



The Wicked Queen Grimhilde

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Fable

I will make this short and I will make this snappy; I am the Wicked Queen and I need to be the most beautiful person in the world! Is that really so much to ask?

That sounded very villain-like, didn't it? People are always assuming things. They assume that I'm totally evil and selfish when they don't even know my backstory! (Which is a bit long, mind you.) So I'll tell you my backstory, because I am really tired of being treated the way I am.

Once upon a time, actually no, my story is completely different to hers. So it will start different, too.

A long time ago, there was a little girl with long black hair as dark as a midnight sky. Her eyes were dark blue, deeper than the ocean. You could sometimes see a twinkle, if you looked long enough, though most dismissed it as a trick of the light.

She sounds pretty, but I have not yet described her other features, which are not quite as charming. She had a too-large nose which was straight with a bump in the middle, it looked as though it was broken though it actually wasn't. Her cheekbones were just barely visible and her eyebrows were too bushy and shadowed her narrow eyes, placing them in constant darkness.

Her parents; on the other hand, were beautiful, with personalities to match. Mrs. Lager and Mr. Lager were the perfect couple, Grimhilde was raised with delicate care.

But, though they didn't know it, Grimhilde's parents could be a little condescending at times, and often made Grimhilde feel small and disappointing. They treated his more as a precious object than a person. They didn't understand the full meaning of having a child.

When Grimhilde was 7, her parents had a carriage crash. A serious carriage crash. A horse, Barnaby, had

gotten frightened at something and bucked then galloped in the complete opposite direction that the other horse was going, altogether resulting in a huge, muddled heap.

Grimhilde, who'd been at her music lessons, was rushed to the hospital in a frenzy. She doesn't remember much about it, in fact, the only thing she remembers is sitting beside her mother, petrified. Her mother had whispered to her; "Be the most beautiful girl in all the land. My beautiful girl."

Grimhilde had sucked in those words like a butterfly sucks nectar; and they stuck in her head forever.

So Grimhilde cut her eyebrows. She made them thin and round and perfect. She wore make-up on her cheeks (to emphasise her cheekbones) and her deep-blue eyes (to make them pop).

She was pleased with the new look, and though she knew she looked stunning, she wanted to look the most stunning. Second-best just wouldn't do. Not for her mother it wouldn't.

On the east-side of the small village in which Grimhilde lived, stood an old, rickety, wooden cottage. It looked as though it was about to rot. Moss grew on the planks and cold air squeezed through the cracks and crevices in-between them. The straw roof was almost falling in on itself and the look of it made you wonder why it hadn't already. Even the air around the cottage seemed dank, dark, and altogether uninviting. In fact, the only inviting thing about it was the neon (well, it used to be neon) sign advertising Wilhelm's Antiques.

Grimhilde was scared to go in, she felt like that frightened little girl she had been. All she had done was stare at her mother, jaw dropped, in her time of need. Grimhilde should have hugged her, squeezed her mama's thin, bony hand with her own small pudgy one. She should've sang her a song, or reminded her of all the good times they'd had together. But she didn't. She just stood there. Doing absolutely nothing. nothing. nothing.

Grimhilde rapped on the door. Tap, tap, tappity tap. The door squeaked and shuffled in its sockets. The merchant came to the door.

He, unsurprisingly, had lank, greasy hair which he tried to hide with a very unfashionable hat. He was very slim and bowed at her as if she was the queen (which at that precise moment she desperately wished she could be). He smiled a wide, fake smile showing gold teeth and a slightly orange tongue.

"Hello, girl." he growled. "You lookin' fer business?"

Grimhilde swallowed. "Yes... sir?"

"Marty for you, dearie."

"I'm looking for..." she faltered. What was she their for? What could this man do for her?

As Grimhilde was about to politely excuse herself, Marty said something.

“Yer lookin’ for magic, dearie. And I know just what type.”

He started walking back in and Grimhilde assumed she should follow. He walks with a limp, she noticed. When his right toes touched the ground, his ankle swung round in a circle. He then lifted it up again and placed it down, repeating the process.

Grimhilde was surrounded by all sorts of antique, robust things. Some things had a whole shelf to themselves but rested at the very edge, looking precariously unbalanced. Some shelves were crammed with as much stuff as could fit on them, stacked up if possible till hitting the unpolished oak which was another shelf above it. Marty nudged one such shelf and it tipped, but nothing fell off it. Everything on it remained on the exact same place. Everything should’ve slid off. Nothing slid off.

Finally Marty came to a halt. He took something of the top shelf and showed it to her. It was a mirror. A bland, ovular, copper mirror which was slightly rusted. Then a rainbow sheen swum across the mirrors surface. It looked like a trick of the light, it wasn’t.

But Grimhilde didn’t think she needed any more mirrors, her foster home was already full of them (the lady who owned it was really quite vain).

Marty must have saw her confused face because he said: “Ah, this is no ordinary mirror. The owner picks a question and s’allowed to ask that question as many times as they want before they die. It never lies, so’s it doesn’t. Can show ye pictures, too. To choose yer question, ye jest run your inner in a swirl on the surface repeating the question over and over again. But to wake her up, ye gotta say ‘magic mirror on the wall,” then ask yer question. It works better if it rhymes, though.”

