

Amalthea Bishop Meir**Silver and her Red Mare: the True Story of Cinderella**

Once upon a time there was a happy girl, living happily with her mother and father near a sacred spring and a wonderful wood, full of gnomes, elves and fairies, where she used to play with other girls and boys blissful like her. They called her Silver for her skin shone like full moonlight. Her eyes were green like newly born leaves, and her long red hair floated and danced when she joyfully ran and somersaulted. Her mother Oestara had taught her how to use fresh herbs and mushrooms from the fields and woods, in order to cook and heal, like powerful medicine. Her father Credne was a goldsmith and knew the secrets of metals, he had told her many stories about the way gold, silver, copper, precious stones and all other things were given to everybody by Mother Earth in order to exchange gifts and enjoy life and create beautiful things for the admiration of eyes and heart.

In the nearby village her mother, who was the High Priestess, led a group of priestesses of the Great Goddess, and they met regularly to share their ancient knowledge and dance under the moon. The men of the community participated in many rituals too and they all enjoyed together the sacred Goddess dance and ecstatically made love in peace and beauty, sharing food and sacred secret herbs and mushrooms that enhanced their sense of connection with all creation and made them experience the beauty of all things and beings. They all lived peacefully together with the community and Silver was growing into a magnificent and beautiful young woman.

One day though something terrible happened, a horde of shouting rough men riding horses and brandishing swords arrived, destroyed wood and village, took her mother away and robbed all her father's beautiful gold and silver creations. For days and months her father Credne searched for the tribe that had kidnapped his wife, but could find no trace of them. Finally, one day, he arrived in

a faraway village where an evil King reigned, who adored a fiendish and vindictive creature that he called the great God of Thunder, but it had nothing to do with the God/Goddess known by Credne, it was a violent kind of God teaching violence and brutality and, something unheard of before, the total supremacy and dominance of men over women, stating that women were inferior beings that needed to be dominated and punished if they did not obey. The King was the head of the horde that had kidnapped Oestara and many other women, and when Credne asked to see his wife and told him he would give anything to have her back, the evil King laughed aloud and so did everybody else in his court. Credne could not hold back his tears and everyone present started insulting him, telling him he was behaving like a woman, but Credne knew his deep feelings and how to express both joy and sorrow; this is what his Goddess had always taught him. Then the evil King showed him the special ring that Credne had created for Oestara when she accepted to live with him in a sacred way, as woman to man and Goddess to God. It was made of the finest gold adorned with the rarest magic and sacred stones that came from faraway lands: amethyst to symbolise the world of the spirit blowing into matter and the physical body; ruby, red like the sacred woman's menstrual blood that, in tune with the rhythms of the moon, marks the time for fertility, ritual, dance, physical and spiritual love; topaz to indicate the light of the sun that shines in the heart of someone who truly loves. Seeing the ring Credne took heart, but when he saw the King's scornful face, under the jeering of the court, he bowed his head and turned away, knowing that all was lost, that his adored Oestara must have been killed for she would never give up her magic ring.

When the Wards led Credne out of the court he felt suddenly very old. All the light had left his eyes and heart. He had given up. On his way home he was thinking of his young daughter, "how can I", he thought, "teach her the secrets of the Goddess? I must certainly remarry, for only a woman can lead her into sacred womanhood". But, as he was thinking this, his heart was heavy and all the teachings of the Goddess seemed suddenly useless, for She had taught him about

joy and sorrow, yes, in the cycles of time, but nothing like what he was feeling now. A sense of total despair, of utter uselessness, a dark heavy cloud was enveloping him and almost suffocating his breath. As he walked, head bowed, lost in his meandering thoughts, a woman approached him, she was beautiful but had a feel about her that made Credne shiver for a moment, but then his old intuition that had always protected and helped him subsided, engulfed in his grief. The woman introduced herself, she said: "I saw you at the King's court, I'm very sorry for what happened to you. I am a widow too, you know, my husband too was killed by the King's horde and I was taken as slave and prisoner, with my two daughters. Soon he tired of us and said we are too tall, taller than he is, and so we're no good, for women must be short and frail and dependent, while we were hard workers of our beloved fields, back in my village. So he told me I must go away, I am useless to him, but I have nowhere to go, my home and village were destroyed and all my family was murdered. I could be a good wife for you, if you wanted me, and my daughters can be helpful too".

