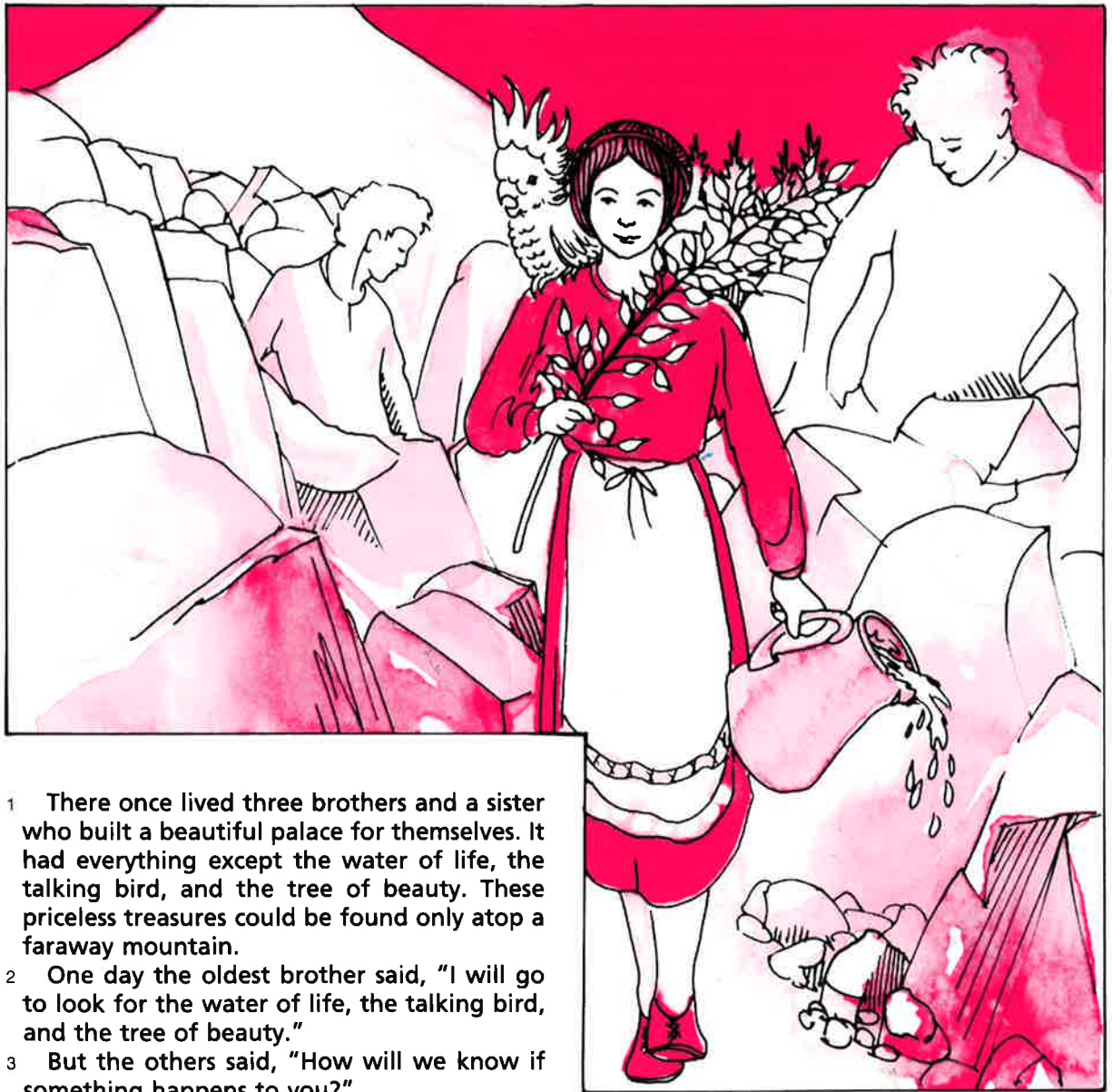


The Water of Life

Adapted from a Spanish folk tale

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- 1 There once lived three brothers and a sister who built a beautiful palace for themselves. It had everything except the water of life, the talking bird, and the tree of beauty. These priceless treasures could be found only atop a faraway mountain.
- 2 One day the oldest brother said, "I will go to look for the water of life, the talking bird, and the tree of beauty."
- 3 But the others said, "How will we know if something happens to you?"

