

# THE CARPET, THE MIRROR, AND THE MAGIC FRUIT

## A Folktale from the Middle East

Once upon a time three princes, who also happened to be brothers, set out to find their fortunes. Early in their travels they came upon a juncture in the road that split off in three directions. The brothers decided that each would follow one of the roads; and that in a month's time they would return to the juncture to determine which one found the most unusual treasure.

The oldest brother went west. He came upon a large bazaar inside a city where he searched several vendors' wares hoping to find an unusual treasure. He almost gave up when he came upon a mirror that was partially hidden behind several colorful scarves. When he saw the reflection of one of his brothers walking in a distant land he knew the mirror was special. He asked the price of the mirror; and didn't even haggle over the asking price of 5,000 gold pieces.

The second brother traveled north. He came upon a village several miles into his journey. In the town square he found a weaver's shop. The prince told the weaver that he was looking

for an unusual treasure. The weaver showed the prince a beautiful carpet. Although impressed with the carpet's fine weave and lovely design, the prince did not think that a carpet was that unusual. Then the weaver told the prince that the carpet was magical and would take him anywhere he wanted. Now that was unusual and the prince readily paid the weaver 5,000 gold coins for the magic carpet.

The third brother traveled west until he came upon a market where merchants sold fruits, spices, and oils. As he looked around, he saw a beggar. The prince gave him a few coins, a share of his food and some kind words. In thanks for his generosity, the beggar gave the prince a piece of magic fruit that could be used to cure any illness. How fortunate this brother was to obtain such an unusual treasure.

At the end of the month, the three brothers met back at the juncture. Each was anxious to show the others the treasures they had found. It was difficult to determine which was the most unusual. As they debated the merits of their own treasures the princes' happened to look into the magic mirror. There they saw the Sultan's daughter in a sick bed. They knew they could cure her with the magic fruit but they also knew that they were very far away from the palace.

The second brother reminded the others about his magic carpet. All three sat upon it; and it instantly took them into the palace and directly to the princess's chamber. They immediately

begged the Sultan to let them try to save the princess. The desperate Sultan agreed to their request.

The youngest brother cut his magic fruit in half, squeezed out its juice and held it to the princess's lips. As soon as she swallowed the liquid the princess recovered from her illness. The Sultan was overjoyed and offered to reward the youngest prince.

The other brothers reminded the Sultan that his daughter could not have been cured without the help of their magic mirror and magic carpet. The Sultan agreed and offered to reward all three princes. He also allowed his daughter to choose one of the brothers to be her husband.

The princess thought long and hard about which brother to marry. She finally chose the youngest brother because he had given up his entire treasure to save her life. The other brothers still had their mirror and carpet but the youngest no longer had his magic fruit. It had been completely used up to make the princess well again. The oldest boys rejoiced in their brother's happiness and good fortune. The youngest brother and his new wife lived happily ever after.

Adapted by Kathleen Simonetta. Inspired by the following tale:

"The Carpet, the Mirror, and the Magic Fruit," Wonder Tales from Around the World, by Heather Forest. Illustrations by David Boston. Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc., c1995, pp. 135-138.

