

The Blind King

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Jefferson the Eagle was the emperor of Good Sight Kingdom for more than twenty-four years. One Saturday, when he woke up, he realized he was seeing a little bit blurry. He did not care too much; maybe it was only some gum over his eyes. However, as days passed by he was seeing more and more bleary. The emperor realized that something really bad was happening to him, he was really losing his sight. In the first moment, the frontal vision was becoming blurrier and blurrier. After a while he only had the peripheral vision. In front of him there was just a dark and dense cloud, which was growing bigger and bigger each day. The emperor's doctors diagnosed it as glaucoma, but they were wrong. All the doctors of the kingdom, as well as all doctors of all friend kingdoms were called but they could not do anything better than prescribe some eye drops that did not work at all. Several exams were made and nothing was discovered. It was not any kind of common or known disease. What we know is that in less than one year after that very first Saturday morning, for the sorrow of the Good Sight Kingdom, Jefferson the Eagle was completely blind.

If the daily life is not an easy task to a born blind person, you can imagine how hard it was for the emperor, who, as you, was not prepared to live under such conditions. The next years would be the hardest ever. Each day seemed to be an eternity of suffering and anxiety. Jefferson could not realize how he would be able to keep being a king, the best ever as he was, how he could command his people, how he could keep being the powerful emperor of Good Sight Kingdom in such conditions. He passed his time dived in such thoughts of self-pity and despair.

However something really unexpected and weird happened after nine weeks of blindness. The emperor had taken a shower, with all difficulties, as usual, he was leaving his gorgeous and enormous bathroom, when, suddenly, "WOW!" As a flash of light in front of him, he could see his reflection in the mirror. Not only this, much more. He returned to the mirror and he saw that he was not seeing only himself, but he could see whatever was reflected in the mirror behind him. He could not believe, but it was true. Without the mirror he was as a common and ordinary blind man, but he could see clearly and perfectly everything the mirror reflected, as the real eagle.

Thomas, the kingdom's engineer, built a mirror support which king Jefferson could place on his neck and chest to keep a mirror in front of him. In this way the emperor could see whatever he wanted, or almost this. After one month of hard work, Tomas arrived with his brand new invention, a new set of mirrors he had created. With such apparatus, full of gears and controls, the emperor would be able to see forward, working with the angles of the mirrors. However they realized that every time they changed the angles of the mirrors in a way that the emperor's image disappeared, he lost the vision again. They realized that the only way Jefferson could see the reflections of the mirrors was when he was part of the image that was being reflected in the mirror. All images the emperor could see had his own image in the foreground.

In this way, Jeff could only see what was behind him, having himself in front of everything. If this was the way the situation had been presented to him, this was the way he was going to face it. And the emperor Jefferson the Eagle kept reigning over all land of Good Sight using mirrors and watching everyone and everything behind himself.

Jefferson the Eagle had three wives, some concubines, more than twenty daughters, and only one son, Louis the Myopic. He was the son of the Your Majesty the Queen Mary, the first and real queen of the Good Sight Kingdom. Louis the Myopic was the natural heir of the emperor, but nobody in the entire kingdom believed that one day he could reach such position. Louis was a laughing stock, a true shame to his father, someone who could not even believe he deserved to be a king one day. He, the Myopic, behind his thick lenses was a crestfallen human being, without courage to face the people.

The kingdom was in rampage. The wives and concubines of the emperor were facing a great opportunity to make the new heir, the future king. Jefferson could not keep being the emperor using mirrors to reign. He should be dethroned and replaced as soon as possible. However nobody could even suppose that Louis could be the successor. All his wives and concubines were going to try to make the real heir to him. In less than one month, there were five pregnant women – two wives and three concubines, but no Queen Mary – in the real palace.

Queen Mary was in her fifties, she was fat and moody. Since years ago the emperor did not feel attracted to her at all. The last time they slept together was so distant in their memories that seemed to have been in another life. She did not have any hope of having another son. However she was the queen, always close to him in all official events. She could not lose this opportunity of having her own son as king, in spite of all deficiencies she knew her son had.

“Your majesty, you don’t think you should have a... a helper in these conditions you are in?” – suggested she in a break during one of these official events.

“What conditions are you talking about?”

“In such special conditions as you are living.” – She said facing his nape.

“Special conditions?! I’m more than accustomed of being king! I know more than anyone how to be one, the best one ever.”

“I see... but... I’m not talking about the king condition; I’m talking about this other situation you are facing... I mean, I’m not sure if facing is a good word... anyway.”

“What do you mean?” – Jefferson could not imagine she was daring enough to say something about his vision.

“I mean, it’s about your vision... I mean, your special vision, using mirrors,” – she was trembling with a goblet of champagne in her hands. “You know, I thought Louis, our son, could be useful to you. Don’t you think so?”

“Hmmm... Yes, I guess you are right. Maybe he can be useful. Sometimes the mirrors have to be cleaned and replaced for new and clean ones, and it’d be nice if someone who I could trust did that.”

“Oh, this sounds great, your majesty!” – She said while swallowing a big gulp of champagne. “Maybe he could do even more than this.”

“A nearsighted one like him only can do small tasks, you know. He can’t do anything that requires seeing more than ten feet in front of him. I can’t imagine other utility to him.”

With another gulp of her drink, the queen just consented nodding her head. “You’re right; I guess you’re right.”

Standing just in front of Jefferson, Louis was listening to their conversation without being noticed, without saying any word. "He was right, surely he was right." He thought before leaving the ceremony.

