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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Princess Dido and the Prince of the Roses

Little Princess Dido ran away from her attendants every time she could, and one day when she was walking in the forest with her servants she hid behind a tree while they were talking, and before they had missed her she ran down another path and was out of their sight.

When Princess Dido found herself alone she began to look about to see if she could find any flowers, for she was very fond of flowers and was never allowed to pick them herself; her servants did that for her.

"I can pick them myself now," she said, laughing to herself to think she had escaped from the servants, and she began picking all the wild flowers she could find, walking along all the time and going farther into the forest.

When it was sunset the Princess Dido found herself in the thick of the trees and bushes, and she began to wonder why her attendants did not find her and take her home; but the sun set and the stars came out and still no one came, and Princess Dido felt tired and lay down among the leaves and mosses and went to sleep. When she awoke the moon was shining, and although she was in the forest alone she was not afraid, for she did not think any one would harm a princess, so she

rolled over on her soft bed, thinking she would go to sleep again, when something cold touched her cheek. Princess Dido opened her eyes very wide then and sat up, and on a bush beside her she saw a very small gold key hanging by a thread which swung back and forth and half touched her face.

"I wonder what this cunning little key can fit," said the Princess. "I do wish I knew! I am sure I should find something nice. I believe I will look about. I am not a bit sleepy, and the moon is as bright as day."

Princess Dido hunted everywhere among the bushes and rocks, and nothing could she find, when, just as she had decided to go to sleep again, she saw something shining on a tree, and there was a tiny keyhole that the key just fitted.



She put the key in the lock and the tree opened like a door, and Princess Dido stepped inside and closed the door after her.

She walked along a road which seemed to be just behind the tree, but when she looked about she was

not in the forest at all, but in a beautiful country filled with flowers and tall trees, and in the distance she saw a beautiful castle.

When Princess Dido came to the castle she saw fountains and more beautiful flowers growing around, and there were birds of all kinds singing in the trees. "I suppose I must go to the door of the castle and let them know who I am," thought the Princess. "A princess ought to do that, I know, but I would much rather stay in this beautiful garden and hear the birds sing and look at the flowers."

When the Princess knocked at the door no one answered, and after waiting a short time the Princess opened the door and stepped inside. All was still and she sat down and waited.

"I expect everybody is at breakfast," thought the Princess. "I wish I had something to eat. I didn't have any supper, and I have not had my breakfast, either. "Yes, I am hungry and want my breakfast," said Princess Dido, and, though she did not know it, she had spoken right out loud, and as she did so a table appeared beside her with her breakfast on it and a bouquet of beautiful pink roses.

"I wonder where this came from. I didn't see or hear any one," said the Princess.

But she did not wonder about it; she was too hungry. When she had finished she walked along the hall, for, being a princess, she was in the habit of going where she liked, and as she saw no one she did the same here. But there was no room opening out of the hall she was in, so the Princess went up the stairs, and here again

she found herself in a large hall, but this was so beautiful she looked about her in wonder, for it was a much more beautiful place than her own castle. The floor was of opals and the walls were the same; the sunlight shining through the windows made the most wonderful colors wherever it fell, and all around the place were white roses, making the air sweet with their fragrance.

There was another flight of stairs, and up these the Princess went. The stairs were of silver, and on the next floor the Princess found herself in a hall of crystal with roses all around; beautiful pink roses such as she had never before beheld.

"Oh, how I wish I could pick them!" said the Princess as she went from bush to bush, and to her surprise the roses nodded as if to tell her she could if she liked. Princess Dido broke one from its stem, and then another, and as the roses still nodded she picked more until her arms were full.

But there was another flight of stairs, and these were of gold. So the Princess walked up these and found herself in another beautiful room, which was blue, the color of sapphires, and around this room grew red roses.

But there was still another flight of stairs, and the Princess did not stop long here, with her arms filled with the pink roses. She went up the last flight and found herself in a hall filled with red, pink, and white roses, but the walls were hung with soft gray silk and the floor covered with velvet of the same color.

"Oh, how beautiful! I wish I could live here among the roses," she said.

"You can, my Princess of the Roses," said a voice, and from behind a curtain stepped a handsome prince, dressed in a suit of gray velvet, with trimmings of silver and pink.

He took from his head a hat with a long plume of pink and bowed low before the Princess Dido, who had dropped her roses and stood blushing as pink as the roses she had dropped.

"This is my castle, the Castle of the Roses," explained the Prince, "and I vowed I would never marry until I found a princess who loved my roses as well as me, and you have proved you do by coming into all of my rose-garden. Others have been here, but when they found only roses in each room they never came to this floor.

"Behind these curtains is my palace. These halls of roses are but a part of my private rooms. Will you stay, Princess, or shall I call the fairies to take you back to your own castle?" asked the Prince.

"You may call the fairies to take the news to my people that I will live in the Castle of Roses, with the Prince of Roses," said Princess Dido.

"But who hung the little gold key on the bush?" she asked the Prince.

"Oh! I asked the fairies to help me find a wife," said the Prince. "They hung it there. You see, we shall live in an enchanted castle, as well as in the Castle of Roses, so there is nothing for us but happiness."