



## **Snow White and the Seven Dwarves:** Grimm's Fairy Tales

### **Snow White and the Huntsman**

"Arise for their Majesties, King Ra ban and Queen Elspeth." The court gasped. The King had picked the kingdom's greatest beauty for his new bride. From her nurse's arms, Princess Snow White waved to her stepmother.

But each day Queen Elspeth thought,

"Will the king take a new beauty?"

And every day she assured herself at her mirror.

"Magic Mirror, tell no lies, who is fairest in your eyes?"

*"My glass reflects what others see, The deepest truths appear in me*

*You beauty transports everyone, outshines the moon, eclipse the sun."*

As years pass, Snow White rides with the Royal Huntsman.



"Her skin is as pale as a winter dawn, but the girl's nature is warm and her temper fiery." the huntsman thinks as he tries to catch up with Snow White.

As years pass, the Queen's icy beauty is etched by mistrust and her heart freezes.

"Magic Mirror, show the face of any who can take my place" begs the Queen.

*"Oh Queen, who everyone adores, no maiden's charm surpasses yours."* comforts the mirror.

Then, as her step-daughter grows tall and beautiful, royal gifts from King Raban, once destined only for the Queen, go to his Princess.

"Magic Mirror, can you find, a beauty that can compares to mine? The Queen implores

*"A daughter's sweet, kind face will win, more alone than silken skin."* a pitiless mirror tells the Queen.

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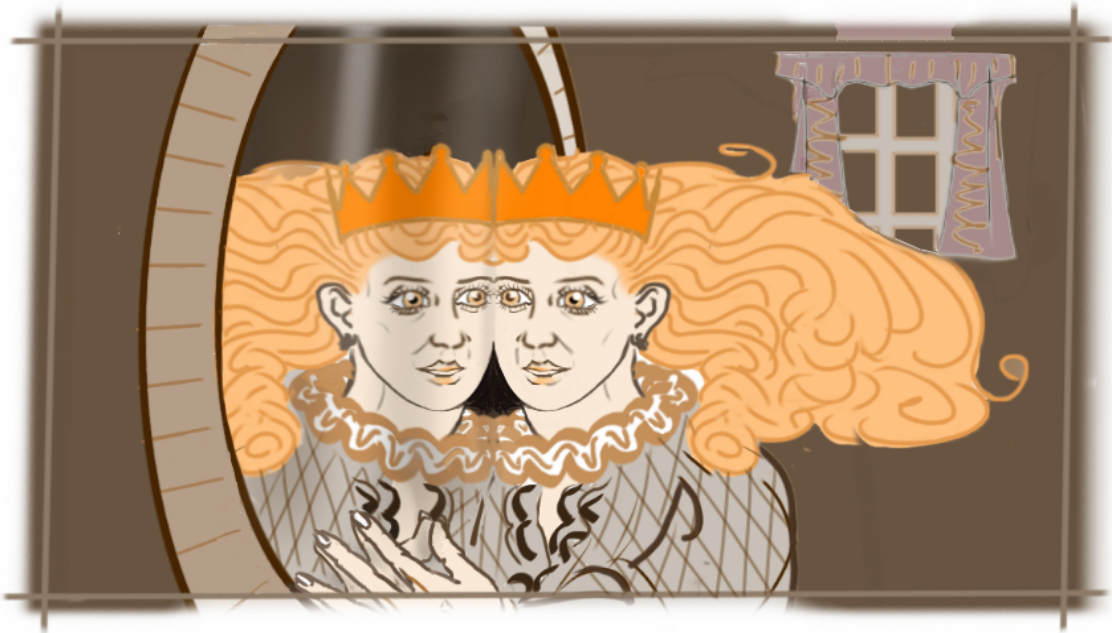
"Take my step-daughter to the forest, and bring me back her heart" the Queen decrees, and the fearful huntsman dutifully follows the Queen's command.

But the forest reminds the huntsman of the rides and adventures they shared. He has raised his charge as his own daughter. So he leaves his friend alive and brings the Queen only the heart of a deer.

The abandoned girl wanders the forest's many paths without hope. Alone, tired and hungry she rests in a rambling cottage garden. The day draws to a close, and seven dwarves return home to find Snow White. She tells them that the Queen wants her gone, and thinks she is dead. So, to keep her safe, the Seven Dwarves happily agree to share their home and hide Snow White.

## Snow White and the Pedlar

In a forest live Seven Dwarves and one princess. Princess Snow White waits for when her jealous step-mother is no longer queen and she can return safely to her kingdom. For Queen Elspeth demanded that Snow White be killed, and she believes that Snow White's heart was served for dinner.



Yet, still each day the Queen challenges herself in the mirror,  
"Magic Mirror, I am sure, you'll find no maid with my allure."  
*"You question, and my search returns, the message that you  
beauty earns."*

Then one day, the Magic Mirror replies,  
*"The fairest, Queen, is fair once more,  
You wished her dead, but she's restored"*

"So, Snow White still lives!" the enraged Queen cries.

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The Dwarves are at the forge, Snow White is working in the garden. And an old pedlar tempts Snow White with a beautiful, but expensive bodice.

“Surely, you should just try it” the pedlar cajoles, leading the girl to a mirror. Once on, the bodice magically tightens, instantly, Snow White falls to ground, gasping for breathe. Queen Elspeth, beneath her disguise, smiles and leaves Snow White for dead.

“Magic Mirror, you will own, I am the fairest one, alone” the Queen crows. But the Mirror shows her the Dwarves loosening the bodice and rescuing Snow White.

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On the very next day, another pedlar calls at the Dwarves home. She tempts Snow White with a stylish silver comb.

“Sit and relax, and let us smooth those kinks away.” she smiles, “We'll make your hair shine.” laughs the pedlar, before she digs the comb’s poisoned teeth into Snow White head. Once more, the Queen slips away, past a lifeless Snow White.

“Magic Mirror, celebrate! All my cares have been set straight.” But in her mirror, the Queen sees the Dwarves pulling the comb from Snow White’s hair.

Snow White and the Dwarves know they must escape the vengeful Queen, They agree to move up to the other side of the mountain that the Dwarves mine. There the Queen will not see them. They take more care and they are happy in the snow and ice of Prince Theodor's Kingdom.

## **An Apple for Snow White**

The high snowy mountains shelter Princess Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. They are well hidden. The Queen's Magic Mirror should not see them there. Queen Elspeth, Snow White's heartless stepmother, wants her dead.

Many times the Queen asks her Mirror where Snow White may be. "Magic Mirror with mystic sight, reveal the den that hides Snow White." the Queen asks relentlessly.

And finally, the Queen sees Snow White's mountain refuge.

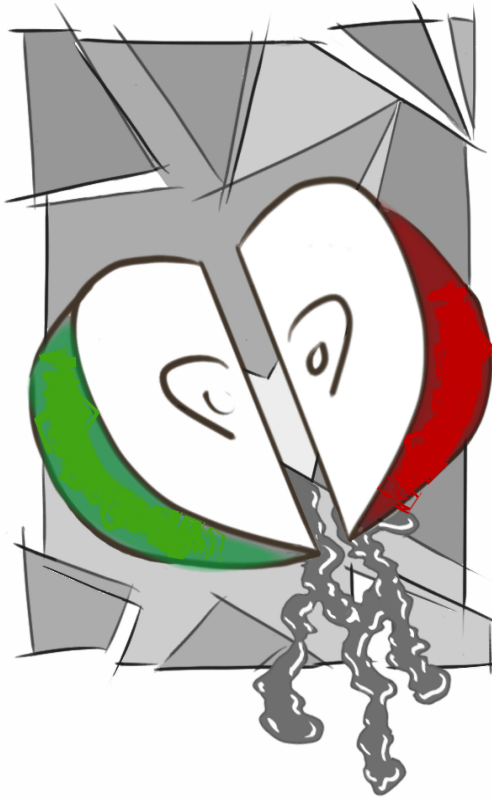
Next day a farmer's wife climbs the mountain path to see the Dwarves. She has a sack of apples for them, and she lays on the grass for Snow White. Snow White trusts no strangers anymore. But the farmer's wife takes an apple from the sack: one side warm red from the sun. The other side, cool green.

