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Genevieve of Brabant

Unknown writer

Once upon a time in Brabant, there lived a powerful, rich count with a beautiful daughter called Genevieve. One day the count was attacked by his neighbour and he had to go to battle. He returned as the victor and in his company he had brought Count Siegfried, who had saved his life. Count Siegfried asked for his daughter's hand in marriage and the count agreed. Siegfried took his new bride to his castle near the Rhine river.

One evening when Siegfried and Genevieve were sitting in the living room, they suddenly heard trumpets and the count was called to battle the Saracens, an old Arabic people. Quickly everything was set up for departure and the next morning Siegfried said goodbye to his sad wife Genevieve.

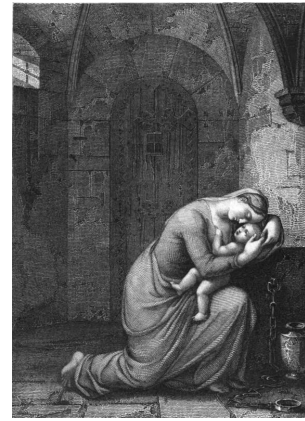
For the countess though times were ahead. Knight Golo, who was appointed by the count as place observer, turned out to be disloyal. He behaved as if HE was the count and when Genevieve addressed this to him, he became angry and vowed to take revenge. Golo wrote letters to count Siegfried and wrote all kinds of nasty lies about Genevieve and even had her taken prisoner.

Genevieve was imprisoned for a couple of months when she gave birth to a child she called Schmerzenreich. She named him this because she gave birth to him in the saddest time of her life. Golo decided to kill mother and child. The next day they were supposed to die. In the middle of the night, Bertha, the daughter of the tower watch, knocked on the small window of the prison cell and told Genevieve of Golo's plan.



'If there is anything you wish, please tell me', the loyal girl said. 'I shall make sure it happens.' Genevieve wrote a letter to count Siegfried, pleaded her innocence and requested mercy for her killers and wrote that she forgave them. She hoped that no one else was to face her destiny. She gave the letter through the window to Bertha, so she could give it to count Siegfried upon his return.

Soon two armed men came to get Genevieve and they led her through an underground tunnel that ended up in the middle of the forest. Here Genevieve was supposed to die. But she was pleading for her life and the men decided to let her live. But she had to swear that she would never appear from the forest. She swore and she walked day and night through the forest to look for a suitable hiding place for her and her child.



Eventually she found a small cave and decided to live there. She had not eaten anything except for some carrots and she was at the point where she would faint from hunger and thirst. Desperately she started to plead for help again. And decided to go look for blueberries. But as she was walking outside, a deer came walking in the cave to rest. Genevieve lured the deer to her by speaking gently and her child was able to drink the deer's milk.

Genevieve and her child fed themselves with the milk from the deer and blueberries and other fruit from the forest. Years passed. Her son, who was growing well, was her only joy. At this point, count Siegfried had laid ill in bed for over a year due to a wound he obtained in battle. His sorrow over his wife's death had slowed down his healing process.

When he returned home, he found countless letters his wife had written to him, but he never received. Golo hadn't send any of them. Then loyal Bertha came to him and handed him the letter. That letter enraged Siegfried so much that he wanted to kill Golo right away. But then he remembered Genevieve's words: 'Forgive him, as I have forgiven him', and he let Golo live, but had him imprisoned.

After several years Siegfried decided to go hunting again and invited all of his knights. They had been in the forest for a while when he spotted a deer and chased after it. He followed it through bushes and thorns and arrived at a cave. In front of the cave he saw a boy and a woman who protected the deer.

Siegfried mounted off his horse and asked: 'Who are you and where do you come from?' Because after all those years, he had not recognized his wife. 'I am Genevieve, your wife and this boy is Schmerzenreich, your son.'

It was as if the ground disappeared from under his feet. He fell in front of Genevieve's feet. She made him get up and embrace his son. The count blew his gold horn and assembled all his knights to introduce them to his wife and son. Then he had beautiful clothes fetched for her and put her on the most beautiful horse he could find and brought her to his castle. Here they lived happily ever after.

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