

# 105 學年度高中職學生英語讀者劇場比賽活動簡章

## 一、目的：

- (一) 因應國際化地球村之趨勢，提升學生英語能力。
- (二) 打造學生英語學習情境，讓英語閱讀融入課程並靈活運用於生活中。
- (三) 透過各校讀者劇場演出，提高高中職學生英語學習興趣，以達觀摩學習與多元評量之成效。

## 二、辦理單位：

- (一) 指導單位：東南科技大學 觀餐休閒學院
- (二) 主辦單位：東南科技大學 應用英語系

## 三、辦理方式：

- (一) 參加對象：高中職應用外語科英文組/應用英文科高三生（歡迎各校自由組隊參加）。
- (二) 比賽地點：東南科技大學中正大樓 10 樓演講廳。
- (三) 比賽時間：106 年 3 月 10 日（星期五）第一梯次 9:00~9:30 報到、第二梯次 10:30~11:30 報到。
- (四) 比賽方式：附件中劇本由參賽者自選(六選 1)，學生事先準備演出內容參賽，並請攜稿上台朗誦台詞。
- (五) 比賽人數：每校至多兩組，人數以 5~10 為標準，角色可重複。
- (六) 活動當天，提供帶隊老師及參賽選手精緻午餐。

## 四、演出時間與計分方式：

- (一) 演出時間：每校表演時間限 6~9 分鐘
- (二) 計分方式：

### 1.演出時間

標準演出時間為 6~9 分鐘（第一位演出者開始表演起至最後一位表演結束之間的時間），

| 時間控制    | 分數               |
|---------|------------------|
| 未滿 6 分鐘 | 每 30 秒扣總平均分數 2 分 |
| 超過 9 分鐘 | 每 30 秒扣總平均分數 2 分 |

## 五、評分標準：

| 評分項目       | 占比   |
|------------|------|
| 劇本詮釋與故事呈現  | 25%  |
| 發音、語調、聲音表情 | 50%  |
| 團體默契       | 25%。 |

## 六、評審：由東南科技大學應用英語系教師擔任之。

## 七、比賽報名時間與方式：

- (一) 報名時間：106 年 2 月 20 日（星期一）起至 3 月 8 日（星期三）17:00 止，以寄件日期為憑。
- (二) 報名方式：  
電子檔：請傳送附件 1 之電子檔至 yanyilee@mail.tnu.edu.tw。
- (三) 有疑問歡迎寫信詢問或洽詢東南科技大學應用英語系系辦(02)8662-5940。
- (四) 請各校確實遵守報名時間。

#### 八、獎勵：

第一名：頒發獎狀、5000 元獎金。

第二名：頒發獎狀、4000 元獎金。

第三名：頒發獎狀、3000 元獎金。

第四名：頒發獎狀、2000 元獎金。

第五名：頒發獎狀、1000 元獎金。

優勝：10名頒發獎狀、500元獎金。

#### 九、活動流程

| 時間          | 活動          | 地點               |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 9:00~9:30   | 第一梯次報到      | 中正教學大樓 11 樓國際會議廳 |
| 9:30~9:50   | 開幕          | 中正教學大樓 11 樓國際會議廳 |
| 9:50~10:00  | 休息          | 中正教學大樓應英系各教室     |
| 10:00~11:30 | 第一梯次比賽      | 中正教學大樓 1007 演講廳  |
| 11:00~11:30 | 第二梯次報到      | 中正教學大樓 10 樓中庭    |
| 11:30~13:00 | 用餐/活動(中午供餐) | 中正教學大樓 應英系教室     |
| 13:00~14:30 | 第二梯次比賽      | 中正教學大樓 1007 演講廳  |
| 16:00~      | 頒獎/閉幕       | 中正教學大樓 11 樓國際會議廳 |

#### 十、附則：

參加比賽之隊伍對於下列各事項應確實遵守：

- 1.參賽隊伍均須於時間內完成報到手續（請參賽學生攜帶身分證以備查驗），否則以棄權論。
- 2.各校休息觀賞座位由承辦單位事先安排，報到後請依序入座。

## 來校交通



| 各地區來校交通指引             |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 方向                    | 路線說明  |
| 捷運新店 (新店、景美)          | 由 捷運景美站 轉乘【660 公車】到 東南科技大學站                             |
|                       | 由 捷運七張站 轉乘【819 公車】到 東南科技大學站                             |
| 捷運文湖 (南港、東湖、內湖、大直、大安) | 由 捷運木柵站 轉乘公車到 東南科技大學站。【251 公車】或【660 公車】【666 公車】【819 公車】 |
| 捷運動物園                 | 由 捷運動物園站 轉乘【236 公車】到 東南科技大學站                            |
| 捷運板南 (土城、板橋、          | 由 捷運忠孝復興站 換搭捷運文湖線(往動物園方向)至 木柵捷運站, 轉乘公車到 東南科技大學站         |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 南港)                    | 【251 公車】或【660 公車】【666 公車】【819 公車】<br>由 捷運市政府站，轉乘【912 公車】到東南科技大學站   |
| 捷運淡水<br>(淡水、士林、<br>北投) | 由 捷運台北車站 轉搭捷運板南線至 捷運忠孝復興站 中轉至捷運文湖線<br>(往動物園方向)至 木柵捷運站，轉乘公車到東南科技大學站 【251 公<br>車】或【660 公車】【666 公車】【819 公車】   |
| 捷運南勢角<br>(中和、永和)       | 由 捷運古亭站，轉乘公車到 東南科技大學站 【251 公車】或【660 公車】<br>【236 公車】<br>由 捷運公館站，轉乘公車到 東南科技大學站 【251 公車】或【660 公車】<br>【236 公車】   |
| 台北車站<br>(萬華、三重、<br>新莊) | 由 捷運台北車站搭乘捷運板南線至 捷運忠孝復興站，換搭捷運文湖線(動<br>物園方向)至 木柵捷運站，轉乘公車到東南科技大學站 【251 公車】或<br>【660 公車】【666 公車】【819 公車】<br>由 捷運台北車站 搭乘捷運板南線至 捷運市政府站，轉乘【912 公車】到<br>東南科技大學站 |
| 汐止地區                   | 搭乘【藍 1 5 公車】或【藍 2 3 公車】至 捷運南港展覽館 換搭捷運至 捷<br>運市政府站，轉乘【912 公車】到 東南科技大學站<br>由汐止火車站搭乘火車至南港火車站，換搭捷運由 捷運南港站 至 捷運市<br>政府站，轉乘【912 公車】到 東南科技大學站                   |
| 基隆地區                   | 由基隆車站搭乘 「台汽 中崙 (40 元)」至聯合報(市政府捷運站) 轉乘<br>【912 公車】到 東南科技大學站   |
| 桃園地區                   | 中壢客運桃園站搭乘 【指南中壢客運台北桃園線 9009 公車】至 捷運六張<br>犁站 轉搭捷運文湖線(動物園方向)至 木柵捷運站，轉乘公車到東南科技<br>大學站 【251 公車】或【660 公車】【666 公車】【819 公車】                                     |
| 宜蘭地區                   | 搭乘葛瑪蘭汽車客運於台北市復興南路站下車，轉捷運文湖線 捷運科技大<br>樓站 (往動物園方向)至 木柵捷運站，轉乘公車至東南科技大學站 【251<br>公車】或【660 公車】【666 公車】【819 公車】  |

