

SNOW PRINCE

Once upon a time, in the middle of winter when the sky let snow flakes fall like goose down on the earth, a beautiful King was sitting at an ebony-framed window, sowing. As he did so, his mind wandered thinking about the falling snow and the King pricked his finger with a needle. Three drops of blood fell on the snow. The red blood looked so beautiful on the snow-white snow and he thought *If only I had a baby that were as fair as snow, with cheeks as rosy as blood and eyes as black as the ebony frame!*

It was not long before the King had a son, as fair as snow, with cheeks as rosy as blood and eyes as black as ebony, and he called him Snow Prince. The King died soon after the baby was born and the Queen married another man, a very handsome man and very proud of his looks.



The new King was the most beautiful man in the entire kingdom and he would stand in front of his mirror every morning and ask:

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

And the mirror would always reply:

My King, you are the fairest here so true.

And the King was certain he was the fairest of all.

Meanwhile, the young Prince grew older and more beautiful and his beauty soon outshone that of the King. On Snow Prince's seventh birthday, the King came up to the mirror and asked the usual question:

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

But this time the mirror replied:

Famed is thy beauty, Majesty. But hold, a lovely lad I see. Alas, Snow Prince is more fair than thee.

Upon hearing these words, the King turned pale with envy and hated Snow Prince wholeheartedly ever since. Whenever he looked at him he was thinking that Snow Prince was the one who made his beauty only second best in the land. He was completely overpowered by hatred and his envy would not let him find peace again. Eventually, he called for a Hunts-woman and said to her:

Take Snow Prince far into the forest and there you will kill him. But to make doubly sure you do not fail bring me back his heart. I will cook it in salted water and eat it.

The Hunts-woman took Snow Prince into the forest but when she took out her knife Snow Prince began to cry and beg for his life. He promised to run away into the forest and never ever

return home again. The Hunts-woman felt compassion and sympathy because Snow Prince was so beautiful and she thought: *Beasts in the forest will soon devour him anyway and I feel so good it won't be me who will kill him.* At this very moment, a wild boar ran passing by. The Hunts-woman killed the wild boar, cut out its heart and took it with her to present to the King as proof of Snow Prince's death. The King cooked it in salted water and ate it, as planned, certain it was Snow Prince's heart.

Meanwhile, Snow Prince was all alone in the big forest, scared. He began to run and ran on sharp rocks and through thorny bushes all day. Finally, as the sun was setting, he reached a small cottage. The cottage belonged to seven dwarfs. The dwarfs worked in a mine and were not home at the time. Snow Prince entered the cottage and saw that everything inside was tiny but clean and orderly. There was a tiny table and on it there were seven tiny plates, seven tiny spoons, seven tiny forks and knives, seven tiny cups and there were seven carefully done tiny beds near the far wall.

Snow Prince was hungry and thirsty so he ate some vegetables and some bread from each tiny plate and he drank a droplet of wine from each of the seven tiny cups. He was very tired so he tried to lie down and sleep a little. He tried each of the seven tiny beds, one by one, but none was large enough, except for the last one where he lay and fell asleep.

At dusk, seven dwarfs returned home from the mine. They lit seven tiny candles and saw that someone had been in their house.



The first dwarf said:

Someone had been sitting on my stool!

The second dwarf said:

Someone had been eating from my plate!

The third dwarf said:

Someone had been eating my bread!

The fourth dwarf said:

Someone had been eating my vegetables!

The fifth dwarf said:

Someone had been using my fork!

The sixth dwarf said:

Someone had been cutting with my knife!

The seventh dwarf said:

Someone had been drinking from my cup!

Then the first dwarf said:

Someone had been lying in my bed!

The second dwarf cried:

Someone had been lying in my bed, too!

And it went on like that until the seventh dwarf saw Snow Prince sleeping in her bed. The seven dwarfs rushed towards the bed and marveled at the sight. They brought their seven tiny candles and stared at sleeping Snow Prince.

