

Little Snow White (1810)

It was once winter and snowing down from heaven. A queen sat at an ebony-framed window and sewed. She would like to have had a child. And while she thought about that, she stuck her finger with the needle, so that three drops of blood fell on the snow. Then she wished: "Oh, if only I had a child as white as this snow, as red-cheeked as this red blood, and as black-eyed as this window frame!"

Soon thereafter she received a stunning little daughter as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as ebony, so the little daughter was named Little Snow White. The lady queen was the most beautiful woman in the country, but Little Snow White was a hundred thousand times more beautiful. When the lady queen asked her mirror:

Mirror, Mirror on the wall
Who is the most beautiful woman in all of England?

the little mirror answered: "The lady queen is the most beautiful, but Little Snow White is one hundred thousand times more beautiful."

The lady queen couldn't take that any longer, because she wanted to be the most beautiful in the kingdom. When the king went off to war once, she had her carriage prepared, and took Little Snow White with her, then commanded that they drive into a wide, dark forest. In this same forest, however, were many very beautiful red roses. When she arrived there with her little daughter, she said to her: "Oh Little Snow White, go climb down and break me off some of the beautiful roses!" As soon as she left the carriage to obey this command, it drove off with great haste, but the lady queen had commanded it because she hoped that the wild beasts would soon tear her apart.

Since Little Snow White was now abandoned by her mother in the great forest, she cried hard and kept going on and on, and became very tired, until she came finally to a small cottage. In the cottage lived seven dwarves, who had gone off to the mines and were not at home just now. When Little Snow White entered the house, she saw a table, and on the table were seven plates, seven spoons, seven forks, seven knives, and seven glasses. Further back in the room were seven little beds. Little Snow White ate some vegetables and bread from every plate and drank a drop from every glass, until finally she wanted to collapse from exhaustion. She tried all of the little beds, but none of them suited her until the last one, and there she remained.

When the seven dwarves came home after their workday, they said in turn:

Who ate from my plate?
Who took some of my rolls?
Who ate with my fork?
Who cut with my knife?
Who drank from my cup?

And then the first dwarf said:

Who climbed into my bed?

And the second said "Hey, someone laid down in mine, too!" And so did the third, and the fourth, and so on, until they found Little Snow White lying in the seventh bed. They liked her so much that they let her lie out of pity, and the seventh dwarf had to content himself with the sixth as well as he could.

When Little Snow White had slept in the next morning, they asked her: "How did you get here?" And she told them everything, that the lady queen mother had left her alone in the woods and driven away. The dwarves took pity on her and entreated her to stay with them, and cook for them when they went to the mine, but she would have to guard against the lady queen and let no one into the house.

When the lady queen heard that Little Snow White was with the seven dwarves and had not died in the forest, she put on the clothes of an old peddler, went to the house, and sought entrance with her wares. Little Snow White, however, didn't recognize her at all and said at the window: "I'm not allowed to let anyone in." The peddler woman responded, "Oh, dear child, look at the pretty laces I have and I'll sell them to you cheaply!" Little Snow White thought to herself: "I need laces right now, it won't hurt anything if I let the woman in, I can make a good buy" and she opened the door and bought laces. When she had bought them, the peddler began to speak: "But my, look at how sloppily laced up you are. How can you look like this? Come, I want to lace you up properly." Then the old woman, who was actually the lady queen, took the laces and tied up Little Snow White so hard that she fell as if dead, and then left.

When the little dwarves came home and saw Little Snow White lying there, they all realized pretty quickly who had been there, and untied her immediately so that she came to again. They admonished her, however, to take better care the next time.

After the lady queen discovered that her daughter had been resurrected, she could not rest and came back to the house in disguised clothing to sell Little Snow White a magnificent comb. Because the comb pleased her so well, she was misled and opened the door, and the old woman came in. She began to comb her yellow hair and left the comb stuck in her hair, so that she sank down dead. When the seven dwarves came home, they found the gate left open and Little Snow White lying on the ground. They knew right away who had caused this mischief. Meanwhile they removed the comb immediately from her hair and Little Snow White returned to life. They said to her, however, that if she allowed herself to be deceived again, they wouldn't be able to help her any more.

The lady queen, however, was very angry when she found out that Little Snow White had been resurrected, and disguised herself a third time, this time as a peasant, and took an apple with her that was half poisoned – just the red half. Little Snow White was wary of opening up for the woman, but she gave her the apple through the window and could play the role of peasant so convincingly that

no one would have noticed anything amiss. Little Snow White bit into the beautiful apple where it was red, and sank dead to the ground.

When the seven dwarves came home, they couldn't help her any more and were very sad and held a great lamentation. But they laid Little Snow White into a glass coffin, in which she maintained her previous form completely. They wrote her name and ancestry on it and watched it carefully day and night.

One day the king, Little Snow White's father, came back to his kingdom and had to go through the same forest where the seven dwarves lived. When he noticed the coffin and its inscription, great sorrow overwhelmed him over the death of his beloved daughter. But he had very experienced doctors in his retinue with him, who requested the corpse from the dwarves, took it, tied a rope to four corners of the room, and Little Snow White came back to life. Thereupon they all went back home, Little Snow White was wedded to a beautiful prince, and at the wedding a pair of clogs were heated in the fire, which the queen had to put on and dance in until she died.