

## The Legend of the Ghost Leaf

Once upon a time, an evil ogre king asked a sorcerer to imprison the spirit of a wood nymph in a leaf. The sorcerer used an *Irreversible Spell* so the nymph would remain forever trapped in the leaf. The ogre king kept his leaf treasure in a strong wooden box. Though she was lonely and unable to speak, the nymph spirit was allowed to perform one magical act each year to help another.

Several years later, the evil ogre king fell in love with an Indian princess. When she rejected him, the ogre asked the sorcerer to curse the princess and turn her into an insect. He then decided to imprison the insect in a box for one month. If the princess was still alive at the end of that time, the ogre would ask the sorcerer to release her from the curse. The king forgot that the leaf containing the nymph spirit was also in the box.

The Indian princess needed to eat to survive for a whole month inside the box, and she felt great joy upon discovering the leaf. However, the princess did not want to destroy the pretty leaf, even to survive. But after going hungry for two days, the princess decided she must eat, because she did not want to die. Thinking for a very long time, she decided to eat only the softer parts of the leaf, leaving the veins, or skeleton, because a wise man had once told her that the skeleton of a leaf holds its life.

As the month slowly passed, the princess nibbled away and gradually ate the softer parts of the whole leaf, but she was careful never to nibble on the veins.

The nymph spirit, though she could not speak, was grateful that the princess had not eaten the whole leaf because if the leaf had been entirely consumed, the nymph spirit would have died. Knowing that the ogre king was truly evil, and often went back on his word, the nymph decided to use her one magical act for the year to help the princess. On the day before the king was due to open the box to check on the princess, the nymph returned the Indian princess to her people and reversed the spell that had turned her into an insect.

The ogre king was very angry to discover that the princess had escaped. And even though he wasn't very bright, he figured out what had happened when he saw the leaf. Feeling revenge in his heart, he seized the leaf, intent upon destroying it. Little did he know that the Indian princess herself was magical, as all Indian

princesses are, and the princess's magic was spread through her touch. Having touched every part of the leaf during her confinement, the princess passed some of her magic to the nymph. When the ogre king tried to crush the leaf, he howled with pain because the leaf skeleton magically burned his hand. As the leaf dropped to the ground, a magic stronger than that of the sorcerer took hold of the leaf, turning it white and changing the nymph spirit into a ghost who could then travel to other skeleton leaves created by insects, enchanted and otherwise.

To this day, ghost leaves are very special and valuable because the nymph spirit that has touched them protects everyone, not just Indian princesses.