Oh dear, oh dear, they cried. He is so beautiful!

They found they liked Snow Prince very much but they did not wake him up and let him sleep till the next morning. The seventh dwarf had share a bed with her companions, one hour in each bed and this is how the night went by.

When Snow Prince woke up, they asked him who he was and what had made him come to their cottage. Snow Prince told them about the bad step-father who had him killed, about the Hunts-woman sparing his life and about him running all day to finally reach the tiny cottage. The dwarfs felt very sorry for the boy and said:

If you will keep our house for us, and cook, clean, mend clothes, make the beds and knit, and if you keep everything clean and orderly you may stay with us and you shall have everything that you need. We return home in the evening so dinner must be ready by then, but we spend our days in the mine, looking for gold. You will be alone then so beware of your bad step-father and do let anyone in.

Meanwhile, the step-father believed he was again the most beautiful man in the kingdom. He stood in front of the mirror the next morning and asked:

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

But the mirror again replied:

You, my King, are fair; it is true. But Snow Prince, beyond the mountains is still a thousand times fairer than you.

This startled the King, for he realised that he had been deceived. The Hunts-women had not killed Snow Prince. Only dwarfs lived beyond the mountains so he immediately knew they must have saved Snow Prince. Then he thought, and thought again, how he could kill Snow Prince, for as long as the mirror did not tell him he was the most beautiful man in the world his envy would give him no rest. At last, he found a new way. He disguised himself as an old peddler, put on a mask so that no one would recognise him and went to the house of the seven dwarfs.

Knocking on the door he called out:

Beautiful wares for sale, for sale!

Snow Prince White peered out the window and said:

Good day, good man, what do you have for sale?

Good wares, beautiful wares, he answered. Bodice laces in all colors, dear child.

And he took out one at the top that was braided from yellow, red and blue silk.

Would you like this one?

I certainly would, and thought, I can let that old peddler in, he will do no harm to me.

Snow Prince unbolted the door and bought one pretty bodice lace.

Child, said the old man, come, let me lace you up properly.

The unsuspecting Snow Prince stood before him and the old man pulled so quickly and so hard that Snow Prince could not breathe and collapsed as if dead. The old man hurried away happy.

Not long afterward, in the evening time, the seven dwarfs came home. How terrified when they saw their dear Snow Prince lying on the ground, as though he were dead. They lifted him up, and, seeing that he was too tightly laced, they cut the lace in two. Then Snow Prince began to breathe and soon he came back to life. When the dwarfs heard what had happened they said:

The old peddler was no one else but the bad king trying to kill you. Take care and let no one in ever again.

Meanwhile, the King asked the mirror back in the castle:

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

And the mirror replied again: *You, my King, are fair; it is true. But Snow Prince, living with the dwarfs beyond the mountains is still a thousand times fairer than you.*

When the king heard that all his blood ran to his heart because he knew that Snow Prince had come back to life. He spent all day and night trying to develop a new plan to trick Snow Prince. At last, he made a poisoned comb. Then he disguised himself, taking the form of a different old man. Thus he went across the seven mountains to the seven dwarfs, knocked on the door, and called out but Snow-White looked out and said:

Go on your way. I am not allowed to let anyone in.

The King pulled out the poisoned comb and when Snow Prince looked at the comb flickered wonderfully in the sunshine. Snow Prince noticed the man was a complete stranger so he opened the door and bought the comb.

Now let me comb your hair properly, said the peddler.

He had barely stuck the comb into the Prince's hair when the boy fell down unconscious.

The poison will kill you very soon, the King hissed and, relieved, he walked back to the castle.

The dwarfs came right in time. They what had happened and quickly pulled out the poisoned comb. Snow Prince opened his eyes and solemnly promised never ever to let anyone in.

The King asked the mirror:

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

And the mirror replied again:

You, my King, are fair; it is true. But Snow Prince, living with the dwarfs beyond the mountains is still a thousand times fairer than you.

