

A woman with long brown hair is shown in profile, looking back over her shoulder. She has intricate red floral and vine tattoos on her arms and shoulders. A red flower is tucked into her hair. The background is dark with more red floral patterns.

# Bedtime STORIES

*A Collection of Erotic Fairy Tales*

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JEAN JOHNSON

National Bestselling Author  
of the Sons of Destiny Series



# *Bedtime* STORIES

*A Collection of Erotic Fairy Tales*



JEAN JOHNSON

HEAT  
New York

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SHIFTING PLAINS

BEDTIME STORIES

THE SONS OF DESTINY

THE SWORD

THE WOLF

THE MASTER

THE SONG

THE CAT

THE STORM

THE FLAME

THE MAGE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I really have the coolest job in the world . . . and the best readers. You have all been very kind in taking the time to contact me and let me know what you liked, and even what you didn't like, about my stories. (Yes, I include the didn't-like stuff, because it can still be helpful in shaping my future works, particularly when phrased politely and thoughtfully.) So thank you very, very much.

Also, I'd like to extend a thank-you to all the editors and compilers of folklore, legends, and fairy tales everywhere, and to the many, many tellers of those tales over the centuries. I'm proud to be part of this long-standing tradition of entertaining people, and I'll do my best to keep it up.

~Jean

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## The Frog Prince

*Author's Note:* Welcome, and I hope you'll enjoy my versions of erotically revised fairy tales. Revising them erotically isn't as strange as it might seem, either; I'll bet you didn't know that in the oldest German version of this story, the princess didn't own a golden ball so much as she owned a golden ballus . . . which was a local corruption of the Latin word phallus. Puts a whole new twist on this classic tale, doesn't it? In an effort to preserve the true spirit and meaning of this classic fairy tale, I feel it should be told in a way that honors that original, adult intent.

PRINCE Henrik was a frog. It wasn't his idea, but he was one. There were worse things he could have been enchanted into, of course. The flies he ate, for one; it was bad enough how the wings tickled on the way down into his gullet, but to actually *be* a fly would have been horrible. A disturbingly short life span and an unnatural attraction to animal droppings were not at all on his list of must-have experiences.

Still, there was the mud between one's toes; that wasn't as bad as it could have been. At least, not on a warm summer's day like today. It was soft and squelchy, and satisfying in a way he hadn't felt since he was a lad. The only problem was, he wasn't a lad, and feeling like a lad was what had gotten him into this predicament.



Prince Henrik was doomed to remain a frog, unless he either married the Fairy Tilda—who was more than twice his age, and Henrik just couldn't bring himself to marry a woman who had been born before even his own mother—or found a young woman willing to fulfill the fairy's codicils.

*I shouldn't have said to her face that I didn't need a "second mother." That wasn't well done of me. Nor did it help when my father's chief counselor pointed out she was surely in the last gasp of her childbearing years and thus unlikely to bear a suitable heir . . . and I definitely should not have agreed, let alone concurred so wholeheartedly.*

*I also should have paid more attention to my geography lessons as a lad . . .*

Part of the Fairy Tilda's curse had been to translocate Henrik to a foreign land. Instead of the birch trees he was familiar with, this forest boasted a plethora of broad-trunked oaks. The only tolerable things about it were the mild weather and the large, tasty flies. One full month of life as a frog had taught him the different flavors of a variety of insects from spiders to gnats, and the fat, fuzzy, flies were the best. Except they tickled when they went down. Tasty, but disturbing at the same time.

If ever a frog could pray to the ears of the angels in Heaven, Henrik certainly tried. Every single meal, he offered up a prayer for deliverance. Every single mouthful, he worried he would never again be a man.

A strange, beautiful sound tickled his ears, or what passed for them. For a moment, the transformed prince wondered if he was hearing angels laughing. It was coming from the far bank of the river he had been deposited by, the river which was his temporary home. The near bank had a gentle slope to it, green and mossy, with the occasional thicket of bracken ferns. The far side was steep and clifflike; had he been a man, it would have been taller than his head, counting from the rippling surface of the water.

The noise echoed across the little valley again; his wide, blinking eyes swiveled and focused as three pastel-clad figures came into view. One of the three maidens—for they seemed to be young and lithe and full of laughter, though he couldn't be completely sure at this distance—was holding aloft in one hand something gold and glinting. She twisted and turned in her attempts to dodge as the other two leaped and grabbed, trying to wrest it from her grasp.

