

EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION:

EXCERPT
ADAPTED
FROM


PRINCE HYACINTH AND THE DEAR LITTLE PRINCESS

Read the following adaptation of "Prince Hyacinth and the Dear Little Princess," a French fairy tale from *The Blue Fairy Book*, edited by Andrew Lang. Then answer the questions on pages 4 and 5.

ONCE upon a time, a King loved a Princess. But the Princess could not marry him, for she was under a spell. The King's friend the Fairy told him how to break the spell and win the Princess's love: he must touch the tail of the cat who was the Princess's constant companion. *An easy enough task*, thought the King. But the cat was tricky. He evaded the King, until one day, the King found the cat fast asleep and managed to touch his tail. With a terrific yell, the cat instantly changed into an enchanter, who put a curse on the King's unborn son as revenge. The curse stated that the King's son would never be happy until he learned that his nose was too long. Despite his fear, the King had to laugh. *How would his son not know if his nose were so long?* And so, the Princess and the King married. Shortly after, they prepared to have their first child, but alas, the King did not live to see the new Queen give birth to their son, Hyacinth. Hyacinth was a beautiful boy—except for his enormous nose! The horrified Queen was assured by her ladies that her son's nose was as handsome as any nose could be! The Queen made sure that Hyacinth never knew that his nose was anything but perfect, and she taught him that short noses were undesirable. The Prince believed that all great heroes had long noses. As such, Prince Hyacinth grew up convinced a long nose was a great beauty. He wouldn't have had his own nose a single inch shorter.



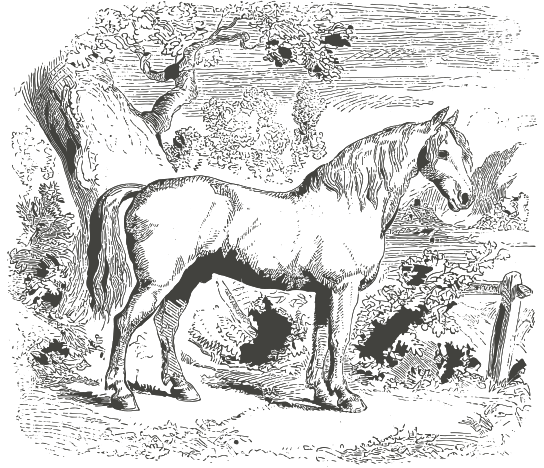
- 1 When the Prince's twentieth birthday passed, the Queen thought it was time for him to marry. She showed him **portraits** of several princesses. Prince Hyacinth was very much struck by the portrait of one, the Dear Little Princess. The Princess had, however, quite a little nose, which the Prince found strangely charming. This was a dilemma for the courtiers, who had gotten into such a habit of laughing at little noses. They found themselves automatically laughing at hers. The Prince failed to see the joke and had two of them **banished** for their disrespect.
- 2 The Prince sent **ambassadors** to ask the Dear Little Princess for her hand in marriage. She agreed, and Prince Hyacinth traveled to meet her. As he was just advancing to kiss her hand, however, the Enchanter appeared as suddenly as a flash of lightning. He snatched up the Dear Little Princess and whirled her away out of sight!

EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION:

PRINCE HYACINTH AND THE DEAR LITTLE PRINCESS

Continue reading.

