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Opening extract from

Illustrated Grimm's Fairy Tales

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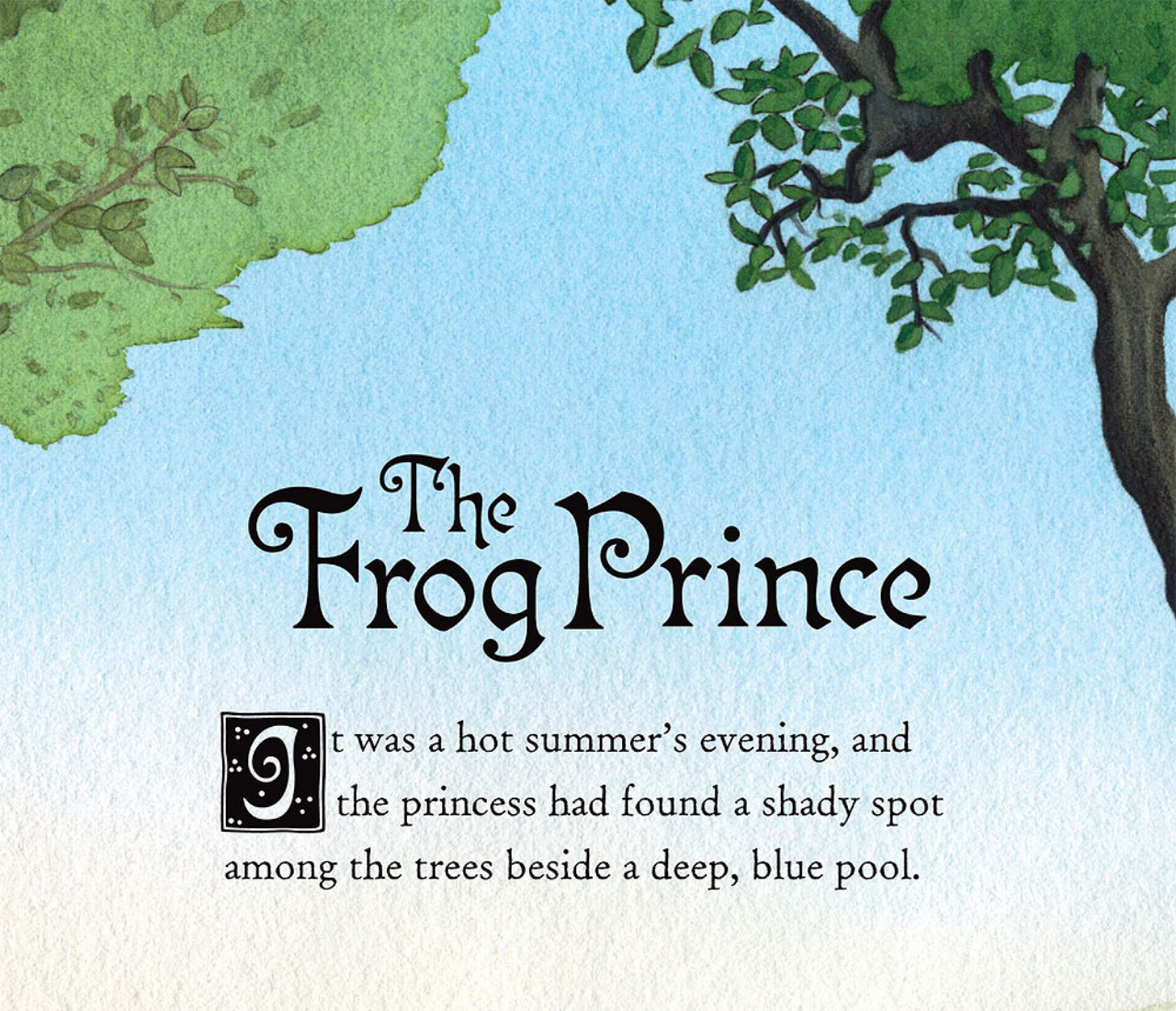
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The Frog Prince

It was a hot summer's evening, and the princess had found a shady spot among the trees beside a deep, blue pool.

Although she was already late for dinner, the princess was in no hurry to go home to the stuffy castle, so she lingered by the pool. Idly, she threw her golden ball into the air. It glinted in the evening sunlight, dazzling her. And, as she reached to catch it, her ball slipped from her fingers.

