

**THE WOOD  
BEYOND  
THE WORLD**  
**William Morris**

Sample



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The Wood Beyond the World  
by William Morris

First published 1894

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Morris, who was born in 1834 and died in 1896, was a poet, a novelist, a translator, a textile designer and a socialist activist, and was closely involved with the Pre-Raphaelite art movement. He also was an entrepreneur, founding Morris & Co in 1861 to produce objects of decorative arts, being particularly successful with their stained glass windows, and the Kelmscott Press publishing and printing house in 1891. His “prose romances,” fantasy novels which he wrote in his later years, have been credited as being major milestones in the development of the fantasy genre. Written in a style that is reminiscent of medieval prose, like all his artistic work they show his educated fascination with medieval history, literature and art.

William Morris’s activities, his influence and his achievements are too extensive to be adequately covered here, for more information please look at these sources:

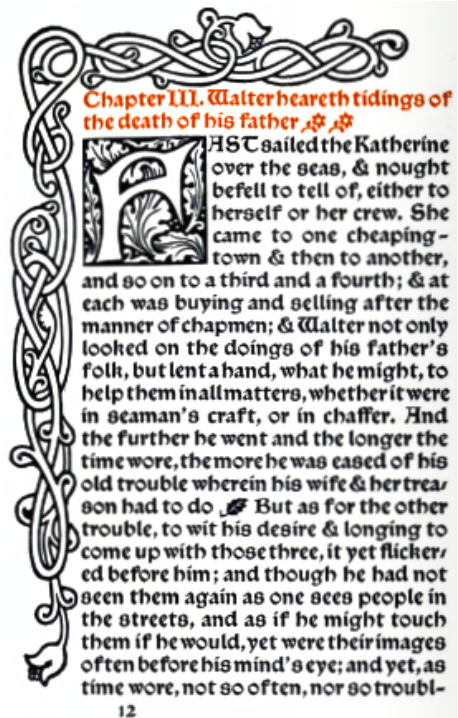
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## ABOUT THIS EDITION

This edition is based upon the Lawrence and Bullen edition of 1895, which in turn follows William Morris's original Kelmscott Press edition of 1894, but without its ornate typeface and design. In some later editions punctuation has been changed (not to say bowdlerized) by adding quotation marks. The sparing use of upper case initials in the chapter headings is taken from the original Kelmscott Press edition, in the Lawrence and Bullen edition more words are capitalized. In the present edition, the word "Chapter" has been omitted from the chapter headings, and the Roman numerals have been replaced with Arabic ones. The paragraph breaks are those of the Lawrence and Bullen edition, as is the table of contents, which the Kelmscott Press edition does not have. A few minor typing errors and inconsistencies in spelling have been corrected.

A page of the original  
Kelmscott Press edition of 1894



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Of Golden Walter and his father	7
2. Golden Walter takes ship to sail the seas	10
3. Walter heareth tidings of the death of his father	14
4. Storm befalls the Bartholomew, and she is driven off her course	19
5. Now they come to a new Land	22
6. The old man tells Walter of himself. Walter sees a shard in the cliff-wall	27
7. Walter comes to the shard in the rock-wall	33
8. Walter wends the Waste	36
9. Walter happeneth on the first of those three Creatures	39
10. Walter happeneth on another Creature in the strange Land	43
11. Walter happeneth on the Mistress	53
12. The Wearing of four days in the Wood beyond the World	57
13. Now is the Hunt up	64
14. The Hunting of the Hart	70
15. The slaying of the Quarry	75
16. Of the King's Son and the Maid	79
17. Of the House and the Pleasance in the Wood	84
18. The Maid gives Walter tryst	89
19. Walter goes to fetch home the Lion's Hide	92
20. Walter is bidden to another Tryst	98
21. Walter and the Maid flee from the Golden House	102
22. Of the Dwarf and the Pardon	105
23. Of the peaceful ending of that wild day	109