#### 汽機車 各地區來校交通指引

| 地區                     | 路線說明  |
|------------------------|---|
| 北市東區<br>(以台北市政府<br>為例) | 機車：基隆路 和平東路 軍功路 木柵路 北深路 東南 (共 10.7 公里)<br>汽車：松智路 信義路 信義快速道路 國道 3 甲 文山路 北深路三段 東南<br>(共 8.9 公里)                     |
| 北市西區<br>(以萬華火車站<br>為例) | 機車：汀州路 師大路 羅斯福路 興隆路 萬芳路 木柵路 北深路 東南 (共<br>14.6 公里)<br>汽車：和平東路 和平西路 羅斯福路 公館 基隆路 國道 3 甲 文山路 北深<br>路三段 東南 (共 13.9 公里) |
| 北市南區                   | 機車：羅斯福路 興隆路 萬芳路 木柵路 北深路 東南 (共 10.2 公里)  |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| (以公館為例)                | 汽車：羅斯福路 興隆路 萬芳路 木柵路 北深路 東南 (共 9.5 公里)  |
| 北市北區<br>(以士林劍潭站<br>為例) | 機車：中山北路 信義路 新生南路 基隆路 和平東路 軍功路 木柵路 北深路 東南 (共 17.5 公里)<br>汽車：中山北路 新生高架 辛亥路 國道 3 甲 文山路 北深路三段 東南 (共 16.8 公里) |
| 新店<br>(以捷運七張站<br>為例)   | 機車：寶橋路 木柵路 北深路 東南 (共 9.3 公里)<br>汽車：中正路 中興路 國道 3 號 文山路 北深路三段 東 (共 10.4 公里)                                |
| 南港<br>(以捷運南港站<br>為例)   | 機車：忠孝東路區段 109 縣道/南深路 北深路 東南 (共 12.8 公里)<br>汽車：忠孝東路區段 台五線 國道 3 號 文山路 北深路三段 東南 (共 13.5 公里)                 |
| 永和<br>(以永和市公所<br>為例)   | 機車：永福橋或福和橋 公館 羅斯福路 興隆路 萬芳路 木柵路 北深路 東 南 (共 11.9 公里)<br>汽車：福和橋 基隆路 國道 3 甲 文山路 北深路三段 東南 (共 11.2 公里)         |
| 汐止<br>(以捷運南港站<br>為例)   | 機車：南港路一段 民權街 研究院路 舊庄街 109 縣道/南深路 北深路 東 南 (共 10.9 公里)<br>汽車：大同路 國道 3 甲 文山路 北深路三段 東南 (共 12.2 公里)           |
| 基隆<br>(以基隆火車站<br>為例)   | 機車：建議搭乘大眾交通工具或住校<br>汽車：中山一路 忠四路 國道 3 號 文山路 北深路三段 東南 (共 25.5 公里)  |
| 宜蘭<br>(以宜蘭火車站<br>為例)   | 機車：建議搭乘大眾交通工具或住校<br>汽車：宜興路 東港路 慈安路 大福路 國道 5 號 石碇 文山路 北深路三 段 東南 (共 41.1 公里)                               |
| 板橋<br>(以捷運府中站<br>為例)   | 機車：縣民大道 民權路 景平路 秀朗橋 復興路 木 路 北深路 東南 (共 17.3 公里)<br>汽車：民族路 中正路 國道 3 號 文山路 北深路三段 東南 (共 22.2 公里)             |

(附件二)

## Script 1

### The Ugly Duckling

Players:

Narrator, Mother Duck, Ducklings, the Ugly Duckling,

First Hen, Turkey, Rooster, Geese, Old Woman, Second Hen, Swans, First Boy, Second Boy, Girl

Narrator: Once upon a time there was a mother duck who was sitting on six of her eggs that were about to hatch. It was the height of summer, when the grass was greenest and the corn most yellow. The first five ducklings burst forth out of their shells very quickly, but the sixth did not seem to want to see the light of the day.

Mother Duck: (anxiously coaxing)

“Let’s go, move it out, I have brooded over you for far too long. Now, shake of that egg! (Finally, the eggshell breaks and an odd-looking duckling emerges.) What is this? What an ugly creature! Someone must be playing a joke on me and swapped one of my eggs for this one. We’ll know soon for sure: if it doesn’t like going into the water, we’ll know it’s not a duck.”

Ducklings:

“Mother, Mother, we yearn to go swimming in the pond.” (They all enter the water, including the Ugly Duckling.)

Mother Duck:

“Well, it’s definitely not a chicken. It moves its legs not unlike a duck and it’s proud-looking. All in all, it’s actually not so ugly. Let’s go to visit our friends on the farm. I’ll introduce you to all the other animals. And you (speaking to the Ugly Duckling), go to rear and try not to be observed.

First Hen: (She catches sight of the Ugly Duckling.)

“Mother Duck, your duckling here is of such an ugly color. It is not yellow like your other offspring, but is drab gray.”

Turkey:

“And its legs are rather long.”

Rooster:

“Take a look at its head feathers. They shoot out in such a rodlike manner! Ha, ha, ha! (He laughs very loudly and then the others laugh, too.)

Ugly Duckling: (Talking to himself)

“I am so discontented and unfortunate. Everyone makes a laughingstock of me. The farmer’s wife, when she fetches our food, boots me to one side as well. I wish I could just fly over the fence....Wait, I think I can. Now—when Mother is not observing—that’s my opening.

Narrator:

The Ugly Duckling flies away and passes his time—days, weeks and months—concealed in the prolific plants of a pond. One radiant day, when the sun was especially bright, the Ugly Duckling encountered some wild geese.

Geese:

“Hey! Look at that ugly creature there in front us.

You pitiful and friendless thing. Would you like to be with us in the pond? (Without any warning, some gunshots are heard, and the geese quickly fly off.) Hunters!

Quickly! We’re in great peril!

Narrator:

As soon as the geese have flown off, a dog comes forth, with its tongue sticking out and its eyes glittering with excitement. Although it catches the scent of the Ugly Duckling, it does bother the Ugly Duckling and runs off.

Ugly duckling:

“Even a dog does not desire to consume me, as I am so ugly.”

Narrator:

The Ugly Duckling departs from the pond and discovers a small cottage where there is an old woman, a cat and a hen.

Old Woman:

“Oh look, here’s a runty duck! It appears as though it has not had anything to eat for a long time. Even though it indeed looks uncommon, I will give it something to eat.

Cat and Second Hen: (Angrily addressing the Ugly Duckling) “Don’t get the idea that just because the old woman has given you a bite to eat that you are welcome here. There is nothing here for you to do, as you cannot capture mice and you cannot produce eggs. As soon as you are done eating, you will have to leave.”

Narrator:

The Ugly Duckling must depart. The seasons are changing and autumn has just about ended, as the fallen leaves and the color of the sky augur the arrival of winter. Observing the sky, the Ugly Duckling is astounded when catching a glimpse of a flock of huge white birds, with glistening feathers and elongated supple necks. They were agilely and gracefully flying south to warmer places where they would be passing through the winter.

Ugly Duckling:

“Winter is fast approaching. I need to locate someplace to shelter and just devote myself to surviving until the coming of spring.”

Narrator:

The Ugly Duckling awakes one day and becomes aware of the arrival of spring.

Ugly Duckling:

“Oh, the flowers smell so wonderfully fragrant, and the grass is so wonderfully verdant and the sky is so wonderfully sapphire...”

Narrator:

The Ugly Duckling peers up to sky and once again beholds the same grand white birds with elongated necks returning from their winter journey.

Ugly Duckling:

“Wow, what magnificent birds! I would do anything to be like them.”

Swans:

“Hey, Pal! Why are you here, all by yourself?”

Ugly Duckling: (In a state of amazement)

“Me, your pal? You must be joking. I’m just an unremarkable, ugly bird.”

Swans:

“How can you speak in such a way? Come near the water and take a look at your likeness in the water.”



Ugly Duckling: (Comes near the water and contemplates his physical form as reflected from the water)

“Wow...this is unimaginable! I am large, regally splendid and white! My neck is also similar to yours—its elongated and majestic! (Some children turn up making merry, shouting with laughter)

First Boy: “Hey, you guys, take a gander! There are the swans!

Second Boy: “Yes, and there is also a new one here. It appears the most youthful one

.

Girl:

“It is the most elegant and handsome swan in this lake. Let’s feed them with some of our break crumbs.”

Ugly Duckling: (Astonished as he talks to himself)

“Wow, I am a swan! I have endured all those days of lamentation, solitude and lonesomeness, but now I am fully aware of who I truly am, and I further am cognizant that I will never be alone again. (Addressing the other swans) If I truly am a swan, will it be possible for me to fly like you when autumn arrives again?

