The Frog Who Wanted a Friend: Grimm Brothers Fairy Tale #1

Once upon a time, there lived a king who had many daughters. All of his daughters were beautiful, but the youngest daughter was the most beautiful of them all.

Nearby the king's castle there was a dark forest, and next to an old tree in this forest there was a well. (A "*well*" is a deep hole in the ground from which people can get water.) On hot days, the youngest princess used to sit by the well, because it was very cool.

The princess had a golden ball that she liked to play with. She loved this golden ball very much--it was her favorite toy. The princess liked to throw the ball up into the air, and catch it again.

But one day, as the princess was throwing the ball up, and catching it, she accidentally dropped the ball, and it fell into the well, and sank into the water. And the well was so deep that the princess couldn't see the bottom.

Because this ball was the princess's favorite toy, she was very sad. She started crying. She cried louder and louder.

"Why are you crying Princess?" someone said. The princess looked around to see who was talking, but she couldn't see anybody. Then she heard the voice again. "What's wrong Princess? Why are you crying?"

The princess looked down, and saw that the voice was coming from a frog. "Oh, it's you frog," she said. "I am crying because I have lost my favorite toy, a golden ball, which fell into the well."

"Stop your crying," said the frog. "I can help you. But what will you give me if I bring your ball back to you?"

"You can have anything you want," said the princess. "My clothes, my jewellery, even my golden crown which I am wearing now."

But the frog said, "I'm a frog. I can't use clothes, or jewellery, or a golden crown. What I want is for you to love me. I want to be your best friend, and to be with you all the time. I want to sit with you at the table during mealtimes, and eat food off of your golden plate, and drink out of your little cup, and sleep in your bed with you. If you promise me all of these things, I will swim down and get your golden ball."

"Oh yes, I promise," said the princess. "You can have all of that if you will bring me my ball back again." But in her head, the princess was thinking, "What a stupid frog! He lives in the water here with other frogs. He can't be best friends with a human, and he can't possibly come to the castle with me."

As soon as the frog heard the princess's promise, he put his head into the water and swam down. After a short time, he came swimming back with the golden ball in his mouth, and threw the ball on the grass.

The princess was so happy to see her golden ball again that she forgot all about the frog and her promise. She picked up her golden ball and ran back to the castle. "Wait! Wait!" called the frog, as loudly as he could. "Princess, pick me up and take me with you! I cannot run as fast as you can." But it did him no good. The princess ran back to the castle, and the frog had to go back to his well again.

The next evening, the princess was eating dinner with the king and with all her sisters. While they were eating, they heard a splashing sound coming up the staircase, and then, when the sound got to the top of the staircase, there was a knock on the door.

And a voice cried out, “Princess! Youngest Princess! Open the door for me.” The princess ran to see who it was, but when she opened the door, she didn’t see anyone. Then she looked down at the ground, and there was the frog, sitting there.

The princess quickly shut the door, and went back to her seat at the table. She was very frightened, and the king saw that she was troubled. So the king asked, “My child, what are you afraid of? Is there a giant outside who wants to carry you away?”

“No,” the princess replied. “It’s not a giant. It’s a disgusting frog.”

“A frog?” said the king. “What does a frog want with you?”

“Ah, dear father,” the princess said, “Yesterday, I was in the forest sitting by the well and playing with my golden ball, when my ball fell into the water. Because I cried so much, the frog swam into the well and got my golden ball for me. But the frog made me promise that we would be best friends, and that he would always be with me. I promised him this, but I never thought that he would be able to come out of the water. And now he is here, outside, and he wants to come in and be with me.”

While the princess was talking, there was a second knock at the door, and the frog cried out, “Princess! Youngest princess! Open the door for me! Don’t you remember what you said to me yesterday by the well? Princess! Youngest princess! Open the door for me!"

Then the King said, “You must keep your promises. If you promised to let the frog stay with you, then you have to do it. Go to the door and let him in."

So the princess went and opened the door, and the frog hopped in and followed her to her chair. The princess sat down in her chair, but the frog was still down on the ground. So the frog cried out, "Lift me up and put me on the chair next to you." The princess just sat there and didn’t do anything, until at last the king ordered her to do what the frog had said.

Once the frog was on the chair, he asked to be on the table. So the princess put him on the table. And when the frog was on the table, he said, "Now, push the little golden plate nearer to me, so that we can eat together." The princess did this, but it was easy to see that she was not happy. The frog ate happily, but the princess was very unhappy while she ate.

After some time, the frog said, "I have eaten and I am full. Now I am tired. Carry me into your room and make your bed ready, and we will both lie down and go to sleep."

The princess began to cry, for she was afraid of the cold frog which she did not like to touch, and she did not want the frog to sleep in her pretty, clean little bed. But the king got angry and said to the princess, "If someone helps you when you are in trouble, you must be thankful to them afterwards." So the princess picked up the frog with two fingers, and carried him upstairs, and put him in a corner of her room. Then she went into the bed by herself. But the frog hopped over to the bed and said, “I am tired. I want to sleep in the nice bed just like you. Lift me up and put me in the bed or I will tell your father."

What do you think will happen next?

Then the princess became terribly angry. She picked up the frog, and threw him against the wall as hard as she could. “Be quiet, you horrible frog,” she said.

But then, an amazing thing happened. The frog hit the wall, and fell down to the floor. But when he hit the floor, he was no longer a frog, but a prince, a human prince, with beautiful kind eyes.

The princess was very surprised, but the prince told her his story. A wicked witch had turned him into a frog. The witch had left him in the well, and no one but a princess could break the witch’s magic, and turn him back into a prince.

When the princess saw how kind and nice the young prince was, she fell in love with him instantly. And, it was easy to get married, because she had already promised him that they would always be together. And her father, the king, had already told her that she must keep her promise.

So, they went to sleep, and in the morning, they got married, and they said goodbye to everyone in the castle, and they left together to go live in the prince’s kingdom.

They got into a beautiful carriage. (A “*carriage*” is something that people rode in long ago before there were cars. It has wheels, and is pulled by horses.)

Someone got out of the carriage to help the prince and the princess. It was the prince’s servant, named Henry. (A “*servant*” is someone whose job it is to help the prince.) Henry was so faithful that his nickname was Faithful Henry. (If someone is “*faithful*”, it means that they will never forget you, and always help you, no matter what.)

When the prince had been changed into a frog, Faithful Henry had been very sad. In fact, Faithful Henry had been so sad that he had been worried his heart would break. So he had three iron bands put around his heart to protect it from breaking. (A “*band*” is something you put around something.)

Faithful Henry helped the prince and the princess climb into the carriage. Then, Faithful Henry got in the carriage himself, and rode behind them.

As they were riding away, the prince heard a crackling sound, that sounded like something was breaking. So the prince turned around and cried out, “Henry, the carriage is breaking!”

“No, my prince,” said Faithful Henry. “It is not the carriage. It is the iron band around my heart. When you were turned into a frog and put into the well, I was so sad that I had to put iron bands around my heart to protect it from breaking. But now that I can see you again, I am so happy that my heart is growing bigger and bigger. And the iron bands around my heart are beginning to break.”

Three times the prince heard a crackling sound, and each time the prince thought the carriage was breaking. But each time, it was just another band on Henry’s heart. The happier Henry became, the bigger his heart grew.

And so, the prince, the princess, and Faithful Henry rode away to live in the prince’s kingdom. And they all lived happily ever after.