Cries of “No, it's mine!” and “Oh, please!” and “I just want to hold it!” echoed across the water, along with a particularly odd, almost lasciviously voiced, “Just hold it? *I* want to *try* it!”

Intrigued, but unable to make sense of what the golden thing was, Henrik cursed his amphibian eyes. They were good enough for seeing things clearly within a few yards, but not so good for viewing things at a far distance. Hopping along the edge of the water—he never went far from the water, as his skin seemed to prefer being moist—he twisted his eyes this way and that, trying to focus on the object in the dark-haired maiden's hands.

The three of them dodged and grasped, laughed and shrieked, begged and protested, until an accidental bump and an unexpected trip sent the owner of the gilded whatever tumbling to her hands and knees. The gleaming object, flung free of her grasp, tumbled over the edge of the low cliff and *splopped* into the river.

The other two girls, with their brown hair and their giggles, caught themselves before they also fell. Huddled together, they gaped at the water, dark with the thick mud coating the river bottom. From the disappointed, rueful looks on their faces, he guessed they couldn't see whatever had been dropped. The way they sheepishly backed up as the other maiden struggled to her feet told Henrik they weren't about to help the girl look for her fallen treasure, either.

“Wonderful. Just wonderful!” the grass-stained maiden muttered as she dusted off her gown. “Well, don't just stand there. Help me get down the bank!”

The other two girls warily eyed the muddy edge of the cliff and backed up. Henrik heard them muttering something about “chores” and “embroidery” as they shook their heads. Without further ado, they hiked their skirts and ran up the slope, heading deeper into the woods. The young woman they left behind dropped to her knees and stared glumly at the river below.

Mindful of the terms of his enchanted imprisonment, Henrik hopped into the river. Whatever the girl had lost, if he could help her find it, she might consider herself indebted to him. It was a slim chance, but the only one he had. All he had to do was find a golden, metallic object in the mud of the riverbed.

It didn't take long to find it, since logic dictated the object had fallen straight in, given the heavy splash it had made. Though it hadn't been swayed more than an inch or two from its trajectory by the river's current—geometry had been one of Henrik's favorite classes as a lad with his tutors—the bottom was very muddy at that point, giving him only a glimpse of polished gold. Orienting himself underwater, Henrik made sure he could find the spot again, then stroked up toward the surface.

His wide-swiveling eyes spotted the maiden gingerly picking her way down to the river's edge several yards away. Letting the current carry him toward her, he watched her test the water with a hand, flinching at the chilly temperature. He was used to it, as it was one of the hazards of amphibious life, but she was clearly dubious about getting wet in search of her lost treasure. Leaping onto a head-sized rock at the water's edge, Henrik cleared his throat.

*“Ahem. Good afternoon to you, fair maiden!”* he called out.

Startled, she lifted her gaze from the water. This close, Henrik could finally make out the details of her features, since as a frog he was woefully shortsighted. She had lovely light blue eyes and curly brown hair, a slightly turned-up nose, and a hint of freckles on her otherwise creamy complexion.

"Who . . . Who's there? Who spoke?" she demanded, twisting to look up and down the bank.

"Down here, on the rock. The frog," Henrik clarified. She turned and peered his way.

"The . . . *what?*"

Executing a courtly bow wasn't easy in an amphibious form, but Henrik did his best. "Greetings, fair maiden. I am, as you see, an enchanted frog, capable of speech, including intellectual discourse and helpful hints."

She blinked at him.

"I believe you have lost a golden object in the muddy depths of this river, yes?" he inquired politely.

"A . . . talking frog," she muttered.

"Yes," Henrik repeated patiently. "My name is Henrik. About a month ago, I said the wrong thing to a fairy—for which I am ever so sorry—and now I am stuck in the body of a frog. But I still have the wit and courage of a man. I noticed how you lost an item to the river, and I just happen to know exactly where to find it."

She blushed. It wasn't a shy, maidenly, becoming blush. It was a bright red, full-faced, all-the-way-down-onto-the-sternum blush, as revealed by the square neckline of her gown. Henrik wondered what could have embarrassed her so much.

