



THE PRINCE AND THE FROG

Once upon a time there was a kingdom ruled by a very old king. The king had two twin sons, Ivan and Victor, but he couldn't decide who should get the crown when he died.

One day, he sent for them and said, "My dear sons, I am going to give you three tasks. Whichever of you can better accomplish the tasks will be king. Your first task is to call upon your future brides and bring me the most beautiful scarf they have."

Victor was excited. This would be an easy task! He was engaged to a beautiful girl whose wardrobe was full of beautiful clothes, so he ran to her house as fast as he could. Ivan, on the other hand, was incredibly sad. He hadn't found a girl he loved yet, so he had no one to ask for a scarf. He wanted so badly to be king, and he didn't know what to do. He wandered into the garden, hoping to come up with an idea, but he couldn't think of anything. He sat under a tree, and after a while he heard a frog croak and looked up to see it sitting on a stone near him.

"Why are you so sad?" asked the frog.

"My father is the king, and he said that he would give me and my brother three tasks and that whoever was more successful would get the crown," Ivan

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explained. “He just gave us the first task, but I can’t do it. I’m supposed to ask my girl for the most beautiful scarf she has and bring it to him... but, you see, I don’t have a girl yet,” sighed the prince.

“Stop worrying, prince! I can help, just follow me,” said the frog, and hopped away.

Ivan followed the frog into a cave.

“Once there was a pool here, but it dried up many years ago. I need you to bring me water,” the frog said. Ivan was confused about how this would help him, but he went out to the stream and brought as much water back as he could. When he finished filling the pool, the frog thanked him and said, “Look in the back of the cave, and you will find what you need.”

Ivan ran to the back of the cave and found the most beautiful scarf he had ever seen. Thrilled, Ivan thanked the frog, took the scarf and ran home as fast as he could.

The king called the boys into his chambers and they both ran in, impatient to show him what they had accomplished. Victor held out a splendid blue scarf.

“Well done, Victor! That truly is a beautiful scarf. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a prettier scarf in my life!” said the king.

Victor smirked, knowing his brother had no bride, but when Ivan held out the scarf he got from the frog, the whole chamber lit up with its beauty and even Victor had to admit it was the more beautiful scarf.

“For your second task,” the king said, “Go to your brides and bring me the most beautiful ring they have.”

Once again Victor ran to his girl and asked her for the most beautiful ring she had, while Ivan, who still had no bride of his own, sadly returned to the gardens. When he reached the tree he had last sat by, he once again saw the frog.

“Prince, why are you still sad?” asked the frog.

“The scarf was beautiful, but I can’t do the second task,” Ivan said. “I have to bring my father the most beautiful ring my bride has. But, as you already know, I don’t have a bride.”

“Don’t worry,” the frog said, yet again. “Come with me.” The frog took him back to

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the cave and asked him to go to the forest and gather some wood for a fire. Without giving it a second thought, Ivan went out to the woods and started chopping. He gathered as much wood as the frog wanted and when he had collected enough, she gave him the most beautiful ring he had ever seen. Ivan thanked her over and over and ran home.

Once again, the two brothers met in the royal chamber to show their father what they had brought. Victor gave his father a lovely golden ring inlaid with rubies. "Well done, that's a very beautiful ring," said the king approvingly.

Then Ivan took his ring out of his pocket and held it out to his father. The lustre and splendour of the jewel overwhelmed them.

"I've never seen such a marvellous jewel," the king said, impressed.

Then he gave his sons the last task: "Go to your brides and bring them back with you. Whoever has the more beautiful bride will get the crown."

Victor ran to fetch his girl. "This time," he thought, "I will triumph! Ivan might have a better scarf and ring than me, but he doesn't have a prettier girl!"

Ivan went back to the gardens again, thinking, "The frog gave me the most beautiful scarf and then a ring so beautiful it lit up the whole chamber. But how could she give me the most beautiful bride? It can't be possible."

All of a sudden, the frog hopped over to him and asked, "Why are you still so sad, my prince?"

Ivan sighed and said: "The third task is the hardest. Father wants me to introduce my girl to him. The crown will go to whoever has the prettier bride. But I don't have a bride, I only have you."

"Well," the frog said. "I think I can help. When I asked you for water, you filled the pool to the brim. When I asked you for wood, you gathered heaps and heaps. I can help you, but I need you to take me to your hands and kiss me."

Ivan stared at the frog, confused. What help would it be to kiss a frog? But since he had already completed her other tasks and gotten exactly what he needed, he decided it couldn't hurt to try. He picked the frog up and held her close to his lips, closed his eyes and kissed her. Suddenly, the ground trembled and the sky lit up with lightning. Startled, Ivan opened his eyes and saw the most beautiful girl he

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had ever seen standing right before him. He looked around for the frog, but only saw the girl.

“It’s me,” the girl said. “I’m a princess, and I was cursed and turned into a frog many years ago. The only way to reverse the curse was a kiss from a good man. If you’ll have me, I will be your bride.”

Ivan was so happy! He took her hand and brought her home to his father. Victor’s girl was very pretty and elegant, but she couldn’t compare to Ivan’s princess.

“You have both found such beautiful brides,” the king said, “But it is Ivan –“

“Father,” Ivan interrupted, “I would like to concede to my brother. Victor should have the crown. I will marry my princess and we shall rule her kingdom, in the East.”

Victor and his bride were ecstatic, and the king was happy that he did not have to choose between his sons. And so the brothers lived happily ever after, loving their wives dearly and fairly ruling their kingdoms.