He looked up, to meet her eyes, but she was looking down, for, she said, women here in the evil King's village were not allowed to look up, like men, women had to walk with bent heads and had to cover their sinful hair; this was the God of Thunder's commandment, and if a woman did not obey, she was stoned to death. Credne was horrified to hear this, "How can something so horrible even be conceived, how can they use the sacred bones of our Mother Earth to violently kill Her daughters and priestesses, and how can women's hair be sinful if they represent the spiralling sensual energy of love-making between Goddess and God under the moon during the sacred marriage rituals?" he wondered, but then again his ancient wisdom was obfuscated by his grief. He reflected, only for a brief moment, and then decided that yes, she may be useful and maybe her daughters are nice and they can keep company to Silver. He was starting to think of women as useful tools for his own benefit... maybe he was already forgetting his Goddess's teachings of love, empathy and care for every creature... "had he been

contaminated by the King's terrible God of Thunder?" he wondered, but then, slowly, he gathered his force to say: "Yes, you're right, you're a sweet and beautiful woman, do call your daughters and let's all go together to what remains of my home and we can rebuild it together, since we're both alone, we can be together and help each other".

There was no joy in his voice, not even a hint of hope, only desolation, sadness and a heavy heart and mind. "What is your name", he asked. She replied: "I used to have a powerful name in the old days, but I was forbidden to use it here, and now I forgot it. My daughters too had names, but now, here, we are simply called woman and girls. Credne did not take any notice of what she said, he told her "yes then, woman, let's go". As he said that the girls appeared as they had always been there, hiding, waiting and hoping to be taken along by a man in order to be protected and fed. Credne did not notice, but one of the girls had dark hair like the night when the moon is resting on the other side of the world, and was very tall and strongly built; the other girl had golden hair, like wheat, and was also strong, with a round sunny face and a warm smile, veiled by the sadness in her eyes that mirrored her condition of slave in the castle of the evil God of Thunder and the evil King. So the quartet left the village of the evil God and King, and they felt thankful that they were allowed to leave and were not held prisoners or slaves or killed.

"Can you ever imagine anything so ugly and absurd, against all our human principles of having another human being (or an animal or stone or plant for that respect) as a slave?" – Credne heard Oestara's sweet and strong voice as a whisper in his heart, like the whirlwind in the sacred Goddess spring where she used to give oracles to the questing peoples who came from far away to be advised and guided by Her wisdom. He did not pay too much attention though, "I must be dreaming", he thought, as he walked along in the lonely path with the three unknown lonely and nameless women towards what used to be truly home.

In the meantime Silver had not been passively grieving. She had learnt well from Oestara; she had cried and grieved but had also taken action, for she had to keep her strength and wisdom so that her mother could come safely home. Every night she went to the sacred spring, even though she was still young and had not been initiated yet into all the sacred mysteries of the Goddess, she had observed what her mother did as High Priestess to alleviate physical pain and spiritual grief with herbs and prayers and special rituals and meditations. Silver had not experienced yet her first sacred bleeding and so had not retired into the sacred hut with all the other young women in their menarche in order to learn the secret mysteries of the Goddess's sexual power. However, her suffering because of what had happened (and now she missed both her parents) had somewhat matured her and she knew she had to take her mother's role, just until she came back. "Only then can I blossom and flourish into womanhood, through her sacred and wise guidance", she thought. In the meantime she prepared herbs that had the power to induce trances and visions, as she had seen her mother do. She took the herbs and saw her father with another woman and two girls slowly making their way towards their home. She was puzzled and angry. How could father take another woman with him? Then she despaired. My mother must be dead, she thought, and my father was so sad that he couldn't help doing what he is doing... She cried and cried in the foreknowledge of the hard times to come. She fell asleep and she had a dream: she saw herself riding Maeve, Oestara's beautiful red mare, which was a symbol of her spiritual and earthly power. What could that mean? Had Oestara come back and given her the most wonderful gift she had always been wishing for all her young life? Had she finally been initiated into the secret mysteries of the Goddess and was she herself a priestess? She woke with half a smile, but then she saw her father eyes on the floor in front of her, and he was telling her that now she will have to accept the two nameless girls as sisters and this nameless woman who was now his partner as her new mother, for unfortunately her mother had disappeared and must have been killed by the evil

King and his vindictive God of Thunder, for she was the High Priestess of the Goddess and this false God envied her power and knowledge and wanted to annihilate Her forever. This he said amidst tears and sobs and they all cried, also the step-sisters and step-mother, for they remembered their cheerful times and their home, which had been destroyed and burnt down too.