"Would you like my assistance in recovering it?" When she said nothing, he prompted, "Or would you rather leave it in the mud and forget the expense of its fine gilding?"

She buried her face in her hands for a moment. "My mother is going to kill me . . . And a frog! A *frog* offers to help me!"

"A talking frog," Henrik reminded her. A gnat buzzed into range of his tongue. Gnats were tasty, if not very filling. He carefully ignored it so as not to upset this maiden with too much froggish behavior. "Do you want my help, or would you rather splash around in the cold water and squishy mud, trying to find your lost item on your own?"

Face still red, she lowered her hands and gave him a tight-lipped look. Hitching up her skirts, she gingerly waded into the water. Henrik stifled the urge to point out that the knee-deep section she was sloshing through was a good eight feet or more from where she needed to be wading. Instead, he mustered his patience and waited. She finally gave up after several more minutes, shivering as she crawled out of the water.

"Oohhh! It's no use! I've lost it forever!"

"No, you haven't," Henrik countered. At the sound of his croaking confidence, she started and glared at him.

"Haven't you gone away yet?" she asked, struggling to wring out her skirt without baring too much more of her lovely pale legs.

"My offer still stands . . . if with a small price," Henrik stated. "I know exactly where your lost item has fallen. In fact, it can be done in a mere handful of minutes, with the assistance of your belt. And I will gladly help you retrieve it . . . *if* . . ."

"If?" she asked warily.

"Well, first you should introduce yourself. I, as I have stated, am Henrik." He left off the part about being a prince. Such things would be impossible to prove unless and until he was restored to his human form. "What is your name?"

"Gisette." She lifted her chin a little, though her proud look was spoiled a little by her shivering. "Princess Gisette."

"A pleasure to meet you, Your Highness." Again he attempted a bow, though his stubby body wasn't exactly built for such things. "I would be willing to help you retrieve your fallen item, Princess Gisette . . . *if* you would be willing to help me recover my humanity. Suffering as I do from an enchantment, I require your assistance to break the fairy's spell that traps me in this form. You want your lost valuable, and I want to be a man once again. Swear you will assist me, and I will assist you."

Abandoning her hem, she rubbed her upper arms. "What . . . what sort of assistance?"

"That you take me home with you. That you treat me as your closest companion. That you let me eat off your plate and drink from your cup. That you let me spend an entire month as your constant, closest companion," he clarified. "And . . . that you let me sleep in your bed with you."

"Oh! Oh, how dare you! I am a princess, not some village trollop!" Gisette immediately protested. "I am an unmarried maiden of genteel birth, and I will not—"

"My lady, I am a *frog*. I can hardly endanger your chastity in this form," Henrik said, chiding her dryly. "Now, you can either acquiesce to this simple enough request, or you can risk freezing yourself in this chilly, muddy river looking for something you haven't the first clue how to find."

She eyed him dubiously.

"I assure you I can be an entertaining, delightful companion," he added. "You won't regret it."

"How will my belt help you retrieve my lost . . . item?" Princess Gisette inquired warily.

"I will take the end of it into the river with me, wrap it around the item, and allow you to draw it out without getting wet. At least, any more wet than you already are," he added. "Once you have it back, you and I can travel back to your home where I shall be your companion for the next month. We shall eat together, sleep together, laugh together, and play together. Hopefully somewhere in there I shall be released from my enchanted state, whereupon I will go merrily on my way back home, and you shall be able to rest contentedly, knowing you have done a good deed in aiding me. Just as I will have done a good deed in aiding you . . . Are we agreed?"

Sighing heavily, Princess Gisette unbuckled the long belt wrapped

three times around her hips and waist. "We are agreed . . . I suppose."

Lifting his foreleg, Henrik gestured her closer. She inched toward him and he patiently beckoned, until she was almost standing upon him, the long strip of leather trailing from her hand. Taking the end of the belt in his mouth, he dove into the water. The golden object still glinted in the mud right where he had found it.

Frog paws weren't the kind most suited for digging, but the mud was soft. Kicking up clouds of thick silt, he managed to work enough of the oblong object free and wrapped the belt around it. Tying the knot was a bit complicated, but he managed something that looked like it would hold.

A kick of his hind legs popped him back up to the surface. "Pull it up gently!" he warned the princess. "I have no thumbs, so I wasn't able to secure it as tightly as I'd wish."

