



The Goose Girl



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Once upon a time there was a queen who had only one beautiful daughter. She loved the girl very much.

At last, the day came for the princess to go far away and marry a prince. The queen was sad to say goodbye.

She gave her daughter some beautiful dresses, a gold cup, and many other things. She gave her a magic horse. It was a white horse and it could talk.

'I love this horse, Mother,' the princess said.
'I will call it Falada!'

And the queen gave her daughter a maid to ride with her.





Then the queen made three drops of blood fall onto a handkerchief.

‘Take this,’ she said to her daughter.

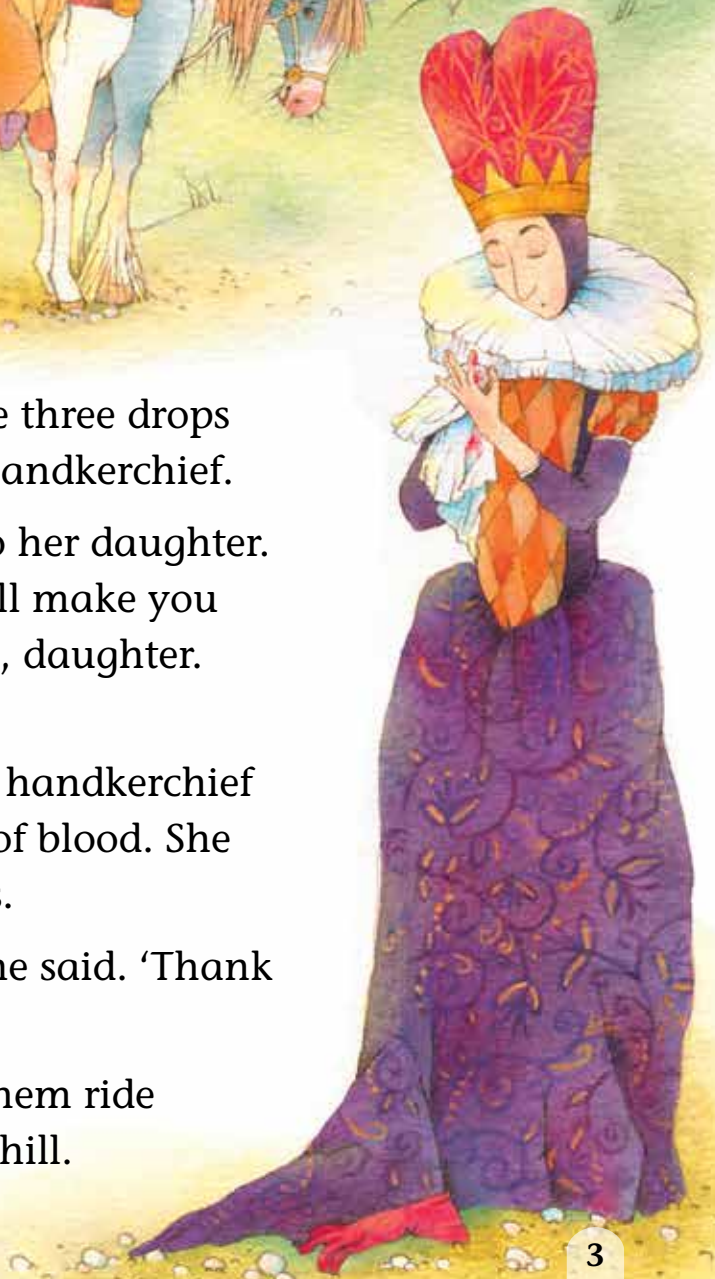
‘It will help you. It will make you strong. Now goodbye, daughter.

And be happy!’

The princess took the handkerchief with the three drops of blood. She put it inside her dress.

‘Goodbye, Mother!’ she said. ‘Thank you for everything!’

