

The Frog Prince (Grimm Brothers)

Once upon a time, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful. But the youngest was so beautiful that even the sun was surprised, when it shone in her face.

Close by the king's castle there was a great dark forest, and under an old tree in the forest there was a well. When the day was very warm, she went out into the forest and sat down at the cool fountain. And when she was bored she took a golden ball, and threw it up on high and caught it, and this ball she loved so much.



But one time it happened that her golden ball did not fall into her little hand, but rolled straight into the deep water. The princess began to cry, and cried louder and louder, and could not be comforted.

Suddenly someone said to her, "Why are you crying so loud? Even a stone would show pity."

She looked round, and saw a frog stretching forth its ugly head from the water.

"Ah, oldwater-splasher, is it you," she said, "I am weeping for my golden ball, which has fallen into the well."

"Do not weep," answered the frog, "I can help you, but what will you give me if I bring your golden ball up again?"

"Whatever you will have, dear frog," said she, "My clothes, my pearls and jewels, and even my golden crown."

The frog said: "I don't want your clothes, your pearls and jewels or your golden crown. But if you will love me and let me be your companion and play-fellow, and sit by you at your little table, and eat off your little golden plate, and drink out of your little cup, and sleep in your little bed - if you promise me this I will go and bring you your golden ball up again."

"Oh yes," said she, "I promise you all you wish, if you will but bring me my ball back again." But she thought, "What a silly frog. All he does is to sit in the water with the other frogs, and croak. He can never be a friend and companion to me."

So the frog when put his head into the water and after a short time it came up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the grass.

The king's daughter was very happy to see her golden ball, and picked it up, and then she ran away with it. "Wait, wait," said the frog. "Take me with you. I can't run fast as you can." The frog screamed his croak, croak, after her as loudly as he could. The princess did not listen to it, but ran home and soon she forgot the poor frog, who was forced to go back into his well again.

The next day when she had seated herself at table with the king and all the courtiers, and was eating from her little golden plate, something came creeping splish splash, splish splash, up the staircase, and when it had got to the top, it knocked at the door and cried, "Princess, youngest princess, open the door for me."

She ran to see who was outside, but when she opened the door, the frog sat there. Then she slammed the door in great haste, sat down to dinner again, and was quite frightened.

Of course the king saw that her heart was beating violently, and said: "My dear child, what are you so afraid of? Is there perhaps a giant outside who wants to carry you away?"

"No, it is no giant but a disgusting frog. Yesterday as I was in the forest sitting by the well, playing, my golden ball fell into the water. And because I cried so, the frog brought it up again for me. He wanted me to promise him that he could be my companion, and I did, but I never thought he would be able to come out of his water. And now he is outside there, and wants to come in to me."

A second time it knocked on the door, and cried: "Princess, youngest princess, open the door for me, don't you know what you said to me yesterday by the well? Princess, youngest princess, open the door for me!"

Then said the king, "You must perform what you have promised. 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 did not want to, but the king commanded her to do it. The frog wanted to be on the table and said: "Now, push your little golden plate nearer to me that we can eat together."

She did this, but it was easy to see that she did not do it willingly. The frog enjoyed the meal, but the princess felt miserable.

Finally he said: "I have eaten and am satisfied, now I am tired, carry me into your little room and make your little bed ready. Then we will both lie down and go to sleep."

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

But the king got angry and said: "The frog helped you when you were in trouble. Now keep your promise!"

So she took him 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."

At this she was really really angry. So she took him up and threw him with against the wall. "Now you will be quiet, you ugly frog," said she.

But when he fell down he was no frog but a king's son with kind and beautiful eyes. And by her father's will he was now her dear companion and husband.

Then they went to sleep, and next morning when the sun awoke them, a carriage came driving up with eight white horses, which had white feathers on their heads. They were harnessed with golden chains, and behind stood the young king's servant Faithful Henry.

Faithful Henry had been so unhappy when his master was changed into a frog that he had caused three iron bands to be laid round his heart, lest it burst with grief and sadness. The carriage was to conduct the young king into his kingdom. Faithful Henry helped them in, and placed himself behind again. And was full of joy and happiness.

After a short time the king's son heard a cracking behind him as if something had broken. So he turned round and cried, "Henry, the carriage is breaking." "No, master, it is not the carriage. It is a band from my heart, which was put there in my great pain when you were a frog and imprisoned in the well."

Again and once again while they were on their way something cracked, and each time the king's son thought the carriage was breaking. But it was only the bands which were springing from the heart of Faithful Henry because his master was set free and was happy.

(Translated by Juliane, Lea and Sarah)