

THE FATTEST OF THEM ALL

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Long ago, in a faraway kingdom, there lived a vain and vicious queen. She was proud of her svelte figure, and would spend hour after hour preening in front of the mirror, running her long and slender fingers over lean, pale flesh. “There's not a woman in this kingdom as slim as me,” she purred. She relished the thought. Relished it so much, in fact, that she made it the law: no woman in the kingdom was allowed to be thinner than the queen.

Of course, at the time, nobody *was*, so the law didn't matter much as first. But as the years passed, the queen began to grow lazy about her five-times-daily calisthenics. She developed a fondness for honey bread and sugar pastries. Slowly but surely, she began to put on weight, and once she hit her thirties, it was a lot less slowly and a lot more surely, too.

This was a big problem for the women who were her subjects. At first it was only the thinnest women, and they only had to fill out a little, which wasn't so bad, but as the queen grew, the problem grew, and the women grew too. Soon there wasn't a slender woman left in the entire kingdom, and even the average-sized women found themselves having to keep up—and they weren't average-sized for very long. Every time an update to the law was posted in the square it was followed by a chorus of groans from the women of the kingdom and creaks from their overburdened chairs.

The land changed, and not for the better. There were food shortages from the constant eating, requiring more to be imported at great expense. There was a crisis in tailoring as larger sizes were in high demand and smaller sizes became useless—all while the nation's seamstresses were slowed by their fatter fingers. The Guild of Gymnasts disbanded entirely after one of its members broke the balance beam in half in the middle of her routine. And, with the Queen having developed a taste for beer and crumble pastry, the problem showed no signs of going away.

It was thus on a warm spring day that the Queen stood on her balcony, cheeks burning, as she listened to the pronouncements of the town crier.

“Extra, extra, hear all about it! Queen hits two hundred pounds! The big two-oh-oh! Extra, extra—and I do mean extra! All ladies now required to top two hundred!”

The Queen turned away from the window, her skin prickling with humiliation. When she's made the law, she hadn't really thought about the fact that in order for people to follow it, they'd need to know how much she weighed. And that meant her every extra pound was shouted the length and breadth of the kingdom! She snatched up a jam-filled sugar puff and stuffed it into her mouth.

“Daffit,” she swore around a mouthful of jam and pastry, looking down at the empty plate. No wonder she was getting so fat. But it wasn't her fault, of course. It was never *her* fault. It was the town crier, and the cook, and all those rotten women who didn't have the decency to be fatter than her without being told. She should have them all *executed!*

She looked at herself in the mirror and sighed. Her raven hair was as long and beautiful as ever, and her pale skin was porcelain-perfect, but her diaphanous robe that had one draped loosely from her lean frame now clung to plump curves. She was bulging everywhere. She had *rolls!* Beautiful, pale, porcelain rolls. But still—*rolls!*

At least everyone else is even fatter than me, she reminded herself. The thought cheered her. *Those cows! Those pigs! Those overstuffed geese! Why, aren't I still the thinnest woman in the kingdom, after all?*

“Mirror, mirror, tell me vocally,” she purred, “who's the thinnest woman locally?”

Clouds swirled in the mirror's surface and coalesced into a face. The queen had asked this question before, often—every time she was insecure, really, which meant almost every day. And every time she'd asked it, the mirror had given the same answer:

*“In the set of all female humans older than twenty,
the rest of them all outweigh you by plenty.”*

The queen held her head high and smirked, waiting for the same praise to wash over her again. But today the mirror's words were unexpected.

*“You're still among the thinnest, true,
but Snow White's much more slim than you.”*

“What?” the Queen said. “Snow White? My stupid *daughter*? She's, what, five? Kids don't count, stupid!”

“*Your daughter has reached twenty summers,*” the mirror stated with a shrug. “*Some days I must deliver bums.*”

“How much thinner?” the queen said, her voice rising. “Five pounds? Ten?”
The mirror cleared its throat.