"They are deliciously sweet," winks Elspeth beneath her disguise, and takes a bite from the green half. The juice runs down to form an icicle on her chin. She offers Snow White the red half. One small taste is enough. The red is poisoned and the jealous Queen remains and watches until Snow White is still and cold.

The Dwarves return to find Snow White's icy form. Her smile is frozen, and her laugh is silenced. But the dwarves will not say goodbye to their friend. So they treasure Snow White and place her body in a glass coffin, on the path to their house, held in the mountain snow.

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There Prince Theodor sees her, Seemingly frozen in a block of ice.



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to my palace.” commands

“Let's hope the heat of the valleys may thaw this girl.” he prays,

Snow White, in her glass coffin, trundles over the rough mountain roads. The piece of poisoned apple lodged in her throat. Her wagon thuds into potholes, the apple moves. She coughs and coughs. The Prince's heart bursts alight. Princess Snow White sits up. She gives the Prince a warm and grateful smile. Prince Theodor smiles at Snow White. They accept the artful ploys of fate, and the two are betrothed before they reach the palace.

“We wish the couple a long and happy union” Snow White's father, King Raban, declares at their wedding feast. And the guests and neighbours and seven Dwarves cheer. Seated next to her father at the high table, Snow White tells him of his wife's wicked plots. And King Raban is red hot in his anger.

“Take the Queen and abandoned her.” he rages, “High in the mountains, where snow will freeze her icy soul.”

## **The Musicians of Bremen:** from Grimm's Fairy Tales

### **Entertaining Thieves**

Our Musicians are a donkey, a cockerel, a cat and a hound.

How did they sound?

Dreadful. A terrible, ear-splitting cacophonous noise.

"Yeomeowl! He-hiss-haw! BarKock-a-doodHowl-doo!"

How did this awful band get together?

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Once upon a time, a Donkey overhears his owner say,

"This donkey is worn out. Now he's only good to turn into glue."

That night, the Donkey makes off for an easier life. He is going to be a town musician in Bremen.

Down the road, the Donkey sees a hound creeping behind a wall.

"Are you tracking something?" he asks.

"Sadly no," the dog shake his head. "The Hunter says I'm too slow to keep up with the pack, so I'm escaping his knife!" says the Hound.

"Then join me," replies the Donkey, "I'm going to Bremen. We can sing together as town musicians."

The following day, they find a grey cat asleep on the kerb.

"I've no teeth sharp enough to catch mice to eat," the Cat sighs. "I'll have to beg for my food." and the cat howls.

"Then join us. Join us!" call the Donkey and the Hound.

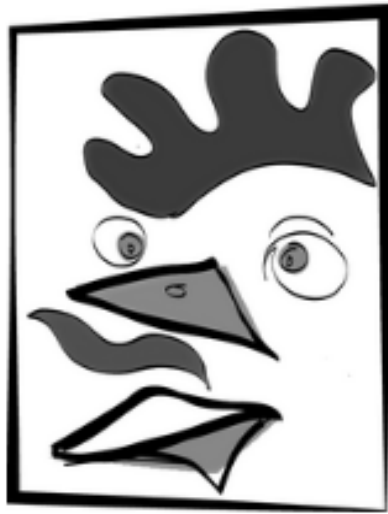
Next, the three companions see a cockerel.

"I slept too late to wake the farm. Again!" he moaned, "so the farmer is planning chicken soup... Tonight!"

"Then join us!" chorused the trio, "Join us, join us .... JOIN US."

"Meet Cat-a-Wall, Meet Howsit-Sound, Meet Off-Key" the friends cry. And 'Band-Tam' joins the group.





As they trot along, they sing along,

“YeowlHe-haw! BarKock-a-doodHowl!”

“That’s great,” the Donkey grins, “Let’s go again.”

“GrowffHootatootHeowl-Me-hawroo!”

“Ka-dodyeeruff-woarheehowferoul!”

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The companions march on. As they near Bremen, they pass an old farmhouse. That night the band plans their first gig. Outside the old farmhouse, they will sing for their supper.

But inside the farmhouse, robbers are planning their next job.

“Screech!, He-Honk! Rowwoo! Kukuriku!” go the band

The robber chief hears the first notes of the musician’s first song, and he knows that demons have come for revenge.

“They’ve come to avenge our victims!” he cries,

“Run! Run for your lives!”

“Meeeuwl!, Eeee-Yore! GRrrruff! Cacroooow!”

The robbers flee, leaving their meal and their gold and their house to the animals, who happily settle down where they are.

The band sing only to themselves (thank God!), so the town of Bremen must make do with its own musicians.

## The Robbers Return

The Musicians of Bremen sing together in the captured farmhouse. The Hound howls happily; the Cockerel crows comfortably; the Cat contentedly claps its paws; and the Donkey dreamily drums his hooves.

“GrowffHootatootHeoowlMe-hawroo! Ka-doodyeeruff! woorheehowferoul!”

They are pleased; with their songs; with their new home; and with the abandoned gold that they have found.

Robbers had rushed from the farmhouse to escape the terrifying uproar of the musician’s first concert. But the robbers now plan to return this night.

“Goodnight, good players” calls Off-key from his bed in the yard. Howsit-Sound lays behind the door, Band-TamI sits on a roof-beam, and Cat-a-Wall curls up in the fireplace,

“Sleep tight, everyone.”

The Robber Chief steals through the moonlit garden and creeps softly inside. He tiptoes into the front room. The How-Sound snores quietly on; Band-Tam settles down peacefully on his perch. But from the hearth Cat-a-Wall watches, and the Chief takes her glowing eyes for embers. He bends down to blow the fire into life, He plans to silently throw its light onto the dark room.

Into his face springs the Cat, spitting and scratching. The Robber Chief jumps back, and “Snap!” go the Hound’s teeth around his leg. Across the yard he leaps, where the Donkey delivers him a weighty kick. And from above, the Cockerel cries,

“Cock-a-doodle-doo!”



The trembling Chief cannot get out soon enough. His feet get caught in the briars near the road. He remembers his trial and that terrible judge. He remembers the chains round his leg in goal. And the robbers hear his pitiful moans.

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Back on the road he reports his ordeal to his men.

"A savage witch blew foul-smelling poison into my face, and scratched me with her long fingernails. By the door there hid a knife-man, who stabbed me in the leg. An ogre lay waiting outside, and struck me with his giant club. And the judge – he sits on the roof, called out, 'Kill-the-robber! Do!' ... Kill-the-robber-doo!... You can hear him, still"

"Cock-a-doodle-do! Cock-a-doodle-dooo!"

The robbers never dare return to the farmhouse, and the four friends never leave.

## **Shahrazad and One Thousand and One Nights:**

from The Arabian Nights

The Persian King slept alone in the royal bedchamber. His Queen had run away. The fury of King Shahryar had no limit, and had no end.

"I will trust no woman again!" he growled. But a Persian King requires a Queen.

"If I must marry, no wife will betray me again." Shahryar vows.

"Get me a new wife!" the King commands Pujman, his Vizier. And the Vizier brings him the beautiful Qamara. But as the moon sets, and the sun rises, Qamara's life ends; executed on the orders of the King. Shahryar keeps his vow; his new bride can no longer betray him.

"Get me another wife!" demands a pitiless Shahryar, and Pujman sadly agrees. And in the morning's first light, the new queen's eyes are closed for the last time.

Every evening the King marries, and every morning he ends his bride's life. Soon, the daughters of the city are either married or far away. Now the Vizier cannot get a new bride, so he fears for his own life.

"Shahrazad and Dinarzad are still unmarried?" inquires Shahryar. He is asking about Pujman's own two daughters. In fact, Shahrazad has already asked her father to let her marry Shahryar. She wants to rescue the City's maidens from their fate.

"But I shall lose you!" Pujman cries, "It will break my heart."

"I have a plan!" his clever daughter assures him.

