



# Snow, Glass, Apples

By Neil Gaiman

Illustrated by Julie Dillon

# **Snow Glass Apples**

by Neil Gaiman



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# Snow Glass Apples

a play for voices



by  
**Neil Gaiman**

with wood engravings by  
**George Walker**

and an introduction by  
**Jack Zipes**

## Foreword

### **What if** SNOW WHITE....?

There are hundreds if not thousands of versions of “Snow White” tales, collected in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North and South America, but the one we remember most and cherish most is the Disney film version Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Perhaps cherish is the wrong word, but the virginal, graceful and modest Snow White, who has a figure like a Barbie Doll, who chirps when she speaks, and who is as meek as a deer, has warmed the hearts of children and adults throughout the world ever since the film appeared in 1937.

But what if Snow White were really a monster?

This is the question Neil Gaiman asks in his chilling play, *Snow Glass Apples*. He is not the only one to ask disturbing questions about the true story behind the Disney version we all know. Such gifted contemporary writers as Robert Coover, Tanith Lee, and Emma Donoghue among others have also written unsettling versions of “Snow White” that have explored the raw sexuality of a tale concerned with the flowering of a young girl and the crazed jealousy of her (step)mother. In fact, step must be placed in parenthesis because not all the tales are about a stepmother’s jealousy, as the Brothers Grimm and Disney would have us believe. There are just as many mothers who want to kill their own daughters as there are stepmothers who have murder on their minds, and storytellers and writers from antiquity to the present have spun those Snow White tales to try to understand what makes murderous mothers tick. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gilbert in their famous feminist study, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, suggest that the classical Grimm tale is all about the angel-woman and monster-

woman, who are locked in a struggle for the favor of the absent father, represented by the mirror that frames their lives. Their conflict is essentially a vicious cycle in which no woman can be the winner in the patriarchal order of things, for Snow White will also get old one day, and her beauty and position will be challenged by her daughter or another young woman. Her triumph at the end, as the cynical poet Anne Sexton suggests in her superb book, *Transformations*, is a sentence of doom. She will hold court, roll her china-blue doll eyes, and glance at herself in the mirror until she, too, turns mad.

Gaiman's play shifts the center of this vicious conflict in a brilliant and inventive way. Told from the perspective of a gullible and good-hearted stepmother, Gaiman's version of "Snow White" focuses on the bad seed, the indelible evil nature of a young girl, who consumes everything and everyone near her—her father, the inhabitants of the woods, her stepmother. Nobody is safe from her bloodthirsty actions. So it would seem. There is a marvelous ambivalent quality to Gaiman's narrative. We must ask whether the stepmother, about to be cooked, is telling the truth. Has she concocted this story to cast blame on Snow White and to exonerate herself from the acts that she may have committed as a witch? We never hear Snow White's version or anyone else's story about the events that led to the stepmother's punishment. Could the stepmother have poisoned her husband to gain power? Has she been imagining things? After all there are cases each year in America of delusional mothers (and fathers) who murder their own children and twist tales to make themselves appear innocent. Then again, perhaps the stepmother is not hysterical. Perhaps she is not lying, and her story is especially frightening for us because it reveals something about the ruthless power of children today and the violence with which we all must contend.

Gaiman's play, based on a short story that he published in 1994, is in truth about the contemporary world despite the timeless fairy-tale setting. We are living at a time—and it may not have been much different several centuries ago—when it is not uncommon for children to murder their parents or step parents, and when child abuse keeps rising. Moreover, we are witnessing, especially in America, children using guns on other children and teachers in schools or on the streets. There are also incidents of youngsters haphazardly hacking unsuspecting people to death for their credit cards, possessions, or some small amount of money. Very little remorse is shown. In fact, feelings or compassion for the victims appear to be absent.

Perhaps I am reading too much into Gaiman's play, but I cannot help but asking why he has rewritten the traditional "*Snow White*" tale to depict a young girl as a monstrosity, as an unremorseful vampire. Is he asking whether the young today have become parasitical and destructive, and if so, who is to blame?

Yes, who is to blame for the situation in his play? Who is to blame for the many violent acts that young people are committing in American society? Why all the mutilation and self-mutilation? Are we giving birth to monsters? Why do the father and the stepmother appear to be so helpless? Gaiman does not provide any easy answers. His Snow White appears to be cruel and sadistic, but we are not certain whether she was born this way, or whether her early traumatic experience of her mother's death has driven her to suck the blood from the world that produced and "abandoned" her. The father has absolutely no control over his daughter. Only the stepmother, through her use of black magic, can contain her for a while. In the end, however, the girl triumphs over her. But is it a triumph? Is



a world that will be ruled by a cold-blooded killer a happy kingdom? Will Gaiman's killer Snow White reproduce a daughter even more fierce and ruthless than her mother?

This exquisite reproduction of Gaiman's play by Biting Dog Press is particularly artful and appropriate in the manner in which it brings out the key disturbing questions of the story through unusual design, typography, and images. George Walker's wood engravings are haunting and capture the mood of the play. The indelible traces of torment and a world gone awry can be scanned in his illustrations and throughout the entire conception of this unusual book. After reading Gaiman's *Snow Glass Apples*, nobody will ever be able to view Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and recall it with a happy heart. There is another story to be told about Snow White, and Gaiman has told it well.

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# Character List

QUEEN  
SOLDIER  
KING  
PEASANT  
SOLDIER  
PRINCESS  
ARCHBISHOP  
WINEBEARER  
COURTIERS  
HUNTSMAN  
LORD OF THE FAIR  
FRIAR  
JENNA THE QUEEN'S MAIDSERVANT  
PRINCE



SFX: THE WAIL OF COLD WIND. THE  
FEET OF SOLDIERS COME DOWN A STONE  
STAIRWAY. AN IRON DOOR IS UNLOCKED  
AND OPENED WITH A CLANG.

SFX: INSIDE A CELL, FEET CRUNCHING ON STRAW, THE  
QUEEN BACKING AWAY ...

QUEEN

Don't touch—don't you try to touch me—

SOLDIER

Get her legs. You two, get her arms. And up!

EXT: THE WINTER FEAST.

A low hubbub, the wail of the wind.

PEASANT

Here they come!

ASSORTED PEASANTS

- Look at her! She's coming!

- Nothing to be scared of!

-Naked as a jaybird!

-Evil as a demon!

-Witch!

-Monster!

-Murderess!

SOLDIER

That's where she's going! You! Open that door!

SFX: THE KILN DOOR IS OPENED, AND THEN SLAMMED  
WITH A DULL BOOM.