24. The Maid tells of what had befallen her	112
25. Of the triumphant Summer Array of the Maid	122
26. They come to the folk of the Bears	126
27. Morning amongst the Bears	131
28. Of the new God of the Bears	134
29. Walter strays in the Pass and is sundered from the Maid	140
30. Now they meet again	143
31. They come upon new folk	148
32. Of the new King of the City and Land of Stark-wall	151
33. Concerning the fashion of King-making in Stark-wall	154
34. Now cometh the Maid to the King	156
35. Of the King of Stark-wall and his Queen	158
36. Of Walter and the Maid in the days of the Kingship	162

## THE WOOD BEYOND THE WORLD

### 1.

#### Of Golden Walter and his father.

A while ago there was a young man dwelling in a great and goodly city by the sea which had to name Langton on Holm. He was but of five and twenty winters, a fair-faced man, yellow-haired, tall and strong; rather wiser than foolisher than young men are mostly wont; a valiant youth, and a kind; not of many words but courteous of speech; no roisterer, nought masterful, but peaceable and knowing how to forbear: in a fray a perilous foe, and a trusty war-fellow. His father, with whom he was dwelling when this tale begins, was a great merchant, richer than a baron of the land, a head-man of the greatest of the Lineages of Langton, and a captain of the Porte; he was of the Lineage of the Goldings, therefore was he called Bartholomew Golden, and his son Golden Walter.

Now ye may well deem that such a youngling as this was looked upon by all as a lucky man without a lack; but there was this flaw in his lot, whereas he had fallen into the toils of love of a woman exceeding fair, and had taken her to wife, she nought unwilling as it seemed. But when they had been wedded some six months he found by manifest tokens, that his fairness was not so much to her but that she must seek to the foulness of one worser than he in all ways; wherefore his rest departed from him, whereas he hated her for her untruth and her hatred of him; yet would the sound of her voice, as she came and went in the house, make his heart beat; and the sight of her stirred desire

within him, so that he longed for her to be sweet and kind with him, and deemed that, might it be so, he should forget all the evil gone by. But it was not so; for ever when she saw him, her face changed, and her hatred of him became manifest, and howsoever she were sweet with others, with him she was hard and sour.

So this went on a while till the chambers of his father's house, yea the very streets of the city, became loathsome to him; and yet he called to mind that the world was wide and he but a young man. So on a day as he sat with his father alone, he spake to him and said: Father, I was on the quays even now, and I looked on the ships that were nigh boun, and thy sign I saw on a tall ship that seemed to me nighest boun. Will it be long ere she sail?

Nay, said his father, that ship, which hight the Katherine, will they warp out of the haven in two days' time. But why askest thou of her?

The shortest word is best, father, said Walter, and this it is, that I would depart in the said ship and see other lands.

Yea and whither, son? said the merchant.

Whither she goeth, said Walter, for I am ill at ease at home, as thou wottest, father.

The merchant held his peace awhile, and looked hard on his son, for there was strong love between them; but at last he said: Well, son, maybe it were best for thee; but maybe also we shall not meet again.

Yet if we do meet, father, then shalt thou see a new man in me.

Well, said Bartholomew, at least I know on whom to lay the loss of thee, and when thou art gone, for thou shalt have thine own way herein, she shall no longer abide in my house. Nay, but it were for the strife that should arise thenceforth betwixt her kindred and ours, it should go somewhat worse with her than that.



Said Walter: I pray thee shame her not more than needs must be, lest, so doing, thou shame both me and thyself also.

Bartholomew held his peace again for a while; then he said: Goeth she with child, my son?

Walter reddened, and said: I wot not; nor of whom the child may be. Then they both sat silent, till Bartholomew spake, saying: The end of it is, son, that this is Monday, and that thou shalt go aboard in the small hours of Wednesday; and meanwhile I shall look to it that thou go not away empty-handed; the skipper of the Katherine is a good man and true, and knows the seas well; and my servant Robert the Low, who is clerk of the lading, is trustworthy and wise, and as myself in all matters that look towards chaffer. The Katherine is new and stout-built, and should be lucky, whereas she is under the ward of her who is the saint called upon in the church where thou wert christened, and myself before thee; and thy mother, and my father and mother all lie under the chancel thereof, as thou wottest.

Therewith the elder rose up and went his ways about his business, and there was no more said betwixt him and his son on this matter.

**End of  
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