*“By ninety pounds if she's an ounce,
without a ripple, bulge or bounce.
She keeps it slim and tight and taut,
oh, quite unlike that gut you've got.
She's slender-hipped and lean of buns.
She doesn't waddle when she runs.
In fact, I must inform you that
she makes you, Queen, look downright—”*

With a guttural cry, the queen heaved her heavy oak morning throne into the mirror, smashing it to bits. She stood there, plump chest heaving, and watched the silvery shards tumble to the floor.

“We'll about *that*,” she snarled, shoving the chair aside. She yanked the bell for her attendants so hard she almost pulled it off the wall.

Her maids arrived a few minutes later, gasping and wheezing. They'd been an excellent attendants a few years ago when first hired, but they'd put on so much weight since then that the queen was finding herself waiting longer and longer for them to show up when called.

The three of them squeezed and prodded and kneaded the queen until they'd managed to get her into her satin gown of office. It fit her like a sausage casing, bunching up in the worst areas and stretched almost to the bursting point across her middle, bust, and rump. She'd ordered a new one ages ago, but the royal tailor, like all tailors, was far behind in her work.

Once the queen was successfully corseted, squeezed, and stayed into a half-convincing semblance of an hourglass, the three attendants accompanied her to the tower home of her stepdaughter, Snow White. At first they walked behind her as she regally ascended the steps, chin held high, but the higher they went, the more the queen struggled under her own bulk, and the more the attendants had to support her. By the time she reached the top, she was staggering. Her gown was soaked through with sweat, and every gasping heave of her ample chest popped a few more stitches along some unseen seam. Her attendants, who were hardly fit enough to climb the tower themselves, shoved hard against her rump and gave her one final boost over the top step.

“You!” she snarled as she staggered forward into the tower room.

Snow White almost fell off the uneven parallel bars. “Stepmother?”

“What are you doing?”

“Practicing for my gymnastics final?”

“And *why*, pray tell, are you doing that instead of *eating*?”

"I'm only eating applesauce and carrots right now," Snow said. "I'm in training."

"And look what it's done to you! All skin and bones and gristle. You're as scrawny as an old alley cat!"

"And stepmother, you're—" Snow White paused. "Well, you certainly are eating well. I'll put it like that."

"Do you think you can get around the law just because you're a princess?"

"No, Stepmother! I just—honestly, I didn't realize this was still a thing. Or that it had gotten to be such an, uh, *big* thing. I guess this does explain why the other girls on the team suck so bad bad."

"Well, I won't stand for my own fake daughter making a mockery of our country's proud legal tradition. You'll get fat, and you'll do it now!" The queen stomped her foot and glared at Snow. "Go on!"

"Um," Snow White said. "Like, right now, while you're watching me?"

"Yes!"

"I don't think that'll work. I mean, I could carboload, I guess. But my metabolism's pretty fast, and it would take a long time to catch up with me."

Blast!, the queen thought. *She's right! The little minx has outsmarted me. It'll take her weeks to put the weight on! Months! And all the while, I'll only be the second thinnest in the land! There's got to be a shortcut. There always is.*

Ah-ha, she realized.

"Mary! Minnie! Mitzi!" she commanded her exhausted maids. "Get off your chubby behinds and carry your royal mistress back down the stairs! Now!"

And so the queen traveled—or rather, was carried—or rather, was almost dragged, because the poor attendants' arms gave out and they had to haul her like a potato sack—to the hut of the Huntress.

The huntress was tall and strong as a bear, with bronze skin and thick black hair tied back in braids. She was unusual among the women of the kingdom because there was hardly an ounce of fat on her; her frame was so big and so muscular that she'd far outweighed the queen to start with. The queen felt a sharp spike of jealousy, but tamped it down. She needed this woman, for now.

"Huntress," she said. "I have a job for you."

The huntress eyed the queen's attendants, who were collapsed on the ground, panting.

"Should we do something about them?"

"Never mind about them! I need you to deal with my stepdaughter, Snow White."

"You want me to kill your stepdaughter?"