INT: FURNACE

The furnace—a big oven or kiln: there is a slight echo in here. We can barely hear outside the sound of the people at the winter feast. This is the place from which the queen is talking to us any flashbacks are in the ambient sound of the places we are, while the queen's narration is explicitly from the furnace. She is talking to us in the language of fairy tales—a precise, accurate, ever -so -slightly archaic language. She is telling us her last story. A confessional. She is talking quietly.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

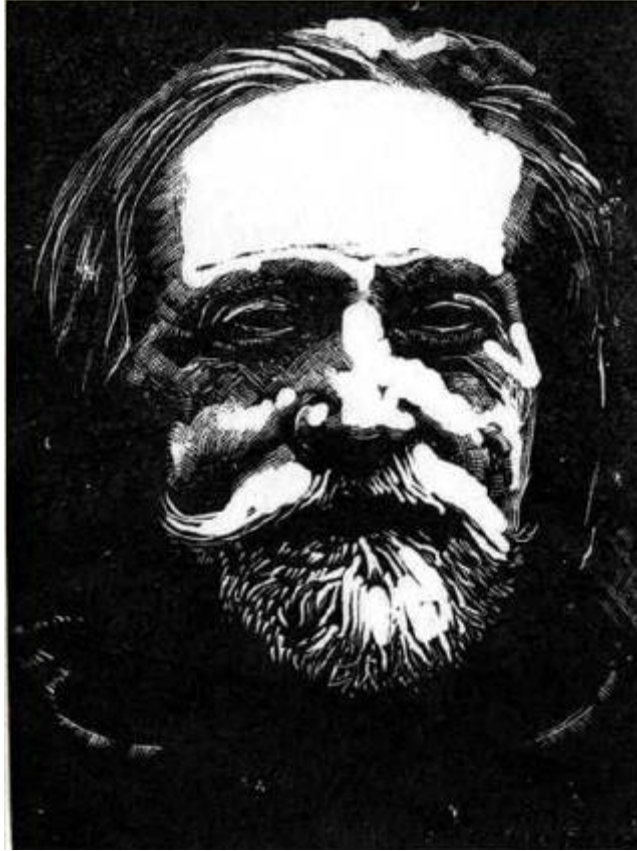
*I do not know what manner of thing she is. None of us do.  
She killed her mother in the birthing, but that's never  
enough to account for it.*

(beat)

*They call me wise, but I am far from wise, for all that I  
foresaw fragments of it, frozen moments caught in pools of  
water or in the cold glass of my mirror. If I were wise I  
would not have tried to change what I saw. If I were wise I  
would have killed myself before ever I encountered her,  
before ever I caught him.*

(beat)

*Wise, and a witch, or so they said, and I'd seen his face in  
my dreams and in reflections for all my life: eighteen years  
of dreaming of him before he reined his horse by the bridge  
that day, and asked my name.*



SFX: A HORSE IS AMBLING. BIRDS SING. A RIVER RUNS.

KING

And do you know who I am?

QUEEN

Yes, your majesty.

KING

So you recognised me, eh? Do you live far from here?

QUEEN

No. Not far, your majesty. Just past those trees.

KING

Have you food there?

QUEEN  
Yes. Just plain food.

KING  
Plain food is good food, girl. Any wine?

QUEEN  
A little.

QUEEN—INTIMATE  
*He helped me onto his high horse and we rode together to my little cottage, my face buried in the gold of his hair. He asked for the best of what I had; a king's right, it was. And he did not leave my cottage that night.*

(beat)  
*His beard was red-bronze in the morning light, and I knew him, not as a king, for I knew nothing of kings then, but as my love. He took all he wanted from me, the right of kings, but he returned to me on the following day, and on the night after that: his beard so red, his hair so gold, his eyes the blue of a summer sky, his skin tanned the gentle brown of ripe wheat.*

KING  
These days have passed like hours, my sweet.

QUEEN  
Yes.

KING  
I am afraid it is time for me to return to the palace.

QUEEN  
Oh?

KING

Darling ... will you come with me?

QUEEN  
As your slut?

KING  
As my queen.

SFX: EXT. WE HEAR A HORSE'S HOOVES AS THEY  
APPROACH THE PALACE ... BIRDSONG...

QUEEN  
I'm scared.

KING  
Of the castle? You have nothing to worry about there.  
They'll all love you. Or they'll have me to answer to.

QUEEN  
No...  
(pause)  
Odd. I thought I saw a face in that tower window.

KING  
That would be my daughter.

QUEEN  
The face was so white. I thought she was a ghost.

KING  
You'd not be the first.

SFX: INT. THE CASTLE, ECHOES AND FOOTSTEPS  
GOING UP STONE STAIRS



QUEEN

That painting at the top of the stairs. It's beautiful. She was your first wife?

KING

The first queen. My daughter's mother. Yes.

QUEEN

She was very lovely.

SFX: NOW THEY ARE WALKING DOWN A CORRIDOR.

KING

Your rooms will be in here. Mine are at the far end of the hall.

QUEEN

And where does that staircase go?

KING

Those are the little princess's quarters.

QUEEN

Look! There she is, peeping round the corner. Hello. Hello little one. I'm your new mother. Are you going to come and say hello?

SFX/ FOOTSTEPS SCURRY UPSTAIRS.

QUEEN

I think I scared her.

KING

Nothing scares her. It'll just take her a while to get to know you.



### QUEEN—INTIMATE

*His daughter was only a child: no more than five years of age when I came to the palace. Another portrait of her dead mother hung in the princess's tower room; a tall woman, hair the colour of dark wood, eyes nut-brown. She was of a different blood to her pale daughter.*

*(beat)*

*The girl would not eat with us. I do not know where in the palace she ate.*

*(beat)*

*So, I had my own chambers. My husband the king, he had his own rooms also. When he wanted me he would send for me, and I would go to him, and pleasure him, and take my pleasure with him.*

(beat)

*One night, several months after I was brought to the palace, she came to my rooms. She was six. I was embroidering by lamplight, squinting my eyes against the lamp's smoke and fitful illumination. When I looked up, she was there.*

QUEEN  
Princess?

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*She said nothing. Her eyes were black as coal, black as her hair; her lips were redder than blood. She looked up at me and smiled. Her teeth seemed sharp, even then, in the lamplight.*

QUEEN  
What are you doing away from your room?

PRINCESS  
I'm hungry.

QUEEN  
I have just the thing.

