

COVID FAIRY TALES

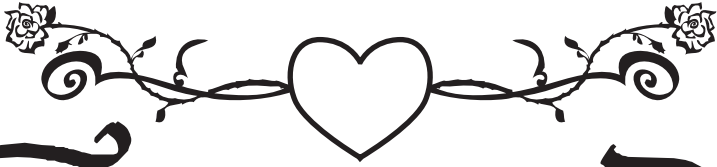


Crime of Hoods



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Game of Hoods

by
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Once upon a time, in a faraway land, lived good King Donald and his daughter Princess Clarity. They had just embarked on a journey with a mission to reestablish trade with their neighbor, King Himhaw. He had, without reason or warning, blocked traders from entering his kingdom and stopped sending trade goods into theirs.

Reports from their scouts had not found anything out of the ordinary near the border towns. Concerned by this, King Donald had determined to visit King Himhaw himself and find out the issue. Bringing Princess Clarity with him was a gesture of good will as well as possibly a negotiation tool for a future marriage between her and one of King Himhaw's sons. As the scouts had reported, nothing looked amiss as they traveled across the border.

As they drew closer to the capital the atmosphere began to change. The villagers they passed on the road hurried or ran away from them in fear. When approaching walled towns with gates they found them closed and barred and they had to ride around to continue on their journey. In

small villages the houses and businesses had their doors and shutters closed and bolted. The streets were empty of people. Even the beggars seemed to have disappeared. Everything was eerily quiet.

Further along they came to a town where a few souls wandered the streets. To King Donald's and Princess Clarity's astonishment they had brown hoods over their heads. It was not abnormal to see peasants with hoods, but these hoods were different. They covered the entire head, face, and neck the only thing not covered was the eyes. If not for clothing and gait it was hard to tell the age or identity of anyone. No one would stop to answer questions about what was going on.

When they finally arrived at the capital they were stopped at the bridge, prior to entering the gates, by the guards.

"Visitors are not allowed into the capital," stated one of the hooded guards.

"But I am King Donald," King Donald puffed with indignation. "That rule simply cannot apply to me."

Princess Clarity watched the guards exchange looks with each other.

"If you are going to come in you all have to wear these," the first guard insisted, thrusting a bag of hoods into King Donald's hands through the carriage window.

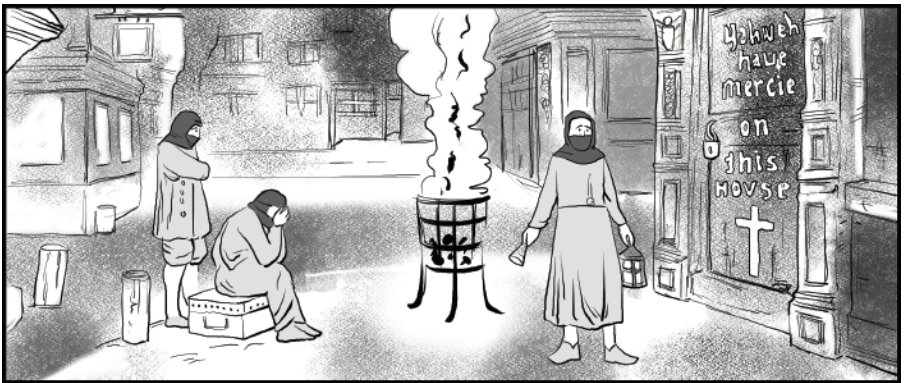
"Why?" asked Princess Clarity.

"Because of the sickness," answered the second guard.

Reluctantly King Donald put on a hood and handed one to Princess Clarity. He then tossed the bag to his chief guard to distribute to the rest of the retinue.

“What type of sickness can a cloth hood protect you from?” Princess Clarity asked, studying it curiously as the carriage rolled towards King Himhaw’s palace. She refused to put it on till just before they left the carriage.

Her father just shook his head and shrugged in confusion.



They soon rattled into King Himhaw’s nearly empty courtyard.

The only people about were guards and a few servants scuttling about. All were hooded and all seemed in fear at their arrival.

Having demanded an audience with King Himhaw from the reluctant guards they followed them into the palace and towards the throne room.

They found the King Himhaw, his two sons, and a handful of advisors present in the room. All were hooded and only

their clothes betrayed who they were. They also were all standing arms lengths apart from each other. Before approaching them Princess Clarity whispered to King Donald, "These people and their customs are extremely odd."

