

King Arthur Eats His Squire's Food

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"Oh, Laurel," says King Arthur exasperatedly, "Must you play with your food?"

Laurel does not look up from the floor where she sits squatted over her dinner plate. Her mashed potatoes are completely mixed up with the green peas and laid into a mound as if it were a tiny mountain on a plate. Her chicken is split and sticking up from several places out of the potatoes.

She grabs her glass of water and pours it carefully on the food. Water spills out and slowly covers the rest of the plate, becoming a grey and brown lake surrounding the mashed potato mountain. It shimmers in various colors due to the grease from the chicken.

The plate looks awful. She sighs and drops her table knife.

"I'm bored!" she announces.

"That is no excuse for playing with your food," counters King Arthur, "A lady must be poised and elegant at all times. And not sit like a buffoon on the ground!"

Laurel rolls her eyes, "Fine" she stands up quickly, making a green pea fall to her dress, "where should I sit then your highness?" she feigns a curtsy.

King Arthur gestures to the wooden chair next to him at the small round table. Laurel takes it.

"You know," she begins as she sits down, "I know my little project isn't the greatest, funnest thing to do today, but what else can I do? Dr. Bores took away my hair dolls."

"And your hair," King Arthur adds knowingly looking at the strangely parted bowl cut on Laurel's head.

"Exactly!" she self-consciously runs her hands through her hair, "So, any great ideas? What else can I do?"

King Arthur ponders the question for a minute. "Well, we can always write. We can always read. Dr. Bores left some books around here, or some pens and notebooks at least, did he not?" There is a sound of his own growling

stomach, "We can always eat. Tell me, my dear, are you going to finish that?" he points to the plate on the floor.

Laurel shakes her head.

King Arthur proceeds to drop on all fours as he saunters over to the plate. He lowers his mouth and begins to eat Laurel's leftovers. Laurel stares at him with a tilted head.

"Try not to make a mess, King Arthur, Dr. Bores always blames me for it."

King Arthur looks up, swallows the food in his mouth, and says politely, "Don't be ridiculous. I never make a mess," he continues to devour the food on the plate, then looks up again, "a lady must not spread lies either, you know" he says with his mouth full.

Laurel nods slowly and turns away as King Arthur continues to eat. She slowly gets up from the round table and sits on her decrepit bed. She tries her best to ignore the sad walls surrounding her as she looks out the window wistfully. It is spring outside, with vivid green life covering the grand landscape.

King Arthur notices her silence and gets up, joining her on the bed. He carefully picks the pea from her dress, eats it, then rests a hand on her shoulder.

"It will turn out fine, young squire," they say at the same time. They sigh in unison and sit in silence, each staring in a different direction.

