



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

East of the Sun and West of the Moon

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Once upon a time, there was a man who had very handsome children but not enough money to feed them. His youngest daughter was the most beautiful of all his children. One autumn evening, there were three knocks on the window. The father found a White Bear outside. "Will you give me your youngest daughter?" asked the White Bear. "You will be richly rewarded."



The poor man would love to have more money, but he felt that his daughter should decide if she wanted to go with him. But she said no. The father told the White Bear that he must come back in a week. During that week, the father convinced his daughter to go with the White Bear. A week later, the White Bear came to take her. She climbed onto his back, and they left.

And so they rode for days, until they arrived at a large mountain. A door opened, and there stood a magnificent castle. It was night, and the girl went to sleep. When the light went out, a man came to lie next to her. But the girl never saw the man, because he always came in the dark and left before morning.

After a while, the girl became homesick. The White Bear agreed that she could visit her family. "But you must promise me that you will never be alone with your mother. She will take you to a room to talk alone with you. But you must not do that, or you will bring us a lot of trouble." The girl promised.

So the White Bear took her to her family. The family now lived in a splendid house. They all looked very happy. "Your parents live here now," said the White Bear, "but do not forget what I said to you, or you will do yourself and me much harm."

In the afternoon, exactly what the White Bear had predicted happened. The mother took the girl by the hand and persuaded her to talk alone with her. The girl told her that a man slept with her every night, but she had never seen him. The mother gave her a candle and said, "Use the candlelight when he sleeps, but be careful not to drop any candle wax on him."

That night, the White Bear came to get her. On the way, he asked if what he had

predicted had happened. She had no choice but to admit that it had happened. "If you did what your mother wanted," he said, "you have brought us both a lot of trouble." "No," she said, "I did not do anything."

In the evening, the man came to lie next to her. When she heard that he was sleeping, she lit the candle and let the light shine on him. Then she saw that he was the handsomest prince she had ever seen. She immediately fell in love with him and kissed him. As she did so, a few drops of candle wax fell on his shirt. He woke up and cried, "What have you done?! If you had lasted a year, I would have been free. My stepmother has enchanted me, so that by day I am a White Bear, and by night a man. But that's about to end. I have to leave you and go to my stepmother. She lives in a castle that is east of the sun and west of the moon. There is also a princess with an enormously long nose, and with her, I must now marry."

The girl felt intensely sad and asked if she could go with him. But no, he said it couldn't be. "Then I'll look for you," said the girl. "You can do that," he said. "But there's no way to get there. It lies east of the sun and west of the moon. You'll never find the way."

When she woke up in the morning, the castle with the prince had disappeared. She lay on the grass. Her old rags lay next to her. She got up and walked for days until she came to a great mountain. There sat an old woman playing with a golden apple. The girl asked her if she knew the way to the prince who lived with his stepmother in the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon. She told her that he would marry a princess with a long nose. "Maybe you are the one," said the woman. She lent the girl a horse and the golden apple and said, "My horse will take you to my neighbor. Maybe she can help you. Send the horse home afterward. You can keep the apple."



So the girl got on the horse and rode for miles to reach the neighbor's mountain. The old neighbor was playing with a golden comb. The girl asked her if she knew the way to the prince who lived with his stepmother in the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon. She told her that he would marry a princess with a long nose. "Maybe you are the one," said the woman. "I know a woman who lives nearby. Maybe she can help you. Here, take my horse and the golden comb. You can keep the comb, but please return the horse."

So the girl got on the horse again. After a long time, she came to a great mountain where an old woman was sitting, spinning a golden wheel. The girl told her why she had come, and the old woman said, "Maybe you are the one who was meant to have the prince." But this woman didn't know the way any better than the others. "You can borrow my horse, and I think you should ask the East Wind. Please return my horse. You can keep the spinning wheel."

And so the girl came to the East Wind. He blew the girl to the West Wind, who blew her to the South Wind, who in turn blew the girl to the North Wind.

"Yes," said the North Wind, "if you're not afraid to come with me, I'll carry you on my back and try to blow you there."

The girl said she wasn't afraid. Then the North Wind inflated himself, becoming so big and strong that it was frightening to see. And off they went, high in the sky. Below, the houses were blown down by the storm, and many ships were lost at sea. A long time passed, and the North Wind grew tired and threw the girl onto the shore, directly under the windows of the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon.

The girl sat down under the walls of the castle and played with the golden apple. The first person the girl saw was the princess with the long nose. "What do you want for the golden apple?" the princess asked. "There is no money that can buy the apple," the girl replied. "But you can have it if I can spend a night with the prince."

"Fine," said the princess. That night, she was allowed to stay in a room where the prince was. He was sleeping so deeply, however, that the girl couldn't wake him up. In the meantime, she cried because no matter what she did, he remained in a deep sleep. The next morning, the princess with the long nose chased the girl out again.

Once again, the girl sat beneath the castle windows and began to comb her hair with the golden comb. Again, the princess asked if she could buy the comb and again the girl said she would give it to her in exchange for a night with the prince.

"Fine," said the princess. But when she went to the prince's room, he was sleeping again. She called him, shook him, and cried big tears, but he still slept through it all. When it was light in the morning, the princess with the long nose chased her away again.

The girl once again took her place beneath the castle windows. This time, she spun her golden spinning wheel. The princess also wanted the spinning wheel. The girl again wanted to trade it for a night with the prince. The princess agreed.

However, there were some people in the castle who were being held against

their will by the stepmother. They told the prince that they had heard a woman crying in the prince's room for two nights. The prince understood that the princess had probably given him a sleeping potion. So when the princess brought him another drink that evening, he pretended to drink it. That night, the prince was awake.

"You came just in time," said the prince. "Because I have to get married tomorrow. But I don't want the princess with the long nose. You can save me. I have a plan."

On the day of the wedding, the prince said to his stepmother, "First, I want to see what my bride is capable of. I have a beautiful shirt that I want to wear as my wedding shirt, but it has drops of candle wax on it that I want to remove. And I have sworn to marry no one except the woman who can do it. If she can't, she's not worth it."

Well, that was just a trifle, thought the stepmother and the princess. So they agreed to do it. The princess with the long nose began to wash the shirt as well as she could, but the more she rubbed, the bigger the stains became. "Ah! You can't wash at all," said the stepmother, an old witch who was her mother. "Give it to me." But she hadn't had the shirt long in her hands before it looked even worse. The more she washed and rubbed it, the bigger and blacker the stains became!

"Oh," cried the prince, "none of you are good for anything! There's a beggar girl under the window. I'm sure she can wash better than all of you! Come in, girl! Can you wash this shirt?" he asked her.

"Oh! I don't know," she said. "But I'll try." And barely had she taken the shirt and dipped it in the water than it was as white as snow, even whiter than that.

"I'll marry you," said the prince.

The stepmother was so angry that she burst and not only did she disappear, but also her daughter, the princess with the long nose. The prince immediately released the people who had been imprisoned in the castle.

The prince and the girl married and moved far away from the castle that lay east of the sun and west of the moon. They lived happily ever after.



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