Swans:

“Of course. You certainly will be able to fly like us when autumn arrives. Now, let’s swim together and we will introduce you all of our friends in the flock.”

Narrator:

With this transformation from an Ugly Duckling into a handsome, majestic swan, it is now possible for our hero to think no more of the doleful and unhappy experiences at the farm, the atrocious and unpleasant conduct of the hen and cat, as well as the days of suffering and lonesomeness. Now he lives like the other swans, as he passes his days enjoying a new kind of lifestyle, swimming gracefully and effortlessly on the lake.

## Script2

### Echo and Narcissus

Players:

Narrator, Zeus, Echo, Hera, narcissus, Chorus (three or more players)

Narrator: The story is based on a famous Greek myth. The ancient Greek myths are famous and known to people from around the world. The Greeks maintained that the deities who established and concocted the macrocosm dwelled here on earth. The deities Zeus and Hera were a couple; they were husband and wife. In the Greek myths, the origins of many types of natural phenomena are often explained, and these explanations are often done through stories in which the shenanigans of the deities are often showcased. In the myth we are dealing with in this story, we discover how the phenomenon of echo first began, as well as the origin of the narcissus flower. The story opens with Zeus talking with a nymph named Echo in a beautiful glade.

Chorus:

Although she was bewitchingly gorgeous, she really enjoyed talking, and she did this quite a bit.

Zeus:

Echo, I presume that the wood nymph's plans for the banquet and festivities are proceeding without and problems.

Echo:

Naturally, Zeus. Everything is going as planned. We'll be serving delicacies, including local fruits, nuts and berries. We'll also have some ambrosia that will only be served to you. In addition, Pan will be playing his flute. All of the beings who dwell in the glade will attend. On the other hand, perhaps not all of them....

Zeus:

Echo, pipe down, and try not to talk so much.

Echo:

(Murmuring) Oh, there is no need to be overly concerned Zeus. I can keep my mouth shut. If you need anyone to shush, I'm your nymph. You just have to call upon me to clam up and I'll be as quiet as a wood mouse or a wood-nymph mouse. Ha-ha. I think you realize my meaning...

Zeus:

Echo! My wife, Hera, is not aware of my plans for attending the wood nymph banquet and festivities, so, I want you to safeguard and secure the area, in the event that she enters the glade.

Echo, Okay, I understand. You want to be stealthy!

Zeus:

Pipe down!

Echo:

(Murmuring.) Oh, I understand! You just want to be ingenious and clandestine.

Zeus:

That's correct. I'm being both ingenious and clandestine. Now if Hera makes an appearance, you inform her that you haven't spotted me, right?

Echo:

Right, Zeus!

(Zeus slinks off in one direction while Hara appears on the scene from another. Echo continues to shout after Zeus.)

Echo:

There's nothing to worry about Zeus. I'm not scared of venerable Hera!

Hara:

Ahem.

Echo:

I'll stand here to safeguard the area from her!

Hara:

Ahem!

Echo: (Shrieking)

Eek!

Hera:

Who were you speaking with, Echo?

Echo:

Oh, me?

Hara:

That's right, you. Who were you speaking with?

Echo:

I wasn't speaking. It's really astonishing that you should mention that I was speaking. I don't even like to speak. If someone would inquire into what the one thing that Echo does not enjoy, it would be speaking. Indeed, I even enjoy washing my clothes more than speaking, and do you realize how difficult it is to find a satisfactory detergent...

Hara:

Shut your mouth! I'm searching for my husband, Zeus.

Echo:

Well, I assuredly haven't come across him. Zeus, you say. Hmm, I don't even believe I've ever been apprised of this fellow. No, I'm not in the least familiar about my pal Zeus.

Hera:

Your pal?

Echo:

Uh-oh.

Hera:

You're not telling me the truth. I'll have to penalize you now so that you never tell a falsehood again. I'm going to do this by depriving you of your speaking capability.

Echo:

Oh, no. I beg of you! Don't do that! I was pretending before about not enjoying speaking. I actually do enjoy speaking. Indeed, it's the most enjoyable thing I like to do.

Hera:

Okay, then I'll have it so that you are still able to speak, but you will only be able say what another person says first.

(Hera motions her hands in a manner similar to that of casting a magical spell.)

Echo:

Another person says first.

Hera:

You will reiterate things a person says, just like a parrot.

Echo:

Reiterate things a person says, just like a parrot.

(Echo has a very difficult time believing what is happening to her.)

Hera:

This should edify you.

Echo:

Should edify you.

Hera:

Now where has my good-for-nothing husband gone?

(As Hera raves and rants as she marches off, Echo tries to speak but is unable to say anything. Whenever Echo attempts to speak, nothing will come out. At last, Echo starts to cry.)

Chorus member 1:

Echo was despondent and aggrieved by the deprivation of her favorite behavioral action, by what she liked to do most.

Chorus Member 2:

Echo most likely would have stayed in that spot and cried for many days if she hadn't heard the footsteps of the approaching Narcissus, a young hunter that Echo was deliriously in love with.

Chorus Member 3:

Narcissus was the most attractive man in the glade.

Chorus:

Echo turned her attention away from her problems for the time being and sought to catch the eye of the hunter.

(Narcissus comes onto the scene with a bow and arrows. Echo moves to obstruct his passage.)

Narcissus:

Hello.

Echo:

Hello.

Narcissus:

How can I help you?

Echo:

How can I help you?

Narcissus:

Okay, wood nymph, you could move out of my way so I'm able to carry on hunting.

Echo:

Carry on hunting.

(Echo is becoming increasingly disheartened.)

Narcissus:

Thank you.

Echo: Thank you.

(Narcissus endeavors to move on, but Echo once again blocks his passage.)

Narcissus:

Could it be that you are one of those wood nymphs who are insanely infatuated with me because I am so good-looking and attractive.

Echo:

So good-looking and attractive.

Narcissus:

Yes, I am.

Echo:

Yes, I am.

Narcissus:

Not you, me!

Echo:

Not you, me!

Narcissus:

I am much more physically attractive than you are.

You're not worthy enough to love me.

Echo: (Beseeching him.)

Love me!

Narcissus:

Stop blocking my passage, you kooky nymph, or I'll pounce upon you!

Echo:

Pounce upon you!

(Exasperated, Narcissus swaggers off. Echo cries once more and then departs.)

Chorus Member 1:

Echo was so distraught by what had occurred that she fled the glade and decided to live all by herself on a mountainside cliff.

Chorus member 2:

Echo still lives there and is so lonesome without any person to speak with that whenever someone shouts to her she replies; however, she is still only able to speak what that person has just spoken.

Chorus member 3:

Conversely, Narcissus was very prideful and egotistical, and that's the way he behaved, but, then again, he was perpetually prideful and egotistical.

Chorus:

On the other hand, what he didn't realize was that Hera had observed how shabbily he had conducted himself towards pitiful Echo.

Chorus Member 1:

Although Hera was the one who had penalized Echo, Hera didn't wish to have Echo undergo further suffering just because of Narcissus's pretentiousness and egotism.

(Hera enters into the glade and awaits Narcissus. Narcissus enters the glade in good time.)

Hera:

Hello, Narcissus.

Narcissus:

Lofty Queen Hera. It seems that you have come to the glade to observe my wonderful handsomeness.

Hera:

Yes, of course, I have. Narcissus, I've observed you hunting all day, and I thought you might require some rest and a drink of water.

Narcissus:

Oh, thank you, Hera. Perhaps you'd like to hang around and observe me drinking.

Hera: Well, there are other matters that I must look after just now, but I'm certain that we'll meet again. Good-bye.

Narcissus:

It was peculiar that she didn't wish to linger and observe me some more. Oh well, there is something here for me to drink at least.

(Narcissus bends down to drink from the fountain and views his reflection.)

