



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Queen Bee

Brothers Grimm

Once upon a time, there were two princes on an adventure. On the way, they were so dissolute that they did not even return home. The younger one, Simpleton, went to find his brothers. When he found them, they ridiculed him, saying that HE was surely too stupid to find the right way.

But they went on together anyway and came to an anthill. The two older brothers wanted to break the anthill and then laugh at the frightened ants. Simpleton said, "Leave them alone, I can't bear it when you disturb them."

As they went on, they came to a lake full of ducks. The two older brothers wanted to catch the ducks and roast them. Simpleton said: "Leave the ducks alone, I will not tolerate your killing them."

At last, they came to a bee's nest, filled with honey. The two older brothers wanted to smother the bees with fire. Then they could eat the honey themselves. Simpleton said: "Leave them alone, I will not allow you to burn them."



Then the three brothers came to a castle. There were stone horses in the stables. There was no one else to be seen. They went looking in all the halls. Finally, they came to a door with heavy padlocks and a hatch that could look through.

Inside they saw an old man. They called out to him but he did not hear them. When they called for the third time, he got up and came out. He did not say a word but conducted them to a handsomely-spread table. When they had eaten and drunk, he showed them where their bedrooms were.



The next morning, he woke up the eldest and took him to a large stone with three tasks, by which the castle could be delivered.

The first task was to find all the thousand pearls of the princess. These were hidden all over the forest. If even one was missing before sunset, the one who had searched would become a stone himself. The eldest searched all day but only found a hundred by sunset. And... he was turned into a stone.

The next day, the second brother tried. He found two hundred but that was not enough either and... he too became a stone.

Then it was Simpleton's turn. It was so difficult to find the pearls in the forest. He sat down on a big stone and cried big tears of discouragement. As he sat there, the queen ants passed by with five thousand ants. The little animals quickly went to work for him and found all the pearls. They were happy to help him because he had saved their anthill.

The second task was to fetch the key to the princess's bedroom from the lake. At the lake, the ducks swam right up to him and retrieved the key from the depths. They were happy to do something in return, for after all, Simpleton had saved their lives.



The third task was the most difficult. The youngest and sweetest princess had to be chosen from three sleeping princesses. They all looked exactly alike. The only difference was that they had all eaten a different sweet before going to sleep. The oldest had a bit of sugar, the middle one syrup and the youngest honey.



The queen bee arrived. She too was happy to help Simpleton. After all, he had saved the hive from the fire. She tasted the lips of all three princesses and stayed on the mouth of the princess who had eaten honey. That's how the Prince recognised the real one!

The spell was broken. Everyone was freed from their sleep and those who had been turned to stone became alive again. And Simpleton married the youngest and sweetest princess and even became the king after her father's death. And his brothers...they married the oldest sisters!