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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Frog Princess

Once upon a time, there was an old king with three grown sons. One day, he addressed his sons and said, "My dear sons, it's time for me to pass on my kingdom. One of you will be the king of my kingdom. Let it be the one who marries a woman who meets the qualifications of a worthy queen."

The sons understood that they had to be married to become king. So all three of them agreed to their father's proposal to marry immediately.

In this kingdom, it was customary to shoot an arrow from the tallest tower to guide the way to a woman worthy of a prince. So each of the princes shot an arrow from the tower that would lead them to their destined woman.

The arrow of the eldest prince landed at a palace in the city, where a senator lived. He had a beautiful daughter, and the eldest prince went there and married her.

The arrow of the second prince landed on a mansion.

There lived a beautiful young lady. She was the daughter of a wealthy merchant.

So the second prince went there and married her.



The arrow of the youngest prince shot through a green forest and landed in a lake. The prince hurried there and saw that the arrow had landed under a leaf where a frog looked at him with steady eyes.

"Well," said the frog. "You didn't expect that, did you? Your arrow for finding your ideal marriage partner has come to me. This means you will marry me."

"But how can you be my wife, little frog?" asked the youngest prince.

"That's not a problem," said the little frog. "You shot your arrow, and it followed the way to where you would find a sweet wife. And now you have found me."

"You are very wise, little frog," said the prince. "But tell me, how can I marry you? How can I introduce you to my father? And what will people say about us?"

"Take me to your house and don't let anyone see me. Say you have married a lady from a country where it is forbidden for other people to see her. Except her husband."

The prince thought for a moment. The arrow drifted to the edge of the lake, so he picked it up and put the little frog in his pocket. He took her to his house and soon fell into a deep sleep.

The next morning, the king was told that all his sons were married. He called them all together and said, "I am so happy and proud that all three of you have found a wife and married. I hope all three of you are also satisfied with your wives?"

"We are certainly happy and satisfied," the princes replied.

"Now we have to see who has chosen the best wife worthy of being queen," continued the king. "Let each of my daughters-in-law weave a carpet for me tomorrow. The one who has made the most beautiful carpet will become the new queen."

The eldest prince didn't waste any time going home to tell their wives about their father's wish.

The youngest was desperate when he came home.

"What's wrong, my prince?" asked the frog.

"My father has asked each of his daughters-in-law to weave a carpet for him. The one who has made the most beautiful carpet will become the future queen. I think it won't be a problem for my brothers' wives. But you, my little frog, I see no way how you could weave a carpet."

"Don't worry," said the frog. "Tomorrow morning, I will have a carpet ready for you."

The prince went to sleep and slept remarkably well, despite his worries.

The little frog stood at the window and sang a song softly, wishing that a carpet would be brought for her that would be more beautiful than ever seen before.

And seven young court ladies appeared at the window, bringing a carpet of various colored wool to the frog, covered with pearls and flowers. They made a deep bow to the little frog and flew away.

Meanwhile, the brothers' wives worked hard at their looms the next day.

Then the brothers gathered before the king, with the carpets made by their wives.

The king looked at the first and second carpet. Then he saw the third carpet and was deeply impressed. "This is the most beautiful carpet for me," he exclaimed. "But I think another test must be done to make the best of the three women the queen. I'll let you know tomorrow." The youngest prince returned to his frog wife and sighed deeply.

"What's troubling you, my prince?" asked the little frog. "My father wants our wives to undergo another test. I don't know what it will be."

"Go to sleep," said the little frog. "When you wake up, you will see that everything will be alright."

The prince went to sleep and the frog jumped in front of the window and sang a soft song again.

The song was about herself. She was actually a princess, but she had been turned into a frog. Her mother was a great sorceress, known as the famous Queen of Light. Her mother had many enemies and to protect her daughter, she had turned her into a frog. Under the frog skin, she was a beautiful princess. Her mother would break the spell when she had defeated all her enemies. That would be the moment when the prince would see her as she really was.

The next day, the young prince received news that his father asked the sons, along with their wives, to come to a feast in the palace.

The young prince was at a loss, but the little frog said, "Don't worry, my prince. Go to your father alone. If he asks about me, it will start to rain. Then say that your wife will come, but that she wanted to take a bath

first. If lightning shows, say that I am changing clothes. When the thunder follows, say that I have arrived."

The prince did as the frog had asked. When he arrived at the palace without his wife, the king asked where she was. It started to rain and the prince said she wanted to take a bath before her departure. Then lightning followed and the prince said she was changing clothes. During the thunder that followed, the prince said, "Look, she's already here."

The princess had spoken magical words that caused her frog skin to fall off. She walked into the palace and everyone was amazed at her beauty. The king was pleasantly surprised. The prince himself was no less surprised and overjoyed with the beauty of his wife.

"Tell me, my son," said the king, "why didn't you tell me about the beauty of your lovely wife?"

The prince told his father everything and the king said, "Go home now, my son, and throw her frog skin into the fire. Then come back as soon as possible. Then she will remain as she is now."

The prince did what his father told him. He threw the frog skin into the fire and immediately returned to his father's palace. But things didn't go as expected. When the princess came home and searched in vain for her frog skin, the prince told her what he had done. She screamed and jumped out of the window, where she turned into a duck and flew away.

The prince was inconsolable.

He mounted his horse to search for her. She had told him she was the daughter of the Queen of Light. If he

could find her mother, he would surely find his princess as well.

After many days of travel, he came to a strange-looking cottage and knocked on the door.

An old woman was sitting behind a spinning wheel in the cottage.

"Well, prince, what brings you here?" she asked.

The prince told her the whole story, and she said, "You are a wise boy, and it's good that you told me the truth. I know your bride. She flies past my house every day in the form of a duck. Hide yourself, and when she comes, grab her, no matter what form she takes. When she is tired, she will turn into a spindle, which we use for spinning. When she changes into a spindle, you must break it in two. Then she will be the one you are looking for."



Not long after, the duck flew by. The prince tried to catch her, but she escaped and transformed into a dove, then a hawk, and then a snake. The last form frightened the prince so much that he let her go. Then she turned back into a duck and flew out the window. The prince realized he had not done it right, and the old woman shouted, "What have you done? Now you have driven her away from me forever! But because she is your bride, I will find another way to help you. Take

this ball of thread and throw it in front of you, anywhere. Follow it, and you will come to the house of my sister. She will tell you what to do next."

The prince left and did as the old woman had said. He arrived at the next house and found another old woman there, to whom he told his story.

"Hide under the bench," the old woman shouted. "Your bride is coming in now."

The duck flew in, and the prince grabbed her. She croaked and turned into a turkey, then a dog. Then she turned into an eel and slipped out of his hands through the window.

The prince was desperate, and the old woman gave him another ball of thread. He followed it again until he came to a cottage where an even older woman lived. He begged her for help.

"Why did you go against the will of your smart and wise wife?" asked the old woman. "She knew better than you what her frog skin was good for. But you had no patience. You wanted to show her to the world. And now, for her safety and yours, she had to fly away from you!"

The prince hid under the bench again. The duck flew in, and the prince grabbed her. She fought with all her might, but she could not defeat him. So she turned



herself into a spindle, and he broke her in two. And then... then he held the hands of his beautiful princess, who looked at him lovingly.

She promised him that she would always remain as she was, because her mother's enemies were all dead, so she was now completely safe.

She uttered magical words, and a golden carriage with white horses appeared. They got in and rode to the palace of the prince's father. The king crowned his youngest son as king and the princess as queen, and they lived happily ever after.