Narcissus:

Wow, look at that. Here is a young man who is as physically attractive and handsome as I am. Hello, beautiful. He seems to be rather a quiet kind of guy. He probably came here just to have a look at me. He's quite fortunate to have someone as good-looking as I am look at him. Still, he is so beautiful himself. Maybe it would be a good idea for me to tarry and just let him look. Then I can go on looking at him. Great idea, Narcissus: genius and beauty.

(Narcissus continues gazing into the fountain for quite some time)

Chorus Member 2:

As Narcissus was so utterly infatuated with his own good looks, he stayed there at the fountain for many years.

Chorus Member 3:

While standing there at the fountain, Narcissus started growing roots which grew into the ground. Then, after a while, his physical torso turned into a stem and his arms turned into leaves.

Chorus:

As Hera's crowning punishment, Narcissus's head turned into a yellow flower.

Narrator:

Although it appears that Hera could curtail Narcissus's life, she could not diminish his resplendent beauty, and that is the reason why the narcissus flower, which is also referred to as the daffodil, is one of the most gorgeous flowers in the world.



Please select one of the following four scripts for this contest.

**The Sea Kings Daughter**

**Script 3**( from aaronshep.com)

NARRATOR 1: Long ago, in the river port city called Novgorod the Great, there lived a young musician named Sadko.

NARRATOR 2: Every day, a rich merchant or noble would send a messenger to Sadko's door, calling him to play at a feast. Sadko would grab his twelve-string *gusli* and rush to the banquet hall. There he'd pluck the strings of his instrument till all the guests were dancing.

HOST: Eat your fill!

NARRATOR 1: . . . the host would tell him later, pointing him to the table, and passing him a few small coins besides.

NARRATOR 2: And on such as he was given did Sadko live.

NARRATOR 1: Often his friends would ask him,

FRIEND: How can you survive on so little?

SADKO: It's not so bad.

NARRATOR 2: . . . Sadko would reply.

SADKO: And anyway, how many men can go to a different feast each day, play the music they love, and watch it set a whole room dancing?

NARRATOR 1: Sadko was proud of his city, the richest and most free in all Russia. He would walk through busy Market Square, lined with merchants in their stalls and teeming with traders from many lands. He never crossed the square without hearing tongues of far-off places, from Italy to Norway to Persia.

NARRATOR 2: Down at the piers, he would see the sailing ships with their cargos of lumber, grain, hides, pottery, spices, and precious metals. And crossing the Great Bridge over the River Volkhov, Sadko would catch the glint from the gilded roofs of a dozen white stone churches.

SADKO: Is there another such city as Novgorod in all the world? Is there any better place to be?

NARRATOR 1: Yet sometimes Sadko was lonely.

NARRATOR 2: The maidens who danced gaily to his music at the feasts would often smile at him, and more than one had set his heart on fire. But they were rich and he was poor, and not one of them would think of being his.

NARRATOR 1: One lonely evening, Sadko walked sadly beyond the city walls and down along the broad River Volkhov. He came to his favorite spot on the bank and set his gusli on his lap.

NARRATOR 2: Gentle waves brushed the shore, and moonlight shimmered on the water.

SADKO: (*sighs*) My lovely River Volkhov. Rich man, poor man—it's all the same to you. If only you were a woman! I'd marry you and live with you here in the city I love.

NARRATOR 1: Sadko plucked a sad tune, then a peaceful one, then a merry one. The tinkling notes of his gusli floated over the Volkhov.

NARRATOR 2: All at once the river grew rough, and strong waves began to slap the bank.

SADKO: Heaven help me!

NARRATOR 1: . . . cried Sadko as a large shape rose from the water.

NARRATOR 2: Before him stood a huge man, with a pearl-encrusted crown atop a flowing mane of seaweed.

SEA KING: Musician, behold the King of the Sea. To this river I have come to visit one of my daughters, the Princess Volkhova. Your sweet music reached us on the river bottom, where it pleased us greatly.

SADKO: (*stammering a little*) Thank you, Your Majesty.

SEA KING: Soon I will return to my own palace. I wish you to play there at a feast.

SADKO: Gladly. But where is it? And how do I get there?

SEA KING: Why, under the sea, of course! I'm sure you'll find your way. But meanwhile, you need not wait for your reward.

NARRATOR 1: Something large jumped from the river and flopped at Sadko's feet. A fish with golden scales! As Sadko watched in amazement, it stiffened and turned to solid gold.

SADKO: Your Majesty, you are too generous!

SEA KING: Say no more about it! Music is worth far more than gold. If the world were fair, you'd have your fill of riches!

NARRATOR 2: And with a splash, he sank in the river and was gone.

\* \* \*

NARRATOR 1: The next morning, Sadko arrived at the market square just as the stalls were opening. He quickly sold the golden fish to an astonished merchant. Then, hurrying to the piers, he booked his passage on a ship leaving Novgorod that very day.

NARRATOR 2: Down the Volkhov the ship sailed, across Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland, and into the Baltic Sea. As it sped above the deep water, Sadko peered over the rail.

SADKO: (*softly, to himself*) In all the wide sea, how can I ever find the palace?

NARRATOR 1: Just then, the ship shuddered to a halt. The wind filled the sails, yet the ship stood still, as if a giant hand had grasped it. The captain cried out to his crew,

CAPTAIN: It must be the King of the Sea! Perhaps he seeks tribute—or someone among us.

SADKO: Do not be troubled. I know the one he seeks.

NARRATOR 2: And, clutching his gusli, he jumped from the ship.

NARRATOR 1: Down sank Sadko, down all the way to the sea floor. The red sun shone dimly through the water above, while before him stood a white stone palace.

NARRATOR 2: Sadko passed through a coral gate. As he reached the huge palace doors, they swung open to reveal a giant hall.

NARRATOR 1: The elegant room was filled with guests and royal attendants—herring and sprats, cod and flounder, gobies and sticklebacks, sand eels and sea scorpions, crabs and lobsters, starfish and squid, sea turtles and giant sturgeon.

NARRATOR 2: Standing among the guests were dozens of maidens—river nymphs, the Sea King's daughters. On a shell throne at the end of the hall sat the Sea King and his Queen.

SEA KING: You're just in time! Musician, come sit by me—and let the dance begin!

NARRATOR 1: Sadko set his gusli on his lap and plucked a merry tune. Soon all the fish swam in graceful figures. The seafloor crawlers cavorted. The river maidens leaped and spun.

SEA KING: I like that tune!

NARRATOR 2: The King jumped to the center of the hall and joined the dance. His arms waved, his robe swirled, his hair streamed, his feet stamped.

SEA KING: Faster! Play faster!

NARRATOR 1: Sadko played faster and the King's dance grew wilder. All the others stopped and watched in awe. Ever more madly did he move, whirling faster, leaping higher, stamping harder.

NARRATOR 2: The Sea Queen whispered urgently,

SEA QUEEN: Musician, end your tune! It seems to you the King merely dances in his hall. But above us, the sea is tossing ships like toys, and giant waves are breaking on the shore!

NARRATOR 1: Alarmed, Sadko pulled a string till it snapped.

SADKO: Your Majesty, my gusli is broken.

SEA KING: A shame.

NARRATOR 2: . . . said the Sea King, winding to a stop.

SEA KING: I could have danced for days. But a fine fellow you are, Sadko. I think I'll marry you to one of my daughters and keep you here forever.

SADKO: (*carefully*) Your Majesty, beneath the sea, your word is law. But this is not my home. I love my city of Novgorod.

SEA KING: Say no more about it! Now, behold your bride—the Princess Volkhova!

NARRATOR 1: The princess stepped forward. Her green eyes were sparkling, and a soft smile graced her lips.

VOLKHOVA: Dearest Sadko, at last we can be together. For years I have thrilled to the music you've played on the shore.

SADKO: (*in wonder*) Volkhova! You're as lovely as your river!

NARRATOR 2: But the Sea Queen leaned over and said softly,

SEA QUEEN: You are a good man, Sadko, so I will tell you the truth. If you but once kiss or embrace her, you can never return to your city again.