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Louis started to work with his father as Your Majesty Queen Mary had suggested. In the first days he almost didn't talk. However, after a while, the king began to really appreciate the presence of his son by his side. The king stayed several times completely blind in front of Louis, and he knew he was the only one that the king allowed such intimacy and closeness. Louis was responsible for exchanging dirty mirrors for clean ones. Only one king knows how vulnerable is to be blind, even for few seconds, in the presence of someone else. The hands of Louis seemed to be comfortable to Jefferson, even when he was adjusting the support in the real neck. It was maybe related with the blood, with that inexplicable connection between fathers and sons; this type of thing Jefferson had never believed in.

Louis was feeling each day more self confident. He was the right hand of the emperor. He started to talk more and more. It was almost a whisper in the first times, which only Jefferson could hear. After a while, his voice became louder and louder. After a while, after several talks, Jefferson started to call him to the meetings with the real advisors. More than this, Jefferson started to listen to him.

One morning, he approached to the king and presented to him what he had done as a surprise, without the king's authorization. He had asked Tomas, the kingdom's engineer, to create a special pair of mirrors, with magnifying lens. It was a simple, almost obvious idea, but

nobody had thought of that before. Now, with these new lenses, Jefferson could see even more, farer and clearer.

This was much more than what Jefferson was expecting from Louis. He was a good company, a safe and reliable presence, a thoughtful advisor, and now, he showed clearly he was a really smart person. Jefferson decided to make a ceremony to honor Louis, the Prince. Yes, the Prince. In the new order, it was prohibited to all any mention of the old name, the Myopic.

During the ceremony of his nomination, the king slipped on the ramp that gave access to the real throne. Louis had no doubt; he left his position and jumped to save his father. And he did it. He saved his father from the humiliation; however the mirror support hit and broke the Louis' thick glasses. The king was saved, but Louis was on all fours, groping, looking for the pieces of his broken glasses. Some people looked at him with pity, some with disdain – how could the king recognize this guy as his real heir? Some of them started to laugh at him. It was probably a natural reaction after the shock of almost seeing their king falling, or it was just a human reaction of making fun of who was in an awkward situation. A nameless voice screamed, “The Myopic is back!”

Jefferson was for the first time in a royal impasse. He used to make fun of his son. He used to think his son was a ridiculous person, who sooner or later would embarrass him in front of everyone. However in the last weeks, Louis had been his best company, his best advisor. But now, when he had trusted in his son, all his expectations were confirmed, and Louis had made him be embarrassed in front of his people.

“A round of applause for the Prince Louis, who saved the king’s life!”, screamed the Queen Mary from behind of the royal throne. Few people starting clapping shyly. “Save the king!”, she continued. More people clapping. “Save Louis, the Prince!” Now almost everyone was clapping. Jefferson showed his real smile. “Save Jefferson, the Eagle!” The people were standing in ovation. Jefferson was proud and raised his arms greeting the people. “God bless Louis, our prince, the heir of our kingdom!” “God bless Louis! God save the king! God save our prince!” Father and son were side by side, greeting the people that were screaming their names. Both were recognizing that something important had just happened.

Louis was finally in the position Queen Mary had dreamed. He was the second man of the kingdom. Finally he was respected and honored by everyone. The king had no more words to talk about his son. He was just pride.

Louis got married with Princess Annemarie, who was daughter of the King of Good Neighbor. Annemarie was a Barbie princess, blonde, blue eyes, a common type among the princesses. She said that the glasses Louis wore made him look even cuter. The entire kingdom was happy with the new royal couple.

Everything seemed to be perfect. However Louis was a weak person who was easily manipulated. His mother, Queen Mary, at contrary, was a strong and manipulative person. For Louis surprise, his wife, Princess Annemarie, was more like his mother. She could be Queen Mary’s daughter, so similar they were in thoughts and greediness. The women had a plan, and Louis did not know how to say no to them. He was just a man between two women, an easy prey for them; two beasts full of hunger smelling the blood of the prey. He, who never even

dreamed about being a king, was manipulated in a way that he could no longer wait to sit in the throne. In the next mirror's exchange they would execute the plan the two women had created.

Louis came to the royal room with a new set of mirrors in his hands. The king did not pay attention, but Louis left the door opened for his mom and his wife to come in. The king was sitting facing the door looking at the gardens through the royal window, when Louis asked permission and came to exchange the mirrors. His hands were trembling what made the king notice something was strange, "Is everything okay, son?"

"Yes, yes... yes... ", Louis' voice was just a confirmation that something was wrong. When Louis finished taking the mirrors off, the two infamous women were just a few steps far from the king's neck, each one carrying a knife.

The presence of them, the scene, the proximity with the crime as well as with the throne, drove Louis so nervous. His trembling hands were shaking, and the mirrors fell to the ground, breaking into a thousand of pieces. "What's wrong with you, Louis?", the king asked but he did not wait for an answer. He was not king without reason. Jefferson smelled the danger. He smelled the disgusting perfume Queen Mary was wearing. Some say The Eagle smelled the iron of the knives. I say he smelled the rotten odor of betrayal and turned around his body, hitting both women with the empty support. With his heel he kicked his renegade son.

Louis the Myopic, his wife, and his mother, were expelled from the kingdom. The royal mirrors were never more exchanged, and the king started to clean them for himself. Nobody could be close to him in such a fragile moment.

One month later, the kingdom was again in peace. King Jefferson the Eagle was sovereign over all land of Good Sight. To celebrate, he called everyone to the royal plaza in front of his palace. He had a speech and he had bought tons of champagne to share with all his vassals.

“They tried to convince me I should not be your king. They tried to steal my throne. They tried to make me look as a fool in front of everyone. They told me I could not be a king for seeing everything behind me, for having myself in front of my sight. So I ask you, who among all of you do not do the same? Who, among all of you do see yourself in first plan and the entire world behind of yourself?”

All people cheered. “Save the king! Save The Eagle! Long life to King Jefferson! Save The Eagle!”