Silver, who was very sensitive and perceptive, in spite of her immense sadness in realising she would never see her mother in the physical form again, welcomed the three unfortunate women and hugged them, feeling all their grief and trying to ease it with all her compassion. The three women were surprised, they did not expect a welcoming embrace, they had lost the habit of feeling comforted and loved, and therefore they were suspicious of Silver's kindness, they all imagined Silver had a secret plan to poison them, for they had heard her mother had been a powerful midwife bringing children to the world and knowledgeable herbalist who also eased the elders into the caring hands of the Goddess, in the cycle of life, death and rebirth that characterizes our earthly path. They were afraid and suspicious, and as fear brings hate, envy, jealousy and violence with it, they all started persecuting Silver. The more she was kind and helpful to them, serving them by all means, often despite her tiredness, the more they loathed her. She became the target of all the anger they had repressed while being the evil King's slaves and they tried all the time to humiliate her, sneering at her, distorting her beautiful name Silver and calling her Cinderella, as she often was covered in soot and ash because of all the cleaning and washing they obliged her to do. Slowly Cinderella lost her self-esteem and forgot her true name and started to believe what the others told her. "Cinderella, you're so ugly, with your red hair and green eyes and ashy skin (for her skin had lost all of its lustre), no man will ever want you as a wife. You're lucky that we still keep you here and don't throw you out where the wolves are". Silver had known the wolves, with her mother, they were good animals, keeping the balance of things, hunting only out of necessity, never cruelly killing for the pleasure of killing like men had been doing under the evil God, who ordered

them to torture and kill anybody who did not accept him or who still adored the ancient Goddess. But Cinderella had forgotten all this and was afraid of the stories they now told about the way wolves would devour you, especially if you were a young woman, going out alone in the forbidden woods. She always remembered what had happened to Little Red Riding Hood who was eaten alive after her grandma by the evil wolf, because she had ventured alone joyfully singing and dancing across the forbidden wood. So Cinderella said yes and humbled herself and cried in silence. The other women believed they were glad for this, but at the bottom of their hearts something told them that this was a false happiness, born of fear and grief; they well knew inside that nobody can be really gratified if they make someone else suffer. But they stifled this ancient knowledge as a stupid idea, because they enjoyed all the nice clothes and perfumes and jewels their new father bought for them and even forgot about their story, family and origins.

Credne did not notice any of the suffering and humiliation inflicted to Silver, he saw only the wily smiles they made in front of him and heard all the false words they said, believing in them, because his grief had clouded his sixth sense and his capacity to really see. He was still working with gold and silver to create jewels for the horde and the King who now also ruled the nearby village. The gnomes, elves and fairies of the wood hid and were not seen anymore and the Goddess spring was not frequented by the priestesses anymore, for everyone was afraid of the evil King and the vindictive God of Thunder and his priests, who loathed and tortured all women who dared oppose their power or dared still use herbs to cure and give oracles. They were burnt as witches, millions of them, it is said, and their knowledge went underground, even if their ancient wisdom lay like embers in the heart and memory of all good women and men of the Earth.

Credne had forgotten his alchemical Goddess's art: he was not creating through Her inspiration anymore, but was selling his creativity and making jewels for the rich evil King and his court; thus he himself had become rich and respected in the new society. He bought lots of nice clothes, perfumes and artefacts for his

daughters and wife, but never realized that Silver was always covered in rags, for his eyes had been veiled by the evil magic of grief and fear and corrupted by the power of money: he could not see reality anymore.

Silver felt abandoned even by him and so she thought "it must really be all my fault, I must really deserve to be punished as I am a useless and stupid girl, not even my dear father notices what is happening. Oh how I wish mum were here!" Only when she finally fell asleep, late at night, after all her chores were done, did she dream and could still hear her mother's faint voice, telling her to keep going, to be strong, to not forget who she really is. Rhiannon, she heard, Rhiannon, remember who you are and your power. Soon you will have to manifest it, get ready, gather your inner strength, do not believe what others say about you. Trust your feelings, listen to your gut, go into the wood, look for the old Queen of the fairies and she will advise you well. Go, wake up to yourself!" Rhiannon, she had not been given that name yet, she remembered though that her grandma, before going back to the ancestral home through death, had told her that name, whispering: "This is what you will be called, once you become a full blossom, Silver, my dear. Then you will make magic, heal with herbs, make trance dreams with our holy mushrooms and guide our sisterhood and brotherhood into the sacred spiralling dance, while listening to the Goddess's voice inside the murmur of the spring consecrated to Her and giving Her oracles for the wellbeing of the whole community and all animate beings living on our beautiful Mother Earth – for there is no such thing as something 'inanimate' in the Goddess's cosmic dance". This is what her grandma told her, herself an ancient priestess in a long lineage of priestesses from time immemorial, since the time when they had descended from the stars, landing in the beautiful green-and-blue planet of this galaxy of ours.

