

Story for performance #626
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Tags: [husband/wife](#), [sex](#), [storytelling](#)

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Details in the tale of Snow White are disputed. These days the best known version of the story is probably the Disney film, which is based on the story by the Grimm brothers. But other versions do exist. In these the seven dwarves often appear as seven robbers, and the sun or the moon replace the magic mirror to which Snow White's stepmother addresses the question: 'who is the fairest of them all?'

Tonight I am going to settle these disputed details. There were dwarves. I don't know where the robber thing came from. It helps explain their somewhat isolated existence I suppose, but short stature will do that to you too. Especially when there are seven of you. Which indeed there were. The dwarves were cousins related across three families. The bizarre flourishing of a recessive gene that had lain dormant in the effected families for generations caused their short stature.

Their names, far from the weird choices made by the Disney family, were: Abe, Galilea, Omari, Adiv, Tali, Soraya, and Nikolas, or Nik. Well. For that matter Galilea was known as Gertie-the-pig and Omari was usually called O.

There was no magic mirror, only the seething jealousy of the stepmother, but that was real enough. She didn't need to enlist the help of the sun or moon to focus her fury on Snow White. For the record, she also employed other people to do the dirty work for her. She never visited the home of Abe, Gertie, O, Adiv, Tali, Soraya, Nik and Snow, as she does in the stories. But she did initiate three attempts on Snow White's life including yes, the poisoned apple that induced the coma from which, yes, yes, the Prince revived Snow White later on. Actually though, the Prince just took her to the hospital. But he really did fall in love with her and he did read to her every day and he did always kiss her hello and goodbye while she was in there.

The other thing that I would like to put straight is the 'happily ever after' thing, because it always grates on me when I hear that.

It truly was a great love that the Prince and Snow White shared. He was a lovely man. When you think what the odds are that someone you fall in love with in a coma will be an amazing, loveable being when they regain consciousness, you'd have to say he was very lucky, and when you think of all the idiots who might have come across you in a coma and developed a fixation on you, you'd have to say that she was lucky too. They were young: 18, 19. And it's true they were both very beautiful. Clear eyes, shining hair. She told him he had a smile like a cartoon character, perfectly straight across the top, beautiful curve below. He told her he couldn't be away from her ocean eyes for long, always felt them drawing him to her when they were apart.

Being in love was for Snow White such a deep relief, such a profound surprise, after being in her hellish family, and then in the crowded company of the seven dwarves, that she spent years curled up in it. The Prince never once

raised his voice or his hand. He delighted in her and supported her enthusiastically when she took up correspondence education and discovered she had a gift for drawing. They made friends together, had a tabby cat together, they never tired of talking, never got bored with each other. He took her into his family fearlessly, not for a second caring what they might think of her, knowing that they would love her.

Happily yes. Years of happily.

At some point though she stopped enjoying sex with him. At first just lost interest and then over time developed a real loathing for it. Not for him. Never for a moment did she stop adoring him, but the thought of sex came to make her stomach lurch.

At the same time a sort of restlessness arose in her. She enrolled in art school to see if this would help, and it did, giving her somewhere to put her strange, wordless feelings. She made big paintings with little jags of broken glass all through them, and series of tiny charcoal drawings made in a frenzy, churned out in all night exorcisms.

Still the sex thing was never solved, despite their exhausted attempts at couples counselling and a disastrous Tantra workshop. 'Those people!' she spat furiously at the Prince as she stormed from the gathering after the first morning 'What a crock! They HATE sex!' He said nothing.

Eventually he met someone else.

Oh yes. Boo hoo. No, it was. It was tough. But it wasn't acrimonious. They were exhausted, had tried everything to fix their marriage and failed. It was, as they say, time to move on.

Snow White decided that her move must be a big one. The Prince's family insisted on supporting her financially for as long as she needed, an offer she reluctantly accepted. But with their support and very bravely for a girl who had hardly ever travelled and never done so alone, she emigrated to the other side of the world. To Australia.

She found a tiny flat near the beach in the great southern capital of Melbourne and enrolled in university there, studying Art History. She kept painting. In some ways it was much easier than she had imagined. She made friends. She had some success in her work, and the university employed her as a tutor. Eventually she met another man and discovered that her aversion to sex had disappeared. They were together for a number of years before he left to pursue his career in another state. She did therapy and talked a lot about her family. She struggled a bit with drinking, but it never overwhelmed her.

So. Ever after? No. Not seemingly. Alas.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Margaret Trail.