

The Magician (A Parable)

By Jeffery Greb

The King's Men were at a loss. They'd brainstormed. They'd worked and worked. They'd tried everything. (They even considered seeing if the horses could help!) But it was still a mess. They stood in the riot of debris looking at their shoes and shaking their heads.

A mighty explosion, complete with sparks, bright flashes, and billows of smoke, sounded in the doorway to the courtyard. The King's Men stood aghast, for they knew this meant the Magician had arrived on the scene. And, sure enough, the smoke cleared to reveal the Magician standing in the threshold.

The Magician stood resplendent in a luxuriant red brocade robe with gold adornments. She held her ivory staff in her right hand with her left held aloft, palm forward in greeting. Her head was bare, and her hair held more and more sunlight as the smoke diminished. She stepped from the doorway toward the King's Men, slowly advancing on golden slippers. With each step, the soft handed little men retreated the same distance.

The King's Men feared the Magician because her power was real and because she was a woman. No one dared to even think of her as a witch. Witches operated in the shadows through tricks and manipulation; the Magician worked her magic for all to see. Some whispered in the shadows that her magic kept her beautiful; her splendor had not faded after more than forty years in the castle.

She inspected the mess on the ground, exasperation on her face. From beneath the folds of her robe, she produced a bow and arrow of solid gold. (To where the ivory staff had disappeared, no one knew.) She raised them to her lips and kissed them both. Then she nocked the arrow, pointed it skyward, and let it fly. It vanished into the heavens and was gone for many minutes. When it came whistling back to earth, it struck the ground in the center of the mess. A flash and smoke.

When the smoke cleared, he sat where the mess had been. The King's Men walked away muttering to themselves, and the Magician smiled patiently as he stood, dusted himself off, and climbed the wall to sit atop it once again.