

Bianca, Prince Ivan, and the Little Worm

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Once upon a time, there was a beautiful young girl who went by the name of Bianca. She lived in a small hut with her father whom she loved dearly. Both of them had an undying faith to one another. Bianca's father decided to wed a woman who was old in age and hideous to look at. Nonetheless, Bianca was kind to the old hag because that would be what her father would want. The hag brought with her two daughters, who shared the same ugly features as their mother. From the moment the hag and the daughters had met Bianca, they were struck by her exquisite beauty and were jealous. Their jealousy resulted in constant ridicule and forced labored of the young beauty. Bianca was forced to do all the cooking, cleaning, and sewing by her new stepmother and stepsisters. Bianca never did complain though, for her heart was pure and she knew that her father would want her to do as the hag told her.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the forest, lied a kingdom where Prince Ivan lived. He decided that it would be time for him to set out to search for a bride, so he asked his father for permission and rode away on his horse. Prince Ivan had planned to search every household and every part of town until he had found the fairest maiden to wed. He rode on his horse through every part of town, but he had no luck in finding his beloved maiden. Discouraged, Ivan set down against a tree, tired and restless. All of a sudden he heard a small voice.

“Hello,” the voice said.

The prince looked around, unsure to where the voice had come from.

“Hello?” he asked. He then looked next to where he sat to find a little worm looking up at him.

“What is wrong, fair prince?” the little worm asked.

“Little worm,” the prince answered, “I have been searching for the fairest maiden, for it is time that I get married, but I haven’t had any luck.”

“Ah, fair prince, you just have not been searching in the right places. You must follow your heart and you will find your maiden in a place that you would least expect.”

The little worm gave Prince Ivan a tiny compass and told him that it would help him in his quest to find the fairest maiden. The Prince thanked the little worm and went on his way. Prince Ivan continued to ride his horse, staring at the compass. All of a sudden, when he reached a certain point of the forest, the compass got extremely hot and started to glow. Prince Ivan also felt his heart pounding against his chest, feeling it almost pulling him in a certain direction. Prince Ivan took this as a sign he was getting close to his maiden, but he did not see any houses. He then looked closely at his surroundings and he saw, in the midst of all the trees laid a small hut.

“Well, I’ll give it a shot,” he thought to himself.

The prince knocked on the door of the hut and it was answered by the face of the old hag, who was Bianca’s stepmother. Taken aback by her ugly appearance, Prince Ivan almost ran away, but decided to stay.

“How may I help you, young man?” asked the hag kindly, for she knew he was the prince in search of a wife.

“I am looking for the fairest maiden to take as my wife,” the prince said.

“Well then! I have two lovely young maidens who would love to meet you!”

The prince followed the hag into the hut and was introduced to the hag’s first daughter. Shocked, because he had no idea that a young woman could be so ugly to look at, he

gently let her down. With much haste, the hag immediately brought out her younger daughter. Once again, Prince Ivan was quite startled with what he saw, as he could barely even look in her direction, and let the youngest daughter down gently.

This made the old hag very angry, so before the young prince could escape the hut and continue on with his journey, the old hag turned him into a frog.

“That’ll teach him a lesson,” the old hag said to her daughters as they all laughed together.

At that time, Bianca walked into the hut from an afternoon of picking wild berries and fruit for her stepsisters and stepmother to eat. Prince Ivan, in frog form, hopped around on the floor and saw the young beauty.

“That’s her!” he thought to himself. He had to think of a way to get closer to her, so he decided to jump into her basket full of fruits and travel with her into the kitchen. The old hag and ugly step sisters did not even take notice to where the frog had hopped to. They barely even noticed Bianca’s presence when she walked into the hut. When Bianca saw the frog in her basket she was very frightened and practically threw it out of the window. Regardless, of her attempts to get rid of the frog prince, it kept following her. Wherever she would go, the frog prince would be hopping along right behind her.

At bedtime, Bianca changed into her nightgown and said her prayers. She kneeled against her bed, and she prayed for her father and even the old hag and ugly step sisters, who were terribly mean to her. Saddened by the thought of them, she began to cry. At that very moment, the frog prince hopped onto her bed and looked up at her from underneath where she was praying. The girl did not even notice him because she was

crying so much. The frog prince was just then splashed by one of her tears and magically turned back into the handsome Prince Ivan. Bianca stared at him with wide eyes. Prince Ivan gently kissed her and they immediately fell in love.

The couple got married right away. Never again did Bianca see her stepmother and stepsisters, for her father saw the truth of their hearts was written all over their ugly faces. They all lived happily every after and prosperously! And what a fine couple they were!