

THE JEWELRY BOX

Once, there was a king who lived in a big castle. He had a wife. And as it should be, the queen and the king were happy together. One day, the king had to set off to look if everything was right in his kingdom. The queen caring told him “My dear man, come back soon and be careful!”, for she loved him so much. And the king went away.

As it goes in stories, he was riding a horse. Six days passed and he had been nearly all around his kingdom. One forest only was left unseen. The forest was wild, dark and full of creatures. But the king was not afraid. It was his forest after all. So he went on. He reached the middle of the forest when he saw a little house. An old woman was sitting on a bench in front of the door. The king asked if everything was fine for he had to care for his people. The old woman answered: “well, I’m fine. But maybe you could come in and take a look at my daughter, because she is very ill and I can’t take care of her any more. I’m so old.” The king went in and took a look at the girl. She was very young and it seemed as if she was sleeping. But as he stepped closer, she woke up. The king said: “I’m the king. What’s wrong with you my dear?” But the girl didn’t answer. No. Instead she squeaked like a pig. The king grew fear but he tried to hide it. He thought a bit and told the old woman: “Old woman, I will try to help you. I shall ponder about it for three days. But I cannot stay here so long. I have to go to my wife.”.

He rode back to his castle, leaving the house and the forest behind him. He recounted the story to his wife. She was a wise woman and knew many a thing. They spent two days pondering together, but as the second day was ending, they did not have a clue how to help the poor squeaky girl. A mouse lived in the bedroom of the royal couple, the queen asked her for advices: “Little mouse, do you know how to help the old woman?”. The mouse answered this way: “Well, that is no problem. Do you know that little box which lies on the table? The little box in which you put your colours?”. She explained to the queen what should be done. The queen and the king picked up the box and together went to the old woman, bringing a pig along.

Once inside the house, they put the pig and the girl into the box and closed the lid over them. They sat the old woman on top and made her count to a hundred. The old woman obeyed. When she came to a hundred, a big bang was heard. One hundred ghost appeared. When the box opened, the pig had disappeared and with it its voice. The girl did not squeak any more. Her first words were to the caring couple, pronounced with all the respect she bore: “Best king and queen, thank you. You are the best king and queen I know, for you care for your people.” The king was transported with joy and invited the girl and her mother to the castle to work there. This was a great honour.

The end.