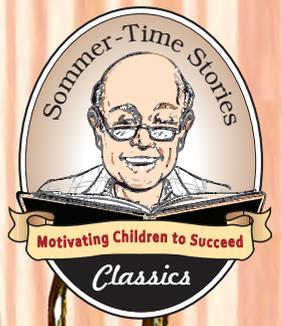


The Ugly Princess



Retold by Carl Sommer
Illustrated by Jorge Martinez



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Fun Times With

Self-Esteem / Compassion / Seeking Wisdom



Sommer-Time Stories—Classics

The Ugly Princess

By Carl Sommer
Illustrated by Jorge Martinez



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In a faraway land lived a princess named Isabella. Isabella, an only child, was greatly loved by her parents, the king and queen. She was a very happy child.



After playing tag, Isabella happened to walk past two girls. She heard one of the girls say, “Did you notice how big Isabella’s nose and ears are?”

Isabella stopped. The other girl laughed and said, “They are sure funny looking.”



Isabella loved school, and after school she had lots of fun playing with her friends. But one day everything changed.

When Isabella heard what the girls had said, she rushed to her bathroom. She looked in the mirror and began to cry, “It is true! Not only are my ears and nose big, but they are ugly!”



After crying for a long time, she washed her face and went outside. As the other children played, Isabella sat down and groaned over and over, “Why do I have such an ugly nose and ears?”



Mom gave Isabella a big hug, and with tears in her eyes said, “Dad and I love you just as you are. You are our precious sweetheart.”

Then Mom put her loving hands on her face and said, “If you want to find true happiness, Isabella, focus on your inner beauty, not your outer beauty.”

“I know you both love me, but it does not change the way I look. All my friends make fun of my ugly nose and ears.”

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When Isabella came home, Mom asked, “Why are you so sad?”

“I am fine,” Isabella mumbled.

“No, Isabella,” said Mom in a sweet voice, “you are not fine. Something is wrong.”

“Why do I have such an ugly nose and ears?”

Mom shook her head and said, “Your nose and ears are not ugly.”

“They ARE ugly!” insisted Isabella.



When the king heard what happened, he called Isabella. “What is this I hear about your nose and ears?”

“All my friends made fun of my big, ugly nose and ears,” complained Isabella.

“How many friends *really* made fun of you?”

“Two.”

“So it is two friends, not all your friends.”



Then the king put his arms around Isabella and said, “If you always listen to what other people say, you will live a very unhappy life. You have two ears. Some things you hear should pass through your ears, and some things should go into your heart.”

Then he gave her a big hug and said, “Your mother and I love you just the way you are. That is something you should *always* keep in your heart.”

But Isabella did not listen. She felt she was ugly, and nothing Dad or Mom or anyone else said would change her mind. She became a very miserable girl.

Whenever children came to the palace, Isabella said, “I’m embarrassed by the way I look. I’m not playing with them.” This went on for a long time.



The king thought much about how he could help Isabella. Then one day he said, “Isabella, I would like you to try something.”

“Is it about my ugly nose and ears?” she asked.

“No, it is not,” said the king. “It is about how unhappy you have been. I want you to study people to find out what makes them happy. Can you do this for me?”

“I will do that,” said Isabella.

The king gave her a big hug and kiss. Then he said, “I love you, Isabella.”



The next week the king, queen, and Isabella went to a feast. After Isabella ate, she said to herself, "I'm going to look for someone who is very happy."

Isabella looked around and found an old

woman laughing in the middle of a happy group of children. "Oh, my!" she exclaimed. "Look at her. Her nose and ears are much bigger than mine! How can she be so happy? I'm going to find out why."



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When Isabella came to the old woman, she asked, “May I ask you a question?”

“Sure,” said the old woman. “Let’s go to that empty table.”

When they sat down, Isabella asked, “What makes you so happy?”

“I was once a very sad girl. Boys and girls often made fun of my big nose and ears. One day my grandpa asked me, ‘Why are you so sad?’

“I told him why. Then he took me for a walk and said, ‘Listen to me very carefully. You cannot change the way you were born. So be wise and content with what you cannot change. Instead of always looking at yourself, aim to love others. If you do this, you’ll find great happiness.’

