

A Classics Revisited Edition

Just-So



By Charlotte Glover

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A Red Hen Classics Revisited Edition
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A Just-So Story



for a Particular
Reality

Foreword

CREATION MYTHS ARE COMMON TO ALL CULTURES. Some of these were once expressions of homage to a supreme — or at least a supernatural entity — and have at least some basis in what was once a living theology. Most, however, are folktales which may or may not utilize the names of such entities, or those of cultural heroes, in addition to speaking beasts, in tales whose purpose is mixed entertainment and instruction, sometimes intended for children, explaining, halfway in jest, how the world came to be the way it is. The tales attributed to a Greek slave named Aesop are probably the most famous of this sort.

More closely related to these latter tales than those of the former sort are more recent stories which are clearly examples of Art, being composed of fiction, intended only as fiction, imaginary, and in no manner claiming to represent the truth (although some of these may actually be retellings of older folktales of no certain provenance). Some of the most well-known examples of these “art tales” are those to be found in the collection entitled

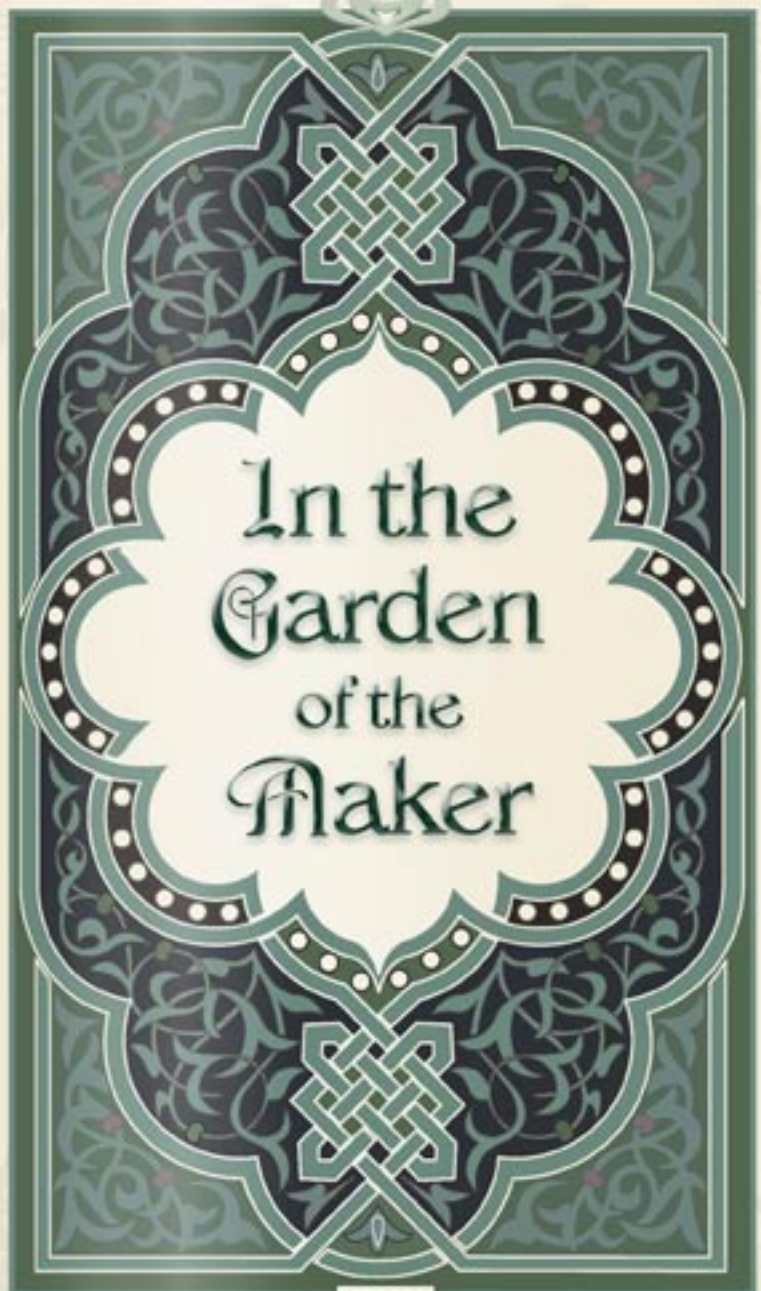


“JUST-SO STORIES” by a gentleman named Rudyard Kipling. In these, the storyteller has combined the traditional conceit of talking animals, with supernatural beings from myth and folklore and the occasional historical figure into (typically) comical tales dealing with such matters as the butterfly that stamped, or how the elephant got his trunk.


