

THE KING AND HIS DAUGHTERS PUNJABI FOLK-TALE

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There was once a king who had several daughters. To the first he said: 'How do you love me?' 'I love you as sugar,' said she. To the next he said: 'And how do you love me?' 'I love you as honey,' said she. To the third he said: 'And how do you love me?' 'I love you as sherbet,' said she. To the last and youngest he said: 'And how do you love me?' 'I love you as salt,' said she.

On hearing the answer of his youngest daughter the king frowned, and, as she persisted in repeating it, he drove her out into the forest.

There, when wandering sadly along, she heard the tramping of a horse, and she hid herself in a hollow tree. But the fluttering of her dress betrayed her to the rider, who was a prince, and who instantly fell in love with her and married her.

Some time after, the king, her father, who did not know what had become of her, paid her husband a visit. When he sat down to eat, the princess took care that all the dishes presented to him should be made-up sweets, which he either passed by altogether or merely tasted. He was very hungry, and was longing sorely for something which he could eat, when the princess sent him a dish of common spinach, seasoned with salt, such as farmers eat, and the king signified his pleasure by eating it with relish.

Then the princess threw off her veil, and, revealing herself to her father, said, 'O my father, I love you as salt; My love may be homely, but it is true, genuine and lasting, and I entreat your forgiveness.'

Then the king perceived how great a mistake he had made, and there followed a full reconciliation.

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