

Once upon a time there lived a man and his wife who had three daughters. The first one was known for her intelligence, the second one for her beauty, and the third one, Palina, was considered a fool. The first spent her days reading books and speaking with other intellectuals. The second spent her afternoons picking flowers from the fields while chatting with young men, looking for a husband. Palina did neither of these things; she simply lay in the house all day. One day her mother said to her: “My little Palina, you have become so lazy, what will you do for your future? Your sister has her knowledge to get her a job; your other has her beauty to find her a wealthy husband. You must set out and make something of yourself. Your father’s back is ailing him and he can no longer work and support you in your laziness.” Palina was surprised at what her mother had said to her. Without being asked again she left her home in search of something that would make her family proud.

The fool walked past her eldest sister hovering over a book and held her head up high. The sister turned and shouted at her: “And where does the fool think she is going, venturing so far from the comfort of the house?” Palina ignored the comment and kept walking. She passed her beautiful sister while she flirted with a handsome young man. This sister was surprised as well, but Palina’s only comment was: “I am off to make our family proud.” She walked for a long time or a short time and was caught off guard when she heard something behind her. She looked and saw that there was a penguin standing on the side of the path with a stick stuck in his webbed foot. Palina looked at the penguin’s tears and gently took the stick out of his foot. “Thank you for your kindness. I see that you are on a journey to make your family proud. In the third ocean in the third kingdom there is a great whale that swallows everyone that goes into the

water. He happened to engulf a young prince who has a vial around his neck containing a powder that will cure your father's aching back. For your kindness I will give you the ability to become slippery and swim like a penguin." The penguin then invited Palina into his house where she ate and drank her fill and rested for six days. On the sixth day she set out for the third ocean in the third kingdom.

She walked for a long time or a short time when she reached the third kingdom. She stopped at the palace and demanded to see the king. "What business do you have in my kingdom, Palina the Fool?" Palina stood tall and said with a strong voice: "I have come to save your son from the great whale that swallowed him up." The king laughed at this remark. "Nonsense! I have sent my best men out there to save him and you know what happened to them? They are keeping him company in the belly of the whale!" "If you give me a boat I will find your prince and after doing so you will write on a scroll that I have accomplished this so that I may prove to my family that I have made something of myself." "It is agreed then, Fool. Take one of the boats out on the dock and good luck to you." The king chuckled as Palina walked out of the palace to a certain death.

Palina walked for a long time or a short time to the third ocean. She found a bright red boat to her liking and set out rowing into the ocean. She knew the red boat would attract the whale. Some time passed, not much, not little when she felt a stirring under her boat. A gigantic whale surfaced right next to her boat. "Well there is a tasty looking thing. I hope you don't mind that I am going to swallow you up in one bite." Palina just smiled at the whale and prepared herself for what was going to happen. In one giant bite she found herself in the dark belly of the beast. There she had no trouble

finding the prince, he was the only one with a vial around his neck. “Hello prince, I have come to rescue you from this belly.” “And a fine job you are doing fool, how can you save me while you yourself are in the belly as well?” “Don’t worry about a thing, just promise that when we are safe on the land that you will give me your vial of powder so I may save my father from his aching back.” The prince agreed and Palina instructed him to hold on tight to her back so that she may slip out of his mouth into the water. Just then the whale opened his mouth to swallow another boat and Palina used her power of slipperiness to easily glide down the giant tongue and out of its mouth on her belly with the prince holding on tight. As soon as she hit the water she swam as fast as a penguin for the shore. The whale tried to overtake them but his enormous body couldn’t keep up.

The prince danced now that he was safe on the land again. He handed her the vial of powder. “My little Palina, you have saved my life and now I wish to marry you.” She of course obliged and they returned to the castle to tell the king. “Well Palina, you saved my son, and now I shall not only write your accomplishment on a scroll but I will welcome you into my family as my daughter.” The two wed on that very day. There was a feast of many cakes and meats and wines to celebrate their marriage and the prince’s homecoming. A long time or a short time later Palina and her new husband set out to see her family. They were more than excited to see her and her prince, but even more so that she had brought back a bag full of gold and the powder that would heal her father’s back. Her father would no longer need to work, even with his back being in good shape. Palina showed them the scroll the king made to prove that she had made something of herself in her time away from the family. Her parents were now proud of her, but her sisters were extremely jealous. Palina saw that in the time she was gone her eldest sister had an

accident that made her forget all that she had learned from books. She could no longer work for herself. Her second sister had burned herself and was no longer beautiful and none of the wealthy young men wanted her as their bride. Palina joyfully invited her family back to her new kingdom to help celebrate her accomplishments. There they met with the king and his many friends and family. There was a spectacular feast to celebrate the wedding with more food and wine than Palina's family had ever seen before. They all sang and danced until they were exhausted or silly from wine. I danced at the feast, too. I drank wine and mead but it ran down my mustache and did not go into my mouth.