

## The Gate of Dreams

### Excerpts

There are three stories in *The Gate of Dreams*.

"The Woodcarver's Daughter"

"Franz the Fool"

"The Girl of the Bells"

**"The Woodcarver's Daughter" opens...**

The woodcarver loved the woodland where he lived. He hated city strife. He loved his baby daughter, and he loved his wife. In many ways, he was a simple man. But none who had ever seen the intricacy of his woodcarving could dispute his brilliance.

The creatures of the woodland did not flee the sound of the woodcarver's approach. For they had spied him as a youth crouching upon the forest floor to carve his inspirations. And he had stirred in them a mysterious longing to be caught for all time in the work of his hands. Soon the lore of him had spread to the birds in the skies above the woodland, and to the fish in the deep clear waters of the woodland lakes. Indeed, because of the depth of their longing, time blinked for the woodland creatures, so that mid-stream, mid-flight, mid-stride, mid-fight they could hold fast in stark and stunning poses for the woodcarver.

**"Franz the Fool" opens...**

Long ago, when magic often woke while mortals slept, a boy name Franz lived with his father on a lofty mountain's slope. Lovingly the boy looked up at the snowcapped peaks all around him - peaks that yearned for and sometimes reached the clouds. The days he cherished most were those when snowy crests and clouds combined in ever changing artistry. "Stop daydreaming!" the father would snap at his little son. "There's work to be done!"

It seemed to Franz that his neighbors rarely looked beyond the dark spruce forests that circled their mountain town. Growing up amongst such plentiful wood, his father had become a carpenter, and had decided that Franz should be a carpenter too. Every tool his father gave to him the boy quickly mastered, yet in his heart he could find no love of wood.

Years passed as the youth worked under his father's guidance, but on winter nights by lantern light Franz began to labor alone, carving his vivid dreams out of towering blocks of ice. Alas, he toiled through the long winter, only to watch his work melt in the springtime sun. The villagers watch too. And when one of them whispered, "Franz the fool!", how the joke did travel!

**"The Girl of the Bells" opens...**

Once, long ago, a night of blackest sky and brightest stars settled over a hillside cottage. There a young shepherd and his beloved wife awaited the birth of their firstborn child. They were two waiting to become three. But three they would never be, for that night the shepherd's wife died giving birth to a lovely daughter. If ever a single night could have torn a heart in two, this was such an eve for the young shepherd.

As he wept and rocked his infant in his arms, a fairy appeared and spoke to him. "Though this poor child shall have no mother, she shall not be poor in love," the fairy said, "For I myself shall see that her life is not unhappy. She shall be called 'Carabella, the girl of the bells.'" The fairy then touched the baby's tiny hands and disappeared.