



BROAD, LONG AND SHARPSIGHT

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom and in that kingdom lived a king and his only daughter. She was as beautiful as she was sharp, but she was also very picky. Princes came rushing to ask her for her hand in marriage from far and wide, but not a single one stroke her fancy.

One day she said: “I will only marry a man who can keep me in my chambers for three days and three nights and won’t let me get away. But those who would let me escape will have their head cut off!”

The king tried saying no to her, shaking his troubled royal head, but the princess wouldn’t hear of it. The princes and the dukes from all over the world gathered in the palace, trying to fulfil the princess’s task, but none succeeded, the princess escaped from every one of them.

One day a young prince called Martin heard of the beautiful princess who would only marry someone who could keep her in her room for three days and three nights. He packed his things right away and embarked on a long journey to try his luck.

As he was walking along the road and whistling, he chanced upon a stranger. “Where are you headed?” asked Martin.

“Oh, I’m just roaming through the world, trying to sway a bit of luck my way,” answered the wanderer.

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“And what are you good at?” asked Martin curiously.

“I can do what no other could. I can grow my belly so big no one could pass around me even on the widest of roads.” And already he started growing his belly and soon no one else could fit on the path next to him.

Martin couldn't believe his eyes. What a hefty fellow, I will call you Broad! “Listen, why don't you come along with me? Two could surely find a bit of luck more easily than one,” suggested Martin.

Broad nodded and both of them set off together. As they were walking, they met another man, as thin as a hair.

“Where are you going?” asked Martin.

“I'm just wandering the world, trying to find a bit of luck,” answered the slim fellow.

“And what can you do?” Martin kept asking.

“I can do what no other could. With a single step I can cross mountains and when I stretch my hands, I can touch the sky.” And indeed, he suddenly grew so high his head was hidden in the clouds and when he made a single step, whoosh, he was miles away.

“Wow, I will call you Long!” said Martin.

“Listen, why don't you come with us? Three of us will surely find some luck more easily,” Martin started convincing him.

The long fellow only grinned at him and the three of them were now walking together. As they were walking, they noticed a man sitting by a fire with a bandana over his eyes.

“Why are you sitting here with your eyes covered?” asked Martin.

“My sight is so sharp I can see miles away, but when I look too close, everything I see turns into flames,” he took off his bandana and suddenly the logs on the fire burned to ash.

“That is impressive,” said Martin. “I will call you Sharpsight.”

“And would you care to join us? We roam the world seeking some luck and the four of us would walk more merrily.”

The sharp-sighted man nodded and once they roasted some bacon on the fire

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together, the four of them set off side by side. When they reached the town where the choosy princess resided, Martin revealed his plans to his companions.

“If you help me get the princess’s hand, I’ll reward you all handsomely and we can rule together.”

The three men agreed and Martin took off to the palace to ask for his chance to guard the princess. His only condition was that he could bring along his three servants.

“Think carefully, dear stranger,” warned him the king. “If the princess escapes from you, all four of you will lose your heads.”

Martin agreed and all four of them were escorted to princess’s chambers. Long and Sharpsight sat by the window while Broad blocked the door. Martin sat next to the princess and started chatting with her.

They talked of many things for a long time when suddenly the princess’s eyes blinked a couple of times and she fell asleep. By that time, Long had already dozed off on Sharpsight’s shoulder while Sharpsight was leaning towards the wall and calmly breathing deep into his dream. Broad was lying in the doorway and snoring so loudly as if he was sawing wood. Martin saw that everyone was asleep and rested his head on the princess’s shoulder, looking forward to a bit of sleep after his long journey. Just as he fell asleep, the princess first slowly opened one eye to see if everyone was really sleeping, then carefully moved Martin’s head on a royal pillow. She quietly stood up, opened the door, jumped over Broad and left her chambers. At the palace gate, she put on a beggar’s clothes and suddenly the princess was no more, just an old beggar. When Martin woke up and saw that the princess was gone, he quickly rushed to wake up his friends. Sharpsight looked out of the window and saw someone in ragged clothes walking in the fields in the distance. He focused his eyes even more and recognised the princess herself. With a single step, Long leapt all the way to her and with one more leap, they were both back in the palace.

Later in the morning, the king came to see how Martin was faring. When he saw him and his daughter chatting in the room, his jaw dropped to the floor. He organised a feast for them, but he wasn’t too happy about the idea of Martin

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marrying his only daughter. The day quickly passed by and when the sun neared the horizon, Long and Sharpsight once again sat by the window while Broad blocked the door. They talked and talked long into the night when suddenly the princess's eyes blinked a couple of times and she fell asleep. Our friends also lay to rest, but just as they fell asleep, the princess woke up and carefully placed Martin's head on a royal pillow. Then she quietly opened a chest and took out a rope. She tied one end to a column in her room and threw the other out of the window. She climbed down the rope, ran to the palace gate where she changed clothes, grabbed a basket and set off to the country.

When Martin woke up and saw that the princess was gone, he rushed to wake up his friends. Sharpsight looked out of the window and saw someone with a basket full of clay pots walking in the distance. But once he focused his eyes, he recognised the disguised princess. Long made his leap towards her and suddenly he was walking by her side. He wrapped his arms around her and with another long leap they were both standing back in the chamber.

In the morning, the king couldn't believe his eyes when he saw that Martin managed to keep his daughter in her room again. He prepared a big feast, even though he wasn't fond of the idea of Martin marrying the princess.

"We must better prepare for the third night," said the king to his daughter and together they racked their brains to figure out how to get the better of Martin and his friends.

In the meantime, Martin stressed to his companions to be more vigilant this night. After all, if they failed, they all would lose their heads.

When the evening came, everyone sat down at their usual spots and Martin with the princess chatted until midnight. Suddenly the princess yawned, her eyes blinked a couple of times and she was deep in slumber. Martin was determined not to fall asleep tonight, but the princess and his friends were already snoozing away and before long, he began dozing off as well. Just as he fell asleep, the princess opened her eyes and walked on her tippy toes towards her bookcase. She carefully pushed it from the wall and opened a hatch behind it leading to a secret staircase. Then she quickly ran all the way down to the palace gate. A

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carriage with four of the fastest horses in the kingdom was already waiting for her. She jumped right in and with a snap of a whip, she was far into the country. Later when everyone woke up, the princess was long gone. They saw the bookcase moved from the wall and the secret staircase behind it and Martin knew they were in trouble. Sharpsight looked out of the window, but no matter how hard he looked, he couldn't see the princess anywhere. Long took three large leaps over the land, but the princess was nowhere to be found. Martin was already hanging his head, thinking they would all lose their lives when finally Sharpsight noticed a fisherman in a boat sailing across the ocean. Long grabbed Broad and with one long jump, they were standing by the water. Broad then threw himself into the water and grew so big he pushed all the water out of the sea. The fishing boat was suddenly stuck on dry land and Long stepped right next to it. In the boat was the princess dressed as a fisherman. Long took her and with a single step, they were back in the palace.

The king was shocked when he saw the princess in Martin's arms. When the princess saw how much Martin had fought for her, she grew fond of him. She agreed she would marry him and the king had no choice but to throw them a magnificent wedding. As a dowry they got half of the kingdom, Martin became the king and the princess became the queen. Broad, Long and Sharpsight became the royal advisors and together they lived and ruled happily ever after.