

# Hans Christian Andersen stories



**Selected Stories Vol. 1**

**– Translated, Edited, Written, Read, Published and Produced by Benjamin Kurzweil**

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## FOREWORD

**Since the beginning of time**, storytelling has been loved by people of all ages and from all cultures. Fairytales and fantasy stories can be understood on several levels, so they can provide entertainment for adults and children alike.

**The version of “*The Ugly Duckling*” on this CD is very unique for two reasons:** The translation on this CD is an unabridged translation from the original Danish, translated by Benjamin Kurzweil having had the read-aloud component in mind. Furthermore the translation was done in 2008, so the English is up-to-date.

**The style of recitation** for most of the short stories is simple, rhythmical and eloquent. It is the style used for the recitation of short stories in the ‘art-tales’ tradition in northern Europe. In German it is called *Kunstmärchen*, and in Danish, *Kunsteventyr*.

**What is an ‘art-tale’? An art-tale is a story written by a named author, in a specific year.**

- 1) The tale is a story that was written down.
- 2) The year when the tale was written is known.
- 3) The name of the author is known.

**Art-tale recitation** is not the same as the older oral tradition known as ‘folk tale’ storytelling, where conventionally there is no written script and the stories are anonymous. Within the storytelling genre, the narrator is allowed to deviate from the text and to improvise. Within the recitation genre of art-tales, the narrator has to keep his reading strictly within the text.

**A fine balance** has to be achieved if the reading is to sound harmonious, spontaneous and unscripted. It takes a lot of concentration on the part of the reader to swap between the roles; maintaining the dynamic, yet at the same time keeping the poise and rhythm of the narrator throughout the story.

**It is no secret** that Hans Christian Andersen was not satisfied with the German and English translations of his fairytales and stories. In particular, the English translation was not good.<sup>1</sup> The translations that followed decades after Andersen died are all marked with the same interpretation error that provides little or no understanding of the various components needed when translating for the ‘read-aloud’ genre: the verbal rhythmical element, the flow of language and of poetry and Andersen’s play on proverbs.

**They only looked at the text** to be translated, as if there were no other components to be taken into consideration. Some English versions were even produced from poorly worked German translations. Can you imagine what kind of distorted route some of the stories went through? Yet they called them *bona fide* Hans Christian Andersen translations!

**No wonder** that, to this day, so many millions worldwide still have no proper understanding of what Hans Christian Andersen is about; they still believe in the Danny Kaye interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

**Translating poetry** from one language to another can be an impossible task. Some languages are quite close to each other and share a similar syntax - other languages are very far apart. Quite often a translator ends up interpreting the text instead of translating it because that’s the easiest and quickest way to do it.

**It is a common opinion** that R P Keigwin’s translations<sup>3</sup> of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairytales are the best on the market, but I disagree and would say that the translation by Tiina Nunnally (2004) and Diane Crone Frank & Jeffrey Frank (2005) are clearly superior to Keigwin’s translations.

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<sup>1</sup> **The English translation was not good** – Andersen expert, Elias Bredsdorff, has elaborated on this topic extensively.

<sup>2</sup> **The Danny Kaye interpretation** – Elias Bredsdorff has also elaborated on Danny Kaye extensively.

<sup>3</sup> **R P Keigwin’s translations** – Keigwin’s translations are from 1935, which is nearly 80 years old. English has changed considerably the past 80 years, which you can see in more recent translations for example by Tiina Nunnally (2004) and Diane Crone Frank & Jeffrey Frank (2005).

Some hold that the Oxford translation by L W Kingsland is the best.<sup>4</sup> Some say that the more modern translations are better, but which of the translations respects the rhythmical 'read-aloud' component? Only Benjamin Kurzweil's translation has fulfilled that criterion.

Hans Christian Andersen wrote for read-aloud, thus this criterion is mandatory if you want to convey the authentic Andersen flavour and texture.

*The stories are meant to be heard - not read.  
It would be like reading the words of a song,  
without listening to them being sung.*

*Welcome to KurzweilStories*

**Enjoy!**

Benjamin Kurzweil

London, December 2008

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<sup>4</sup> **Oxford translation by L W Kingsland** – Kingsland's translations are from 1959, and often, he captures the moment better than Keigwin; sometimes vice-versa.

## The Princess and the Pea<sup>5</sup>

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess, but she had to be a real princess. That's why he travelled all around the world to find one, but everywhere there was something wrong. There were plenty of princesses, but he couldn't quite work out if they were real princesses; there was always something that wasn't quite right. Eventually he came home again, but he was so sad because he so much wanted to have a real princess.

One evening the weather became dreadful: there was thunder and lightning; the rain poured down; it was quite frightening! Then, there was a knock at the town gate, and the old king went out to open it.

It was a princess who stood outside, but my goodness, what a sight she was with the rain and the bad weather! Water was running down her hair and clothes, and it was running into the tips<sup>6</sup> of her shoes and out of the heels, and she said she was a real princess!

"Well, we shall soon find out," thought the old queen, but she didn't say anything. Went into the bedroom, took off all the duvets and placed a pea on the bottom of the bed. Then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on top of the pea, and then placed another twenty feather duvets on top of the mattresses.

The princess had to spend the night there.

In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

"Oh, badly, terribly" said the princess. "I barely closed my eyes the whole night. Goodness knows what there must have been in the bed. I have been lying on something so hard that I am simply black and blue all over my body. It is so dreadful!"<sup>7</sup>

Then they could see that she was a real princess, because through twenty mattresses and through twenty feather duvets she had felt the pea. Nobody could be so sensitive without being a real princess.

The prince then made her his wife, because he now knew that he had found a real princess.

And the pea was placed in the art-museum, where it is still to be seen unless someone has taken it.

See, that was a real story!<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> **The Princess and the Pea** - The title "The Princess and the Pea" is slightly different in Danish. In Danish you say '*Prinsessen på Ærten*', which means "The Princess *on* the Pea". I have been told that it is inappropriate to say "The Princess on the Pea", because it phonetically collides with pee, and for read aloud the listener hearing this will think "What!" This is not a problem when you read the text yourself.

<sup>6</sup> **Into the tips of her shoes** – In the Danish text, Andersen makes a play with the tip of her shoe; not a word play, just a poetic play. Andersen is humanising the shoe by using the word 'nose' instead of 'tip' or *spidsen* in Danish. It is clearly meant to take the listener by surprise. The rain was so powerful that it was not only running down her hair, it also ran into her nose, which literally translated means "it was running into the nose of her shoe". You would need to hear this spoken out loud to fully understand it. When reading the text aloud in Danish, one has to make a short pause after the word 'nose', then say 'of her shoe', just to confuse the children for a split second. When translating all this into English, you encounter a problem, you realise that the English language can't accommodate this play with the shoe tip as the nose tip.

