

## Abbreviated version of the *King & King* story

The version below is an adaptation of the *King & King* story, which deviates from the story in the picture book.

At the top of the mountain lived an old queen, a young prince and a royal cat. They had a beautiful castle. The old queen was already very elderly. She walked crookedly and her face was very wrinkled. And when she sat upon her throne, she did so very carefully. One day the old queen said: "I am tired. I no longer want to be queen." And so the queen decided that she wanted to stop. "I'm not going to do this any longer," she said. "I want to stop working before the summer holidays." The queen walked slowly to the bedroom of the prince. "Rise and shine!" said the queen loudly.

The young prince woke up with a jolt. "Hey, mother, what's up?" asked the young prince. "I need to talk to you," answered the old queen. "I no longer want to be queen." "I have ruled for so long." And then the queen started to cry. She sat down on the bed and the prince comforted her. "It's time for you to get married," said the queen. "I want to stop being queen before the summer. We need to organise a big wedding." The prince got the shock of his life! "What are you telling me? Must I get married?" The prince started to tremble. "But to who?" "We'll find someone," said the queen and wagged her finger. "But you are going to get married, that's for sure."

Later, at dinner, the queen again raised the subject. The prince, who was seated on the other side of the table, was so shaken that he had completely lost his appetite. The queen just kept going on and on about it. She laid down her fork and said: "When I was your age, I had already been married twice. Every prince around us is already married, but you aren't. Why is that?" The prince said nothing. He was unhappy and had to get used to the idea of getting married. He had never seen any princesses that he liked, so he didn't know who to choose. The queen assured him that things would work out just fine. She hugged the prince and told him that she would take care of everything. The prince wished his mother good night. "Sleep well, mumsy," said the prince.

That evening, the queen pulled out a long list of names of princesses. She called each and every one of them and invited them to visit the castle. The first princess arrived the very next day. The young prince was brushing his teeth when the doorbell rang. "Prince! Get the door, will you!" called the queen. And so the prince, with the toothbrush still between his teeth, ran to the front door and opened it. "Hello!" said Princess Aria of Austria. And she sang a beautiful song. Well it may have been beautiful, but the prince didn't like it. In fact, he thought the princess was rather a poor singer. And so he thanked her and asked her to kindly leave.

An hour later, the doorbell rang again. A small princess stood in the doorway. Her name was Princess Dolly. "Hello," said

Princess Dolly. And she started a circus act. She juggled balls and clubs. They flew all over the place. It frightened the prince. "No," replied the prince. He thanked her and sent her away.

The next to arrive was a princess from Greenland. She was indeed bright green! "Hello," said the princess. But green was not the prince's favourite colour. That didn't bother the princess, who immediately fell in love with the prince's valet. The valet and the princess went off dancing through the castle. The prince didn't mind at all, but he still hadn't found his princess.

Then there appeared a princess who came from a land far, far away. "Hello," said the princess. She had very long arms, which she waved to everyone she saw. She wore beautiful clothes and had dark brown eyes and a brown skin. Also, she was very tall. But the prince was much shorter. He couldn't reach her lips to give her a kiss. And so he sent her away. The queen was very disappointed. "Oh, my dear, dear prince! Are none of the princesses to your liking?" "No," replied the prince. "I am sorry, but they just don't make me feel happy." Just when the prince wanted to start crying, his valet came running in. "Wait! Someone is approaching the gate. It is Princess Madeleine with her brother Prince Charming." The gate opened, allowing Princess Madeleine and her brother Prince Charming to enter. "Hello," said Madeleine. She wore a beautiful dress with colourful flowers. "I am Princess Madeleine and this is Prince Charming." And then it happened... The crown prince started to feel all warm inside. He became very happy and started to laugh. His young heart beat faster with excitement. He fell in love.

*(Stop reading here. The children may make up the end of the story).*

"Oh"... sighed the crown prince. "What a handsome prince! You have such beautiful eyes and a pretty jacket." Princess Madeleine giggled. She hadn't expected this, but she was very pleased for her brother Prince Charming.

The old queen was so happy! She organized a big party. A magnificent wedding for two princes. Lots of guests came. All kings and queens. And of course all the princesses that the prince liked, but not enough to marry them. The princes stood side-by-side. And the queen asked: "Prince Charming, do you want to marry my son?" He replied: "Yes." Then the party started. And everyone danced and had a very good time.

From that day on, the princes were called "King & King". The old queen now finally had time to relax and enjoy the summer sun. The kings loved one another very much. And they lived happily ever after.