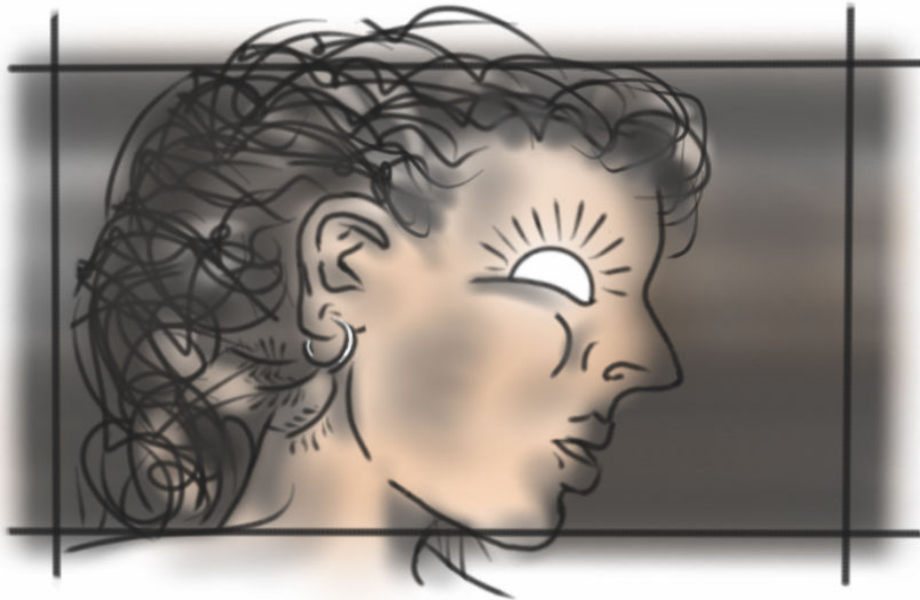
From her marriage chamber, Shahrazad calls for her sister. Shahryar wearily allows his bride to say farewell to Dinarzad. But before her goodbye, the Queen sits young Dinarzad down and

tells her tales of djinnis and fishermen, magic caves and cut-throats. And the King listens too.

The story's end draws near and Shahrazad stops.

"Does the fisherman escape?" demands the King.

"Sleep, husband. It gets light." whispers Shahrazad, "I will tell you of the fisherman's fate later. You can hear the end of the tale this coming night."



And that night, Shahrazad's tells how the fisherman is rescued. But then she begins a new tale. She sends a magic horse into the sky, where it flies on into tomorrow.

For One Thousand and One nights, and One Thousand and One tales, Shahrazad begins new stories just before dawn. And so she lives to complete the tales when she sits with the King the following night.

Finally, Shahryar admits his mistaken vow. The next night, King Shahryar and Queen Shahrazad, together in the royal bedchamber, enjoy a story that ends where it begins.

## **The Happy Prince:** from Stories for Children by Oscar Wilde

### **The Swallow**

One chilly, autumn evening a Swallow soars in the wind over the City. He swoops and hovers by a statue standing on a tall column. Below him, the people struggle. The late Autumn wind is cold; and makes it hard, living in their dark streets and draughty tenements.

"I cannot help them. I cannot stay in this cold, grey city. I need the warmth of Africa" thinks the Swallow, perched high on the statue's gilded stone shoulder

"Tell me of yourself." the statue of the city's 'Happy Prince' presently asks his visitor. The swallow turns to see the statue's tender eyes on him.

"Though the swallows have all flown to Africa," starts the bird, "I stayed for love of a most beautiful Reed. I loved her slender waist and graceful movement." says the Swallow.

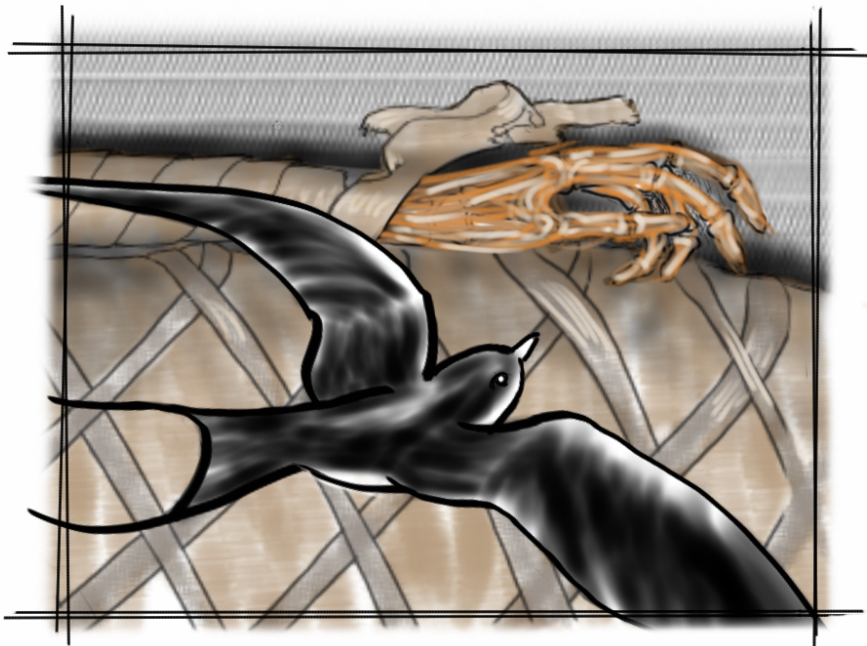
"In the spring I found her with her friends and relations by the river banks. All summer I made silver ripples in the water around her. Finally, I asked her to come away with me. 'I cannot,' she said, shaking her head with the other reeds, 'I am too attached to this river-bank.'"

"She is like the rest. She sways with every wind," curses the Swallow, "and her whispers about me pass down the river bank with all her friends!"

"My heart is cold." sighs the Swallow.

"Now, my summer has gone, and my friends expect me. They sleep by the painted coffin of an Egyptian King. A long-dead King

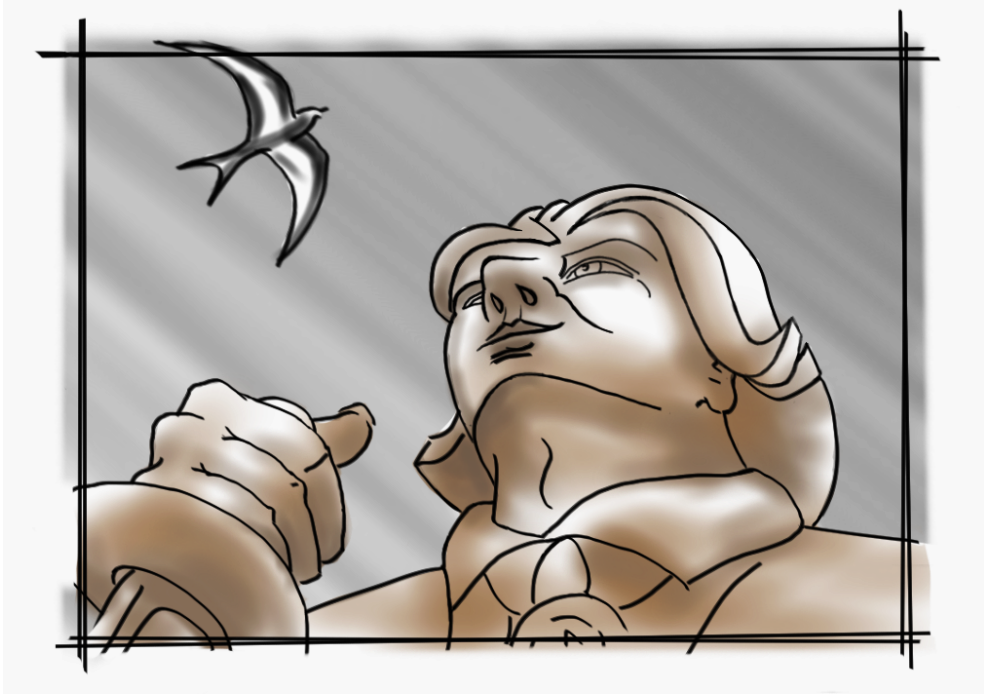
wrapped in spices and yellow linen, and his hands are like the withered leaves in winter.”



“Stay tonight, and help me” asks white, still, marble lips of the Happy Prince, “and you will get a gift to warm your heart.”

The Swallow takes shelter under the Prince’s gilded cloak and sleeps, looking forward to tomorrow’s adventures. And the lonely East Wind howls; in the streets and around the column, outside the palace walls, and into the ears of the reeds that crowd the river banks.

