

Sister Alyonushka and Brother Ivanushka

Once upon a time there lived a king and a queen who had two children: a girl and a boy. The girl's name was Alyonushka, the boy's was Ivanushka. Then the king and the queen died. The children were left alone and decided to go into the world.

They walked on and on and came to a pond, with a herd of cows grazing nearby. «I am so thirsty», said Ivanushka. «Do not drink, little brother. If you do, you will turn into a calf», said his sister. Ivanushka heeded her words and on they went until they came to a pond, with a drove of horses nearby. «I am still thirsty», said Ivanushka. «Do not drink, little brother. If you do, you will turn into a foal», said his sister. Ivanushka heeded her words and on they went until they came to a pond, with a flock of goats nearby. «I must have a drink», said Ivanushka. «Do not drink, little brother. If you do, you will turn into a kid», said his sister. But this time Ivanushka did not heed his sister's words and drank some water. At once he turned into a kid.

Alyonushka burst into tears and the kid was skipping around her and bleating. At this time a king from a nearby kingdom was riding by on his horse. He saw the girl crying bitterly and came to ask what the trouble was. Alyonushka told him about her parents and her brother. The king came to like the pretty girl and decided to marry her. Alyonushka liked the king too and went to live in his palace. They took the kid with them.

One day when the king had gone hunting, a witch turned into an old woman and came into the palace. She asked Alyonushka to take her to the pond nearby. Alyonushka did not think it kind to refuse so she agreed. When they came to the pond, the witch tied a heavy stone to Alyonushka's neck and threw it into the water. Then she turned into Alyonushka and went to live in the king's palace. She did not know that the kid had followed them and had seen everything.

When he came back, the king was surprised to find Alyonushka changed a lot. The witch began to insist on slaughtering the kid. Ivanushka the kid got desperate. He went to the pond and started calling to his sister saying:

«Alyonushka, my sister dear,
Rescue me from my fate.
Hurry up! Or I fear
It should be too late.»

And his sister said:
«Ivanushka, my brother dear,

A heavy stone is pulling me down,
A vicious viper has sucked my heart.»

But the king had followed the kid to the pond. He heard the kid calling his sister and her answering him. The king dived into the pond, tore the rope off Alyonushka's neck and carried her out ashore. Alyonushka returned to life and they all went into the palace. When she knew that Alyonushka had been rescued, the witch died in a fit of rage. And Ivanushka was turned into a boy. The king and Alyonushka lived happily ever after.