<sup>7</sup> **Black and blue** – In the Danish original text, it says, "I am yellow and blue all over my body". But in English you would have to say, "I am black and blue all over my body".

<sup>8</sup> **A real story** – You could also say, "There, that was a real story!", or "Now, that was a real story!"

## The Ugly Duckling

It was so lovely out in the country; it was summer! The wheat stood yellow, the oats green, the hay had been stacked in the green meadows, and there went the stork on his long red legs, chattering in Egyptian - for he had learnt that language from his mother. Around the fields and meadows there were vast woods, and in the middle of the woods there were deep lakes. Yes, it was really lovely out in the country! Right in the sunshine there lay an old manor-house with deep canals around it, and from the wall down to the water grew great leaves<sup>9</sup> – they were so tall that small children could stand under the biggest of them. It was just as wild under the leaves as in a wild forest, yet here sat a duck on her nest. She was waiting for her little ducklings to hatch out, but she was rather tired of it now because the sitting had lasted so long and she rarely had a visitor. The other ducks much preferred swimming around in the canals than running up and sitting under a leaf to gossip with her.

At last, one after another, the eggs began to crack. “Peep, peep,” they said. All the eggs had come alive and the ducklings were poking their heads out into the big world.

“Quack, quack!” said the mother duck and then the ducklings quacked quickly<sup>10</sup> and looked around under the green leaves, and their mother let them look as much as they wanted to, for green is good for the eyes.

“Wow, how big the world is!” said the young ones, for they had so much more space than when they were inside their eggs.

“Do you think this is the whole world?” said their mother. “It stretches a long way over to the other side of the garden, right into the parson’s field, but I have never been there. You are all here now, aren’t you?” Then she got up, saying: “No, I don’t have all of you; the biggest egg is still there. How much more time will it take? I am getting really fed up waiting for it!” Then she sat down again.

“Quack, quack, quack, err, wha...wha – what’s up, duck?” said an old duck who had come to pay a visit.<sup>11</sup>

“This last egg is taking such a long time,” said the mother-duck. “It just won’t hatch; but now you must see the others. They are the loveliest ducklings I have ever seen. They all look like their father, the wretch; he never comes to visit me!”

“Let me look at that egg that won’t hatch,” said the old duck. “I’ll bet it’s a turkey’s egg. I was once cheated like that too, and I had my sorrow and pain with the young ones, because they are afraid of the water. Yes, believe me, I couldn’t get them out! I quacked and clacked but it didn’t help. Let me see the egg. Yes, it is a turkey’s egg. Listen to me, teach the other children to swim, but that one - just get rid of it!”

“I’ll sit on it a little longer,” said the mother-duck. “I have been sitting so long now that I can wait a bit more, even if I have to wait until the end of the season!”

“Well, whatever!” said the old duck, and off she went.

At last the big egg cracked. “Peep, peep!” said the young one as he tumbled out. He was very big and rather ugly. The mother-duck looked at him. “It is a terribly big duckling,” she said. “None of the others look like that. Hopefully it is not a turkey-chick. Well, we shall soon find out: into the water he shall go, even if I have to kick him in myself!”

That day the weather was really heavenly, with the sun shining on all the green leaves. The ducklings’ mother came out with all her family and went down to the water. “Splash!” She jumped into the water.

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<sup>9</sup> **Great leaves** – Most English translations use the words ‘dock leaves’; which phonetically collide with the word ‘duck’ and could be confusing for the listener. ‘Dock leaves’ just mean ‘great leaves’; hence I have left it out. The original Danish text uses the word ‘skræppeblade’ of the species Rumex, which plays on the word ‘skræppe’, meaning ‘gossip’.

<sup>10</sup> **Quacked quickly** - In the Danish it says “*Rap! Rap!*” sagde hun, og så rappede de sig i alt hvad de kunne. The Danish word for quack is ‘rap’. Later in the same sentence, Andersen uses the word ‘rappede’, which is a play on the word ‘rap’. ‘Rappede’ means to rush or to do something quickly; hence I translated it to “quacked quickly”; keeping a sort of pun.

<sup>11</sup> **What’s up, duck?** – This is a deviation from Andersen’s original Danish text. I am playing with Bugs Bunny’s, “What’s up, doc?”

“Quack, quack,” she said and, one after another, the ducklings plopped in. The water rushed over their heads, but they came up again at once and floated beautifully; their legs moved automatically and all of them were out in the water. Even the ugly grey duckling joined in the swimming.

“No, it is not a turkey,” said the mother-duck. “Look how beautifully he uses his legs and how straight he holds himself. He is my own little one. He is quite handsome if you look at him properly.” “Quack! Quack! – Now, come along with me and let me show you the world and introduce you all to the duck-yard; but mind yourselves and stay close to me, so that nobody steps on you; and keep a sharp look-out for the cat!”

So they went into the duck-yard. There was a terrible noise going on, for there were two families fighting over the head of an eel, and then after all that fighting, it was the cat that got it.

“Look! That’s the way of the world,” said the mother-duck licking her bill, for she would have liked the eel’s head too. “Use your legs,” she said. “Hurry yourselves along and bow your heads to that old duck over there. She is the most distinguished of them all! She has Spanish blood, which is why she is so solid-looking. Did you notice she has a red ribbon tied around her leg?<sup>12</sup> That is something very special: it is the greatest distinction any duck can have and it really means a lot. It means that they don’t want to get rid of her and that she shall be known by both animals and humans. Hurry up now! Don’t turn your toes in! A well-brought-up duckling turns its toes out, like father and mother. Come on now, bow your heads and say ‘Quack!’”

And so they did; but the other ducks round about looked at them and said quite loudly: “look at that, we shall have to share with that lot as well. As if there weren’t enough of us as it is! Oh my goodness how that one duckling looks - we won’t tolerate him!” Straight away, one duck flew at him and bit him in the neck.

“Leave him alone,” said the mother-duck. “He is not harming anyone!”

“Yes, but he is too big and peculiar,” said the duck that had pecked him. “Because of that he deserves to be bullied.”

“Pretty children the mother has there,” said the old duck with the red ribbon round her leg. “Every one of them pretty, except that one: he didn’t turn out successfully. I wish you could make him over again!”

“That is not possible, Your Grace,” said the ducklings’ mother. “He is not good-looking, but he is very good natured and he swims so beautifully; like the others. Well, I dare say he even swims a bit better than them. I believe he will grow quite handsome and, in time, get a little smaller! He has lain too long in the egg, so he hasn’t yet got the right shape.” Then she preened at his neck and smoothed the rest of his body. “Besides, he is a drake,” she said, “and so it doesn’t matter so much. I believe he will be strong and he will make it!”

“The other ducklings are beautiful,” said the old duck. “Anyway, make yourselves at home, and if you find an eel’s head, then you can bring it to me.”