SFX/ SHE WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM. WE HEAR HER  
TAKING A DRIED APPLE FROM THE BEAMS.

QUEEN (cont'd)  
When they gathered the apples for the midwinter feast I had them bring me some extra ones and hang them in here.  
Here you are. It's an apple.

QUEEN—INTIMATE  
*It was winter, when fresh food is a dream of warmth and sunlight; but I had strings of whole apples, cored and dried,*

*hanging from the beams of my chamber, and I pulled an apple down for her.*

QUEEN

Everything has a season, princess. Did you know that? Autumn is the time of drying, of preserving. It's the time when we pick apples, and we render the goose fat, and we store food away. Now, winter is the time of hunger, of snow, and of death; and that's when we have the midwinter feast.

Have you ever been to the midwinter feast? No?

Well, first of all, we take a whole pig, and we stuff it with that autumn's apples, then we slather its skin with goose fat, so it'll be nice and crispy when it's cooked, then we roast it in a huge old brick oven, and everyone in the town comes to feast upon the crackling. And if you're good, I'll take you to the next festival. Would you like that?



PRINCESS

Will father be there?

QUEEN

Yes. I'm sure he will ...You are so hungry. Look at you devour that apple. What sharp little teeth you must have.

SFX// THE GIRL IS EATING THE APPLE.

QUEEN  
Is it good?

PRINCESS  
Nice apple.

QUEEN—INTIMATE  
*Up till that moment, I had been, I suppose, almost scared of the little princess, but looking down at her then I warmed to her and, with my fingers, gently, I stroked her cheek. She looked at me and smiled— she smiled but rarely—then she sank her teeth into the base of my thumb, the Mound of Venus, and she drew blood.*

QUEEN  
(She starts to scream)

QUEEN—INTIMATE  
*Then she looked at me and I fell silent.*  
(beat)  
*Her mouth fastened to my hand, where the blood ran, and she licked and sucked and drank.*

PRINCESS  
Thank you. Nice.

SFX. THE PRINCESSES FOOTSTEPS WALK AWAY. THE  
DOOR CLOSES.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*Beneath my gaze the cut that she had made began to close,  
to scab, and to heal. The next day it was an old scar: I  
might have cut my hand with a pocket-knife in my  
childhood.*

SFX—THE YOUNG QUEEN BEGINS TO CRY ... OVER IT:

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I had been frozen by her, owned and dominated. That  
scared me, more than the blood on which she had fed. After  
that night I locked my chamber door at dusk, barring it  
with an oaken pole, and I had the smith forge iron bars,  
which he placed across my windows.*

SFX—THE THRONE ROOM.

A NUMBER OF COURTIERS IN THE BACKGROUND.  
THE KING IS NOW ILL—A YOUNG MAN, BUT DYING AND  
HIS MIND IS GOING.

KING

So, what are you saying archbishop?

ARCHBISHOP

I am saying, your majesty, that if Edwin and Morcar  
continue in this heresy I shall have no recourse but to send  
an envoy to Rome and request their excommunication.

KING

I... yes, I... . You were... Edwin...  
Yes. I'm afraid my mind wandered...

ARCHBISHOP

Edwin and Morcar, your majesty. The Northern secession. I  
was pointing out to your majesty that...

KING

You, boy. Come here.

WINEBEARER  
Yes, your majesty.

KING  
Wine. Most grateful. Yes.

We hear him drink a little, then the glass fall from his hand.  
It smashes noisily on the floor. Courtiers GASP in horror

KING (CONT'D) Most frightfully...

We hear his feet stumbling away, and the mutters of  
courtiers...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*My husband, my love, my king, sent for me less and less,  
and when I came to him he was dizzy, listless, confused. He  
could no longer make love as a man makes love; and he  
would not permit me to pleasure him with my mouth: the  
one time I tried, he started, violently, and began to weep. I  
pulled my mouth away and held him tightly, until the  
sobbing had stopped, and he slept, like a child.  
I ran my fingers across his skin as he slept. It was covered  
in a multitude of ancient scars. But I could recall no scars  
from the days of our courtship, save one, on his side, where  
a boar had gored him when he was a youth. Soon he was  
just a shadow of the man I had met and loved by the bridge.  
His bones showed, blue and white, beneath his skin.*

INT. THE KING'S CHAMBER. DAY.

SFX: THE KING IS MUMBLING IN HIS SICK BED. THE  
QUEEN IS, WE CAN ASSUME ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE, MOPPING HIS FEVERED BROW,  
MUTTERING ENDEARMENTS ...

MAIDSERVANT  
The Archbishop, your majesty.

QUEEN  
Send him in.

SFX: THE ARCHBISHOP'S FOOTSTEPS.

QUEEN  
I am pleased you came, Archbishop. His majesty will die soon. I need you to deliver the final sacraments.

ARCHBISHOP  
I see. Do you know why he is dying, your majesty? Do you know what is killing him?

QUEEN  
(A beat.)  
I believe so.

ARCHBISHOP  
Then you know as well as I why I cannot administer the last rites.

QUEEN  
He is your king. How dare you —

ARCHBISHOP  
I dare because this is a monstrous thing, your majesty.

KING  
(delirious)  
Daughter... no. Please, little one...

And he dies ...



ARCHBISHOP

And he is nobody's king, your majesty. Not anymore.

QUEEN

(coldly angry)

Get out of here.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS, AND A DOOR CLOSES.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I sat there with my love's dead body. His hands were cold  
as stone, his eyes milky-blue, his hair and beard faded and  
lustreless and limp  
He weighed near to nothing.*

SFX: OUTSIDE. SNOW BLOWS. A RAVEN CROWS.

STONES FALL.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The ground was frozen hard, and we could dig no grave for  
him, so we made a cairn of rocks and stones above his  
body, as a memorial only, for there was little enough of him  
left to protect from the hunger of the beasts and the birds.  
So I was queen.*

SFX: LUTE MUSIC STARTS ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*And I was foolish, and young, and I did not do what I would  
do, now.*

*If it were today, I would have her heart cut out, true. But  
then I would have her head and arms and legs cut off. I  
would have them disembowel her. And then I would watch,  
in the town square, as the hangman heated the fire to  
white-heat with bellows, watch unblinking as he consigned  
each part of her to the fire. I would have archers around  
the square, who would shoot any bird or animal who came*

*close to the flames, any raven or dog or hawk or rat. And I  
would not close my eyes until the princess was ash, and a  
gentle wind could scatter her like snow.*

SFX: THE LUTE MUSIC HAS FADED TO NOTHING MORE  
THAN FALLING SNOW AND DUST AND WIND.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I did not do this thing, and we pay for our mistakes.*

(beat)

*They say I was fooled; that it was not her heart. That it was  
the heart of an animal—a stag, perhaps, or a boar. They say  
that, and they are wrong.*

*And some say (but it is her lie, not mine) that I was given  
the heart, and that I ate it. Lies and half-truths fall like  
snow, covering the things that I remember, the things I saw.  
A landscape, unrecognizable after a snowfall; that is what  
she has made of my life.*

(beat)

*There were scars on my love, her father's thighs, and on his  
ballock-pouch, and on his male member, when he died. We  
took her in the day, while she slept and was at her weakest.*

PRINCESS

(she wakes and yawns, sleepily)

Stepmother?

