



The Bat Faced Princess

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Animals, Magic, Romance

In the kingdom of Malrioch, there was legend of a princess with the face of a bat, somewhere deep in the Black Forest.

It was during the painting of the Autumn leaves, that Prince Ivan of Malrioch had come to the age of marrying. “Well my son,” the King said, “You’re of age to marry, so go out into the world and find a bride to suit you. For I would like to see you married before I come to the end of my days upon this earth.”

With horse and provisions, the Prince did just that, and set off into the and to fulfill his father’s wish. His travelling led him into the Black Forest, where he met a young witch, with wavy hair the color of dark chocolate, and eyes of sapphires. “Good afternoon, witch and fortune go with you.” He greeted her politely, as he dismounted from his steed.

“Fortune go with you Prince Ivan, for I know what you seek.” She said as she pointed a black nail at his chest. She shared her food with him, and he asked her about the legend of the bat faced Princess.

The witch nodded, “She is real, the same as you and I. Many Princes have asked me where to find the princess in her alabaster tower.”

“How many Princes have succeeded in finding her?”

The witch saw the sun beginning to set, “Oh, they’ve found her, and they’ve all met the same end.” She replied as she looked the Prince over.

“Well, may I please have the same directions that you gave the Princes before me?” Ivan asked the witch politely, for he wished to court this bat faced Princess.

The witch smiled, “The alabaster tower lies in the secluded meadow of Silver Myst, but you should wait until the first three stars appear in the sky.” She replied as she gave him a spool of spun silver thread.

“Thank you, I hope I can win the Princess’s hand.” Ivan replied and the witch tapped her nails against the fire, “Look out for overconfidence Prince Ivan,” she warned him. “The last Prince who rebuked the Princess’s appearance had his face ripped off.”

Needless to say, that was enough to send a shiver slithering up his spine, he gulped nervously at the thought of meeting that fate. “If you are humble, and you do not judge the book by it’s cover, you will be rewarded.” The witch said as crickets began to stir and sing.

When the first three stars appeared in the sky, the witch sent Ivan on his way, with the spool of silver thread unraveling in front of him (The witch told him that the thread would lead him to the alabaster tower and the Princess therein).

Prince Ivan followed the silver thread, and sure enough, it led him to Silver Myst and the alabaster tower. From the tower, he could hear such beautiful singing, the source being the Princess no doubt.

Prince Ivan listened to the words of the song, and he found that he knew them as well.

‘For in the light of the stars, I was no longer afraid.

I’m safe in your eyes, and I will guard you within mine.

For if I could be with you, it wouldn’t matter.

Together we can disappear.’

As he sang with the Princess, a silk ladder fell from the window and down to him. Ivan continued to sing with the Princess, their voices blending together in wonderful harmony, as he climbed up the ladder.

‘I was caught by that hint of promise in your voice...’

‘Perhaps if we pray for a miracle...’

‘Let these vows come from our dreams.’

‘Together we can disappear.’

Prince Ivan slipped inside the tower, and sitting on the bed, brushing her pitch black hair was the bat faced Princess. Her golden brown eyes gazed at the Prince, who only gazed at her with the warmest blue eyes.

Prince Ivan got down on one knee, and kissed her hand, “Princess, you are lovely as the day and night. May I have your hand in marriage?” He asked politely. For he did truly find her to be lovely.

“Dear Prince, I accept your proposal, for you have been kind to me.” She replied, “However, I must spend three days alone after the wedding, in my own chamber. No one must see me until nightfall.”

Prince Ivan agreed, and he took her home to his father. The king was thrilled to meet his soon to be daughter-in-law, he complimented her face, saying that she had the sharpest senses he had even seen before.

Prince Ivan and the bat faced Princess were married, and the Princess was given chambers to herself and the key that went with them. These chambers were next to the Prince’s own sleeping chamber.

“Now for three days until nightfall I cannot see you, but can we speak through the walls?” He asked his wife as they danced during the wedding feast. “We may speak through the walls, but no matter what you hear, you must never try to enter my chambers during the day.”

Prince Ivan understood, and he vowed that he would be a good husband to the bat faced Princess, for that is what she deserved.

The moon was honey for the newlyweds, kiss after kiss, embrace after embrace, a necklace of warm consummation. But when the morning comes, the Prince is alone in his bed, snuggling his wife’s wedding veil.

