

The Draught

(Queen Rose, Elise, John Wilson)

Queen Rose, the mother of Prince Adam, who will one day be transformed into the Beast, was once a beautiful, determined, and ambitious woman, but over the years, she has become quite relaxed.

Now, she was only thrilled by music and musicians, particularly loving romances and emotional songs. Courtly matters no longer interested her, and she no longer bothered with them. Although she had never been strict with the servants, she had now become rather finicky.

One day, she selected a girl named Elise for one of her maids. Elise came from modest origins but possessed immense beauty and charm. As was customary with new servants, the queen told her, "I have only two commands for you. First, close the door when entering a room. Second, close the door when leaving a room. I detest draughts. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Your Highness."

"You may go," the queen waved her hand and returned to her music and musicians.

One day, Elise, trembling with excitement, stood before the queen. "Your Highness," she said, "Prince Charming from the neighboring kingdom has invited all eligible young ladies to a ball. He intends to choose a wife at this ball, and I adore him. I would die for him. May I go?" The girl quivered with impatience, awaiting the queen's response.

"Well, that's marvelous!" the romantic queen exclaimed. She not only agreed to allow the lovestruck girl to attend the ball but also dressed her in her finest gown and permitted her to use one of her best carriages.

Once Elise was ready, she returned to show her gratitude to the queen, saying, "Thank you, Your Highness!" The girl sent the queen thousands of kisses and hurried out of the room.

Approximately fifteen minutes after her departure, the queen sneezed and noticed the open door. She immediately ordered a stablehand to saddle the fastest horse, catch up with the servant, and bring her back.

The carriage was fast, and it was a challenge to catch up, but the young and eager stablehand Wilson put in a tremendous effort. He intercepted the carriage halfway and shouted, "The queen commands you to return immediately!"

"But..."

"At once!"

The poor girl had no choice but to return to the palace. She stood before the queen, who was lounging on a couch, enjoying her music. "You called for me, Your Highness. I am here to listen to your orders."

"I called you only to close the door behind you," the queen replied calmly. "Then, you may continue on your way." She waved her hand and resumed listening to romantic ballads.

The girl, of course, was late. She arrived at the ball long past midnight, and they didn't allow her inside anymore. Through the iron bars of the palace gates, she watched as the lights in the palace windows dimmed. She saw the cleaners sweeping the grand staircase and the prince racing by, worried, holding a lady's shoe in his hand. He didn't notice her. She never saw him again. She married that jealous stablehand Wilson and gave birth to a daughter.

For a long time, nothing else was heard about Elise until she fell ill, and her granddaughter was sent to her with some cakes. But that's another story.

The Dirty Boots

(Prince Philip, Jasper Jones)

Prince Philip, the future husband of Sleeping Beauty, once ventured into the distant forests of his kingdom on a hunting expedition, accompanied by his servant, Jasper. Night fell upon them, prompting them to seek refuge in a cave. They roasted a rabbit, enjoyed a hearty meal, and saved a portion for breakfast. Jasper fashioned two beds from leaves and kindled a fire to keep them warm. The prince removed his boots and soon drifted into slumber on the soft leaf bedding.

The following morning, the prince inquired about his boots and was taken aback by their condition. "Why haven't my boots been cleaned?" he demanded.

"I thought that, considering your continued journey, they would quickly become dirty again," Jasper replied.

The prince's frustration grew. He snatched a piece of rabbit skewered on a stick, placed it in his mouth, and mounted his horse. "Farewell, Jasper!" he mumbled with his mouth full. "I have no use for such a lazy servant!" With that, he took the reins of another horse and rode away at a leisurely pace.

Jasper called after him, "And what about my wages?"

"Even if I gave them to you, you would spend them quickly!" the prince calmly retorted before disappearing into the distance.

Jasper had no destination in mind. He remained in the forest and took up the trade of a woodcutter. One day, he encountered a young girl collecting firewood. Her name was Anne. They married, and soon they welcomed two children into their family, Hansel and Gretel.

The Generous King

(King Theodore, King Zorgh, King Edward)

King Theodore, the ruler of the land where Snow White will one day be born, led a long and ruthless war against King Zorgh, the lord of the neighboring kingdom. They fought over some trivial matter. The real reason had long been forgotten, but the war was remembered for the terrible final battle that took place near a location still called Bloody Field today.

