



Rapunzel

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Humor

A long time ago, in a faraway land, deep in an enchanted forest there stood the worst hair salon in the history of time.

The woman who ran it couldn't tell the difference between a pair of scissors and a hot air balloon. Her assistant Malik was a black cat of doubtful origins, and when it came to cutting hair, the cat was the lesser of the two evils.

She also had a beautiful adopted daughter named Rapunzel.

The hair salon stood on the top floor of a large brick tower. The tower had only one door, also at the top. A wooden staircase led there from outside.

Rapunzel was very happy in the salon, and she would walk around, humming a sweet, lovely tune as she helped her mother and Malik. She had many friends, and she was popular with the customers. Her bliss was part of the reason people came to the salon. She was also smart enough never to let anyone there cut her hair.

But her serene happiness was destined to be tragically disturbed one cold winter day.

That day started just like any other day, but at exactly two p.m., a tall, dark, young stranger climbed up the stairs, cutting the line, and walked straight into the hair salon like he owned the place.

"I'd like to speak with the owner. Now."

“She’s gone to the market today,” said Malik. “We’re a bit understaffed, so you’ll have to wait.”

The young man was no other than the famous Prince John. The richest man in the kingdom.

“What did you just say to me?”

“I said you will have to WAIT,” said Malik.

“What?! Do you know who I am?”

“No, but by the staring, it seems some of the ladies do. You’re quite a distraction. Please get back in line.”

“I’m surprised you don’t recognize me.”

“Get used to the disappointment.”

“Right. I see where this is going. How much?”

“How much what?”

“How much money? I’m the richest man in this kingdom.”

“That’s okay, nobody’s perfect.”

“I’ll pay you more than everyone this month put together. Just get me in a chair.”

“Thanks, but no thanks. Get back in line and try to grow some patience.”

“I beg your pardon!”

“Don’t beg. Just get in line. I need to get back to work here. If you’re bored while waiting, you can speak to Rapunzel.”

Prince John was shocked. Nobody had ever dared speak to him that way.

He was always adored, and treated like the royalty that he was, and he was used to the finer things in life. He ate gourmet desserts for breakfast. He had four yachts – one for sailing in each direction. He drove the finest horse carriages since the invention of the wheel, and he drove them fast and hard. He was admired and he was handsome. He was tall and dark and had deep, piercing eyes. He wore shiny coats and was always silk-clean shaved. He smelled like the wild midnight on an adventurous cruise.

He slept in the best suites at the best inns, and he never slept alone.

That’s because Prince John had strong muscles.

Everywhere.

Prince John was not only the richest man in his kingdom.

He was also the most evil man in his kingdom.

He was just about to take out his sword to slay Malik, when he saw Rapunzel. Her hair, woven into a long braid, was a golden decoration to the room and her clear blue eyes shined like sapphires. She was sweeping the fallen hair on the floor, and her lovely hum filled the air in the most enchanting way. Her olive dress swirled softly.

Prince John looked at her perfect figure, and the kindness and gentility in her eyes. And she stopped for a moment and looked straight at his hard posture.

And, just like that,

At first sight,

They hated everything about each other.

“How can I help you, sir?”

“I’d like to have my hair cut.”

“You’ve come to the right place.”

“Yeah, right!”

“Is there anything I can do for you?”

He looked at her from top to bottom. “Probably not.”

“Then how about you take a seat here and we’ll get you in the queue?”

“Fine.”

When his turn finally arrived, Malik did his best to please Prince John, but his style was not exactly fit for John’s luxury taste.

When Prince John returned home, he looked in the mirror and got very angry. “That cat Malik! I bet his mother was nothing more than a ...”

The line of appropriate curses to describe what Prince John thought about Malik’s mother is too long to be given here. Prince John was mad with anger and diligent – he used every single one of these curses.

After two days of cursing, he was just getting more and more angry, and his evil rage burned in his veins. So he ordered his men to burn down the hair salon, and leave no trace of it.

Incidentally, Prince John was right about Malik's mother.

A week later, when the salon owner was away again, a group of Prince John's men came at night to set the hair salon on fire. But when they tried to burn it down, the fire only destroyed the wooden staircase, and the brick tower remained unharmed.

In the morning, the salon owner returned and found a group of customers waiting at the bottom of the tower.

"What happened?"

"Prince John sent his men to burn the salon in the night, ma'am."

The salon owner looked up. Rapunzel waved to her.

"Are you all right, honey? How is Malik?"

"We're good, but we are stuck. We don't know what to do. Without the stairs, we can't come down."

The salon owner thought about this. In what could only be described as a spark of genius, she released into the world one of the most famous sentences in fairy tale history:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair!"