"Not *kill* her, you psychopath!" The queen frowned. "Why do you go right to killing? That just sounds insane. I need you to take her into the forest and make her fat."

"Much more rational," the huntress agreed.

"I don't care how you do it," the queen said, "but bring back those little gym shorts she wears, ripped at the seams! That will prove she's fat!"

"This is all making so much sense, it's amazing," the huntress said, rolling her eyes. "But very well. Consider it done."

The next day, the huntress took Snow White out on a long walk through the woods. The younger woman skipped along, turning cartwheels and somersaults in the meadows and running nimbly along the fallen logs.

"You're pretty limber," the huntress observed.

Snow nodded. "Yes, once I've finished my degree I'm going to go to grad school and get my master's in gymnastics. Moving around freely using my lithe, fit body is kind of central to my life and sense of self."

The huntress bit her lip. "Mm, I see. Oh, what's that up ahead?"

They stepped into a clearing, and a Professor McWacky's Cheesecake Zone and Old-Time Milkshakery stood before them.

"Why look," the huntress said. "It's a delicious cheesecake restaurant, right in the middle of the forest. Why don't we go in and have lunch?"

"Nah," Snow said, doing chin-ups on a tree branch. "That place doesn't look very healthy, and I'm in training."

"Surely one little treat couldn't hurt?" the huntress suggested.

"Weeeeeelll..." Snow mused. "I suppose not."

They went in and, at the huntress' urging, Snow ordered the Bottomless Cheesecakalanche, a never-ending platter of deep-fried hyper-dense cheesecake pumped full of twelve different kinds of artisanal organic fat, including peanut oil and whale blubber.

The huntress knew the forest, and all the animals in it, well. Sometime she came here when she was behind and needed a slow, fat deer in a hurry. She'd hunker down near the dumpster and wait for the animals to waddle up and forage until they were little more than balls of blubber. The cheesecake here was fattening beyond all normal definitions of the world. A single meal, and Snow White's figure would be obliterated.

The girl dug her fork deep into the cheesecake and brought a heaping bite to her mouth. She opened wide and slid the tines slowly inside...

"Wait!" the huntress cried.

"Eh?" Snow paused.

"I can't do this," the huntress sobbed. "I can't destroy your Olympic hopes! Take off your shorts. I'll take them to the queen and tell her you're fat now. Just go! Flee into the forest, and never return."

"Uh, okay," Snow said, wriggling out of her shorts and handing them over. "Can I maybe have something else to put on—"

"Go!" the huntress said, pounding on the table. "Hurry! Before I change my mind!"

Snow went.

The huntress pulled the shorts up over her muscular legs. She sat back down in front of the cheesecake platter and stuffed a thick hunk of it into her mouth. *Someone* had to ruin these shorts, after all.

She gorged herself on slice after slice, feeling each one slap into her stomach like a glob of concrete and almost immediately melt into a thick soup of its component lipids and lards. The fat soaked straight into her like butter into a warm biscuit. Her rock-hard muscles disappeared under a rising tide of flab, which pooled in rolls on her waistband and threatened to spill over.

By closing time, she had thoroughly destroyed the shorts. The waistband had burst open, unable to hold back her gut, and the legs had split like hot dogs in a microwave under the force of her thighs. She'd done it. She lurched to her feet, waddled outside, and struggled out of the last rags of blue polyester. Then she returned to her employer.

"The deed is done," she said, tossing the ruins of the jeans before the queen. "Snow White is fat."

The queen laughed and snatched up the jeans. "Excellent!" she chortled. Her eyes narrowed. "I can't help but notice that you're looking a little bigger yourself..."

The huntress stiffened.

"...good for you!" the Queen said. "That's going the extra mile!"

"Yes, my queen."

Snow White wandered through the forest, tugging her jacket down as far as she could to try and cover up her panties. She was worried. Not only was she completely lost, she had nowhere to go. Her

stepmother was apparently plotting to fatten her up. Plus she had bare legs, so she was a serious risk of contracting Lyme disease.