So they made themselves at home.

But, the poor duckling, the last to hatch out of the egg, was pecked, pushed and mocked by the other ducks and hens, because he was so ugly-looking. “He is too big,” they all said, and the turkey-cock, who had been born with spurs on his feet, and therefore thought he was an emperor, puffed himself up like a ship in full sail, went right up to him and shouted until he was red in the face. The poor duckling did not know where to stand or where to go; he was so miserable at being so ugly and at being the laughing-stock of the whole duck-yard.

And so the first day passed, but it soon became worse and worse. The poor duckling was being chased by everyone. Even his own brothers and sisters were evil towards him and kept on saying, “If only the cat

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<sup>12</sup> **Red ribbon tied around her leg** – In the original Danish text, Andersen is using the Danish word “*klud*”, which means rag. In reality it is a reference to the rings that humans often place around the legs of various birds (bird ringing). Since Andersen is clearly playing on the perception that this is a mark of honour, I went a step further and named it a red ribbon, instead of a rag. Andersen is indicating that it is, in reality, a thing that has become elevated in the duck-yard although it is a rag.

would get you, you ugly thing.” Even his mother would say, “I wish you were far away.” The ducks bit him, the hens pecked him, and even the girl who fed the animals kicked him.

Because of all this trouble he ran off and flew away over the fence, but the little birds in the bushes jumped, terrified, into the air. “That’s because I am so ugly,” thought the duckling, shutting his eyes, yet he ran on all the same. Then he came out into the great marsh where the wild ducks lived and there he lay the whole night. He was so tired and unhappy.

In the morning the wild ducks flew up and took a look at their new comrade. “What kind of fellow are you?” they asked as the duckling turned from one to another, greeting them as well as he could.

“You are so ugly,” said the wild ducks, “but that makes no difference to us as long as you don’t marry into our family.” The poor thing, he had never thought about getting married. If only he could just have some peace, rest in the rushes and drink a little of the marsh water.

There he lay for two whole days before eventually there came two wild geese or, more correctly, two wild ganders, for they were cocks. It was not long since they had hatched, and were therefore very lively.

“Listen, pal,” they said, “you are so ugly that we have come to like you. Do you want to come along with us and be a bird of passage? Listen, not far away from here, in another marsh, are some sweet, lovely wild geese; young ladies every one of them, and they can say ‘Quack’. You could probably become a hit with the ladies, as hot as you are....”

“Bang! Bang!” it suddenly echoed from above. Both the ganders fell down dead in the rushes, and the water became red with blood. “Bang! Bang!” it sounded again and flocks of wild geese flew up from the rushes; again fresh shots rang out. A big shoot was in progress; the hunters lay ready all round the marsh; some even sat up in the trees on the branches that stretched far out over the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns drifted like clouds amongst the dark trees and hung far out over the water. The dogs came running through the mud; splash! splash! Rushes and reeds swayed on all sides. It was terrifying for the poor duckling, which turned its head to the side to hide it under its wing, but at that very moment there stood next to him a terrifyingly big dog.<sup>13</sup> Its tongue was hanging out of its mouth, showing sharp teeth and....splash! It went off again without touching him.

“Oh, thank goodness,” sighed the duckling, “I am so ugly that even the dog doesn’t want to bite me.”<sup>14</sup>

So he lay quite still while the bullets whistled in the rushes and shot after shot went bang!

It was late in the day before all was quiet again, but the poor duckling dared not move. He waited several more hours before he looked around, and then hurried away from the marsh as fast as he could. He ran over fields and meadows, but there was a strong wind that made it difficult for the duckling to get away.

Towards evening he reached a poor little farmhouse. It was so poorly maintained that it hardly knew which way to fall, so it remained standing.<sup>15</sup> The wind whistled around the duckling so that he had to sit down to withstand it, yet it became worse and worse.<sup>16</sup> Then he noticed that the farmhouse door had come off one of its hinges and was hanging so twisted that he could slip into the living room through the crack, so that was what he did.

An old woman lived in the farmhouse with her cat and her hen. The cat, which she called Sonny, could arch his back and purr; he could even give out sparks if you stroked his fur the wrong way. The hen had short little legs, so she was called ‘Chicky short-legs’. She laid well, and the woman was as fond of her as if she were her own child.

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<sup>13</sup> **Terrifyingly big dog** – In the audio version I have chosen the grammatically incorrect “terrifying big dog”, but flow-wise better. The ‘ly’ is changing the rhythm. It is the same with music. Some times the incorrect is better audio somatically.

<sup>14</sup> **“I am so ugly that even the dog doesn’t want to bite me.”** – This is a 19<sup>th</sup> century joke. The whole of Denmark was walking around laughing for days. The Danes could not get over this joke.

<sup>15</sup> **So it remained standing** – This is also a 19<sup>th</sup> century joke. It shows how humour has changed!

<sup>16</sup> **Sit down** – The original Danish text says “sit down on his rump”. I have shortened it to ‘sit down’.

The next morning the strange duckling was spotted at once. The cat began to purr and the hen to cluck.

“Uh, what’s that?” said the old woman, looking all around her. But her sight wasn’t good and so she thought the duckling was a fat duck that had strayed away. “My goodness what a nice catch,” she said. “I can have duck-eggs now, if only it isn’t a drake. Well, this we have to try.”

And so the duckling was taken on trial for three weeks, but no eggs appeared.

Now the cat was the master of the house and the hen was the mistress. Their favourite saying was ‘*We and the world*’, for they believed that they made up half the world – and the better half at that! The duckling thought that one could have a different opinion, but the hen would not hear of it.

“Can you lay eggs?” she asked.

“No.”

“Well then, you had better be quiet.”

And the cat said: “Can you arch your back, purr and give out sparks?”

“No.”

“Well then, you shouldn’t express an opinion when sensible people are talking!”

So the duckling sat in a corner of the room and was in a bad mood. Then the thought of fresh air and sunshine came into his mind and he got such a curious longing to float upon the water that at last he could not help telling the hen about it.

“What’s the matter with you?” she asked. “You have nothing to do<sup>17</sup> - that’s why you get these fancies. Lay an egg or purr and you will get over them.”

“But it is so lovely floating on the water,”<sup>18</sup> said the duckling, “so lovely to get it over your head and to dive down to the bottom.”

“Yes, that must be a great pleasure,” said the hen. “You must have lost your mind. Ask the cat, who is the cleverest person I know; ask him whether he likes floating on water or diving to the bottom! I’ll leave myself out of it. – Please, ask our mistress; ask the old woman yourself, for there is no one in the world cleverer than she. Do you think she has the desire to float or to get water over her head?”

