

have given me the comeliest, the worthiest, and the most gallant young man ever born as my husband. You must know that when he comes into my chamber to lie by my side, he casts off his dirty hide and leaves it on the ground and changes into a graceful, handsome youth. No one could ever believe this miracle unless they saw it with their own eyes."

When the queen heard those words she was sure that her daughter-in-law must be jesting, but Meldina insisted that what she said was true. And when the queen asked to witness with her own eyes the truth of this matter, Meldina replied, "Come to my chamber tonight, just as we are falling asleep. I will keep the door open, and you will discover that what I have told you is the truth."

That same night, when the time came, and everyone else had gone to sleep, the queen had some torches lit and went, accompanied by the king, to the chamber of her son. When she walked in, she saw the pig's skin lying on the floor in the corner of the room. Then she went over to the bedside and found Meldina lying in the arms of a handsome young man. When the king and queen set eyes on the two of them, their delight was very great, and the king ordered the pig's hide to be torn to shreds before anyone left the chamber, thus lifting the curse.<sup>2</sup> The king and queen nearly died from the shock and joy of finding that their son had become human.

And King Galeotto, when he saw that he had so fine a son and a grandchild as well, put aside his diadem and his royal robes and passed the crown on to his son, who was made king with great pomp. Ever afterwards he was known as King Pig. To the great joy of the people in the land, the young king began his reign, and he lived long and happily with Meldina, his beloved wife.

## BROTHERS GRIMM

### The Frog King, or Iron Heinrich<sup>†</sup>

In the olden days, when wishing could help you, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful. But the youngest was so beautiful that even the sun, which had seen so much, was filled with wonder when it shone upon her face. There was a dark, vast forest near

2. In this version of the story, Meldina's betrayal of the pig's confidence has no consequences, but in other variants, the heroine must undertake a perilous journey or carry out "impossible" tasks to redeem herself and be reunited with her husband. The phrase *this lifting the curse* has been added by the editor.

† Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich," in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 7th ed. (Berlin: Dieterich, 1857; first published: Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812). Translated for the first edition of this Norton Critical Edition by Maria Tatar. Copyright © 1999 by Maria Tatar.

the king's castle, and in that forest, beneath an old linden tree, was a well. When the weather was really hot, the king's daughter would go out into the woods and sit down at the edge of the cool well. And when she got bored, she would take out her golden ball, throw it up in the air, and catch it again. That was her favorite toy.

One day it happened that the golden ball didn't land in the princess's hands when she reached up to catch it, but fell down on the ground and rolled right into the water. The princess followed it with her eyes, but the ball had disappeared, and the well was so very deep that you couldn't see the bottom. She began to weep and wept louder and louder, unable to stop herself. While she was wailing, a voice called out to her: "What's going on, princess? Stones would be moved to pity if they could hear you."

She turned around to see where the voice was coming from and saw a frog, which had stuck its big ugly head out of the water.

"Oh, it's you, you old splasher," she said. "I'm crying because my golden ball has fallen into the well."

"Be quiet and stop crying," said the frog. "I can help you, but what will you give me if I fetch your toy?"

"Whatever you want, dear frog," she said. "My dresses, my pearls and jewels, even the golden crown I'm wearing."

The frog said: "I don't want your dresses, your pearls and jewels, or your golden crown. But if you promise to cherish me and let me be your companion and playmate, and let me sit beside you at the table and eat from your little golden plate, drink from your little cup, and sleep in your little bed, if you promise me that, I will crawl down into the well and bring back your golden ball."

"Oh, yes," she said. "I'll give you anything you want as long as you get my ball back." But to herself she thought: "What nonsense that stupid frog is talking! He's down there in the water croaking away with all the other frogs. How could anyone want him for a companion?"

Once the frog had her word, he dove down into the water head first. After a while he came paddling back up with the ball in his mouth and tossed it onto the grass. When the princess caught sight of her beautiful toy, she was overjoyed. She picked it up and ran off with it.

"Wait for me," the frog cried out. "Take me with you. I can't run the way you do."

He croaked as loudly as he could after her, but it was no use. She paid no attention, sped home, and quickly forgot about the poor frog, who crawled back down into the well.

