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THE COLOUR OF MY EYES

by Marie Lavroff.

My Father employed the great Angel Sandalphon in his work. And Sandalphon wrought upon a shaft of sunlight, bending it this way and that, until he had made a Rainbow in the Heavens as a ring for the finger of my Father.

Moreover he chose a goddess to tend his rainbow; swift was she, and fair to look upon; and her name was Iris.

And Sandalphon was enamoured of her beauty, because she was like unto the Rainbow that he had made; but she was subtle and elusive, so that whenever he was here, she was there; when flying strongly, he came there, she was gone.

At last, weary and disconsolate, he sat down upon a great rock above a waterfall, and folded his wings over his face and wept.

When he opened his eyes, he saw his lovely Iris playing in the spray of the waterfall, mocking him. But he, being made wise by love, and by the sorrow of love, turned away steadily.

There, on a grassy slope dew-bright, he saw a peacock strutting. Then he said: Lo! the Father hath wrought also wonder of beauty upon earth, where one may grasp and hold.

Now, playing with the peacock, and feeding him with gilded grains of wheat, there was a nymph of the daughters of men. And Sandalphon moved secretly towards her, wondering if his art might not blend the colour of the peacock with her form. But when he looked into her eyes, he saw pale cloudy skies of blue, like unto the heavens before he had wrought his Rainbow.

And the nymph marvelled at his glory, but with disdain and nonchalance, for she was perfect in herself and in her pleasure.

Sandalphon was content, seeing ice in her eyes; for he understood that their form was apt for the incarnation of an Iris, if only my Father would allow him to work into them the Miracle of Colour.

So then Sandalphon flew away to my Father, and spake his heart. And my Father smiled and bade him do as he best could. Oh! this was long ago, long, long ago - Sandalphon made delight in many a myriad of eyes, but he was never satisfied. At last - just a few years since - he went back to my Father, saying humbly that he understood that the task was too great for him, that this was a thing that only my Father himself could bring to Perfection.

So then my Father smiled, and said to Sandalphon that He would show him how to colour eyes. And they came to me together, and found me a small child lying asleep; and my Father said: "These will be good eyes for this Work".

So my Father took my eyes, and wrought mightily with His thumb for an hammer, and the Breath of His nostrils for a forge. And first about the iris of my eyes He put a ring of orange, to wake remembrance of the Sun. And He made the groundwork of violet, like a tropical night, with shades of peacock green and peacock blue, because He wished to commemorate the adventure of Sandalphon by the waterfall. Then He set in them, all about the blackness of the pupil, flecks of pale gold for stars, and sparks of scarlet to be the sign-manual of His work.

And when He had finished, He showed these jewels to Sandalphon proudly. But the great Angel became agitated and embarrassed, and hid his face from my Father. Then my Father bade him speak, but he would not. At that my Father smiled indeed, for He knew all things, but sternly He commanded Sandalphon.

Then the great Angel threw himself upon the earth, and abased his brow seven times, and cried through the storm of his sobbing: "Let me be destroyed

in Thine anger, for it is not of mine own will that I blaspheme. But - oh my Lord! - although these eyes be of beauty and wonder a miracle to gaze on through Eternity, yet - these are not the eyes that I conceived in mine heart!"

And my Father laughed softly, and raised him, and led him away, and whispered in his ear: "Oh Sandalphon, be of good cheer; for I am compassionate of thine artist sorrow. But I have done all that Omnipotence itself can do. As thou seest, that is only half the work. Thou must come back in a few years and look upon these eyes, when they are filled with Love."

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