Nodding, she gingerly tugged on the belt. The leather went taut after a moment, then angled itself through the water as she dragged the object up out of the mud. Stooping, Gisette picked it up. Despite the mud and the leather wrapped around it, Henrik could see it was longish, somewhat lumpy, and not just gilded, but plated in gold, or perhaps even crafted from solid gold. She turned from him as she picked off the leather, then stooped and swished it in the river, but he caught a glimpse of its true shape all the same. Henrik gaped.

"It's a *phallus*?" he croaked, as much from surprise as from his enchanted state. "You dropped a gilded *phallus*?"

"Oh! You . . . you . . . horrible beast!" Flushed with embarrassment, Princess Gisette hiked up her skirts and fled.

"Wait! Wait—our bargain! Please, wait?" Grimacing as she sprinted away, Henrik stared glumly after her. So much for fulfilling Tilda's demands on how to break his unlucky enchantment. About to consign himself to spending the rest of his life as a frog, he spotted a glint of

gold with his swiveling eyes. It was from the buckle of her belt, abandoned on the ground when she had freed her rather naughty toy.

Peering up at the hillside, Henrik made up his mind to follow her. He tucked the leather of the belt into his mouth, letting its ends trail after him like two flat, brown snakes, and started hopping in the direction she and the other two maidens had gone. It might take him all day to hop his way after her, but he doubted she had wandered overly far with her amusing, symbolic prize.

With her muddled belt in his possession as proof of their bargain, he just might have the means of enforcing that bargain, and thus have a chance at ending his enchantment. *If* he could find where she had gone.

*Nothing like a long hike, a difficult quest, and an uncertain chance of success to make a man-turned-frog feel humble, he thought. Well, that and stubborn. I will not let Fairy Tilda win. I will break her curse. Somehow.*



THE knock at the door disrupted supper. It wasn't often the royal family came to this hunting lodge, but when they did, King Henri preferred not to be disturbed. Dinner, the midday meal, was the time for requests and interruptions, but not the evening meal. The guards knew this, and it was a hesitant knight who poked his helmed head through the doorway.

"What is it?" King Henri inquired, his attention deliberately focused on cutting into his lamb chop. Queen Jeanne eyed her husband, then the guard, waiting to hear his excuse for disturbing their tranquillity. Princess Gisette picked up her goblet and sipped at the freshly squeezed grape juice it contained, unconcerned by the interruption.

"Um . . . sire . . . there is a . . . well . . . a talking frog outside," the guardsman said apologetically.



Gisette choked.

Her father stilled the movements of his fork and knife. "A what?"

"A talking frog, sire. He claims he assisted Her Highness with a certain task earlier, in exchange for a certain set of privileges and, erm, has even returned with Her Highness's belt as proof of their lawfully made barter, in order to claim those privileges."

Henri rested his wrists on the edge of the table. He studied his blushing, throat-clearing daughter. "I take it from your reaction that this . . . talking frog . . . has a truthful claim?"

Embarrassed, Gisette nodded glumly. There was no way out of this, though she'd hoped she had left the memory of her humiliation and that frog far behind this morning. *If it's not to be, the only thing I can do is control any possible damage. I hope.* Cheeks hot, she watched as the guard ducked out again, no doubt to fetch the talking frog she had met. *My best hope is to make sure he doesn't mention what he helped me retrieve.*

She snuck a glance at her father, but he had gone back to carving up his meat. A glance at her mother showed Queen Jeanne's blue eyes studying her daughter. Her mother said nothing, though. Not quite hungry anymore, Gisette waited for the guardsman to return.

When he did, the knight entered with the green and yellow frog balanced on his chain-mail-clad hands. Her belt was caught in the frog's mouth and draped over the knight's wrists, visibly damp and muddy. The golden buckle had little tufts of grass caught along its hinge, a testament to the long journey the frog had undertaken, hopping from the riverbank almost half a mile away.

Guilt seeped into her thoughts, mixing with her embarrassment. *He's so small, and it's such a long way from the river . . .*

"This is the talking frog?" her father asked, skepticism coloring his voice.

The frog removed the belt from his mouth. "Greetings, Your Majesty. I am Henrik, and I do apologize for disturbing your meal, but I