

What 'Snow White' Has to Teach Us About Politics, Romance, and Civilization

This story resounds with truth, beauty, and goodness. Consequently, it has some lessons and warnings for us even today.

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A statue of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs owned by Michael Jackson is seen on display in Beverly Hills, Calif., on April 13, 2009. Gabriel Bouys/AFP via Getty Images



Commentary

Walt Disney's 1937 "[Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#)" rightly remains one of the most amazing American films ever made.

Originally dubbed "Disney's Folly" because of the hundreds of artists and technicians involved in its animation, the movie was a box-office smash on its release and has remained a family favorite ever since. Renowned Russian director Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948) called it the greatest film ever made. With its blend of movement and color, the extravagant use of animated birds and other wildlife to enhance so many scenes, the music, and the mix of comedy and horror, "Snow White" is indeed a work of art.

But technique and style alone do not elevate it to that status. This movie also resounds with truth, beauty, and goodness. Consequently, it has some lessons and warnings for us even today.

Good and Innocence Versus Evil and Corruption

Snow White is a princess, the embodiment of innocence and goodness right down to her name. These virtues add to her physical beauty. Even after she bites the wicked queen's poisoned apple and falls into a "sleeping death," Snow White remains "so beautiful, even in death, that the dwarfs could not find it in their hearts to bury her."

On the other hand, we have the malevolent, stone-hearted Queen, who wishes to do away with her rival. She first orders her huntsman to murder Snow White, but when he permits the girl to escape, the Queen disguises herself as an old crone, prepares a poisoned apple, and uses first lies and then compassion to convince Snow White to take a bite of the deadly fruit.

Today, we see the Queen's tactics at work in our politics, our culture, and much of our corporate media. Those seeking to steer us away from truth, goodness, and beauty often approach us in the guise of relativism and slippery language, twist the truth or discard it entirely for their own end, and if necessary appeal to our sense of pity and compassion to help us take a bite of the apple they offer. The politicians who promote utopia; the Marxist who hides behind words like democracy or "the people," or who uses issues such as gender and race to divide people; the newspaper reporter who pigeonholes truth to serve a personal or political agenda: All operate in this same spirit of corruption.

The Demise of Romance

More recently, others besides the Queen have attempted to poison Snow White and fairy tale princesses in general.

These are the extreme feminists, who when Snow White sings, "Someday my prince will come," laugh with scorn at that sentiment. More than 50 years ago, some females in this camp **proclaimed**, "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle." Women, so the thinking went, should be independent of men, defined by their jobs, their money, and their freedom to live as they chose.

Forgotten in that formula were its effects on men. "What's good for the goose is good for the gander," runs the old saying, and many men have since decided that they don't necessarily need women, marriage, or children. Once a natural bridge between men and women, **romance** today seems to many commentators to be on life support. The desire of Snow White for her Prince Charming and to live happily ever after may still make the wish list of many females, but you'll rarely hear it expressed publicly. You will hear some of them criticize the supposedly low state to which men have fallen and wonder why so many of them seem unsuitable for a relationship.

The answer to that question is simple, really: Without a princess, there can be no prince.

A Woman's Touch

When Snow White first enters the dwarves' cottage, it's a dump, like a frat house on a Sunday morning. Dirty dishes are stacked everywhere, dust covers the floor and the furniture, and unwashed clothing and linens litter the place. Assuming that motherless children lived there, and helped by her animal friends—deer, chipmunks, birds, and others—Snow White goes to work, sets the house in order, puts a large kettle of soup on the fire, and then collapses in exhaustion across some of the little beds upstairs.

After the dwarves recover from their shock at these changes—they originally assume a monster has taken up residence in their house—at Snow White's command they wash up for a supper of delicious soup, with promises in the future of apple dumplings and gooseberry pie. They then spend the evening in music, dance, and laughter. At bedtime, the "little men," as Snow White calls them, insist that she take their bedroom. They settle down in the living area below while we see Snow White pray for them at her bedside. In the morning, she kisses each of them on top of the head as they set off to work after issuing her stern warnings to beware of the wicked queen.

What we see here is a profound metaphor for civilization, both the little civilization that changes a house into a home and the greater civilization that grows out of thousands and thousands of such homes. Snow White delivers the woman's touch to the uncouth lives led by the little men. From those fundamentals of civilization there naturally follows culture—the dancing and the music. Exchanged between these men and Snow White are the traditional promises of care and protection once natural to the sexes, summed up in the chaste kisses of the princess and the protective instincts roused in the dwarves.

For nearly 50 years, our society has neglected or denigrated the essential importance of homemakers and as a result, the centrality of family to civilization. The wreckage of that neglect lies all around us.

C.S. Lewis once [wrote](#), "Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again."

Right about now might be a good time to start.

Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

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Jeff Minick

Author

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust On Their Wings,” and two works of nonfiction, “Learning As I Go” and “Movies Make The Man.” Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.

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