

Amiaivel

by Angela Brett

Once upon a time a queen was blessed with twin sons, which she named Nosch and Amiaivel.

Nosch fought his way out of the womb a few minutes ahead of Amiaivel, and thus thought himself the eldest. He knew that this meant he would become king, so he always demanded too many entitlements, and looked upon his twin as a slave. Amiaivel had a kind soul, and could not allow himself to deny his own twin's demands. But the wise queen saw this, and as she began to get old, she announced to the people that Amiaivel would become king when she died.

Nosch was incensed that the second twin would steal his position, so he called upon a witch to cast a spell upon Amiaivel. The spell made Amiaivel, his fiancée Bella, and his maids into toads, and locked them in a dungeon beneath the vegetable patch.

Much time passed, and Amiaivel contented himself with talking and singing to his toad maidens. One day, a pixie floated in on a golden plume.

"Soon, the son of King Nosch will come to see you," said the pixie. "He will demand the most beautiful shawl in existence. If you give him the one that the elves gave Bella as an engagement gift, then you will soon become human again, and be let back into the palace."

As soon as the pixie had left, a young man descended into the toads' dungeon.

"Excuse me, good toad," he said. "I am Tais, the son of King Nosch. I seek the most beautiful shawl in existence. Can you help me?"

Though it pained him to give away such a valued keepsake, Amiaivel asked one of his maids to give it to him, and said, "This is the most beautiful shawl in existence, and one of my most valued possessions. Take it. I wish you good luck."

Tais thanked him and left. By and by, the pixie came back.

"I must again ask a good deed," she said. "The king's son will come back seeking the most beautiful jewel in existence. If you give him Bella's engagement band, then you will soon become human again, and be let back into the palace."

In no time, the young man came back. "I am most unhappy to have to annoy you again, but I must find the most beautiful jewel in existence. Can you help me?"

Amiaivel hesitated to give up the symbol of his and Bella's love, but knowing that the love itself would not lessen, he gave Tais the engagement band. "On this band is mounted the most beautiful jewel in existence, and one of my most valued possessions. Take it. I wish you good luck."

Amiaivel sat glumly in his dull dungeon, awaiting the pixie. She fell into the jail with a potato plucked out of the soil above. "I can not yet fulfil my pledge, I must yet again ask you to give up something you love," she said.

"I have nothing left to give. Make me human, I beg you!"

The pixie paid no attention to his plea. "This is a magic potato. If you put a lady toad in it, she will become human," she announced. "When the king's son comes to see you next time, he will need the most beautiful maiden in existence. Let Bella climb into the potato and leave with him, and you will soon become human again, and be let back into the palace."

In a little while, Tais came to visit. "Again, I am most apologetic to ask an act of kindness. But I must fetch the king the most beautiful maiden in existence. Can you help me?"

Amiaivel had lost too much to his hateful twin, and could not give his fiancée to him as well. He gave the potato to Tais and showed him Puzchunza, his most beautiful housemaid. "Hollow out the potato and put this toad in it. The toad will become the most beautiful maiden in existence, and the one that I love the most. Take the maiden to the king. I wish you good luck."

So the king's son hollowed out the potato, and put the toad inside. As soon as he had done so, the toad became a maid, and the potato became a coach. Tais kissed the maid, and they left.

Again, Amiaivel sat and awaited the pixie. But she did not come. Many weeks he waited, until finally somebody came. This time it was Tais.

"Thou hast shown me immense kindness," he said. "Because of thee, I have become king. In thanks, I would like to help thee," he continued. "A pixie told me that thou beest my uncle, locked in a toad's body by the late King Nosch. So I have found a good witch, who gave me this potion to heal you. Alas, she could not make enough to save thy housemaids."

Amiaivel swallowed the potion, and instantly became human, still as young as he had been when he was enchanted. He went up to the palace, and was taken to Puzchunza, and given Bella's engagement band. "Since this is the lady thou lovest the most, she will be thy wife."

At once Amiaivel began to sob. "I lied. She is but my maid. My fiancée is still a toad! Oh, if only I had not been so selfish!" With that, Amiaivel dashed back into his cave, and found the middle pieces of potato which had been left behind. He massaged Bella with them, and soon she became human. But alas, not enough potato was left. She had one leg like that of a toad, and skin pocked with boils. But she was still his beloved.

Amiaivel helped his fiancée to the palace, and soon they wed. Tais had fallen in love with Puzchunza, and was glad that she was not, in fact, Amiaivel's fiancée. Those two also wed, and the two couples united to lead the kingdom with wisdom exceeding that of any single king.