She walked on, periodically checking herself for ticks, until she stumbled upon a charming little house in the woods. It was so small, she had to bend down to turn the doorknob, and, when it opened, crawl on her hands and knees to get through the door.

“Maybe I am gaining weight,” she thought, maneuvering her be-underpanted butt through the doorframe. “Or at least getting bigger.”

She flopped down across the seven tiny beds and soon fell asleep. The next thing she knew, someone was poking her in the rear end with a miner's pick.

“Hey!” the someone said. “We're sick of you kids sneaking out here to get drunk and bang in our house. Get your damn pants on and get out.”

“I'm sorry,” Snow White said, sitting up and bonking her head on the ceiling. “Ow! I haven't been drinking *or* banging, and I only *wish* I had pants to put on. The truth is, my stepmother, the Queen, is plotting to make me fat, which will really screw up my gymnastic career, but a kindly huntress warned me and sent me away. And also stole my pants for reasons I'm not completely clear about. I'm really sorry for intruding. I'll go now.”

She shrugged apologetically to the seven tiny, pick-wielding women standing in the room with her.

“Wait,” said one of the women. “We too are victims of the Queen and her mad decree.”

“You are?” Snow White said. “But most of you aren't even fat.”

“That's because we fled here to live in hiding. It was impossible to continue living in the kingdom.” The little women gestured to herself and the others. “I mean, just look at us! At our height, even trying to match *your* weight would make us blobs. Forget about keeping up with Queen Snacks-A-Lot and her magical expanding ass.”

“What kind of idiot passes a weight requirement and doesn't make it proportional to height?” another of the women grumbled.

“And *build!*” complained another. “I'm naturally willowy!”

“How could we live with ourselves if we send an innocent to such a fate?” the first woman asked the others. “I say we let her stay here.”

“I agree!”

“So do I!”

“As long as she wears pants!”

And so Snow White came to live with the seven little women, and to earn her keep by using her full-sized muscles to chop wood and haul water. They made her new pants out of sturdy deerskin and studded them with gems they'd pulled from the earth. And in time, the eight of them were happy.

The queen was also very happy. She'd gotten rid of her one rival. She was the slimmest, trimmest woman in the kingdom again. It called for a celebration. She decreed an enormous feast, with a hundred dishes, each more succulent than the last, and fell asleep in her chair after stuffing herself with every last one of them. She enjoyed the feast so much, she declared another for the next night, with a hundred and one dishes. The next night, one hundred and two. And then, one hundred and three.

Things went on like that for some time. Well, there's no need to be vague—things went on like that for exactly two months, because on the night they stopped, the Queen had feasted on one hundred and sixty delectable dishes.

She slumped in her throne, utterly replete. She would have slid right out of it and onto the floor if her rear wasn't wedged in so tightly. It was getting uncomfortable. She'd need a bigger throne soon.

She'd given up on her official robes of office, which her seamstresses simply couldn't keep up with, and draped herself in an elegant toga which gave her ample body plenty of room to move and concealed her gut. Well, usually it did—when she wasn't gorged on a 160-course dinner, anyway. At the moment, it was undeniably bulgy.

And yet, she reflected in gluttonous pleasure, I'm still the thinnest woman in the kingdom!

And it would always be true! So why worry anymore? After years of her weight creeping up a pound here and a pound there, she'd finally given in. She'd already packed on over forty more pounds. And it didn't matter, because her loyal subjects would always keep a few pounds ahead of her, or *else*.

"Your highness?" her loyal steward said around a mouthful of sausage.

"Go away," the queen belched. "I just ate. I don't want any honey drizzled into my mouth for at least an hour." She wrinkled her nose. It annoyed her that the steward was always eating in front of her. Sure, the woman had had to gain forty pounds of her own, but couldn't she do that somewhere else?

"This isn't about your post-dinner drizzling, Highness," the steward said. "I merely wanted to report that your artisan have finished repairing the mirror that—*accidentally* broke."

