

# *The power of love*

## CHAPTER 1

Once upon a time, in a very prosperous land, there was a huge castle with the highest towers ever seen and a beautiful garden that was in bloom all year round. It was surrounded by an immense forest with all kinds of trees: oaks, pines, maples and many others, which separated the castle from the rest of the village that was ruled by King Arthur and Queen Victoria. The king was an old but valorous man, he was only interested in the power and stability of his reign; while the queen was a generous and lovely dame, which used to spend her time reading books and playing the flute as she loved music. They both tried for a long time to have children but never could, until, finally, an heir was born. He was named William, after his grandfather, and was born with his father's striking blue eyes and his mother's golden, curly hair. To celebrate his birth, the royal family organized a banquet with food from all over the land and they invited all the nobles nearby. That night the queen's personal maid heard someone knocking on the door but when she opened it the only thing she could find was a small basket covered by a blanket and when she unfolded it, she saw a tiny baby with porcelain skin, big leaf green eyes, dark brown hair and soft, red lips. Next to the baby was a note that carried the only information about her, her name, which was Sarah. The woman immediately showed her to the queen to ask her if she could keep her. Queen Victoria, known for her kindness, accepted without hesitation and told her that the baby could be raised in the castle.

As the years passed by, William and Sarah grew up together and became at first very close friends and then they fell in love. Every afternoon they either played in the garden, read books together or had fun telling each other scary stories. Their favorite place to meet was under the biggest oak of the forest, where they used to lay down and look at the different shapes of the clouds.

One day, William was late for their appointment and when he arrived he apologized by saying:

"I'm sorry for being late, but my parents wanted to speak to me."

Sarah replied: "What happened, Will?"

He hesitated, afraid she might get upset and when he finally found the courage to speak he said:

“They want me to get married.”

The sentence was followed by a moment of deep silence when they just looked at each other.

“You are not free to decide who to marry...”

William understood Sarah’s intentions and proposed her to run away together.

“You can’t give up your reign, your land, think about your people! I will not let you sacrifice everything for me!”

“But I love you!”

“I love you too, that’s why I can’t let you do this.”

While saying this, she ran away crying, back to the castle.

In the following days, William went back to the places of their appointments several times but she was nowhere to be found. After a week he visited the maid who had found Sarah on the first day, to ask her if she had any news of Sarah, trying to hide their forbidden love.

“My mother is looking for Sarah, she seems to have disappeared, have you seen her by any chance?”

“I thought you knew... She left to go on a journey to find her father who abandoned her here when she was born.”

He tried to hold back the tears in front of the maid who didn’t know about their love affair, but as soon as he arrived in his room he was devastated and couldn’t stop crying.

## CHAPTER 2

Meanwhile Sarah was wondering through the Dark Oak forest, wearing the silver medallion she had been wearing around her neck since the day she was found, the only object that could have helped her trace back her origins. It was round shaped and it carried the emblem of a phoenix.

She had been walking barefoot for days now and she was tired and worn out but determined to find her father. The maid had told her that a man had been seen running away after dropping the basket with baby Sarah inside and she had always imagined that that man could be her father.

The forest was menacing and terrifying. Sarah was very tired, she stopped to drink at a pond and while she was drinking she saw in the water the reflection of a huge bear right behind her, she started running as fast as she could and she didn't realize that her precious medallion had got stuck on a tree branch. Only hours later did she understand that she had lost it. She was devastated.

"I won't be able to find my family now that I have lost my medallion, I won't know who I am."

At the same time, a group of knights on their horses, led by King Robert were hunting in the same forest. While chasing a wild boar, King Robert's attention was attracted by something glittering among the leaves. He stopped at once, he picked the medallion which carried his own royal emblem, and immediately recognized it as the one that he had given orders to put around the neck of his little daughter before she was abandoned in a basket, 17 years before.

King Robert was shocked but relieved that his little girl might be still live. He immediately summoned his most loyal knight, Sir Edward, the man who had travelled to the neighboring reign of King Arthur and left the basket outside the maid's door.

"Sir Edward, come here at once!" he shouted.

"Yes, my lord."

"Look what I have just found, isn't it incredible?"

"Where did you find it?" Sir Edward recognized the medallion immediately and was just as shocked.

"It was hanging from a branch. You know how much I have looked for her in all these years."

"My lord, someone could have stolen the medallion", Sir Edward pointed out.

"She must be close, she was here, I can feel it! Please, I need your help to find her."

All the knights were ordered to go in different directions to look for the king's long lost daughter.

### CHAPTER 3

In the meantime, in King Arthur's castle, William was meeting one of the many princesses his father wanted him to choose among to find his bride. Her name was Elizabeth and she was his parents' favorite because she was very beautiful and smart. She had long blond hair and brown eyes, skin as pale as milk and soft as wool; she was also cheerful and wide-cultured, so it was a pleasure to spend time with her. Despite this, he felt nothing for her because he was still in love with Sarah and could not stop thinking about her. That very evening the king and the queen entered William's room and asked him

"What do you think about Elizabeth? Isn't she the most charming girl you have ever seen?"