QUEEN

Tie her up.

HUNTSMAN

Yes, majesty.

SFX: WE HEAR A SCUFFLE ... THE PRINCESS WAILS  
LIKE THE FRIGHTENED CHILD SHE MIGHT BE ...

PRINCESS

No... please... No... Mother. Make them let me go.

QUEEN

I'm not your mother. Take her into the forest and kill her.

SFX: FOREST NOISES BEGIN: OVER THIS NARRATION  
WE HEAR THE PRINCESS BEING KILLED. A STAB AND A  
SCREAM, WHICH STOPS.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*They took her to the heart of the forest, and there they  
opened her blouse, and they cut out her heart, and they left  
her dead, in a gully, for the forest to swallow.*

SFX: FOREST NOISES/FOREST THEME BEGINS.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The forest is a dark place, the border to many kingdoms;  
no-one would be foolish enough to claim jurisdiction over it.  
Outlaws live in the forest. Robbers live in the forest, and so  
do wolves. You can ride through the forest for a dozen days  
and never see a soul; but there are eyes upon you the  
entire time.*

SFX: FOREST NOISES FADE.

SFX: PALACE ROOM. THE HUNTSMAN ENTERS:

QUEEN

Is it done?

HUNTSMAN

Yes, majesty.

QUEEN

You have it with you?



HUNTSMAN

She was only a child, your majesty.

QUEEN

I don't know what she was. But she wasn't a child. Give it to me.

SFX: THE HEART BEATS GENTLY IN THE BACKGROUND

...

QUEEN (CONT'D)

Well done. That will be all.

HUNTSMAN

Majesty.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*They brought me her heart. I know it was hers—no sow's heart or doe's would have continued to beat and pulse after it had been cut out, as that one did.*

SFX: THE HEARTBEATS GET LOUDER.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I took it to my chamber.*

*I did not eat it: I hung it from the beams above my bed, placed it on a length of twine that I strung with rowan-berries, orange-red as a robin's breast, and with bulbs of garlic.*

(beat)

*Outside, the snow fell, covering the footprints of my huntsmen, covering her tiny body in the forest where it lay.*

SFX: GENTLE LUTE THEME. SNOW FALLING.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I had the smith remove the iron bars from my windows, and I would spend some time in my room each afternoon through the short winter days, gazing out over the forest, until darkness fell.*

SFX: THE HEARTBEATS FADED AWAY ...

SFX: PASSAGE OF TIME MUSIC ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*As I said, there were people in the forest. They would come out, some of them, for the Spring Fair: a greedy, feral, dangerous people; some were stunted—dwarfs and midgets and hunchbacks; others had the huge teeth and vacant gazes of idiots; some had fingers like flippers or crab-claws. They would creep out of the forest each year for the Spring Fair, held when the snows had melted.*

SFX: SLOWLY RAISING UP, THE NOISE OF THE SPRING FAIR. PEOPLE CRYING THEIR WARES. SOME MINSTRELS PLAYING.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*As a young lass I had worked at the Fair, and they had scared me then, the forest folk. I told fortunes for the Fairgoers, scrying futures in a pool of still water; and, later, when I was older, in a disc of polished glass, its back all silvered—a gift from a merchant whose straying horse I had seen in a pool of ink.*

(beat)



*The stallholders at the fair were afraid of the forest folk; they would nail their wares to the bare boards of their stalls—slabs of gingerbread or leather belts were nailed with great iron nails to the wood. If their wares were not nailed, they said, the forest folk would take them, and run away, chewing on the stolen gingerbread, flailing about them with the belts.*

SFX: CRIES OF “HOY! COME BACK!” AND SCUFFLING, OVER THE MARKET NOISES.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The forest folk had money, though: a coin here, another there, sometimes stained green by time or the earth, the face on the coin unknown to even the oldest of us. Also they had things to trade, and thus the fair continued, serving the outcasts and the dwarfs, serving the robbers (if they were circumspect) who preyed on the rare travellers from lands beyond the forest, or on gypsies, or on the deer. (This was robbery in the eyes of the law. The deer were the queen's.)*

(pause)

SFX: THE FAIR NOISES ARE GONE. NOW ALL WE CAN HEAR IS THE GENTLE BEAT OF THE PRINCESS'S HEART.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The years passed by slowly, and my people claimed that I ruled them with wisdom. The heart still hung above my bed, pulsing gently in the night. If there were any who mourned the child, I saw no evidence: she was a thing of terror, back then, and they believed themselves well rid of her.*

SFX: MARKET MUSIC, GENTLE IN THE BACKGROUND, BUT NO MARKET SOUNDS—MAYBE ONE LONE CRIER CALLING HIS WARES. SLOWLY A LONELY WIND BEGINS.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*Spring Fair followed Spring Fair: five of them, each sadder, poorer, shoddier than the one before. Fewer of the forest folk came out of the forest to buy. Those who did seemed subdued and listless. The stallholders stopped nailing their wares to the boards of their stalls. And by the fifth year*

*only a handful of folk came from the forest—a fearful  
huddle of little hairy men, and no-one else.*

SFX: THE WIND HOWLS.

SFX: INT... FOOTSTEPS ON A WOODEN FLOOR.

MAIDSERVANT  
Your majesty?

QUEEN  
Hmm..? I'm sorry.

MAIDSERVANT  
The Lord of the Fair is here, your majesty.

QUEEN  
Show him in, Jenna.

SFX: A DOOR OPENS. FOOTSTEPS.

QUEEN  
My Lord?

LORD OF THE FAIR  
Your majesty

QUEEN  
You asked to see me

LORD OF THE FAIR  
Yes, majesty. (he plucks up his nerve)  
I do not come to you as my queen.

QUEEN  
No?