The next day, after she had sat down for dinner with the king and all the other courtiers and was eating from her little golden plate, something came crawling up the marble staircase, splash, splash, splash, splash. When it reached the top of the stairs, it knocked at the door and called out: "Princess, youngest princess, let me in!"

She ran to the door to see who it was, and when she opened the door, the frog was waiting right there. Terrified, she slammed the door as fast as she could and went back to the table. The king could see that her heart was pounding and said: "My child, why are you afraid? Was there a giant at the door coming to get you?"

"Oh, no," she replied. "It wasn't a giant, but it was a disgusting frog."

"What does a frog want from you?"

"Oh, father dear, yesterday when I was playing at the well, my golden ball fell into the water. And because I was crying so hard, the frog fetched it for me, and because he insisted, I promised that he could be my companion. I never thought that he would be able to leave the water. Now he's outside and wants to come in to see me." Just then there was a second knock at the door, and a voice called out:

Princess, youngest princess,

Let me in.

Did you forget

Yesterday's promise

Down by the chilly waters?

Princess, youngest princess,

Let me in.

Then the king said: "When you make a promise, you must keep it. Just go and let him in."

She went and opened the door. The frog hopped into the room and followed close on her heels until she reached her chair. Then he sat down and called out: "Lift me up beside you."

She hesitated, but the king ordered her to obey. Once the frog was up on the chair, he wanted to get on the table, and once he was there he said: "Push your little golden plate closer to me so that we can eat together."

She did as he said, but it was obvious that she was not happy about it. The frog enjoyed his meal, but for her almost every little morsel stuck in her throat. Finally he said: "I've had enough to eat and am tired. Carry me up to your little room and prepare your little bed with the silken covers."

The princess began to cry, and was afraid of the clammy frog. She didn't dare touch him, and now he was going to sleep in her beautiful, clean bed. The king grew angry and said: "You shouldn't scorn someone who helped you when you were in trouble."

The princess picked up the frog with two fingers, carried him up to her room, and put him in a corner. While she was lying in bed, he came crawling over and said: "I'm tired and want to sleep as much as you do. Lift me up or I'll tell your father."

Then she became really cross, picked him up, and threw him with all her might against the wall. "Now you'll get your rest, you disgusting frog!"

When he fell to the ground, he was no longer a frog but a prince with beautiful, beaming eyes. At her father's bidding, he became her dear companion and husband. He told her that a wicked witch had cast a spell on him and that she alone could release him from the well. The next day they would set out together for his kingdom. They fell asleep, and, in the morning, after the sun had woken them, a coach drove up drawn by eight white horses in golden harnesses, with white ostrich plumes on their heads. At the back of the coach stood Faithful Heinrich, the servant of the young king. Faithful Heinrich had been so saddened by the transformation of his master into a frog that he had to have three hoops placed around his heart to keep it from bursting with pain and sorrow. Now the coach was there to take the young king back to his kingdom, and Faithful Heinrich lifted the two of them in and took his place in the back again. He was overjoyed by the transformation. When they had covered some distance, the prince heard a cracking noise behind him, as if something had broken. He turned around and called out:

"Heinrich, the coach is falling apart!"

"No, my lord, 'tis not the coach,  
But a hoop from round my heart,  
Which was in such pain,  
While you were down in the well,  
Living there as a frog."

Two more times the prince heard the cracking noise, and he was sure that the coach was falling apart. But it was only the sounds of the hoops breaking off from Faithful Heinrich's heart, for his master had been set free and was happy.

## ANGELA CARTER

### The Tiger's Bride<sup>†</sup>

My father lost me to The Beast at cards.

There's a special madness strikes travellers from the North when they reach the lovely land where the lemon trees grow.<sup>1</sup> We come

<sup>†</sup> Angela Carter, "The Tiger's Bride," in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (New York: Penguin, 1993). Copyright © the Estate of Angela Carter 1995. Reprinted by permission of the Estate of Angela Carter c/o Rogers, Coleridge & White Ltd.

1. A reference to Italy, which was described in a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) as the "land where the lemon trees blossom."

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