**The Talisman**

/ˈtælɪzmən/护身符

A **prince** and a **princess** were still on the **honeymoon**. They felt so **extremely** happy. Only one **thought** **disturbed** them; it was this: will we always be as happy as we are now? And so they wanted to own a talisman that would **protect** them against every **disappointment** in **marriage**.

一位王子和公主仍在度蜜月。他们感到无比的开心，不过有一个念头让他们觉得有些不安;那就是：“我们会永远像现在这样幸福吗? ”于是，他们想拥有一个护身符，可以保护他们在婚姻中不受任何挫折。

Now, they had often heard of a man who lived in the forest, and who was **held** in high **esteem** by everyone for his **wisdom**. He knew how to give the best advice for every **hardship** and **misery**. The prince and the princess went to him and told him what was **troubling** them.

他们经常听说有一位住在森林里的老人，大家都很尊敬他。因为他很聪明，他知道如何为每一位深陷困境的人提供最佳的建议。王子和公主走到这位老者面前，告诉他正在困扰他们的事情。

When the **wise** man had heard it, he replied, “Journey through all the lands in the world, and when you meet a truly **contented** married couple, ask them for a little piece of the **linen** they wear next to their skin. When you get it, always carry it with you. That is an **effective** **remedy**.”

智者听了，回答说:“走遍世界各地，当你遇到一对真正心满意足的夫妇时，向他们要一小块贴身的亚麻布。当你得到它的时候，总是带着它。这是一个有效的补救方法。”

The prince and the princess **rode off**, and soon they heard of a knight who, with his wife, was said to live the happiest of **lives**. They came up to the castle and asked them, themselves, **whether** in their marriage they were as extremely happy as **rumor** would have it.

王子和公主骑马走了，不久他们就听说有一位骑士，据说他和他的妻子过着最幸福的生活。他们来到城堡，亲自问他们，他们的婚姻是否像传闻所说的那样幸福。

“Of course! ”was the reply. “Except for one thing: we have no children!”

“当然!”他回答。“除了一件事:我们没有孩子!”

Here, then, the talisman was not to be found, and the prince and the princess had to continue on their journey to **seek** out the most perfectly **contented** married couple.

在这里，他们没有找到护身符，王子和公主不得不继续他们的旅程，去寻找最幸福的夫妇。

Next they came to a city in which,they heard,an honest **burgher** lived with his wife in the greatest **harmony** and contentment. They went to him, too, and asked whether he really were as happy in his marriage as people said.

接下来，他们来到了一座城市，听说那里有一个诚实的市民和他的妻子过着非常和谐、非常满意的生活。他们也去找他，问他是否真的像人们说的那样幸福。

Yes, indeed I am! Replied the man. “My wife and l live the best of lives together. **If only** we didn’t have so many children. They cause us so much sorrow and **anxiety**!”

是的，我的确是!那人回答说。“我和妻子一起过着最好的生活。要是我们没有这么多孩子就好了。它们给我们带来了太多的悲伤和焦虑!”

The talisman was not to be found with him, either, and the prince and the princess journeyed on through the land and **inquired** everywhere after contented married couples.

他身上也找不到护身符，于是王子和公主就走遍了这片土地，到处打听新婚夫妇的幸福情况。

But no one **came forward**.

但是没有人**站出来**。

One day, as they were riding along fields and **meadows**, they noticed a **shepherd** who was playing quite **merrily** on a **shawm**. At the same time they saw a woman come over to him with a child on her arm and **leading** a little boy by the hand. As soon as the shepherd saw her, he went to meet her. He **greeted** her and took the child, which he kissed and **caressed**. The shepherd’s dog came over to the boy, **licked** his little hand, and barked and jumped up and down with **joy**. In the **meantime** the wife made ready the pot that she had brought with her and said, “Papa, come now and eat.”

一天，当他们骑着马在田野和草地上走着的时候，他们注意到一个牧羊人正兴致勃勃地吹着笛子。与此同时，他们看见一个女人抱着一个孩子走到他跟前，牵着一个小男孩的手。牧羊人一看见她，就去迎接她。他向她打了个招呼，抱起孩子，又亲又抱。牧羊狗走到小男孩身边，舔着他的小手，高兴地又叫又跳。与此同时，妻子准备好了她带来的锅，说:“爸爸，现在来吃吧。”

The man sat down and helped himself to the dishes. But the first **bite** went to the little child and he **divided** the second between the boy and the dog. All this the prince and the princess saw and heard. Now they went closer, talked with them, and said, “Are you truly what might be called a happy and contented married couple?”

那人坐下来，自己拿了碗。第一口喂了小孩，他把第二口分给了男孩和狗。王子和公主看到和听到了这一切。他们走得更近了，彼此交谈着，说道:“你们真是一对幸福美满的夫妻吗?”

“Yes, indeed we are!” replied the man. “Praise to be God! No prince or princess could be happier than we are.”

“是的，我们确实是!”那人回答说。“谢天谢地!没有哪个王子或公主能比我们更幸福。”

“Then listen,”said the prince. “Do us a favor that you will not come to **regret**. Give us a tiny piece of the linen that you wear next to your skin.”

“听着。”王子说。“帮我们一个忙，你就不会后悔了。给我们一小块你穿在身上的亚麻布吧。”

At this request the shepherd and his wife looked strangely at each other. At last he said, “Heaven knows we would gladly give it to you, and not just a tiny piece but the whole shirt and **petticoat** if only we had them. But we don’t own a thread!”

听到这个请求，牧羊人和他的妻子奇怪地对视了一下。最后，他说:“上帝知道，我们很乐意把它给你，而且不仅是一小块，而是整件衬衫和裙子。可是我们没有一根线呀!”

So the prince and the princess continued on their journey without any success. At last they grew tired of this long, **fruitless** wandering, and so they headed for home. When they now came to the wise man’s hut, they **scolded** him for having given them such poor advice. He listened to the whole story of their journey.

于是王子和公主继续他们的旅程，没有任何成功。最后，他们对这种漫长而徒劳的流浪感到厌倦了，于是就回家了。当他们来到智者的小屋时，他们责备智者给了他们这么糟糕的建议。他听完了他们旅行的全部经过

Then the wise man smiled and said, “Has your journey really been so fruitless? Didn’t you come home rich in experience?”

当智者微笑着说:“你的旅程真的如此徒劳吗?你不是带着丰富的经验回家的吗?”

“Yes,”said the prince. “I have learned that **contentment** is a rare **blessing** on this earth.”

“是的,”王子说。“我明白了知足是这个世界上少有的福气。”

“And I have learned,”said the princess, “that in order to be **content**, you need nothing more than just that——to be content.”

“我明白了，”公主说，“要得到满足，你所需要的仅仅是满足。”

Then the prince gave the princess his hand. They **gazed** at each other with an **expression** of the deepest love, And the wise man gave them his blessing and said, “In your hearts you have found the true talisman. Guard it carefully, and never will the **evil** **spirit** of **discontent** **gain** power over you!”

于是王子向公主伸出手来。他们深情地对视着，智者祝福他们说:“在你们的心中，你们找到了真正的护身符。小心地守护它，不满的恶灵将永远不会控制你!”