

Cast In Order Of Appearance:

Narrator
Eldest
Middle
Youngest
King
Bird One
Bird Two
Bird Three
Boys
Prince One
Old Woman
Prince Two
Princess

NARRATOR : About a thousand or so years ago, three sisters were watching their cows on a hill, and they spied a King hunting with his two ministers. The eldest sister pointed to the king and cried out to her sisters -

ELDEST : Oh, that one! That one! If I do not marry him, I shall have none.

NARRATOR : The middle sister then pointed to the minister on the king's *right* and cried out -

MIDDLE : Oh, that one! That one! If I do not marry him, I shall have none.

NARRATOR : Then the youngest sister pointed to the minister on the King's *left* and cried out -

YOUNGEST : Oh, that one! That one! If I do not marry him, I shall have none.

NARRATOR : When the King returned from the hunt, he sent for the sisters. All three girls were beautiful, especially the eldest sister who had hair the color of flax, which is a very light pale blond.

KING : What did you three call out to each other on the mountain the other day?

NARRATOR : The sisters played coy with the King.

SISTERS : Nothing, your Majesty.

KING : You are the eldest. Will you really take me for your husband?

ELDEST : Oh yes, your Majesty!

NARRATOR : And so the eldest sister married the King and she became Queen, and the other two sisters married the two ministers.

A few years passed, and while the King was away, the Queen gave birth to a little boy (*who brought a bright red star into the world*). Her sisters, however, had no children and, because of this, were very jealous.

MIDDLE and
YOUNGEST : We shall throw that little Prince into the river!

NARRATOR : When they threw the baby into the water, a little bird flew up and sang -

BIRD ONE : To thy death art thou sped
until God's word be said.
In the white lily bloom,
brave boy, is thy tomb.

NARRATOR : The King later returned and the two sisters told him that the Queen had given birth to a dog.

KING : If God makes a dog, then that is what God has made. All is well!

NARRATOR : Meanwhile, a fisherman found the little Prince in the water and he was not dead, so he took the baby home with him. The fisherman and his wife had no children and they were more than happy to raise the little Prince as their own.

A year later, the King again went away, and the Queen gave birth to another little boy. The jealous sisters also threw this second baby into the water. A second little bird flew up and sang -

BIRD TWO : To thy death art thou sped
until God's word be said.
In the white lily bloom,
brave boy, is thy tomb.

NARRATOR : When the King returned, the two sisters told him again that the Queen had given birth to a dog.

KING : If God makes a dog, then that is what God has made. All is well!

NARRATOR : Meanwhile, the same fisherman found the second little Prince in the water just like the baby the year before, and the fisherman also took this baby home with him to rear.

A year later, the King *again* went away, and the Queen gave birth to a little girl. And, once more, the jealous sisters threw the baby into the water. A third little bird flew up and sang -

BIRD THREE : To thy death art thou sped
until God's word be said.
In the white lily bloom,
bonny girl, is thy tomb.

NARRATOR : This time, when the King returned, the two sisters told him that the Queen had given birth to a cat.

KING : All is not well! The Queen must be cast into prison!

NARRATOR : And so the Queen sat in prison for many long years.

Now, the little Princess was also recovered from the water by the same fisherman, and so all three royal siblings grew up together.

One day, the eldest of the three tried to go fishing with some other boys, but they shooed him away.

BOYS : Go away! We want nothing to do with a foundling!

NARRATOR : The eldest then learned that a foundling is a found child and he asked the now old fisherman if he really was one. The old fisherman told him that it was true, he was a foundling.

PRINCE ONE : Then I shall go forth and seek my father.

NARRATOR : The old fisherman did not want him to go, but he couldn't dissuade the boy, and so the eldest Prince set out on his search. After many days walking, the young Prince came upon a river with an old woman fishing from its shore.

PRINCE ONE : Good day to you.

OLD WOMAN : And to you.

PRINCE ONE : With so fast a moving river, you will fish a long time before catching anything.

OLD WOMAN : And you will search a long time before finding your father. How will you get across the river?

PRINCE ONE : I have no idea.

NARRATOR : So the old woman picked him up and carried him across the river and he continued his search, without success.

A year later, the second Prince arrived at the river in search of his brother.

PRINCE TWO : Good day to you.

OLD WOMAN : And to you.

PRINCE TWO : With so fast a moving river, you will fish a long time before catching anything.

OLD WOMAN : And you will search a long time before finding your brother. How will you get across the river?

PRINCE TWO : I have no idea.

NARRATOR : So the old woman picked him up and carried him across the river and the second Prince continued his search, without success.

Now, with both her brothers gone, the young Princess was very sad. Finally the old fisherman let her go forth to seek them. She, also, arrived at the river with the old woman fishing.

PRINCESS : Good day to you.

OLD WOMAN : And to you.

PRINCESS : May God help you with your fishing.

NARRATOR : Her kind words pleased the old woman, and after she carried the Princess across the river, the old woman gave the Princess a wand and directions.

OLD WOMAN : Follow this road. Eventually, you will find a great black dog and you must pass it in silence and with courage. Do not laugh or look at the dog.

NARRATOR : The Princess nodded and the old woman continued -

OLD WOMAN : Then you will come to a great castle. Before entering the front gate, drop the wand from your hand, and then walk straight through the castle and out the other side to a garden. There you will find an old fountain with a tree growing in its center.

Hanging from a branch of that tree, you will find a little bird in a cage. Take down this cage and also fill one of your flasks with water from the fountain. Take both of these with you and go back through the castle the way you came until you find the wand. Speak with no one either way.

NARRATOR : The Princess nodded and the old woman continued -

OLD WOMAN : Pick up the wand, and now with all three things journey back to the black dog. With the wand, strike the dog on the face. Be certain you've hit him, and then come back to me.

NARRATOR : The Princess left and did everything the old woman told her to do. As she was nearing the black dog, the Princess found her two lost brothers sitting on the side of the road. Together, they went to the black dog and she struck it on the face with the wand.

PRINCESS : Oh my! The black dog has turned into a handsome Prince!

NARRATOR : The Black Dog Prince then joined the royal siblings and the four of them went back to the river to find the old woman and thank her.

OLD WOMAN : Oh this is wonderful! I shall carry you all back across the river and then I shall be free!

NARRATOR : The four of them then returned to the old fisherman and his wife. Everyone was happy except the bird, which was still in its cage that had been hung on the wall.

Some time later, the youngest Prince was bored and decided to go hunting whereupon he ran into the King.

KING : Who gave you permission to hunt here?

PRINCE TWO : No one, sir.

KING : Whose son are you?

PRINCE TWO : The old fisherman and his wife.

KING : The old fisherman and his wife, you say? Why, they have no children.

PRINCE TWO : If you do not believe me, then come home with me.

NARRATOR : And the King did just that. The old fisherman told the King everything he knew about the situation. Then the little bird in the cage began to sing -

BIRD ONE : The mother sits alone
there in the prison small.
Oh King of royal blood,
these are thy children all.
The sisters twain are false,
they wrought the children woe
there in the waters deep,
where fishermen come and go.

NARRATOR : The King then took the bird from the wall and everyone went to the castle. The Queen was freed from her prison, but the years inside had made her weak and ill. The Princess fetched the water she had saved from the fountain and gave it to her mother.

After drinking it, the Queen's strength and health returned. The two false sisters were burnt at the stake and the Princess married the Black Dog Prince.