NARRATOR 1: That night, Sadko lay beside his bride on a bed of seaweed. He longed to hold her, but time after time, the Queen's words came back to him—

SEA QUEEN: (*voice only, offstage*) . . . never return to your city again . . .

NARRATOR 1: —and his arms stayed frozen at his sides.

VOLKHOVA: Dearest, why do you not embrace me?

SADKO: (*stammering a little*) It is the custom of my city. We never kiss or embrace on the first night.

VOLKHOVA: (*sadly*) Then I fear you never will.

NARRATOR 2: . . . and she turned away.

NARRATOR 1: When Sadko awoke the next morning, he felt sunlight on his face. He opened his eyes and saw beside him not the Princess Volkhova but the River Volkhov. And behind him rose the walls of Novgorod!

SADKO: My home.

NARRATOR 2: . . . said Sadko, and he wept—perhaps for joy at his return, perhaps for sadness at his loss, perhaps for both.

\* \* \*

NARRATOR 1: The years were good to Sadko. With the money that remained to him, he bought a ship and goods enough to fill it. And so Sadko became a merchant, and in time, the richest man in Novgorod. What's more, he married a fine young woman and raised a family.

NARRATOR 2: Yet sometimes still on a quiet evening he would walk out of the city alone, sit on the bank, and send his tinkling music over the water. And sometimes too a lovely head would rise from the river to listen—

NARRATOR 1: or perhaps it was only moonlight on the Volkhov.

### How Violence Is Ended

NARRATOR 1: Nearly all the world's greatest religious teachers have been peacemakers, and one of these certainly was the Buddha. Among the teachings of his Eightfold Path was Right Action, and part of this was to avoid all killing.

NARRATOR 2: Tradition says that the following tale was told by the Buddha himself to monks whose quarrel had reached the point of violence.

\* \* \*

NARRATOR 1: Once long ago, there arose a quarrel between two kings.

NARRATOR 2: One king was the great Brahmadatta. His kingdom was large and rich, and his troops were many.

NARRATOR 1: The other king was Dighiti. His kingdom was small and poor, and his troops were few.

NARRATOR 2: Brahmadatta told his generals,

BRAHMADATTA: We will march against Dighiti and conquer his kingdom. He will not be able to resist me.

NARRATOR 1: When Dighiti heard of the army's advance, he told Deva, his queen,

DIGHITI: (*calmly*) Nothing we do can prevent Brahmadatta from seizing our country. For the sake of our people, it is best to avoid a battle. Let us flee from the kingdom tonight.

NARRATOR 2: Deva asked,

DEVA: (*anxiously*) Where can we go?

DIGHITI: We will go to Brahmadatta's own capital city, Benares. It is large enough to hide in, and he will never search for us there.

NARRATOR 1: So they took their young son, Dighavu, and fled by night to Benares.

NARRATOR 2: There they lodged in a poor quarter of the city. King Dighiti disguised himself as a wandering holy man and each day begged enough coins and food for them all.

NARRATOR 1: Time passed and the prince grew toward manhood. Then King Dighiti told his wife,

DIGHITI: Truly is it said, we may forgive those who hurt us, but we never forgive those we hurt. If Brahmadatta finds us here, he will surely kill us all. It is best to send our son from the city.

DEVA: Let him go to my parents in the west. There he can learn the arts and sciences proper to his estate.

NARRATOR 2: So they sent the prince away.

NARRATOR 1: Now, it happened that the barber from the court of King Dighiti was at this time at work in the court of Brahmadatta.

NARRATOR 2: One day, the barber caught sight of Dighiti in the marketplace, begging in the guise of a holy man. Hoping for reward, he secretly followed Dighiti to his home, then reported to Brahmadatta.

NARRATOR 1: Brahmadatta sent his men to arrest the family.

NARRATOR 2: Dighiti and Deva were brought before him.

BRAHMADATTA: Where is your son?

NARRATOR 1: . . . demanded Brahmadatta.

DIGHITI: (*firmly*) Beyond your reach.

NARRATOR 2: . . . replied Dighiti. Brahmadatta turned to one of his generals.

BRAHMADATTA: (*seething with anger*) Tie them up and cart them around the city for all to see and scorn. Then take them out the south gate and execute them by the sword. Allow no one to perform the funeral rites. Their bodies shall be prey to birds and beasts. (*waves them off*)

NARRATOR 1: Now, on that very day, Prince Dighavu had come back to Benares to visit his parents. As he passed through the marketplace, he saw soldiers on horse and on foot, and among them a cart, and tied up in the cart, his mother and his father. And he was powerless to help them.

NARRATOR 2: King Dighiti saw the prince as well. Wishing to advise his son, yet mindful not to give him away, Dighiti called out as if to no one. And these were his words:

DIGHITI: (*loudly*)

Be not shortsighted.

Be not longsighted.

Not by violence is violence ended.  
Violence is ended by *nonviolence*.

NARRATOR 1: As darkness fell, King Dighiti and Queen Deva were taken outside the city walls and executed by the sword.

NARRATOR 2: Their bodies were left on the ground, with a dozen soldiers standing guard.

NARRATOR 1: Within the city, Prince Dighavu told himself,

DIGHAVU: (*bitterly*) First I will perform the funeral rites for my parents. Then I will find a way to avenge them.

NARRATOR 2: He brought strong wine from the marketplace out to the guards. They took it gladly, and soon lay drunk and asleep.

NARRATOR 1: Dighavu piled up wood, placed his parents' bodies on top, then lit the funeral pyre. He pressed his palms together and walked three times around the flames.

NARRATOR 2: At that moment, at the royal palace, Brahmadatta was strolling upon his roof terrace, puzzling over the words of King Dighiti that had been reported to him. Gazing far south, over the city wall, he spied the fire and the figure circling it. A cold fear gripped his heart.

BRAHMADATTA: It must be Prince Dighavu! (*turns away from the sight*)

NARRATOR 1: The prince, his duty complete, slipped quickly into the forest.

NARRATOR 2: For days he stayed there, hiding from Brahmadatta's men while grieving for his parents.

NARRATOR 1: At last, the danger and the tears had passed, and Dighavu entered the city once more.

NARRATOR 2: At the royal elephant stables, he took work as an apprentice.

NARRATOR 1: And so it was one morning that Dighavu rose early, sat before the stables, and sang to greet the dawn.

NARRATOR 2: His voice drifted to the palace and to the balcony of King Brahmadatta, who had also risen early, wakened by a fearful dream.

BRAHMADATTA: (*to himself*) How lovely. I have need of such music to ease my mind. (*leaves the balcony*)



NARRATOR 1: He sent for the singer, and Dighavu was brought before him.

BRAHMADATTA: (*pleasantly*) Sing for me.

NARRATOR 2: . . . said Brahmadatta, not knowing who the young man was.

NARRATOR 1: Dighavu sang, and the king's heart was gladdened. Then Brahmadatta told him,

BRAHMADATTA: Stay with me.

NARRATOR 2: And Dighavu answered,

DIGHAVU: (*formally, with a bow*) As you wish, my lord.

NARRATOR 1: So Dighavu became the king's attendant.

NARRATOR 2: And since the young man's conduct was agreeable and his words pleasing, the king grew ever more fond of him, bestowing on him more and more responsibility and trust.

NARRATOR 1: Then came a day when Brahmadatta desired to go hunting. And he told Dighavu,

BRAHMADATTA: (*pleasantly*) Today you will drive my chariot.

NARRATOR 2: And Dighavu replied,

DIGHAVU: (*formally, with a bow*) It is an honor, my lord.

NARRATOR 1: So Dighavu that day drove the chariot of the king.

NARRATOR 2: But as the hunters pursued their quarry, Dighavu cleverly took a path that led away. He brought the king far from the sight and hearing of the others.

NARRATOR 1: At last Brahmadatta said,

BRAHMADATTA: I wish to stop and rest.

NARRATOR 2: Dighavu dismounted and sat cross-legged on the ground. And he told the king,

DIGHAVU: Come rest yourself, my lord.

