



The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl

牛郎织女

A long, long time ago, there was a cowherd named Niulang. He lived on a farm and tended to the fields. Niulang had only one friend—a very old ox—whom he cared for his whole life. Niulang was a very hard worker. In the mornings, he tilled the soil. In the afternoons, he planted the seeds. In the evenings, he watered the crops. From sunrise to sunset, he worked, and worked, and worked.

很久很久以前，有一个放牛娃，叫牛郎。他住在农场里，在田里干活。牛郎只有一个朋友：一头特别老的牛。他一直照顾着这头牛。牛郎非常勤劳，他早上耕地。下午播种。晚上给庄稼浇水。从日出到日落，他一直在做呀做呀。

One night, he sat beside the old ox as the moon shone on the fields. “Oh, Ox,” he sighed. “I feel so lonely.” “Mooooo,” said the ox, chewing some grass. “Don’t get me wrong,” said the cowherd. “I’m glad you’re my friend. But sometimes I wish I had another human friend.” “Maybe you can, Niulang,” said the ox suddenly. The cowherd stared at the ox with surprise in his eyes. “You can talk?!”

一天晚上，他坐在老牛旁边，看着月光下的田野。“老牛啊。”他叹了口气。“我感觉很孤独。”“哞——”老牛边嚼草边叫。“别误会我的意思。我很感谢你是我的朋友。但是有时候我希望有一个人类的同伴。”“也许你可以，牛郎。”老牛突然开口说。牛郎惊讶的看着老牛。“你会说话？！”

Without answering his question, the ox continued: “Tomorrow night, go to the pond in the forest next to the farm. When the moon is especially beautiful and bright, the heavenly maidens come down from the sky to swim and play in the pond’s cool waters. Wait next to the pond, where the maidens keep their robes. Then, once they come out of the water, you’ll have a chance to meet them.” “Is this true, Ox?” said Niulang. “Will I really be able to speak to them?” But the ox said nothing and continued chewing the grass.

老牛没有回答他的问题，继续说：“明晚，去农场旁边的森林里的池塘。当月亮特别美丽而明亮的时候，仙女从天上下来在清凉的水里游泳嬉水。你到池塘旁边，在仙女放衣服的地方等着。等她们从水里出来的时候，你就有机会和她们见面。”“真的吗，老牛？我真的能跟她们说话吗？”但是老牛没有再说话，继续嚼草。

The next night, just as the ox told him to do, the cowherd headed over to the pond in the forest. As he came closer, he could hear the sound of the heavenly maidens' voices as they sang and laughed and splashed each other with the water. Their voices, light and lovely, floated in the air like stars. Niulang found the spot where they kept their towels and sat down and waited. Even though he couldn't see them from where he sat, he was enchanted by their sweet voices.

第二天晚上，按照老牛的吩咐，牛郎前往森林里的池塘。当他靠近时，他能听到仙女们的声音，她们一边唱着笑着，一边互相泼水嬉闹。她们的声音，轻盈而优美，像星星一样在空中飘扬。牛郎找到她们放毛巾的地方，坐下来等着。虽然从他坐的地方看不到仙女，牛郎被她们甜美的声音迷住了。

A few minutes later, the maidens finished their playing and waded out of the water. As they approached the bank of the pond, they came face to face with the cowherd. "AaaaAAAA!" two of them shrieked. "It's a human!" they quickly grabbed their robes and flew away into the sky. But the third maiden did not cry out or flee. She was not afraid of humans; in fact, she was actually quite curious about them. She often watched them from the heavens, fascinated with their lives on earth.

几分钟之后，仙女玩耍好了，从水里出来。当她们来到岸边时，面对面地碰上了牛郎。“啊啊啊！”两个仙女叫起来。“有人！”她们赶紧抓住自己的仙衣向天空飞去。但是第三个仙女既没有叫唤也没有逃跑。她不怕人类，事实上，她对人类充满好奇。她经常从天宫观察他们，被他们在地上的生活而着迷。

"Who are you?" asked the maiden. "My name is Niulang," said the cowherd. "I heard the sound of your beautiful singing and I really wanted to meet you. What is your name?" "Hand me the robes you've been sitting on and I'll tell you," said the maiden. Embarrassed, the cowherd gave the maiden back her robes. As she pulled them on, she looked so radiant against the night stars that the cowherd realized she was no ordinary maiden—she was a goddess.

“你是谁？”仙女问牛郎。“我叫牛郎。我听见你美丽的歌声，特别想跟你见面。你叫什么？”“把你坐着的仙衣递给，我就告诉你。”牛郎尴尬地把仙衣还给她仙女。她穿上衣服，在夜空中看上去光彩夺目。牛郎意识到她不是一个平凡的少女——她是一个女神。

My name is Zhinü, weaver girl of the skies. Up in the heavens, I weave delicate, colorful clouds and tapestries of stars for my mother, the Queen Empress.” “That sounds amazing,” said Niulang. “You must have a wonderful life up there.” Zhinü sighed. “It’s quite lonely,” she said. “The queen keeps me in a room where I work every day. Once a month, under the light of the full moon, I sneak out with my friends to come play in this pond.” “I’m lonely, too!” said Niulang. I spend my days working the fields from morning until night, with just an old ox to keep me company. I often wish for a partner to share my life with.” “Oh— ” said Zhinü suddenly. “Me too! I could be your partner. We could be married and live on the farm together.” “Me?” said Niulang. “You’d want to marry a humble farmer like me?” The weaver girl smiled then, and said: “I’ve seen you from the heavens before. You’re kind-hearted, hard-working, and a good soul. I would gladly be your partner here on earth.”

“我叫织女，天上的织工。在天宫里，我为我的母亲王母娘娘，编织精美多彩的云霞。”“哇，真棒。你在天宫的日子一定过得很美。”织女叹了口气。“其实，我的生活很寂寞。王母娘娘把我关在一个房间里，让我天天织锦。每月一次，在满月的光芒下，我跟朋友一起偷偷溜出来到这个池塘玩耍。”“我也很孤单！”牛郎说。“我每天从早到晚在田里干活，只有一头老牛陪伴我。我经常希望能有一个同伴，与我一起分享生活。”“啊。”织女突然叫起来。“我也希望！我可以做你的伴侣。我们可以结婚，一起住在农场里生活。”“我？你真的想嫁给一个谦卑的农民？”织女笑着说：“其实，我以前从天上看到过你。你是一个善良勤劳的人而且你有一颗美丽的心灵。我很乐意成为你人间的伴侣。”

With that, the cowherd and the weaver girl were married. They passed their days together happily on earth, with Niulang tending to the farm and Zhinü weaving beautiful pieces with her loom. Meanwhile, the Queen Empress of the Heavens was very angry. Ever since the weaver girl did not return from the pond that night, the queen empress had been scouring the skies in search of her missing daughter.

就这样，牛郎和织女结婚了。他们在人间开心地过着日子。牛郎在田里干活，织女用织机编织美丽的织锦。与此同时，王母娘娘特别特别生气。自从织女没回家的那一晚起，王母娘娘就到处寻找她失踪的女儿。

One day, one of the heavenly guards approached the queen empress with news. “Your heavenly majesty,” said the guard, kneeling before her. “We have found your daughter. She has been living on earth, and she is married to a cowherd.” “On EARTH?!” exclaimed the queen empress, horrified. “And wedded to a mere human, a simple cowherd at that?! Unacceptable. Bring her back to me at once!” bellowed the queen.

有一天，一个天兵为王母娘娘带来了消息。她在她面前跪着说：“娘娘，我们找到了您的女儿。她一直住在人间，嫁给了一个牛郎。”“在人间？！”王母娘娘发了火。“嫁给了一个普通的人类，还是一个普通的放牛郎？！岂有此理，马上把她给我抓回来！”王母娘娘怒吼着。

That night, as the cowherd and the weaver girl were fast asleep, the heavenly guards flew down to the farm. One of them snuck inside their house through an open window, and, before Zhinü could even open her eyes, the guard snatched her up and raced away! “Help, Niulang, help!” she cried as the queen’s guards flew off with her into the sky. The cowherd, rushing outside, called after her: “Wait for me, Zhinü, I’m coming to rescue you!” But as she disappeared farther off into the distance, Niulang was filled with a sense of despair. “How am I supposed to follow her now,” he asked.

