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How Miss Springtime Was Stolen

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Jack Frost is full of mischief, but he does not really mean to harm anyone with his pranks and snappy tricks, but old giant King Frost is a different sort of fellow. He will freeze things so hard and fast that sometimes even the warm work of Madam Summer cannot bring them back safely again.

One night when it was about time for Miss Springtime to come to town, old giant King Frost, who had ruled with a rod of ice all winter, did not want to go back to his ice castle.

"If only I could catch Miss Springtime," he said to himself, "I would carry her off to my castle and then I could come back and stay as long as I like."

He knew well enough that Miss Springtime would be very careful not to come out while he was anywhere about, and not till he was back in his ice castle would she even put the tip of her dainty feet into town.

So it was out of the question for King Frost to catch pretty Miss Springtime. He must think of some other way to carry out his wicked plan.

"There is Jack Frost," thought he. "Now, she isn't really afraid of Jack and often she lets him come close to her, I am told. I might get Jack to carry her off if he did not suspect that I wanted to keep her a prisoner."

So he awoke the sleeping Jack and told him he wanted to play a trick on Miss Springtime and he wanted him to help with the joke.

Jack Frost, always ready for a lark, jumped up and ran down the mountain with King Frost, and here King Frost told him he must leave him, for he must hide behind the mountain. It would never do for Miss Springtime to suspect that he was anywhere around.

"Let her come to town," said King Frost, "and then you jump out from behind some place where you have hidden during the day and catch her when it is dark, and do not let her get away. Bring her here to this mountain and I will do the rest."

So off capered Jack Frost to do as King Frost told him, and gaily came Miss Springtime tripping into town when the sun rose one morning, for there was no sign of the Frost King or even Jack Frost. But that night when the sun went down

and all was dark and still, out crept the fun-loving Jack and caught Miss Springtime fast asleep in a garden.

She awoke with a cry of alarm, but when she saw Jack Frost she laughed. "Oh, it is you," she said. "None of your frosty pranks, Jack. Run along, I am not afraid of you."

But Jack did not run. Instead, he held Miss Springtime close in his frosty arms and off he ran with her struggling to free herself.

Away to the mountain he carried her, and there was King Frost waiting, for he had been watching from the top and had seen Jack catch her up from the garden. When Miss Springtime saw old giant King Frost, she gave a loud scream, for she knew that he was bent on doing something cruel and had got Jack to help him.

"Carry me back, Jack Frost. Carry me back to the garden quickly. King Frost is cruel. He will not play tricks as you do just for fun!" cried poor little Miss Springtime, struggling to get free.



Before Jack could ask King Frost what he intended to do, the wicked King had caught Miss Springtime from him and ran over the mountain toward his home in the cold north. Jack Frost started to run after them, but as he had planned to do some mischief for himself that night, he turned back and ran to town, thinking that King Frost would bring Miss Springtime back when Rosy Dawn ran along the mountain top in the morning.

Madam Summer had heard Miss Springtime's cry for help, so she told Rosy Dawn to look for her the next morning, but, of course, she could not find her.

As soon as Mr. Sun was up, Rosy Dawn ran back to tell Madam Summer that Miss Springtime could not be found.

"It is old giant King Frost, who has done this wicked deed," said Madam Summer. "He shall pay for this if he does not bring her back."

But King Frost did not bring her back; he had Miss Springtime fast locked in his ice castle, and there he intended to keep her until he was ready to go home for good.

Long Madam Summer waited, and each day Rosy Dawn sadly shook her head. She could not find Miss Springtime.

Of course, Madam Summer did not have many clothes; those she had were old and drab-looking, but she knew she must forget her pride and go forth to find

Miss Springtime if ever the earth was to be freed from the grip of old King Frost.

So one morning she went along with Rosy Dawn, and from the top of the mountain, she looked around.

She was not dressed in nice clothes such as she usually wore, and King Frost did not know her, so he did not bother to hide his home but ran off to it while Mr. Sun was shining to snatch a few hours' sleep.

"Ah," said Madam Summer, as she watched him. "So that is your home, and there I know is poor Miss Springtime weeping out her heart. You shall pay for this, you wicked king."

Madam Summer went right to work. She ran down the mountain into the fields and gardens and over the ponds and ice-covered streams, but she did not go near the castle of King Frost.

When night came, out came the King and looked about; then he started to run down the mountain, but to his surprise, he found he was not feeling strong; in fact, he seemed about to crumple and fall to the ground.

"I wonder if Madam Summer has come," he said, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "I was sure she would not appear without her new clothes."

King Frost turned back to his home, but what a sight met his gaze when he reached the spot where his castle had stood!

Madam Summer had been there while he was away, and on the castle and ice-covered forest, she threw her warm breath, and the castle was no more.

King Frost had no place to lay his old white head, for Madam Summer had worked fast and sure, and his icy realm had disappeared.

With a mighty roar of rage, old King Frost threw himself on the ground and tore his white locks, for Miss Springtime had not only escaped, but he had been driven away by Madam Summer before he was ready to go.

Down he went into the frosty ground, his tears of rage melting for him a bed where he went to sleep to dream of his wicked deed all summer.

Poor little Miss Springtime had wept until she was pretty no longer; rivers of tears she had cried, and as Madam Summer led her through the town, she looked with wet eyes at the gardens and fields she should have made ready for summertime, all empty and bare. It was too late; she would have to go home now and wait another year, but no one blamed poor little Miss Springtime; it was all the fault of the wicked giant King Frost.

Madam Summer did not blame her, either, though Madam had to do all of her own dressmaking that year as well as other things, and when fall time came

along, she was glad to go to sleep.

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