NARRATOR 1: So the king lay down beside Dighavu and slept.

NARRATOR 2: Dighavu gripped his sword and drew it slowly from its sheath.

NARRATOR 1: He pointed the blade at the throat of Brahmadata.

NARRATOR 2: And then there came to him the words of his father.

DIGHITI: (*speaking as Dighavu's memory*)

Be not shortsighted.

Be not longsighted.

Not by violence is violence ended.

Violence is ended by *nonviolence*.

NARRATOR 1: The sword of Dighavu trembled.

NARRATOR 2: He drew it slowly away and replaced it in its sheath.

NARRATOR 1: Brahmadata breathed heavily and opened wide his eyes and sat up in alarm.

BRAHMADATTA: (*breathes loudly and heavily, eyes wide in fear*)

DIGHAVU: What is wrong, my lord?

BRAHMADATTA: (*slowly calms himself*) It is a dream that often plagues me. I see Dighavu, the son of my enemies, coming at me with his sword to avenge his parents.

NARRATOR 2: Then Dighavu rose and again drew his sword.

DIGHAVU: (*fiercely*) I am Dighavu, son of your enemies, and here am I to avenge my parents!

BRAHMADATTA: (*in terror*) Have mercy, dear Dighavu! Grant me my life!

DIGHAVU: (*reproachfully*) How can I grant your life? Truly is it said, we may forgive those who hurt us, but we never forgive those we hurt. You have killed my mother and my father, and would surely kill me too. So the life to be granted is mine!

BRAHMADATTA: Then grant me my life, and I will grant you yours!

NARRATOR 1: So Dighavu put away his sword.

NARRATOR 2: And the king rose, and the two clasped their hands and swore never again to seek the other's harm.

NARRATOR 1: Then Brahmadata said,

BRAHMADATTA: I have often pondered your father's final words. Tell me, Dighavu, what did he mean when he told you, "Be not shortsighted"?

DIGHAVU: My father meant, “Do not be quick to spurn a gift of friendship.”

BRAHMADATTA: And what did he mean when he told you, “Be not longsighted”?

DIGHAVU: My father meant, “Do not allow your hate to last too long.”

BRAHMADATTA: And what did he mean when he told you, “Not by violence is violence ended. Violence is ended by *nonviolence*”?

DIGHAVU: My father meant this: You, my lord, have killed my parents and stolen their kingdom. If I were to kill you in revenge, your allies would kill me, and then my allies would kill them, and so on, with no end to violence. But now instead, you have granted my life and I have granted yours. So violence is at an end.

NARRATOR 2: Then the king marveled at the wisdom of Dighavu, who understood in full what his father said in brief.

NARRATOR 1: Indeed, so great was Brahmadatta’s admiration and his gratitude, he soon restored to Dighavu the kingdom of his father.

NARRATOR 2: And as long as both kings lived, all quarrels between them were resolved in friendship and good will.

### **Forty Fortunes**

NARRATOR 1: Once, in the royal city of Isfahan, there lived a young man named Ahmed, who had a wife named Jamell. He knew no special craft or trade, but he had a shovel and a pick—and as he often told his wife,

AHMED: (*cheerfully*) If you can dig a hole, you can always earn enough to stay alive.

NARRATOR 4: That was enough for Ahmed. But it was not enough for Jamell.

NARRATOR 2: One day, as she often did, Jamell went to the public bath to wash herself in the hot pool and chat with the other women. But at the entrance, the woman in charge told her,

WOMAN: You can't come in now. The wife of the King's Royal Diviner is taking the whole place for herself.

JAMELL: (*angrily*) Who does she think she is? Just because her husband tells fortunes!

NARRATOR 3: But all she could do was return home, fuming all the way.

JAMELL: (*furiously*) Ooh!

NARRATOR 1: That evening, when Ahmed handed her his wages for the day, she said,

JAMELL: Look at these few measly coins! I won't put up with this any longer. Tomorrow you'll sit in the marketplace and be a diviner!

AHMED: Jamell, are you insane? What do I know about fortunetelling?

JAMELL: You don't need to know a thing. When anyone brings you a question, you just throw the dice and mumble something that sounds wise. It's either that, or I go home to the house of my father!

NARRATOR 4: So the next day, Ahmed sold his shovel and his pick and bought the dice and the board and the robe of a fortuneteller. Then he sat in the marketplace near the public bath.

NARRATOR 2: Hardly had he gotten settled when there ran up to him the wife of one of the King's ministers.

MINISTER'S WIFE: Diviner, you must help me! I wore my most precious ring to the bath today, and now it's missing. Please, tell me where it is!

NARRATOR 3: Ahmed gulped and cast the dice. As he desperately searched for something wise to say, he happened to glance up at the lady's cloak. There he spied a small hole, and showing through the hole, a bit of her naked arm.

NARRATOR 1: Of course, this was quite improper for a respectable lady, so Ahmed leaned forward and whispered urgently,

AHMED: Madam, I see a hole.

MINISTER'S WIFE: *(leaning closer)* A what?

AHMED: A hole! A hole!

MINISTER'S WIFE: *(perking up)* Of course! A hole!

NARRATOR 4: She rushed back to the bath and found the hole in the wall where she had hidden her ring for safekeeping and forgotten it. Then she came back out to Ahmed.

MINISTER'S WIFE: God be praised! You knew right where it was!

NARRATOR 2: And to Ahmed's amazement, she gave him a gold coin.

AHMED: *(stares at coin in his hand and shakes head in amazement)*

NARRATOR 3: That evening, when Jamell saw the coin and heard the story, she said,

JAMELL: You see? There's nothing to it!

AHMED: God was merciful on this day, but I dare not test Him on another!

JAMELL: Nonsense. If you want to keep your wife, you'll be back in the marketplace tomorrow.

AHMED: *(sighs in resignation)*

NARRATOR 1: Now, it happened that on that very night, at the palace of the King, the royal treasury was robbed.

NARRATOR 4: Forty pairs of hands carried away forty chests of gold and jewels.

NARRATOR 2: The theft was reported next morning to the King. He commanded,

KING: Bring me my Royal Diviner and all his assistants.

NARRATOR 3: But though the fortunetellers cast their dice and mumbled quite wisely, not one could locate the thieves or the treasure.

KING: Frauds! Throw them all in prison!

NARRATOR 1: Now, the King had heard about the fortuneteller who had found the ring of his minister's wife. So he sent two guards to the marketplace to bring Ahmed, who appeared trembling before him.

KING: Diviner, my treasury has been robbed of forty chests. What can you tell me about the thieves?

NARRATOR 4: Ahmed thought quickly about forty chests being carried away.

AHMED: Your Majesty, I can tell you there were . . . forty thieves.

KING: Amazing! None of my own diviners knew as much! But now you must find the thieves and the treasure.

NARRATOR 2: Ahmed felt faint.

AHMED: I'll . . . do my best, Your Majesty, but . . . but it will take some time.

KING: How long?

NARRATOR 3: Ahmed guessed the longest he could get.

AHMED: Uh . . . forty days, Your Majesty. One day for each thief.

KING: A long time indeed! Very well, you shall have it. If you succeed, I'll make you rich. If you don't, you'll rot with the others in prison!

AHMED: (*gasps softly*)

NARRATOR 1: Back home, Ahmed told Jamell,

AHMED: You see the trouble you have caused us? In forty days, the King will lock me away.

JAMELL: Nonsense. Just find the chests like you found the ring.

AHMED: I tell you, Jamell, I found nothing! That was only by the grace of God. But this time there's no hope.

NARRATOR 4: Ahmed took some dried dates, counted out forty, and placed them in a jar.

AHMED: I will eat one of these dates each evening. That will tell me when my forty days are done.

NARRATOR 2: Now, it happened that one of the King's own servants was one of the forty thieves, and he had heard the King speak with Ahmed. That same evening, he hurried to the thieves' meeting place and reported to their chief.