"Brilliant!" said Malik.

Rapunzel grabbed a pair of scissors and cut her braid, right below the shoulders.

She tied the braid strongly around one of the iron pillars and threw it down.

The crowd clapped, and the salon became the greatest sensation of the kingdom overnight.

And Rapunzel looked even more beautiful with her new hairdo.

Prince John was furious. He needed a new plan to get his revenge. He ordered his men to spy on the hair salon, and the next time the owner was away, he made his move.

At dawn, right after the owner left, he approached the tower and hid between the bushes below.

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,” he imitated the salon owner’s voice. “Let down your hair!”

Rapunzel threw the braid down.

Without a wink, Prince John set the braid on fire.

But when the flames touched the tip, the entire braid turned instantly into gold.

Rapunzel and Malik stared at it. They had no idea how this could possibly happen. Nor had they ever seen so much gold in one place.

Prince John was now the second richest man in his kingdom.

“I’ll get you for this!” he cried.

He tried to cut the golden braid, but it moved away from his sword. He tried to pull it down, but it was immune to him. So he climbed up the hair, got to the top and aimed his sword at Rapunzel.

“Come with me and no one gets hurt.”

“Why would you want me to come with you?”

“So we can grow your hair again and get another golden braid.”

“Step aside, Rapunzel,” said Malik. “I’ll handle him. There are two things you need to know about me, mister: there is no martial art in this world that I haven’t mastered, and I’ve got nine lives!”

“Don’t, Malik,” said Rapunzel. “I’ll go with him.”

“What? Why? He’s mine! Let me kick his butt.”

“Malik, please, if you fight him, his guards will destroy the place. I will go on the condition that you leave the hair salon alone.”

“Done,” said Prince John.

“And that you marry her,” said Malik.

“What!?” said Rapunzel and the prince.

“You’re about to ride off with the man who has the worst reputation with women in this country. A deal is a deal only if it works for everybody.”

The prince and Rapunzel looked at each other in disgust.

“Well?” said Malik

“Okay.”

“Deal.”

Malik stood at the top of the tower and watched Prince John and Rapunzel climb down. And then he used his magic dust. And changed everything. The dust landed softly on the prince’s eyes, but he was so absorbed in the climb that he didn’t notice.

Magic dust is unlike any other type of magic.

It’s the joker, the wildcard. There’s no knowing what it might do.

That night, the king died.

The prince was informed by his chief of staff.

“The king is dead. Your Highness...I mean, Your Majesty, tomorrow morning will be your coronation.”

In the morning, Prince John woke up to the most important day of his life. The day he would become king. And he couldn’t see a thing.

Rapunzel was woken by her new maid and was immediately sent to meet Prince John. They had signed their marriage agreement the night before, had a quick royal church wedding they would both wish to forget, and then they slept in separate rooms.

Prince John was sitting with his back toward her when she entered the room.

“Leave us!” he told his chief of staff, who was the only other person there.

Rapunzel approached his chair, softly. “I’m so sorry about your father. I hope you are all right.”

“I’m fine.” But he sounded so sad. “If there is anything I can do, please let me know.”

“Thank you,” he said and started to turn. He was grabbing the chair as he tried to get up, but he stumbled.

Rapunzel rushed to him. “Are you all right?”

He turned his face toward her, but his eyes were looking in the wrong direction.

“Oh dear! Are you blind?”

The prince nodded.

“Oh, you must have loved him so much!”

“What?”

“Your father. You loved him so much, that when you heard he died, you cried yourself blind.”

“That’s... possible.” He did cry, but only a little bit. It was his first time, so he assumed it was a lot.

“I will help you.”

“How?”

“I will hold your hand during the coronation, and walk down the aisle with you very slowly. You can just look down, and people will think it’s because you are mourning. Nobody needs to know the truth.”

He was surprised. No one had ever shown him kindness before. “Why are you so nice to me, after everything I’ve done to you?”

“To teach you.”

Rapunzel helped Prince John dress and prepare for the ceremony. The chief of staff, who was the only other person who knew the truth, helped them walk to the ceremony.

The ceremony was short. Rapunzel held the prince’s hand, as they walked slowly down the aisle. The crown was placed on his head and then he kneeled and held out his hand to receive the king’s sword. When he stood, he waved in all directions blindly. Then the ceremony was over and Rapunzel helped him back to his suite.

A few days passed, But the king’s sight did not improve.

Rapunzel helped him as much as she could and did her best to conceal the awful secret. For convenience, she moved her belongings into his room.

“I will sleep on your couch until you can see again.” This was in no way a sacrifice, since the expensive couch he owned was larger than his bed.

“Are you sure?”

“I am your wife. I should do this.”

“Thank you for everything.”