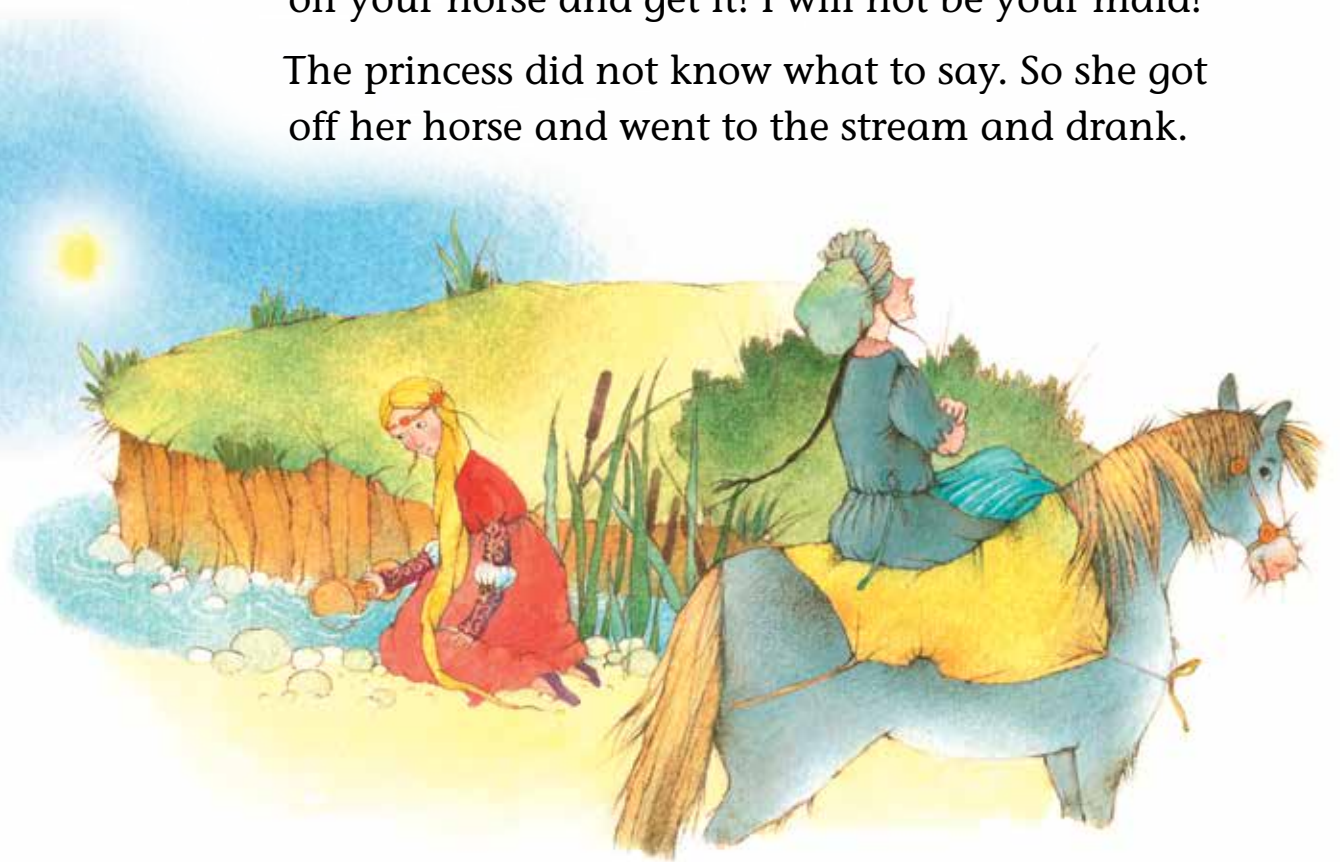
The queen watched them ride away down the long hill.



It was a very hot day. Soon the princess was thirsty. They were near a stream and so she asked her maid, 'Maid! Please will you get me a drink of water in my gold cup?'

But the maid said angrily, 'No! I will not! You get off your horse and get it! I will not be your maid!'

The princess did not know what to say. So she got off her horse and went to the stream and drank.