Grimhilde stretched her arm out towards the magic mirror in a trance-like state. “Magic mirror on the wall-“ she started. Marty grabbed her arm quick as a shot. His pale, frail fingers squeezed her skin. Grimhilde tried hard not to cry.

“That’ll be five pennies, lovey.” he grinned at her. His face was too close to hers. She could see his forest of long nose hairs, she could smell his stale breath of vodka and cigars, she could look into his yellow, watery eyes and she could count the amount of pimples on his face (8 big ones).

She breathed in. She reached her hand into her pockets. She had 6 pennies. She breathed out.

Grimhilde counted out 5 pennies, they were nearly all her savings from 6 years at the orphanage. She gave them to him hesitantly. He snatched them out of her hand with visible greed.

“Oh, did I say 5? I meant 6.” he said.

Grimhilde looked up at him, swallowed, and reached her hand into her pocket once more. She should never have come. She wanted that magic mirror.

Grimhilde slowly drew out her last penny.

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When Grimhilde was 18, she moved out of the orphanage. She had carefully hidden her mirror all those years and frequently asked it the question: 'Magic mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?'. Every time it answered, 'you are, Grimhilde' and she felt as though her mother's spirit was beside her, spreading warm waves of pride. And when the mirror answered differently, Grimhilde would do all in her power to look better, be prettier, be the best. Once, it was someone in the orphanage who out-prettied Grimhilde. Grimhilde, that night, snuck into that poor girl's room and chopped off almost all her hair in swift jags.

Let's just say that that girl was upset.

Grimhilde almost dedicated all of her life 'eliminating' her 'enemies'. Then one man came along and swept her off her feet.

Grimhilde loved him, she really did. He was everything she wished to be; loving, handsome (well, she wanted to be beautiful), kind. Her mother would have loved him, she knew it. And what made it even better was, he was a king. Her king.

Apparently, his beloved wife died some years ago and he was left a widower. I wouldn't leave him, not like that, not ever. Grimhilde and Frank. Queen and King. Grimhilde would reign by his side with pride and joy.

Or so she thought she would, until she met her.

Her was his daughter, Snow White. A silly name, if you ask Grimhilde. A silly name for a silly girl. From the moment Grimhilde met her, she was struck like a slap across the face with Snow White's other-worldly beauty. Her skin was as white as snow, her red lips vividly red against white. She had black, velvet hair cut into a bob and a fringe. Her big brown eyes looked so innocent and her angelic, ski-slope nose was the opposite of Grimhilde's. And when she smiled, Frank's face couldn't stop itself from doing the same. Grimhilde hated it, but Grimhilde knew it. Grimhilde knew it before she rummaged in her bag. She knew it before the mirror was even in her hands. Snow White was more beautiful than her.

At first, Grimhilde just felt icy-hot rage. It didn't move, it was just there. Like her thoughts had been filled up with it and couldn't escape until it left, too. Grimhilde just sat there, fists clenched, on the plush chair. Red,

like Snow White's lips. She didn't like that chair anymore.

Eventually, the rage trickled out of her as water would drip out of a tap. All that was left was nothing. That nothing involved into jealousy. But it wasn't the kind of jealousy where you can't think; it was the kind that you could think extra clear. Like a dull thrum at the back of your empty head constantly reminding you: this person is better than you. Grimhilde would've done anything to make it stop. And she did.

Grimhilde lived with this dull thrum for as long as she could, but it never got better and it never got worse. All Grimhilde could think about was making Snow White's life miserable. Making Snow White's face ugly. Just as Snow White did to her.

Grimhilde didn't know it, but her once rounded eyebrows now had sharp, icicle-like points. Her eyes were hardened with no smile-lines. The creases on her forehead multiplied and her lips set into an almost-sneer. Grimhilde was still beautiful, but in an evil way. She radiated control, discomfort, evil. Grimhilde no longer felt her mum's spirit. It was gone, and without it, she felt empty. Like a starved dog, a dry ocean, a fish out of water. She needed it.

In her spare time, Grimhilde started to 'dabble in the dark arts', so to say. She practiced black magic. Magic involving sacrifices. With this black magic, she soon became somewhat of a sorceress. She was able to do large, complex spells.

If you know the story of Snow White, you'll know what the 'Wicked Queen' did. You'll know that she tried to kill Snow White using a huntsman, who could not carry out the dark deed, you know that Snow White escaped to a secluded cottage in the middle of the woods which belonged to seven dwarfs. And you'll know that the 'Wicked Queen' then made herself look like an old woman and poisoned a bright scarlet apple in order to trick and kill Snow White. You'll also know that I failed.

I died a villain. I know I was a villain and I know that what I tried to do was wrong. I was just so... hungry. As I lay at the bottom of the cliff Snow White's animal friends pushed me off, I realised this. And because of this realisation, I felt my mother's and father's warm, reassuring spirits beside me. Then I died. And I wasn't afraid because I knew I was forgiven. I was forgiven by Snow White. I was forgiven by the girl in the orphanage. I was forgiven by Snow White's father. And most importantly, I was forgiven by myself.

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