"Oh?" the queen said. She'd really missed having that mirror to tell her how thin she was. "Very well. Bring it in."

The steward clapped her white-gloved hands, and two of the Queen's maidservants waddled in, carrying the mirror between them. The poor girls were so fat and out of shape they had to rest the sheet of silvered glass on their bellies for support, but, huffing and puffing, they finally set it in place next to the the queen.

The queen's head lolled to one side and she regarded the mirror. The shards had been fitted back into place expertly, but the surface was still a spiderweb of cracks. And beyond the spiderwebs she saw a ridiculously fat queen overflowing her throne.

Thin queen, she reminded herself. *The thinnest in the kingdom!*

"Mirror, mirror, next to my throne," she asked, "who's the thinnest in this zone?"

The mirror's face appeared and scowled at her. "*And if I don't say that you're thin—you'll throw a chair at me again?*"

"Well, you won't say that, will you, because I took care of our little problem, didn't I?" She narrowed her eyes. "The Snow has been shoveled. Now tell me I'm thin."

"First promise me my honest answer—won't get me treated like rectal cancer."

"Fine, I promise. Now tell me, tell me, tell me!"

*"Alas, oh queen, the news is grim.
I just cannot declare you slim.
Your life of gluttony and leisure
has left you huge by any measure.
And even next to dearest Snow
you are a whopping heap of dough,
for Snow is just as lean and lanky
as was she when you first got cranky.
You plan, you see, completely failed,
though you ignored that and inhaled
a metric ton of pie and cake,
which, perhaps, was a mistake.
If you still want to fatten Snow,
you've got a hundred pounds to go,
and frankly I suggest you quit—
lose weight yourself before you split!"*

"What?" the queen bellowed, and hurled a pastry at the mirror. It bounced off. She wished it had been a brick. "Why didn't you tell me?"

*"If you'll recall, you broke my glass,
my dearest royal blubber-ass."*

The queen knocked the mirror over. “Where is Snow White now? And stop calling me fat! That's the *opposite* of what I have you for!”

*“Snow White is in the forest deep,
in a small house she works to keep.
And that you're fat could not be clearer—
you could learn that from any mirror!”*

The queen struggled to her feet and stomped on the mirror, shattering it again.

“Obnoxious pile of shards. Have that cleaned up!” The queen growled. “I'm going to pay my stepdaughter a visit.”

Snow was carefully walking along the roof, arms extended, when she heard a knocking from beneath her. She sprung up onto her hands, flipped off the edge of the roof, and landed lightly as a cat. Her training was going really well considering she didn't have access to a decent gym.

Snow came up beside the knocker and tapped her on the shoulder. The knocker whirled. She was dressed in a tracksuit, a baseball cap, and sunglasses, with her dark hair pulled back into a ponytail. Snow thought the woman looked a little like her stepmother—except she outweighed her by a good fifty pounds or so, and anyway, Snow's stepmother wouldn't be caught dead in a tracksuit, even a fancy pink designer tracksuit like this one.

“Can I help you?” Snow asked.

“Yeah, I'm going door-to-door, looking for people who are serious about fitness,” said the woman.

“Oh, that's me!” Snow said eagerly.

“Awesome, dude!” the woman said, clapping her hands. “I've got a supplement here that's guaranteed to blast your major muscle groups with a surge of nutri-awesomeness. It's called AppleMax, the radical applesauce shake that gets you fit and never quits.”

“Oh, I don't buy suspicious supplements like that,” Snow White said. “There's no shortcut to fitness, after all. Daily exercise and a healthy diet is the only path to *real* fitness.”

“Bro, it's totally free,” the mysterious woman said, holding out a can to Snow. “Yo, slam it in your chug-hole! There's, like, no obligation to buy, 'cause that would *suuuccceck*.”

“I suppose it wouldn't hurt to try it...” Snow said warily, taking the can and popping it open. She put the cool metal to her lips and raised it. Apple-flavored sludge flowed into her mouth.

“It tasted a little funny,” she said when she'd finished the can. “Good, but funny.”