## The Statue of The Happy Prince



A statue stands on a high pedestal, in the heart of the City. He wears a contented smile and is bedecked in gold and jewels. The citizens have paid to give lasting honour to their courtly and carefree "Happy Prince".

A Swallow awakes and sees rain falling in front of his gilded perch. He has slept beneath the statue's cloak, the pleats and folds of the cool stone set against the night's cruel East Wind, But he looks up to find that the raindrops are tears that fall from the statue's eyes.

"Who are you?" asks the Swallow.

"My people called me 'The Happy Prince'." the statue answers.

"So, why does The Happy Prince cry?"

"Tears and sorrow had no entrance to my Palace when my heart's beat was of flesh and blood." the statue says, "I played with my friends in the sun, and at night, led the Dance in the



Great Hall. The high walls of the gardens blocked my view beyond, and everything surrounding me was beautiful. So I never asked what lay on the other side. I was 'The Happy Prince', and I was happy indeed, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died.

"And the City council made this likeness of me. I was richly adorned so the people can recognise my happiness. Then they set me high up here. For all to see, but out of reach, so none can touch or despoil me.

"Now from my pedestal I see all the ugliness and misery of my city. I do not share my happiness, as I cannot. I am fixed in the sky, without hope of helping the people who need help most." said the Prince.

"Now, my heart is lead, and I only share their grief."

Perched high, set apart from the crowds, the Prince and the Swallow together look over a City that would not know them, and chill rain hides their hot tears.

## The Prince's Gifts

"Please act for me, little Swallow" says a golden Statue to a migrant Swallow. The glittering statue of 'The Happy Prince' stands on a high pedestal above the City.

"I see my people's misery, and I cannot help them." he laments, "Your wings can take the place of my stone legs. I need you to fly down, for me."

"I will stay to be your messenger," answers Swallow, "but only for this one night. The winter's icy grip is close, and I must flee to where it cannot reach."

"I see a seamstress, thin and worn," says the Prince. "with coarse, red hands, all pricked by her needles. She embroiders a fine silk dress for the Queen, while her little boy lies ill with a fever. He cries for oranges, but she has only river-water. Take them my ruby, for medicine and shelter."

So Swallow takes the ruby from the Prince's sword. He flies and lays the gift by the sleeping child.

"It is so cold, yet I feel warm." says Swallow, returning.

"Helping others will warm your heart." replies the Prince.

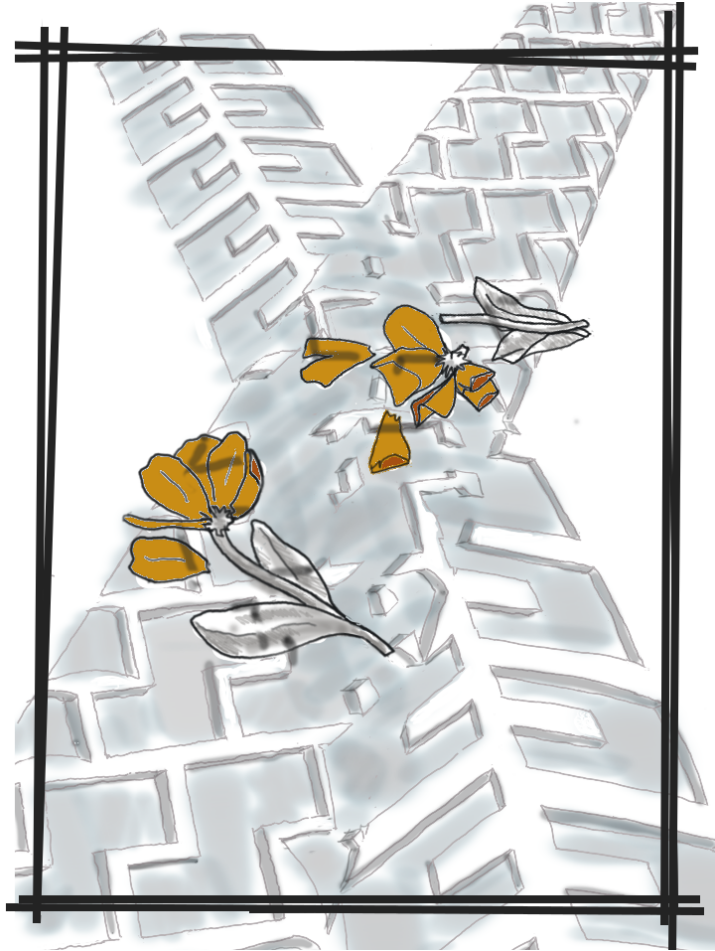
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"Swallow, little Swallow, stay one night longer." says the Prince, next evening.

"I see a poet who cannot write any more. He is cold, and is faint from hunger."

"I will take him a ruby." says Swallow.

"I have no ruby now," says the Prince, "take the sapphire from my eye."

"My friends await me in Egypt." says Swallow, next day, "When I return, you will have a new ruby and sapphire!" But the Prince wants nothing from Africa.



"In the market," the Prince relates, "a barefoot, young girl stands crying. Her flowers-stall has spilled, and everywhere are ruined blooms and petals. When she returns without a full day's takings, her father will beat her. You must fly to give her the sapphire from my other eye."

"I cannot" replies Swallow, "for then you would be blind."

"Please do as I command you." demands the Prince.

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The statue can no longer see his people's hardships. Winter closes in, and the Swallow stays to warm him with tales of lotus-flowers singing to the Egyptian sun.

## **The Swallow and The Prince:**

"Bring me the City's most precious possessions." says God. And the Angel returns with a dead swallow and a heart of lead.

"You have chosen wisely." says God.

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A golden statue of 'The Happy Prince' stands on a high pedestal, looking down on the City. But the statue cannot see. His eyes of sapphire have been given away; to ease his peoples' hardships. He'd asked Swallow to take his ruby to save a seamstress' son. One of the Prince's sapphire eyes had helped a hungry poet, the sapphire from his other eye rescued a young, market-girl.

"The winter snows come, yet I feel warm." says Swallow.

"Good actions warm us." replies the Prince.

Winter draws in, but Swallow stays; to tell of burning sand and basking crocodiles; to fire the blind statue's spirit.

One day, the Prince asks, "Swallow, little Swallow, fly over the City. Find out how my people fare."

Swallow tells the sightless statue of the rich making merry, whilst mothers beg outside, and frozen children huddle in the polished archways of fine villas, and white-faced boys starve in the dark lanes.

"Why do we let Misery hold so many captive?" laments the Prince. "Our many tales of magic can never match this unhappy mystery."

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"I am covered in fine gold." says the Prince to the Swallow, "Take it, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor." And the Swallow takes the gold leaf from the statue. Piece by piece, the Swallow peels away; until only the frost sparkles on the dull, grey statue.

“I must go now, my breath is frozen” says the Swallow, and kisses the Prince goodbye. And, “crack” the statue’s lead heart brakes in two.

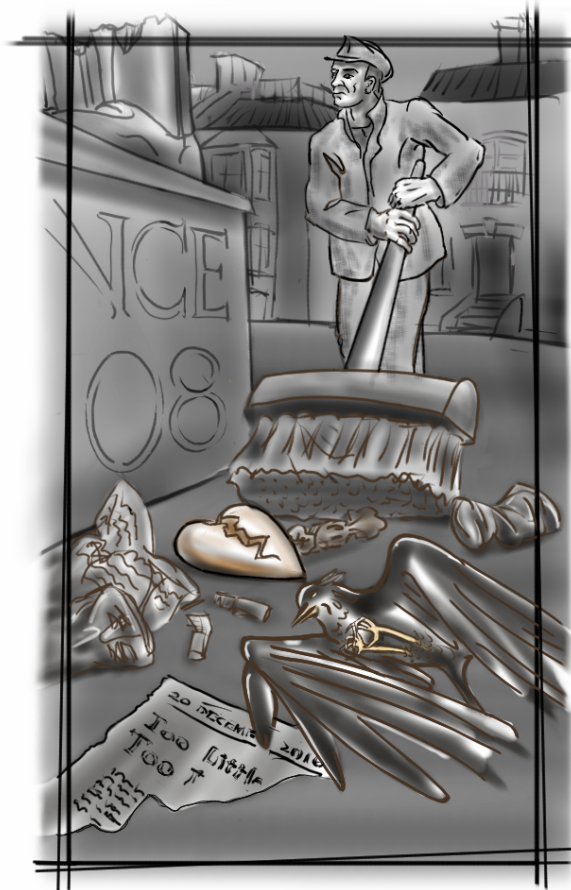
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Next morning, the Mayor regards the Prince.

