

The Dancing Princess and the Zima Fruit Tree

By Emily Edwards

Once, three princesses, who loved to dance, lived with their mother and father, the king and queen. The youngest was the best dancer, the eldest was the traditional dancer, but unfortunately, the middle daughter was so terrible that she was never asked to dance with anyone at any royal balls.

After a long day of dancing, it was time for the three princesses to go to bed. So they did. However, in the middle of the night the middle princess got out of bed and headed to the throne room so she could practice. Hours passed and it was almost morning. Suddenly, she crashed into her father's throne. The king heard and ran down to the throne room ready to confront whoever was down there.

The princess decided to hide because she was scared of what might happen to her if she was caught. "Who's down there?", said the king. The princess tried to run but she couldn't. She looked down and screamed, it was her toes – they were GONE! The king rushed over to where the princess was hiding. "My daughter, what are you doing here?". He froze in shock and astonishment, while looking down at her feet. The king peered over his shoulder – there they were. The princess' toes laying in the middle of the floor. He fainted.

Because of the noise, the other two princesses woke up and rushed down to see what was happening. While entering the throne room, they could see the bleeding toes of their beloved sister and their father out cold on hard polished floor.

"What should we do!?" said the youngest.

"Maybe we should ask the wise man," the eldest replied. They changed their clothes and went to the village: where the wisest man in the kingdom lived. When they reached the village, they knocked on the door and the man let them inside. The eldest princess told the man what they had seen and asked if there was a way to cure it.

“There is only one way I can think of that will help,” said the wise man. “You will need to go on a dangerous journey to get zima fruit; through scorching deserts and raging blizzards and many other obstacles that will get in your way. Once you pass them you will have to climb the tallest mountain, then the tree will give you a task in return for some fruit. But make sure to grab the one on the tallest branch.”

“What would happen if you don’t do the task the tree gives you?” asked the eldest.

“It would end in death – of you and all the people you love.” answered the man gloomily. The princesses thanked him and headed back to the castle. When they arrived the king was back on his feet and their sister was sitting on her throne.

“Where have you been my darlings? I was worried sick.” said the Queen.

“Don’t worry mother we just went to ask the wise man something.” replied the eldest. The girls then went over to their father and told him what the wise man had said. The king was furious of what he had heard. Because he did not want his daughters to get hurt, he forbade them from going on the journey. He sent the girls to their rooms and went to the house where the wise man lived.

“WHY DID YOU TELL MY DAUGHTERS TO DO SOMETHING SO DANGEROUS!” shouted the king.

“But, I, I,” the wise man stuttered.

“NO BUTS! You’re coming with me to my castle.” Once they got to the castle, the king ordered for the wise man to be hung as a slow and painful death. The eldest was thankful to be forbidden to go on the journey, because she was too scared to risk her life for her sister’s toes.

However, the youngest was sad that she couldn’t help her sister, so she came up with a plan and waited until midnight. Hours had passed and it was finally the right time to put the plan in action. She tied a rope to the leg of her bed and tied the other end to her waist.

Carefully, she climbed through the window and lowered herself. Once she reached the ground, she untied her waist and ran to the wise man’s house. She knocked once. No answer. She knocked a second time. Still, no answer. The

third time she knocked the door swung open. It was silent-too silent. The princess walked in and looked around. A piece of rolled up paper laid under the bed.

“It’s a map!” the princess whispered to herself quietly. “And it leads to the Zima fruit tree!” She looked around again in hope to find some supplies she could take to help her on the journey; a book about riddles; a loaf of bread and a canteen of water. “I have food, drink and a book. What am I supposed to do with these?” questioned the princess. “I’m sure it will become useful.” She took the map and supplies and went on her way taking small sips and nibbles out of the bread and water.

It was almost mid-day when she hit the desert. A sand storm had started and it was going to be hard to push her way through. Not far ahead she could see a wagon that looked freshly painted and new. “Maybe there is a horse not that far away.” she thought.

The princess climbed over dunes of sand and soon enough she had found a big black stallion lost and walking in circles. She then went up to it and calmed it down before heading back to the wagon. They managed to get to the end of the desert but there was another problem ahead waiting for them. A raging blizzard swept snow beneath their feet and hooves. It was too cold for the horse but not for the princess.

Hours and hours had passed and the princess was at the bottom of the mountain. She was about to walk up the path, but a tall figure appeared in front of her. “HALT YOUNG CHILD! What are you doing here?” shouted the strange figure,

“I’m looking for the Zima fruit tree,” replied the princess.

“If you wish to see him you will need to answer my riddle.” exclaimed the creature. “What instrument do you use that you cannot see or hold but you can still hear.” The princess thought and thought. Then she remembered about the book. She got it out and looked in it.

“A voice, that’s the answer. You can’t see or hold it but you can still hear it.” answered the princess.

“Correct.” The figure said bitterly-then he disappeared without a trace.

The princess then walked up the path to the tree. When she got to the top she

could see the tree beginning to open its eyes.

“What are you doing here?” shouted the tree.

“I’m here for some fruit. What is my task?” asked the young princess.

“Ok I will tell you, but first drop your leftover water on my roots.” So she did.

“Thank you. Your task is to kill the king and bring me his heart. I will open a portal so you can get there easier and once you have the heart. A portal will open back to here and then you can collect your reward.”

“But I can’t!” then she remembered what the wise man had said if you don’t do the task, so she hesitantly agreed. A portal then opened and once she got on the other side of it, it closed. A sharp dagger appeared in her hand and her father was right in front of her with his back turned. Hesitantly, she plunged the dagger into his back and carefully took his heart out. A portal then appeared and it was time to get the fruit. She stepped through and there was the tree waiting for her.

“I’m surprised you actually did it. You must desperately love your sister,” the tree said in shock.

“Just give me the fruit!” the princess shouted back. A long branch bent down and she got on it while it lifted her up to the tallest branch.

Once she went through the portal back to the castle, she gave the fruit to her sister and told her to eat it. The middle daughter’s toes suddenly grew back. It was a miracle.

“There she is, the girl who killed the king!” shouted the eldest princess while pointing at the youngest. A horde of angry villagers charged at her with pitch forks and torches. With nowhere to run, within minutes she got killed and her heart was stolen, only to be burnt to a crisp.

The End...