“You don’t understand me,” said the duckling.<sup>19</sup>

“Yes! We don’t understand you. Who should then understand you? Don’t tell me that you are cleverer than the cat and the old woman, not to mention myself! Don’t make a fool of yourself, child, and thank the good Lord for all the good things that have been done for you. Haven’t you come into a warm room and found company that you can learn something from? But you are foolish and it isn’t easy to make company with

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<sup>17</sup> **You have nothing to do** – The young swan had lots of good things to do, it just didn’t fit into the hens worldview.

<sup>18</sup> **Floating on water** – Floating on water is a meditative state. From Wikipedia: “Flow is the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing by a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity. Proposed by positive psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, the concept has been widely referenced across a variety of fields.”

<sup>19</sup> **“You don’t understand me,”** – This scene with the hen and the ‘aristocat’ is a funny scene that underlines a common situation between two different types of people. It is highlighted in this fairytale by the use of animals. Could it be clearer, when we know that a drake cannot lay an egg, that he cannot make this kind of contribution? It is also obvious that the drake cannot purr. The hen becomes generous and gives the drake a 3<sup>rd</sup> option, to ‘give out sparks’. The hen is absolutely convinced that she knows what is best for the young swan. “Who should then understand you?” she insists. The reader/listener can see the irony. How much can a cat understand about the nature of a swan? The cat would hate having water poured over it, or having to swim in water. Floating on water is just as contributory as to purr.

you. You can trust me!<sup>20</sup> My intentions are good for you. I'm saying unpleasant things to you, but that's how you can tell your true friends. Now just make sure that you lay eggs and learn to purr, or give out sparks!"

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the duckling.

"Well, go on then!" said the hen.

The duckling went on his way, floating on the water and dived below the surface, but none of the other animals would have anything to do with him because of his ugliness.

Eventually, autumn came. The leaves in the woods turned yellow and brown; the wind caught them and they danced around. Up in the air it looked cold and the clouds hung heavy with hail and snow-flakes. The raven perched on the fence, screaming "Oy! Oy!" from the sheer cold. Just thinking about it was enough to make you feel frozen. The poor duckling did not feel well.

One evening, when there was a lovely sunset, a flock of large and beautiful birds came out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen such handsome birds. They were shining white and had long graceful necks. The birds were swans. They uttered a strange noise, spread their splendid great wings and flew away from the cold regions to warmer countries and open lakes. They rose so high,<sup>21</sup> and the ugly duckling felt strange as he watched them. He wheeled around in the water and craned his neck in their direction, letting out a cry so loud and strange that it scared even himself. Ah! He could not forget those lovely birds, those fortunate birds, and as soon as he lost sight of them he dived right down to the bottom. When he came up again he seemed to be quite out of his mind. He did not know what the birds were called, or where they were flying to, yet he felt drawn more deeply to them than he had ever been to anything. He did not envy them at all. How could it possibly enter his mind to wish himself such loveliness? He would have been happy if the ducks could have just tolerated him – that poor, ugly creature.

The winter grew cold, so cold. The duckling had to swim round and round in the water to keep it from freezing completely, but every night the hole in which he swam became smaller and smaller. It froze so that the ice-crust creaked and the duckling had to use his legs all the time to prevent the water from icing over. Finally he became lifeless, lay very quiet and froze with the ice.

Early the next morning, a farmer passed by. He saw the duck, went out and broke up the ice with his wooden shoe. He carried the duck home to his wife, where it recovered.

The children wanted to play with him, but the duckling thought they meant to hurt him. In panic he flew right into the milk bowl so that the milk splashed out into the room. The wife shouted and raised her hands over her head, but then he flew into the tub where the butter was kept; then into the barrel of flour and out again. My goodness what a sight he was! The wife screamed and struck at him with the fire-tongs whilst the children were running around and falling over each other trying to catch the duckling. They laughed and they shouted. Fortunately the door was wide open, so he was able to rush out into the bushes and onto the newly-fallen snow – where he lay as if in hibernation.

It would be far too sad to tell you about all the want and misery he had to go through that harsh winter. – He was lying among the reeds in the marsh when the sun began to shine warmly again. The larks were singing – it was lovely spring.

All at once he stretched his wings. They ruffled together and felt stronger than before, carrying him swiftly away. Before he realised it, he was in a great garden where the apple-trees stood in bloom and the lilacs dangled, sweet-scented on their long green boughs right down to the winding water in the canals. Ah! It was beautiful here in fresh spring. Right in front of him, out of the thicket, came three lovely white swans, ruffling

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<sup>20</sup> **You can trust me!** – The words are translated correctly, but I am making a change in the intention Andersen had with this sentence. I am pointing back to the previous sentence, whereas it should be pointing forward to the next sentence, meaning, "Trust me, my intentions are good for you," being positive towards the duckling, whereas I am using it as talking down to the young swan, increasing the drama, flow and pace. This is the only place in this story where I am 100% deviating in the meaning and intention. The place with the "red ribbon" is a lesser deviation compared with this deviation (see footnote 9); the same could be said about footnote 8, "What's up, duck".

<sup>21</sup> **They rose so high** – The original Danish text says, "*They rose so high, so high.*" Initially I had it twice, ...*so high, so high...*, but during the face-to-face proofreading I decided to skip the repetition for a couple of reasons.

their feathers and floating lightly on the water. The duckling recognised the magnificent birds and a strange sadness fell upon him.

“I will fly over to those majestic birds and I know they will kill me, because I – being so ugly have dared to come near them. Yet that doesn’t matter. It is better to be killed by them than to be snapped at by the ducks, pecked by the hens, kicked by the girl who looks after the poultry-yard, and suffer through the winter!” So he flew out onto the water and swam towards the beautiful swans. They saw him, and came towards him with ruffled feathers. “Yes, kill me, kill me!” said the poor creature, bowing his head down towards the water, awaiting his death. But what did he see in the clear water? He saw his own reflection beneath him; he was no longer a clumsy, dark-grey, ugly unattractive bird – he had become a swan!

It doesn’t matter if you were born in a duck-yard as long as you had been lying in a swan’s egg!

He felt really happy at having gone through so much hardship and suffering. He could now appreciate his good fortune, appreciate all the loveliness that greeted him. The great swans swam around him and stroked him with their beaks.

Some little children came into the garden and threw bread and grain into the water, and the youngest shouted: “There is a new one.” The other children joined in joyfully, saying: “Yes, there is a new one.” They clapped and danced around, running after mum and dad.<sup>22</sup> While bread and cake were thrown into the water they all said: “The new one is the most beautiful of them all. He is so young and so beautiful.” Even the old swans bowed before him.

Then he felt quite shy and hid his head under his wings; he didn’t know what to do with himself. He was much too happy, but not at all proud, because a good heart is never proud. He thought of the time when he had been persecuted and ridiculed, and now he heard them all saying he was the loveliest of all the lovely birds. The lilacs bowed their branches right down to the water next to him and the sun shone warm and welcoming. Then, he ruffled his feathers, raised his slender neck and with a heart full of joy he shouted: “I never dreamed of so much happiness, when I was the ugly duckling!”