SERVANT: There is a diviner who says he will find the treasure and the thieves in forty days!

CHIEF: He's bluffing. But we can't afford to take chances. Go to his house and find out what you can.

NARRATOR 3: So the servant climbed up to the terrace on the flat roof of Ahmed's house, and he listened down the stairs that led inside.

NARRATOR 1: Just then, Ahmed took the first date from the jar and ate it. He told Jamell,

AHMED: That's one.

SERVANT: *(gasps loudly, nearly falls over)*

NARRATOR 4: The thief was so shocked, he nearly fell down the stairs. He hurried back to the meeting place and told the chief,

SERVANT: This diviner has amazing powers. Without seeing me, he knew I was on the roof! I clearly heard him say, "That's one."

CHIEF: You must have imagined it. Tomorrow night, two of you will go.

NARRATOR 2: So the next night, the servant returned to Ahmed's roof with another of the thieves. As they were listening, Ahmed ate a second date and said,

AHMED: That's two.

NARRATOR 3: The thieves nearly tumbled over each other as they fled the roof and raced back to the chief. The servant told him,

SERVANT: He knew there were two of us! We heard him say, "That's two."

CHIEF: It can't be!

NARRATOR 1: So the night after that, he sent three of the thieves,

NARRATOR 4: and the next night four,

NARRATOR 2: then five,

NARRATOR 3: then six.

NARRATOR 1: And so it went till the fortieth night, when the chief said,

CHIEF: This time, I'll go with you myself.

NARRATOR 4: So all forty thieves climbed up to Ahmed's roof to listen.

NARRATOR 2: Inside, Ahmed gazed at the last date in the jar, then sadly took it out and ate it.

AHMED: That's forty. The number is complete.

NARRATOR 3: Jamell sat beside him.

JAMELL: (*gently*) Ahmed, during these forty days, I've been thinking. I was wrong to make you be a diviner. You are what you are, and I should not have tried to make you something else. Can you forgive me?

AHMED: I forgive you, Jamell, but the fault is mine as well. I should not have done what I knew was not wise. But none of this helps us now.

NARRATOR 1: Just then came a loud banging at the door.

AHMED: (*sighs*) The King's men already!

NARRATOR 4: He went to the door and unbolted it, calling,

AHMED: All right, all right, I know why you're here.

NARRATOR 2: He swung the door open. To his astonishment, he saw forty men kneeling before him and touching their heads to the ground again and again.

CHIEF: Of course you know, O great diviner! Nothing can be hidden from you. But we beg you not to give us away!

NARRATOR 3: Bewildered though he was, Ahmed realized that these must be the thieves. He thought fast and said,

AHMED: Very well, I won't turn you in. But you must replace every bit of the treasure.

CHIEF: At once! At once!

NARRATOR 1: And before the night was through, forty pairs of hands carried forty chests of gold and jewels back into the King's treasury.

NARRATOR 4: Early the next morning, Ahmed appeared before the King.



AHMED: Your Majesty, my magic arts can find either the treasure or the thieves, but not both.  
Which do you choose?

KING: The treasure, I suppose—though it's a pity not to get the thieves. The boiling oil is all ready for them. Well, never mind. Tell me where the treasure is, and I'll send my men right away.

AHMED: No need, Your Majesty.

NARRATOR 2: Ahmed waved his hand in the air and called,

AHMED: *Pish posh, wish wosh, mish mosh.* By my magic, the chests have returned to their place.

NARRATOR 3: The King himself went with Ahmed to the treasury and found it so.

KING: You are truly the greatest fortuneteller of the age! From this day forth, you shall be my Royal Diviner!

AHMED: (*bowing*) Thank you, Your Majesty, but I'm afraid that's impossible. Finding and restoring your treasure was so difficult, it used up all my powers. I shall never be a diviner again.

KING: What a loss! Then I must doubly reward you. Here, take two of these chests for your own.

NARRATOR 1: So Ahmed returned home to Jamell,

NARRATOR 4: safe,

NARRATOR 2: rich,

NARRATOR 3: and a good deal wiser.

NARRATOR 1: And as any diviner could have foretold,

ALL: they lived happily ever after.

Midsummer Eve

NARRATOR 1: Early in the morning of one Midsummer Day, young Count Alaric rode out of his castle alone. The count was joyful as he rode his horse over his fields, for the sun was shining and life was good.

NARRATOR 2: Halfway across a meadow, he saw a maiden in a gown of green, sitting on the grass. Her feet were bare, and on her hair of flaxen gold she wore a wreath of moon daisies. Alaric reined in his horse.

ALARIC: You are a stranger here, fair lady. Will you tell me your name?

NARRATOR 1: She smiled a little, but distantly, as though she were smiling at something remembered.

LADY: I do not know my name.

ALARIC: (*in surprise*) But where do you come from?

LADY: I do not know.

ALARIC: Can you tell me nothing about yourself?

LADY: Nothing, but that for an hour or two I have sat in this field, watching the sun rise higher and listening to the song of the lark.

NARRATOR 2: Count Alaric looked down at her pale, strange beauty, and she looked up at him and smiled, and he knew he wanted to help her more than anything in the world.

NARRATOR 1: Yet there was a look in her golden-green eyes that he had never seen before—a look as though, even while she smiled at him, she was thinking of something else.

ALARIC: My castle is yonder. Will you come there with me?

NARRATOR 2: She thought a moment, then rose and answered.

LADY: I will.

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NARRATOR 1: As the maiden had no name, he called her Catherine, because he knew of no name more beautiful. And since he loved her and she was willing, he married her.

NARRATOR 2: But though they were happy and talked and laughed together, whenever he looked into her eyes he saw she was thinking of something else.

NARRATOR 1: With others, she was shy and silent, and when dances were held at the castle, she would sit by the wall and watch and smile. But one day Alaric came upon her in a room alone, dancing in a shaft of sunlight that streamed through a window.

ALARIC: You dance so lightly and gracefully. Why will you never dance with me?

NARRATOR 2: She stopped and gave him a puzzled frown.

LADY: I never want to dance.

ALARIC: (*laughs*) You were dancing a moment ago, dearest. I saw you as I came in.

LADY: (*face lightens*) Ah yes. I heard the music and I *had* to dance.

ALARIC: But, dearest, there was no music.

LADY: But there was! Sometimes I hear it in the distance, but today it seemed quite near.

NARRATOR 1: She listened for a moment.

LADY: (*sadly*) It is all silent now.

NARRATOR 2: Count Alaric took her hand in his.

ALARIC: Tell me truly, Catherine, are you happy with me?

NARRATOR 1: She smiled and laughed and pressed his hand.

LADY: Of course I am happy with you.

NARRATOR 2: But his heart was heavy, for still he saw the look in her eyes, as though she thought of something else.

\* \* \*

NARRATOR 1: A year passed, and it happened that on Midsummer Eve, Count Alaric was returning home from a short journey. All through the night he rode, hoping to be with Catherine at the very same hour he had found her, twelve months before.

NARRATOR 2: Towards dawn, as he passed the meadow where he had first seen her, he heard strains of sweet music. He rode towards it over the grass, and in the fading moonlight he could see some twenty or thirty figures in gowns of green, dancing barefoot in the dew.

ALARIC: (*wonderingly, to himself*) It is the fairy people. They have come here to dance on Midsummer Eve.

NARRATOR 1: And then he noticed that one among them wore crimson instead of green.

ALARIC: That hair, and that little chin. And I have seen her wear that gown before.

NARRATOR 2: But he could scarcely believe it, and he watched for many minutes before he knew beyond doubt that the dancer was Lady Catherine.

ALARIC: The fairy people have lured her from the castle! There is no time to lose. I must save her from their power.

NARRATOR 1: He urged his horse forward, but the horse took fright and bolted, fleeing like a mad creature back the way it had come. It carried him three miles before he could calm it and turn it around. But before he reached the meadow, the cock had crowed, and he found the field deserted.

