



# Prince Chameleon

There once lived a King and Queen who had waited many years for a child. They had waited so long that the King's hair grew white, and the Queen sent the cradle up into the attic so she wouldn't have to look at it any more.

But at last, after they had lost all hope, a son was born.

So the cradle was carried back downstairs. Its covering of cobwebs was carefully brushed away. All the lords and ladies of the kingdom were invited to the **christening**. Late into the evening they laughed, they chattered and danced together. Servants clattered in and out with their dishes. The Prince cried loudly in his cradle. Dogs barked. It was the noisiest, the happiest feast day the kingdom had ever seen.

Then the stroke of midnight sounded. The curtains **billowed**. A sharp wind blew through the hall. Draped in the mist of rainbows, a tall majestic fairy floated into the state room and **stooped** over the cradle.

"A gift of riches," hoped the Queen.

"Of power," muttered the King.

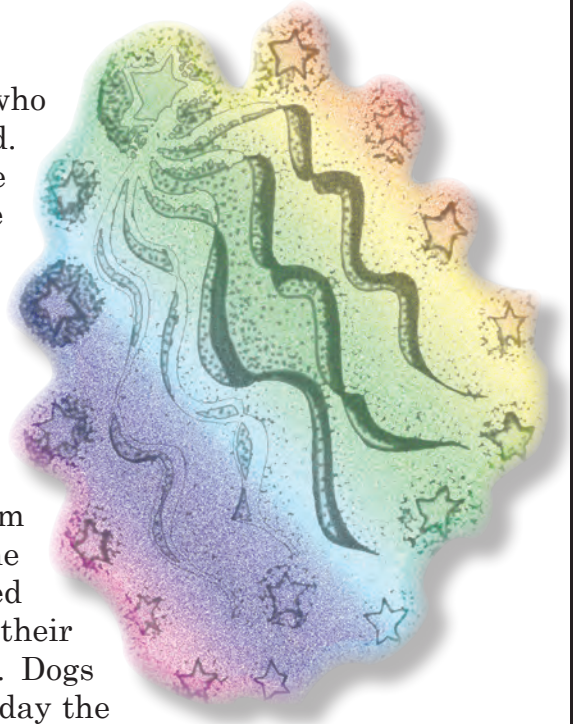
"Destiny," said the Rainbow Fairy, with a graceful nod of her head. "I **bestow** on the Prince the gift of Destiny."

"Prince Destiny—Destiny—Destiny. A royal name indeed," mumbled the guests. Of course, the old King and Queen were overjoyed; but the royal baby **scrunched up** his tiny, red face and let out a most unprincely **howl**.

Prince Destiny grew older. Quickly he stepped into his father's shoes. Almost as soon as he learned to count, he climbed up the steps to the treasury. He spent hours **stacking** the coins into tidy rows, studying the **ledgers**, balancing the accounts. He rarely smiled. He spent no time at play. The old King and Queen watched over him anxiously, but with pride.

"He will soon take over the affairs of the kingdom," declared his father.

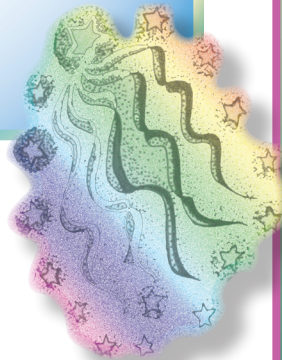
"He worries too much," fussed his mother.





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Prince Chameleon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (howl) a loud unhappy cry
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
ruled books for keeping accounts
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
the naming of a newborn baby
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
blew open in the wind
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
(she) bent her body low
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
making a pile
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
give
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
twisted



## Prince Chameleon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 1

- a. What is a symbol? It is something that stands in place of, or makes us think of something else.
- b. So then, what do these things make you think of? An old-fashioned water clock? An hourglass? A sundial? Do they make you think of Time passing? You decide.
- c. What do you think it means to receive the gift of Destiny?
- d. Why are the old King and Queen worried about Prince Destiny?
- e. Why do you think Prince Destiny doesn't smile very often?