Ivan woke up, and he remembered what his wife had told him. Although he was wanted to remain in bed with her, and stroke her ears, he respected her wish to be alone in the day. “My dear, my dear, with ears so keen, are you awake?” He asked through the wall.

“Good morning to you as well, dear husband.” She replied sweetly, her voice slipped through the wall so clear, it was almost as if she was still in his chambers. As they spoke with each other, the Prince could hear the sound of shattering glass. “Are you well dear? I hear breaking glass...” He asked his wife, wanting to make sure she was fine.

“It was only the wind that knocked my chalice on the floor, I am well. You’ll see me at nightfall, when the first three stars appear in the sky.” The bat faced Princess replied to ease her husband’s worries.

Ivan accepted her words, and he tended to the kingdom and the needs of the people, waiting for nightfall. Time seemed to slow to a snail’s pace as he waited, he did everything he could to take his mind off of the time, but it wasn’t easy.

“Good things are worth waiting for Ivan,” he told himself as he walked around the royal library, looking for more books to read. “She has her reasons for being alone in the day, and it’s not my place to meddle in her affairs.” He grabbed stack of books, and read in his room.

At nightfall, when the first three stars appeared in the sky, the bat faced Princess came to her husband’s chambers, just as she had promised. She was in a simple gown as pale as the moon, with lace at the sleeves. “I thank you for respecting my wish today.” She said.

Prince Ivan threw the book he was reading on his bed, and embraced his beloved bat faced wife. He had completely forgotten about how long the day seemed to pass into nightfall.

They cuddled and kissed in the Prince’s bed, and he stroked her large ears. “I am thankful to have married you.” she said as she stroked his hair. This news overjoyed the Prince, and he kissed his wife all over.

Another night of wonderful comfort, but when morning came, the Prince was alone in his bed. In his hands was the lace from his wife's gown that she wore last night, "My dear, my dear, with eyes so sharp, are you awake?" He asked through the wall.

"I am awake my love, and I thank you once again for respecting my wish yesterday." she replied through the wall, and he heard the sound of clashing swords. "My dear, you're certain that you are well? I can hear swords clashing. . ." he asked politely but the worry was there.

"I am well my husband, it was just ashes clattering against the fireplace. You will see me at nightfall when the first three stars appear in the sky, just as you did last." She replied to soothe her husband's worries for her, and he accepted her words.

It was the same as yesterday, the Prince and his wife conversed with one another, until he left to tend to the kingdom and the needs of the people. The time seemed to go slower than yesterday, and the Prince wanted nothing more than to have tea in the garden with his beloved bat faced wife, but he couldn't, he had to wait for nightfall.

He read books in the library, and practiced his fencing, anything to keep him from thinking of the time.

Ivan had just entered the garden, to pick strawberries for himself and his wife, when a faerie in a cloak of black velvet came to him. Her face was hidden by the cloak, and the only thing he could see was the pale rose lips which spoke to him.

"Would you have the bat or the maiden by your bedside?"

"Kind faerie, I am bound to my wife. I will always love her, be she a bat or human or any other in between."

"Then, do not give in to your worry and doubt, but wait for her. For she is bound to the cloak of a bat, which she has worn since her birth."

Just as she came, the cloaked faerie vanished, as if she had never been in the garden at all. The Prince picked strawberries late into the afternoon, at sunset he went to his room and read.

As it happened before, when the first three stars appeared in the sky, so did the bat faced Princess appear in

Prince Ivan's chambers. She wore a shimmering gown like the stars, with an indigo blue sash of gossamer around her waist. "Thank you for respecting my wish today."

Prince Ivan threw the book on his bed, and spun his wife around and round three times. He was so happy to see her, that he had forgotten about the time he had to wait for her.

They dined on the fresh strawberries that he had picked, and they embraced one another. Such peace and comfort swaddled them both so, that nothing else in the world seemed to matter.

As the night went on, the bat faced Princess placed a kiss on Ivan's forehead. "You've done well these past two days, but tomorrow will be the hardest part of all." She said as she stroked his hair.

"I promise, I will wait for you, even if it takes a thousand years."

"I know will, but I will lock the door to my chambers, for no one must see me tomorrow until nightfall."

