



Riquet and pobrica

Once upon a time there was a boy named Riquet and a girl named Pobrica. Riquet was the prince of one country and Pobrica, the princess of the bordering country.

Riquet was a boy with his feet so firmly planted on the ground that he had become a pessimist. This means that he always saw the dark side of things. For example, if it was raining, he never thought about the sun that would come out after the rain. He thought that it would just keep raining forever. And so, of course, that made him sad.

Pobrica was just the opposite. She was a born dreamer. She was always letting her imagination run wild, the bigger the fantasy, the better. And real things, like her toys and her parents, didn't seem so important to her. This was why Pobrica was always just as sad as Riquet.

Riquet had a little pink pig's tail growing out of his back. Pobrica had two wings that lifted her a few inches off the ground. The blacker Riquet saw things, the grayer and more withered turned his tail. The more Pobrica dreamt, the higher her wings let her fly.

This story is about how the prince and the princess found happiness. It's called: "Riquet and Pobrica."

One day, Riquet went out for a walk. He was walking along sadly, his tail growing darker and limper, when he met Pobrica.

Pobrica was flying a couple of feet off the ground. She was so enchanted with her dream that she hardly even noticed Riquet.

As soon as he laid eyes on her, Riquet fell madly in love.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Pobrica," she said.

"My name's Riquet and I want to marry you," he said enthusiastically.

Then he added:

"But I'm sure you'll turn me down. You don't know even know me."

"That doesn't matter," answered Pobrica. "What matters to me is that our wedding be the way I've always dreamt it would be. And that we go to Jupiter for our honeymoon."

Riquet immediately saw what Pobrica was like and said to her:

"I think you need to plant your feet more firmly on the ground, Pobrica. I have something that might help you."

And so Riquet gave Pobrica a metal ball, the very heavy kind used to play pétanque.

"Put the ball in your pocket," said Riquet. "Since it's heavy, you won't fly so high."

You'll come down from the clouds and see that real things can also be very pretty."

And so, Pobrica put the metal ball in her pocket and then made a pact with Riquet. They agreed to meet again a year later in the same place to see how things had gone for Pobrica.

That year, thanks to the metal ball, Pobrica was happy. She had hopes and dreams. But she no longer flew two feet above the ground. That helped her learn to love the things that were real, like her toys and her parents.

But Riquet was bitter. He was still in love with Pobrica, but he was so pessimistic that he was sure she no longer remembered him.

And so the year went by. On the day that Riquet and Pobrica had to meet again, do you know what Riquet did? He stayed home. He didn't show up because he was sure that Pobrica wouldn't be there.

But then something happened that he could never have imagined. Pobrica went to look for him at his house. And she said to him:

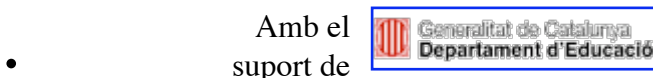
"I've come to thank you for the ball you gave me, and to give you a gift. Just as I needed to get my feet back on the ground, you need to dream. My gift will help you."

And Pobrica gave Riquet a motorized skateboard that raised Riquet a few inches off the ground as soon as he got on it. How differently he saw things from then on! Thanks to the motorized skateboard, Riquet stopped being a born pessimist. He started thinking more about the sun that would come out after the rain. He started to dream. At first at night, then during the day as well. And, of course, that made him start feeling happy.

Time passed and as was to be expected, Riquet and Pobrica became inseparable. They went everywhere together, one on a motorized skateboard, and the other with a metal ball in her pocket. They dreamt about the things they would do when they grew up, like being good monarchs, and traveling around the world by train and plane.

Now Riquet and Pobrica are husband and wife. The prince and princess are spouse and friend, so it's time for this story to come to an end.

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