Can you draw a picture of Prince Destiny's christening?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.



**W**hen Prince Destiny was seven years old, a second son was born to the Queen. Once more, the lords and ladies of the kingdom came to the christening. They stood around the cradle. They whispered to one another. Just before the stroke of midnight they looked **expectantly** about, hoping that the beautiful Rainbow Fairy would appear. But she never came.



The guests began to yawn. They drifted toward the doors, putting on their cloaks, saying goodnight.

“*Halt!*” shouted the footman. An old woman was climbing up the grand staircase. “*Halt!*” he roared again.

But as she straightened her humped back, he saw how very tall she was. Her hair looked like a tangled web of **wiry** silver. Her eyes were as fierce as a **falcon’s** gaze. She turned on him with such a **withering glance** that he tumbled to the very bottom of the **stairwell**.

The Queen shuddered as the hag’s shadow fell over the cradle—a twilight shadow. Was this the Rainbow Fairy of Royal Christenings? Why did she look so old? Why was her face so grey? And why were her rainbow robes drained of all their colours?

“Do you not know me?” demanded the ancient fairy. “I bring a gift for the royal child.”

“Beauty?” whispered the Queen, **shrouding** the child’s eyes with his christening veil.

“Courage,” muttered the King, although without much hope, to be sure.

“Too late,” croaked the fairy harshly. “I have grown old and my rich store of gifts has **dwindled**. I have one last to spare. It is the gift of the **Chameleon**.” She whispered this, and so quietly that only the Queen could hear.

“Chameleon?” Her Highness echoed to the King.

“He’s christened *Chameleon, Chameleon, Chameleon*,” chattered the serving maidens, running down the stairwell into the **scullery**.

“Chameleon!” echoed the bootboy, with a grin.

“But that’s a lizard!” frowned the cook. “A lizard that changes the colour of its skin. *Prince Lizard!* What the devil of a gift is that?”



Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Prince Chameleon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. ( **withering glance** ) a fierce look that makes you afraid

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
twisted like wire

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
circular staircase

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
looking forward to something

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
covering up

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
a back kitchen where pots and pans are washed

7. \_\_\_\_\_  
have become lesser or fewer

8. \_\_\_\_\_  
a ferocious looking bird of the hawk family

9. \_\_\_\_\_  
a sort of lizard that changes the colour of its skin.

## Prince Chameleon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 2

- a. Why doesn't anyone recognize the Rainbow Fairy at Prince Chameleon's christening?
- b. Why does the Rainbow Fairy have only one last gift to spare?
- c. Why do you think that only the Queen can hear Prince Chameleon's whispered name?



Can you draw a picture of Prince Chameleon's christening?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.







As the Prince grew older, no one dared call him by his real name, Chameleon, so they called him—nothing. Well, not exactly nothing, for the Queen always called him, “My dear,” and the King called him, “My son,” and almost everyone else called him Prince Playful. Chameleon loved chasing fiery sparks up the chimney, or splashing outside in the raindrops, or painting his skin rosepetal.



“Why, he is sillier than the Court Jester,” grumbled his elder brother, Prince Destiny. “That’s what I’ll call him—Prince Jester!”

“Shush, don’t be so unkind,” whispered the Queen.

For her little Chameleon, dressed in his silk rainbow cloak, was forever searching the kingdom for its rarest colours, in order to **inhabit** them. Early in the morning, he liked to try on the gold lacework of sunlight which decorated the **battlements**. At **twilight**, he was often seen following the scarlet tails of **fox fire** along the **marshes**. Some days he would wrap himself up in a delicate layer of onion skin; or shrink very small and slide into the pearly insides of a beached oyster shell.

“But *when* will he learn to be a Prince?” demanded the King.

“Patience! Give him more time,” murmured the Queen.