The princess watched helplessly as it landed in the pool with a plop, and vanished into the deep water. "My beautiful golden ball!" she cried. "How am I ever going to get it back?"

Then, she heard a croaky voice. "I can help you," it said.

The princess wiped the tears from her eyes, but she couldn't see anyone. "Who's there?" she called. "Where are you?"

"I'm right beside you," came the voice again.

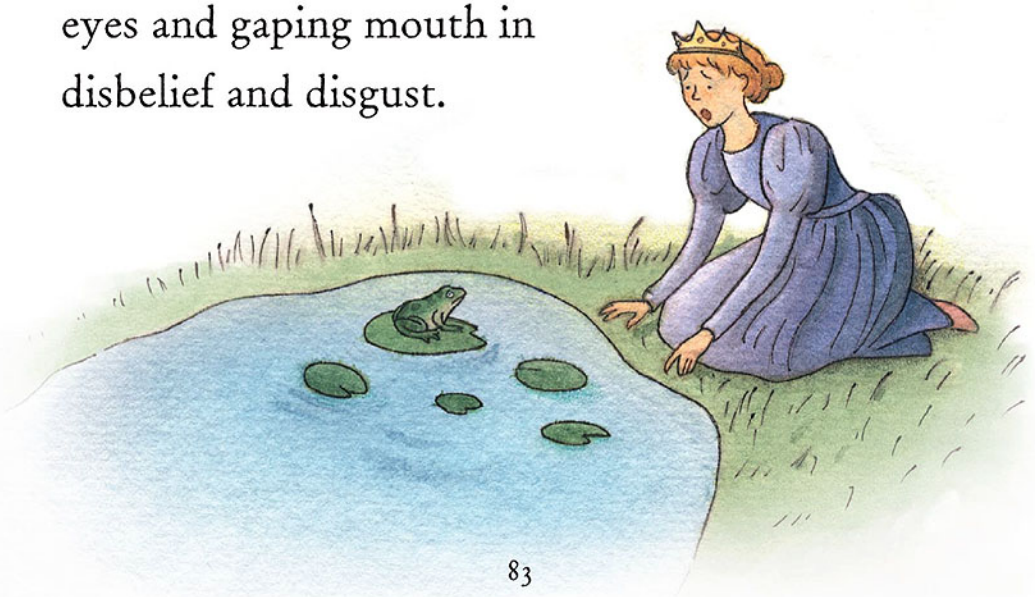
The princess looked all around her, but she still couldn't see anyone.

"I'm down here, on this lily pad," called the voice.

The princess peered down at the lily pad. "Eugh! An ugly, slimy frog," she gasped. "And it can talk."

"I may not be pretty," croaked the frog. "But I'm really very nice, when you get to know me."

The princess stared at the frog's bulging eyes and gaping mouth in disbelief and disgust.



"I can get your ball back for you, Princess," the frog continued. "But will you do something for me in return?"

"I'll do anything you want," she replied. "I'll give you my pearls, my jewels, even my crown."

"I don't want any of those things," said the frog. "All I want in the world is a friend. But when you're an ugly, slimy frog, no one wants to know you. If you promise to be my best friend, take me to your castle let me eat at your table and sleep on your pillow, then I'll get your ball back for you."

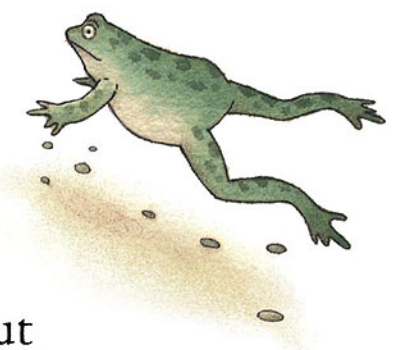
"How ridiculous," thought the princess. "Who ever heard of a princess with a frog for a friend?" But to the frog she said, "I promise."

So the frog dived into the water. There was a huge splash, and rings of ripples spread out

across the pool. The princess waited and watched as the ripples became smaller and smaller, until the water was as smooth as glass. She was about to give up and go home, when the frog burst out of the pool with her ball.

"Ta-da!" he croaked triumphantly, laying it at her feet.

"Thank you," cried the princess. She was so excited to have her precious ball back that she picked it up and ran straight home, without giving the frog a second glance.



The frog hopped after her as fast as he could. "Wait for me, I can't keep up," he called. "Take me with you to the castle, as you promised." But the princess had already left him far behind.