When Silver awoke something was stirring in her, some memory of a long forgotten truth moving first through her blood and only afterwards through her heart and mind. So she took her mother's sacred crystal wand, which she had

been hiding all the time from the evil God's priests and her step-sisters and step-mother.

"Step-sister and step-mother – hey Rhiannon what on Earth do these definitions mean? For the Goddess we are all brothers and sisters and there are many mothers and fathers for all the children of the community. Not only ties of blood unite us, these are important, but we're all truly children of the Great Mother, the Goddess, and She loves us all in the same way, with the same intensity. Yes, even those who behave in an evil way and have become violent because of fear and suffering, also these are my children, my dear. Only if you respect this wisdom can you become my priestess. Do not ever forget my teaching, my dear!"

"Whose voice is this? It seems like mum's, but it is deeper, fuller, stronger... is it the Goddess of the spring calling me? I must go then, at the risk of my life, for the life of all". Thus Silver, in the middle of the night, stealthily went to the sacred spring, which was not guarded anymore by the evil King's guards, since nobody had the courage anymore to go there for the sacred rites. She went down the steps towards the beautiful stone altar. She had the mushrooms with her, she sat by the candle's dancing flame, burnt some incense and sage and other sacred herbs that she knew helped to induce the trance. She closed her eyes, ate the sacred mushroom and stayed in quiet stillness for what seemed only a short time, but in reality time ceases to be when you enter the mysteries of the Goddess. Slowly she opens her eyes again and sees a golden form floating on the beautiful stone altar of the cave. The murmur of water brings her mother's voice with it and suddenly there she is, powerful and strong in her body of light. "Rhiannon", she says, "now it is your time to act out as the sacred priestess, do come every night after midnight and I will instruct you and reveal all the mysteries of the Goddess to you, so that you can bring back to the world Her wisdom and knowledge". "Yes mum", she said, "yes Oestara, my Goddess", she added, feeling the tremendous power emanating from that shining form. Thus every night she went, performed the rituals with increasing confidence and talent, entered into trance and received

Oestara's instructions, all the while seeming during the day to be the same passive, sad and submissive Cinderella.

One day her father Credne said that the young Prince, son of the evil King, was now looking for a wife and the evil King had invited all the rich men of the country to take their most beautiful daughters to the ball he had organised, so that the young Prince could choose for his wife the young virgin that he liked the most.

The step-mother and step-daughters were thrilled at the news, but envied and feared Silver's beauty that still shone under her Cinderella rags. So the trio decided to imprison her in the cellar to prevent the Prince from meeting and falling in love with her. Actually Silver had no interest in the ball; she wanted rather to go to the sacred spring and perform her rituals. Her father, as usual, had not noticed the machinations of the trio and had believed what they had told him about Silver: "Leave the poor girl alone, she is unwell and needs to sleep; plus she is no beauty and the Prince will never take any notice of her!" So they went to the ball all in the beautiful clothes and jewels Credne had brought them.

Silver pretended to be fast asleep. She had hidden one of the keys of the cellar, so that when everyone had left she swiftly got up and went to the sacred spring. A strange light was illuminating it and she could see it from afar. When she arrived all the fairies and gnomes and elves were blissfully dancing in a circle around the sacred altar where her mother, Oestara, the High Priestess, was holding up the holy Chalice of life, as she used to do when they were all a happy community living in peace and harmony with all other creatures, before the evil God of Thunder pulled them all into his web of false power. Silver too was beaming, "Mum", she said, "Mum, now you're really, finally back!" But her mother did not reply, only sweetly looked straight into her eyes. She felt a tremendous power surging at the back of her spine... "It is the holy Serpent", she thought, "she's back too, with her sacred spiralling telluric energy vivifying all things!" She was dancing now with everyone else, more blissful than she thought she could ever be again. Then a soft voice said: "Rhiannon, Goddess of horses and mares,