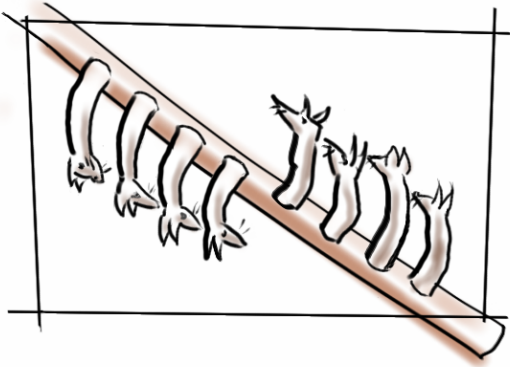
“He looks like a beggar!” he says. “Without his gold, he makes no one happy.

“Take him down! And clear away this dead swallow, too.”

Before the workmen come, the Angel appears and recovers the lifeless swallow and the Prince’s leaden heart.



## The Pied Piper of Hamelin (the poetry is Robert Browning's)



*"Rats!*

*They fought the dogs and killed the cats,  
And bit the babies in their cradles,  
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
And licked the soup from the cooks' own  
ladles.*

*Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
And even spoiled the women's chats,  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats."*

The townsfolk Hamelin town have had rats up to here.

"Do something, councillors!" they storm, gathering around the old town hall.

"Do it now! ...Or else.."

And, on cue, a colourful stranger strides into the council chamber.

*"His queer long coat from heel to head  
is half of yellow and half of red.  
(And here they noticed round his neck.  
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,  
To match his coat of the self-same cheque;  
and the scarf secures a silver pipe)."*

"I can make your problem disappear." grins the stranger.

"When I play the pipe, all animals follow me." claims the Pied Piper, absently fingering his silver flute,

"I can lead your rats away."

"For just one thousand guilders." adds the Piper.

The councillors argue.

“One thousand is too much!” and argue, “Much too much!”

But they reluctantly agree.

The music tumbles from the stranger’s pipe, and the rats tumble from their holes. Behind the Piper they scurry, the doomed parade of dancing, chattering rats.

*Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,  
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,  
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—  
Followed the Piper for their lives.  
From street to street he piped advancing,  
And step for step they followed dancing,*

They spill across Hamelin Bridge and plunge into the River below.

“The rats have gone!” everyone cries.

“We have cleaned our town!” claims their Mayor to their cheers.

“One thousand guilders,” claims the Pied Piper. “was my price.”

“Our joke, yes!” chorus the council as one.

“One thousand guilders has other uses now the rats are gone.”  
explains the Mayor

“Take one hundred and join your rats.” the council laugh.

That night, the Piper’s tunes call again. The notes float in the air, and drill through the walls of the houses. And the town’s children stir from their beds. They creep from their rooms and into the streets. Silently, they skip and dance to the town’s gates, to the Pied Piper.

The waiting figure smiles and turns, and one hundred children of Hamelin happily follow the Pied Piper into the mountains,

and they never return.

**The Key:** a version of *"The Ancient Coffin of Nuri Bey"* found in *"Tales of the Dervishes"* by Idries Shah

Nnenne, the meerkat, is Queen of her tribe. Her daughters and sons are 'aunts' and 'uncles' to Queen Nnenne's younger pups. Every day Nnenne's family scurry through their burrow to the meeting chamber. There, aunts and uncles are each given a young pup to watch and teach.

"Take special care of my Ife," the Queen tells Aunt Makena. "she knows little of scorpions! Losing her would break my heart."

Winter cools the baked Kalahari sands, rain floods a chamber in the tribe's burrow. By winter's end, the youngest pups are grown tall and strong and independent. Nnenne and her tribe can raise a new litter of pups.

And Queen Nnenne is pregnant.

"No other pups will be born here." she warns her daughters, "If I find any pups, they will be sent with their mother out into our unforgiving Kalahari Desert."

"Nnenne's pups are here!" The news echoes through the chambers and passageway and out to meerkats foraging in the sand. Everyone rushes to the Queen's chamber.

"Hurry up Ife!" says Makena as she passes her old pupil. Ife is locking the heavy door to a small store-chamber. Ife looks up, guiltily.

The next day Makena hears Ife whispering comforting mewa as she closes and locks the store-chamber door.

Makena keeps an eye on Ife over the following days. One morning Makena is sure that there is mewing behind the heavy door as Ife slips out into passage.





Makena scurries to Queen Nnenne

"Ife has her own pups!" Makena tells Nnenne. "They are down here, and she is hiding them!"

Ife is summoned.

"Were you stealing food? What else does the store-chamber hold?" demands the Queen.

"Do you trust me or do you listen to Makena?" questions Ife, the Queen's favourite.

"I will not justify why I ask, just open the door." replies her mother.

"That is not possible, Makena is just jealous."

"Is the door locked?"

Ife holds up the key,

"Send Makena away and you shall have it."

When Makena is gone, and Nnenne has the key, she considers Ife. Then she orders the store-chamber's entrance blocked up, and the question is never asked again.

**Sisyphus:** from the Greek myths

### **Sisyphus and Thanatus**

The cunning King Sisyphus lies dying.

“Listen. This is my strategy in cheat Death ....” he whispers carefully to his wife, Merope. Now the King's breath slows, heaves and finally ebbs away.

Unmoved, Merope leaves Sisyphus unmourned, and his Queen just throws the Great King's lifeless body into the street.

The Styx River separates Hades, the land of the Dead, from our land of the Living, and the souls of the dead must cross over. To reach Hades, the dead must pay the ferryman. And so the shade of King Sisyphus stands arguing with Kharon, the ferryman and Thanatus, the Controller of Death.

“Before I embark.” the King demands, “I must go back to my Palace to condemn Queen Merope for her disrespect.”

“You can have one hour.” says Thanatus.



The hour soon passes, but Sisyphus doesn't return. Sisyphus stays away a lifetime ... and he and Merope enjoys his new, extended life.

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Finally, the shade Sisyphus arrives at the Styx once more. There is Thanatus awaiting his long-deferred return. For Sisyphus Thanatos' greetings are far colder than usual; and they are never warm

"Once we are across the river, I will chain you down. This time you are staying forever." vows the God.

"Your chains are tangled." points out the King, "Will they be able to reach around me? Will there be enough spare to hold the padlocks?"

As they await the ferry, Thanatus tests his chains. He wraps them around himself.

"They're tight," he grunts, untwisting a kink, and unkinking a twist, "but not too tight, and the locks will work."

Sisyphus agrees, and he reaches over and snaps Thanatos' padlocks shut.

With Thanatus in chains, nobody can cross the Styx. If no one crosses the Styx, then no one can die ... even in battle.

"I ..AM ..NOT ..HAVING ..IT!" bellows Ares, the God of War, in his usual way,

"THIS ..IS ..NOT ..WAR!"

Zeus, the father of the Gods, is furious. He sends his son Ares to free Thanatos and to get Sisyphus to Hades and to his punishment. Ares carries the deceitful king over the Styx himself.

Zeus may be angry still, but has to smile to hear what happened.

"Thanatus ... Thanatus ... that God will swallow any story."

## **The Trials of King Sisyphus:**

from Greek myths via Albert Camus and John Finnemore

"This boulder must be at the summit by nightfall!" demands Zeus, and points to a far hilltop.