LORD OF THE FAIR (CONT'D)

No, majesty. I come to you because you are wise. When you were a child you found a strayed foal by staring into a pool of ink; when you were a maiden you found a lost infant who had wandered far from her mother, by staring into that mirror of yours. You know secrets and you can seek out things hidden. Something is taking the forest folk. Next year there will be no Spring Fair. The travellers from other kingdoms have grown scarce and few, the folk of the forest are almost gone. Another year like the last, and we shall all starve.

QUEEN

Jenna, bring me my looking glass. It is in the chest, in my chamber.

MAIDSERVANT

Yes, Majesty.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*It was a simple thing, a silver-backed glass disk, which I kept wrapped in a doe-skin, safe in the dark.*

MAIDSERVANT

Here, majesty.

LORD OF THE FAIR

Is that the one we bought you?

QUEEN

The same. Sometimes I can see things in it.  
Sometimes it tells me things. Now, quiet.

SFX: MIRROR MUSIC, DISTANT AND STRANGE.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*She was twelve and she was no longer a little child. Her skin was still pale, her eyes and hair coal-black, her lips blood-red. She wore the clothes she had worn when she left the castle for the last time—the blouse, the skirt—although they were much let-out, much mended.*

*Over them she wore a leather cloak, and instead of boots she had leather bags, tied with thongs, over her tiny feet.*

SFX: FOREST NOISES BEGIN—RUSTLING AND NIGHT BIRDSONG ... BUT TREATED, THROUGH THE MIRROR, WITH A LITTLE ECHO AND FLUX ...



### QUEEN—INTIMATE

*She was standing in the forest, beside a tree. As I watched, in the eye of my mind, I saw her edge and step and flutter and pad from tree to tree, like an animal: a bat or a wolf.*

*She was following someone. He was a monk. He wore sackcloth, and his feet were bare, and scabbed and hard.*

*His beard and tonsure were of a length, overgrown, unshaven. She watched him from behind the trees.*

*Eventually he paused for the night, and began to make a fire, laying twigs down, breaking up a robin's nest as kindling. He had a tinder-box in his robe, and he knocked the flint against the steel until the sparks caught the tinder and the fire flamed. There had been two eggs in the nest he had found, and these he ate, raw. They cannot have been much of a meal for so big a man.*

SFX: THE FIRE CRACKLES.

FRIAR  
That's the thing.

He gets comfortable, noisily.

FRIAR (CONT'D)  
Who's there? Is someone there?

SFX: NOTHING. A RUSTLE IN THE BUSHES. THEN  
FOOTSTEPS APPROACH, NERVOUSLY.

FRIAR (CONT'D)  
Hello... My, you're a pretty thing. Come on, pretty thing.  
Over here.

There is a rustling.

FRIAR (CONT'D)  
Oh yes. Such a pretty little thing. Now let's see what you'll  
do to a man of god for a shiny penny...

QUEEN—INTIMATE  
*She stood up and walked around the fire, and waited, an arm's-length away. He pulled in his robe until he found a coin—a tiny, copper penny—and tossed it to her. She caught it, and nodded, and went to him. He pulled at the rope*

*around his waist, and his robe swung open. His body was as hairy as a bear's. She pushed him back onto the moss. One hand crept, spider-like, through the tangle of hair, until it closed on his manhood; the other hand traced a circle on his left nipple. He closed his eyes, and fumbled one huge hand under her skirt. She lowered her mouth to the nipple she had been teasing, her smooth skin white on the furry brown body of him.*

SFX: IN THE BACKGROUND WE HAVE HEARD THE FRIAR CHUCKLE AND MUTTER ENDEARMENTS. NOW, FOR A MOMENT, HE SQUEALS, AND THEN ALL WE CAN HEAR IS A LAPPING NOISE

...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*She sank her teeth deep into his breast. His eyes opened, then they closed again, and she drank. She straddled him, and she fed. As she did so a thin blackish liquid began to dribble from between her legs...*

The end of the Mirror sequence: we can hear the noises of the throne room, crisp and clear.

LORD OF THE FAIR

Majesty? Do you know what is keeping the travellers from our town? What is happening to the forest people?

QUEEN

Yes. I know.

LORD OF THE FAIR

Is something killing the travellers?

QUEEN

Yes, something is. Go home, my lord. I will take it upon myself to make the forest safe once more.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I had to, although she terrified me. I was the queen.  
A foolish woman would have gone then into the forest and  
tried to capture the creature; but I had been foolish once  
and had no wish to be so a second time.*

*I spent time with old books. I spent time with the gypsy  
women (who passed through our country across the  
mountains to the south, rather than cross the forest to the  
north and the west).*

*I prepared myself, and obtained those things I would need,  
and when the first snows began to fall, then I was ready.*

SFX: WE'RE OUTSIDE, AND A FREEZING WIND IS  
BLOWING, HOWLING AND SCREAMING ACROSS THE  
CASTLE WALLS.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*Naked, I was, and alone in the highest tower of the palace,  
a place open to the sky. The winds chilled my body; goose-  
pimples crept across my arms and thighs and breasts. I  
carried a silver basin, and a basket in which I had placed a  
silver knife, a silver pin, some tongs, a grey robe and three  
green apples. I put them down and stood there, unclothed,  
on the tower, humble before the night sky and the wind.  
Had any man seen me standing there, I would have had his  
eyes; but there was no-one to spy. Clouds scudded across  
the sky, hiding and uncovering the waning moon.*

QUEEN

(She starts to hum, as if she is half-humming, half-chanting,  
magically.)

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I took the silver knife, and slashed my left arm—once,  
twice, three times.*

QUEEN

(Sharp intake of breath as she gashes her arm.)

