

(1) The Prince with Donkey Ears

Once upon a time, in a faraway land, lived a kindhearted prince with a secret. Unlike other princes with perfect features, his ears were long and droopy, much like a donkey's. This worried the King and Queen deeply, so they always kept his head covered with a hat.

Years passed. The prince grew into a thoughtful young man. People admired him for his intelligence and good heart. One day, his hair became too long and needed a trim. Worried, the King summoned a barber from a nearby village.

"Listen carefully," the King said seriously. "The prince has a special feature. You must promise to never, ever tell anyone about his donkey-like ears."

The barber, a man with kind eyes, bowed deeply. "Your Majesty, your secret is safe with me."

Years flew by. The barber kept his mouth shut about the prince's secret. But it was like carrying around a giant bowling ball – heavy and stressful. One day, he just couldn't handle it anymore. He took a long walk, way past the last house in the village. There, he dug a super deep hole and leaned right in. "The prince has donkey ears!" he blurted out into the hole, feeling a lot lighter.

He filled the hole, feeling lighter, and returned home. He was sure the secret was buried safe and sound.

However, a tiny seed carried on the wind landed right where he'd buried the secret. As time passed, the seed grew into a tall reed. One sunny afternoon, a young boy found the perfect reed and fashioned it into a whistle. When he blew into it, a surprising tune emerged, "The prince has donkey ears!"

Excited by the strange melody, the boy ran through the village, playing his whistle. Soon, every child had a reed whistle, echoing the same mysterious tune.

Panic struck the King and Queen. They sent for the barber, their faces filled with anger. "You broke your promise!" the King roared. "You will be punished for revealing the prince's secret!"

Just then, the prince himself entered the throne room. Calmly, he went to his parents and, removed his hat with a gentle hand. His unique ears were revealed for the first time.

"There's no need for anger, Father," the prince spoke softly. "The secret is out. Please, don't blame the barber. He was simply trying to ease his burden."

A stunned silence fell over the room. Villagers gathered outside the palace, peeking through the windows. As the prince stood bravely with his ears exposed, their surprise turned into respect.

"We love you, Prince!" they cheered. The prince's appearance mattered little to them. They saw his kind heart and honesty, realizing true value comes from good qualities, not looks.

From that day on, the prince's donkey ears became a symbol of his gentle nature and courage. Now free from the secret, he became a hero, proving that kindness and honesty are the true marks of a great leader.