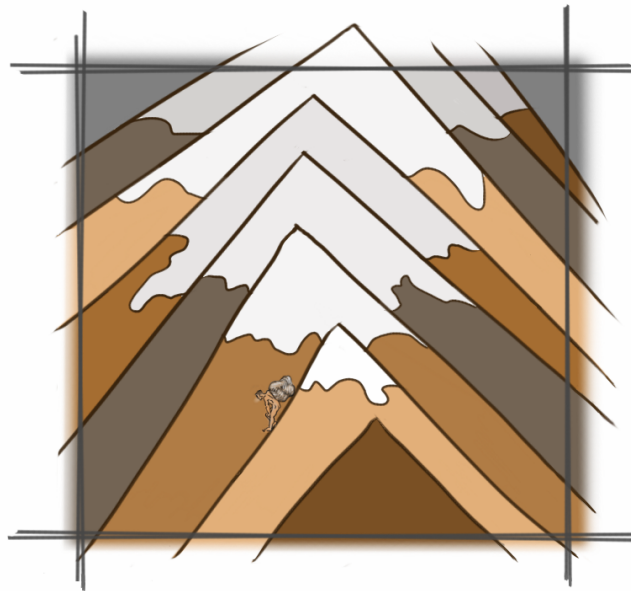
King Sisyphus accepts his punishment, it was easily worth it.

"I dodged Hades, the Land of the Dead, and lived two lives. And then I got Thanatus again; locked him in his own chains. He couldn't send me, or anyone else, to Hades." Sisyphus smiled as he remembered.

"When Thanatus saw he had been tricked! The look on his face! I'm happy to be punished."

Sisyphus presses his face to the rock, and heaves.

"This isn't going to be easy, though" concedes Sisyphus, with his toes dug into the hillside.



"And again!" laughs Zeus, and nudges the rock off the summit. Sisyphus also smiles, watching the boulder bounce and shatter on its way down.

But he isn't laughing in the morning when a new boulder appears. This rock is heavier, and slips and rolls back several times before nightfall. Finally, Sisyphus makes it to the top, and Zeus arrives.

"Look again, Oh 'King'." Zeus grins and points, "There is your summit!"

Following the God's finger across from the hilltop, Sisyphus looks down a ridge and then back up to a higher hilltop. Zeus smiles broadly. The boulder moves.

"Off it goes." sighs Zeus.

The boulder nearly lodges on the ridge, totters then careers down into the valley.

"I'll be back." says Sisyphus, and strides down after his boulder. Eons pass. Whenever Sisyphus nears a summit, the boulder gets heavier, or a higher hilltop appears.

-----

Thanatus complains to Zeus.

*"THIS PUNISHMENT ISN'T WORKING"* Thanatus shouts, *"SISYPHUS DOESN'T FEEL IT!* Even as the boulders crash down, his head is full of plans. How he will go higher, what will make him stronger.

**"I** find bigger boulders. **I** make deeper valleys. **I** even build new hills. I work all night, again and again, the same every time.

"And all the while, Sisyphus sleeps and happily dreams of beating you. It's not boring and painful, it's hard and challenging.

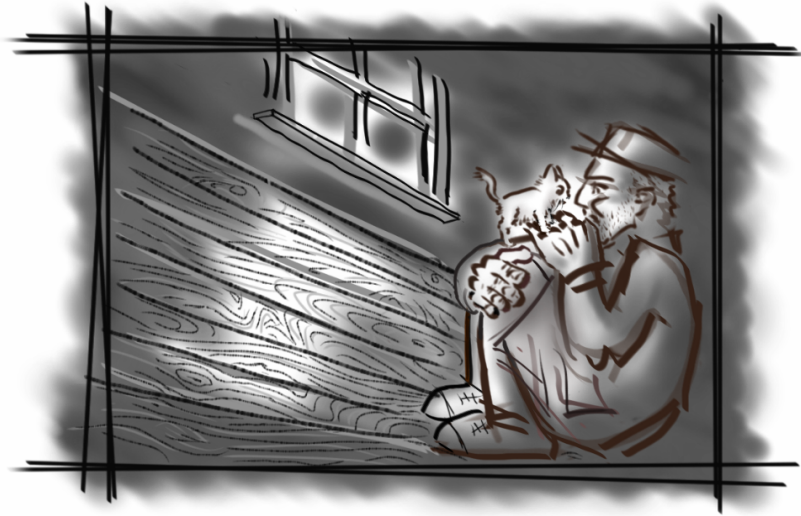
**"THIS IS NOT PUNISHMENT!"** screams Thanatus.

"It is punishing for you, isn't it" explains Zeus.

**Johnny One-Eye** by Damon Runyon in Colliers Magazine

### **Johnny One-Eye Makes a Friend**

A tiny kitten climbs through a broken window into a boarded up house on 53rd Street, New York. Rudolph can hear its low, weak merouws going from room to room. It is searching for food and company, when it makes the second floor and finds Rudolph.



Rudolph sits alone on the empty, bare floor, watching for unwelcome visitors. Rudolph isn't feeling too well. In fact, the 0.38 bullet in his side hurts like crazy. He speaks to the cat as follows,

"Hello, cat." he says

Of course, the cat does not say anything in reply, except merouw. Rudolph squints and can see that the kitten's right eye is swollen and closed.

"Well cat, you seem as scuffed up as I am." he laughs, "What's your name?"

The kitten only merouws again, so Rudolph calls him 'Johnny One-Eye'.

Johnny One-Eye trips across, and climbs on Rudolph's lap.

"We make a fine pair of invalids, here together." Rudolph says, moving his gun to let the kitten curl up.

Rudolph had also climbed in the broken window; but he wasn't after food or company. He just wanted to hide.

"Still, I'm glad of your company." he tells Johnny, and Johnny purrs back. "Johnny, you is plenty game to sing when you is hurt so bad. It is more than I can do."

Rudolph is not a nice man. He's never cared for anyone in his life. The New York police want to catch and goal him. 0.38 bullets aren't sent by friends, and Buttsy certainly wasn't friendly. In fact, Rudolph is on 53rd East Street to pay Buttsy back, on account. He owed Buttsy for the pain in his side. But then the pain made him fall down onto the basement steps of the empty house.

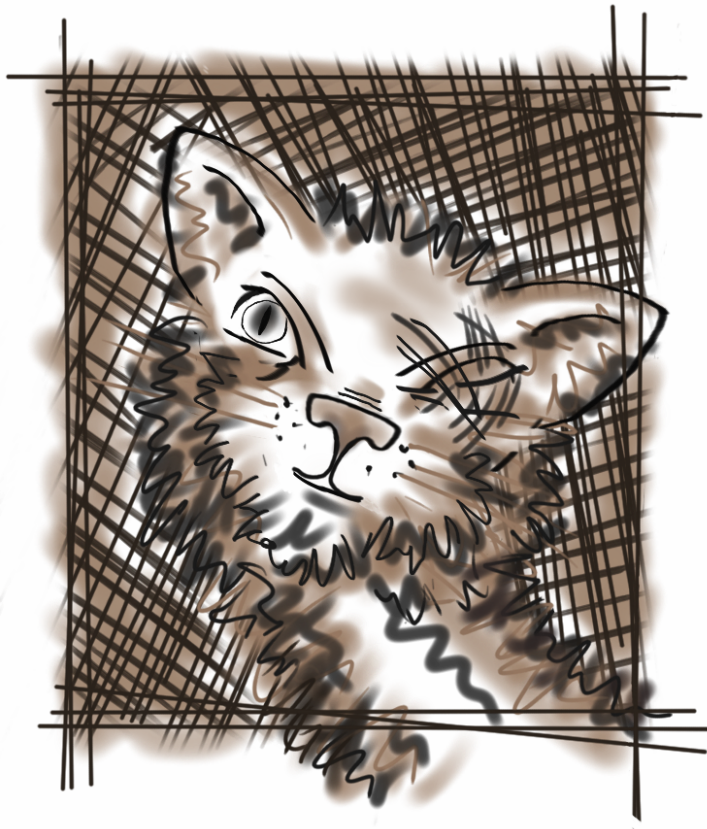
So he shuffles in and shelters for comfort, just like Johnny. Unlike Johnny, he's found no warmth or relief in the empty house. Except that the small kitten's purrs are comfort enough for Rudolph. So they curl up and drift in a quiet sleep together.

## Rudolph Rescues Johnny

A man lies injured, holed up in a derelict house. He's got a gun and a wounded kitten on his lap.

"It's hurting bad." groans Rudolph, "and no one knows I'm here. No one cares, and I don't want their help, anyhow."

"Let's go get you help, though." whispers Rudolph, wiping the kitten's swollen eye with his coat sleeve. The kitten's weak meows echo in the empty rooms as Rudolph climbs awkwardly out through the basement.