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<sup>22</sup> **Mum and dad** – The original Danish text says “*far og mor*”; in English ‘dad and mum’. In English you mention the mum before the dad. Another example: In “The Story of a Mother”, it says: “three nights and days”, but in English you mention the days before the nights ‘three days and nights’. Even in Danish I find it better to say “*tre dage og nætter*” in the English order, because it gives a better flow.

## The Story of a Mother

There sat a mother by her little child. She was so sorrowful, so afraid that the child would die. It was very pale, its little eyes were closed, it drew breath slowly, and sometimes it breathed very deeply, as if it was sighing, and the mother looked even more sadly upon the little soul.

Then there was a knock at the door and a poor old man came in, wrapped in something that looked like a great horse-blanket; that keeps you warm, and he needed it, for it was a cold winter; everything outside was covered with snow and ice and the wind blew so that it cut one's face.

And as the old man shivered with cold and the little child slept for a moment, the mother put some beer in a pot on the stove to warm for him – and the old man sat and rocked; and the mother sat herself on a chair near him, watched her sick child that drew its breath so deeply, and raised its little hand.

“Don't you believe that I will keep him?” she said, “Our Lord will not take him from me!”

And the old man, who was Death himself, he nodded so strangely, it could just as well have meant “Yes” as “No”. And the mother looked down at her child and tears rolled down her cheeks; her head became so heavy; for three days and for three nights, she had not closed her eyes, and now she slept, but only for a moment. Then she jumped up and shivered with cold “What was that!” she cried and looked all around, but the old man was gone, and her little child was gone, he had taken the child with him, and over in the corner the old grandfather clock whirred and whirred, the big heavy brass pendulum plummeted right down to the floor, bang! And then the clock stood still.

The poor mother rushed outside and cried for her child!

Out there in the middle of the snow sat a woman in long black garments, who said: “Death has been in your room I saw him rush away with your child. He walks faster than the wind and he never brings back what he has taken.”

“Please, just tell me which way he went,” said the mother, “Tell me the way and I will find him.”

“I know the way,” said the woman in the black garments, “but before I tell you, you have to sing for me all the songs that you have sung for your child. I love those songs, I have heard them before, I am Night and I saw your tears when you sang them!”

“I will sing them all; all of them” said the mother, “but do not stop me, so that I can catch him; so that I can find my child.”

But Night sat dumb and still. Then the mother wrung her hands, sang and wept, and there were many songs and even more tears; and then Night said: “Go to the right in the dark forest of fir trees that is where I saw Death make his way with your little child.”

Deep in the forest there was a crossroads and she no longer knew which way to go. There, there stood a thorn-bush with neither leaf nor flower upon it, for it was the cold winter time; only icicles hung on its branches.

“Have you seen Death pass by with my little child?”

“Yes” said the thorn-bush, “but I will not tell you which way he went unless you warm me up with your heart. I am freezing to death; I am turning to ice.”

And she pressed the thorn-bush firmly to her bosom, so that it could be properly warmed up. And the thorns pierced her skin, going deep into her flesh and her blood flowed in great streams. And the thorn-bush shot fresh green leaves and flowers bloomed on it in the cold winter's night; that's how warm it was next to the heart of a grieving mother! And the thorn-bush told her the way that she should go.

Then she came to a great lake on which there was neither ship nor boat. The lake was not frozen hard enough to bear her, nor sufficiently shallow for her to walk through. Yet she had to cross it; she had to find

her little child. Then she laid herself down to drink the lake dry. This was impossible of course, but the sorrowful mother thought that perhaps a miracle would occur?

“No, it will never work out” said the lake, “it is better that we make a deal. I love collecting pearls, and your eyes are the two purest I have ever seen. If you will cry them out to me, then I shall carry you over to the great greenhouse where Death lives and where he looks after the flowers and trees; each of them is a human life.”

“Oh, what would I not give to get to my child,” said the weeping mother as she wept even more and her eyes sank down to the bottom of the lake and became two priceless pearls. Then the lake lifted her up as if she sat in a swing, lifting her in one movement to the other side of the shore, where there stood a strange house, many miles in length. One could not tell whether it was a mountain with forests and caves or if it had been built, but the poor mother couldn’t see it, because she had cried her eyes out.

“Where shall I find Death, who went away with my little child?” she said.

“He hasn’t arrived here yet” said the old woman caretaker who walked around to take care of Death’s great greenhouse. “How could you have found your way here, and who has helped you?”

“Our Lord has helped me” she said, “He is merciful, and so will you be. How shall I find my little child?”

“Well, I don’t know your child,” said the old woman, “and you can’t see! – Many flowers and trees have withered away tonight; Death will soon come and replant them. You probably know that every human has its tree of life or its flower according to how they are gifted. They look like other plants, but they have hearts that beat. Children’s hearts also beat, so follow the sound and maybe you will recognise your child’s heartbeat? Now, what will you give me for telling you what you should do next?”

“I have nothing to give” said the sad mother, “but I will go with you to the end of the world.”

“Well, I have nothing to do there” said the old woman, “but you can give me your long, black hair. You probably know that it is beautiful - and I like it! You can have my white hair in return, that is something.”

“Is that all you ask,” she said “I will give it to you with pleasure!” So she gave the old woman her beautiful black hair and received the old woman’s hair, white as snow, in return.

And then they went in to Death’s great greenhouse where flowers and trees were growing strangely among each other. There stood fine hyacinths under glass bells, and there stood big strong peonies, there were water-plants growing there, some fresh, others sick, water-snakes were coiled upon them and black crabs were squeezing their stems. There stood lovely palm trees, oak trees and plane-trees, there stood parsley and flowering thyme. Each tree and each flower had a name and was the embodiment of a single human life. Those people were still living; in China, in Greenland, all around the world. There were large trees in small pots, standing so cramped that they were about to burst their pots. There were also quite a few places where small sad looking flowers were well cared for, flourishing in rich soil with moss all around. But the sorrowful mother bent over the smallest plants, listening to their human heartbeats; and somehow amongst those millions, she recognised her child’s heartbeat.

“It is that one!” she shouted, stretching out her hand over a small blue crocus, whose sickly stem grew to one side.

“Don’t touch the flower!” said the old woman, “but come and stand over here and when Death arrives – I expect him at any time – do not let him pull up that plant, but threaten him that if he pulls it up you will do the same with the other flowers and that will frighten him; he has to account for each one of them to Our Lord; no one dares to uproot them before He gives His permission.

All at once there was an icy cold rush through the hall, and the blind mother could feel that Death was arriving.

