

No Limit

A fairy tale

Once upon a time there was an old witch who gave birth to a daughter called Annelies. She took a dislike to her daughter because she stole people's attention. The witch had the child locked up in a box and had it thrown into deep water. A medical couple from the town happened to find the locked box and brought the girl up. Many years later it happened that the daughter started a family of her own. She, too, had a bad heart and a dislike of children. She lived in a huge house full of resplendent furniture white as snow. Her avaricious husband, Peter, was highly regarded by everyone in the village, but at home his children hated him because he was cold and conceited.

One day all the children gathered in the snow white living room: the twins Andrea and Olivia, Elliot, the firstborn son, rebellious Anna, courageous Simon and Zoe, the baby of the family. The children jointly devised a pact and Elliot, addressing them all, said, 'Our lives are black and unwholesome like coal dust. We want to go out into the world and tell everyone about our diabolical parents'.

The parents got wind of this scheme and flew into a terrible rage. They shouted the children down, saying: 'We'll make sure it's not going to be that easy for you. Anyone leaving this house must bring us three pieces of gold from the city and a white carpet'. Upon this, Andrea and Olivia took their leave and set off on their travels. They had heard of a place where help was a distant possibility. But the people there did not want to help them. They did not believe their stories. And so it came about that these evil people told the parents, Annelies and Peter, everything. Andrea was so upset at this treachery that one night she threw herself into the well and drowned. On that same night the water of the well turned black forever. Olivia wept for seven days and seven nights. She could not live without her twin sister so she, too, courted death and perished in her turn. When the angry, grasping mother learnt about this, she took two glass bottles, a metal vat and a chalkboard and carried these things to the well. She filled the bottles and the vat with black water, dipped the chalkboard in the well and carried everything back into the kitchen.

Now it was the turn of Elliot, the elder brother. With his two sisters gone, he felt his loneliness even more keenly. He, too, took to the road, in search of a woman who might understand him and help him spread the story of his evil parents. However, never having learnt from his parents how to speak to people, he was unable to find such a woman, no matter how hard he searched. He only found incomprehension, indifference and rejection. The sense of being an outcast caused him so much pain that he decided to take revenge. On a cold winter's day he turned against all happy young people and killed them one after another with a long-bladed knife. Red blood ran in streams down the streets of the town and when he had done he turned the blade on himself and slowly bled to death. When the parents learnt about this in their snow white living room, they were beyond themselves with outrage and Annelies and Peter said, 'What kind of people were these wretches who have allowed themselves to be killed by our son so that now we are looked at askance by the entire village community?'

Anna could brook the madness of her parents no longer and said, 'If you do not tell me why the water in the well has turned black I'm going to turn my back on this ill-omened house for ever'. The parents said, 'We know nothing'. So Anna left her parents' house to embark on an uncertain quest for recognition and love. She, too, remained faithful to the pact and told everyone she met in the course of her wanderings about her evil parents, her dead sisters and brother and the snow white living room. After some time she arrived at a castle. The queen was sitting on a snow white throne in her great white throne hall and said, 'I smell human flesh '. Anna got such a fright that she stumbled as she was making her escape and fell off a cliff. When her parents heard this, they rode in haste to the queen on their white horses, begging her to pardon them. This was the beginning of a friendship of many years.

This is how it came about that the only children left at home were Simon and Zoe. Simon had long forgotten all about the pact and had instead learnt everything about the life of his evil father. He had stopped longing for love and had understood that evil usually gains the upper hand over good. He killed animals, set fire to the woods and tortured his sister Zoe, who thereupon turned into a white rabbit. Zoe kept trying to feel anything at all but she had simply forgotten how having feelings worked. She paid a visit to her grandmother to learn there how to have feelings but of course grandmother was a witch and instead of helping her she transmogrified her, using the power of the dark water, into a dark statue of beauty and stone.

Sitting in their living room, the parents stared contentedly at larger-than-life-size pictures of their children. 'I've had a bad dream', said Annelies. 'Don't hold it against the children', replied Peter. They were sitting on the edge of their oversized sofa, drinking black tea, and lived happily ever after in their snow white living room, dreaming of a perfect world, the exact replica of their imaginings.

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