Time passed, and Chameleon began to hear whisperings in the courtyard. The **saucy** stable boy grinned whenever he passed. The maidservants gathered in little groups and giggled. It made him angry and embarrassed to hear the echoes of his ridiculous name rippling from every **niche** and corner of the castle. He wished he had been christened with a name as grand as **Crown Prince** Destiny.

**PRINCE DESTINY**—His brother’s name seemed to have a special ring to it, like silver trumpets.

If only I had a name like Prince Destiny, thought Chameleon, Father would be pleased and—he’d be proud of me. He might even **entrust** me with the serious **tasks** of the kingdom. But whenever Chameleon tried to help, the old King just glared at him impatiently. The Queen sighed and shook her head. Prince Destiny shooed him out of the council chamber.



Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Prince Chameleon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (inhabit) live in
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
bold, cheeky
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
trust someone to do something
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
damp lowlands covered with coarse grass
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
row of stone blocks built above castle walls
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
a tiny corner
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
a bright light flaring from rotted wood
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
the time between sunset and nightfall
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
jobs
10. \_\_\_\_\_  
a Prince who will one day be King

## Prince Chameleon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 3

- a. Why doesn't anyone dare call the Prince by his name, Chameleon?
- b. What is strange or special about Prince Chameleon?
- c. When does Prince Chameleon first realize that he is different from most people?



Can you draw Prince Chameleon hiding inside some wonderful shape and colour?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.





One day, early in summer, Chameleon had been told for the hundredth time to run off and play nicely in the garden because his brother, Prince Destiny, was getting his carriage ready for a journey and everyone else was too busy even to talk to him. So he climbed over the castle wall and **strayed** into the Royal Forest of pines and firs and silvergreens. He thought that he would love being a forest creature. It seemed such fun to creep up freely in damp, dark places, to kneel in the grass. Chameleon stroked the creamy **cape** of a tiny mushroom **sprouting** near the road.

“You have the prettiest brown petticoats I’ve ever seen,” said the Prince.

The mushroom blushed ever so faintly pink. “Thank you, Your Highness. It takes an **eternity** to fold them to such perfect **pleats**.”

“But you’re so **fragile**,” said Chameleon. “I am almost afraid to touch you.”

“Of course I am fragile, Your Highness, and beautiful. I am a mushroom.”

“And I am Prince—”

“Prince Who?” said the mushroom, looking at him curiously.

“To tell the truth,” whispered Chameleon, “I don’t know who I am.”

“Do you mean you’re **searching for** your **soul**?”

“Yes—well, I suppose so.”

“Then you’ve got to find the Rainbow Fairy,” replied the pretty mushroom. “*She’s* the Keeper of Souls, and she lives in the Land-of-**Mists**-and-**Mazes**.”

“Won’t you help me, little mushroom? May I try on your cape, just for a moment, and become a mushroom?”

“You can’t do that,” laughed the mushroom, **swirling** her delicate petticoats in the breeze.

“Of course I can,” said Chameleon; and he shrank very small, and slipped inside her cape. “There,” he cried triumphantly, “what did I tell you?”





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Prince Chameleon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (soul) the essence or quality that makes you what you are
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
growing
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
many twisting and connecting pathways
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
forever; a very long time
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
fluttering in the wind
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
condensed vapour or fog
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
folds of a dress
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
a loose cloak
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
wandered away
10. \_\_\_\_\_  
delicate
11. \_\_\_\_\_  
looking for

## Prince Chameleon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 4

- a. Why does Prince Chameleon wander away into the forest?
- b. Have you ever heard a mushroom talking?
- c. Where can you read about talking mushrooms?
- d. How does the pretty mushroom know who she is?



Can you draw a picture of Prince Chameleon trying to become a mushroom?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.