That's because it's loaded with fat, the queen thought gleefully. Aloud, she said, “Can you feel the tingle? That's the powersation of apples Apleblazting your Sauce Zone!”

“No,” Snow said. “No tingle. It's just...sitting there. It's really heavy in my stomach.”

“Oh, no probs, homeslice. That's 'cause you're an obvs an elite athlete and you must need the special elite stuff for elites only.” The queen reached into her duffel bag and pulled out a larger can with *AppleMax Pro* printed on the side. “This is the real deal. No amateurs allowed.”

“I don't think I want another can...”

“Dude! It's totally free! This would run your upwards of ten bucks at GNC, and I'm, like, *giving* it to you! Take the win!”

“All right,” Snow said skeptically. “I'll *try* it.”

She popped the cap, and she drained the can. The goop inside was even thicker and heavier than the first one.

“All right!” the queen cheered her on. “You took that one like a pro. Feel that tingle now?”

Snow White shook her head again. “No 'tingle.' I feel...kind of bloated, actually?” She rubbed the bulge of her stomach through her practice leotard. “Kind of *really* bloated. I think maybe I need to sit down.”

She dragged herself over to a stump and plopped down heavily.

“Whoa, dude, this is no good,” the queen said.

“No, it's not,” Snow agreed. “No offense, but I don't think I'll be buying any of your supplements.” She covered a yawn. “They...they don't work. They just make me full. And...” She yawned again. “And sleepy!”

“No kidding.” The queen put her hands on her hips. “Okay, this is totally my screw-up. I thought you were an elite athlete, but you're totally the *elite* of the elite! AppleMax *Pro* won't do a thing for a bod of your high caliber except bore it to sleep. You need AppleMax *Pro Plus*.”

She reached into her duffel again and pulled out a canister the size of a coffee can. She gave it a shake. Snow could hear the dense glop shifting inside.

“I think I've had enough AppleMax today,” she protested.

“Dude, you've had AppleMax that wasn't PH balanced for optimum performance, and it's making you totally logy. That's all on me. Let me fix it.” The queen pressed the can into Snow's hands. “This will blast out your system, supercharge your Awesome Zone, and leave you feeling better than ever.”

Snow looked down at the can and hefted it experimentally. It was so heavy, it left red marks on her thighs. “I don't know...”

“What do you have to lose, my homey? Even if it didn't work, and it totally *will* work, you'd just still be tired, right?”

Snow popped the top. “You...promise this will counteract the other stuff?”

The queen raised one hand. “On my honor as a nutritional supplement saleswoman!”

Snow hoisted the canister to her lips and took an experimental mouthful. She swallowed.

“Tastes the same,” she said.

“It takes a while to kick in, dawg! Hashtag *chug* that rad sauce!”

Snow took several long gulps up of the goo before lowering the can. “I...I don't think I can drink any more,” she gasped. “I'm *really* full.”

“You gotta blast through the bloat to hit that AppleCleanze sweet spot, but once you do, it's worth it!”

“But my stomach—”

The queen lifted the canister back to Snow's mouth, cutting her off.

“There we go. Down the hatch, babe.”

The queen could feel the container lightening, its weight shifting as the contents poured into Snow. She smiled. The poor girl was beginning to look like a water balloon. The blue and white horizontal stripes on Snow's leotard stretched and warped around her swelling stomach. She was filling up with thousands upon thousands of calories, and she didn't even realize it!

When Snow had suckled the last of the glop, the queen pulled the canister free from her lips with a loud pop. Snow slumped.

“Feeling better?” the queen asked. Snow groaned and tried to sit up. Her eyelids were heavy, and when she spoke, her mouth sounded like it was full of marbles.

“I don't think it worked,” she moaned. “I can barely keep my eyes open. Errything feels so heavy...”

“There, there,” the queen said. “If you're tired, you'd better go to bed, darling.”

“Okay,” Snow White slurred, letting the queen support her as she half-staggered into the cottage. “Hey, you sound different...”

