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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Prince Sneeze

Once upon a time, there was a king and a queen who threw a magnificent party to celebrate the christening of their newborn son, Prince Rolandor. After all the invitations were sent out, the queen went to the kitchen to check if everything was going according to plan. The enormous strawberry cake was the centerpiece of the feast. In the castle's main hall, coffee, tea, and lemonade were served along with a slice of the strawberry cake.

The queen noticed that the guests on the right side of the hall were not being served any strawberry cake. She asked the chef why, and he whispered to her, "Your Majesty, the strawberry cake is gone." The queen turned pale. "Do you have enough other pastries?" she stuttered. "Yes, Your Majesty," the chef replied. "Serve those immediately," she ordered the chef.

The chef left, and the queen was about to give her speech when a loud voice suddenly interrupted the chatter in the hall, saying, "Where's my slice of strawberry cake?" It was the old fairy Malvolia from the Kingdom of the Black Mountains. She stood up,



staring at her plate, which had just been served a small banana cream puff. "Where's my slice of strawberry cake?" she exclaimed again. "Oh, I'm so sorry," said the queen, "but the strawberry cake is gone."

"You're not telling me that you only made enough for your personal friends, are you?" Malvolia shouted, extremely offended. "We'll immediately have some brought from the baker," suggested the king. "Oh yes, cake baked by the queen is only for personal friends, but I have to settle for a cheap banana cream puff?" Malvolia roared. "The Kingdom of the Black Mountains is deeply offended by this!"

"No, no, no," the royal couple exclaimed, "it was certainly not done on purpose, it was just bad luck."

"Well, I consider the whole affair to be a deliberate insult," Malvolia continued. With raised voice, she went on, "I will make you pay dearly for this humiliation! Every time the prince sneezes, something will change, until..."

At that moment, a northeast wind blew through the hall's open windows, carrying Malvolia's last sentence away. The angry fairy turned herself into a raven and flew away. The royal couple heard the little prince crying. His face was pink and swollen, and he had terrible sneezing fits. A loud thunderclap followed, and the astrologer transformed into an astrological clock. The queen called for the doctor to ask for advice on how to prevent the prince from sneezing. "The prince must be protected from everything that causes him to sneeze," said the doctor. "Protect him from colds by

dressing him warmly. As his little highness grows older, the use of pepper is out of the question. Do you happen to have a castle in the mountains? Then let the little prince live there for the sake of the pure air." "We'll take him to the tower on the Golden Mountain," sighed the king.

The king and queen were not happy to let their child grow up somewhere else. But they had to. Because with each sneeze, a terrible change took place in the palace. The doctor's wife, who had been a nurse, went with the prince to take care of him. The king and queen visited their child three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Years went by and the prince grew up to be a handsome young man. He was taught by the best scholars and learned all the things a prince should know. But he knew almost nothing about real life. The French poodle Poldo was his best and most loyal friend. During his stay in the tower, the prince sneezed only three times. Not much, but it caused chaos every time. As the prince's twenty-first birthday approached, he looked sad. His dog Poldo asked him, "Why are you so sad, master?" "Because of my fate," the prince replied. "I find it terrible that I will never see the world." The poodle was silent for a moment. Then he said, "Prince Rolander, do not give up hope. I can visit my old friend, the giant of the North Pole. He has a large chest full of secrets that the wind has taken away. Maybe Malvolia's words are among them!"

The prince let the dog go, and after a long journey, he knocked on the giant's door. The giant asked him what

he could do for him. "I am looking for a few words from the fairy Malvolia that were taken by the northeast wind during the baptism of Prince Rolandor," replied the poodle. Fortunately, the giant was able to find the words of Malvolia's enchantment: "...until he finds someone brave enough to marry him."

The poodle learned the words by heart, thanked the giant, and hurried back to the king and queen. "Did you find the last sentence?" asked the queen. "Yes," said Poldo, "the enchantment will end when the prince gets married." That evening, the king sent messengers to different kingdoms. But there was not a single princess who dared to marry Prince Rolander. They were all afraid of being enchanted themselves.

Finally, it was the last princess in all of Fairyland who said she would marry the prince. She too was under a spell, cast by a jealous witch. Her beautiful golden locks had been turned into bright blue hair, and her nose was thirty centimeters long. It was a strange sight when the handsome prince led his ugly bride to the altar. The wedding ceremony was not yet over when the prince felt a sneeze coming on. However hard he tried to suppress it, he couldn't in the end.

"Achoo!!!" There followed a tremendous thunderclap, and at that moment a lot happened. The enchantments in the kingdom were broken, and everything returned to its former state. The



bride too returned to being her sweet and beautiful self. The wedding was completed, and immediately afterward, the prince went on a honeymoon with his bride to enchanting islands. They lived happily ever after.