"She is truly perfect under every aspect but my heart belongs to another woman." He finally found the courage to confess.

"Who is the lucky girl you chose to marry?" the queen asked.

"None of those who you introduced to me", replied the prince.

"Then tell us, who is she? Where have you met her?" the king pressed him.

"Someone who surely wouldn't meet your approval", was William's bitter remark.

"Just tell us", both his parents insisted.

"The girl I fell in love with is Sarah, the maid's adoptive daughter."

King Arthur couldn't hold his disappointment at his son's foolishness and got very angry.

"You're a prince, she is just a maid, you can't marry her. You must marry Elizabeth!"

When the prince heard these words he decided to leave the room slamming the door behind him.

"But I love her!" he shouted.

## CHAPTER 4

Sarah had lost hope to get out of the forest, when she saw a man on his horse approaching her. He got closer and finally asked her:

“Excuse me, my lady. I’m looking for a girl. She lost this medallion here in the forest, have you seen her?”

“My name is Sarah, where did you find my medallion?”

“You need to come with me”.

Sarah was very suspicious; she didn’t know the man so she wasn’t sure if she should follow him.

“Who are you? Why do I need to come with you?”

The man then explained himself.

“My name is Sir Edward, I’m King Robert’s closest friend and most loyal knight, we are searching for a girl lost many years ago, we have reasons to believe she is in this forest right now.”

“But what do I have to do with all of this?” Sarah was confused.

“Lady Sarah, you are the girl we are looking for”, explained Sir Edward.

Finally, since she was starving and she didn’t want to remain alone in the forest any longer, she convinced herself to follow Sir Edward. He helped to get on the horse and together they rode to the meeting point. There, Sir Edward blew in a horn to call the other knights and in a few minutes everyone arrived.

## CHAPTER 5

As soon as the King arrived he asked Sir Edward why he had called them back so quickly while they were still searching. When she heard that voice, Sarah immediately got off the horse and when she saw King Robert for the first time she instantly recognized him. She knew who that man was; something inside her heart was telling her she was looking at her father. When their eyes met, her filled with tears that started to fall on the ground so the king hugged her and dried her face. She could hear her father's heart beating wildly and his knees shaking. They looked at each other and when King Robert finally found the courage to speak, he said:

"My darling, is it really you? I can't believe I'm actually holding my daughter in my arms again after all these years!"

"Yes father, it's me, I've dreamt about this all my life, but please tell me, why did you abandon me?"

The king burst into tears as he heard his daughter's question.

"20 years ago I fell in love with one of my wife's maids, she was as beautiful as you are, she had your green eyes and your gorgeous smile. I didn't love my wife, but I had to marry her for political reasons, but my heart had always belonged to your mother. She got pregnant with you and we couldn't hide our love anymore, so she had to run away from my wife who wanted to kill her. Shortly after you were born, my wife hired two killers to get rid of her. I asked Sir Edward to find out if you were still alive, so he found you and took you to the nearest castle, hoping that you would have a happy life. Now my evil wife is dead, so we can finally be reunited without you risking your life."

Sarah remained in silence for a couple of minutes as she was thinking, then she said "I love you, I always have and I always will, but I need some time to think about what you just told me and some time to forgive you".

After this, Sir Edward interrupted them by saying:

"My Lord, the sun is setting; we need to get back to the castle before it's too late. You know this forest is dangerous at night".

"You're right, we better get back", the king agreed.

Having said that, they got back on their horses and returned to the castle.

## CHAPTER 6

A few months later...

King Arthur couldn't stand any longer the fact that William didn't want to get married, so he summoned all the princesses of the neighboring kingdoms and forced him to choose one of them. Sarah, that had become a princess, attended the meeting. When William looked at all the girls taking part in the ball, he recognized her immediately. Sarah was wearing an emerald green dress with a heart-shaped neckline, tight on the waist and with a very wide skirt, she was also wearing the medallion that she had had since she was little. William had to dance with all his guests and when it was Sarah's turn they started to talk.

"Are you real?! Are you a ghost?!" he asked.

"Yes it's me, William, you are not dreaming!"

"You broke my heart!"

"I've done this for you!"

"How could you think running away would have helped me?"

Sarah explained her reasons and told the truth regarding what had happen to her during the time they had been apart.

"So that is why you are dressed like that? You look so beautiful in this dress".

She looked down and blushed not knowing what to say. Since nobody else had recognized her except for William, he was able to choose her as his bride to be. William told his parents that he had finally made his decision, so the king was happy at last.

A few months later they got married and lived happily ever after.

THE END