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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Prince Hyacinth and the Dear Little Princess

Once upon a time, there was a king who was in love with a princess. But the princess was under a spell and could not marry anyone. A kind fairy took pity on the king and told him how to break the curse. He had to stand on the tail of the princess's cat, and whoever succeeded would be destined to marry the princess. The king thought it would be easy to stand on the cat's tail, but the cat was always one step ahead of him. Until one evening, the cat was fast asleep. The king put his foot on the tail and stepped as hard as he could. The cat let out an icy scream and transformed into an evil wizard. The wizard said, "You will marry the princess because you broke the curse. But I will take revenge. You will have a son who will never be happy until he discovers that his nose is too long." The king was terrified, but he couldn't help but laugh at the threat. "If my son has such a long nose," he thought to himself, "he will surely be able to see it for himself." When the wizard disappeared, the king wasted no time and went to find the princess who agreed to marry him immediately. Shortly after the wedding, the king died, leaving the queen with her son, whom she named Hyacinth. The

little prince had beautiful big blue eyes and was incredibly sweet. But his nose was enormous! The queen was inconsolable when she saw his big nose, but her court ladies assured her that it was not as big as it seemed. They said it was a handsome Roman nose. You only had to open a history book to see that great heroes had big noses. The queen was pleased with what the court ladies told her. When she looked at Hyacinth again, his nose didn't seem as big to her.

The prince was raised with great care. Terrible stories were told about people with short noses. No one was allowed near him whose nose was not more or less the same size as his. History teachers were urgently told to say that great men had long noses. Portraits of people with very big noses hung in the prince's room. The prince grew up believing that a long nose was of great beauty and that he would never have wanted his own to be even a centimeter shorter.

When the prince turned 21, the queen thought it was time for him to get married. She had portraits of various princesses brought to the castle. Among those portraits was the one of the dear little princess. She was the daughter of a great king and one day would rule multiple kingdoms herself. But Prince Hyacinth did not care about that. He was head over heels in love with the dear little princess and only wanted to marry her, even if she had a small, insignificant nose. But one of the courtiers told the prince that it was different for a woman's beauty, and that even Cleopatra had a small and even slightly crooked nose. The prince gave him a splendid gift for this good news and sent his

people to ask the dear little princess for her hand in marriage. Her father, the king, gave his consent.

So the prince set off to meet the sweet little princess in person. Just as he was about to kiss her hand, the wizard suddenly appeared and snatched the princess away, vanishing with her in an instant.

The prince was inconsolable and declared that he would not return to his kingdom without his princess. He sent all of his courtiers home and continued on alone, riding his horse day and night.

He rode until he saw a light shining from a cave. Realizing that he and his horse had gone a long time without eating, he approached the cave and met a small, old woman. She was a fairy and looked to be at least a hundred years old. She put on her glasses to take a good look at the prince, but her nose was so small that the glasses kept sliding off.

After several attempts, she managed to keep the glasses in place. They both burst out laughing and exclaimed at the same time, "Oh, what a funny nose!"

"Not as funny as yours," said Prince Hyacinth to the fairy. "But madam, I beg you to leave our noses alone



and give me something to eat, for I am starving and so is my poor horse."

The fairy told him that he was the son of her best friend. She continued to talk about the prince's father and his handsome nose, which started to irritate the prince. He was more concerned about his hunger and that of his horse. The fairy eventually took him inside and ordered her servants to prepare some food.

While the prince was eating, the fairy told him about his father and asked him what was happening in the kingdom now. She also continued to comment on the prince's nose, which annoyed him even more. He thought to himself that the fairy was spoiled by flatterers who made her believe that she talked very little.

The prince became so irritated by the fairy's constant remarks about his nose that he quickly left, got his horse, and rode away. But wherever he went, people had something to say about his nose. He began to think that all people were crazy and could not bring himself to admit that his nose was probably too long. He had always thought his nose was beautiful.

The fairy felt she had to help the prince and came up with a plan. She had the sweet little princess locked in a crystal palace and placed it in a spot where the prince would surely find it. And he did. The prince was overjoyed to find her and worked tirelessly to free her from the palace. But despite his efforts, he couldn't do it. He then tried to get as close as possible to the sweet little princess to talk to her. She held out her hand for him to kiss, but his nose got in the way. For the first time, he realized how long his nose really was

and exclaimed, "Oh no, I must admit that my nose is far too long!"

The crystal palace shattered into a thousand pieces. The old fairy took the sweet little princess by the hand and said to the prince, "Now you see how self-love prevents you from knowing your own faults. You refuse to see your own faults until they get in the way of what is most important to you."

From that moment on, the prince's nose became smaller and smaller until it was the size of everyone else's nose. He married the sweet little princess, and they lived happily ever after.