



# *The Ice Princess*

Jutta Rawcliffe

Magic

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Once upon a time there was a princess who lived with her two sisters and her father in a large palace. Their mother had died when they were young. Princess Alea was very kindhearted. She always had time to help anyone with their problems and she spoiled her father cooking him his favorite meals herself. She was very beautiful and that brought about her one flaw. She was a little vain about her looks and would gaze often in the large lake to check she was looking her best.

Her two sisters Hermione and Gretchen were jealous of her because she was her father's favorite. This jealousy began to eat them up over the years and turned their dispositions sour.

One day when they were all of marriageable age the two sisters decided to remove her from the competition over eligible princes.

"She's so kind she is bound to get the pick of the princes," said Gretchen.

"Yes, we should fix her so she is no longer in the running," said Hermione.

"I've got an idea," said Gretchen. "Let's go to the wicked witch who lives in the woods and get her to cast a spell on Alea."

So they set off the next day in search of the witch. They told their father they were going to have a picnic in the woods and set off with a hamper of food. Their father hardly noticed they were going as Alea was reading him a story.

The woods were dark and scary but the two sisters were determined. They brought a lit lantern with them and a supply of candles. But the woods were very deep and soon they had run out of candles and they were left in the dark.

“What’s that noise,” exclaimed Hermione.

“I hope it’s not a wolf,” answered Gretchen.

“Look there is a small light shining through the trees. Let’s go towards it,” reported Hermione triumphantly.

So they set off towards the light with their hands in front of them, feeling for the tree trunks and going around them. When they reached the light they saw it was shining from a little cottage. They knocked on the door and a crabby voice answered,

“Who’s disturbing my peace?”

“It’s princess Hermione and princess Gretchen and we are looking for the witch who lives in the woods,” answered Gretchen.

“Well you’ve found me. So what is it you want with me?” grouched the witch.

“We want you to put a spell on our sister so that she doesn’t win the heart of the richest and most wonderful prince,” Hermione told her.

“Well, I could do that”, said the witch, “but what will you give me in exchange for my spell.”

“Well, we could give you all the gold you could want,” offered Gretchen.

“And what would I do with that,” retorted the witch. “I can conjure up all the gold I could possibly want. You will each have to give up something you value. Hermione, you will have to give up your golden tresses and Gretchen, you will have to give me your peaches and cream complexion.”

The two princesses discussed it amongst themselves.

“If Alea is out of the picture, it will not matter that you have lost your tresses and I have lost my beautiful complexion,” reasoned Gretchen. “One of us will get the handsomest and richest prince and the other will get the next best prince.”

Hermione agreed.

“You drive a hard bargain, witch, but we agree,” she told her.

There was a blinding light and then a puff of smoke and suddenly Hermione’s hair was a dull mousy color and hung lankly. At the same time, Gretchen’s complexion dulled and she no longer shined with radiant health.

The two sisters looked aghast at each other.

“Oh look at your hair, Hermione,” exclaimed Gretchen.

“And just look at your skin,” retorted Hermione.

“But it will be worth it to get even,” they both said together.

“And now for your wish,” said the witch with a cackle, for she now had hair the color of sunlight and skin the color of peaches and cream. She was no longer an old crone.

“Tell me what vices does your sister have?”

“Well,” said Gretchen. “That is hard because she is very kindhearted and everybody loves her.”

“Ah, but she is somewhat vain,” her sister reminded her.

“Good,” said the witch. “She will be imprisoned in the ice of the lake which will be permanently frozen now winter and summer alike.”

“But how are we to find our way home?” Asked the princesses.

“I will give you a magic light which will shine in front of you until you reach home,” replied the witch.

So the two sisters set off for home. As they were passing the lake they noticed their sister under the frozen water and they cackled with glee.

“Now you and I will have our pick of the princes,” exclaimed Hermione.

As they entered the palace they heard the sound of wailing. It seemed everyone was grieving for the lost princess.

The king was especially loud in his grief. He lost all interest in having princes come around.

“The witch tricked us,” whined Gretchen. “She didn’t tell us there would be no more princes coming around. Now we have lost our beauty for nothing!”

The king sent all over his kingdom for a good witch who could defrost his favorite daughter. They came in droves but inevitably they all failed.

Then one day a wise woman came and knocked on the palace door. She was heavily wrapped in a cloak and only her eyes could be seen.

“No one can undo the wicked witch’s spell,” she said, “but it can be mitigated. I will cast a spell that Alea’s true love will be able to draw her out of the frozen water.”

She built a fire and burned some herbs in it. Then she turned around three times, and the fire vanished in a puff of smoke.

The king was so overjoyed he said he would marry her if only his daughter could be saved.

She vanished saying that when the time was right she would come to claim her prize.

The king sent out messengers all over the land to eligible princes to see if they could draw Alea from the frozen lake. He proclaimed that the prince who could free her would receive her hand in marriage and half his kingdom.

They came one by one to try for Alea’s hand. They didn’t even give Hermione and Gretchen a second look.

Then after several years had passed, a prince arrived from a distant land who had only just heard of the beautiful princess imprisoned in ice. When he beheld her beautiful face he fell in love with her. His hand was drawn towards her and as he reached to caress her skin his hand slipped through the ice and touched her hair. Immediately the ice shattered and Alea stood in front of him.

There was a sudden flash of light and the wise woman appeared. She cast off her cloak and there was the witch with her golden tresses and her peaches and cream skin. The king took one look at her and fell in love, which was fortunate as he had already promised to wed her.

The two sisters gnashed their teeth and cursed and were turned into ugly crones which reflected their personalities. As for the king and Alea they had a double wedding and the four of them lived happily ever after.

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