

Queen Marjorie

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

With her clever mind to go with the golden crown atop her curly hair, Marjorie was a queen who ruled with fairness. She was well-respected by her people; when she spoke, everybody listened because she was smart and sensible and made excellent decisions.

Queen Marjorie had inherited the throne from her father, King Reginald. Once she became the queen, many of the men in the land wanted to come to the castle and ask her to marry them. Some were rich, some were handsome, and some were both. But the queen was never sure if they truly loved her for herself, or if they were only interested in becoming her husband so they could enjoy living like royalty. So she turned down every marriage proposal she received.

The queen's handmaid wanted Marjorie to be happy and find romance, so she suggested a test for the suitors to see if they were truly in love or not. Queen Marjorie agreed.

The next man to propose marriage to the queen was given a challenge. The queen's handmaid said, "If you truly loved the queen, you would know her favorite flower. Bring back a bouquet, and if you are right, Her Majesty may consider your proposal." The man left the castle and searched the flower stalls at the market for a flower fit for a queen. He had no idea what her favorite might be, so he bought the most expensive bouquet of red roses he could find. He went back to the castle and presented them to the queen. She took one look and shook her head. The man was sent away.

Some time later, another suitor ventured to the castle in search of the queen's favor. The handmaid gave him a different challenge. "If you truly loved the queen, you would know her favorite color. Bring back something in that color, and Her Majesty may consider your proposal." The man left the castle and searched the dressmaker shops for the most luxurious fabrics in beautiful hues. He had no idea what her favorite color might be, so he bought the most elegant, shimmering gold cloth he could find. He went back the castle and presented it to the queen. She took one look and shook her head. The man was sent away.

More time passed. The next man to arrive at the castle was neither handsome nor rich. He had a small rough sack over his shoulder. He bowed before the queen nervously. The handmaid asked her first question. "If you truly loved the queen, you would know her favorite flower. Bring back a bouquet, and if you are right, Her Majesty may consider your proposal."

The tall man stammered a little. "I – I – if you please, I hope it is all right, I didn't want to come empty-handed to meet the queen. I have already picked some flowers for you." He smiled and presented the queen with a small nosegay of wildflowers. "I gathered these in the meadow. I believe Her Majesty likes daisies, since I have noticed she often wears them in her pretty, curly hair."

The queen accepted them with a raised eyebrow, and nodded at her handmaid.

“Very well, my good man,” said the handmaid. “You have chosen wisely. Now we give you another task. If you truly loved the queen, you would know her favorite color. Bring back something in that color, and Her Majesty may consider your proposal.”

The gentle fellow blushed and stammered. “If I may – if you please – I may not be a rich man, but I do have another gift for the queen.” From his sack he pulled out several pretty velvet ribbons, all in different shades of green.

“Whenever I am lucky enough to catch a glimpse of our beautiful queen, I can not help but admire her green eyes which shimmer like emeralds,” he said. “Her Majesty often wears a bit of green in her dresses or shoes, so I am hoping you will accept these green ribbons as a small token of my affection.”

The queen accepted them with a hint of a smile and nodded at her handmaid.

The handmaid addressed the suitor. “Right again, dear man. It seems you do care for our beloved queen. But having a keen eye doesn’t mean you love her truly.”

The man blushed. “I have no more gifts to offer, except perhaps for this.” He removed a violin from his sack. “Whenever I am lucky to get near enough to Her Majesty when she walks through the crowds, I sometimes hear her quietly humming a little tune to herself.” He tucked the violin under his chin and placed the bow upon the strings. “After much research, I think I have found it. It’s an ancient love song, and I think it will show you how I feel.” The bashful man played, and the music swelled and filled the air with its sweet melody. He began to sing. As he sang of true love, a single tear fell down his cheek. When his song ended, he wiped it away and took a small bow.

Queen Marjorie stood up from her throne. “Your presents are small and humble. As a queen I can certainly afford my own gifts, so I am not easily persuaded by trinkets.” The suitor looked down at his feet, embarrassed. The queen continued. “But your gifts come from the heart, and your song has touched my heart too. I will consider your marriage proposal, kind sir.”

The man looked up, scarcely believing his good luck. “If I may say so, Your Majesty, even if you were not the queen, I would still be in love with you. You are clever and fair and good, and in my eyes, you are the most beautiful lady I’ve ever seen. I didn’t dare think you would marry me and love me in return.”

The Queen looked upon the man. “You may have love in your heart, but there is not much sense in your head if you think I would agree to be married to a complete stranger.” She smiled gently. “However, I am ready to consider that there might be feelings between us that could grow into something like love, in time.”

“If it took forever, I would be delighted to wait for all eternity,” the suitor declared, grinning from ear to ear. “Just the chance to spend one more moment with you would make me the happiest man in the land.”

“Then I expect you will be quite happy indeed,” replied the queen. “And I have a feeling that perhaps I may also find happiness in your company. Shall we go walk the royal gardens and get to

know each other?”

The gentleman nodded, and they walked out of the castle together.

Questions

1. What are three character traits of Queen Marjorie?
2. Why did many of the men want to marry the queen?
3. What did the shy man's gifts show to the queen?
4. Why didn't the queen decide to marry the suitor right away? Do you think this was a good decision? Why or why not?