



The Storybook Princess

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Chomnan is a child who likes listening to stories. His father always tells stories to him. 'Dad, I want to hear a story!' Chomnan says. His father begins: 'Once upon a time, a couple working as firewood choppers had seven children. The youngest child was as small as a thumb...'



Chomnan interrupts: 'Dad, why is he as small as a thumb?' 'Because he eats very little and grows slowly,' his father says. 'Why does he eat very little?' Chomnan asks. 'Because his family is poor.'



Chomnan asks: 'Why are his older siblings normal?' 'Now do you want to hear the story or not?' his father says. 'I want to,' Chomnan says, 'but I want to hear a different story. I know this story already.'



His father begins another story. 'Once upon a time, lakes and ponds dried out. A crow flew to find water. It saw a jar half full of water, and it drank the water in the jar—'



Chomnan interrupts: 'Then the crow carried pebbles one by one. But wouldn't the crow get tired, Dad?' 'Now do you want to hear the story or not?' his father asks. 'I want to,' Chomnan says, 'but I want to hear another story. I know this one already.'



'Will you interrupt me again?' his father asks.
'I promise I won't!' Chomnan says.



Chomnan's father opens the book again and starts reading another story: 'Once, the sun and the wind made a bet—' 'Dad, why is the sun so hot?' Chomnan asks.



'Didn't you promise to stop interrupting me?' his father says. 'I'm sorry!' Chomnan says. 'That's enough for tonight, son,' his father says. 'I think you already know all these stories. Good night!' 'Okay, Dad,' Chomnan says sadly.



He hugs the book and falls asleep. That night, Chomnan hears the sound of a book opening. He gets up to check. Chomnan says to himself: 'Dad didn't make that noise.'



'Hello?' Chomnan calls out. 'Who are you?'
'Hello!' the girl says. 'Little Finger.'



Chomnan is curious. 'Strange! Your name is Little Finger?' 'You're also strange, Ring Finger,' she says. Chomnan frowns. 'My name is not Ring Finger!' he says. 'Where are you from?' 'Middle finger,' she says, ignoring Chomnan's question.



'Why don't you answer my question?'
Chomnan asks. 'Index finger,' she says.
'What do fingers have to do with anything?'
Chomnan says. 'Where are you from?'
'Thumb,' she says.



Chomnan feels angry. 'Why don't you answer my question?' he says. 'Don't you like questions? I don't mean to bother you, but I would like my book back.' Chomnan takes the book from the girl.



The girl smiles and says: 'Thank you for asking so many questions, even though I didn't answer them. I am a character in a story.' 'Why didn't you answer my questions?' Chomnan asks. 'I am a princess who can't answer questions,' the girl says. 'A witch put a curse on me that stops me from answering questions.'



Chomnan becomes more curious. 'But why do you answer now?' he asks. The girl responds with a smile: 'Because you asked more than five questions and broke the spell. That's more questions than the witch has fingers on her hand.'



Chomnan smiles and asks: 'Why did you come here?' 'I was bored,' the princess says. 'I wanted to listen to your father's stories, but you interrupted him all the time.' Chomnan laughs because it was true.



Chomnan opens the book. 'If you want to listen, I will read you the story,' he says. The princess replies excitedly: 'Really? I would love to hear a story!'



Chomnan starts to read the story about the boy who was as small as a thumb. He reads the story and adds gestures with his hands. The princess listens carefully to every word.



After a while, the princess begins to feel sleepy. 'Thank you for the story,' she says. 'But I am sleepy now.' 'Good night, princess!' says Chomnan. 'I am sleepy as well.' Chomnan and the princess both fall asleep.



When Chomnan wakes up, the princess is gone. His father comes in the room. 'Son, what are you looking for?' he asks. 'Nothing, Dad!' Chomnan says. 'Hurry up and get dressed for school!' his father says.



Chomnan smiles at the storybook. He eats breakfast, and then his father takes him to school.



That night Chomnan says to his father: 'Dad, tonight I will tell you a story.' 'What story?' his father asks. 'The Princess Who Can't Answer Questions,' Chomnan says. Chomnan and his father have a very happy night.

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