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THE FROG PRINCE

Once upon a time, when magic was much more common than it is today, there was a King who had seven daughters. The six older princesses were all very beautiful but the seventh was so beautiful the sun itself could not outshine her, and her name was Aurora.

One by one, the older princesses got married and left home, until only Aurora was left. She, however, refused to marry.

"Not until I find the perfect prince," she insisted.

One day, Aurora was by herself in the palace gardens. She was playing with a golden ball, throwing it up in the air and catching it again, and laughing merrily. But then she dropped the ball, and it rolled away into a pond and sank into the gloomy depths.

THE FROG PRINCE

"Oh no," cried Aurora, racing after it. She peered into the dark water, but there was not so much as a gleam of gold.

"How will I get it back?"

"Don't worry," croaked a bright, emerald-green frog, sitting on a lily pad. "I will help you, if you help me in return."

"What do you want?" she asked. "I'll give you my pearl necklace or my golden ring."

"No," said the frog. "I don't want riches. I just want to come home with you, to eat from your own little plate, drink from your own little cup and sleep on your own little pillow."

Aurora looked at the frog's wet, green skin and big, bulgy eyes, and shivered. "Still, he's only a frog," she thought. "He couldn't hop all the way to the palace." So she agreed.

The frog dived deep under the water. When he reappeared, he held a shining golden ball.

"Thank you," cried Aurora. She snatched the ball and set off for the palace at a run.

"Hey, what about your promise?" called the frog, hopping splashily after her. But Aurora pretended not to hear, and he was soon left far behind.

When she got back, Aurora didn't tell anyone about the frog.



In fact, by dinner time she had forgotten all about him. Her six older sisters were visiting and she was busy finding out their news. They were sitting down to eat, chatting happily, when they heard a strange noise.

Hoppity-splash,
hoppity-splash,
hoppity-splash.

Something with wet, webby feet was hopping up the marble staircase.

Aurora's heart sank. "Oh no."

"Princess, youngest Princess, let me in!" came a croak.

"Aurora, open the door," ordered the King.

Hoppity-splash!

A bright, emerald-green frog leaped into the room.

"Who's *that*?" asked the oldest Princess.

"Er, just a frog," replied Aurora. "He helped to get my ball out of the pond and now he wants to come for dinner."

"A frog?" squealed her sisters. "Yuck! Send him away."

"Princess, youngest Princess, have you forgotten your promise?" cried the frog quickly.

"What promise?" asked the King.