“How did you find your way here?” he asked. “How could you arrive here before me?”

“I am a mother!” she said.

Then Death stretched out his long hand towards the delicate little flower, but she held her hands tightly around it; so close and yet so afraid that she would touch one of its leaves. Then Death blew on her hands and she felt that his breath was colder than the cold wind and her hands fell down lifeless.

"You can't do anything to harm me," said Death.

"But Our Lord can!" she replied.

"I only do what he wants," said Death. "I am his gardener. I take all his flowers and trees and plant them out in the great garden of Paradise in the unknown land, but how they grow there and how it is there, I dare not tell you."

"Give me back my child!" wailed the mother as she cried and begged. Quickly, she took two beautiful nearby flowers in both her hands and shouted to Death: "I will tear all your flowers apart because I am in despair!"

"Don't touch them" said Death. "You say that you are unhappy, yet now you want to make another mother just as unhappy." "Another mother!" said the poor mother and immediately released both flowers.

"Here, please, take back your eyes," said Death, "I fished them up from the lake where they shone so brightly; I didn't know they were yours. Take them back; they are now clearer than ever before. Look down into the deep well over there. I shall tell you the names of the two flowers you wanted to uproot and you will see their whole future, their whole human life. You will see what you would disturb and destroy."

And she looked down into the well; and it was wonderful to see how one of them became a blessing for the world and to see how much happiness and joy surrounded it. And she saw the life of the other, which was nothing but sorrow and need, horror and misery.

"Both situations are the will of God" said Death.

"Which is the flower of misfortune and which is the blessed one?" she asked.

"That I will not tell you," said Death, "but this you will know from me. One of the visions in the well was of your own child. It was your child's destiny you saw; your own child's future."

Then the mother shouted out of fear: "Which of them was my child! Tell me! Save the innocent. Save my child from all that misery. Carry it away. Carry it into God's kingdom. Forget my tears, forget my prayers and forget everything I have said and done."

"I don't understand you" said Death. "Do you want your child back, or shall I walk with it into the place you do not know?"

Then the mother wrung her hands, fell on her knees and prayed to Our Lord. "Don't listen to me when I ask, against your will, which is the best. Don't listen to me! Don't listen to me!"

And she bowed her head down to her chest.

And Death walked away with her child into the unknown land.

## A Chinese Light

Once upon a time a poet bought himself a Chinese candle. After a long and tiring voyage all the way from the land of China, the candle finally stood on the poet's desk. It was a very fine and beautiful candle with a piece of paper wrapped around it. On the paper it was written that the light had been made according to a very old Chinese tradition, and that the craftsmanship of this old tradition should guarantee the quality of the candle.

The poet didn't want to light the Chinese candle; he really didn't have to burn such a fine piece of work, he was easily satisfied by glow from the Danish tea-light that stood right next to the Chinese light.

One late winter's night, it happened that the poet became tired and sad. Outside it was cold and very quiet. The poet was getting cold. "Warmth doesn't come from outside, but from within," he said to himself, but nevertheless he wrapped himself in a woollen blanket. This cheered him up. He really wanted to write, but was so tired that he began to complain about the darkness. "Better to light a candle than complain over the darkness," said the Chinese candle to the poet. He turned his head towards the light and smiled, thinking, "It is so true, what the Chinese light says." He rose from his chair to fetch a match, but although he searched and searched, there was no matchbox to be found.

The Danish tea-light felt very envious because of all the attention the Chinese light received, so it said with great arrogance "In order to light a candle, you must have something to light it with, right?" The Chinese light didn't get agitated by the tea-light; it simply said these comforting words to the poet, "You don't need to have matches to light a candle. You can also do it just by saying 'Candle, light yourself,' and the candle will light straight away." The poet went back to his chair and said, "Candle, light yourself!" The Chinese candle was lit straight away. The poet became very happy, because it worked, and so he turned his face towards the tea-light, saying, "Candle, light yourself!" The tea-light also lit straight away. The poet's happiness increased and increased and his inner tiredness disappeared. He wasn't cold anymore, so he took off the woollen blanket and smiled to the Chinese candle while he thought, "Warmth doesn't come from outside, it comes from within."

The envious tea-light became furious, and with great arrogance it said, "I don't want to be lit by your words, I want to be lit by a match!" The tea-light's wax became liquid and waded back and forth because of its arrogance. The tea-light repeated that it didn't want to be lit by the poet's words, which resulted in the tea-light drowning it its own arrogance. And so the flame of the tea-light went out. The poet didn't answer the tea-light because he had fallen asleep in his chair. And while he slept, the Chinese light continued to burn and to warm the poet's heart.

When he woke up next morning, the Chinese light was still burning because it had been made according to a good old Chinese tradition.

## Who is the most valuable?

Five fingers discussed which of them was the most valuable.

At the very moment that the hand was about to put its grip on the door handle, the five fingers began to part and argue their worth. "I am the most valuable," said the thumb with its head upright. "Without me, you can't open the door. Just take a look." And then the thumb took its firmest grip on the door handle. The door handle didn't turn at all; most fingers would have given up after this much effort, but the thumb had an unusually strong will and physical strength, so he continued his attempt to turn the door handle. Some time later he realised his inadequacy and the thumb turned his head downward.

The forefinger raised itself and said with great confidence, "I am the most valuable. Just take a look." And then he took a smart grip on the door handle. "I don't want to be called forefinger, I want to be called chief-forefinger," thought the forefinger because he was longing for honour and glory. The forefinger tried and tried, but he too couldn't succeed in turning the door handle.

The middle finger stepped forward and said "I am not only the tallest with regards to height; I also have the greatest wisdom. I just need to look at the door handle and my wisdom will open the door." The middle finger tried with a long-fingered attempt, but he also failed to turn the door handle.

Then the ring finger stepped forward and said "I am the most valuable. I can open the door with my art. I am the love finger, just take a look." Then the ring finger began to sing a love song, but it happened for the ring finger as it had done for the others - the door handle didn't move.

Finally, the little finger stepped forward and said "Yes, I know I can't open the door alone. On my own I am too little and too weak. However, if we unite, we will succeed in opening the door!" All the fingers agreed to unite for the task. Together they took a grip on the door handle and very easily they succeeded in opening the door.

## The Butterfly

The butterfly wanted to have a sweetheart. Of course, he wanted to have a nice little one of the flowers. He looked at them; each sat so quietly and modestly on her stalk, as a lady<sup>23</sup> should sit when she is not engaged, but there were so many to choose from that it became a difficulty. The butterfly couldn't be bothered to spend more time on it, so he flew over to the daisy. They call her French Margaret. They know that she can tell fortunes, which she does while lovers pick off her petals one by one. As each petal falls they say something about their sweetheart, such as "She loves me", "She loves me not", "She loves me a lot", "She loves me just a bit" or something like that. Everyone asks in his own language. The butterfly also came to ask, but he didn't pluck off the petals, he kissed each of them in turn, with the intention that you get further with kindness.

