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The Happy Couple

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There was a husband and wife who were devoted to each other—so completely and uncomplicatedly in love that it was almost a provocation to those who make it their business to disturb such things. The devil took notice of them, and called in an old witch to help him pull the situation apart.

The plan was simple and mean: to plant suspicion in each of them about the other.

The old witch told the husband a story—a convincing, detailed, anguished story—about things his wife had allegedly been doing. She told the wife a rather different story: that her husband was suffering under a curse, and the only cure was a hair from his beard, cut while he slept.

That night the wife got up quietly, picked up a small razor, and went to her sleeping husband's bedside. She was doing this for love, to save him from a curse—but the razor was a razor, and a sleeping husband is a sleeping husband, and when he half-woke and found a woman standing over him with a blade in her hand, he grabbed her wrist.

He held her wrist. She held the razor. They looked at each other in the dark.



What happened next was the only thing that could happen between two people who loved each other as much as they did: they started talking. She explained about the curse and the hair and the old woman. He explained about the story he had been told, which had made him afraid of exactly what this looked like.

The witch's story collapsed the moment it was compared to the truth. The devil's scheme came apart against the simple fact of two people being completely honest with each other for five minutes.

The couple were, if anything, rather more devoted after that—having now seen each other in the dark, each holding something potentially dangerous, and having discovered nothing worse than love on the other side.

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