

The Greatest of Them All

Narrator: Once upon a time in a faraway land, there was a king who made a very unusual proclamation.

Herald: Hear ye, hear ye! The king has commanded that all the liquids of this realm are to present themselves before him. Each is to tell of what service and benefit they were to the kingdom. The greatest liquid will receive a special reward of great value.

Narrator: The news echoed around the kingdom, and soon the court was assembled and many liquids stood before the king, anxious to speak their piece.

Seawater: I, Seawater, am the greatest, O King. I transport the ships that carry your subjects and cargo from one port to another. There are also many fish and creatures that swim in my waters and need me to survive.

Not only that, I contain a valuable mineral, salt, that is used for a great many things throughout the realm.



Freshwater: No! I, Freshwater, am the greatest!

I fill the rivers, lakes, and streams. There are many fish and creatures that would no doubt die without my existence. Not only that, I fill the wells, where the thirsty come to drink.

Indeed, without *me* the people would die, for I am the only one that can quench their thirst. Surely I am the most important of all!

Fruit juices: Excuse me, but you have forgotten that we, the Fruit Juices, also give satisfaction to man's thirst. By us, their bodies are strengthened because of the vitamins we contain and the nourishment we give. We are the greatest because we are the most desired and pleasurable to the taste.

Milk: Listen here! It is not water or juice that a newborn tastes when only a wee child; it is milk from the mother's breast. I, Milk, am both food and drink to the young, and their only source of nourishment. Without me, man and beast would cease to exist.

Narrator: And so likewise the rest of the liquids boasted of themselves to the king, claiming that they were indeed the greatest and deserved to be rewarded.

Once their presentations had come to an end, the king's subjects, too, began to argue amongst themselves as to which liquid they thought should receive the prize.



Cook: I am the king's cook! I say wine comes out on top. It gives joy to the heart and drowns men's sorrows.

Lady: You fool, haven't you smelt the aroma of perfumes which rouse your passions? Why, surely something so rich and lovely deserves to be rewarded as the greatest.

Narrator: Soon the whole court was divided by endless bickering over which liquid was the greatest. The once happy, cheerful king became very worried and deeply disheartened.

King: I regret having made the proclamation at all! I never thought that this decree would cause such an uproar! Excuse me, I'm not feeling well. I must retire to my chamber.

Narrator: Days passed, and the liquids continued to boast of themselves, and even began to put the others down with cutting remarks.

Fruit juice: Oh, you, Seawater, have always got something dirty floating on you.