NARRATOR 2: He rode on to the castle and went straight to his lady's room, fearing to find it empty. But when he flung back the velvet curtains around the bed, he saw her sleeping there, her pale hair spread over the pillow. She awoke and smiled.

ALARIC: Dearest, is all well with you?

LADY: Of course. You are home early, and I am glad.

ALARIC: What did you do last night, Catherine?

LADY: I slept. What else should I do? (*smiles*) I am tired, and you ask so many questions. Wake me again when the sun is high.

NARRATOR 1: And she closed her eyes and slept once more.

ALARIC: (*softly to himself*) I must have been mistaken. It could not have been her in the meadow.

NARRATOR 2: He turned from the bed and walked softly away. But there hanging over a chair was her gown of crimson brocade, and he saw that the hem was dark and wet, as though it had been dragged in the dew.

\* \* \*

NARRATOR 1: Count Alaric thought much on what had passed that Midsummer Eve, and on the look he saw always in his lady's eyes. And at last he told himself,

ALARIC: I can bear this no longer. I will go out on the moors and visit wise old Magda. If anyone can advise me, it is she.

NARRATOR 2: So Count Alaric rode across the heath to the tumbledown hut of Magda. He knocked, and a voice of dignity answered.

MAGDA: Come in.

NARRATOR 1: He stooped to pass inside the door, and in the dim light he saw Magda, standing by the fire and stirring a pot of steeping herbs with her strong peasant hands. She turned to him and smiled.

MAGDA: Good day, Count Alaric. Sit you down. You are in trouble, or you would not have sought me out.

ALARIC: It is of my Lady Catherine that I would speak with you.

NARRATOR 2: And he told her all about the strange maiden he had married, and how he had seen her on Midsummer Eve dancing with the fairy people, and about the look always in her eyes, as though she were thinking of something else.

NARRATOR 1: When he had done, Magda was silent for a while, then looked at him with eyes full of pity and understanding.

MAGDA: Alaric, your lady is one of the fairy people.

ALARIC: It cannot be!

NARRATOR 2: But he knew in his heart she spoke true.

MAGDA: The time you found her, she must have been dancing on Midsummer Eve as the fairy people do, and happened to remain in the meadow at dawn when the others departed. Away from her people, she would forget much of her life with them, and so could tell you nothing of herself.

ALARIC: But if she is one of them, must I then lose her?

MAGDA: So long as she remembers anything of her fairy life, she will never be wholly yours. She will always hear the fairy music borne on the wind, and on Midsummer Eve she will have to dance with her people—and one day she may not return. And even if she should come back each time, you will always see in her eyes the look that troubles you.

ALARIC: (*in despair*) Is there no way to make her forget the fairy people? Can I never win her completely for my own?

MAGDA: There is only one way. You must give her a love that is perfect—a love that leaves no room for memory of any other life.

ALARIC: But my love *is* perfect. Magda, I would die for her!

MAGDA: (*shakes her head*) If your love were truly perfect, she would be wholly yours. But do not despair. Go home and see what time will do to help.

NARRATOR 1: From that day on, Count Alaric was even kinder to his lady than before, if that were possible.

NARRATOR 2: Yet daily he grew more sad, for still he saw she thought of something else.

\* \* \*

NARRATOR 1: Winter came, and after that the spring, then spring was gone and summer back again.

NARRATOR 2: On Midsummer Eve, Count Alaric watched and waited, and at dusk he saw his lady slip through the castle gate and run toward the fields. He buckled on his sword and mounted his horse.

NARRATOR 1: When he reached the meadow, he heard the music and saw once again the fairy people, dancing barefoot in their fluttering gowns of green. And among them in blue velvet was his lady, her feet bare and her pale hair flying, just the same as theirs.

NARRATOR 2: The count left his horse and came nearer, keeping to the shadows where he could. And as he watched his lady dance and laugh, he felt his heart would break.

ALARIC: (*softly to himself*) She must be mine! I will take her at any cost.

NARRATOR 1: He stepped among the dancers and seized her by the wrist.

NARRATOR 2: The fairy people scattered and fluttered into a group a little way off, with their white faces turned to him in the moonlight. And his lady would have followed, but he held her fast.

ALARIC: Catherine, it is Alaric, your husband. I have come to fetch you home.

NARRATOR 1: But she only struggled and cried,

LADY: Let me go!

NARRATOR 1: . . . and the fairy people held out their arms like white moonbeams and moaned,

FAIRY PEOPLE: Come back, our sister, come back.

NARRATOR 2: Yet Alaric's hold was too strong, and after a while she ceased her struggling. Then she smiled cunningly at him, and touched his cheek and stroked his hair.

LADY: Dear husband, my people wait for me. Let me join in the dance, and when it is over, I promise I will come back to you.

ALARIC: (*shakes his head*) The promises of the fairy people are as breath in the wind. If I let you go, you may *never* come back to me.

NARRATOR 1: Then tears filled Catherine's eyes.

LADY: The fairy people have no tears, but you have taught me how to weep.

NARRATOR 2: And Alaric turned his gaze away so pity should not make him weak.

NARRATOR 1: The fairy people swayed closer.

NARRATOR 2: Around the count and his lady they made a circle, and she cried out to them,

LADY: Give me now your strength, my people!

FAIRY PEOPLE: Be strong, our sister, be strong.

NARRATOR 1: And Count Alaric's lady became a sapling, and his hand was on its trunk, and a strong wind bent it away to tear it from his hold.

NARRATOR 2: But he clung to the tree tightly, and the wind died down and was still.

FAIRY PEOPLE: Be wild, our sister, be wild.

NARRATOR 1: And Count Alaric's lady became a vixen, which twisted and turned and snapped at him.

NARRATOR 2: But he held it close until it lay panting in his arms.

FAIRY PEOPLE: Be flowing, our sister, be flowing.

NARRATOR 1: And Count Alaric's lady became water which would have trickled through his fingers.

NARRATOR 2: But he cupped his hands and caught every drop.

FAIRY PEOPLE: Be fiery, our sister, be fiery.

NARRATOR 1: And Count Alaric's lady became a magic flame that seemed to scorch away his flesh.

NARRATOR 2: But he cried in his pain,

ALARIC: If I hold you till dawn, you will still be partly mine.

NARRATOR 2: . . . and he did not let go of the flame.

NARRATOR 1: Then Count Alaric's lady in her own shape sank upon the grass.

LADY: (*softly*) You are too strong for me, and I cannot leave you.

NARRATOR 2: The voices of the fairy people rose in a wail, and the circle broke.

NARRATOR 1: The count looked up and saw with joy a streak of saffron in the east. But when he looked down to where his lady crouched and moaned, his heart was troubled.

ALARIC: (*gently*) Catherine, if you stay with me, will you remember your people and be sad?

LADY: I shall only faintly remember them. I shall not be sad, but I shall always feel there is something I have lost.

ALARIC: And if you went back to your people, would you remember me and our life together and regret that it was past?

LADY: I should remember none of it. So I should have no regrets and be only happy.

ALARIC: (*remains silent a moment*) I would not wish your happiness lessened for even a minute. Dearest, go back to your people.

NARRATOR 2: And he let go of her wrist.

NARRATOR 1: In the distance, the first cock crowed. Alaric turned and ran to his horse, and he never looked back, for he could not bear to see the meadow empty behind him.

NARRATOR 2: For an hour he rode blindly, not caring where his horse carried him. When again he noticed where he was, he found himself nearing the castle.

NARRATOR 1: And there on the dusty road before him trudged a solitary figure in blue velvet.

ALARIC: Catherine!

NARRATOR 2: He raced to her side and found her very close to tears.



LADY: Oh, Alaric! I woke up and found myself alone in a meadow, and I was so afraid. I must have walked there in my sleep. Did you ride out to look for me? Were you afraid too?

ALARIC: (*smiling*) I rode out to look for you. And I was afraid.

NARRATOR 1: Alaric dismounted and took her hand, and when he looked into her eyes, he saw she thought only of him and of her and of their life together.

NARRATOR 2: And he knew that now she was wholly his, for his love at last was perfect.