birds and the sea, travel and fertility, now it is time to absolve your duty!" It was Aeval, Goddess and Queen of the fairies, who always held a midnight court to hear the debate on whether the men of her province were keeping their women sexually satisfied or not. She commanded the men acquiesced to the women's sexual wishes if they too wanted to be ecstatic; for only when men and women shared pleasure from mutual and loving sex could the earth be content and life safe for everybody. Aeval was now swiftly moving her magic wand and out of nowhere came a beautiful orange carriage pulled by beautiful mighty red horses and a very handsome coachman, all dressed in colourful clothes, and for Silver there was a wonderful red dress, with many precious stones shimmering on it. "This is for you. Go, enchant the Prince, so that the world of the Goddess can be restored and all of us can return, also on the mundane plane instead of being limited to a secret spiritual dimension". "But", faltered Silver, "I am not interested in men, I don't want to..." "Enough!" Oestara interrupted with a calm but firm voice: "This is childish fear, my dear. Now it is your time. Do what I taught you and you'll be safe, we'll all be safe. Remember well: Love, Trust, Peace, Joy, Pleasure, Sisterhood and Brotherhood feelings all belong to the Goddess who loves the good God as her companion. Hate, Fear, War, Sadness, Pain, Dominance: these perceptions and mental ideas bring you down and entrap you within the spires of the evil God of Thunder, who hates women and nature and joy and wants us all to submit and be afraid. Your duty is to go beyond all this, always truthfully searching inside yourself and knowing whether you're acting out of fear or love. This is the only way. Only through Love and Partnership can everybody win and nobody lose". Silver's young voice then transmuted into Rhiannon's fuller and stronger assertion: "Yes my Lady of all things animate, I will do thy wise bidding".

Thus she donned the magnificent red robe and got into the carriage and was led to the ball at the castle. Her feet were naked, for only like this could she feel the earth's serpent power and keep her determination and courage. When she arrived, everybody, even her step-mother and step-sisters were amazed, not even

her father Credne recognised this beautiful young woman. As soon as the Prince saw her, he fell in love. He felt a long forgotten intense yearning for that feminine energy he perceived in her that was once transmitted into him by his beloved mother, but sadly also long forgotten, because of his father's and the evil God of Thunder's teachings about women. She smiled as he approached her and she too felt a deep stirring in her heart and belly. A passion yet unknown to her but felt in her soul from time immemorial, a physical urge to take him to the sacred wood to join with him in the ritual mating under the moonlight, when priestesses initiated men to the sacred sexual power of the earth and body. But these rites were forbidden now and the new formalities of the evil King forbade sensual pleasure. The envious God of Thunder and his priests loathed women and thought them inferior and sex was allowed only to procure new children to men, especially if they were boys, good for making soldiers or other priests. The Prince realised she was barefoot and offered her a beautiful pair of crystal shoes that fitted her perfectly... So Rhiannon forgot herself and wore the Prince's shoes, losing the connection with herself and the Mother Earth. She and the Prince, entranced by each other, started dancing and danced and danced, till everyone in the court fell asleep. Only when she realised that through her magic power and dance she had put everyone in a trance, did Rhiannon become Silver again and then Cinderella. Cinderella was scared to death. If the evil King found out what she had done he would certainly kill both her and her father; if the evil step-daughters and step-mother knew they would certainly poison her... her heartbeat was quick but not for joy and pleasure as before, but because of fear. So she ran away, her beautiful red dress immediately changed into her old Cinderella rags, she lost the crystal shoes, her carriage became an empty pumpkin, and she ran, and breathlessly ran until she reached home, hid in the cellar, where the evil trio found her pretending to still be fast asleep. They laughed and told her that in the morning the Prince would come with a crystal shoe, to see to whose lovely foot it would fit, for he was desperately in love with a stunning woman who had stolen his heart. So

they did their best, following their mother's advice to all be very clean, modest and pleasant, when the Prince arrived. The mother insisted that he should try the crystal shoe on them, even if they were very tall and had very strong big feet, fit for walking and running in the fields, as they used to do when their father was still alive and they were all contented. The Prince was a fine and nice young man and did not want to hurt the mother and her daughters' feelings, so he knelt and tried the crystal shoe on their feet. The crystal shoe, of course, did not fit. "Here", shouted the mother, "here find these scissors and cut your ugly feet, my stupid daughters, who will never marry a Prince and make me rich, safe and happy!" The Prince was looking in horror as the daughters were taking the scissors from their mother's hands in order to act out her horrid and absurd command.

