

# The Three Challenges

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## Tips for Telling

*This story has an answer to the third challenge. It requires a standard, letter-size piece of paper, and scissors.*

## The Story

Once upon a time in a far-away kingdom, a King and Queen had a lovely daughter, who grew to become a beautiful and kind young woman. As tradition dictated, the King sent a decree through many lands declaring that if any Prince could complete three challenges, he would win the hand of the Princess in marriage.

Many young Princes arrived on the appointed day. The first challenge was to climb the highest mountain in the kingdom. After many days, half of the men returned to the palace. The King congratulated them and proposed the second challenge.

The challenge was to swim the width of the widest river in the kingdom. Some of the Princes glanced at each other, knowing that this river was also the widest in the world! The day of the swim dawned warm and clear. The challengers were ready and the Princess started them off. Only a handful of suitors arrived late in the day on the river's far bank. Exhausted, but happy, they agreed to meet the King the next morning to hear the final challenge.

That evening, the Princess requested a meeting with her father. They talked about the challenges and the suitors who had met them. Finally, the Princess said, "Father, I know that you showed your courage and won mother's hand by slaying a dragon."

"And don't forget that I journeyed to the ends of the earth for priceless rubies for her, too!" interjected the King.

"Ah, yes, that-too. However, father, times have changed. I would like to know the Prince I marry has brains as well as brawn. No offence to you and mother, but I would like to compose the final challenge for the Princes. Please, father?"

Well, this is most unusual. I suppose it's to be expected with these modern times and the younger generation. Very well. You may do it.

And so the Princess locked herself in her room and thought and worked all night. As the sun cast its first pink rays in the east, she had finished creating the challenge. Happily, she washed, put on a clean gown, and after a leisurely breakfast with the King and Queen she felt refreshed and ready to pronounce the final challenge.

The Princess met and talked with the few Princes who were able to meet this final challenge. Then with her father and mother present, she told them the challenge.

Each suitor took several pieces of paper and scissors to a separate part of the huge room. The knew that the Princess had allocated only one hour. Each worked feverishly to complete the task. *(You could give paper and scissors to 3 or 4 volunteers to try.)*

Alas, when one hour was up all of the men were called to give their solutions. Some made feeble attempts and did not succeed. The last Prince accepted the paper and scissors, but started talking to the Princess instead. *(Cut out the fold as you talk — making the conversation hold the audience's attention.)*

"My dear Princess, I have admired your beauty from afar, but I have also longer to talk to you.

What do you enjoy doing?"

"I like to go for long walks and I enjoy horseback riding," replied the Princess.

"I too enjoy walking and horseback riding. It's fun to take along a picnic lunch. Do you also enjoy swimming and dancing?" *(Add other interests in conversation, such as music, writing, tennis, family and children.)* And so they continued, deep in conversation as though they were the only two people in the room.

Then the Prince spoke, "Dear Princess, as we come to know each other better, I feel that we can truly find love. Please accept this ring as my answer to your challenge. I would be honoured to be your husband." *(Open paper ring, slip over head to toe.)*