

The Gift

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The palace guests were gathered in the grand ballroom to celebrate a special occasion. Princess Guinevere stood in the center of the room holding back her excitement. She felt as though her heart would burst. Soon she let out a squeal. She couldn't help it. In her small hands was the most beautiful diamond she had ever seen. She felt as if a magical power rushed from her hands, up through her arms and into her small body.

It was Guinevere's 16th birthday and her father, the beloved King Alexander had given her a beautiful rare diamond. (100) Her mother, Queen Haley stood there with joy in her heart and a grand smile on her face. Guinevere cried out, "Oh father, this is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen!" The King and Queen knew that this priceless diamond was worth more than the gold and silver of any kingdom near or far. It was widely known that any kingdom that possessed the diamond would have good health, peace and security. The diamond had been passed down through many generations of King Alexander's family. Today, it was time to continue the tradition by giving it to his only daughter.

The sound of the palace troubadour interrupted the exciting moment. “Presenting, Prince Malkin!” The guests gasped. Prince Malkin was from the (200) neighboring kingdom. While his family had been friends with King Alexander and Queen Haley, the prince did not share the fine qualities of his parents. He had become greedy and selfish in his older years. The arrogant Prince walked in and said, “Hello your Majesties. I’m afraid I didn’t receive my invitation.” Guinevere looked at Malkin in disgust. “Why, lord Malkin what brings you to my kingdom?” asked the King. “Well, I was riding my horse and I couldn’t help but notice the large gathering.” “So I thought, “Why don’t I just propose to Princess Guinevere today, after all we are now both 16. (300) Staring at the King and Queen he said, “You do remember that you promised that she would be my wife.”

At that moment an argument broke out between the King, the Queen and Prince Malkin. Then Guinevere ran out of the room. Queen Haley slipped away unnoticed. Moments later Queen Haley returned. “She has made a decision,” the beautiful Queen said to the young lord. “Yes?” Asked Malkin. “She has decided to wait and marry someone that she loves. So you may leave now.” Malkin stood in shock. “What! Why are you letting her refuse me? You know the tradition. You know the agreement you made (400) with my father years ago. And you know the consequences if you refuse to honor the agreement. He who refuses to honor the betrothal of the first born must give all of their gold and silver to the other. If this is her choice, then give me what is mine or I will take over your kingdom,” screamed Malkin!

“We have made our decision,” said the King. “We want what is best for our daughter.” “So, you would give away (500) all of the silver and gold of your kingdom

for one small person? Ha ha ha”, the evil prince laughed. “Yes, I would”, the honorable King replied. “Well, then go and fetch your gold and silver. My guards are waiting outside,” the prince said, coldly. “No, father...wait,” shouted Guinevere as she entered the room. “I will go with him. You can’t leave the kingdom without money just because of me!” “Trust me my daughter,” the gentle King said, lovingly. “I know what I am doing.”

As the palace guards(600) carried the last of the kingdom’s many boxes of gold and silver out to Prince Malkin’s carriage, the King, the Queen and the Princess stared out of the window. The King put his arms around his wife and daughter. There are some things in life that are more important than treasure. He glanced at his daughter. I wouldn’t trade you or your happiness for all of the gold and silver in the world. I love you too much.”

The Queen reached into her pocket and pulled out the large diamond that had been given to her daughter earlier that day. “And besides,” she smiled, “Prince Malkin didn’t say anything about diamonds.” They all laughed and hugged each other warmly as the greedy prince rode off alone in the sunset.