“You are welcome.” She smiled.

“I was wrong about you, Rapunzel.”

“How so?”

“You are very sexy.”

The weeks went by, and the king was still blind. Rapunzel was always by his side, and she kept coming up with creative ways to conceal his terrible secret from everyone. Even from her mother and Malik when they visited.

He couldn’t believe her kindness. Whenever he needed her, she was there and she was always patient.

At night, he would listen to her breathe and it would calm him down. During the days, her sweet humming

voice would be his favorite music. She was his first waking thought every morning, and his last before falling asleep at night. For the first time in his life, he felt strong for being weak. She was also very easy to please. He'd never met a woman like that before.

Making her happy made him happy. And he made sure that she was kept happy. There were jewelry, and roses, and chocolate and all the comforts she could ever desire.

Courting her became his new hobby.

Sex became hers.

Rapunzel was a very quick study.

And there came a day when Rapunzel tried to count to twenty-eight and failed miserably.

"The queen is pregnant!" The kingdom was overjoyed.

And the baby came nine months later. As they often do.

The hair salon sent a patch of Rapunzel's golden hair as a present, along with Malik.

When he entered the royal chamber, he found King John sitting alone near the window.

"I think we both know why I'm here," said Malik.

"If you're going to kill me, do it right away. I'm not a very patient man."

Malik laughed. "Yes, you are. I actually came here to congratulate you. In the past year, I've heard how you've been listening to your people. How they would come here to this room, and you would hear them with your eyes closed and help everyone in need."

"Rapunzel has been an inspiration."

"I can see that."

"I only wish I could see my little baby girl... I suppose you know my secret."

"Things like that can't escape a cat. I'm truly sorry for your inconvenience."

"That's okay. There's nothing you can do."

"Now, who says there's nothing I can do?"

"What do you mean? What can you do?"

"Ever heard of magic dust?"

"You have magic dust? And you'll use it to help me? How could I ever repay you?"

"Don't worry about it. Think of it as a token of respect between two rivals who became friends."

“Thank you. That is really kind.”

“Oh, and stay a good man.”

And once again, Malik used his magic dust on John.

That night, the baby wouldn't sleep.

They tried everything. Bottles, diapers, warm bed, cold bed, songs, boring poems, cradle, and drugs, for everybody else.

Rapunzel went to town to buy special herbs that soothe crying babies.

And earplugs.

And a bottle of rum.

King John was left alone with his crying daughter.

“What is it? What can we do for you, darling?”

But she just kept crying. He hugged her close.

When John held her like that, a couple of her tears dropped straight into his eyes. For a moment, everything stopped. It was as if the doors of heaven had opened, and he felt a relaxation in his eyes that almost put him to sleep right away. The baby was suddenly silent.

He looked at her perfect serene face. And he saw it perfectly! He couldn't wait to tell Rapunzel.

In the morning, Rapunzel rushed to the hair salon to thank Malik.

“I was just about to come visit you, dear,” said her mother.

“So I saved you a journey! The baby and John are in the carriage. I thought we'd go for a ride and you can finally meet her.”

“Splendid.”

“Can I meet you downstairs? I just wanted a moment with Malik.”

“Sure! I can't wait to meet my little granddaughter.”

The salon owner rushed down and Rapunzel was left alone with Malik, who was sharpening his fingernails to prepare for cutting people's hair.

“Thank you so much for helping John.”

“I was also the reason he went blind.”

“I figured.”

“Did you tell him?”

“No.”

“Better this way.”

“So what’s the catch?”

“Catch?”

“Every time you use that magic dust, something happens. Like with my hair. You used it on me accidentally when I was a little girl and it gave it magical immunity. Fire turned it into gold.”

“That was unplanned.”

“Yes, but this is.”

“True. So?”

“So, where did my husband’s evil go?”

“Is that what’s bothering you?”

“I have a happy marriage. I want it to remain that way.”

“Then don’t worry about it. I don’t know where John’s evil went. The best thing you can do is just forget it was ever there. You’re going to have a very good marriage, with a kind man. Forget the rest. It doesn’t really matter, right?”

“Hmm. Okay. I will follow your advice. Thank you.”

That day, Rapunzel, her mother, and King John rode with the baby into the woods to have a wonderful family day.

As they did for many years to come.

The years passed, and they were good years. Rapunzel had a very good marriage with a good, kind man, and a good, kind king. They had their happily ever- after and Rapunzel followed Malik’s advice and forgot about John’s old evil ways.

As did the kingdom.

But magic never forgets.

A long time ago, about three generations after we started, there lived an evil old lady, who liked to scare her little granddaughter with wolf stories. And her mother’s name was Rapunzel.

– The End –

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