

Chapter 2

The evil stepmother

After a year had passed the king took to himself another wife. She was a beautiful woman, but proud and haughty, and she could not bear that anyone else should surpass her in beauty. She had a wonderful looking-glass, and when she stood in front of it and looked at herself in it, and said,

“looking-glass, looking-glass, on the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all.”

The looking-glass answered,

“thou, o queen, art the fairest of all.”

Then she was satisfied, for she knew that the looking-glass spoke the truth.

But snow-white was growing up, and grew more and more beautiful, and when she was seven years old she was as beautiful as the day, and more beautiful than the queen herself. And once when the queen asked her looking-glass,

“looking-glass, looking-glass, on the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all.”

It answered,

“thou art fairer than all who are here, lady queen. But more beautiful still is snow-white, as I ween.”

Then the queen was shocked, and turned yellow and green with envy. From that hour, whenever she looked at snow-white, her heart heaved in her breast, she hated the girl so much. And envy and pride grew higher and higher in her heart like a weed, so that she had no peace day or night. She called a huntsman, and said, take the child away into the forest. I will no longer have her in my sight. Kill her, and bring me back her lung and liver as a token. The huntsman obeyed, and took her away but when he had drawn his knife, and was about to pierce snow-white's innocent heart, she began to weep, and said, ah dear huntsman, leave me my life. I will run away into the wild forest, and never come home again.