

# THE PRINCE AND HIS THREE FATES

## A Tale from Egypt

Once upon a time, the king of Egypt and his queen bore a son. The king was so happy about the new prince, and heir to the throne, that he held a feast in his honor. All the wise men of his kingdom attended. When the king asked them to tell the prince's future the wise men predicted that the boy would die, either by a dog, a crocodile or a serpent. The king and queen were devastated by this news.

Soon afterword the king had a palace built high upon a hill. He surrounded it by a moat and had it secured by soldiers. There the prince was raised, far away from other people, dogs, crocodiles and snakes. As you can imagine, the boy was lonely. He would look out of the highest palace windows and watch the villagers below.

One day he saw a man playing with his dog along a path next to the palace moat. He asked his father what kind of creature that was. The king told his son it was a dog. The boy asked for one of his own. Knowing the prophecy, the king refused. But the boy begged and pleaded until his father finally gave in and brought him a puppy. The prince and his dog became

inseparable. In this way, and unknowingly, the boy faced part of the prophecy and succeeded in cheating fate for the first time.

Eventually the prince asked his father why he was locked up so far away from others. It was then that the king told his son about the prophecy. Knowing that he would die no matter what, the prince asked his father to let him go and make his way in the world, a free man. Reluctantly, the king agreed to his sons wishes.

And so it was that the prince took his dog and left the only home he'd ever known in order to see the world. They traveled together for many days. Eventually they came to a new kingdom. There they saw a princess locked up in a tower, far away from other people. Her father promised to keep her there until a man was brave and strong enough to climb the tower and capture her. Many men tried, but all failed.

The prince knew how the princess must feel. Both had been locked away by their fathers. He decided to try and climb the tower to rescue the princess. Where others failed, this prince succeeded. He and the princess fell instantly in love. They were married and lived happily in her father's kingdom for several years.

Eventually the prince told his wife about the prophecy. He

also told her he was homesick and wanted to return to his father's kingdom. The princess understood his desires and agreed to accompany him on his journey.

When the two young people arrived in Egypt they lived quietly in the village for a time. They discovered that the people were terrified of a large crocodile that took villagers who came too close to the river. One day when the prince was out hunting with his dog, the crocodile came upon him. It grabbed the prince in its strong jaws and began dragging him to its lair. The prince's dog attacked the crocodile, which made it release the prince. Then, the prince and his dog worked together to kill the crocodile. In this way, the prince faced another part of the prophecy and cheated death for a second time.

About a month later the prince fell asleep early. The princess placed a bowl of milk by his bedside so he could drink it when he awoke. Soon afterward the princess saw a snake slithering toward her husband. Knowing that snakes like milk, she moved the bowl of milk in its path. When the snake got to the bowl, it began to drink the milk. It drank until it was full and then fell asleep. As it lay slumbering, the princess took a sword and chopped off the serpent's head. In this way, the prophecy was faced and the prince cheated death for a third time.

Now that the prince had escaped his fate he made himself

known to his father who took the prince and princess into the castle. There they lived happily for several years. When the king died, the prince and princess became king and queen. They were good, kind rulers who were loved by all their subjects, and who lived long and prosperous lives.

\*Adapted by Kathleen Simonetta. Inspired by the following tales

“The Prince and His Fate” found in, The Whole World Storybook, by Marcus Crouch. Illustrated by William Stobbs. Oxford University Press, c1983, pp. 44-50.

“The Prince and the Three Fates” found in A World of Fairy Tales, retold by Andrew Lang. Illustrated by Henry Justice Ford. Selected and introduced by Neil Philip. NY: Dial Books, c1994, pp. 92-102.