"Your majesty," Princess Clarity curtsied and King Donald bowed his head in acknowledgment.

"We have come to inquire about the sudden stop to the trade between our two kingdoms," King Donald stated waiting for a response from King Himhaw.

"I have been advised to stop all travel and trade with other kingdoms due to the sickness," King Himhaw said with a sigh. "It is hard on both my people and I, but I have been told it is the only way which there is to stop the death of all in my kingdom."

"Is that the reason for the mask and the people not wanting to be close to anyone else?" Princess Clarity asked.

"Yes, and it is a very serious matter," one of King Himhaw's advisors, a wizened old man, replied.

"What type of sickness is this? That we may know what dangers we should be looking out for," inquired King Donald.

"Well, it depends, sometimes it's a cough, a cold, a sore throat, trouble breathing, a sneeze...we never know exactly what it is disguised as," replied King Himhaw.

"And who is the one who discovered this sickness and its

attributes?” asked Princess Clarity with curiosity. To her the symptoms sounded like any cold which could be caught at any point or time of year. Yes, colds had their dangers and people did die from them, but not at a rate that warranted shutting down an entire kingdom.

“It was the wizard Fauci who arrived about 3 weeks ago,” a female advisor with a grating and high pitched voice said with awe. “He prophesied this sickness would come and he gave us these tools to fight it.”

“Tools like the hoods, shutting down the borders, and staying away from each other?” King Donald probed.

“Where did this wizard Fauci come from?” asked Princess Clarity.

“Fauci said he came from our enemies to warn us they were going to unleash this curse and sickness within our borders,” one of the princes replied.

“And you believed him without any further information?” Princess Clarity asked hardly believing her ears. She had a hard time not laughing out loud at this explanation. The hood came in useful for hiding her amusement.

“So far very few subjects have died since he arrived, therefore we have no reason to doubt this wizard Fauci,” King Himhaw replied.

“Did it occur to you or your advisors that maybe Fauci was sent by your enemies to intentionally cause chaos and shut down your kingdom?” Princess Clarity asked.

King Himhaw, his sons, and all of his advisors went wide

eyed at this suggestion.

“Such an accusation would need to be deeply investigated before any changes are made.” The female advisor blustered. “The common good is our highest priority.”

“Why don’t you just ask Fauci and see how he replies?” suggested King Donald.

“Summon Fauci,” King Himhaw ordered to his guards by the door.



Half an hour later the guards returned to say that no sign of Fauci could be found anywhere in the castle. He had vanished into thin air.

At this news Princess Clarity removed her hood and kept her urge to grin down to a small smirk.

The two princes soon followed suit and removed their hoods as well. Both smiled sheepishly in her direction.

“There has to be a reasonable explanation,” The wizened advisor countered, “Fauci wouldn’t just abandon us.”

“The restrictions are working and all of the edicts are being obeyed,” added the female advisor. “There has never been such control and order before.”

“But your people are miserable and your country will soon be in financial ruin,” Princess Clarity pointed out.

The advisors drew closer to each other to confer, whispering and gesturing maniacally.

“Your majesty,” Droned the wizened advisor, “We highly advise against jumping into action which could cause the entire kingdom to die in a matter of days.”

“But you shut down the kingdom with far less thought and your people are going to die anyway from lack of food and resources soon.” Princess Clarity said.

“Considering the circumstances,” King Himhaw coughed, “I think we need to issue an edict to the people saying that the sickness edicts have been removed. No hoods and distancing from neighbors are required and trade can resume with other towns and kingdoms.”

Princess Clarity smiled fully this time and King Donald patted her shoulder fondly. This was his way of saying he was proud of her.

“Please, join my family and I for dinner,” King Himhaw invited, “It’s the least I can do to make up for the trade delays this mistake has caused.”

King Donald accepted this invitation graciously.

There was no mention of marriage or betrothal the entire visit.

King Donald confided in Princess Clarity on the carriage ride back, “If King Himhaw and his sons were fooled that easily and went along with it, their intelligence and ability to rule a kingdom are highly in question.”

Princess Clarity strongly agreed with this assessment.

The journey back to their kingdom was enjoyable. The townspeople had heard the rumor that the visiting princess and king were the reason for the sickness having disappeared and cheered them on loudly when their carriage passed by. Tossing their hoods in the air in celebration.

Thus Princess Clarity and King Donald rescued a kingdom from a ‘sickness’ and enabled everyone to live their normal lives happily.



The End



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