Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

extracts from

Tales from Grimm

Written by

Antonia Barber

Illustrated by

Margaret Chamberlain

Published by

Frances Lincoln Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

THE FROG PRINCE

There was once a king, both wise and good, who was blessed with many lovely daughters. The youngest daughter was by far the loveliest and was petted and fussed over by all her sisters. Indeed, she was so beautiful that even the sun in the sky shone more brightly when she was around. This was really rather a nuisance on hot summer days. Then, to escape from the heat, and the fussing of her older sisters, the youngest princess would steal away and play in the cool glades of the old forest that lay just beyond the palace gardens.

The old forest was dim and mysterious and more than a little magical. The princesses had often been warned by their old nurse not to stray into it. But the youngest princess was so much spoilt by her older sisters that she rarely did as she was told.

One tiresomely hot summer day, she was wandering aimlessly in the forest, singing to herself and playing with a golden ball. As always the sun seemed to seek her out, shining down through every gap in the trees.

The princess began to tease the sun, throwing her ball up through the leaves into the bright air. It flashed as the sun caught it, then fell back through the green shadows into the princess's hands. It was fun playing hide and seek with the sun and she laughed, running about on the soft leaves, tossing up the golden ball here and there. Then suddenly the sun found her, shining into her eyes so that she was dazzled and could not see the golden ball as it fell. It slipped through her hands and rolled away towards a still black pool in a deep hollow.

With a cry of dismay the princess ran after it, but it bounced against a twisted

She hung her head. "No, father," she said in a small voice. "It is only a frog."

At this a great roar of laughter ran round the table and the princess wished that the ground would swallow her.

"A talking frog?" exclaimed the king. "Why, this will amuse us all. Pray bid him come in."

"But, father," said the princess, "you don't understand. He wants to sit by me and eat from my plate."

"Does he, indeed!" exclaimed the king. "And by what right does he claim to dine with my daughter?" The princess saw that the truth could not be hidden. She was forced to tell her father, in front of everyone, how the frog had found her golden ball and of the promises she had given.

The king no longer smiled but listened with a solemn face. When she had finished, he sat a while in silence while the courtiers whispered among themselves. Then he said thoughtfully: "A talking frog. . . and in the old forest. . . "

Now I have told you that he was wise as well as just and he knew something of the magic of the old forest. Suddenly he smiled and seemed to make up his mind.

"Let the frog come in," he said.

"But, father. . . !" wailed the youngest princess.

"No 'buts'!"said the king. "You gave him your word and you must keep it!"

The princess bit her lip angrily, but she knew better than to argue with her father. She opened the door the merest crack, then ran back to her chair and sat down. She stared hard at the tablecloth in front of her while all other eyes turned towards the door.

In came the frog, hopping wearily across the cold marble floor until he reached the princess's chair. "Lift me up, king's daughter," he said, "that I may eat from your plate."

The princess would not look at him. She glanced desperately at her father who said nothing but nodded sternly. With a sigh, the princess picked up the frog and put it on the table. It hopped across and sat beside her golden plate.

"Welcome, frog," said the king. "We thank you for your kindness to our daughter. Feed and drink with us to your heart's content."

To everyone's astonishment, the frog rose up on his hind legs and bowed

And when they had eaten their fill, she led them to two little beds which smelled sweetly of fresh linen, and there settled them down to sleep.

Now the old woman was really a cruel witch who ate little children. She had built the gingerbread house only to tempt them into her clutches. She looked down at the two children, who were soon lying fast asleep, and thought, I will eat the boy first. She picked Hansel up and carried him while he slept to a little shed with iron bars. As she locked him in, Hansel woke up and began to kick and scream, but the witch only laughed.

She woke Gretel and said, "Fetch water and cook food to feed up your brother, for I mean to eat him when he is fat enough."

Poor Gretel was terrified; she wept and pleaded but it was no use. She could not free poor Hansel and she would not leave him, so she was forced to do as the witch said.

Weeks passed while Hansel was given all the best food and Gretel had only the scraps. Each morning the old witch would tell Hansel to poke out a finger through the bars, so that she could feel how fat he was getting. It was fortunate that, like all witches, she had very weak eyes by daylight. So Hansel held out an old rabbit bone to her and the witch, believing it to be his finger, marvelled that he did not grow fatter.

At last she resolved to eat Gretel first instead and thought of a way to trick her. "We will bake today," she told the girl. "Heat up the oven while I make the dough." When the dough was ready she said, "Look into the oven, girl, and see if it is hot enough."

The witch planned to push Gretel into the oven and close the door. But Gretel was too clever for her. "How am I to look inside?" she asked. "The door is much too small."

"Nonsense!" said the witch crossly. "The door is quite big enough, you foolish girl. See, even I can get my head inside."