This particular story is one of this last sort. It is not set in the same reality of Mr Kipling’s Just-So stories, but in another — a reality which does not conform to the natural laws of Mr Kipling’s, yet one which we all recognize. The author of this tale, however, alas, is no Rudyard Kipling.

With all my love—

Charlotte Gloner



In the
Garden
of the
Maker



IN THE BEGINNING, and for private amusement, the Maker of all things created a world in which all things worked as was proper, each within its season. The sun and the moon marched in their progress and the stars danced in their courses. The Earth was fruitful and wholesome, and upon the earth, and in the air, and in all the seas, were living creatures which did as seemed right according to their natures and their Maker was pleased.

And it came to pass, that for the Maker's greater amusement, and also to create a place to which the Maker of all might go to be at rest, she or he (for the Maker is both Mother and Father and, we, not truly knowing whether there is a preference, perhaps should hesitate to specify) brought forth a Garden in which were gathered representatives of all of the families of the creatures

of the earth, and in that garden the Maker caused to grow examples of all of the flowers and trees which were about the world. And these flowers and trees the Maker caused to bloom and fruit out of their seasons, so that in the garden all seasons of the year were as one, and the Maker worked also upon the appetites of the creatures, so that all, even those which outside of the garden had hunted and eaten other creatures would eat of the fruits of the garden instead and all should live in harmony.

And into this garden the Maker set two great trees whose like were not to be found among those that grew outside that place. And one of these trees was the Tree of Life, and any creature which ate of that tree would live forever. And the other tree was the Tree of Discernment and also of Change, and any which ate of that tree would thereafter know the natures of good and evil, but their immortality would pass from them and they would begin to flourish and fade with the passage of time. And the Maker charged the creatures of the garden that they should not eat of this tree, for if they did they would surely die.

At length, the Maker said *"I will have people with me in this place also"*, and from the ruddy earth of the garden the Maker fashioned a man

and a woman, both of them fashioned in the Maker's own image. And into their lungs, the Maker breathed the breath of Life, and they lived. And the Maker gave unto the man the name of Adam, and to the woman, Lilith. And the Maker gave unto them both sovereignty over all of the creatures of the garden and he charged them that they might eat of all the plants in the garden, even of the Tree of Life, but that they must not eat of the Tree of Change, lest they die. And the man and the woman obeyed the Maker in this, and lived in the garden where all was harmony and much time passed there, though none marked its passing.

And in that garden all of the creatures that the Maker had brought together understood one other, and the man and the woman also. And the man and his mate lived happily together and they went among the creatures in friendship and spoke with them one unto the other, and had friends among them. And the man's favorites among the creatures were those who gathered together in groups and joined together in their roaming. And he and they roamed the garden together, and the leaders of the dogs and of the wolves were his boon companions, and they and all their followers did his bidding. And

the woman's closest companion among the creatures was the serpent, who was the subtlest of the beasts, whose mind was most able among all creatures to begin to understand matters of cause and of consequence. And Lilith and the serpent often were found among the branches of the great Trees speaking of what had passed before them in the garden day by day, and of what things were, and of what were not, and what they found to have grown within their hearts because of this knowlege.

And matters moved peacefully thus for what must have counted as many years outside the garden where Time left marks of its passing, and at length the man began to be dissatisfied. We do not know what it was that first disturbed his peace, for there have been many spiteful tales told by others who were not there, and these tales do not agree with one another, nor do we have any way to know whether any of them were ever true in any part. But, I will say that I have had dealings with men, and I will say that if a tree may be known by its fruit, I think that perhaps the roots of Adam's discontent may have grown from the fact that the Maker had given sovereignty over all of the creatures to the man and to his mate both, together. For while the

woman, in her friendships to each creature in its own right, had found no cause to be discontented, the man, with his followers around him, had grown to take pleasure in the knowlege that, verily, every creature that was in the garden did his bidding, and all of them were subject to his will. Save only one.

The woman loved her mate and she did not knowingly seek to displease him. But she could see no reason why she should yield up to him a power over her actions which was greater than her own will, and one which her Maker had not chosen to grant to him. Nor was the man able to show her any reason why she should do so in any manner that she could understand, and his demands that she do so without such reason hurt her feelings, and she would not do it. And so a disagreement grew between them, and each grew angry with the other. And they lived no longer in harmony.

And so, at length, upon a time when the Maker was in the garden, the man complained to the maker of the woman, that she would not do his bidding, and that he, Adam, would that the woman be sent away from that place and some other mate be given him in her stead. And the Maker spoke with Adam at further length, and the Maker spoke with Lilith

also, and spoke, as well with their companions. And the Maker considered deeply what all had said of this disagreement between the man and woman, and the Maker saw that the man was flawed.