Prince Ivan nodded and they fell sound asleep together. The next morning, Prince Ivan is alone in his bed, clutching the gossamer sash to his heart.

He pressed his ear against the wall, and heard the steady drip drop drip of a liquid onto the floor, with the sound of shuddering breath. Such a sound worried the Prince, and he wondered if his wife was truly alright alone in her chambers.

"My dear, my dear, with wit so clever, are you awake? Are you well?"

There was no reply, and Prince Ivan heard a body slam against the wall, as his wife cried out in pain.

"My dear! My dear! Are you safe? Are you well?"

"I am fine, I am fine, dear husband." The bat faced Princess replied in a weary voice, "I just tripped and spilled paint on my gown, you'll see me at nightfall, when the first three stars appear in the sky. Just as I did the past two days." Her words did soothe him a little, yet the Prince couldn't help but worry, for he loved his wife, bat features and all.

It was the same as before, the Prince and his wife spoke with one another, and then he tended to the kingdom

and the people's needs.

This time day seemed to pass slower than the previous days combined! All the while, the Prince did everything to try and keep his mind off of the time. He had been patient and waited for his wife at nightfall before, and he was determined to do it again.

But the worry of losing his wife, pricked and twisted his stomach into knots, "Good things are worth waiting for Ivan," he said to himself, "She has her reasons for being alone, and I am in no place for meddling in her affairs." He explored every inch of the castle (save for his wife's chambers) to keep his mind off of the time and worry.

Time passed on snail back, and the sun set into the sea. Ivan looked to the sky, the first three stars would appear in the sky, but when? When? He didn't eat all day for thinking of his wife, the sounds he had heard from the other side of the wall, it worried him sick.

Finally, the first three stars appeared in the sky, and there stood the bat faced Princess in a gray dress, her wings were spread out behind her.

Prince Ivan leapt and kissed her passionately, and held her close. It had been torture to wait for her, but here she was, safe and sound.

The bat faced Princess kissed her husband's forehead, "My love, you have been kind to me and you respected my wish for the three days I asked you to. But now I must ask of you one last wish."

"Whatever you ask of me, I will do."

The Princess then pull a bronze dagger from the sleeve of her dress, "My dear, I want you to take this dagger and skin me." She said as she held the dagger out to her husband.

Prince Ivan fell to his knees, "My dear! Give me some other task! I cannot hurt you!" He begged, his blue eyes gazed into hers for any sign of mercy. For this request she asked of him chilled him to the bone, he loved his wife, he would hurt himself before he ever thought of laying a harmful hand upon even a hair on her head.

The bat faced Princess fell to her knees as well, "My love, this is all that I ask of you, please fulfill this final

wish.” She said gently before kissing her husband’s forehead, and laying down on the floor, humming their song softly as she waited for the bronze dagger to touch her skin.

With tears in his eyes and an aching heart, Prince Ivan took the dagger, and began to skin his wife. Though he hated the thought of harming her, he kept going, the sound of his wife’s humming kept him calm enough to fulfill the task at hand.

But listen, as the Prince peeled away the skin, what should he find but the fair skin of a maiden underneath.

Confused and curious, he continued skinning his wife, not a drop of blood fell on the dagger. When he had finished peeling the bat skin away, there laid a maiden in a gown, golden and warm as the sun.

The maiden looked up at her husband and smiled, she wore the wedding ring he had given her upon her slender finger.

Prince Ivan dropped the dagger, and embraced her with tears of joy washing away the tears of heartache that had rested on his cheek.

“I am Princess Betillia, and I was given the cloak of a bat as a gift for my eighteenth birthday. When I was trying it on, an imp jinxed it so I couldn’t take it off, and the only way to break the jinx was for a Prince to skin me with the enchanted bronze dagger I gave you.”

The Prince kissed her passionately upon her rose pink lips, “My dearest, I’ll always love you, bat cloak and all. Jinx, curse, or hex, nothing will ever drive me away from you. Not now, not ever.”

The two embraced and kissed and rejoiced late into the night, and they fell asleep in the early hours of dawn, snuggled under the bat cloak.

The word spread throughout the castle of the broken jinx, and the king had a feast prepared and held for Prince Ivan and Princess Betillia.

But goodness me if I don’t wake them up soon, they’ll sleep through the whole celebration!

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