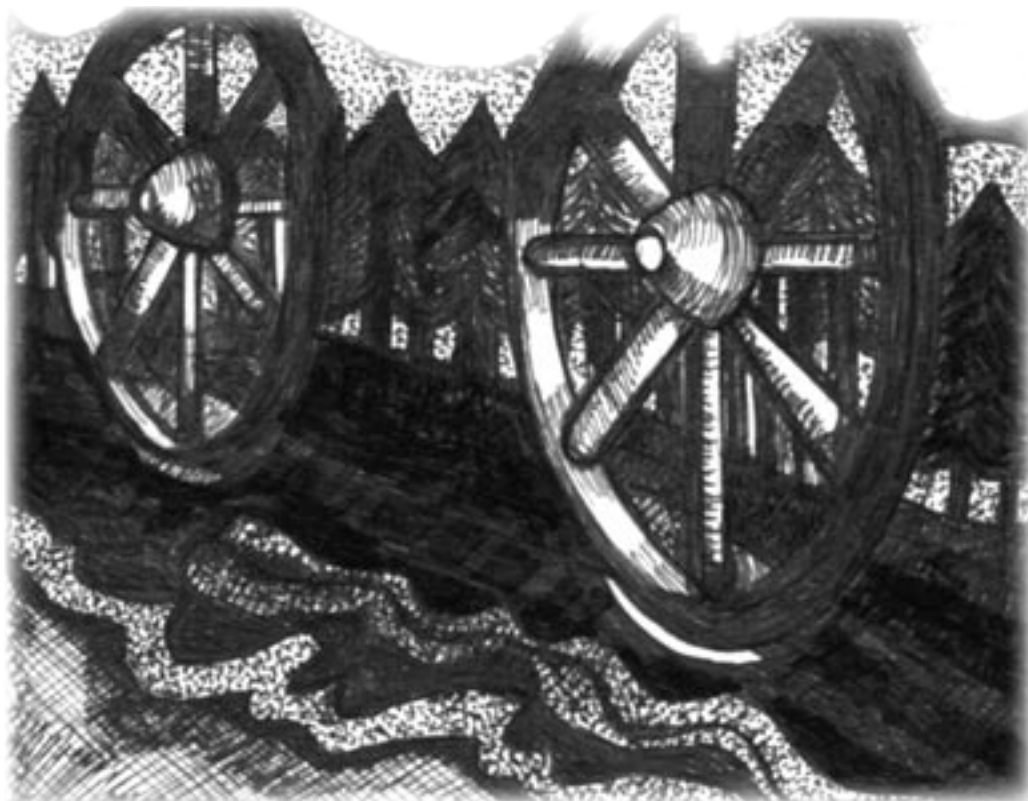
**B**ut as soon as the sun disappeared, it grew colder. An owl hooted softly. This twilight forest, Chameleon discovered, was a very lonely place. He shivered inside the mushroom's **silken** cape. His feet were cold and damp. He stared at the night clouds chasing one another, shifting, **colliding**, sliding over the moon. For hours the sky was as black as India ink; then it faded into a flat, blue blanket of dusty wool. Gradually a pinkish haze crept over the horizon. At last the sun rose.

A traveler thundered through the wood. It was Prince Destiny. His horse and carriage swung around the curve. An **ironbound** wheel sliced through the pretty mushroom's head, tossing Chameleon high up into the branches. A moment later he crashed down, fainting, beside a tree.

Chameleon felt quite dazed as he stared at the deep **wheel marks** left by Prince Destiny's carriage. A **gash** marked his own forehead. Pain **hammered** between his eyes. He gathered the broken mushroom into the palm of his hand.

"Oh, my poor little mushroom," he said, blinking back his tears, "you have been crushed in an instant."

"But you wouldn't give up your *own* life for me," whispered the dying mushroom. "You don't have the soul of a mushroom, Your Highness. Of that, I am sure."





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Prince Chameleon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (gash) a deep cut
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
circled with a band of iron
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
made of, or feeling like silk
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
bumping into one another
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
struck violently, like a hammer
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
deep tracks made by heavy wheels

## Prince Chameleon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 5

- a. Is it Prince Chameleon's fault that the mushroom dies? What do you think?
- b. Why does the mushroom say, "You don't have the soul of a mushroom, Your Highness. Of that, I am sure..."?



Can you draw a picture of Prince Destiny dashing through the forest in his carriage?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.