Now the Maker of all things has no illusions. And, having made all things, must accept the knowledge that all things have been made as they are. And that if the man was flawed, it was surely no proof that the woman was not also, whether or not there be yet any sign of it. And the Maker looked ahead and saw that the time of the garden would one day come to an end. And, reflecting that in the manner of such things it would endure for one generation only, the Maker agreed to a part of the man's request.

And, causing the man to fall into a deep sleep, the Maker fashioned from one of Adam's ribs another woman. And this woman was given a nature that was pliant and yielding, and one which would be easily led. And the Maker told Adam what had been done, so that he would understand that his new mate was made from from his own body and that the two of them were one flesh. And that this knowledge must serve as a reminder that he would not be permitted to casually set her aside should he grow displeased with her. And the Maker gave unto this

new woman the name of Eve, and charged Adam to teach her the laws of the garden as he himself had been taught them in the beginning.

And the Maker said privately to Lilith; *"Have patience. All will be settled in time."* For the Maker, having no illusions, knew that the man would surely become impatient with his new mate, sometimes, and might grow to think more kindly of his first, and that there was still some chance that the three of them, eventually, might come to some satisfactory arrangement among themselves. And Lilith heeded the Maker and she tried to have patience. But she missed her mate sorely and was much cast down by his loss.

The man, meanwhile, taught his new mate the laws of the garden, and added unto them another, that she, his mate, must ever avoid the company of the other woman who dwelt there, else he would be most displeased. And, beyond that, he made sure that he and his new mate should often pass before his first mate's sight, for his anger against her had not yet cooled. And he knew that the sight of them together was painful to Lilith and that she was cast down by it, and when she turned away from them she wept.

Now, the serpent was the subtlest of all the beasts, but he yet was but a beast and his understand-

ding was more simple and more direct than that of the man or of either of the two women. And the serpent saw that his friend wept for the loss of her mate, and that the sight of her mate passing before her in the company of another who shunned her gave her pain. And the serpent was grieved for her hurt, and angry to see this hurt given her, for he saw that it was given her deliberately. And the serpent believed that this was all through the coming of the new woman, for before she had come there had been nothing of this weeping, for all that the man and his mate had lived in disagreement. And at length the serpent began to think that if the man's second mate were to die, he might return again to his first.

Having never eaten of the Tree of Discernment and Change, the serpent could not know that the direction of his thinking was wicked. Nor did he speak of it to his friend, for he knew that to speak of her mate, or of the newcomer pained her, and he would not willingly do so. And he did not think to speak of it to any of the other creatures, not even to his own mate, so there was no one to give him advice. And, at length in his thinking upon this puzzle, he grew into the understanding that the name of a thing is not the thing itself, and that there

was nothing which would stay him from speaking false words even when he was aware that the words he spoke were not true.

And, so, the tale has been often told, of how the serpent deceived the man's second mate, by telling her that she might eat of the Tree which was forbidden and yet live, and that if she did so she would then become as a god, knowing good from evil. And that, believing him, she did indeed eat of the Tree of Change. And it is also known that Eve did not at once die, as the serpent had hoped, but took of the Tree and shared it with her mate, and their immortality passed from them, and, knowing that they had done wrong, they became selfconscious of their disobedience, hiding from the Maker's sight when the Maker would speak with them.

And, it is also often told that for their disobedience, the two of them were cast out from the garden to make their way in the wide world, where no other creature cared for them, and none heeded them or did their bidding. And it is told also that the Maker was wroth with the serpent because he had lied, and charged him to crawl upon his belly forever after, to remind him never to do so again. And Lilith wept for her friend that he had come to grief for her sake, and

She wept for her mate, because she now would not ever see him again, and she asked the Maker what wrong she had done that had brought these troubles down upon those she loved. And the Maker told Lilith that she had done no wrong, for she had ever obeyed her Maker in all things, and she had not known of the serpent's design to kill the man's new mate.

Then the Maker of all things sent one of the heavenly host, armed with flaming sword, to guard that place against Adam and his mate, lest they return secretly and eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. But the first woman, Lilith, who had done no wrong, lived on in the garden for so long as it endured. And he who guarded the place with flaming sword comforted her, and was her companion.