When the King heard the mirror saying this, he shook and trembled with anger.

Snow Prince shall die, he shouted, *if it costs me my life!*

Then he went into his most secret room -- no one else was allowed inside -- and he made a poisoned apple. From the outside it was beautiful, white with red cheeks, and anyone who saw it would want it. Then, the King disguised himself as a peasant and went across the seven mountains to the seven dwarfs and knocked on the door.

Snow Prince stuck his head out the window and said:

I am not allowed to let anyone in. The dwarfs have strictly forbidden me to do so.

That is all right with me, answered the peasant. *I am selling apples. Here, I'll give you one of them to taste.*

I cannot accept anything. The dwarfs have forbidden me to do so.



If you are afraid, I'll cut the apple in two. You eat the beautiful red half, and I shall eat the white half.

Now the apple had been so artfully made that only the red half was poisoned. When Snow Prince saw that the peasant was indulging in part of the apple he could no longer resist, and he stuck his hand out and took the poisoned half. He barely had a bite in his mouth when he fell to the ground dead.

The King returned happy to the castle and asked the mirror:

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

And the mirror replied:

My King, you are the fairest here so true.

At last, I will have some peace, he said. *I am the most beautiful man in the kingdom and this time Snow Prince will not come back to life.*

The dwarfs came home from the mine in the evening. Snow Prince was lying dead on the floor. The dwarfs loosened his bodice lace, combed his hair to look for a poison but nothing helped. They could not bring Snow Prince back to life. They lay the body on a bier and all seven of them sat at his side crying for three days. They wanted to bury him but he looked so fresh. His cheeks were rosy all the time unlike in all dead people. So they had a glass coffin made for Snow Prince and lay him inside it so that they could continue to marvel at him. They wrote his name and origin on the bier with golden letters and each would hold a vigil next to the coffin never leaving him alone. Snow Prince lay in the coffin for a long, long time but his body did not decay. He was still as fair as snow, his cheeks were rosy as blood and his eye would be ebony black if he could



open them. He lay there as though he was fast asleep.

One day, a young princess knocked on the dwarfs' cottage door looking for a night shelter. When she entered the playroom she saw Snow Prince, beautifully lit by candle light. She could barely take her eyes off the beautiful boy. She read the golden inscription and learned he was a king's son. She asked the dwarfs to sell the coffin with dead Snow Prince to her but they did not want to do so for all the gold in the world. So she asked them to give it to her as she could no longer live without being able to look at him. She promised to honour and respect him as her most cherished one. The dwarfs felt pity for the princess and gave her

the coffin.

The princess asked for the coffin to be carried to the castle and placed in a room where she then spent all days, sitting beside it and looking at Snow Prince. She was always sad whenever she had to leave and do other things because this meant that she could not be looking at him. Nor was she able to eat quietly if the coffin did not stand right beside her. This made the servants angry

because they had to carry the coffin to and fro. One day, one of the servants lost his temper. He opened the lid, straightened Snow Prince's body and said:

We have been so exasperated with this work and it's all because of a dead boy!

He then hit his back with his hand, which dislodged the poisoned apple bite from Snow Prince's throat. Snow Prince was brought back to life. He approached the Princess and she was rejoiced seeing her beloved Snow Prince alive. They sat next to each other and enjoyed a meal together.

Their wedding was planned for the following day and even the Snow Prince's cruel step-father was invited. On the day, he approached the mirror and asked:

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?

And the mirror replied:

You, my King, are fair, it is true. But the young king wed today is still a thousand times fairer than you.

The King was shocked when he heard these words. He was so terrified that he could barely speak. However, his envy forced him to go the wedding to see the young king. When he arrived in the castle, he saw it was Snow Prince. A pair of iron boots were put into the fire to make them shine with heat and the King was ordered to put them on and dance all night wearing them. His feet were horribly burnt but he could not stop dancing until he danced himself dead.