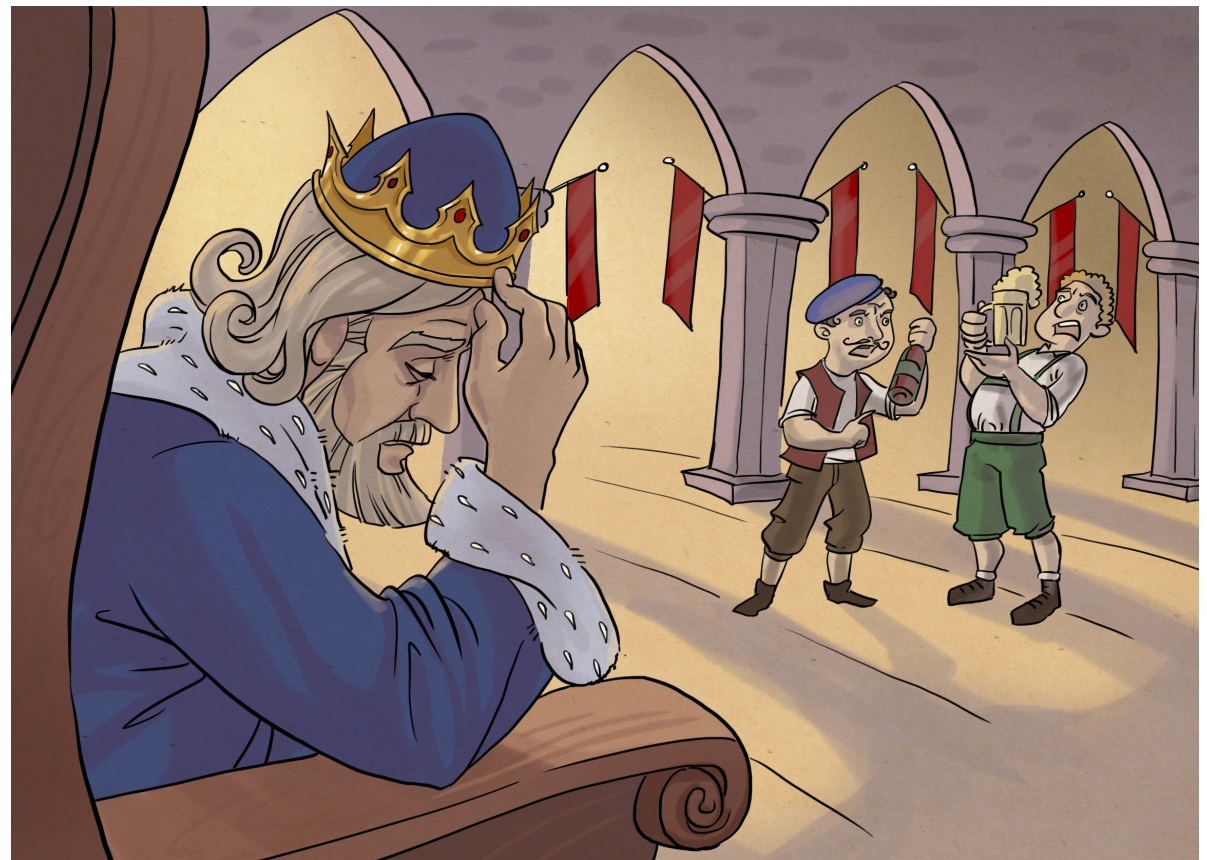
Seawater: You fruit juices are always so sticky!

Narrator: The competitors, being now so desperate, began overemphasizing their worth even to the extent of exaggerating and lying.

Freshwater: I am the only liquid that can sustain life.

Seawater: Who says you can't drink seawater?

Narrator: The troubled king became more and more distressed, until at last he fell seriously ill.



King: Oh, God! You told me that I should give this reward to the most deserving, but I have been unable to find one that is not proud and unloving. Here I lie, and now I shall die with a sad and broken heart.

