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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Water Nymph in the Pond

Once upon a time, there was a miller who was very happy with his wife. They had everything their hearts desired. They even became richer and richer every year. But misfortune came their way. Their wealth decreased every year. Eventually, the miller could barely afford to live in the mill. He was so worried that he couldn't sleep at night.

One morning, he got up at the crack of dawn. He thought it might make him feel better. As he walked over the mill dam, the first ray of sunshine appeared.

He heard a soft splashing in the pond. When he turned around, he saw a very beautiful woman slowly rising out of the water. Her long hair waved on both sides along her body and covered her fair figure.

Now he saw that it was the Water Nymph, and he didn't know whether to stay or run away out of fear. The nymph called him by his name and asked him, in her soft voice, why he was so sad. The miller was dumbfounded. Because she spoke kindly, he gathered the courage to tell her that he used to



have a happy and wealthy life, but now he was so poor that he didn't know what to do.

"Don't worry," said the nymph. "I will make you even richer and happier. You just have to promise me that if "something young" comes into your house, you will give it to me."

"What could that be, other than a young puppy or kitten," thought the miller. He agreed to her request. The Water Nymph dived back into the water. The miller



ran back to the mill, comforted and full of hope. He hadn't even reached the house yet when the maid ran out and told him that his wife had just given birth to a son. "You must be very happy," she exclaimed.

The miller stopped, as if struck by lightning. He understood that the

mischievous Water Nymph

had known this and deceived him. He went to his wife's bed with his head down. "Aren't you happy with such a beautiful boy?" she asked. Then he told her that he had seen the Water Nymph and what promise he had made. "What good is wealth and happiness if I have to lose this dear child?" he cried. "What should I do?" No one knew what to do, not even the family members who came to admire the baby.

Meanwhile, the miller's luck returned. Whatever he started, he succeeded. It was as if the chests and cabinets filled themselves, and the money in the cash box increased by itself at night. It didn't take long before he was richer than ever.

But he couldn't enjoy it at all. The promise to the Water Nymph hurt his heart. He often walked by the pond and was afraid that she would appear and remind him of the promise. The son was not allowed to come near the water. He was told that a hand would come out of the water and pull him in.

So a few years went by. The Water Nymph did not appear during that time, and the miller didn't think about it so often. The boy grew up into a strong young man, and he learned from a hunter. When he became an accomplished hunter, the village lord hired him. In the village lived a beautiful, reliable girl. The hunter fell in love with her. His master gave him a small house. After the wedding, they lived quietly and happily together and loved each other very much.

One day, the hunter chased a deer. When the animal came out of the forest and ran into the field, the hunter shot. However, he did not notice that he had dangerously approached the pond. After picking up the animal, he washed his blood-stained hands in the pond. As soon as he put his hands in the water, the Water Nymph rose up. She embraced him, laughing, and pulled him down so quickly that the waves surged over him. When evening came and the hunter still had not returned home, his wife became very worried. She went outside to look for him. She knew that the hunter

should not come near the pond, but she was afraid that it had happened. She ran to the pond and saw his bag lying there. She knew that an accident had occurred. She ran around the pond, calling her husband's name, but nothing happened. She shouted angry words at the Water Nymph, but it did not help either. The water remained still. Only the face of the half-moon looked impassively at her.

The poor woman kept walking around the pond, moaning and lamenting in sorrow. Eventually, she had no more strength, fell to the ground, and fell into a deep sleep.

She dreamed that she had to climb up between boulders while thorns stuck in her feet and the rain and wind hit her face. Suddenly, on the slope, she had a completely different view. The sky was blue. On the fresh green meadow covered with flowers, there was a hut. She walked up to it and opened the door. There was an old woman with white hair who kindly beckoned her to come in.

At that moment, the poor young woman woke up again. She decided to do exactly what she had seen in her dream. She climbed the hill and saw the hut and the old woman there. The old woman gave her a chair and said kindly, "There must be a lot of misfortune in your life if you come to such a lonely house as this."

The young woman tearfully told her what had happened to her. "Take heart," said the old woman, "I will help you. Here is a golden comb. Wait until the full moon, then go to the pond. Sit on the shore and comb your long black hair with this comb. When you're done,

put the comb next to you on the edge. You'll see what happens then."

The young woman went back. Finally, the full moon came. She sat by the pond in the bright moonlight, combed her hair, and placed the comb on the edge. Immediately, a loud roar rose from the pond. A tidal wave surged over the edge and carried the comb away. When the comb hit the bottom, the water parted, and the head of the hunter emerged. He said nothing but looked sadly at his wife. A second wave rolled in and made his head disappear again. The water was smooth again, with only the reflection of the full moon visible. The inconsolable woman returned home. But in another dream, she saw the hut of the old woman again. She went back to her and complained about what had happened. The old woman now gave her a golden flute and said, "Wait again until the full moon, blow a tune on the flute on the shore, then lay the flute in the sand next to you and wait."

The young woman did as she was told. As soon as she laid the flute in the sand, another large wave washed over the edge of the pond. The flute disappeared into the depths. The water's surface split open and now the man rose up to his hips from the water, stretching his arms out longingly toward his wife. But a second crashing wave washed over him and he disappeared again.

The unhappy woman sighed, "What's the use? I see my husband, but then I have to lose him again." With a heart full of sadness, she returned home. There, she

dreamed for the third time about the hut and the old woman.

So she went back to the cottage. This time, the old woman gave her a golden spinning wheel. She said reassuringly, "Not everything that can happen has happened yet. Wait for the full moon again, go to the edge of the pond with the spinning wheel and spin the spindle full. Then place the spinning wheel near the edge of the pond and wait calmly."

The young woman did exactly as she was instructed.

When the moon was full again, she brought the spinning wheel to the pond and spun all the flax into thread. Immediately afterward, a huge wave surged up from the depths of the pond, and the spinning wheel was sucked into the water. Like a fountain, her husband's entire body rose up from the water. He quickly jumped to the shore, grabbed his wife's hand, and they fled together.

They had only gone a short distance when a very large wave surged up from the pond. The water flooded over the land. Afraid of being killed, the woman once again called on the old woman for help. Immediately, they were transformed into a frog and a toad. Now the water was no longer dangerous for them, but they were separated and drifted further and further apart. Eventually, they no longer knew where the other had gone.

When the water receded and they had dried off, they became human again. But they no longer knew who they were.

They came to a strange land with high mountains and deep valleys. They both became shepherds, but they could no longer see each other because of the mountains and valleys. For many years, they wandered



with their flocks through forests and fields, sad and longing to find each other again. But on a beautiful spring day, they both set out by chance and walked toward each other. The shepherd saw a flock of sheep grazing on a mountain in the distance

and drove his own sheep toward them. They did not recognize each other, but they were happy to be together. From that moment on, they always herded sheep together. One evening, when the moon was full again and the sheep were already lying in the grass, the shepherd took his flute out of his pocket. He played a beautiful but sad tune. When he finished playing, he saw that the shepherdess was crying. "Why are you crying?" he asked. "Oh," she said, "the full moon was shining the last time I played this tune on the flute, and the head of my dear husband came up from the water." The shepherd looked at her again, and suddenly it seemed as if the mist lifted. He suddenly recognized his own wife! A moment later, she recognized her husband too! They hugged and kissed each other. And whether they were happy together again? Of course, you don't even need to ask...