“I listened to my grandpa, and from that day on I always tried to love others. Now I am a very happy, old lady with lots of friends.”

“Thank you so much,” said Isabella. “Your words have been a great help to me.”

That night as Isabella lay in bed she said, “That old woman is right. I cannot change the way I look, but I can change the way I live. My aim from now on will be to love others. But what can I do?”

Suddenly she sat up and exclaimed, “I have an idea!”



The next day Isabella went to her father and said, “I would like to do something special.”

“How can I help?” the king asked.

“I would like to invite the children with special needs to come to the palace. I want to make them happy.”

The king was shocked. “That is wonderful!” he exclaimed. “We will get whatever you need.”

Then Isabella gave her dad a big hug.



When the day came, over fifty children with special needs and their parents came to the palace. They played all sorts of games, and Isabella played with them.

During the party, Isabella hugged her father and said, “This is the happiest day of my life, seeing these children playing and having so much fun. It is true—loving others brings happiness.”



The next day the king ordered his seven advisors, "Search for the wisest and kindest young man in each of your districts. In one month bring them to the palace. We want to honor them."

Isabella hoped that among these seven men, one would strike a spark in her heart.



From that day on, Isabella continued to help others. She became a very happy young woman.

One day the king said, "Isabella, you know that the one you marry will become the next king. How can we help you find the right man?"

"How someone looks is unimportant to me," she said. "I want to marry a wise and kind man. I have an idea about how to find such a man."

Then Isabella whispered her idea to the king. "Excellent!" exclaimed the king. "I would be glad to help."

The king's brother had an only child named Jezreal. Jezreal was jealous of Isabella. Jezreal often told her friends, "If something happens to the king and Isabella, *I'll* be the next queen."

When Jezreal found out about the seven men, she told an artist, "Draw an ugly picture of Isabella with a very long nose and extra big ears."

Jezreal came early to the celebration and placed the picture on Isabella's table. "I hope this makes Isabella furious," she said.



When Isabella sat down, Jezreal watched her unfold the paper. "I hope the picture makes her real mad," Jezreal mumbled to herself.

Isabella looked at the picture and then remembered what her father had said, "You have two ears. Some things you hear should pass through your ears, and some things should go into your heart."

Isabella smiled, tore up the picture, and said to the waiter, "Please throw it away."



After the seven men were honored, Isabella spoke with each of them. One of the men was Steven. When she greeted him, a spark lit up in her heart. The same thing happened to Steven. After talking awhile, Steven said, “May we meet again?”

“I would be glad to see you again,” said Isabella, “but first you need to meet my dad and mom.”

“I would be greatly honored to meet them,” said Steven.

When Steven came to the palace, the king said, “Tell me about yourself.”

“Thank you for inviting me,” said Steven. “My father died when I was six years old. My mother had to work hard to support my two younger sisters and me. After school we had to work to help my mother.”

The queen asked Steven, “What would you do if you were king?”



Isabella hugged her mother and father. Then she went to Steven and said, “My parents approve of you. Let’s visit with one another for one year.”

“That would be great!” said Steven. “Let’s also try to do a kind deed every day.”

“That’s an excellent idea!” exclaimed Isabella.

When they heard a poor man had died, leaving his wife with four children to care for themselves, Steven and Isabella brought food to the family. Steven proved to be the kindest man that Isabella had ever met, and her love for him grew more and more.