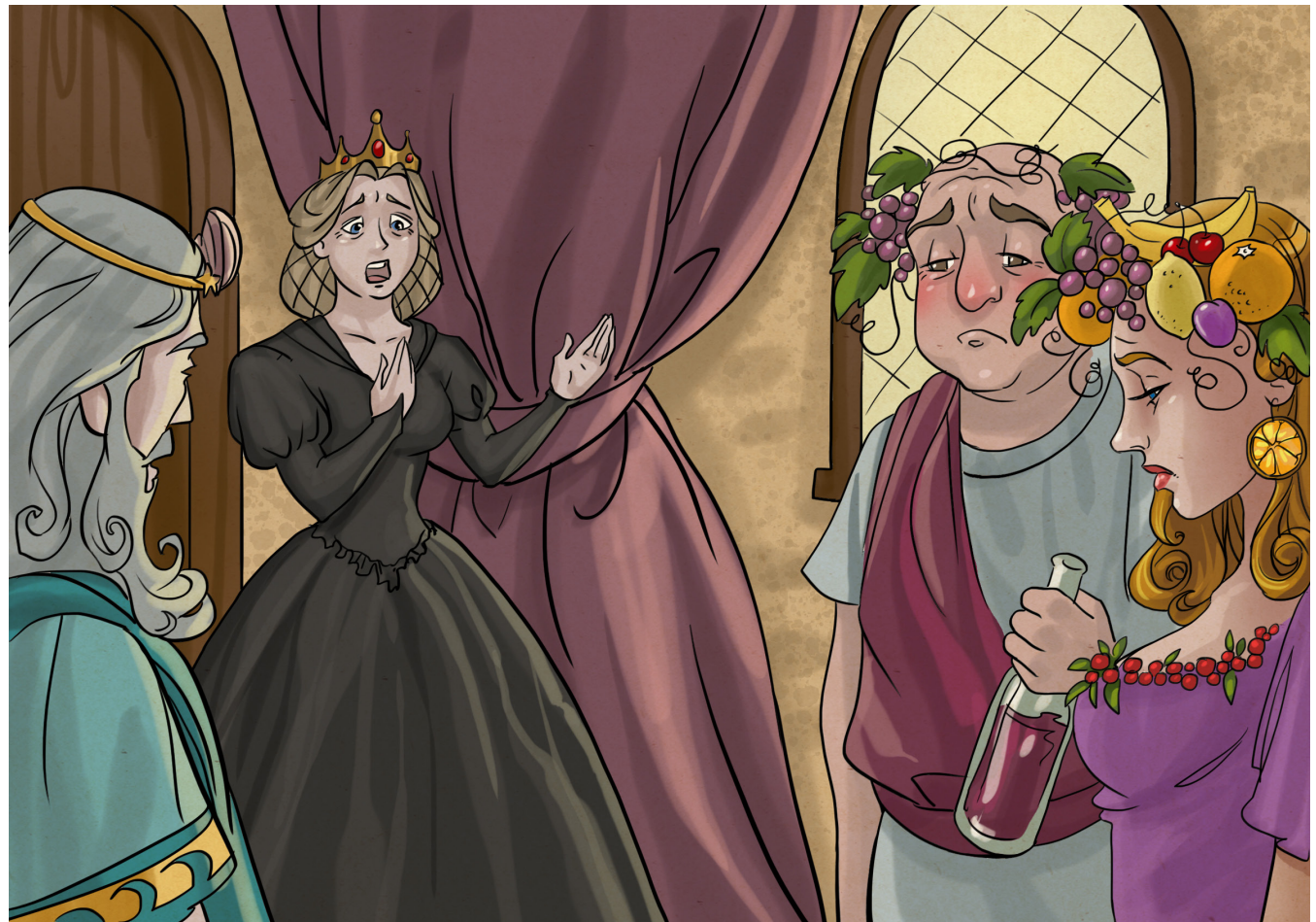
Narrator: Meanwhile, in the court, the arguments were getting louder and more intense. Then suddenly the queen appeared, and everyone was shocked, for she was dressed in black apparel. Quietly the queen spoke.

Queen: With great sadness of heart, I must tell you that our dear, kind, and beloved king has just taken his last breath. It was his grief and despair at our unloving and quarrelsome behavior that took his life. Come, and I will show you for the last time our honorable king!

Narrator: Silently, all the liquids followed the queen with their heads bowed low to pay their last respects to the lifeless king. As they beheld his saddened face, they became ashamed of their selfish pride, greed, and contention.

At that moment, a teardrop ran down the queen's cheek and fell on the king's face. Instantly, the teardrop transformed into a beautiful fairy.

Teardrop: Goodbye, my sweet and cherished king. I am the Fairy of the Teardrop, of the tears that flow from a heart of love, a heart that weeps for another. I was not able to appear before, for I can only flow from a broken heart. I cleanse the hearts of those who allow me in, making way for them to grow closer to God.



Narrator: As the teardrop fairy kissed her beloved king, the king came back to life. He sat up in his bed.

King: Thank you, my dear teardrop, for honoring us with your presence! Truly, you are the greatest of them all!

And so, this day I officially proclaim that the greatest among all the liquids is our dear, beloved teardrop, for she cleanses our hearts and purifies our spirits! She brings our hearts closer to God, for He is near to them who are of a broken heart.

