



The Queen's Secret Snow

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Retold Fairy Tales

The first thing Snow noticed about the new Queen were the fingernail indents deeply embedded into her palms. When her father the King had left the castle three months ago, accompanied by the crown's finest soldiers and horses, Snow had anticipated foreign gifts in the form of clothes, fabrics, and spices; certainly not a new mother. The new Queen, although only a few years her elder, was a stark contrast to Snow. Her deep brown eyes and caramel smooth skin caught not only the eye of the King (who had burned and pillaged the Queen's kingdom before taking her as his prize) but also his daughter. The King was a vain man and spent many hours in front of his mirror admiring his own beauty, not paying attention to his young bride or daughter. Snow's pale white skin became flushed at the very sight of the new Queen while the Queen became transfixed with Snow's dark black eyes. The Queen and Snow took solace in each other and began to engage in stolen glances and secret rendezvous that warmed the cold empty halls of the palace.

The King, although a heartless cruel man, was not ignorant; he could feel the tension between his new young bride and his once lackluster daughter. When he attempted to marry Snow to a prince from a neighboring kingdom, she put up such a fight that his suspicions grew and he had the lovers followed in the dead of night. The truth of their friendship was revealed and the King was filled with a rage that burned through the entire kingdom like one hundred suns. He demanded his daughter be taken into the woods and killed by a huntsman while his wife remained under lock and key inside the castle.

Snow shivered in the woods, waiting to die at the hands of her father, until the cloaked huntsman slipped off heavy black gloves and revealed smooth brown hands, palms pierced with fingernail marks that were finally fading. For the Queen was twice as clever as the King: she enchanted her prison guard with stories of places far

away, tales of pirates and quests and adventures. The guard would leave her shackles unlocked every evening in exchange for the entertainment. Not only was the Queen a master of words but she excelled in the art of disguise as well. She whisked Snow to a cottage in the surrounding forest where seven small miners watched over her. Each night the Queen would disguise herself in rags and visit Snow at her cottage, bringing her thoughtful gifts. On the first night the Queen gave Snow a collection of stories, bound in rich leather and gold strands. The next night, the Queen arrived with a beautiful set of paintbrushes and paints for Snow. And on the third night, Snow was given a beautiful red apple that glistened in the moonlight and matched the color of Snow's flushed cheeks.

These presents captivated the seven miners that lived in the woods. They became envious of the intricate gifts given to the princess by the Queen, and they devised a plan to poison Snow so they could keep the treasures for themselves. When the Queen discovered the glass coffin that preserved her lifeless Snow, she felt the last drop of humanity evaporate within her. One by one, the miners were struck down by the furious Queen. Her fire only grew as she returned to the castle and raged through the cold silent halls, looking for the man who had killed everyone she ever loved. Her anger, loss, and despair took her straight into her husband's chambers where he awoke with a start at the sight of his bride. The Queen slammed her fist into the King's precious mirror and drove a large shard of glass deep into his icy heart.

And so the Queen fled from the kingdom, determined to forget those dark black eyes and snow white skin.

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