



A Queen and a Poet

This is a very unusual love story, and if it's not entirely true, it very nearly is.

Once there was –and wasn't– a queen, who was beautiful, witty and generous, who loved the arts, the arts in all their guises.

She loved the theatre and the circus beyond measure. / She wanted there to be performers at her court at all times, and at all times there were. / Singers, musicians, dancers, painters, poets... And of all descriptions: large and small, plump and slim, old and young, dreary or delightful... So many people performed before the queen, that I couldn't begin to tell you all their names. But I can tell you the name of the queen: she was called Elisabeth.

One day, a charming young actor appeared before Queen Elisabeth, and he danced and sang better than you can possibly imagine.

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The queen was so delighted by his performance that she asked him to it again. / And again, / and again, / and again...

And there the poor young man stood, singing the song and starting another. And another, and another, and another...

On and on, singing and dancing, tumbling and clowning.

She clapped and clapped and waved her handkerchief up and down in her excitement: "Bravo! Encore, encore, encore!"

Queen Elisabeth was so enchanted by the little clown who danced and sang so wonderfully well that she shed tears of joy.

But the poor boy was getting tired... more tired by the minute... his voice was growing fainter and fainter... and his gestures were becoming as stiff as an automaton's.

Time went by and it grew late... very late! Finally, when the whole court, with its knights and ladies, chamber maids and cooks, squires and soldiers, had all gone off to bed, the poor performer looked Queen Elisabeth straight in the eye and told her the truth:

"I can't go on! / And it's not because I don't want to please you, your Majesty, so

beautiful, witty and generous as you are, but because I don't know any more dances or songs. I've exhausted my whole repertoire."

Queen Elisabeth was very sad, but she answered him magnanimously:

"Ah. And couldn't you make up something new for tomorrow? A poem? A song? If you can do it, I promise I'll marry you, because I think that you're beautiful, witty and generous too.

And on that condition, they both went off to their own bedchambers.

The queen climbed into bed feeling very hopeful... But what about him? Poor thing! He sat down at his desk, lit the lamp, and started to write. However exhausted he felt, he still had his homework to do: he had to write a poem for Queen Elisabeth. And if possible, turn it into a song.

"Elisabeth... Elisabeth..." But he was too tired to find a rhyme. His eyelids were closing, and he thought it was the light going out.

And over and over again he said "Elisabeth, Elisabeth, Eslawet, Esliwel..." with such a tired voice, that soon instead of "Elisabeth" all you could hear was "Sleep well"...

He said it over and over so many times that eventually he went to sleep. Ssssh. And he must still be sleeping now, because as far as I know, and according to the Official History of the Kingdom... Queen Elisabeth never got married –not to the poet– or to anyone else!

Good night, good night, I hope you sleep well.

What awaits us tomorrow, only time can tell.

La, la, la, la ...loo, loo, loo, loo...

I'm very tired and so are you.

Script: Teresa Duran