- 4 A wise man overheard this conversation and handed them a knife. "If this knife turns red as blood," he said, "you will know that some awful misfortune has happened to your brother."
- 5 The oldest brother travelled many days. At last he arrived at the foot of the faraway mountain. There he met a giant who said, "Many seek these magical treasures, but none return. Listen to my words, or you too will never return. The path up the mountain is covered with stones. Do not look at them. You will hear voices and laughing, and the stones will call to you. Do not turn around. If you do, you will become like them."
- 6 The young man began climbing. Just as the giant had predicted, the stones called out to him. At first he covered his ears. But the stones shouted louder and louder, and he picked up a rock to throw at them. As he turned to let the rock fly, he became a stone himself.
- 7 That day, his sister saw with horror that the knife was red as blood.
- 8 The second brother set out to find the first. He too encountered the giant, who repeated his warning. When the second brother started up the mountain, the stones called to him. For a while, he ignored them, but then he thought he heard his brother's voice. He looked over his shoulder. Thus one more stone was added to the rest.
- 9 That day, the sister saw that again the knife was red as blood. So the youngest brother decided to set out.
- 10 When he arrived at the foot of the mountain, the giant instructed him, "Go up the mountain. The stones will lie so thickly you can hardly walk. But turn neither right nor left, and pay no attention when the stones call out to you. If you follow my advice, you will save your brothers. You will also find the treasures you seek."
- 11 The young man did as the giant said. But when he heard his brothers' voices, he could not keep from turning around. And so there was yet another stone.
- 12 This time when the knife became red, the sister thought, "Now it is my turn."
- 13 She found the giant, who instructed her, "Take this path up the mountain. It is covered with stones that will laugh and cry. You will think all the stones in the world are taunting you. Pay no attention. When you reach the top, you will discover everything you desire."
- 14 The young woman started up the path. Voices called to her from all sides. But she remembered the giant's instructions, and she looked straight ahead. As she climbed, the voices became louder and louder. Above all the rest, she heard those of her dear brothers. Still she paid no attention. At last she reached the top of the mountain.
- 15 There she found the water of life, the tree of beauty, and the talking bird. She caught the bird, took a branch from the tree of beauty and filled her pitcher with the water of life.
- 16 As she walked back down the mountain, her pitcher was so full that some of the water splashed on the stones. At once they became young women and men, and among them were her brothers! After embracing happily, the brothers and sister returned to their palace. There, with the water of life, the talking bird, and the tree of beauty, they lived long, happy lives.
- 17 *For centuries, people have told fairy tales such as this one. Each country has its own favorites. The tale you just read comes from Spain. It appears in a book of fairy tales by Andrew Lang, a Scottish writer. Lang collected hundreds of fairy tales from all over the world and published them in twelve books.*

How Well Did You Read?

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1 Why did the sister and brothers want the three priceless treasures?
 - a They could not be safe without them.
 - b They had everything else they wanted.
 - c They were poor and had no home.
- 2 Why did the knife grow red?
 - a Because someone was in trouble
 - b Because the wise man made it turn red
 - c Because the water of life had been found
- 3 Why were the three brothers turned into stone?
 - a The giant put a spell on them.
 - b They picked up some of the stones.
 - c They turned around.
- 4 Why were there so many stones on the mountain?
 - a Many people had turned to stone while seeking the treasures.
 - b The giant had put them there to block the path.
 - c There were many landslides on the mountain.
- 5 What turned the stones back into people?
 - a The tree of beauty
 - b The water of life
 - c The talking bird
- 6 Which of the characters showed the most self-control?
 - a The oldest brother
 - b The sister
 - c The youngest brother
- 7 Where did the brothers and sister live in the end?
 - a They lived happily in their palace.
 - b They lived on the top of the mountain.
 - c They lived with the giant.

Learn about Words

Vocabulary

A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 very valuable; of much greater value than money (1)
- 2 already said would happen (6)
- 3 great fear and surprise (7)
- 4 met (8)
- 5 paid no attention to (8)
- 6 making fun of; teasing (13)
- 7 printed (17)

B A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used. The word *watch* is an example.

A guard stood *watch*.
My *watch* is fast.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Write a or b.

- 8 **foot** (5)
 - a part of the leg
 - b bottom
- 9 **pitcher** (15)
 - a container for liquid
 - b baseball player
- 10 **embracing** (16)
 - a including
 - b hugging

Word Study

- C **re** + tell = retell (tell again)
 pre + warm = prewarm (warm
 beforehand)

A prefix is a syllable that can be added to the beginning of a word to form a word with a different meaning. The prefix **re** often means "again." The prefix **pre** often means "in advance" or "beforehand." Read the definitions below. Add a prefix to each word in **heavy type** to make a new word with the stated meaning. Write the new word.

- 11 **awake** again: ___ awake
- 12 **connect** again: ___ connect
- 13 **fold** beforehand: ___ fold
- 14 **draw** again: ___ draw
- 15 **date** in advance: ___ date
- 16 **count** again: ___ count
- 17 **deal** again: ___ deal
- 18 **heat** in advance: ___ heat

- D **inter** + national = international (occurring
 between nations)
 sub + average = subaverage (less than
 average)
 super + human = superhuman (greater
 than human)

A prefix is a word part that can be added to the beginning of a word to form a word with a different meaning. The prefix **inter** often means "occurring between." The prefix **sub** often means "less than." The prefix **super** often means "greater than." Read the definitions below. Add a prefix to each incomplete word to make a new word that has the stated meaning. Write the new word.

- 19 less than human: ___ human
- 20 greater than human: ___ human
- 21 occurring between persons:
 ___ personal
- 22 occurring between planets:
 ___ planetary

- 23 greater than a man: ___ man
- 24 less than normal: ___ normal
- 25 occurring between offices: ___ office
- 26 occurring between continents:
 ___ continental

E There is an incomplete word in each passage below. Choose the prefix **re**, the prefix **pre**, or the prefix **sub** to complete the word in a way that makes sense. Write **re**, **pre**, or **sub**.

- 27 The temperature today is less than normal. We seem to have a ___ normal temperature.
- 28 Awaken those men again; they've gone back to sleep. ___ awaken them.
- 29 We will date this contract with an earlier date than today's. We will ___ date it.
- 30 This road's condition is ___ average. This road is less than average and should be repaired.
- 31 Abby ___ gained her strength. She will gain once again the strength she once had.
- 32 Luke ___ figured the allowance he was owed. He figured once more what he was owed.
- 33 Some people think that monkeys are ___ human. Monkeys are animals that are less than human.

Use Your Imagination

The story doesn't tell us what the talking bird talks about. What do you think it says? Make up a conversation you might have with it.