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The blood dripped into the basin, scarlet seeming black in the moonlight.*

*I added the powder from the vial that hung around my neck. It was a brown dust, made of dried herbs and the skin of a particular toad, and from certain other things. It thickened the blood, while preventing it from clotting. I took the three apples, one by one, and pricked their skins gently with my silver pin. Then I placed the apples in the silver bowl, and let them sit there while the tiny flakes of snow fell slowly onto my skin, and onto the apples, and onto the blood.*



SFX: ALL THE WIND HAS GONE.  
DAWN CHORUS BIRDSONG.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*When dawn began to brighten the sky I covered myself  
with the grey cloak, and took the red apples from the silver  
bowl, one by one, lifting each into my basket with silver  
tongs, taking care not to touch it.  
There was nothing left of my blood or of the brown powder  
in the silver bowl, nothing save a black residue, like a  
verdigris, on the inside.  
I buried the bowl in the earth.*

SFX: MAGIC SOUNDS ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*Then I cast a glamour on the apples (as once, years before,  
by abridge, I had cast a glamour on myself), that they were,  
beyond any doubt, the most wonderful apples in the world;  
and the crimson blush of their skins was the warm colour of  
fresh blood.*

SFX: FOR A MOMENT WE HEAR THE BEAT OF THE  
PRINCESS'S HEART ...  
WHICH FADES INTO THE FOREST ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I pulled the hood of my cloak low over my face, and I took  
ribbons and pretty hair ornaments with me, placed them  
above the apples in the reed basket, and I walked alone  
into the forest, until I came to her dwelling: a high,  
sandstone cliff, laced with deep caves going back a way  
into the rock wall.  
There were trees and boulders around the cliff-face, and I  
walked quietly and gently from tree to tree, without  
disturbing a twig or a fallen leaf.  
Eventually I found my place to hide, and I waited, and I  
watched.*

SFX: THE SOUNDS OF DWARFS COMING OUT OF THE CAVE, CURSING AND CLAMBERING. THEY DO NOT SING HI HO HI HO.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*After some hours a clutch of dwarfs crawled out of the hole in the cave-front -ugly, misshapen, hairy little men -the old inhabitants of this country. You saw them seldom now. They vanished into the wood, and none of them saw me, though one of them stopped to piss against the rock I hid behind.  
I waited. No more came out.*

QUEEN (AS OLD WOMAN)

Hullo? Is anybody there? I've got ribbons, pretty ribbons and combs...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The scar on my Mound of Venus throbbed and pulsed as she came towards me, out of the darkness, naked and alone.  
She was thirteen years of age, my stepdaughter, and nothing marred the perfect whiteness of her skin save for the livid scar on her left breast, where her heart had been cut from her long since.  
The insides of her thighs were stained with wet black filth.*

QUEEN (AS OLD WOMAN)

Ribbons, goodwife. Pretty ribbons for your hair..

PRINCESS

(whispering)

Come to me...

QUEEN (AS OLD WOMAN)



(a screech, then)  
Keep away from me!

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I dropped my basket, and screeched like the bloodless old  
pedlar woman I was pretending to be, and I ran.  
My grey cloak was the colour of the forest, and I was fast;  
she did not catch me.  
I made my way back to the palace.*

SFX: THE HEARTBEAT BEGINS IN THE BACKGROUND. IT  
GETS LOUDER OVER THIS ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I did not see it. Let us imagine though, the girl returning,  
frustrated and hungry, to her cave, and finding my fallen  
basket on the ground.*

*What did she do?*

*I like to think she played first with the ribbons, twined  
them into her raven hair, looped them around her pale neck  
or her tiny waist. And then, curious, she moved the cloth to  
see what else was in the basket; and she saw the red, red  
apples. They smelled like fresh apples, of course; and they  
also smelled of blood. And she was hungry. I imagine her  
picking up an apple, pressing it against her cheek, feeling  
the cold smoothness of it against her skin.*

*And she opened her mouth and bit deep into it...*

SFX: AND SILENCE. THE HEARTBEAT STOPS.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*By the time I reached my chambers, the heart that hung  
from the roof-beam, with the apples and hams and the  
dried sausages, had ceased to beat. It hung there, quietly,  
without motion or life, and I felt safe once more.*

SFX: WINTER WINDS HOWL. ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*That winter the snows were high and deep, and were late melting.*

*We were all hungry come the spring.*

SFX: MARKET SOUNDS ONCE MORE ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The Spring Fair was slightly improved that year. The forest folk were few, but they were there, and there were travellers from the lands beyond the forest.*

QUEEN  
Well?

LORD OF THE FAIR  
Better, your majesty. Better.

SFX: WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF HAGGLING, AD-LIB  
DWARFS AND MARKET FOLK ...

QUEEN  
Over there. The forest folk. Those dwarf-things. What are they doing?



LORD OF THE FAIR

What they've been doing this whole market. Buying glass.  
All the glass they can get. Paying good money for it, too.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I saw the little hairy men of the forest-cave buying and bargaining for pieces of glass, and lumps of crystal and of clear quartz. They paid for the glass with silver coins—the spoils of my stepdaughter's depredations, I had no doubt. When it got about what they were buying, townsfolk rushed back to their homes, came back with their lucky crystals, and, in a few cases, with whole sheets of glass. I thought, briefly, about having the dwarfs killed, but I did not. As long as the heart hung, silent and immobile and cold, from the beam of my chamber, I was safe, and so were the folk of the forest, and, thus, eventually, the folk of the town.*

SFX: PASSAGE OF TIME MUSIC ... LUTE, PERHAPS?

SFX: EXT—HORSES DRAW UP AND ARE STAMPING AND WHINNYING ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*My stepdaughter had eaten the poisoned fruit two winters back, when the Prince came to my Palace.*

SFX: INT NOW, THE HORSES ARE DISTANT AND BELOW US ...

MAIDSERVANT

Do you know who he is, majesty?

QUEEN

From his arms, he's Prince of the land beyond the mountains.

MAIDSERVANT

He is very handsome.

QUEEN

Yes. He is.

SFX: ...CROSSFADE INTO THE NOISE OF A BANQUET.

PRINCE

...of choosing a retinue is that it need be large enough to defend oneself in case of , well, bandits, let us say, but small enough that another monarch—well, yourself, for example— would not see it as any kind of a threat.

QUEEN

No threat at all?

They are flirting here, very seriously...

PRINCE

Certainly not to you, majesty.

QUEEN

How very charming. And what would you say, your highness, would be the purpose of all your... peregrinations?

PRINCE

I travel to make alliances. I am looking for allies. With other monarchs, and other kingdoms.

QUEEN

Alliances.

SFX: FADEOUT THE BANQUET.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I was practical: I thought of the alliance of our lands, thought of the Kingdom running from the forests all the way south to the sea; I thought of my golden-haired bearded love, dead these eight years; and, in the night, I went to the Prince's room.*

SFX: FOOTSTEPS ECHOING ON A STONE FLOOR.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I am no innocent, although my late husband, who was once my king, was truly my first lover, no matter what they say.*

SFX: WE ARE IN THE PRINCES'S CHAMBER.

A FIRE CRACKLES IN THE GRATE.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

PRINCE

Yes?

SFX: A DOOR OPENS.

PRINCE (CONT'D)

My. A visitor. And such a damn pretty one.

QUEEN

Thank you.

PRINCE

No. Don't come any closer.

