour is passing. . . .

(*TYLTYL turns the diamond. A
terrifying minute of silence
and motionlessness elapses,
after which, slowly, the
crosses totter, the mounds
open, the slabs rise up. . . .*)

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MYTYL (*cowering against TYLTYL*)
They are coming out! . . . They are
there! . . .

(*Then, from all the gaping
tombs, there rises gradually
an efflorescence at first frail
and timid, like steam; then
white and virginal and
more and more tufty, more
and more tall and plentiful
and marvellous. Little by
little, irresistibly, invading
all things, it transforms the
graveyard into a sort of
fairy-like and nuptial gar-
den, over which rise the first
rays of the dawn. The dew
glitters, the flowers open
their blooms, the wind mur-
murs in the leaves, the bees
hum, the birds wake and
flood the air with the first
raptures of their hymns to
the sun and to life. Stunned
and dazzled, TYLTYL and*

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MYTYL, *holding each other by the hand, take a few steps among the flowers while they seek for the trace of the tombs.*)

MYTYL (*looking in the grass*)

Where are the dead? . . .

TYLTYL (*looking also*)

There are no dead. . . .

CURTAIN

SCENE 3.—*The Kingdom of the Future.*

The immense halls of the Azure Palace, where the children wait that are yet to be born. Infinite perspectives of sapphire columns supporting turquoise vaults. Everything, from the light and the lapis-lazuli flagstones to the shimmering background into which the last arches run and disappear, everything, down to the smallest objects, is of an unreal, intense, fairy-like blue. Only the plinths and capitals of the columns, the key-stones, a few seats

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and circular benches are of white marble or alabaster. To the right, between the columns, are great opalescent doors. These doors, which TIME will throw back towards the end of the scene, open upon actual life and the quays of the Dawn. Everywhere, harmoniously peopling the hall, is a crowd of CHILDREN robed in long azure garments. Some are playing, others strolling to and fro, others talking or dreaming; many are asleep, many also are working, between the colonnades, at future inventions; and their tools, their instruments, the apparatus which they are constructing, the plants, flowers and fruit which they are cultivating or plucking are of the same supernatural and luminous blue as the general atmosphere of the Palace. Figures of a taller stature, clad in a paler and more diaphanous azure, figures of a sovereign and silent beauty move among the CHILDREN and would seem to be angels.

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Enter on the left, as though by stealth, gliding between the columns in the foreground, TYLTYL, MYTYL and LIGHT. Their arrival causes a certain movement among the BLUE CHILDREN, who come running up on every hand, form a group around the unwonted visitors and gaze upon them with curiosity.

MYTYL

Where are Sugar, the Cat and Bread? . . .

LIGHT

They cannot enter here; they would know the future and would not obey. . . .

TYLTYL

And the Dog? . . .

LIGHT

It is not well, either, that he should know what awaits him in the course of the ages. . . . I have locked them all up in the vaults of the church. . . .

TYLTYL

Where are we? . . .

LIGHT

We are in the Kingdom of the Future, in

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the midst of the children who are not yet born. As the diamond allows us to see clearly in this region which is hidden from men, we shall very probably find the Blue Bird here. . . .

TYLTYL

Certainly the bird will be blue, since everything here is blue. . . . (*Looking all around him.*) Heaven, how beautiful it all is! . . .

LIGHT

Look at the children running up. . . .

TYLTYL

Are they angry? . . .

LIGHT

Not at all. . . . You can see, they are smiling, but they are surprised. . . .

THE BLUE CHILDREN (*running up in ever-increasing numbers*)

Live children! . . . Come and look at the little live children! . . .

TYLTYL

Why do they call us the little live children?

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LIGHT

Because they themselves are not alive
yet. . . .

TYLTYL

What are they doing, then? . . .

LIGHT

They are awaiting the hour of their
birth. . . .

TYLTYL

The hour of their birth? . . .

LIGHT

Yes; it is from here that all the children
come who are born upon our earth.
Each awaits his day. . . . When the
fathers and mothers want children,
the great doors which you see there,
on the right, are opened and the little
ones go down. . . .

TYLTYL

What a lot there are! What a lot there
are! . . .

LIGHT

There are many more. . . . We do not see
them all. . . . There are thirty
thousand halls like this, all full of

The Blue Bird

them. . . . Just think, there are
enough to last to the end of the
world! . . . No one could count
them. . . .

TYLTYL

And those tall blue persons, who are
they? . . .

LIGHT

No one exactly knows. . . . They are be-
lieved to be guardians. . . . I have
heard that they will come upon earth
after men. . . . But we are not al-
lowed to ask them. . . .

TYLTYL

Why not? . . .

LIGHT

Because it is the earth's secret. . . .

TYLTYL

And may one talk to the others, the little
ones? . . .

LIGHT

Certainly; you must make friends. . . .
Look, there is one who is more curi-
ous than the rest. . . . Go up to him,
speak to him. . . .

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TYLTYL

What shall I say to him? . . .

LIGHT

Whatever you like, as you would to a little
playfellow. . . .

TYLTYL

Can I shake hands with him? . . .

LIGHT

Of course, he won't hurt you. . . .

But come, don't look so constrained.

. . . I will leave you alone, you will
be more at ease by yourselves. . . .

Besides, I want to speak to the tall
blue person. . . .

TYLTYL (*going up to the BLUE CHILD
and holding out his hand*)

How do you do? . . . (*Touching the
CHILD'S blue dress with his finger.*)

What's that? . . .

THE CHILD (*gravely touching TYLTYL'S
hat*)

And that? . . .

TYLTYL

That? . . . That is my hat. . . . Have
you no hat? . . .

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THE CHILD

No; what is it for? . . .

TYLTYL

It's to say How-do-you-do with. . . . And
then for when it rains or when it's
cold. . . .

THE CHILD

What does that mean, when it's cold? . . .

TYLTYL

When you shiver like this: brrrr! brrrr!
. . . . When you blow into your hands
and go like this with your arms. . . .
(*He vigorously beats his arms across
his chest.*)

THE CHILD

Is it cold on earth? . . .

TYLTYL

Yes, sometimes, in the winter, when there
is no fire. . . .

THE CHILD

Why is there no fire? . . .

TYLTYL

Because it's expensive and it costs money
to buy wood. . . .