

The Frog Prince

Adapted from Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's original story by Axel Grimm

In olden times, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, marveled every time it shone upon her face. In the vicinity of the king's castle there was a large, dark forest, and in this forest, beneath an old royal Poinciana tree, there was a lake. In the heat of the day the princess would go out into the forest and sit under the shade of the tree by the lake. To pass the time she would take a golden ball, throw it into the air, and then catch it. It was her favorite plaything.

Now one day it happened that the princess's golden ball did not fall into her hands, but instead it fell to the ground and rolled right into the water. The princess followed it with her eyes, but the ball disappeared. Then she began to cry. She cried louder and louder, and she could not console herself.

As she cried, someone called out, "What is the matter with you, princess?"

She looked around to see where the voice was coming from and saw a frog, who had stuck his thick, ugly head out of the water. "Oh, it's you, frog," she said. "I am crying because my golden ball has fallen into the lake."

"I can help you, but what will you give me if I bring back your plaything?" answered the frog.

"Whatever you want, dear frog," she said, "my clothes, my pearls and precious stones, and even the golden crown that I am wearing." The frog answered, "I do not want your clothes, your pearls and precious stones, nor your golden crown, but if you will love me and accept me as a friend, and let me sit next to you at your table and eat from your golden plate and drink from your cup and sleep in your bed, if you will promise this to me, then I'll dive down and bring your golden ball back to you."

"Oh, yes," she said, "I promise all of that to you if you will just bring the ball back to me." But she thought, "What is this stupid frog trying to say? He just sits here in the water with his own kind and croaks. He cannot be a companion to a human."

As soon as the frog heard her say "yes" he stuck his head under and dove to the bottom. He paddled back up a short time later with the golden ball in his mouth and threw it onto the grass. The princess was filled with joy when she saw her beautiful plaything once again, picked it up, and ran off.

"Wait, wait," called the frog, "take me along. I cannot run as fast as you." She paid no attention to him, but instead hurried home and soon forgot the poor frog.

The next day, just as the princess had sat down to dinner, she heard a strange noise—plip plop, plip plop—as if something was coming up the marble staircase: and soon afterwards there was a gentle knock at the door, and a little voice cried out and said:

"Youngest daughter of the king, open up the door for me,
Don't you know what yesterday, you said to me down by the lake?
Youngest daughter of the king, open up the door for me."

Then the princess ran to the door and opened it, and there she saw the frog, whom she had quite forgotten. At this sight she was sadly frightened, and shutting the door as fast as she could came back to her seat. The king asked her what the matter was. "There is a nasty frog at the door that lifted my ball for me out of the water," she said. "I told him that he could live with me here, thinking that he could never get out of the lake; but there he is at the door."

While she was speaking the frog knocked again at the door. The king said to the young princess, "As you have given your word you must keep it; so go and let him in."

She went and opened the door, and the frog hopped in and followed her, step by step, to her chair. There he sat and cried, "Lift me up beside you."

She delayed, until at last the king commanded her to do it. Once the frog was on the chair he wanted to be on the table, and when he was on the table he said, "Now, push your little golden plate nearer to me that we may eat together."

She did this, but it was easy to see that she did not do it willingly. The frog enjoyed what he ate, but almost every mouthful he took made her distraught. At length he said, "I have eaten and am satisfied, now I am tired, carry me into your little room and make your little silken bed ready, and we will both lie down and go to sleep."

The king's daughter began to cry, for she was afraid of the cold frog which she did not like to touch, and which was now to sleep in her pretty, clean bed.

But the king grew angry and said, "He who helped you when you were in trouble ought not afterwards to be despised by you."

So she took hold of the frog with two fingers, carried him upstairs, and put him in a corner, but when she was in bed he crept to her and said, "I am tired, I want to sleep as well as you, lift me up so I may rest on your pillow."

At this she was terribly angry, and took him up and threw him with all her might against the wall. "Now, will you be quiet, odious frog," said she.

But when he fell down he was no frog but a king's son with kind and beautiful eyes. He told her how he had been bewitched by a wicked witch and turned into a frog. "You have broken her cruel charm, and now I have nothing to wish for but that you should go with me into my father's kingdom, where I will marry you, and love you as long as you live."

The young princess was not long in saying 'Yes' to all this; and the next day they got into a coach with eight beautiful horses, and set out, full of joy and merriment, for the prince's kingdom, which they reached safely; and there they lived happily a great many years.