



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

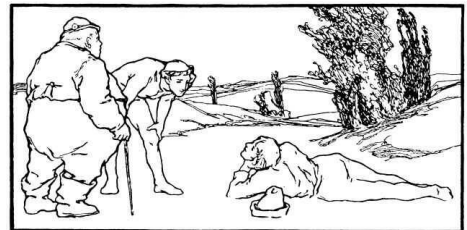
The Six Servants

Brothers Grimm

Once upon a time there was an old, angry queen with a beautiful daughter, but whenever a suitor came to marry her daughter, they had to fulfill three challenges or they would die. Many, blinded by the beauty of the princess, tried their luck, but it never ended well.

It happened that a prince heard of this beauty and told his father: 'Dear father, let me go there. I want to ask her to be my wife.' 'No, never', answered the king. 'You will surely die.' The prince lied down there and then and turned violently ill. For seven long years no doctor was able to help him, so the king said: 'Go and try your luck with the princess. I can't help you in any other way.' When the prince heard this, he was magically healed, got up and went on his way happily.

On his way the prince saw a man with a huge belly lying on the ground. 'If you need someone, hire me. If I try hard, I can be three thousand times fatter.' 'If that is true', said the king's son, 'then I can surely use you. Come, come with me!' They continued the journey together and after a while they came across a man who was lying on the grass with his ear to the ground.



'What are you doing?', asked the prince. 'I am listening', answered the man. 'What are you listening to?' 'To everything that is happening in the world. I can hear everything. I can even hear the grass growing.' The prince asked: 'Can you tell me what you hear from the court of the queen with the most beautiful daughter?' 'I hear a suitor dying', spoke the man. 'I can use you. Come with me', said the prince. And they continued their travels.

They saw two feet and a piece of leg in the forest, but the rest of the body they could not see. 'You are so incredibly tall!', said the prince. 'Oh', said the tall man. 'This is nothing! If I stretch out, I am three thousand times taller than the highest mountain. I would gladly serve you, if you will have me.' 'Surely. I can use you. Come along', said the prince.

The fellowship continued and found a man with a blindfold. 'Is there something wrong with your eyes?', asked the prince. 'Everything I look at, bursts into pieces. That powerful are my eyes', said the blindfolded man. 'Come along. I can

use you', spoke the prince. Again they continued and now they came across a man who was lying in the hot sun, but was still shivering from the cold. 'How is that possible?', asked the king's son. 'The hotter it gets, the colder I get', answered the man. 'You are a wondrous person', said the prince. 'If you want to serve me, you are welcome to come along.'

The group again continued their journey and saw a man, who stretched his neck and could watch over everything. The king's son asked: 'What are you looking at?' And the man answered: 'I have such bright eyes, I can see the whole world.' So the prince said: 'If you want, you can join us, because someone like you we don't have in our group yet.'

The prince arrived at the old queen with his six servants and said: 'I am here to marry your daughter.' 'Yes', answered the queen, 'I have three challenges and if you succeed in them all, you shall marry my daughter. First, I want you to bring back my ring that I dropped in the Red Sea.'

The prince went to his servants and said: 'Can you advise me?' 'I will see where the ring is', said the man with the bright eyes. He looked in the sea and said: 'Look, there it is, by that rock.' 'I can grab it for you', said the tall man, 'but I will have to see it.' 'I can arrange that', said the fat man and he drank the entire sea. The tall man bent over and grabbed the ring. The prince was delighted and brought the ring to the queen. The queen said: 'Yes, it's mine. You have fulfilled the first challenge, here is the second. Beyond my castle, graze three hundred fat cows. Eat these with skin and bone and drink three hundred barrels of wine from the cellar. If anything is left over, you will die.'



'Can I invite guests? Alone it won't taste good', asked the prince. The queen sneeringly laughed and answered: 'You can invite one guest.' The king's son said to the fat man: 'You shall be my guest.' The fat man got to work and ate the three hundred cows with skin and bone and asked if there were more. The barrels he drank without needing a glass and then licked the last drop from his hands. When the meal was finished the prince went to the queen to tell her the challenge had been succeeded.

She was amazed and said: 'As far as you have gotten, no one has gotten before, but there is one last challenge: tonight I will bring my daughter to your room, but don't fall asleep. I shall check in at midnight, if she has disappeared, you have

lost.' 'Oh', thought the prince, 'that is easy. I shall keep my eyes open.' But the servants smelled trouble and said: 'Who knows what kind of ruse this is. You have to pay close attention.'

In the evening the servants sat down in a circle around the princess and they put the fat man in front of the door so no one could get in or out of the room. This lasted until 11pm, then they all fell asleep due to a spell of the queen and the princess disappeared. A quarter to twelve the spell was broken and they woke up. 'Oh, no!', yelled the prince. 'Now I am doomed.'

'Stay quiet', said the man who could hear everything. 'She is behind a rock, three hundred meters from here and is crying over her fate.' 'I can get her', said the tall man, 'but I need a strong glare to remove the rock.' Together, in no time, they had retrieved the princess. When the clock hit twelve, they were all sitting in the room and when the old queen saw this she was startled and said to the prince: 'You can do more than I can.'

Even though the prince had succeeded in all the challenges the queen still tried to keep him from marrying the princess and whispered in the princess's ear: 'It's a disgrace. He only managed because of his servants.' The proud princess was sensitive to this and said: 'You may have succeeded in the challenges, but to marry me you have to stand in fire for three days.'

When the servants heard this, they said: 'We all helped out, except for the cold one.' They took him and put him in the fire. 'I've never been this cold! If it had taken any longer, I surely would have frozen.'

Now there were no escapes anymore and the princess had to marry the prince. When they were married, the servants said their goodbyes and the prince brought his wife to a pig keeper near the castle. Once they arrived he said to his wife: 'I'm not a prince, but a pig keeper and this is my father and we shall help him.'

They went to an inn and he told the innkeeper to steal the royal clothes quietly at night. The next day the princess had nothing to wear. The innkeeper's wife gave her an old skirt and a pair of old stockings and acted as if it was a huge gift. 'If he wasn't your husband, I would not have given you anything.'

The princess then believed that her husband was indeed a pig keeper and went to work and said to herself: 'I deserve this, because of my stupid pride.' After eight days of working she couldn't take it anymore for her feet were full of wounds. Then she was approached by two people who asked her if she knew who her husband was. 'Yes, a pig keeper', she answered. 'Come with us', said the pair. And they brought her to a castle. There was her husband standing in royal clothes. He kissed her and said: 'I had to endure so much for you. It seemed fair that you had to endure something for me.' They held a big party and they lived happily ever after.



Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.

Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom