

Snow White

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful princess named Snow White. Her hair was black as night, her skin was white as snow, and her lips as red as ruby. Her father was a great and kind king, and her mother was beloved by all the people in the land. The king loved his queen with all his heart, but one day the queen fell ill. The king tried to find a cure for her disease but no matter what he did or who he called nothing could be done. Within a year the queen was dead.

All the people in the land came to her funeral and it was there that the king saw her. She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and as their eyes met, he knew he would make her his queen. It was also at this moment that Snow White, who had until that point been kind and innocent, began to change. Her heart, which had been as pure and white as her skin, slowly started to turn malevolent and dark, darker even than her hair. She began to blame her father for her mother's death, thinking that he had not tried hard enough, or even wanted her dead.

Not long after this, the king married the beautiful woman he had seen at his queen's funeral. This was too much for Snow White, confirming in her mind that her father had indeed wanted her mother dead. And so her heart became darker still, and she began to plan her father's death. It was quite simple for her to find a suitable knife, telling the court craftsman that she wanted to carve a small bird for her mother's grave. After that all she had to do was ask to visit her father in his royal chambers before his new queen moved in.

The day following his royal marriage, the king was found stabbed to death with the craftsman's knife. Even as he was being executed for his crime he shouted and pleaded that it was not he who had killed the king, it was Snow White. But nobody believed him, after all, who would suspect such a kind and innocent young girl to kill her own father? Yet there was something about his cries that left a mark on the Queen, causing her to think that perhaps this man had not killed her husband. Unfortunately, someone had to be blamed, and so, at the moment that the executioner's axe fell upon the man's head, Snow White's heart became completely black, leaving no trace of the pure white heart that had once lain in its place.

Many years past, and Snow White grew into a beautiful princess loved by all in the land, just as her mother before her. The Queen, who was now known as a strict ruler, still wore black, symbolizing her continued mourning for the man she had loved. Snow White, who was now of an age that she could rule the kingdom, decided that it was time for her to assume that position that was rightfully hers, and made an attempt on the Queen's life. Unfortunately for Snow White, many such attempts had been made after the king's passing, which was what had turned the Queen into such a strict ruler. She was therefore ready when Snow White made her attempt, and survived.

Astonished that her stepdaughter could have done such a thing the Queen decided that the laws must be upheld, and Snow White was charged with treason. Snow White was very clever however, and had prepared for just such an outcome as this. Before making an attempt on the Queen's life, she had

begun to spread rumors. Rumors that said the Queen was jealous of her beauty, and wanted to get rid of her. So when the Queen sent her to be killed in the Dark Forest as punishment for her crimes, nearly all the people in the kingdom thought that the rumors were true, and the Queen was attempting to get rid of her.

The huntsman who was sent to with Snow White to kill her as was traditional in the kingdom so that criminals who tried to escape could be tracked down, was about to cut out Snow White's heart when she begged him to stop. She conjured up a story about how the queen had been very cruel to her ever since her father died and that she was green with envy of Snow White's beauty and had killed her father for the thrown. Remembering the rumors that she had spread before she was caught and seeing the look of despair on Snow White's beautiful face, the huntsman found himself unable to kill her. Instead he told her to run into the forest and hide where the Queen would never find her. He himself would give the Queen a pig's heart instead of her own so as to deceive the Queen about Snow White's demise.

Snow White agreed and began to run as fast as she could, smiling a satisfied smile as she did. Meanwhile the huntsman returned to the Queen and showed her the heart of a pig he had just killed. Satisfied and terribly sad that the girl she had raised for so many years was dead, the Queen gave the huntsman his reward and dismissed him. Being raised and pampered in a castle all her life however, Snow White was not used to running through forests, and quickly became tired. After running as far and long as she could, Snow White collapsed in front of a small cabin that had appeared, as though by magic. When she awoke she found seven dwarves looking over her with worry plain on their faces.

They explained that they were a band of noble thieves who were banished from the kingdom after trying to help some of its more unfortunate subjects. They had never however stolen from the Queen herself however as they held a deep love for Snow and would never steal from her or those she loved. Smiling softly to herself, Snow White began to tell them the same tale she had delivered the huntsman, explain all about what truly happens in the castle. The dwarves were horrified to learn about how Snow White was treated and what the Queen was really like, after a quick discussion they all agreed that they would help her in any way they could. After a moment's thought, Snow White came up with the idea that the seven dwarves and she could begin to rob passing carriages to raise money for an army that could take back her kingdom.

The dwarves, thoroughly believing Snow White's story even as she grinned maliciously behind their backs, agreed to her plan as long as they were not to rob any common carriages. They were after all, noble thieves. And so began a small reign of terror on the roads that led through the Dark Forest. Nobles began to spread horrible tales about the seven dwarves and their mysterious leader, about how they only attacked the carriages of the rich, and how they disappeared as though made of smoke. The Queen, hearing of how her people were being mistreated, sent a detachment of the royal army to dispatch the so called band of thieves. They were, however, unable to find the band of thieves, who slowly picked them off one by one until there were none left.

The Queen sent a few more detachments, but when none of them returned, she was forced to ask one of her allied kingdoms for help. The kingdom agreed, but would send its prince to negotiate the terms and what they would receive in future for doing so. The prince upon hearing that the thieves only attacked wealthy carriages traveling through the Dark Forest came up with a plan, intending to end the problem on his way there, and set a course through the Dark Forest.

When Snow White and the seven dwarves saw the prince's expensive carriage, they naturally decided to make it a target. This was no simple merchant's carriage however, this was the carriage of a prince, and as such heavily guarded by accomplished swordsmen, hidden inside. When the band of dwarves and Snow White attacked therefore, they were unprepared for the resistance they encountered and were quickly defeated and tied up. The prince, proud of his plan, came out with the intention to gloat about how foolish the thieves were, but quickly forgot about all that when he saw Snow White. To him, she was the most beautiful girl he had ever laid eyes on. Just as quickly as he forgot however, he realized that the band's leader was none other than Snow White, almost more beautiful than the rumors in his kingdom had led him to believe.

He immediately asked her how she could possibly be alive, and why she had sunk so low as to become a common thief. Snow White, sensing that this prince was naïve and entranced by her beauty saw a chance to gain yet more power for fighting the queen began to weep. As she wept she told him the same story she had told the huntsman and the dwarves about the Queen's true nature, adding in how the huntsman let her go and how she and the dwarves were trying to create an army. The prince, completely fooled by Snow White's appearance and clever words, knelt down beside and assured her that he would not let the Queen go unpunished. Upon hearing such kind words she bowed her head and thanked him over and over again, even as tears fell, and a sly little smile played across her face.

The prince took Snow White back to his kingdom where she was granted an audience with the king. After telling him the same story that she had told his son, fresh tears spilling down his face, the king told her that he understood her plight and would give her an army and his son to help her regain her kingdom. Each of the dwarves was given their own squad of 5000 men and promoted to the rank of captain for their bravery and service to their princess. So it happened that Snow White had obtained an army far sooner and more superior than she could have dreamed, and as they rode back to her kingdom she smiled an evil smile, thinking about how she could obtain the prince's loyalty so he could not be swayed by the Queen.

When the army finally reached the kingdom a message was sent to the Queen, announcing that the prince's kingdom was declaring war on her to seek revenge for the king, and that the army would be led by Snow White. The Queen was shocked to discover that Snow White had survived and that she, the Queen, was being blamed for the king's death. When the people of her kingdom heard however, that their beloved princess was still alive and that the Queen was responsible for the king's death, they rejoiced, and many went to join Snow White's army.

So began a horrid and bloody war between the two kingdoms, and while all the battles and all the people were dying, Snow White was making the prince fall in love with her. She did not of course

love him, but she had decided the best way to obtain his loyalty was to obtain his love. So she wooed him and after a great deal of effort she finally succeeded. He asked her to marry him once this war was over and she agreed, realising that she would then have two kingdoms one day by doing so. When the news was announced to the troops they cheered and whooped and parties were held long into the night. After the celebrations had ended they fought harder than ever pushing back the Queens army.

The Queen, upon realising that the battle would be lost unless something could be done about Snow White decided to do the one thing that even her beloved king had never done, and went down into the dungeons. Down and down she went, past criminals whose names had long been forgotten, until she reached the last and deepest of the cells. In this cell lay an old woman, skin tight to the bones with hunger and age. She was a powerful witch who had been trapped down here by a king many ages ago, and could not leave unless the queen or king released her. The Queen hesitated, knowing that magic must always come with a price, but then she thought of what the kingdom would be like in the hands of her stepdaughter who she now saw for what she truly was and asked the witch for a way to kill Snow White.