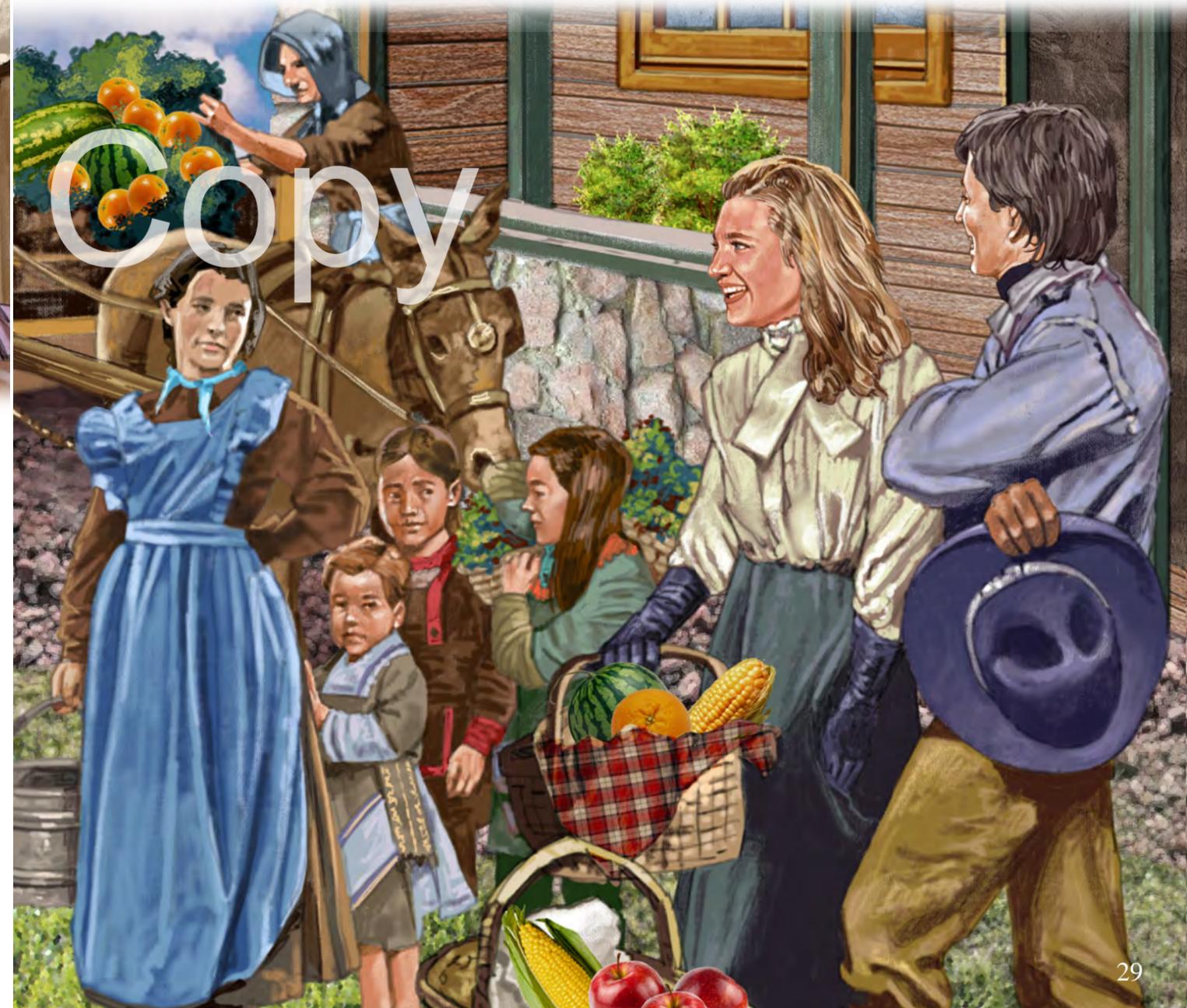
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“If I had the great honor of being the next king, I would seek wisdom from others on how to make our people happy and successful.”

After listening to Steven, the king and queen went to another room. “Did you notice that Steven always spoke about others and not about himself?” the queen said.

“I did,” the king said. “He would be a great man both for Isabella and for our kingdom.”

Then the queen took Isabella aside and whispered, “We approve of Steven.”



Word spread everywhere that Isabella had chosen someone to marry, not for looks, but one who was wise and kind. Many parents told their children, “Did you see what Isabella did? She didn’t pick someone just for looks, but someone who was wise and kind. If you want to have a happy life, do the same.”



Steven had been eagerly counting the days until he could ask Isabella to marry him. Then exactly one year after meeting her, he took her hands and asked with a big smile, “Isabella, will you marry me?”

“Absolutely!” Isabella exclaimed. “You are the kindest man that I have ever met. I know we will have a wonderful and happy marriage, and you will make a great king.”



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When the wedding was announced, there was great joy in the kingdom. The people knew their kingdom would be successful because their future king and queen would be wise and kind.

Steven and Isabella had a very happy life together. The people in their kingdom also prospered because of the wise and kind leadership of their king and queen.



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