

The Frog Prince, or Iron Henry

by the Brothers Grimm

Narrator 1
Frog / Prince

Narrator 2
King

Princess
Henry

- Narrator 1: Once upon a time there was a princess who went out into a forest and sat next to a cool well. She took great pleasure in throwing a golden ball into the air and catching it, but once it went too high. She held out her hand with her fingers curved to catch it, but it fell to the ground and rolled and rolled right into the water.
- Narrator 2: Horrified, the princess followed it with her eyes, but the well was so deep that she could not see its bottom. Then she began to cry bitterly.
- Princess: I'd give anything, if only I could get my ball back. I'd give up my clothes, my precious stones, my pearls-- anything in the world.
- Narrator 1: At this a frog stuck his head out of the water
- Frog: Princess, why are you crying so bitterly?
- Princess: Oh, you ugly frog, how can you help me? My golden ball has fallen into the well.
- Frog: I do not want your pearls, your precious stones, and your clothes, but if you'll accept me as a companion and let me sit next to you and eat from your plate and sleep in your bed, and if you'll love and cherish me, then I'll bring your ball back to you.
- Princess: (*Thinking to herself*) What is this stupid frog trying to say? After all, he does have to stay here in the water. But still, maybe he can get my ball. I'll go ahead and say yes.
(*To the frog*) Yes, to everything you've asked. Just bring me back my golden ball.
- Narrator 2: The frog stuck his head under the water and dove to the bottom. He returned a short time later with the golden ball in his mouth and threw it onto the land.

Narrator 1: When the princess saw her ball once again, she rushed toward it, picked it up, and was so happy to have it in her hand again, that she could think of nothing else than to run home with it.

Frog: Wait, princess! I can't run like you can! Take me with you like you promised!

Narrator 2: The princess paid no attention to to the frog.

Narrator 1: The next day the princess was sitting at her table when she heard something coming up the marble steps: plop, plop. Then there came a knock at the door.

Frog: Princess, princess, open the door for me!

Narrator 2: She opened the door and saw it was the frog, whom she had put completely out of her mind. Frightened, she slammed the door shut and returned to the table.

King: Daughter, why are you afraid?

Princess: There is a disgusting frog out there who got my golden ball out of the water. I promised him that he could be my companion, but I didn't think that he could leave his water. Now he is just outside the door and wants to come in.

Frog: Youngest daughter of the king,
Open up the door for me,
Don't you know what yesterday,
You said to me down by the well?
Youngest daughter of the king,
Open up the door for me.

King: What you have promised, you must keep. Go and let the frog in.

Narrator 1: The princess obeyed, and the frog hopped in, then he followed the princess to her chair.

Frog: Lift me up onto your chair and let me sit next to you.

Princess: I will not!

King: My daughter, you must!

Narrator 2: So the princess did as she was told and placed the frog on the table next to her.

Frog: Now push your golden plate closer. I want to eat from it.

Princess: I will not!

King: Daughter, you must!

Narrator 1: So the princess did as she was told and moved the golden plate closer to the frog. The frog ate until he could eat no more.

Frog: Now I am tired and want to sleep. Take me to your room, and make a place for me in your bed, so that I can sleep beside you.

Narrator 2: The princess was horrified when she heard that. She was afraid of the cold frog and could barely stand to touch him, and yet he was supposed to lie next to her in her bed. She began to cry.

Princess: I will not!

King: (*Angrily*) Daughter, you should not despise the one who helped you when you were in trouble! You must do as you promised.

Narrator 1: There was no helping it; she had to do what her father wanted, but in her heart she was bitterly upset. She picked up the frog with two fingers, carried him to her room, and placed him in a corner. Then she climbed into her bed.

Frog: I am tired, Princess, and I want to sleep as much as you. Lift me into your bed, or I will tell your father.

Narrator 2: So filled with contempt, the princess picked up the frog. But instead of laying him next to herself, she threw him as hard as she could against the wall.

Princess: Now you will leave me in peace, you ugly, odious frog!

Narrator 1: But when he fell down, he was no longer a frog, but a handsome young prince.

Prince: I was bewitched by a wicked witch, and only you could rescue me from the well. Tomorrow we will go together to my kingdom.

Narrator 2: And so they became dear companions and were wed the next morning. The prince's faithful servant, Henry, arrived in a splendid carriage drawn by eight horses and decorated with feathers and glistening with gold.

Narrator 1: Faithful Henry had been so saddened by the prince's enchantment that he had placed three iron bands around his heart to keep it from bursting in sorrow.

Narrator 2: The prince climbed into the carriage with the princess. His faithful servant stood ready to drive them to his kingdom. After they had gone a short distance, the prince heard a loud crack as if something had broken.

Prince: Henry, the carriage is breaking apart.

Henry: No, my lord, the carriage it's not breaking. That is a band that surrounds my heart, that suffered such great pain when you were sitting in the well, when you were a frog.

Narrator 1: Once again, and then once again the prince heard a cracking sound and thought that the carriage was breaking apart, but it was the bands springing from faithful Henry's heart because his master was now free and happy.

The End