The witch slowly raised her head to look at the Queens face, no longer beautiful, but haggard and thin from age and the war she was now fighting, and smiled. She told the Queen that she could help her, but in return the Queen would have to set the witch free. After a moment's hesitation, the Queen agreed and asked what the witch would do. The witch replied that she would give the Queen a magical mirror, and a basket of apples. Disgusted by the witch's offer the Queen began to turn away, but stopped when the witch began to tell her what these items could do. The mirror would allow the Queen to see and travel through any mirror within the kingdom, and the basket would instantly place a curse on any apples inside it, so that if eaten, they would put the princess in a state of living death. The Queen began to hesitate again, thinking about how she was about to take a life, when the witch said that the mirror could also answer any one question, and that it was not the craftsman who had killed her husband the king.

Upon hearing this, the Queen immediately agreed and took the mirror and the basket of apples to her chambers. Once there she paused and looked at the mirror. It seemed ancient, made of silver, with gold engravings running all along the edge in a language long forgotten, and glass that seemed as though it could show the truth of a person and not just their appearance. But she was unable to focus on these things when what the witch had said rang in her head. It was not the craftsman who killed your husband, and so she asked the question that she had wanted the answer to for so long. The surface of the mirror began to glow with a bright light, and then swirl, as though it was a whirlpool of stars. Slowly, an image began to appear. It was Snow White, entering her father's chambers the night after the Queens wedding. Confused, the Queen continued to watch as she climbed up next to her father and asked for a story, then gasps in horror as she saw the little Snow White pull out the craftsman's knife and stab her father in the heart while he wasn't looking.

Distraught over what she had just seen Snow White do the Queen no longer hesitates and starts looking for Snow White through the mirrors of the kingdom. When she finally finds Snow White's mirror the Queen steps through and places the basket of apples on her table and then goes back to her

chambers through the mirror. She then to ensure Snow White is the only one who will eat one of the cursed apples. Not long after Snow White comes into her tent and sees the apples, she then takes one of them and after examining it she takes a small bite, after a moment, falls over in a state of living death.

Delighted that her kingdom will be saved the Queen smiles, but then a small frown appears at the thought that she is smiling over a young girl's death. Soon that too is wiped from her face as the prince comes into the tent and sees Snow White lying on the ground. The smile that had previously been wide on his face suddenly disappeared, replaced with a look of horror and despair. As the Queen watches her stomach falls and her heart feels heavy with guilt, until the prince presses his lips to Snow White's, and her eyes begin to flutter. You see, even though true love's kiss is what lifts any curse, the prince truly loved her, so it was indeed true love's kiss.

Outraged that Snow White gets to have true love, is loved by the people, and will rule a kingdom if she wins the war while the Queen is about to lose her kingdom, has become hated by all her subjects, and had the man she loved taken from her, the Queen dives through the mirror. As she comes through the mirror her vision goes red and all she can see is her hands going around Snow White's throat. But before she is able to get to Snow White the prince has knocked her back and calls out for the seven dwarves who rush into the tent and help to subdue the enraged Queen. As she is tied up she sees Snow White smile behind everyone's backs, showing her true self for a brief moment to the only one who has ever realised what lies behind her beauty and mock innocence.

Not long after this, the Queen's capture is announced to the kingdom and the war ends. The people of the land are overjoyed to have Snow White take the throne, and even more delighted when she announces that she will marry the prince and the Queen will be executed for her crimes in the royal hall, as per tradition and as her father would have wanted it. And so it was that after the prince and Snow White had been married, the Queen, shackles on her wrists and ankles, was taken to the royal hall, chains echoing through the empty halls. As she entered the chamber all went silent. She saw the nobles, staring at her with blank faces, the seven dwarves, wearing new and expensive clothes to represent their promotion to noble stations, and the prince, sitting on her husband's old throne. Finally, she slowly turned her eyes, which were only moments before as blank as a fresh canvas, onto Snow White, her eyes filling with a hate so dark and so deep, that had you placed it next to Snow White's heart, it would have been difficult to tell the two apart. As she stared at the new queen, eyes full of triumph and satisfaction, Snow White smiled a sweet innocent smile at her, and ordered the executioner to let his axe fall. The last things that the Queen thought about while the blade of the axe came ever closer to her neck were her people, how they would suffer under the reign of Snow White, and of the king, how she would be with him once more. Finally, she came upon the one thing that would forever infuriate Snow White, the Queen smiled a true, genuine smile, until the moment that the axe finally met her neck, and all went dark.