- 3 The heartbroken Prince vowed to find the Dear Little Princess, so he mounted his horse and rode away. As night fell, horse and rider grew terribly hungry after the day of riding. The Prince caught sight of a light, which seemed to shine from a cavern, and he rode up to it. There, he saw a little old woman, who appeared to be at least a hundred years old.
- 4 The woman put on her spectacles to look at Prince Hyacinth, but it was quite a long time before she could fix them securely. You see, her nose was so very short. When the Fairy (for that was who she was) looked at the Prince, she went into a fit of laughter and cried, "Oh, what a funny nose!"
- 5 "Not so funny as yours," retorted the Prince. "Madam, I beg you to leave our noses aside and be good enough to give my horse and me something to eat."
- 6 "Of course," said the Fairy. "Though your nose is so ridiculous, you are, nevertheless, the son of my friend. I loved your father as my brother. Now *he* had a very handsome nose!"
- 7 "And pray what does mine lack?" said the Prince.
- 8 "Oh! It doesn't *lack* anything," replied the Fairy. "On the contrary, there is too much of it. But never mind, one may still be a very worthy man even if his nose is too long. As I was saying, I was your father's friend. He often visited me in the old times, and you must know that I was very pretty in those days. At least, he used to say so. Let me tell you of a conversation we had the last time I ever saw him . . ."
- 9 "Indeed," said the Prince, "*after* I have supped, it will give me the greatest pleasure to hear it."



- 10 "You are right, poor boy," said the Fairy. "Come in, and I'll give you some supper. While you're eating I can tell you my story in a few words, for I don't like endless tales myself. Too long a tongue is worse than too long a nose! I remember when I was young that I was admired for not being a great chatterer. They used to say that to the Queen, my mother. For though you see what I am now, I was the daughter of a great king. My father—"
- 11 "Your father, I dare say, surely got something to eat when he was hungry!" interrupted the Prince.
- 12 "Oh! Certainly," answered the Fairy, "and you shall, too. I only just wanted to tell you—"
- 13 "But I really cannot listen to anything until I've had something to eat," cried the Prince, getting upset. But then, remembering that he needed the Fairy's help, he added, "I know that in the pleasure of listening to you I should forget my own hunger. But my horse, who cannot hear you, must really be fed!"
- 14 The Fairy was flattered by this compliment. "You shall not wait another minute!" she said. "You're so polite, and in spite of your enormous nose, very agreeable."

EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION:

PRINCE HYACINTH AND THE DEAR LITTLE PRINCESS

Continue reading.

- 15 *How she does go on about my nose! thought the Prince. If I weren't so hungry, I would soon be done with this chatterpie who thinks she talks so little. How silly people are when they don't see their own faults! That comes from being a princess, spoiled by flatterers who have convinced her that she is quite a **moderate** talker!*
- 16 Meanwhile, the servants put supper on the table as the Fairy asked them a thousand questions, just for the pleasure of hearing herself speak. One maid, no matter what the Fairy said, always praised her mistress's great wisdom.
- 17 As the Prince ate, he thought, *This just shows how sensible I've been to never listen to flatterers, who praise us to hide our faults or change them into **virtues**. I would never be taken in this way. I know my own **defects**!*
- 18 Poor Prince Hyacinth! He really believed what he told himself.
- 19 Then, the Fairy said, "My dear Prince, might I beg you to move a little that way, for your nose casts such a shadow that I cannot see what's on my plate. Ah, thanks! Now, let's talk about your father Dear me, I simply cannot get used to what a long nose you have!"
- 20 "Madam," said the Prince, "I wish you'd stop mentioning my nose. I am quite satisfied with it."
- 21 "Now you're angry with me," said the Fairy. "I didn't mean to vex you. On the contrary, I wished to do you a service. Even though your nose is a shock to me, I'll try not to speak of it again. I'll even try to think that you have an ordinary nose."
- 22 The Prince, no longer hungry, gladly mounted his horse and rode away to resume his search for the Princess. But wherever he went, he thought all the people were mad, for they all talked of his enormous nose. Even so, he could not admit that perhaps his nose was too long.
- 23 As for the Fairy, she wished to make Hyacinth happy, and she at last **devised** a plan. She shut the Dear Little Princess up in a crystal palace, placing it where the Prince would surely find it. The Prince was overjoyed to see the Princess and set to work trying to break her prison. But in spite of all his efforts, he failed. The Dear Little Princess stretched her hand out a window of the palace so that the Prince might kiss it. But turn which way he might, he could not raise her hand to his lips, for his long nose always prevented it. For the first time, the Prince realized how long it really was, and exclaimed, "Well, I must admit that my nose is too long!"
- 24 Instantly, the crystal prison flew into a thousand splinters, freeing the Dear Little Princess. The Fairy appeared and said to the Prince, "See how vanity keeps us from knowing our own defects of mind and body. Our reason tries to show them to us, but we see them only when we find them in the way of our interests."
- 25 Prince Hyacinth, whose nose was now just like anyone else's, was rewarded by the important lesson he learned. He married the Dear Little Princess, and they lived happily ever after.



EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION:

PRINCE HYACINTH AND THE DEAR LITTLE PRINCESS

Answer the following questions about "Prince Hyacinth and the Dear Little Princess."

1. **Part A.** What is the Queen's initial reaction when she sees her son's nose, and how does she decide to proceed with raising her child?

2. Write the correct letter to match the words from the passage with their meanings on the right.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ defect | A. flaw |
| _____ moderate | B. desirable trait |
| _____ devised | C. representative |
| _____ virtue | D. picture |
| _____ portrait | E. not extreme |
| _____ banished | F. came up with |
| _____ ambassador | G. sent away |

3. Read the following sentence from the text.

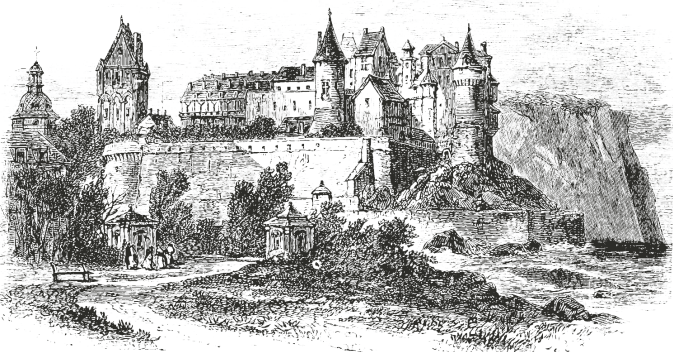
As he was just advancing to kiss her hand, however, the Enchanter appeared as suddenly as a flash of lightning.

What does the simile in the sentence show about the arrival of the Enchanter?

- A.** He floated in on a dark, stormy cloud.
- B.** His arrival was very jarring.
- C.** His arrival was silent and stealthy.
- D.** He waited and watched from the shadows.

4. In paragraphs 15–18, Prince Hyacinth and the narrator have different points of view. What effect does this difference create for readers?

- A.** suspense
- B.** humor
- C.** relief
- D.** confusion



EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION:

PRINCE HYACINTH AND THE DEAR LITTLE PRINCESS

Keep going! Answer the following questions about "Prince Hyacinth and the Dear Little Princess."

5. Write words and phrases from the box into the diagram to show the similarities and differences between the Prince and the Fairy.

royalty big nose persuaded by flattery talks too much magical unaware of own flaws		
PRINCE HYACINTH	BOTH	FAIRY

6. **Part A.** Which of the following famous quotes reflects a theme of the story? Choose two.

- A. "O, happy the soul that saw its own faults." — Rumi
- B. "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." — Eleanor Roosevelt
- C. "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." — Confucius
- D. "A diamond with a flaw is worth more than a pebble without imperfections." — Chinese proverb
- E. "It is easy to see the faults of others, but difficult to see one's own." — Buddha

Part B. Provide evidence from the text to support each of your above choices.

Choice 1: ____ : _____

Choice 2: ____ : _____

In "Prince Hyacinth and the Dear Little Princess," the kingdom focuses on a physical feature—the size of Prince Hyacinth's nose—and creates a skewed version of reality for the Prince. Characters tailor their words and behaviors so that Prince Hyacinth can be confident and comfortable in his own skin. As a result, he is judgmental of others while he remains blissfully ignorant about the way society judges him. **What are the implications of using physical traits to judge a person's worth? Jot some notes, and then discuss!**