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King Alfred and the Cakes

Unknown writer

Once, when the good King Alfred of England had to flee from his strong enemies, the Danes, he hid in a forest. In this forest, there was a small cottage, and Alfred asked the woman who lived there if he could come in to rest.

The woman didn't know the king, but she saw that he was an English soldier and very tired, so she let him in and made him sit in her kitchen.

On the hearth in front of the fire, some cakes were baking. The woman told the stranger that if he watched the cakes and made sure they didn't burn, she would give him some supper. Then she went away to do her work.

At first, King Alfred looked very carefully at the cakes. When one side was well done, he turned the other side to the fire. But after a while, he began to think about his land and his poor people, and then he completely forgot his task.

So when the woman came back, the cakes were black and burnt. "You are a conceited fellow," she cried angrily. "You would be quite willing to eat the cakes, but you don't take the trouble to watch them and make sure they don't burn."

As the woman was scolding loudly, her husband came home. He knew King Alfred. "Quiet, woman!" he cried. "It is our noble lord the king!"

When the woman heard this, she became very frightened, and she begged Alfred to forgive her.

The king smiled and said, "I will gladly forgive you for your scolding, good woman, if you will forgive me for spoiling your supper."



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