“Don't worry your pretty little soon-to-be-fat head about it, Snow White,” the queen sneered, shoving Snow down across several of the beds. “Just sleep it off, and wake up huge!”

Snow sprawled across the mattresses, snoring. Her stomach looked like she'd swallowed a turkey whole. It probably wouldn't be enough to make her fatter than the queen, but it was a good start. The

queen smiled down at her victim. She'd just have to come back with another plan, and another, until Snow was taken care of for good.

Snow slept deeply, with slow, shallow breaths. She slept so deeply and breathed so shallowly that when the little women returned, they thought she was dead.

“Poor thing!” one of them wailed, prodding Snow's stomach. “She must have perished of overeating!”

And so the little women built Snow a beautiful glass coffin and laid her to rest in the forest, although they couldn't quite get the lid to close, thanks to Snow's overfull belly sticking out about an inch over the lip. Once she was laid to rest, they stood around, weeping. They were still weeping when a wandering prince happened by.

“What ho!” he said. “What do mine eyes see but seven tiny women, crying next to a pregnant woman lying in a glass box in the middle of the forest! Forsooth, 'tis downright Lynchian.”

The little women cried louder.

“Why do you weep, tiny maid?” the prince asked.

“Because Snow White is dead!”

“Oh,” said the prince. “I thought she was merely in a deep sleep, possibly caused by yon enormous overdose of sketchy applesauce-flavor nutritional supplements. Verily, I dost not know why you would bury someone in a glass coffin above ground, for ere time passes, this shall getteth super gross. I mean, at least close the top, to keepeth in the stink.”

“She doesn't stink!” one of the little women said. “She smells like fresh flowers and apples.”

“Well, not for long, for verily, tis' friggin' July.” The prince sauntered over to the coffin. “Let me get that for you.”

He positioned the coffin lid on top and shoved down as hard as he could. Snow's bloated stomach was squashed under a princeload of pressure. Her eyes flew open. And, not to put too fine a point on it, she threw up all over the inside of the coffin.

“She lives!” the little women cheered.

“Of course I—OW!” Snow yelped as she tried to sit up and smashed her head into the coffin lid. “What the *hell*? Why is there a glass plate here?”

“And now the two of you shall be married!” said one of the little women, and they all cheered.

Snow frowned. “Uh, I don't even know this guy, and I'm kind of having a bad day, and I really don't think I should be making major life decisions right now.”

The prince agreed. “Thou fair she be, there are maidens aplenty cross the land, many who are not pregnant and splattered with vomit.”

“I'm not *pregnant*!” Snow protested. “I'm just really bloated right now. Oh god, back up, I think I'm going to barf again.”

So they didn't get married, but they both lived happily ever after anyway.

The queen, oddly enough, never came back to the cottage. In fact, word soon reached the little women that the queen had vanished entirely. Snow, feeling much better, returned to the castle and her regular gymnastics routine, and easily worked off the fourteen pounds she'd gained as a result of the queen's trickery. In time, she was crowned the new queen, and the women of the kingdom were able to put their forks down with a relieved sigh, for Snow was so slim that there was hardly a woman naturally bigger than her.

The little women, of course, were an exception, but it didn't matter, for as friends of the new queen they were delighted to discover they had access to the royal chef, and indulged themselves so eagerly they were round as dumplings in short order.

A few people suggested just taking the law off the books, but that was really difficult and involved

a special convention and ratification by two-thirds of dukedoms, and it was easier just to stop enforcing it. It remains to this day the kingdom's contribution to books of wacky but true laws.

Close to a year later—long after the new queen had been crowned—a woman waddled out of the forest, dressed in the ragged remains of a jumpsuit that could barely contain her. She had gotten lost on her way back to the castle and been forced to guzzle her own fattening AppleMax shakes to survive. Trundling into town, her eyes fell on the other women of the kingdom. Some were newly svelte. Some were rather chubby. Some were still quite fat. And yet, the former queen realized, she herself was truly the fattest of them all.