The Firebird - Readers Theatre

Section A – King Dolmat's Garden

"On the other side of this wall is the garden of King Dolmat," said the wolf. "In the summer house you will find three birds in dazzling gold cages – the third cage holds the firebird. Take the firebird as she sleeps, but I warn you: leave the gold cage behind."

Ivan stole into the garden and found the three birds in the summer house, just as the wolf had described. He was about to put his hand inside the firebird's cage when he noticed that it was made of beaten gold. Surely it would be a pity to leave such a treasure behind? He tried lifting it off its hook, but immediately alarm bells rang all over the palace and he was captured by the king's guards.

"I see by your fine clothes that you are a prince," said King Dolmat. "Why would you try to steal my firebird?"

"It is your bird that is the thief," replied Ivan. "It took my father's golden apples and I was sent to bring it to justice."

"I should lock you up in prison," said King Dolmat, "but instead I shall send you on a mission. Beyond the mountains to the west lives King Alfron. He promised me a horse with a golden mane, but never sent it. Bring me the horse and I'll give you the firebird and her cage."

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Section B – King Afron's Stables

So Ivan returned to the wolf and said, "Grey Wolf, take me to the horse with the golden mane."

Swifter than the wind, Grey Wolf carried Ivan out of the kingdom and beyond the mountains. There he came to a wall overgrown with roses.

"Behind this wall are King Afron's stables," said Grey Wolf. "Inside you'll find three horses asleep. One of them is the mare with the golden mane.

Lead her out by her halter and she will not awake. But I warn you, Prince Ivan – do not touch her bridle."

Ivan crept into the stables. He was leading the horse out by its halter when he noticed that the bridle was covered in diamonds. Surely he could not leave so great a prize behind? But as he lifted the bridle from its hook on the wall, alarms sounded, and once again Ivan was caught.

"I should send you to the gallows," said King Afron. "But I see by your soft hands that you are a man of noble blood, so instead I will ask you to do me a small favour. Beyond the river to the east lies the country of King Saltan. He promised to let me marry his beautiful daughter, Princess Helen, but now her refuses to send her. Bring me the princess and I will give you the horse and its bridle."

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Section C – King Sultan's Realm

Once again, Prince Ivan returned to Grey Wolf and they galloped out of King Afron's country and across the mighty river until they reached King Saltan's realm. Grey Wolf stopped near a wall that was overgrown with pomegranates.

"behind this wall sits Princess Helen, asleep with her book," said Grey Wolf. "Lead her out by the hand and she will not wake. But on no account are you to touch the book."

Prince Ivan was about to scale the wall when the wolf stopped him.

"Ivan, since you took no notice of my warnings about the birdcage or the bridle, I know you will not obey me this time, either. Go back and wait for me there."

Prince Ivan waited, and at sundown Grey Wolf returned with the sleeping princess held gently in his mouth. He set her down on the grass and she opened her eyes.

"Don't be afraid," said Prince Ivan. "I've come to take you to your bridegroom."