



## THE GOLDEN CRAFT

Once upon a time there was a king, a queen and their little daughter, Princess Jane. They had a happy life, and they didn't even need to work because the king and the queen had more than enough wealth to give themselves a nice life.

One day, they decided to go sailing on the sea. They had had all their usual sailing things ready; all they had to do was get on board and sail off on their usual course. But this time, it didn't go as usual; as soon as they set sail, a strong wind started to blow and pushed their boat off course.

After a few days, the sea brought them to the shores of another country. When they disembarked, they realized nobody knew who they were. The king told everyone that they were royalty, but it was in vain. If they wanted to survive, they would have to find work. Neither the king nor the queen had ever worked in their life, however, and they didn't have any skills, so the only work they could find was herding sheep. In return for herding sheep, a farmer gave them food and shelter.

As the years passed, the king and the queen got used to hard work and Jane grew into a true beauty. She also herded sheep, like her parents, and one evening, as she walked back to their hut and sang to herself, the prince of the country passed her on his horse. The moment he saw her, he couldn't tear his eyes away. He fell in love with her in that moment and when he got home he

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announced to the royal court that he found his bride. But when his father asked the prince who this future bride was, he wouldn't hear of his son marrying a girl who herded sheep.

"You deserve a noble wife. Don't tell me you want to marry a shepherd girl, I won't allow that!" the king said, outraged. But the prince refused to even think about another girl, and after some time the king gave his consent. He insisted things must be done properly, however, and so he sent a royal messenger to the shepherd's hut to give him a satchel of coins and tell him that the crown prince wanted to marry his daughter.

The messenger came into the hut, as instructed, and poured the satchel of coins on the table.

"The crown prince would like to ask for your daughter's hand in marriage," he said to the shepherd.

"And what handicraft can your crown prince do?" the former king asked.

The messenger stared at the shepherd, confused, before asking, "Why would he need any kind of craft? He's the successor to the royal throne."

"I'm sorry," the shepherd said, "but if the prince has no skills, he cannot marry my daughter."

The messenger was still confused when he came back to the royal court and passed on the shepherd's demands. Soon everyone was dumbfounded. They couldn't believe their ears! What kind of shepherd wouldn't want his daughter to marry a prince? The king sent a second messenger to the shepherd with another bag of coins, but he returned with the same demand. The king was angry, but the prince was so madly in love with the girl that he went out to learn a craft. When he got to the shops, he heard hammers banging and metal clanging. He went from one shop to the next looking for a craft to learn, but each seemed too difficult for him to master properly. Only in the last workshop, where a lady was using a squeaky potter's wheel in the corner and an old cobbler was mending holes in shoes, did the prince begin to have hope. The old cobbler was a good teacher and the prince learned his craft quickly. Soon, he was even able to fix worn down shoes for pilgrims so they could continue their journey.

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One day a shepherd came to the store to have his shoes fixed and gave the prince three coins. The prince fixed them himself to prove that he had skills and could do a craft, and while he worked on the shoes the shepherd talked to him.

“If only I knew at least one handicraft, I wouldn’t have to herd sheep and get holes in my shoes.” The shepherd sighed. Then, suddenly, he began talking about his family’s old life on the royal court, and how they had never needed skills and so they had never learned any. He told the prince about being king in another country and how good their life had been and how they hadn’t needed to work. When the shoes were finished, the shepherd was very impressed, and the prince asked again for Jane’s hand in marriage.

The prince’s father was very happy to find that his son would be marrying a noble woman after all. He was so overjoyed that he threw an enormous celebration for their wedding and they all drank and ate and celebrated for three days and three nights. As a wedding present, the king had a craftsman build an enormous boat for the newlyweds, and after the wedding the whole family sailed out onto the ocean to find their old country.

And, ever since then, everyone in the royal court has had to learn at least one craft so that, should they ever be stranded or lost in the world, they would be able to live happily.