Just before the girls who wanted to obey their mother's command could mutilate their feet to fit the crystal shoe, Silver arrived and shouted her step-mother's name aloud with all her might: Arianrhod, she said, Mother, what are you doing? How can you have forgotten yourself so much? Come back to yourself, wake from this horrible nightmare of fear and loss and finally be yourself again. Be the Goddess of the moon and stars, let your light and power shine fully over us and forget what the evil God of Thunder and King have inculcated with violence into your heart, brainwashing your mind with fear, pain and suffering! In the secret rituals at the Goddess's spring, Rhiannon had discovered with her growing intuition and magic skills the original sacred name of the person who had been sadly belittled and transformed into an arid and frightened woman, fighting other women, even her own daughters, in order to survive, as the evil King and God of Thunder had taught her.

Arianrhod was flabbergasted, hearing her name again after such a long time, something shook inside of her, like an earthquake, and she woke as if from a long sleep. She had lived hypnotised for years, had forgotten her true nature, self and destiny, entrapped as she was by the fear of violence from the terrible King and God of Thunder, but now her true name made her veins shake and blood run

again in her psyche, and she was filled once again with her ancient power, for names give and express power. Indeed, depriving her of her true name had been one of the ways of submission, together with fear of death and the constant beating, rape and violence she had suffered with the King. "Now I am myself again!" she shouted with a strong and powerful voice that almost scared her daughters and the Prince, who was relieved to see his beloved intervening to save the other young women from self-mutilation.

"Epona, Goddess of horses and mules, and Habontia, Goddess of abundance, harvest and prosperity, stop all this nonsense! Wake up you two, forget all that I have previously said, forget fear and find yourselves again, refuse to comply to the Prince's stupid game of power and submission. A crystal shoe to become Princess? Rubbish! You are already wonderful and powerful expressions of the Goddesses that gave you your names, you surely want a partner to share and glorify the beauty of life, but certainly not someone like this immature, spoilt son of the evil King, who believes he is more important than even his mother who gave him birth, or his future wife who will bear his children in a spiritual way, for all children are sacred and belong to the Goddess and the community who must protect and guide them into joy and laughter and love and dance! And you, my beautiful and wise Rhiannon, thank you, my dear daughter, for having kept the promise in dissolving our false evil imprisoning curse that was killing us from inside! Thank you, our dear Goddess of horses and mares, birds and the sea, travel and fertility, we all honour and acknowledge you!"

The girls, or rather the two beautiful young women, Epona and Habontia, all of a sudden opened their eyes wide and a woman's expression appeared on their faces. Epona took off the veil that was covering her beautiful dark hair that she had to hide since dark skinned and dark haired women were more dangerous and evil, according to the evil God of Thunder and King, for they were irresistible and sensual and they would easily take any man into their spires. She then laughed aloud, in a very loud way for a young woman used to repressing any signs

of joy... she showed her teeth, like a powerful panther and shook her hair loose in a freeing gesture full of beauty, joy and sensuality. Habontia too joined in that laughter, and even her eyes smiled now that she remembered her true identity and being, and suddenly all those present laughed aloud and their bellies started shaking more and more, as if taken by a powerful wind, murmuring and rumbling like water from a cascade, fresh and shiny with sunlight. Only the poor Prince was stupefied and mute and did not know what to do. Rhiannon then felt sorry for him, as he was a good young man at heart, only losing his way because of the awful teachings of the male priests and warriors of the evil God of Thunder. She took his hand, looked deeply into his eyes and smiled: "It's all right, she said, I love you. But you must learn the way of the Goddess if you want to share your life with me. You have to abandon the evil violent God of Thunder if you want to be jubilant with all our community. You must fire all your priests, put them in the fields to plough and sow the Mother Earth singing Her glories. Soon they too will forget about the fearful God of violence and dance again with us and the Goddess".

