

***La Légende de La Fée Bleue, The Legend of the Blue Fairy*<sup>1</sup> by Pierre-Georges Roy**  
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[Translator's note: Pierre-Georges Roy in this article describes several legends that have endured into the twentieth century in the Province of Québec and concludes with this one.]

As a bouquet at the end of this article, I want to present to you the legend of the Blue Fairy. It is a *canadienne* legend that was told to me in a shelter for orphans in Rochefort. It is a sketch [*pastiche*] by Léon Gozlan.

One day the Blue Fairy descended to the Earth with the intention of distributing to the young women of different countries the treasures contained in her sack. The dwarf Amarante accompanied the fairy.

Soon a young woman from each nation presented herself at the foot of the throne of the Blue Fairy.

The good fairy said to all of her young friends: "I do not want any of you to complain about the gift that I am going to give you. It is not within my power to give the same thing to each of you; uniformity in my generosity would cancel the value of the gift." Then she began the distribution of her presents.

To the French woman, the fairy gave spirit and grace.

To the Spanish woman, she gave hair so black and so long that she would have been able to make herself a mantilla with it.

To the Italian woman, she gave eyes as bright and ardent as an eruption of Vesuvius in the middle of the night.

To the English woman, she gave cheeks and lips as rosy as beautiful fruits.

To the German woman, she gave beautiful teeth and a loving heart.

To the Russian woman, she gave the distinction of a queen.

To the Irish woman, she gave laughter, gaiety, brilliance.

To the Belgian woman, she gave common sense.

When her sack was empty, the Blue Fairy got up from her throne to fly away.

At the foot of the throne, a very young girl held back the fairy by the floating ends of her blue dress.

"And you, my child," said the fairy to the young girl, who was almost in tears, "have I forgotten you?"

"Yes, Madame," said *La Canadienne*, the Canadian girl, in a very sad voice.

"What can I do?" said the Fairy, "my sack of presents is empty, very empty."

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre-Georges Roy, "Les Légendes Canadiennes," *Les Cahiers des Dix*, Vol. 2, Montréal, 1937, 91-92 of 45-92.

But fairies have many tricks in their sacks even when they are empty.

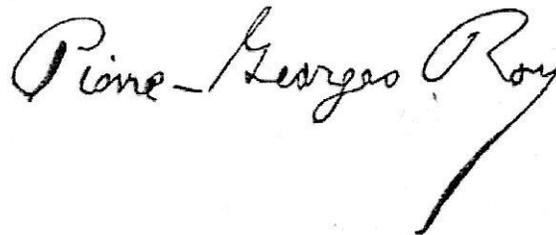
The beautiful fairy thought it over for a moment, and, remembering all of those whom she had gifted who were full of joy, she said to them: "You are good because you are beautiful; it thus becomes your responsibility to undo a very grave wrong on my part; in my distribution of gifts, I forgot your sister, the *Canadienne*. Each of you must take out a part of the present that I gave you and give it to the young *Canadienne*. You will lose little and will mend much."

How can anyone refuse a fairy, especially the Blue Fairy? Thus, these ladies approached the *Canadienne* one by one and threw to her in passing: one, some of her grace and spirit; another, a little of her beautiful hair; this one, some of her lovely coloring; another, a few rays of her gaiety; that one, what she could of her goodness; and, in this way, the *Canadienne*, before then extremely poor, extremely obscure, extremely forgotten, found herself in an instant, by this act of sharing, much richer and better endowed than her companions.

*Voilà!* This is why the *Canadiennes* should love the Blue Fairy: she has been so gracious to them!

Comment refuser à une Fée, surtout à la Fée Bleue ? Ces dames, donc, s'approchèrent tour à tour de la Canadienne, et lui jetèrent, en passant, l'une un peu de sa grâce et de son esprit, l'autre un peu de ses beaux cheveux, l'autre un peu de ses belles couleurs, celle-ci quelques rayons de sa gaieté, celle-là ce qu'elle put de sa bonté et il se fit ainsi que la Canadienne d'abord fort pauvre, fort obscure, fort effacée, se trouva en un instant, par cet acte de partage, beaucoup plus riche et mieux dotée que ses compagnes.

Voilà pourquoi les Canadiennes doivent aimer la Fée bleue: elle a été si gentille pour elles !

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pierre-Georges Roy". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the French text.

In his introduction to his survey of legends, Roy quotes Camille Saint-Saëns, in his "Notes et souvenirs" about the "curious" but "essential difference between history and legend: "History," Saint-Saëns says, "is what probably happened. Legend is what probably didn't happen. There is history in legend and legend in history."

What counts is to be able to distinguish one from the other, the reality from the fantasy, the truth from the make-believe.