And throughout the ages that the garden endured Lilith bore to her new mate seven sons, which are called the Lillim, which is to say the children of Lilith. And each of these lived happily together with their parents through all their childhood and youth. But when each son had grown to manhood and saw that there was in the garden no mate for him, he bade his parents farewell, and ate of the Tree of Change, and left the garden forever, to journey into the West or to the East where the sons and daughters

of Adam and his wife had their dwelling places. And it is these seven who have also been called those sons of God who took as wives unto themselves those daughters of Men that were fair in their sight. And the children that the Lillim got upon these wives were the beginning of the race of Wizards.

And when it came to pass that the Maker saw that the sons and daughters of Men, and of Wizards were grown many upon the earth, and that the time had come that the garden must pass away, the Maker took away the great Trees of the garden whose like was nowhere else upon the earth, and the Maker restored the natures of the creatures of the garden to what they had been when they were first brought there. And the Maker sent the creatures out into the world from whence they had first come, and their understanding of one to another was lost.

And the woman Lilith spoke to the Maker on her friend's behalf, entreating the Maker that surely he must not continue to crawl upon his belly, making him slow and weak and defenseless against other creatures, and unable to protect himself from the children of her first mate who would surely seek to slay him for the lie that he had told. And the serpent spoke up in defense of Lilith, begging that surely she who had done the

Maker's will from the Beginning must not now suffer all of her friends to be taken from her and to be bidden to eat of the Tree of Change and die.

One should be careful of what one asks. For the Maker looked upon these two, whose friendship had stood from the Beginning, and the Maker said unto Lilith; *"Unto the serpent shall be given this gift, that in stillness he shall be able to conceal himself so well that other creatures might pass within his reach and never see him. And, moreover, unto some of the serpent's children I will give a deadly sting, so that for fear of it none will go in search of him or willingly seek him out."* And unto the serpent the Maker said; *"She who has kept my commandment from the Beginning and has eaten of the Tree of Life shall not now eat of the Tree of Change, save only if she choose to do so of her own will. And from this day forth she shall pass as she will upon the earth or among the host, and my face shall not be turned from her, nor shall her understanding of my creatures be taken from her. Moreover, I will give to you this promise, that for so long as there are any of her line which walk upon the earth, there shall ever be a few among them with whom your children may speak and understand, even as you and she do understand one another, and these your children shall willingly serve."*

There are many stories, both good and ill, which have grown up about the woman Lilith. And it is said that she yet moves among those creatures of the earth and of the sea and of the air who serve the Maker, speaking unto each in his own language, and that she is still innocent and unseen and immortal as she was in the beginning.

But other tales are also told.

It is said by some that she, who was made in accordance with the Maker's first plan, is reborn upon Earth once in every forty generations and passes among the Children of Men, seeking a worthy mate. And it is said that the Children that she will bear with him will be able to see the unseen and will know the Maker's will from their cradles, and that they will heal full half of the ills which have fallen upon man through their grandfather Adam's disobedience. But, it is also said, that to this day the spiteful tales and the slanders which have grown up around her name have armed the Children of Men and even those of Wizards against her, and she has yet to find one who would be content to rule with her, rather than to seek to rule her.

But one thing is sure, and this we know for we can see it for ourselves, is that as it was promised so

it has been from that day to this; that for so long as there have been Wizards there have always been some among them who can speak in the language of serpents. And such Wizards all serpents will follow and will gladly serve. And this gift is the serpent's tragedy, for he has no notion of right or wrong, and will be wholly guided by the one he follows, even unto his doom. And perhaps it is by the Maker's mercy that he does not often think of this, and, perhaps, if he did, he still would not complain, for to this day the serpent remembers that this fell gift was given in memory of a friendship which was old long before Death, or the Serpent, or even Time itself had any sting.

Finis



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHARLOTTE GLOVER (b. 1883–) is widely known for her retellings of wizarding household tales.

Since the first decade of the 20th century she has sought out tales told by wizarding families around the world and compiled them into the collections which have delighted the children of the wizarding world for nearly a century.

When Miss Glover was asked about how she got her start as a storyteller;

“The sister of a dear friend from Hogwarts married into a family which had a history of producing Parselmouths. The family had been telling their children this little story for just centuries. I begged to be permitted to tell it to everybody, and they said yes, and it was very well received. — I must say that I am so pleased that you wish to do a facsimile of the first edition. The modern printings just aren't the same at all”

When Miss Glover was first approached regarding our proposal to produce a facsimile of the 1904 first edition of this, her earliest published work, she stated:

“I have always loved stories. When I first discovered the wizarding world, I felt as if I had suddenly woken up inside one, and knew NOTHING of it at all. I decided right then that when I had children of my own they would learn something of the background of this wonderful world.

Actually, I never did have children of my own. I was far too busy traveling in search of stories. But at least I saw to it that the children of others have been well entertained.”





Colophon

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