The Prince felt a tear well in his eyes. It was the first since a long long time... he remembered the salty taste and the warm comforting caress of his mother. But then his father had told him that true men never cry and he had always tried to obey him, for, you know, the King too had once been joyful and young and merry, until his family too had been destroyed by some other evil King bringing the evil violent God with his sword, and he had vowed to take revenge in a sad and seemingly endless cycle. Only Rhiannon could stop all this, as she was doing, gently and powerfully acting out this reconciliation both inside each person and in the community at large. She gently smiled again and, reading the Prince's thoughts, said: "don't you ever worry again about feeling and expressing your feelings! It is our gift from the Goddess as human beings". The Prince was really moved and nodded, unable to utter a single word. He threw off the crystal shoe, took off his princely clothes and his shoes, for it was nice he remembered, to feel the fresh air on your skin and warm earth under your naked feet, it gave you

strength, made you feel joyful, and this is all that he wanted. His riches, his glamour, his slaves, his court... it all seemed so meaningless now that he really felt his heartbeat again. He wanted to follow Rhiannon's advice, and be her man, as man to woman and God to Goddess.

Also Credne, who had silently and passively witnessed all this, was suddenly reawakened to his old self. He approved of the young man and his beautiful daughter and also saw, for the first time, how beautiful his new wife and her daughters had always been, but he had seen no more beauty since his wonderful partner Oestara had disappeared. "Oh, How I wished you were here, my beloved", he thought, but did not say it, for he did not want to spoil the happiness filling the air and hearts. "I will meet you forever in my dreams, my beloved partner. Until I too reach the other world and we can be together forever, as we promised to each other that night swimming in the beautiful calm sea under the moonlight, when I gave you the sacred ring and you gave me the sacred alchemical script that taught me my goldsmith art".

The Prince then said: "Rhiannon, I know you are a woman and a sacred priestess, please say my name aloud, so that I can be myself again and not only a stupid role in a sad game". So Rhiannon did, she pronounced his name aloud, which was full of beauty and power and joy "you are Aesun, my dear, which as you once knew means 'to be', you're the co-creator of life with me, as my beloved partner, for I am the Goddess in all her manifold forms!" Then, in a magic and sacred ritual Rhiannon says aloud the true names of those present, even of the King and his soldiers and his priests, and his evil God of Thunder, who once had been the spouse of the true Goddess but He had forgotten too, and she named also all the things; she named seas and oceans, animals and trees, fields and villages, winds and clouds, stones, woods and plants, stars and galaxies... and as she now pronounces again and again these sacred names, all things and peoples takes on a new brilliance, as if they are just being created... and indeed, this is

really what is happening all the time, for in the Goddess's joy all things are named afresh and renewed.

Rhiannon felt elated to finally see her partner Aesun in all his handsome presence... only a cloud passed her mind, "I wished mum was alive and could be here with us again, not only as the spiritual voice I hear and luminous body I see in the sacred spring, but in her physical body, so that I could again feel her hand, gently touching my hair and smiling... Oh, how I wish you were here, mum". She closed her eyes in order to pray, in her mind, and she heard Oestara's voice strong and clear saying: "Rhiannon, you have remembered and done well, I am pleased with the way you worked towards the Goddess". Silver, hearing her true sacred spiritual name from Oestara's magic voice opened her eyes again, and there, enveloped in a golden light, her magic ring on her finger, was her mother, in flesh and body, towering over them all in all her power and might. Credne could not believe his eyes, but when she embraced him with the old passion he knew all was well. And thus spoke Oestara: "This is how things must be: human beings have to live together in peace and love each other on this beautiful sacred planet Earth, manifesting abundance, equality, equanimity, love, joy, dance, sexual and sensual pleasure and spirituality. For this is how things have been for millions of years, since the time when we came from the galaxy and this is how it must and will always be. Rhiannon, I know you always loved my red mare Maeve, now you are a woman and a priestess of the Goddess, here it is for you". Maeve neighed in recognition and nodded in front of her ready to be ridden, her shining red mane floating like Rhiannon's beautiful hair in the wind.

Thus they went all together to celebrate, Rhiannon riding Maeve together with Aesun, her handsome once-upon-a-time-Prince; they were followed by everybody, everybody was singing and dancing in exultation and joy, even the evil King and the false priests, who had soon been redeemed by ploughing and sowing the sacred earth... they all forgot about the evil God of Thunder, and remembered once again that they were all children of the Earth and the Stars –

women, men, boys, girls, stones, plants, animals, all animate things belonging to the Goddess; and they all lived happily ever after, in joy, harmony, love and peace...

Amalthea Bishop Meir was born in a valley of wheat and light, she knows horses and the sea and the poetry of life.

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