

Adriana the Beautiful and the Wise Owl

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Once upon a time in a far away land there lived a king who had three handsome sons. The youngest, Ivan, was not the brightest son, but he was honest and loyal to his father. One day Ivan asked his father if he could go hunting. Although the king did not want Ivan to leave his side, he allowed him to go as long as he came back as soon as possible. Ivan agreed and set out for a great hunting trip on his horse.

Ivan rode for a long time or a short time through the forest and unfortunately lost his way. Ivan came to a path, which led to the gate of a beautiful kingdom, but the path was guarded by a wise owl which was perched in a giant tree. The wise owl looked at Ivan and said, "You look like a brave youth. You cannot enter this path until you complete one task for me. You must find me the rarest flower in the forest and bring it back to me. I need this flower to cure my sick daughter." Ivan accepted this task from the wise owl and set off to find the flower.

Ivan traveled on his horse for a long time or a short time through the forest. Through a clearing he could see Baba Yaga's house on chicken legs. He approached the house and asked Baba Yaga where he could find the rarest flower in the forest. Baba Yaga said, "I do not know of this flower, so go forth and ask my older sister maybe she can help you." Ivan continued on through the forest until he reached Baba Yaga's older sister's house, also named Baba Yaga. Ivan approached the house on chicken legs and asked Baba Yaga where he could find the rarest flower in the forest. Baba Yaga opened the door and said, "I do not know of this flower, so go forth and ask my eldest sister maybe she can help you." Ivan began to get discouraged but continued through the forest

until he came to Baba Yaga's eldest sister's house, also named Baba Yaga. Ivan approached the house and asked Baba Yaga where he could find the rarest flower in the forest. Baba Yaga opened the door and invited the brave youth into her house. Once Ivan entered, he ate and drank his fill. Then Baba Yaga said, "I know of this rare flower, you must go to the tenth kingdom and pick it from the garden." Ivan listened carefully, thanked Baba Yaga, and left for the tenth kingdom.

Ivan rode on his noble steed for a long time or a short time until he reached the tenth kingdom. He entered the gate and rode around. He found the garden and searched for the rarest flower. He looked and looked and thought that he had been tricked, until he spotted it. It was indeed the rarest flower in the forest; he had never seen anything like it before. Ivan rode back to the wise owl and presented the flower to him. The owl accepted the flower with great appreciation and not only let Ivan continue down the path to the kingdom, but gave him a box for Ivan to keep in his pocket. The wise owl told Ivan to only open it when he needed it desperately and it would help him with whatever he needed.

Ivan rode down the path and entered the kingdom. The king welcomed Ivan into the kingdom and gave him all the food and drink he wanted. At dinner Ivan met the king's beautiful daughter Adriana. Ivan took one look at Adriana and thought that she was the most beautiful maiden he had ever seen. There are no words that could even describe how beautiful she was. The king asked him where Ivan had come from. Ivan explained to the king that he was simply going on a hunting trip and had lost his way. The king felt sorry for Ivan so he let Ivan stay in his kingdom for the night so then he could continue his journey the following day. Ivan was very thankful to the king. Ivan

went up to the guest room; on his way he passed by Adriana's room. He peered in to see the beautiful maiden brushing her hair, when suddenly a giant three headed dragon flew into the room and swept her away. Ivan ran downstairs to get the attention of the king and told him what had happened to his daughter.

The king was furious at the action of the dragon and worried for the safety of his favorite daughter. Ivan volunteered to find the king's daughter if Ivan could marry her once he found her. The king agreed and sent Ivan on his way. Ivan mounted his noble steed and head out to find the beautiful Adriana.

Ivan traveled for a long time or short time down the path he used to get to the kingdom until he reached the house of the eldest Baba Yaga that had helped him find the rarest flower. Ivan told Baba Yaga how the three headed dragon kidnapped the princess and he needed to rescue her. Baba Yaga told Ivan, "go to the ninth kingdom in the thrice land, there you will find a lone tower made of silver with sparkling diamonds. The three headed dragon is keeping the princess there. The dragon guards the tower, but the dragon usually sleeps for two hours each night." Ivan thanked Baba Yaga deeply for her help and continued on his journey to the ninth kingdom in the thrice land.

Ivan rode for a long time in order to reach the far away kingdom. Ivan reached the tower, saw the beautiful maiden in the window, and then quickly hide behind a giant tree so to not be seen by the dragon. The dragon paced around the tower, guarding the princess very closely. Ivan stood behind the tree for the rest of the day and all night until the dragon went to sleep. He whistled and got Adriana's attention. Adriana came to the window and talked to her prince until the dragon started to stir. Ivan quickly hid behind the tree again all day and all night until the dragon fell asleep once again. He whistled

and Adriana came to the window. Again, they talked until the dragon stirred. Ivan hid for a third day behind the tall tree until the dragon fell asleep then came out to whistle for Adriana. On the third day, Adriana told Ivan to stare the dragon in the eye and it will delay the dragon from trying to kill him.

The dragon began to stir, arose, and saw Ivan. Ivan took out the box that the owl had given him and stared into the dragon's eyes. While Ivan was staring he opened the box and a mighty sword lay inside of it. Ivan picked up the sword; it was a magnificent sword, just as the dragon began to attack Ivan. The dragon lifted his hand and clawed Ivan's cheek, but Ivan swung the sword and cut all three of the dragon's heads off in one swift swing. Ivan put the mighty sword back into the box and returned the box to his pocket. Ivan and Adriana mounted his horse and began the journey back to the kingdom.

On the path to the kingdom Ivan and Adriana ran into Ivan's brother. Ivan did not know that his father had sent his brother out to look for him after he had been missing for a long time. Ivan's brother took one look at Adriana and was instantly jealous. He did not have a wife. Ivan, Adriana, and Ivan's brother decided to rest on the side of the path before returning to Adriana's father. During the night Ivan's brother slipped Ivan a special sleeping pill that would last one year and took Adriana. Ivan's brother made Adriana swear not to tell anyone what had happened or he would kill her.

Ivan lay fast asleep on the side of the road for many days and many nights. Ivan's brother brought Adriana back to her father. Her father was so happy, so Ivan's brother and Adriana were married immediately. A year passed and finally Ivan awoke. He saw that both his brother and Adriana were gone. Ivan got up and started walking back to the kingdom. Ivan walked for a long time and then suddenly ran into the wise owl that he

had gotten the rarest flower for. The owl asked him what was wrong and Ivan told the wise owl the whole story. The wise owl was still very grateful for the flower so the wise owl told Ivan to get on his back. The wise owl flew Ivan back to Adriana's kingdom, when they arrived Ivan thanked the wise owl and ran to find the king and his beautiful princess.

Ivan entered the court and approached the king. Ivan told the king how he killed the dragon that kidnapped the princess and on his way back to the kingdom his brother had drugged him. Ivan showed the king the scar on his face to prove that he had fought the dragon. The king took Ivan to Adriana. When Adriana saw Ivan she ran to him and cried tears of joy. Adriana told her father the same story that Ivan told him. The king was very distraught; he banished Ivan's brother from the kingdom and annulled their marriage. Ivan and Adriana were married immediately. I drank beer at their wedding; it ran down my mustache, but never went in my mouth.