那天晚上，乘着牛郎和织女熟睡之际，天兵从天而降。一个天兵从窗户潜入房中，织女还没来得及睁开眼睛，天兵押着织女飞奔而去！“救命啊！牛郎，救救我！”织女拼命的叫。“织女，等等我，我来救你！”牛郎跑出来，跟在后面喊。但是，当她消失在远方，牛郎充满了绝望。“我现在怎么能跟上她呢？”

Suddenly, he heard the ox behind him. “Hurry, Niulang, hop on my back,” said the ox. “I’ll fly you up to the heavens so you can bring back Zhinü.” And with that, they flew off towards the stars. The guards were fast, but the ox was even faster, and soon, Niulang and the ox had nearly caught up with the weaver girl. “Niulang!” she called, and stretched her hand out towards him. Niulang, too, stretched as far as he could.

突然，他听见老牛在他的身后。“快来，牛郎，骑在我背上。我带你飞上天，去把织女带回来。”牛郎骑着老牛的背上，他们俩飞上天空。天兵飞得非常快，但是老牛比他们更快，牛郎马上就要赶上织女了。“牛郎！”她伸出手臂喊道。牛郎也尽力伸长了手臂。

Almost, almost—said Niulang. “I don’t think so!” the Queen Empress thundered. In one swift motion, the Queen Empress plucked a golden hairpin from her hair and used it to draw a silver line in the air. From the gash, a celestial river spilled forth into the sky, separating the cowherd and the weaver girl on opposite sides. This silver river is known today as the Milky Way galaxy, which is made up of billions of shining stars.

“再近一点，再近一点，”牛郎喊着。“放开我的女儿！”王母娘娘大声地喊。突然间，王母娘娘拔下头上的金簪，当空一划。她划过的线，立刻出现一条银色的天河，把牛郎、织女隔在两岸。这条银色的河就是我们今天看见的银河系，由许多颗闪亮的星星组成。

Unable to cross the Milky Way, Niulang and Zhinü wept bitter tears on either side of it. But their gesture of love moved a flock of magpies, brilliant birds, who were deeply touched by the fate of the tragic couple. All of a sudden, thousands of magpies flew up into the sky. They formed a bridge over the river of stars, allowing the cowherd and the weaver girl to reunite in the middle. Niulang and Zhinü embraced each other tightly.

牛郎和织女无法跨越银河，只能在对岸哭泣。他们的爱感动了一群喜鹊，喜鹊们深深怜悯这对苦难夫妻的悲催遭遇。突然，上千只喜鹊飞上天空。在银河上搭成一座桥，让牛郎和织女在桥上相会。牛郎和织女紧紧拥抱着在一起。

Seeing the lovers’ joyful reunion, even the Queen Empress’ hard, cold heart softened—but only a little bit. “My daughter must stay with me in the heavens and weave my beautiful silk brocades,” she began. “But once a year on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, I will allow you to reunite with your love on a bridge of magpies.” Today, we celebrate the Qixi Festival on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month with weaving competitions and special meals. We tell the legend of Niulang and Zhinü and celebrate their love.

看到他们快乐的团聚，甚至连王母娘娘那颗冷酷的心都柔软下来——但只有一点。 “我的女儿必须跟我待在天宫，为我编织美丽的织锦，”她开始说道。 “不过每年一次，农历七月七日，我允许你们在鹊桥上相会。” 农历七月七日就是我们庆祝的七夕节。这天晚上，人们举办织锦手艺比赛，吃特别的食物。我们讲牛郎和织女的故事，纪念他们美好的爱情。