"Sweet Margaret daisy," he said, "you are the wisest Madame<sup>24</sup> of all the flowers; you can tell fortunes. Tell me whether I will get this one or that one? Tell me who I will get? When I know it, I can fly straight to her and propose."

But Margaret didn't answer at all. She didn't like that he called her a married woman, because she was a young lady, and a young lady is not a 'Mrs', but a 'Miss'. He asked her for a second time and he asked her for a third time, but when he couldn't get a single word out of her, he couldn't be bothered asking anymore, but flew straight on towards making a proposal.

It was early spring; there were lots of snowdrops and crocuses. "They're very pretty" said the butterfly, "nice little candidates ready for their confirmation, and too young."<sup>25</sup> Like all other young men, he was looking for older girls. Then he flew away to the anemones, which he found a little bitter; the violets were somewhat too romantic; the tulips too showy; the daffodils too middle-class; the lime blossoms too small and with far too many relatives. The apple blossoms certainly looked like roses, but they were here today and gone tomorrow according to which way the wind blew; he felt it would become too short a marriage. The sweet pea was the one he liked the best. She was red and white, very delicate and refined; she was the type of domestic girl who is both good looking and good in the kitchen. He was just about to propose to her, when suddenly he saw next to him a pea-pod with a dead flower on its head.<sup>26</sup> "Who is that?" he asked. "It is my sister," said the sweet pea. "So, that's how you are going to look like later!" It frightened butterfly, and then he flew away.

The honeysuckles were hanging over the fence. There were lots of these lasses, long in the face and yellow of skin; he didn't like this type. So, what sort did he like? Who knows!

Spring passed, summer came and went, and then it was autumn. He was still no closer. And all the flowers now came in their loveliest clothes, but what was the good of that? Here was not the fresh fragrance of a youthful mind. Fragrance is exactly what heart needs when it gets older, and there isn't so much fragrance in dahlias and hollyhocks. Then the butterfly found himself flying down to the curled mint.

"She hasn't any blossom, but she is a whole flower in herself, scented from root to tip and with fragrance in every leaf. She's the one I will choose."

And so at last he proposed.

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<sup>23</sup> **Lady** – The Danish use the word "jomfru", which literally means "virgin" in English. But virgin would sound odd.

<sup>24</sup> **Madame** – All English translations write "you are the wisest woman". This is an incorrect and misleading translation of the meaning. The Danish text says "kone", which means a married woman. It would have been appropriate to translate it to "you are the wisest wife". The English word "wife" is the exact meaning of the Danish word "kone"; today the Danes would rather say "hustru" instead of "kone". I have translated it differently, using the English word Madam, which is the title for a married woman for a British national, but by using the slightly different Madame, which is the title for a married woman for a French national, I am playing on the "French Margaret"; also increasing the level of variation in the text when saying 'wife': 'Madame', 'a married woman' and 'Mrs'; three different ways of expressing the same.

<sup>25</sup> **Young** - The Danish text says "but quite fresh". The word 'fresh' has a different meaning in English in this context.

<sup>26</sup> **Dead/head** - The Danish text says "en vissen blomst på spidsen", literally "a withered flower on its tip". There is also a pun in it, 'vissen' and 'spidsen'. I have kept the pun by saying: "a dead flower on its head."

But the mint stood stiff and still. Finally she said “Friendship, but nothing more, please. I am old and you are old – we could quite well live with each other, but marry - no! Let us not make fools of ourselves at our advanced age.”

And so the butterfly got no one. He had searched for too long and that is not good. The butterfly became a bachelor.

It was late in the autumn, raining and blustery; the wind blew cold down the backs of the old willow trees so that they creaked and groaned. It wasn't good to fly outside in summer clothes; then he would 'catch his death', as they say.<sup>27</sup> But the butterfly didn't fly outside; he happened to come inside, where there was fire in the fireplace, yes proper summertime warmth. He could live, but “Just living is not enough,” he said, “sunshine, freedom and a little flower is what one must have!”

So he flew against the window pane, and was seen, admired and stuck on a pin in a collection of curios. They couldn't do more for him. “Now I also sit on a stalk, just like the flower” said the butterfly, “I can't say it is great feeling. It is probably like being married, you are pinned!” and so he comforted himself.

“It is a poor comfort” said the pot-plants in the sitting room.

“Pot-plants can't be trusted,” thought the butterfly, “they spend too much time with humans.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> **'catch his death'** - Andersen wrote, in Danish, "*da ville man få kærligheden at føle, som man siger*". Literally translated into English, this is “then you would feel the love, as they say.” To 'feel the love' is a Danish expression full of irony, meaning the exact opposite of its literal sense, something like, “you are going to fell the heat”; it seems there is no exact counterpart for the expression in English. My expert proof-reader wrote to me saying, “We cannot think of an English term that would convey the irony of the original Danish. In English, we often say that if a man goes out in bad weather he will 'catch his death'. While this is not an ironic thing to say, I believe it is the closest thing to the 'equivalent term' you are looking for.”

<sup>28</sup> **Pot-plants** – Pot-plants are not used to living outside, they are not used to freedom, hence their opinion is not trustworthy when speaking on issues about freedom, which is what the butterfly is all about; I think that is the idea behind it.

## The apple does not fall far...

A long time ago there was an apple tree on a hill top. It was a fine apple tree with a long tradition that said, "The apple does not fall far from the trunk." The tradition was normally followed.

Now I shall tell you about the tradition. Every autumn, when the apples were ripe and heavy, they fell down from the branch and, as the tradition said, so it was. The apple did not fall far from the tree. As reward for following the tradition, the apples were given some leaves from the tree; and so it went on year after year.

One autumn it happened a bit differently. All the apples fell as they should, except for one. "Look! An apple is rolling down the hill!" the other apples shouted to the tree. The tree turned immediately in the direction of the apple to see if it was true, and yes, it was true. The apple was rolling and bouncing so quickly that if a worm had been inside the apple it would have gone crazy!

"Not that! Not that!" shouted the terrified tree when the apple rolled past a cider brewery. The tree feared that the apple would suffer in the same way as the others who rolled into the cider company and were dipped in alcohol. This apple was different; it was not interested in alcohol so it made a turn and kept on rolling down the hill.

After the apple turned away from the cider company, the other apples were no longer able to see it. They thought that their brother had become lost in the cider company, so they gossiped about the dangers of doing such things. "It is a very dangerous thing to do," said the tree in a firm voice, as it was afraid that the idea would become popular.

The apple was quite happy with the tremendous speed it had while rolling away from the tree. However, it slowed down considerably when it approached the traffic light showing red. Now it had to make its second choice. "Shall I turn right and continue down 'Passion Street' where there are more red lights, or shall I continue straight on to Willow-Tree Street?"

