

The Magic Key

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April 15, 2003

Russian Fairy Tales, Russian 0090

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Once upon a time, there lived a King and Queen in a kingdom far away. They were overjoyed at the birth of their daughter whom they called Jossalyn. At the birth of princess, the King and Queen had a lavish feast and invited everyone from the kingdom.

When Jossalyn was at the age of 14, her mother became very ill and died. Before she died however, she gave Jossalyn a gift. With trembling hands, she gently placed a solid gold key in the princess' soft hand. "My dear, said the Queen, keep this key with you always, and every night before you go to sleep, place this key under your pillow, and you will have pleasant dreams always." With those last words painfully uttered, the Queen slipped away to the angels of Heaven.

Years passed by and beloved father, the King became lonely and longed for companionship. One day he came into his daughter's chamber and said to her, "My dear daughter, I'm getting up in years and I don't want to die a lonely man. I have asked the Baroness to marry me.

The Baroness came to the palace shortly thereafter and brought along with her two beautiful daughters the close in age to Jossalyn. However, the stepsisters and the Baroness were jealous of Jossalyn's surpassing beauty over their own, and the amount of attention she received from the king. One night, the stepsisters and their mother went in Jossalyn's bedroom and hacked off all her luscious locks. While they were performing this evil act, Jossalyn was having an amazing dream that she was walking along the beach picking up extraordinary looking seashells. In her dream she came across the most beautiful seashell she had ever seen, but something was strange about it; however she put her ear up to it and listened for the ocean. Instead of the sounds of the ocean waves

caressing her ear, a voice said to her: “When you wake up tomorrow morning, do not look into any mirrors, instead go into the garden, and behind the waterfall you will see a water phial, drink it. The next day the princess awoke and remembered her dream very clearly. She avoided all the mirrors and went into the garden. Sure enough, behind the water fall she found the water phial. She drank it in its entirety and returned to the palace. She greeted her stepsisters and stepmother, who just looked at her in disbelief, and she continued on her way. The second night the evil ones snuck into Jossalyn’s room once again. They sat there wondering what they could possibly do next that would permanently damage her beauty. Baroness Elizabeth suggested they go by the river and collect leeches. They did just that and threw them on Jossalyn. Of course with the help of the magic key Jossalyn was having another delightful dream and felt no pain. Jossalyn was walking through a wonderful place called “Candyland,” where everything was made of candy. She walked along a chocolate brick road, passed over a pudding river, and conversed with gelatin dolphins that were swimming in the pudding.

“Can we give you some advice?” they asked.

“Most certainly,” replied Jossalyn.

“Well, when you wake up tomorrow morning, you may be in a lot of pain and feel like the life was sucked out of you. Go out into the orchard and pick some grapes. Smash the grapes with your feet and keep the juice. Dump the juice all over you body and you will come to life again.”

“But wait!” pleaded Jossalyn. “What on earth would cause me to be in so much pain?” The dolphins didn’t answer her, instead everything went black and the sun forced her to open her eyes. She noticed a lot of blood spilled on her sheets and became

frightened, but remembered the instructions that the dolphins had given her. She raced out into the orchard and picked hundred of grapes and brought along a container to collect the juice. Her entire body throbbing, she immersed her body with the grape juice. Immediately, she regained energy and began walking back into the palace. “Good morning Stepmother, Stepsisters,” she said as she passed them by on her way to breakfast. “Isn’t it a beautiful day?”

“Umm, sure is,” they replied in confused unison with eyes to the ground.

“I trust that you all slept well?”

“Not as well as we would have liked apparently,” they mumbled.

That night the king had a lavish feast. Young and old, rich and poor gathered at this gala to exchange stories of the past and present, and to engage in fellowship over wine and meat. A certain kind and handsome young nobleman presented himself to the king and asked permission to court his daughter Jossalyn and to one day hopefully marry her. “By all means!” the king jollily exclaimed slamming his cup on the table. “My daughter is the prettiest thing I have ever laid eyes on; of course you would be interested in her. That was the last straw for the Baroness and her two conniving daughters. The Baroness already had an eye on this nobleman as a possible suitor for one of her daughters, so she couldn’t let Jossalyn get married to him. “Come my daughters,” she said to the beasts. “We have a lot of planning to do.”

Jossalyn retired to her room after the party. She had a wonderful time dancing with the nobleman, he was so charming. Anyways, it was time for some deserved sleep. With the magical key safely tucked underneath her pillow, she slept into a dream world. “Okay my lovelies,” said the Baroness, “it’s time for plan C. The daughters and their

mother had escaped from the party earlier that evening, to make a little trip to the witch's hut in the forest. "We beg of you," pleaded the women in unison, we need something that will destroy a beauty. The old woman cackled. "Why, you've all come to the right place. I have a vicious python that produces the most dangerous venom in the whole world. If you can get her to drink it somehow, she will be paralyzed forever. The women gave the witch a very nice payment, and were on their way. Jossalyn was in absolute delight in her dream state. She was walking down the aisle with her father, who was leading her to her future husband, the nobleman. As they were exchanging rings the nobleman gave her a key instead of a ring. "This key," he said, "is not only the key to my heart, but the key to your survival." Confused, Jossalyn retrieved the key, and as soon as she touched it, her beloved mother appeared.

"Mother!" exclaimed Jossalyn. "How, why," she mumbled.

"My dear, do not be afraid," advised her mother. "You must however listen to me very carefully. When you wake up tomorrow morning you must remove the key from underneath your pillow. This key is very special and it will help you. After you wake up tomorrow morning, look at your ceiling. If you look carefully you will see a keyhole. Use your key to open it up. In there, you will find what you need."

"But mother, wait!" screamed Jossalyn.

"I must be going home now, my dear."

Jossalyn awoke to a tear-stained pillow case. Why was her mother in her dream? What was she trying to tell her? Jossalyn stood on her bed and looked up at the massive ceiling. She searched for the keyhole but couldn't find it. Becoming impatient, she looked more closely, and so the keyhole. She grabbed her key and jumped up and unlocked the door.

A rope ladder cascaded down and she began her ascent. After climbing for a long time or a short time, she came to a dark room with old trunks and boxes. On top of a locked trunk she saw a red velvet robe and remembered that it was what her mother used to wear. Not sure of why she was in there to begin with, she put on the robe and descended the ladder back into her bedroom.

Wearing the beautiful, dustless robe, she walked into the dining room where breakfast was being served. The king beamed at her, for she looked so much like her mother today, while the stepmother and her dreadful daughters sat stone-faced. A short time ago that morning the baroness and her daughters poured the venom into Jossalyn's purple porridge bowl. "Breakfast is served," announced the servants. Everyone dug into their porridge like they never ate anything so good in their lives, including Jossalyn, who was absolutely famished. Her stepmother and stepsisters were looking at her like she was going to drop dead any second, but Jossalyn ignored them and kept on eating. When she couldn't eat another bite, she excused herself and left her stepmother and stepsisters with dumbfounded looks on her face.

"Why didn't it work!" they all shouted.

"What didn't work?" inquired the king.

"Never mind, we'll just finish Jossalyn's porridge.

The stepmother and her daughters ate away the porridge like sows, but became numb all over their bodies, and collapsed to the ground. The king realized what was going on and ordered them to be banished from the kingdom. When Jossalyn heard word of this, she realized the robe had saved her. A week later, a huge wedding was held for Jossalyn and the nobleman. I was there too, but there wasn't enough beer to go around so I left early.