QUEEN

I thought you wanted me.

PRINCE

I do. I just... I want you to do what I tell you. Do you understand?

QUEEN

As you wish.

PRINCE (CONT'D)

Take off your robe. Let it fall. Good. You are. You are very beautiful. Now, walk over to the open window.

SFX. THE WIND BLOWS ...

QUEEN

It's cold.

PRINCE

And do not say another word. Stand there until your skin is chilled and cold.



QUEEN

I am chilled, your highness.

PRINCE

Come here. Lie on your back. Good. Now, fold your hands across your breast. Like this. No, keep your eyes open, but do not look at me. Look up at the beams.

(he is getting very excited)

Now. You must not move. Breathe as—as little as possible.

No.

Don't move. Let me open your legs... Oh yes. Don't say anything.

Do not make a sound.

SFX: His body starts to move on hers... And then a MOAN of passion from the queen. And, immediately, the noise of bodies moving together stops.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I could not help moaning. It had been so long.*

PRINCE

No... Damn you...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*His manhood slid out of me. I reached out and touched it, a tiny, slippery thing.*

QUEEN

What's wrong?

PRINCE

I told you. You must neither move, nor speak.  
Just lie there on the stones, so cold and so fair.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I did my best, but he had lost whatever force it was that had made him virile; and, some short while later, I left the Prince's room, his tears and curses still resounding in my ears.*

PRINCE

You evil witch! Monstrous evil lustful creature.

SFX: NEXT MORNING—WE CAN HEAR THE JINGLING OF  
HARNESSES AND THE STAMPING OF HORSES, FAR,  
FAR, BELOW US.

MAIDSERVANT

So how was he, majesty?

QUEEN

Charming. But He. He does not like... live women.



MAIDSERVANT

Do you think they will ever come back?

QUEEN

No, Jenna. He won't be back.

SFX: HORSES RIDE THROUGH A FOREST, HARNESSES  
JANGLING.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*And what happened next? I do not know. But I can guess. I imagine his loins, now, as he rode, a knot of frustration at the base of his manhood. I imagine his pale lips pressed so tightly together. Then I imagine his little troupe riding through the forest, finally coming upon the glass-and-crystal cairn of my stepdaughter. So pale. So cold. Naked, beneath the glass, and little more than a girl, and dead.*

PRINCE (to himself)

Oh yes.

SFX: HE DISMOUNTS.

PRINCE (cont'd)

Oh yes.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*In my fancy, I can almost feel the sudden hardness of his manhood inside his britches, envision the lust that took him then, the prayer she muttered beneath his breath in thanks for his good fortune. Imagine him negotiating with the little hairy men - offering them gold and spices for the lovely corpse under the crystal mound.*

PRINCE

I want her. I want her now.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*Did they take his gold willingly? Or did they look up to see his men on their horses, with their sharp swords and their spears, and realize they had no alternative?*

*I do not know. I was not there; I was not scrying.*

*I can only imagine...*

*Hands, pulling off the lumps of glass and quartz from her cold body.*

*Hands, gently caressing her cold cheek, moving her cold arm, rejoicing to find the corpse still fresh and pliable.*

*Did he take her there, in front of them all? Or did he have her carried to a secluded nook before he mounted her?*

*I cannot say.*

*Did he shake the apple from her throat? Or did her eyes slowly open as he pounded into her cold body; did her mouth open, those red lips part, those sharp yellow teeth close on his swarthy neck, as the blood, which is the life, trickled down her throat, washing down and away the lump of apple, my own, my poison?*

*I imagine; I do not know.*

SFX: THE HEARTBEAT HAS BEGUN AGAIN DURING THIS SPEECH, REALLY, REALLY QUIETLY. NOW IT'S SLOWLY GETTING LOUDER.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*This I do know: I was woken in the night by her heart pulsing and beating once more. Salt blood dripped onto my face from above. I sat up. My hand burned and pounded as if I had hit the base of my thumb with a rock.*

SFX: A BANGING ON A DOOR.

SOLDIER

Open up! Open up in there!

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*There was a hammering on the door. I felt afraid, but I am a queen, and I do not show fear. I opened the door.*

SFX: MANY FOOTSTEPS. SCUFFLING. THE HEARTBEAT IS CONTINUING ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*First his men walked in to my chamber, and stood around me, with their sharp swords, and their long spears. Then he came in; and he spat in my face.*

SFX: WE HEAR A SPIT, AND THE PRINCE'S CHUCKLE.

PRINCE

There. You old witch.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*Finally, she walked into my chamber, as she had when I was first a queen, and she was a child of six.*

PRINCESS

Hello, stepmother.

QUEEN

Hello, stepdaughter. You have not changed.

PRINCESS

Thank you, stepmother. Neither have you.

SFX: THE HEARTBEAT IS THUDDING AND THUMPING THROUGH THIS SPEECH.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*She pulled down the twine on which her heart was hanging. She pulled off the dried rowan berries, one by*

*one; pulled off the garlic bulb—now a dried thing, after all these years; then she took up her own, her pumping heart—a small thing, no larger than that of a nanny-goat or a she-bear—as it brimmed and pumped its blood into her hand.*

*Her fingernails must have been as sharp as glass: she opened her breast with them, running them over the purple scar. Her chest gaped, suddenly, open and bloodless. She licked her heart, once, as the blood ran over her hands, and she pushed the heart deep into her breast.*

SFX: THE HEARTBEAT STOPS.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I saw her do it. I saw her close the flesh of her breast once more.*

*I saw the purple scar begin to fade.*

PRINCE

My darling? Are you... ?

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*He put his arm around her nonetheless, and they stood, side by side, and they waited.*

PRINCE (CONT'D)

(horny)

You're... still... very cold.

PRINCESS

Yes. Very cold.

SFX: HE LAUGHS WITH DELIGHT, AND THEY KISS ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*And the bloom of death remained on her lips, and his lust  
was not diminished in any way.*

QUEEN

So. You've made your alliance, then.

PRINCE

Our joint kingdom will stretch from the mountains all the  
way to the sea. I fancy we will marry at the midwinter  
feast.

PRINCESS

And you will be with us, stepmother, on our wedding day.

SFX: CROSSFADE THIS INTO HER SAYING ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*They told me that I would be with them on their wedding  
day.*

(Pause)

*It is starting to get hot in here. They have told the people  
bad things about me; a little truth to add savour to the dish,  
but mixed with many lies.*

SFX: THE FURNACE CRACKLES.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I was bound and kept in a tiny stone cell deep beneath the  
palace, and I remained there through the autumn. Today  
they fetched me out of the cell; they stripped the rags from  
me, and washed the filth from me, and then they shaved my  
head and my loins, and they rubbed my skin with goose  
grease.*

SFX: INSIDE A CELL, FEET CRUNCHING ON STRAW, THE  
QUEEN BACKING AWAY ...