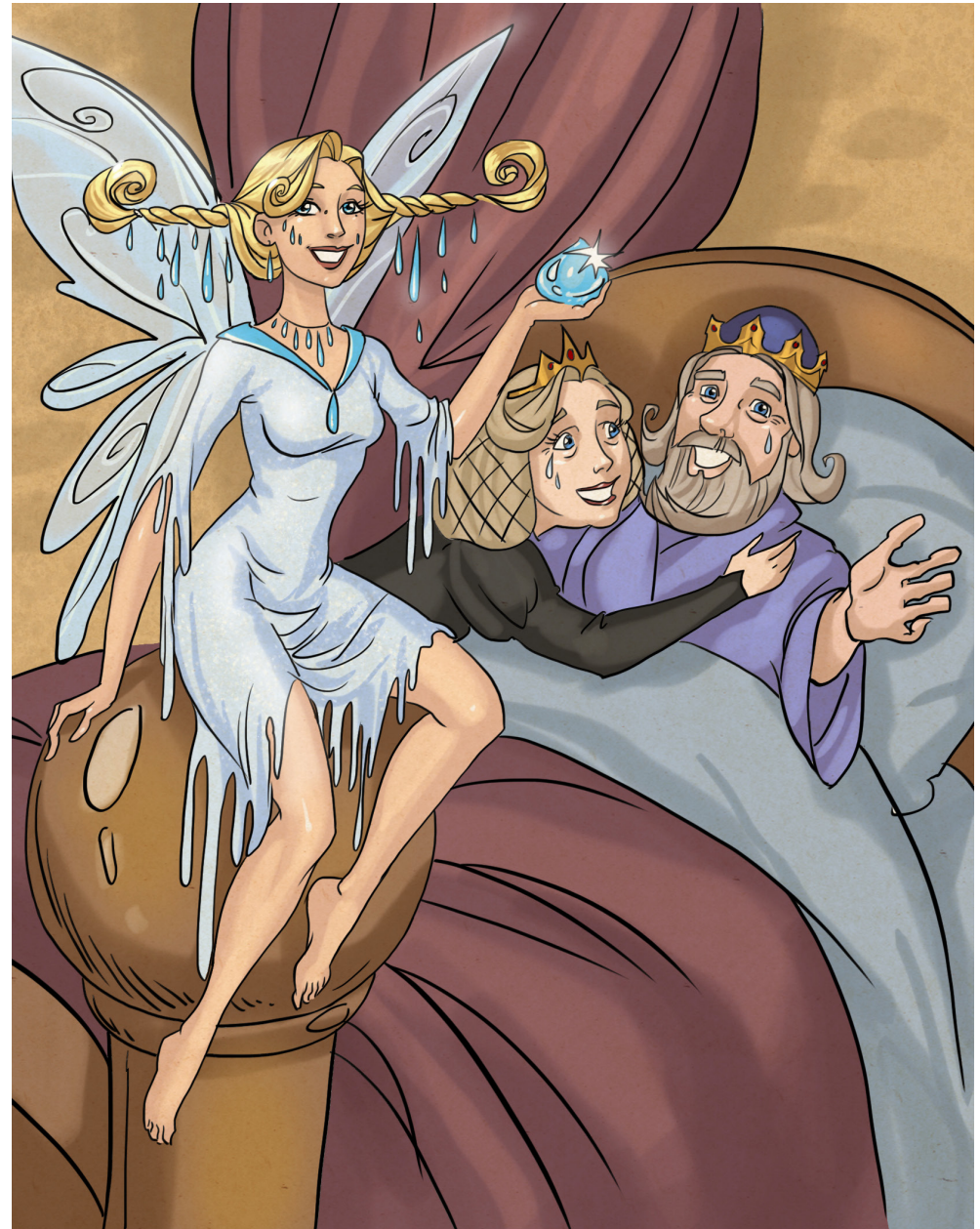
Narrator: Instantly, teardrops appeared on the cheeks of everyone present, and they rejoiced with great rejoicing, for the life of the king had been restored. And they all agreed that the teardrop was indeed the greatest of them all.

From that day on, the kingdom was a happy, peaceful place where all the liquids worked together to serve the kingdom well. Then God, in His joy, made a decree:

God: From henceforth the teardrop will appear not only in sorrow, but also in joy, that her beauty will always be kept in the hearts of mankind.

Narrator: And one day, God will wipe away all sorrowful tears from our eyes, and only the joyous tears will remain.

The End



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