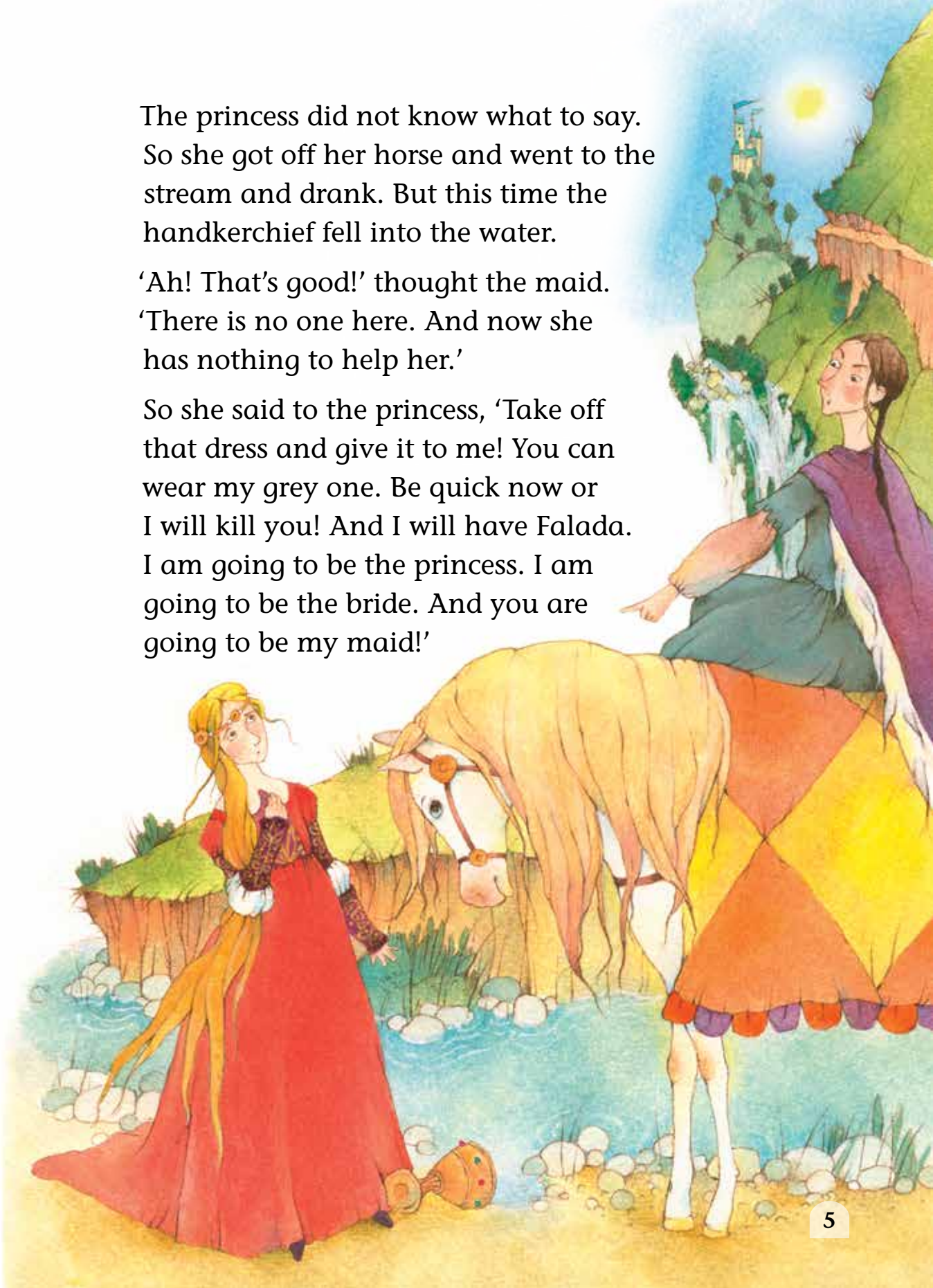
Then they rode on. But the sun was warm and later she asked again, 'Maid! Please will you get me a drink of water in my gold cup?'

And again the maid said angrily, 'No! I will not! You get off your horse and get it! I will not be your maid!'

The princess did not know what to say.
So she got off her horse and went to the
stream and drank. But this time the
handkerchief fell into the water.

‘Ah! That’s good!’ thought the maid.
‘There is no one here. And now she
has nothing to help her.’

So she said to the princess, ‘Take off
that dress and give it to me! You can
wear my grey one. Be quick now or
I will kill you! And I will have Falada.
I am going to be the princess. I am
going to be the bride. And you are
going to be my maid!’



So they rode on. The maid rode in front on Falada. The princess rode behind her on the old grey horse.

In the evening they arrived at the castle. The king and his son, the prince, came to meet them.

‘How do you do, Princess?’ said the king to the maid. ‘This is my son, the prince!’



The real princess was left outside, but the king saw her.

‘Who is that girl?’ he thought. ‘She has a beautiful face!’



'Who are you?' asked the king.

'I came here as a maid,' the real princess answered, 'but you have many maids and you do not need me.'

'I can find some work for you. You can be a goose girl,' said the king. 'Come with me.'

He took her to a little house near the castle gate.

'This is Kirsten's house,' he said. 'She looks after the geese! Kirsten! Come! Here's a nice girl to help you! Give her some food and a bed, please.'





That night there was a big dinner at the castle.

‘This princess is going to be my son’s bride,’
said the king. ‘They will marry in three weeks.’

The maid looked at all the people and smiled.

Later that night she spoke to the prince.

‘I have something to tell you,’ she said. ‘That
white horse, Falada, is a bad horse. It’s mad!
You must kill it!’

She was afraid because Falada could talk.

‘Yes, my bride,’ said the prince, ‘if you want
that. I will tell my men to take it away.’



The real princess heard about this. She had one gold coin. She ran to the men and said, 'Take this gold coin. Do something for me. Do you see this dead horse? Put this horse's head by the big castle gate.'

'What?' they said. 'That's a mad idea! Why?'

'Because I loved that horse,' she said. 'I want to see its face.'

The men liked her. So they took the gold coin. And they put Falada's head by the castle gate.



Every day Kirsten took the geese out to the meadow, and the real princess went with her. They walked through the castle gate. And every day the real princess spoke to Falada's head.

'Falada! My horse ... do you know me?'

'Yes, Princess!' the head answered. 'You are the true bride!'

Kirsten did not like it. She thought it was very strange.