"Where can I find a cat croaker?" he asks a cop. Which is funny, because it happens that the cops would like to find Rudolph, and they are asking everyone.

"There's a vet-shop round the corner." answers the cop and waves him on.

"They ain't looking for a wise-guy who is armed with a beat-up kitten." the gangster smiles to himself as he walks away.



Johnny One-Eye, the kitten, isn't so lucky.

"There's no hope." says the vet, "I can put your cat to sleep before he suffers any more. He can't be saved, he's not worth saving.

"Get another; kittens like him are a dime-a-dozen" he adds.

"No, no, no! This is Johnny One-Eye." Rudolph fingers the gun in his pocket. "Johnny is the only friend I have in the world. He is the only one that pushes up against me all warm and friendly, and he trusts me."

Rudolph wraps Johnny-One-Eye inside his coat, and heads back into the cold New York streets. Back in the house, Rudolph lies down on the bare floor and dozes, one hand shielding Johnny, one cradling his gun.

-----

A small cough stirs Rudolph, and he holds Johnny a little tighter. The kitten looks up and merouws at a shadowy figure standing across the floor.

"That's my Kitty." says the girl, pointing down at the ball of fur purring on the hard-man's chest. "I've been searching for him. It's good you've looked after him." Rudolph moves his gun.

"Who are you, littler pretty?" he asks.

"I'm Elsie." explains Elsie, "My Daddy got a gun, too. He was angry and he kicked Kitty, so Kitty ran away."

Elsie picks up Johnny and grips him tight. Rudolph frowns. Life is tough for the two little friends; they might need him. He stirs, touches the gun in his pocket. He resolves to help.

## **Johnny Rescues Rudolph**

A little girl sits on the empty floor of a cold, empty house. She cradles a black kitten in her lap. The kitten purrs softly though one eye is injured and swollen closed. In front of her, Rudolph sits up and winces with pain. He's injured too.

"What's your name?" Elsie asks, "and why are you sitting on the floor in the cold.

"Where are all your chairs? Do you have any little girls like me, and do you love them dearly?

"You're a nice man for taking care of my Kitty.

"He's called Kitty not Johnny-One-Eye.

"Do you love him?"

Rudolph is not a nice man, he is a gangster. He is sitting lodged against a wall on account of being shot. And he is sheltering in the vacant house because he wanted to settle accounts with Buttsy Fagan, who had shot him.

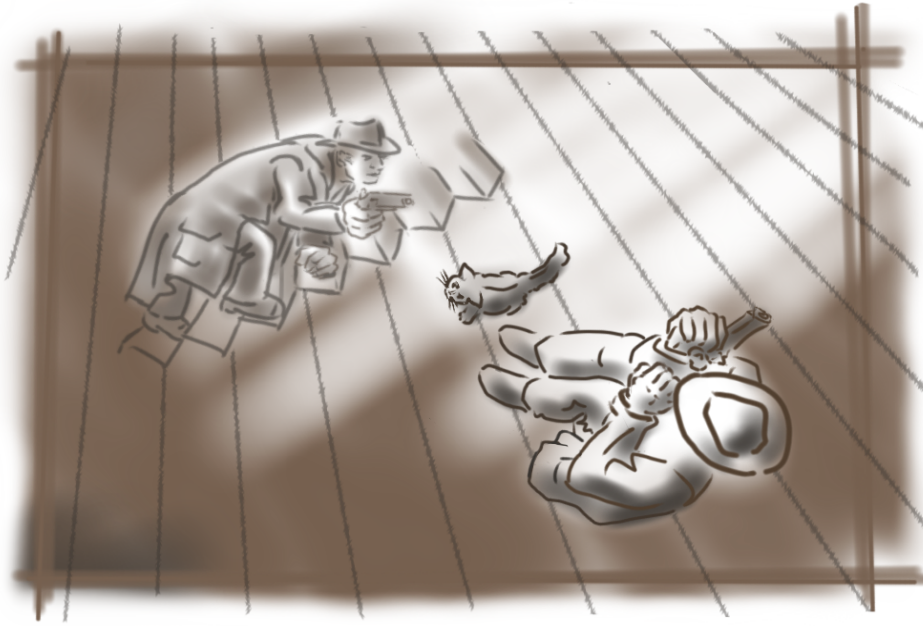
"I will leave Johnny with you to take care of always, and I will come to see him, You see, at home, Buttsy will only kick him again, and hurt his other eye. When he's mad, Buttsy kicks my mom and sometimes he kicks me.

"And Buttsy is always mad. Buttsy is my new daddy, my best daddy is dead."

"Elsie, listen careful." whispers Rudolph, "Go tell Buttsy Fagan that there's this guy in this old house, and you helped him because he was hurt bad, and that he is called Rudolph.

"And when Buttsy leaves, run and tell Mr O'Toole, the cop. Tell Mr O'Toole everything you know."

-----



It is pitch black in the boarded up house, and silent. Rudolph can hear Buttsy creaking on the stairs facing him, and he hears Buttsy loading his gun, but he sees nothing but a sparkle in Johnny's one good eye.

"I'm so cold." Rudolph thinks, "and when I shiver, Buttsy will hear me for sure, and he'll get his shot on me first."

He crumples up a dollar bill and rolls it, and Johnny One-Eye skips after it. From the stairs, Buttsy hears the sound of the paper ball rolling and he sees the glimmer of Johnny's one eye as he plays. Buttsy fires at the glint, and his face is lit up. Now Rudolph knows his target and fires, and Buttsy slumps down the stairs.

"Elsie done good." Rudolph smiles. He lifts the kitten's warm body onto his chest, and waits for the cops.

**The tide turns on King Canute** from Historium Anglorum  
compiled by Henry of Huntingdon in 1129 CE.

Lights of all colours reflect and refract from the many riches in the Bishop of Winchester's Palace. Sitting on the Bishop's throne, the King regards his battle-weary warriors and his tall, fair, battle-weary son, Cnut. He frowns. King Sweyn Forkbeard sees their successes and their scars, but the Angles – the English – are still unbroken. And King Sweyn does not live to see his Danes calm English defiance and King Cnut Sweynson must withdraw his troops to Denmark

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After two years, Cnut Sweyson returns to England. The Vikings want to settle and to demand tributes. Cnut's warriors are fierce and ruthless. His Norse men storm the Angles' kingdoms. And commanding them. Cnut rules all England.

Over many years King Canute is accepted by the people of England. Despite his brutal past and reputation, his laws are well-liked, he has the respect of his subjects. But the nobles are wary of their king. The Anglian Lords had many friends replaced and lands taken. The new 'Earls' were the leaders of the victorious Norse invaders. And many resist Canute's Christian faith and ceremonies.

Noblemen at the Palace at Westminster are careful. The councillors keep their own counsel. Canute's Court is filled with only approval and flattery, and the King can do no wrong. Even his friends do not question the King.

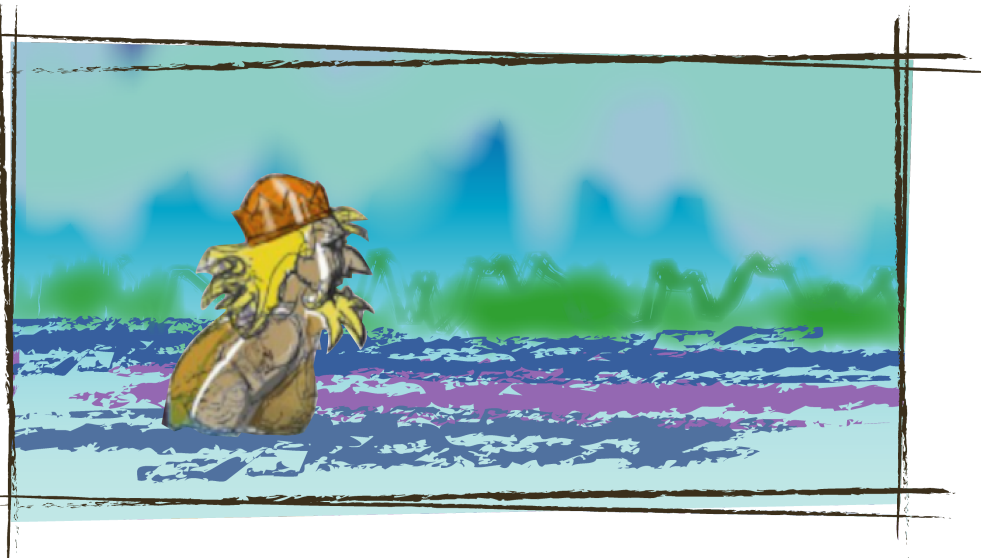
"Yours laws and deeds will ring in the peoples' hearts forever, Sire" As Leofric Leofwineson, Earl Mercia, would assure his Liege.

