

An evening of theatre in Elf Valley

The little elven girl stood on the stage in front of the curtain. She sparkled while she prepared the audience for the amazing experience and threw her arms up in the air: the elven children's ballet performance. The music began, the audience applauded and the curtain was pulled aside. Wait! What is going on? The curtain was stuck! It was only open about half a metre! You could just catch a glimpse of the ballet children. They had begun dancing to the music, but since the curtain couldn't be pulled the one way or the other, the music stopped and the elven children stood still. The hall was in total silence. Backstage, everything was in chaos. Everyone rushed over to the man who pulled the curtain open. The poor man was all red in the face. He did everything he could. He ordered someone to get a ladder. He had to inspect the rope pull.

What were they to do? The theatre director was at a complete loss until little Elvira whispered a few words in his ear. "Of course! Good idea! Get him quickly." Elvira knew that the old elven poet was among the audience. She floated down to him and he was immediately in on the idea. The theatre director walked in front of the curtain and proclaimed that there would be a special performance while the curtain was being fixed. The elven poet would entertain them with a story. The audience became ecstatic and applauded. The elven poet walked shyly onto the stage where a chair had been placed for him in front of the curtain. He sat down and looked out over the gathering which, now eager and quiet as a mouse, looked up at him.

"All right then - I will tell you a little story about the time the elven king could not fall asleep. The story goes back five hundred years." He paused for a moment - yes, he had the audience in the palm of his hand. They swallowed every word.

"The elven king had been having a fine time all evening with a few guests and when the last guest had left the castle, the elven king went to bed. But he couldn't fall asleep. This was something new. Normally, he always fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. He tossed and turned and tried to sleep but nothing helped. The next morning when he sat down to breakfast, he looked tired and grumpy. All the waiters were uneasy with the situation. Their king was usually never like that. The elven children were lively as usual. Of course, they had slept well. The king explained that he hadn't had a wink of sleep all night and that old Hertha had to be sent for immediately. She must have a herb of some kind he could use.

Shortly afterwards, Hertha arrived. She and the elven king knew each other well, so she asked him a number of questions straight away. He asked, in a slightly irritated tone, what good were all these questions? She must have a drink for sleeplessness. Hertha calmly looked at him with her mild, wise eyes. "Well, there are many forms of sleeplessness. I will try to cure yours in a way I

think will suit you. You are an active and busy king who likes to have things going on around you."
"Of course I do. I can't waste time with nothing." Hertha just smiled. She walked out and got hold of the elven jester. She spoke briefly with him. He smiled happily. This was an entirely new task for him. Hertha and the elven jester walked back to the king who was still grumpy and tired. "What's this? I don't need entertaining now. I'm too tired to have fun. I just want to sleep. If only I could."

The jester sat calmly down in front of the king and began to tell a long, boring story. Nothing actually happened in the story. He carried on talking about small details with a slow and calm voice. There was no plot at all. He just carried on and on and the king yawned and yawned. Finally, the king was so bored he closed his eyes and dozed off a little. There had to be some action in this boring story. Hertha and the jester looked at each other. Hertha nodded and the jester carried on and on. At last, the king fell asleep. The jester stopped talking. The waiters were called. They carried the king to bed and he slept for ten hours straight."

The elven poet was finished. The audience applauded and the curtain now opened without problems for the elven children's ballet and the wonderful music began. This was by no means boring. No one fell asleep.

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