

Tales by

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The Swan

Once there was a princess who did not want to marry anyone except a swan.

Her father, the king, pleaded with her in vain to marry a prince of some sort. She didn't want to marry and she didn't want to marry a prince – she turned down all proposals. Instead she kept feeding the swans in the lake by the castle so much that they bred prolifically. They were always fighting, shrieking and screaming: nobody had ever seen anything like it before. The cygnets, thanks to some water rats, were being decimated but swans there were still as common as poppy seeds. The princess monitored them constantly. She was looking for the one that she would desire. Gradually, though, she became depressed and began to deteriorate.

And lo, one day a prince under a curse to inhabit the body of a swan, flew in and started to sing alluring melodies. The princess started to perk up again and run around and her cheeks flushed pink. She was adding quark with sugar to the bird food and so the swan started circling her more attentively and putting one hundred and ten per cent into his singing, one song better than the other. The king realized there was no time to waste: it

was vital to persuade the princess to consider a normal prince rather than a swan. And so he drove this one sweet little prince to the castle and he's such a sweet proposition that anyone would have plumped for him. The king seriously urged her to marry this blue-eyed noble with the property, pointing out that she would never get a chance like this again and that she would be the biggest queen ever when her parents died.

The princess, in front of the whole court, commanded the swan to get out of the water and the swan obeyed. The princess proclaimed him to be her groom and, before anyone could do anything, she kissed the swan on its forehead. At that moment, under the spell of her kiss the swan changed into a severely obese prince with quark-like skin.

The princess fainted on the spot.

Later, in the royal madhouse, she refused all food, and she especially refused the easily digestible and nutritious quark pudding, crying that it reminded her of those swans she couldn't even bear to look at anymore. Her physical state kept improving until she was completely cured and eventually she married the court psychiatrist who actually claimed to be a swan himself. On the day of the wedding the king, although with great reluctance, was forced to give him an enormous wage rise.

A Fashion Show for Vegetarians

At a fashion show for vegetarians this carrot appeared on the catwalk, decorated with a little sieve for camomille tea and vegetable mix. The vegetarians were applauding wildly so she went to put on another costume - a glass of milk on wheels. The carrot pushed it like a baby carriage in front of her and at the end of the runway she jumped into the milk. Again the vegetarians applauded like crazy.

Then she came out wearing a large slice of Emmental. She teased the vegetarians, cocette-style, through the holes in the cheese and they were so aroused that they jumped up from their seats crying bravo! bravo! Now, enormously pleased with herself, she exited to put on another costume: this time it was oats porridge sprinkled with chocolate, sugar and some butter. She was pirouetting and spinning around, striking different poses in the spotlight. The porridge, meanwhile, was drying out very quickly and several vegetarians, especially those in the front rows, felt sick as it took them back to their childhood.

After casting a vote they asked the carrot to come out at the finale in a rinse of pure natural water and the stupid goose, drunk with success, obeyed them. As soon as she entered the spotlight, fresh, clean and bright red, everyone leapt on her, because they all wanted their slice. They began to brawl and panic flared when many had their fingers gnawed, some even bitten off completely. In fact, in the melee, a few people swallowed those fingers and thus ceased being vegetarians. They were never admitted to a fashion show for vegetarians again - a fitting punishment because they deserved it.

The Green Fairy

A king went to war and left his weeping wife behind him. Two years after he had left, the queen gave birth to a handsome boy and she kept wondering what the king would say when he came back. When he did eventually return, nicely tanned and cheerful, she told him that a greenish translucent fairy had appeared, telling her that she should eat an apple from the tree in their royal garden and that she would give birth to a boy. And, lo and behold, the boy was born.

The king did not believe her and started shouting at her. Just at that moment, though, in the chamber where they were quarreling, a greenish translucent fairy appeared and informed the king that his queen was not lying: everything had happened exactly as she had said. And then the fairy disappeared. So the king fell on his knees and begged pardon from the queen. She was so shocked, however, by the fairy's sudden appearance, that she never again regained her sanity. Both the young prince and her husband had to nurse the queen until the day of her death.

The Clover Queen

Once upon a time there was a queen whose husband, the king, was always pottering around. He enjoyed reading but he wasn't so much into ruling the kingdom. So, under some pretence or other, the queen had his head chopped off. Then she married a fake golden-haired guy so she could have a good time. They had a beautiful wedding and the wedding portraits were stunning, but as soon as the wedding was over the barmaids from the royal pub had their eyes on the fake golden-haired king. They were all competing for him, so much so that it made the queen's skin dry and her nails started to break.

That's why she had the golden-haired king poisoned with the help of the pub's head barman who, everyday, was secretly informing her on the loose behaviour of the golden-haired king and the barmaid.

Even now the queen didn't lose her faith in men: she married the barman. Later she had him executed too because he wasn't so much into women: he preferred card games and by the end of the honeymoon he had dissipated her entire fortune. Thus the crown was lost and along with it the queen's leather mittens with the red thumbs from Lapland.[1.35.06]

After this devastating experience completely crushed the queen she withdrew into herself. Then she decided on a radical change and so she married a white angora rabbit, taking everyone totally by surprise.

The queen was finally happy. She fed the rabbit personally with clover leaves both to demonstrate her true love to him and out of guilt, because initially she had married him simply as a coldly calculated move with no genuine affection. Now she showered him with kisses and under his gaze she nibbled on leaves of clover which killed her.

At that moment the kingdom faced a future under the leadership of an angora rabbit. However, he quickly succumbed to depression, debilitated by sadness and poor nutrition. He died too.

The queen, though, was restored to life as it turned out the clover leaves had been cursed and only appeared to have killed her.

Widowed, she took control of the country into her own hands and speedily deployed spies throughout the land. She wanted to discover who had put a spell on the clover leaves destroying her happy marriage and leaving her bereaved.

From the countless reports she received it seemed that every second person in the country could have been the killer, and that was not just among the common people but among the professional killers too. The queen didn't want to escalate the expenses connected with this affair so she had everyone who might have been guilty executed, one by one. Knowing that being unlucky in love meant luck in the game, she privately started to play cards, just as the barman had taught her, by cheating so well that she could beat anyone, including the town mayor, the leader of the city council, and all her ministers and diplomats. She amassed a fortune that enabled her to finance more secret investigations. Meanwhile, alone, she often ate clover leaves because she couldn't forget about her dead husband and even though eating more than the average amount of clover leaves makes you very bloated, she lived to a ripe old age. Her lavish and magnificent funeral was attended by hundreds of people, those she hadn't executed. This was the largest audience ever for a funeral which felt like an appropriate stately occasion for such an amazing person. And, voluntarily, they inscribed the following on her gravestone: HERE LIES OUR BELOVED AND UNFORGETTABLE CLOVER QUEEN.

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