As it is known, King Theodore's army won that war, and King Zorgh had to withdraw with the remainder of his forces to his own country. However, King Theodore, despite being the victor, was gravely wounded in that battle. The moment the trumpeter sounded the victory, the king fell from his horse and, fatally injured, remained lying on the muddy field.

Thick red blood flowed from all the cracks in his armor.

All his generals immediately gathered around the mortally wounded king. The king suffered from a terrible thirst and, with great effort, he said, "Water!"

Someone immediately handed him a small gourd with water. The king slowly brought the gourd to his lips, and just as he was about to take a sip, he noticed a young wounded soldier in the mud beside him, who looked at that precious liquid with immense longing. The generous king handed him the gourd and said, "Take it, young man! You need it more than I do." With these words, King Theodore passed away.

The young soldier recovered from his wounds, and several years later, he rose in rebellion against the son of the very king who had saved him. He defeated him and ascended the throne under the name Edward II. He was Snow White's father.

The Fifth Knight

(Queen Leah, King Stephen)

Queen Leah, Sleeping Beauty's mother was a beautiful and exceptionally wise woman. She was still quite young when her father passed away, leaving her with a powerful throne and a vast kingdom to rule. Recognizing her own youth and lack of experience, she sought an honest and capable advisor and devised a clever plan to find one.

One evening, she invited the five most esteemed knights to her court and hosted a splendid dinner in their honor. She served the finest dishes and poured wines they had never tasted before. For this occasion, she adorned herself in her most exquisite dress. Following dinner, a grand celebration ensued, featuring drinking, singing, and dancing. At the peak of the evening, the queen herself took off her shoes and danced on the table. When the revelry subsided, the young queen addressed her knights.

"My dear knights," she said, "I have a few questions I would like to ask you. I hope your answers won't disappoint me." The young queen raised her left hand, displaying five unusually large diamond rings. "Behold these beautiful diamonds," she proudly declared. "These rings will serve as a reward for your honesty."

"Bravo! Bravo! Long live the queen!" the nobles enthusiastically cheered.

Seated barefoot on her throne, the queen continued, "So, gentlemen! Do you know a more beautiful queen than myself? What are your thoughts on my fame and power? Do you believe neighboring kingdoms rival mine in power? Have you visited any castle as splendid and wealthy as mine?"

Enchanted by the size and beauty of the diamonds, four of the knights eagerly responded. As if in competition, they extolled the greatness of their ruler in every way.

"You surpass all queens in history."

"You are the most powerful!"

"You are the most beautiful!"

"No woman, no queen, can compare to you!"

They praised her beauty, talents, virtues—actually they excessively praised her in everything.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" the queen expressed her gratitude, flashing her irresistible smile.

Finally, she placed a diamond ring on the hand of each of the four knights, and they happily departed. The queen then approached the fifth knight, who had remained silent throughout the evening.

"Why do you remain silent, Sir Stephen? What is your opinion of me and my rule?"

"My opinion, Your Majesty," the dignified knight began, "is this: All your glory, power, and beauty will quickly fade if they rely solely on the brilliance and opulence of diamonds, rather than on the precise fulfillment of the royal duties assigned to you."

A moment of silence followed, and then a spark ignited in the queen's eyes.

"You will not receive the fifth diamond," she said decisively, before adding in a gentler tone, "But you will have my trust, my friendship... and my love, if you accept it."

The dignified knight knelt before the queen.

"Your Majesty, I will always be at your service, with all my heart," the knight declared.

The young queen knelt before the knight, gently touching his face. "Stay with me, my knight," she softly said. "In you, I see the kind of friend that both I and my throne need."

The following morning, the queen and her knight enjoyed breakfast with smiles on their faces when the other four knights burst in, excited and angry.

"Your Majesty, the jeweler deceived you!"

"The diamonds are fake!"

"Fake! Can you believe it!"

"All of them!"

"Why do you complain?" the queen responded with a smile. "Be thankful you still have your heads on your shoulders. Did you think I didn't know the diamonds were fake? I received nothing from you except base flattery and false praise. I gave you tit-for-tat. Those who deceive eventually get deceived." Then she turned to the fifth knight. "And those who love shall be loved."

She married her new advisor and made him king. Soon, a daughter was born to them who would become famous under the name Sleeping Beauty, but their mighty kingdom would face a danger that neither wisdom nor nobility could prevent.