



### **The Story of Princess Vasilisa and the Firebird**

This fairy tale captures the imagination of listeners taking them on a journey through the huntsman's series of missions that he brings upon himself through his initial desire to please his king and receive reward. The huntsman's trusty horse helps him through every challenge.

### **Source**

This is a Russian fairy tale collected by Alexander Afanasyev in *Narodnye russkie skazki*

### **Duration**

Allow 15-20 minutes for telling this story

### **Bare Bones**

- Royal Huntsman finds a feather of the firebird
- Horse warns 'do not pick up that feather or you will know trouble'
- Huntsman picks it up and presents it to the King and receives a reward
- King demands the huntsman bring him the firebird
- Huntsman goes to his horse who says: *weep not, grieve not, this is not trouble, the real trouble lies ahead*. He then advises him to spread corn on the field
- The firebird comes to eat the corn and is caught
- Huntsman presents firebird to the King and receives a reward
- As he has managed this task, the King demands the huntsman bring him Princess Vasilisa to be his bride
- Huntsman goes to his horse who again says: *weep not, grieve not, this is not trouble, the real trouble lies ahead* and then advises him to gather a golden topped tent, finest food and wine before they journey to the coast where Princess Vasilisa is rowing her little boat
- Huntsman sets up the tent and lights a fire to cook the food and the scents and the reflection of the sun on the tent's golden top draw Princess Vasilisa to row over
- They share a meal and drink wine which was foreign to Princess Vasilisa. She falls asleep drunk
- The Huntsman lifts the sleeping Princess onto his horse and journeys back to the King
- Princess Vasilisa is not happy when she awakes and refuses to marry the king without her wedding gown from the bottom of the sea
- The King presents the huntsman with a reward for bringing Princess Vasilisa and demands that he bring him her wedding gown

- Again the huntsman turns to his horse who says: *weep not, grieve not, this is not trouble, the real trouble lies ahead*
- Once the Huntsman and his horse arrive at the coast the horse finds a great crab and sets his hoof firmly on its shell
- The crab (king of the crabs) asks the horse to spare its life and clicks its great pincers and summons hundreds of other crabs to search for the wedding gown and retrieve it from the bottom of the sea
- When the huntsman returns with the wedding gown Princess Vasilisa refuses to marry the king until the huntsman is made to bathe in a cauldron of boiling water
- The huntsman makes a final request to say goodbye to his trusted horse. The horse says: *weep not, grieve not, this is not trouble, the real trouble lies ahead*. The horse advises the huntsman to spread a magical ointment over every inch of his body and that then the water will not harm him.
- The huntsman bathes in the boiling water and comes out incredibly handsome
- The king is jealous and immediately takes his robes off and jumps into the cauldron not to reappear
- The kingdom is set for a wedding and Princess Vasilisa falls instantly in love with the huntsman
- They marry and the people take the huntsman as king instead

### Invisible Learning

- Connection to magical realms
- Interspecies communication

### Tags

- Magic, Mission, Story, Journey, Quest,