"No power dare challenge your might and strategy, Great Cnut" might claim Earl Leofric's wife, the Lady Godiva

"No force can ignore your command, my husband," Queen Emma would smile for her King. "Nothing dares disobey Your Highness" Canute, the Christian and leader, is angry. Their praise is unnecessary, unwanted and unhelpful. He strides down to the River Thames and stands on the mud at its tidal edge. It is low-tide, and the wide, flat waters sweeps and swirls down to the sea.

"Great river Thames, I am Cnut. Lord of all England," commands the King. "Go back. You shall not touch my Royal Person."

Yet the waters continue to swell and eddy. Over the royal ankles, the river rises. The king continues to bellow his orders. And the waters continues to rise. Up the king's legs and around the royal waist.



King Canute turns back to his unbelieving councillors, "Know how empty and worthless are the powers of kings." he calls to his courtiers, who have retreated to the river's drier banks. "No king is worthy of the name, save our Lord God. He whom the heavens, earth and seas obey by His eternal laws."

But the King's motives are twisted by his Earls. They give his actions a new purpose. "Canute, in his arrogance, has commanded the seas and tide to stop before him. Now his boots are full of water, and the Gods laugh at him.

## Talk is Cheap

It is December, and the rain lashes down on the Tollgate Inn. Inside three wet friends laugh over their beers.

"This rain is set in for the night," the professor claims. "Only King Cnut is arrogant enough to think he could stop it."

"The rain interrupted the Royal Hunt." growls a voice from the benches by the fire. "I am caught here, too."

The King's huge frame approaches. "The tale about the sea was not arrogance. It was to show that even a King cannot stop nature's tide."

He bends over the professor.

"My hangman will call for you, tomorrow." he smiles. Ashen, the professor turns to his friends. "What can I do?"

-----

Later, the King's supper is interrupted.

"Please, your Majesty, can I do anything to make up for my insult?"

"What is it you do?" asks the King.

"I am a professor."

"Then teach my horse to speak." laughs the King.

"I'll need a year." replies the professor.

"You cannot teach his horse to talk, you will die, for sure." say the professor's two friends.

"I have a year." whispers the horse teacher, "In a year many things can happen. The King may die, I may die, the horse may die, or the horse may talk."

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Each day the professor goes to the King's stables. Each day he takes the King's horse, Cloud, through his verbs and nouns,

adjectival clauses and possessive pronouns. He knows Cloud cannot speak, but he must pretend.

As the November days dwindle, the professor panics. He takes poisoned meal for Cloud to eat.

"The King will suspect, if I die now. And he will make your death more painful" says Cloud.

"You can talk!" blurts the professor.

"What is talk worth?" asks the horse.



## The Value of Salt

King Ludovic is flattered and pampered. In the palace, life is sweet. He has three daughters, He is proud of the two eldest, who are accustomed to court ways and their father's whims and mood. But the youngest make him happy with her easy grace and loving manner.

His daughters are courted by a Prince of France. King Ludovic is sad, for he will lose one daughter, though he is angry that one might want to leave.

"Tell me of your love for me." a sour Ludovic challenges the princesses.

"I love you like a grand parade that celebrates our history's customs and heroes." says Malene, the eldest.

"I love you like a beautiful symphony that will capture our hearts and flood our emotions." says Gisele.

"I love you like salt, for we cannot live without salt." says Princess Greta, simply.

"Malene, you will marry the prince, for you understand power and nobility."

"Gisele, you know what our people desire, you will stay with me." declares the King.

"Greta, salt is plain, and everyday. It is the concern of peasants, not royalty." growls the King. "How is it special to love your father like salt?" Ludovic complains. And he wants no more to do with her.

-----

Greta leaves the palace, and works for food and shelter at an inn. She is charming to the guests, and careful in her work. So the landlady decides to train Greta as a cook. Greta knows good food, and is soon a better chef than her tutor.





Finally, the inn's reputation summons Greta to King Ludovic's kitchen for a banquet. The King wants rare and special event, as he has missed the joy Greta gave him.

Greta knows his favourites. Thick tomato soup, with fresh rolls. Icy smoked salmon and cheese. Plates of venison stew, piled high with chips. Pies, sauces and wild salad. And cherry ice cream. All around the feast is acknowledged and enjoyed.

But the King takes no pleasure from his food, for Greta made his portions with no salt.

"Bring me the cook!" commands King Ludovic, "For he has ruined my favourite food."

Spattered in soot and flour, Greta stands before her father. He only sees a servant aping a Dalmatian dog.

"How can a cook use no salt?" berates the King.

"Salt is the concern of peasants, not royalty." answers his new cook.

Now Ludovic sees and understands Greta, and is ashamed. Once, her love was every day, but now it is precious.

**Brer Rabbit and the Talking House** adapted from  
Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit, collected by Joel Chandler Harris

The animals are hungry. It's the hard end of a hard winter. Old man Hunger is parading about everywhere, and the creatures had gotten bony and skinny. Brer Wolf is dreaming 'bout rabbit steak ever' night, and he hopes to catch Brer Rabbit. So while Miss Rabbit and the little Rabs is out looking for dinner, Brer Wolf sneaks into Brer Rabbit's house. And he waits.

Where can Brer Wolf hider? Under the table? Too small for Brer Wolf's long jaws. In the fireplace? Too hot for Brer Wolf's thick claws. Behind Brer Rabbit's front door? Perrrrfect.

Soon Brer Rabbit comes sashaying down his lane. He notices, "Everything is mighty still." He sees his door is open a crack.

Brer Rabbit's nose quivers. So he gets a little closer. Brer Rabbits sharp ears twitch and shiver. Brer rabbit pads lightly around his house, but he don't see nothin'. He rests a long ear against his chimney, but he don't hear nothin'. And he lifts and licks his nose, but he don't smell nothin'. Brer Wolf stands, still and silent, secret and silent, behind Brer Rabbit's door.

Brer Rabbit tells himself "The stove knows who is up the chimney, the rafters know who is in my loft, and the mattress knows who is under the bed. I ain't no stove, nor no rafters, but I'll find who is in my house, and I ain't goin' in there, neither.

So Brer Rabbit goes off a little ways. He clambers on a tree-stump, and hollers "Heyo house, hows yous doing?" The house don't make no answer. Brer Rabbit calls out again "Heyo House! Why don't yous 'Heyo'?" Still no answer. Brer Wolf – holding still, behind the door – wonders what to make of all this kind of goings on.

Brer Rabbit, out on his stump, hollers more loudly, "Heyo House! Hey! Ho!" But the House just stands there, silent. And Brer Wolf – inside the house - waits. He has a bad feeling as he peers out through the crack around his door.



Brer Rabbit hollers louder still, "Heyo house! You done lost the little manners you ever had?" Brer Wolf moves about even worse. He's gotten cold chills, and he can't see nothing. He hears Brer Rabbit hollering, "Hey House, you always holler 'Heyo!' back. Still no answer

By-and-by Brer Rabbit hollers one more time. Behind the door, Brer Wolf tries to think how a house might sound. So he hollers back hoarsely, "Heyo yourself!"

Brer Rabbit grins, "Heyo House, You soundin' sweaky-rough, you got a bad cold?" Brer Wolf hollers again, as low and as hoarse as he can, "Heyo yourself!"

Brer Rabbit laughs and laughs. He laughs so much he spillks offen his stump. And he calls out, "Wey-hey Brer Wolf! You need practice. You gotta stand out in the rain a mighty long time before you can talk as hoarse as a house!" Brer Wolf comes a slinking out, his tail between his legs. And makes a break for his home

After that, Brer Rabbit lives a long time without any of the other creature a-pestering him.

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