QUEEN

Don't touch—don't you try to touch me—don't you dare!

SOLDIER

All right. Get her legs. You two, get her arms. And up with her!

SFX: OUTSIDE, THE HOWL OF THE WIND, A DISTANT CROWD

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*The snow was falling as they carried me—two men at each arm, two men at each leg—utterly exposed, and spread-eagled and cold, through the midwinter crowds; and brought me to this kiln.*

SFX: A LOW HUBBUB, THE HOWL OF THE WINTER WIND ...

CROWD

Witch!—Monster!—Murderess!—Poisoner! —Bitch!

PRINCE

Into the kiln with the old monster!

PRINCESS

(whispers)

Goodbye, stepmother.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*My stepdaughter stood there with her prince. She watched me, in my indignity, but she said nothing more. As they thrust me inside here, jeering and chaffing as they did so,*

*I saw one snowflake land upon her white cheek, and remain  
there without melting.*

SFX: THE CROWD NOISE AND THE BOOM OF THE KILN  
DOOR FROM THE OPENING SEQUENCE.

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*They closed the kiln-door behind me... It is getting hotter in  
here, and outside they are singing and cheering and  
banging on the sides of the kiln...*

*She was not laughing, or jeering, or talking. She did not  
sneer at me or turn away. She looked at me, though; and  
for a moment I saw myself reflected in her eyes.*

SFX: THE MUFFLED NOISE OF THE CROWD BECOMES  
LOUD FOR A MOMENT. THEN IT FADES ... UNDER IT  
SLOWLY THE CRACKLING OF THE FIRE BECOMES  
AUDIBLE ...

QUEEN—INTIMATE

*I will not scream. I will not give them that satisfaction.  
They will have my body, but my soul and my story are my  
own, and will die with me.*

*The goose-grease begins to melt and glisten upon my skin.  
I shall make no sound at all. I shall think no more on this.*

(pause)

*I shall think instead of the snowflake on her cheek.*

(beat)

*I think of her hair as black as coal, her lips, more red than  
blood, her skin, snow-white.*

(A beat. Then she whispers, finally, ending it all,)

*Snow-white.*

SFX: AN ECHOING SILENCE. CLOSING MUSIC,  
CRYSTALLINE AND DARK.

**And then we END.**



## THE ARTIST'S NOTES

When first exploring the task of creating this book we imagined a work like the first Gaiman Play for Voices we created, *Murder Mysteries*. Plays are not the easiest things to read and always present a design challenge. However after a careful study we began to believe we could do a better job of creating a text that was easier to follow and had a little more life to it on the page. We tried a number of different layouts and designs before we settled on what my wife Michelle came up with. "Why not centre the text and change the colour of the type for the Queen's voice so that the reader gains a better sense of the change from the past and present voice of the Queen." We tried this and I think you'll agree that it has a natural flow that is easy to read and makes for a lively rubinicated page design.

The early monk scribes described their pages as *textus* meaning cloth they saw 'thought' as a thread, and the narrator as a spinner of yarns and the true storyteller, the poet, as a weaver. Our goal in creating a fine book is to create a cloth for the story so fine that you forget the cloth altogether and are immersed in the story. Of course it is especially alluring when we get to work with a master weaver.

The Snow White Fairytale has a rich history of famous illustrators such as Walter Crane (1882), Arthur Rackham (1909), and Maurice Sendak (1973) to name a few of my favourite artists and their Snow White book publication dates. Their vision of the delicate girl has shaped the visions of thousands of young minds and set the story of Snow White into the collective unconscious of popular culture. In the forward to this book Jack Zipes has pointed to a plethora of elaborations on Snow White's Grimm origins. These permeantations provide a wealth of

opportunity to envision the complexities of this story which at first may seem as innocent as air. It is always wise to hear both sides of a story before we cast judgement: this is something that is greatly lacking in our culture of one sided views. Snow White always appeared to me as unbelievably innocent and naive. Consequently, I relished the thought of exposing the myth in pictures from a new direction. I leapt at this chance to tell the story through the medium of wood engraving, which seemed fitting since the first attempt on Snow White's life takes place in the forest. My second goal for the artwork was to free the Queen from the injustices and biases that have dogged her. I wanted to empower her so that she could reclaim her humanity as Gaiman has artfully woven into the text.

I've been asked why I don't use colour in my wood engravings. It's simply because I prefer the stark truth of black and white. Let the colour be in the fabric of the story and I'll cast dramatic shadows with bold blacks and thin white lines. Black and white has a rich tradition in relation to storytelling as the wood blocks of Albrecht Durer, John Tenniel, Frans Masereel and Lynd Ward can prove. Alfred Hitchcock's black and white films are another example of the black art that I admire.

Barbara Walker writes in *Feminist Fairy Tales*, "Snow White's stepmother seems to have been vilified because (a) she resented being less beautiful than Snow White, and (b) she practiced witchcraft." Barbara Walker also sees the injustice the Queen receives when she is labeled 'witch'. She states, "As for witchcraft, the last bastion of female spiritual power fell when the church declared its all-out war on witches, the name they gave to rural mid-wives, healers, herbalists, counselors, and village wisewomen, inheritors of the unraveling cloak of the pre-Christian priestess. A queen who was also a witch would have been a

formidable figure, adding political influence to spiritual mana. Snow White's stepmother therefore seems to me a projection of male jealousies." I think Gaiman has captured this point in his retelling of the tale. With the engravings I've created for this book I hoped to capture some of the feeling and history that surrounds Snow White. I wanted to portray a beauty in the Queen and a sense of the demonic in the Princess. I prepared each block with a vigour that would have made the Queen proud. I polished each end grain maple surface and carefully incised my lines with purpose. I can only hope they do justice to *Snow Glass Apples* and the mythos of Snow White.

George Walker





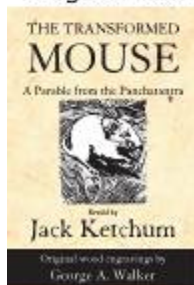
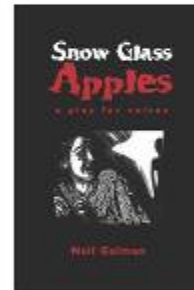
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