Finally the apple had made up its mind. When the traffic light turned green, it continued rolling onto Willow-Tree Street. When the Apple reached the next traffic light, it did not need to ponder because it knew very well what it wanted. With all the entertainment on offer, Theatre Road to the right was tempting, but it was not to be. The apple preferred to turn left into the peace and beauty of the garden called 'Goodness'.

In the garden of Goodness, the apple struck roots and became a beautiful apple tree.

Some years later, a worm passed by the apple that had, by now, become a tree with many branches offering shade for children, the young and the elderly.

The worm overheard the apple's story, which was being told to the children by the elderly. Upon hearing the story, the worm became so excited that it instantly crawled onto the trunk and gnawed this text:

"The apple can fall far from the tree"

## Luck can lie in a stick

Now I shall tell a story about luck.<sup>29</sup>

We all know good luck: some see it from year's end to year's end, others only at certain seasons, on a certain day. There are even people who only see it once in their lives; but see it we all do.

Now I need not tell you, for every one knows it, that the good Lord sends the little child and lays it in a mother's womb. It may be in a rich castle or in a wealthy house, but it may also be in an open field where the cold wind blows; no one knows which it will be. Nevertheless it is certain that,<sup>30</sup> when He brings the child, the good Lord also brings a lucky gift for it. The gift is not laid openly by the side of the child, it is laid in some place in the world where one would least expect to find it; yet it always exists there and that is the positive side of it. The gift may be laid in an apple; it was so for a learned man called Isaac Newton. The apple fell and so he found his luck. If you do not know the story, then ask someone who does know it to tell you. I have another story to tell, and this is a story about a pear.

There was a man who was born into poverty, grew up in poverty, and into it he had married. He was, by the way, a wood turner by trade. His speciality was to make umbrella handles and umbrella rings, but he lived only from hand to mouth. "I will never find luck," he said. This is a story that really happened; one could name the country and the place where the man lived, but that makes no difference.

The red, sour rowan-berries grew as the richest decoration around his house and garden. In the garden there was also a pear tree, but it did not bear even a single pear, yet the good luck had been laid in that pear tree; placed in the invisible pears.

One night the wind blew a terrible storm. They told in the newspapers that the big stage-coach had been lifted off the road and tossed aside like a rag. Certainly a great branch could easily have been torn from a pear tree.<sup>31</sup>

The branch was taken into the workshop where the man turned it.<sup>32</sup> As a joke he made a big pear from it, then another big one, then a smaller one and finally some very little ones. "The tree had to give pears one day," said the man, as he gave them to the children to play with.

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<sup>29</sup> **Now I shall tell you a story** – In the original Danish text, Andersen writes, "Now I shall tell you a story about luck". But this story is really a story about life, and not about luck. Life has its own ways, and we can't catch it and lock it up in a box, feeling more secure.

<sup>30</sup> **'tortuous'** – This story has been translated by very few, and my layman guess would be that it is because this text has a "snørklet" text at least three places. The Danish word "snørklet" is difficult to translate into English; it means something like 'tortuous'; full of twists and turns. For such a text, I would like to introduce a new word into the English language "snirkley"; sounds a bit like the Danish word, right? Andersen is trying to 'glue' the text together at least three places in this story, and he does it with great difficulty, knowing that the gap is too big, so the text ends up being 'tortuous', even when reading it in Danish, all the more so it becomes very difficult to translate into a concise language as English. In the Danish text the following text "no one knows which it will be. Nevertheless it is certain that" is not divided. I have divided the text and also let the meaning point back to the previous sentence with this part of the text "no one knows which it will be". In the Danish it says "yet, not everyone knows it, and sure it is nevertheless" as one sentence. The text has a lot of 'obstructions' and 'negations', 'yet', 'not', 'nevertheless'. You can just about get away with it in Danish, but I don't know how to translate this into meaningful English.

<sup>31</sup> **"snirkley" text** – Here is the second "snirkley" text. Andersen is trying to bridge from "Certainly a great branch could easily have been torn from a pear tree" onto the next scene "The branch was taken into the workshop where the man turned it." It is done with difficulty. Somehow it can't be glued properly together. It could also be the way they spoke 150 years ago. So the meaning might have been "it broke off" while saying "it could have been torn from a pear tree." There was a lot of talking indirectly with a touch of downplay in the language 150 years ago, trying to appear more humble. I have decided to believe that there is a technical construction problem in gluing the sentences together while keeping the musical flow; somehow the 'shoe size' doesn't fit.

<sup>32</sup> **The branch was taken into the workshop** – The title might be a bit confusing. The title, "Luck can lie in a stick", is a branch from a tree that is being turned into a stick, hence he later says, "Luck can lie in a stick". You could also have said, "Luck can lie in a branch", but Andersen decided to focus on "stick", rather than "branch", because of a play with a proverb that I have excluded. This story is unabridged as such, but I have excluded the very last paragraph, because it is irrelevant to the story, and Andersen brings a kind of joke about a white stick - actually a Danish proverb - that not only very few Danes would understand today, but it cannot be translated into meaningful English. In my translation, the story ends where it should have ended for the international audience.

One of the necessities of life in a wet country is an umbrella, yet the whole house had only one for common use. If the wind blew too strongly, the umbrella turned inside out; it also snapped a couple of times, but the man soon put it right again. However, the most annoying thing was the button that held the umbrella together; too often it jumped off or the ring which was round it broke.<sup>33</sup>

One day the button jumped off; the man searched for it on the floor, and there he found one of the smallest of the wooden pears, one of those which he had given to the children to play with. "The button is not to be found," said the man, "but this little thing will serve the same purpose." So he bored a hole in it, pulled a string through it, and the little pear fitted very well into the broken ring. It was definitely the very best fastener the umbrella had ever had.

The following year, when the man was sending umbrella handles to the capital city where he delivered his goods, he also sent some of the little wooden pears with a half ring around them, and asked that they should try the samples; this was how they came to America. There, they noticed quickly that the little pear held much better than any other button, so they demanded of the merchant that all the umbrellas which were to follow should be fastened with a little pear. Well! Now he had lots of work to do. He made pears in their thousands; he put wooden pears on all his umbrellas. The man had to work very fast; he turned and turned as fast as he could. The whole barren pear tree was turned into little pears. It gave him many pounds; it gave him many dollars!

"My happiness was laid in the pear tree," said the man. He then bought a big workshop and employed workmen and boys. He was always in a good mood and often said "Luck can lie in a stick."

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<sup>33</sup> This whole paragraph is the third "snirkley" text in this story. I don't want to make further comment on it. I think I have by now made you aware of the point. I decided to select this story despite the "snirkley" text, because the story is really great.