

the women should be required to spring through a hoop which was hung from the ceiling in the center of the hall.

They thought to themselves "Now, certainly our peasants will get the best of it. They are active and sturdy, but that fragile lady will kill herself if she jumps."

To this, again, the King consented, and the peasants were first given trial.

They sprang through the hoop, but they were so clumsy that they fell, breaking their arms and legs.

Then the lovely lady whom Dummling had brought home, leapt through as lightly as a fawn. This put an end to the argument.

So the crown came to Dummling, who lived long, and ruled his people wisely.

## DUMMLING AND THE THREE FEATHERS



**By The Brothers Grimm**



A LearningIsland.org  
15 - Minute Book

*Editor: Jennifer Robinson*

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Dummling and the Three Feathers/ Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm

Summary: A tale of a king who must choose which of his three sons should inherit the throne.

1. Folk Tale. Juvenile Literature. 2. Brothers Grimm. Juvenile Literature.

Created in USA

Words: 1248  
Reading Level: 5.2





## DUMMLING AND THE THREE FEATHERS

Once upon a time there lived a King who had three sons. The two older sons were learned and bright, but the youngest said very little. He appeared somewhat foolish, so he was always known as Dummling.

Finally the King grew old and feeble. He felt that he was nearing his end. He wished to leave the crown to one of his three sons, but could not decide to which. Then he decided that they should travel, and that the one who could obtain the most splendid carpet should ascend the throne when he died.



So that there could be no disagreement as to the way each one should go, the King led them to the courtyard of the Palace. There he blew three feathers, by turn, into the air, telling his sons to follow the course that the three feathers took.

The young man looked at the young toads around the old toad. Then he seized one at random and placed it in the scooped-out turnip.

Hardly was it there when the most astounding change occurred. The toad was transformed into a very lovely maiden. The turnip became an elegant carriage, and the six mice were turned into handsome horses. The young man kissed the maiden and drove off to bring her to the King.

Not long afterwards the two brothers arrived.

In the same way, as the twice before, they had taken no trouble about the matter. They had picked up the first passable looking peasant woman whom they had happened to meet.

After glancing at the three, the King said: "Without doubt, at my death the kingdom will be Dummling's."

Once more the brothers loudly expressed their discontent. They gave the King no peace, declaring—

"It is impossible for us to agree to Dummling becoming ruler of the kingdom." They insisted that

But the older sons would not rest. They pestered their father into appointing one more test before bestowing his kingdom.

The King finally gave in. He announced that the one who brought home the most beautiful woman should inherit the crown.

Then Dummling again went down to the large toad and made known to her that he wished to find the most beautiful woman alive.

"The most beautiful woman is not always at hand," said the toad. "However, you shall have her."

Then she gave to him a scooped-out turnip to which half a dozen little mice were attached. The young man looked at this despondently. It was not at all what he was seeking.

"What can I make of this?" he asked.

"Only place in it one of my young toads," replied the large toad. "Then you can decide how to use it."



One of the feathers flew eastwards, and another westward. But the third feather went straight up to the sky, though it only sped a short distance before falling to earth.

Therefore one son traveled towards the east, and the second went to the west, both making fun of poor Dummling, who had to stay where his feather had fallen. Dummling sat down and felt rather miserable after his brothers had gone.

He sighed and looked about him. Suddenly he noticed that near where his feather lay was a trap-door. On lifting this up he saw a flight of steps.

Down he went, down the dark stairs. At the bottom was another door, so he knocked upon it. Then heard a voice calling—

"Maiden, fairest, come to me,  
Make haste to open the door,  
A mortal surely you will see,  
From the world above is he,  
We'll help him from our store."

Finally their father agreed. "The one who brings me the most magnificent ring shall succeed to my throne," he said.

Once more he took his sons outside the Palace. Again, he blew three feathers into the air to show the direction each one should go. The two older sons' feathers went east and west. But Dummling's flew straight up, and fell close by the trap-door.

Then the youngest son went down the steps as before. When he saw the large toad he talked with her, and told her what he desired.

The big box was brought, and out of it the toad handed him a ring which was of so exquisite a workmanship that no goldsmith's could equal it.

Meanwhile the two elder brothers made fun of the idea of Dummling searching for a ring. They decided to take no needless trouble themselves.

They found an old iron ring belonging to some harness. They took that to the King. Dummling was there before them with his valuable ring. As soon as he showed it to his father, the King declared that the kingdom should be his.

The two elder brothers were of the opinion that the youngest was so foolish that he would not even try to obtain the throne. They did not think he would find anything at all, and had said to each other: "We do not need to trouble ourselves to look for the carpet!"

They took a course shawl from the shoulders of the first peasant they saw. This they carried to their father.

At the same time Dummling appeared with his beautiful carpet, which he presented to the King. The King was very much surprised, and said—

"By rights the throne should be for my youngest son."

But when the two brothers heard this, they gave the old King no rest. They pestered him, saying—

"How is it possible that Dummling, who is not at all wise, could control the affairs of an important kingdom? Make some other condition, we beg of you!"

Then the door was flung open, and the young man found himself facing a big toad. It was sitting in the center of a number of young toads.

The big toad looked at him and asked him what he wanted.

Dummling was rather surprised when he saw the toads, and heard them question him. But his father had always taught him to be polite and good-hearted, so he politely replied:

"I want to obtain the most splendid carpet in the world. Just now it would be extremely useful to me."

The toad who had just spoken, called to a young toad, saying—

"Maiden, fairest, come to me,  
'Tis a mortal here you see;  
Let us speed all his desires,  
Giving him what he requires."



Immediately the young toad fetched a large box. This the old one opened, and took out an exquisite carpet. The design was so beautiful that it certainly could have been manufactured nowhere on the earth.

Taking it with grateful thanks, Dummling went up the flight of steps. He climbed to the top and was once more in the Palace courtyard.

