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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Graciosa and Percinet

Once upon a time, there was a king and a princess named Graciosa. The queen had passed away, and the princess was not only beautiful but also kind and obedient. In the kingdom, there also lived a duchess named Grognon. As her name sounded, she was as ugly and mean as she was grumpy.

One day, during a hunt, the king came near the castle of Grognon. The duchess knew of his arrival and arranged a meeting with him. She kindly asked him to come and have a glass of wine with her. In the castle, she took him to the wine cellar. The king was impressed by the vast number of wine barrels. "Would you like Champagne? A full-bodied Burgundy, perhaps? A crisp Beaujolais?" asked the duchess. "Are all these wine barrels yours?" he asked. "Yes," she replied, "and it would make me very happy to offer you a good glass of wine." The king made his choice, and the duchess opened the tap of a barrel. Instead of wine, golden coins flowed out. "That's strange," said the duchess, and she opened another barrel's tap. Pearls and diamonds flowed out. "Well, what is happening to me now!" she exclaimed. "Someone has stolen my wine and replaced it with this mess!" "Well," the king responded, "with this mess, you could buy my entire kingdom." "You may have it," said the duchess, "if I could become your queen." The king, who was a great lover of money, greedily

replied, "Certainly, I will marry you tomorrow if you wish."

Grognon stated that she would only agree to the marriage if she could have full control over Princess Graciosa, whom she was secretly jealous of. The king only thought of wealth and immediately gave his consent. When he returned home, he told Graciosa about his intended marriage to Grognon. Graciosa had only heard terrible things about the duchess. But she did not want to spoil her father's happiness and said nothing. Grognon chose the best horse to go to the king's castle.

Graciosa walked anxiously to a small forest, where she quietly began to cry. Suddenly, a young fairy appeared before her. "Princess," said the handsome young man, "I am Percinet. I have been in love with you for a long time. I have the fairy gift of making myself invisible. I am now appearing to tell you that I want to help and comfort you because I love you and want to marry you." The princess was impressed by Percinet, and they talked for a while until Graciosa got ready to meet Grognon.



She mounted her beautiful horse and rode to meet the duchess.

The duchess saw that the staff had only eyes for the beautiful Graciosa on the graceful horse. She became furious and ordered that she could sit on Graciosa's horse. The princess handed over the horse, and when

Grognon mounted it, it went wild with the duchess on it. In the end, she was saved and spoke angrily to the king: "Your daughter wanted to kill me. She must be punished for it." And she ordered that Graciosa be whipped by four servants.

But something strange happened. With each lash, the whips turned into feathers and Graciosa felt no pain, only a gentle tingling sensation. Once back in her room, the fairy prince was waiting for her. He advised her to act as if she had suffered greatly from the cruel treatment. The wedding took place shortly after and was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Soon after, the king gave permission for a tournament in which six brave knights of the court had to say that Grognon was the most beautiful lady in the world. One knight dared to challenge this and declared out loud that Grognon was the ugliest woman in the universe. The most beautiful woman was Graciosa. Graciosa knew it had to be Percinet, but dared not say anything. The competition was to take place the next day. Grognon was furious and had Graciosa taken to a forest a hundred miles away, among wolves, tigers, and bears. Graciosa stumbled anxiously and despairingly through the darkness of the forest and sobbed, "Percinet, where are you?" As she spoke, a bright light blinded her eyes. The forest changed into a city with glittering alleys, at the end of which was a crystal palace. She knew it was her fairy prince's doing, and there he stood before her, more handsome and more charming than ever. He took her to the palace of his mother, the fairy queen. She stayed there for eight days until she heard

that her father thought she was dead. Her stepmother, the duchess, had convinced him of this. Percinet asked Graciosa to marry him, but she could not say yes. She wanted to see her father.

Graciosa asked Percinet to take her home. Then her father would know that she was still alive and that the duchess was a deceiver. So Percinet prepared his carriage, and as they drove away, Graciosa saw the fairy palace behind her fall into pieces. "What is this?" she asked. "Princess, my palace exists only for those who have died. You will only see it again when you are dead," said Percinet. "Prince, I am sorry that you are angry with me," said Graciosa. She understood that her departure and rejection must have been difficult for him.

When the princess saw her father, she had great difficulty convincing him that she was still alive. The duchess managed to convince the king that Graciosa was not the princess, but only a young woman who looked very similar to her. Graciosa was put in prison for deceiving the king. Grognon consulted an evil fairy. "I need your help," she said to the fairy. "I have a girl in prison who deserves the highest punishment. Help me to give her a difficult task to perform every day." The fairy brought a ball of rope as thick as four people, but made of fragile, fine thread that was so tangled it had no beginning or end. Grognon gave it to Graciosa and said, "See if you can unwind this ball of rope without breaking any thread. If you fail, your punishment will be death." Graciosa took the rope, and immediately

hundreds of threads broke. Desperately, she cried out, "Percinet, please help me." Immediately, Percinet was by her side. "Here I am, princess, ready to serve you, even though you left me." He touched the rope with his magic wand, and it untangled itself and wound itself up in perfect condition. "Do you need anything else?" he asked coolly. "Thank you for your help, Percinet," Graciosa said. "You can also come with me and make us both happy," said the fairy prince. But Graciosa said nothing, and Percinet disappeared.

The next day, the duchess saw that the princess had completed her task. The fairy got a scolding. "Think of something now that she will never be able to accomplish," she hissed at the fairy. The fairy brought a basket of millions of different types of feathers.

Graciosa was tasked with sorting them by bird species. Graciosa tried patiently, but she couldn't see any difference in the feathers and began to cry. "Percinet doesn't love me anymore, or he would be here," she thought. "Here I am, my princess," a voice called out from under the basket, and Percinet appeared. He gave three taps with his magic wand, and the feathers flew out of the basket and arranged themselves in small piles, each from a different bird. "How can I ever thank you?" Graciosa asked. "Love me!" the prince answered tenderly and left.

When Grognon arrived, she saw that this task had also been completed. Furious, she approached the fairy, who came up with a new trick. She brought a box. "Give this box to the princess and forbid her to open it. If she is as bad and disobedient as you say," she said to

Grognon, "she will open the box and then you can punish her appropriately." Grognon took the box and ordered Graciosa to carry it to her castle and place it on a certain table. Under no circumstances was she to open the box. Graciosa left, and because she was tired and hungry, she stopped to rest in the forest. Suddenly, she felt a desire to open the box. "What if I just open it and take a quick peek? I won't take anything out. No one will notice," she thought.

Without thinking about the consequences, she lifted the lid. Immediately, dozens of little people jumped out.

They jumped onto the green meadow and divided themselves into different groups. Graciosa tried to catch them, but they made a game out of running away from her. Once again, she called for Percinet's help and he

appeared once again. With his magic wand, he sent all the little people back into the box. When Grognon saw that she had completed her task again, she burst into anger. She had a large hole dug in the garden and took the princess there. "Under this stone is a

great treasure. Lift it up and you will see," she said. Graciosa obeyed, and while she was at the edge,

Grognon pushed her into the hole and let the stone fall



on top of her. After this, there seemed to be no hope for the poor princess.

"Oh Percinet," she said, "why didn't I return your love and marry you?" As she spoke, she saw a glimmer of light through the empty darkness. It was coming from a small door. She thought of what Percinet had said, that she would see the fairy castle again after her death. So she crawled through the door and found herself in a beautiful garden. She knew she would see Percinet here. Indeed, he was already waiting for her. Tears of happiness flowed down Graciosa's cheeks. She married Percinet and they lived happily ever after.