

From the Private Scrolls of Headmistress Flora at Fairy Tale Reform
School

CASE STUDY #1:

The Transformation of the Evil Queen (hence forth known as Professor
Harlow)

Evilness Scale: 8 out of 10

Most Famous Evil Act: Asking the huntsmen to kill Snow White and so she
could be the fairest in the land.

Outcome: A handsome prince saved Snow White making her fairest in the
land. The Evil Queen, meanwhile, was sentenced to wear burning shoes and
dance till she dropped.

Update: You can't keep an evil queen down! Thanks to her excellent use of
magic and the help of her magic mirror, the Evil Queen fled the kingdom
and took on a new identity—Harlow. A magical private eye has tracked her
down to Faerie Springs Day Spa in Captiva, where I confronted her.

“She’s down this hall,” the faerie with the bright blue hair told me, fluttering
ahead of me down the stone hallway where waterfalls flowed on either side of us like we
were in an underground cave. Perhaps, we were. The entrance to the Faerie Day Spa was
well-hidden in Captiva in the middle of their vast Mulberry Forest behind a massive oak
tree. It was no wonder the Evil Queen picked this place as her safe haven. The seclusion

and beauty treatments were too much for her to pass up, I realized, as we passed signs for spa rooms like Hot Stone Beauty Treatment, Turn Back the Clock Facials, and Magic Makeup That Will Make You a Hundred Years Younger!

“Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness!” the faerie muttered as she flew on. “If the Evil Queen knew I helped you, the things she could do to me, my family, this spa...”

“She won’t know,” I assured the faerie in the soothing voice I had become accustomed to using since I’d undergone my own evil to elegant transformation. “You are merely my escort. It was another who told me she was here.”

The faerie reached the end of the hall and motioned to the wooden sign with glowing gold letters: FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH STEAM ROOM. With a snap of her fingers, a key magically appeared in the air, floating in circles till I reached up and grabbed it. “Give me a two-minute start to get out of this hall. Good luck, Flora!” The faerie fluttered away while I reached into my oversized tapestry bag and pulled out my secret weapon. With it hidden inside the apron pocket on the front of my dress, I used the key to let myself inside the room.

A cloud of steam and heat escaped as I opened the door and for a moment, I could not even see. As the fog lifted, I spotted the Evil Queen sitting at the edge of a gurgling, hot spring where steam rose steadily like a boiling tea kettle. I was used to seeing her highness in the finest silks, jewels and garments magic could make, but today she was wearing a fuzzy bathrobe that said FAERIE DAY SPA on the pocket. A turban was wrapped around her head, a layer of mud covered her face, and what appeared to be slices of turnips lay on her eyelids. I watched the water at her feet swirl round and round like a vortex as the steam rose in a rainbow of colors.

“Raoul!” the Evil Queen barked, startling me. “How many times have I told you not to speak—let alone *breath*—in front of me during my mid-morning youth steam session? Need I use more gingerroot on you?”

“Your highness, I—” I began, but she cut me off.

“*Your highness*,” she mimicked. “I need less stress not more for this Fountain of Youth to restore me to my former glorious self and your voice is irritating me, which makes me frown, and frowns give wrinkles! I will not have that!”

Yep, this was the villain I was looking for.

“It’s not Raoul, Harlow,” I said evenly and the Evil Queen sat up so fast the turnips fell from her eyelids. “It’s Flora of Fairy Tale Reform School. Your gig is up.”

This was truly the first time I saw this woman look flustered. “How did you find me?” Her eyes narrowed. “Was it one of the faeries?”

“Nope.” I pulled my weapon out of my apron pocket. “Your magic mirror told me.” This was a pocket sized jeweled version of the Evil Queen’s original mirror and it began to glow as it was summoned. The two of us watched as the glass began to change colors before glowing bright red.

“MIRROR!” The Evil Queen reached for it. “How dare you betray me in this manner?”

“It’s Miri now, thank you very much, your highness, and I no longer answer to you,” the mirror said tightly. “I am a free mirror. When you left me behind to be destroyed along with the rest of your potions and beauty treatments, Flora found me. I’m not stuck in your ridiculous large, and overdone, I might add, mirror anymore. I do more

than give beauty reports now! I help students and can bounce from mirror to mirror around Enchantasia as part of my job at Fairy Tale Reform School.”

The Evil Queen’s high-pitched laugh echoed through the cavernous room. “You have fallen for Flora’s game too, have you, Mirror? Fool!”

“Call me, Miri,” the mirror insisted. “And I’m no fool, your highness! You are! At least I don’t have to hide among faeries and live in shadows. I am a reformed mirror.” The Evil Queen snorted. “You would do well to listen to what Flora has to offer.”

“I’m bored, so entertain me, Flora.” The Evil Queen turned and took new turnip slices from a tray at her side where she also had a pitcher of lemon water. She slowly took a sip from a goblet.

“Miri, I didn’t come here to give the Evil Queen a big transformation speech,” I said, watching her highness.

“You didn’t?” Miri questioned. “Why not?”

“Harlow knows my story,” I said simply. “I have no doubt she’s read it in Happily Ever After Scrolls and heard it in whispers at villain gatherings. I know she’s crossed paths with the Big Bad Wolf who I’ve approached on more than one occasion.” The Evil Queen quietly stirred her water with a straw. “Most villains have to want to transform in order for my speech to work, and the Evil Queen, I fear, does not.”

Her Highness whirled around, her dark eyes ablaze. “Then why are you wasting your time and my Fountain of Youth session by repeating yourself? Be gone before I use gingerroot or stronger magic on the two of you too.”

“I have better motivation than a speech for you,” I said. “Jocelyn has been discovered.”

The queen's eyes widened for a split second before returning to their normal slits.
"Impossible. You lie."

"I do not," I insisted. "You may have tried every protection charm in the world to keep Enchantasia from knowing Jocelyn was your younger sister, but her true identity has been revealed. It was bound to happen. She has too much of you in her to live in the shadows."

The Evil Queen rose and pulled her robe tightly around her before slipping her feet into heels. "I don't have to listen to this. Jocelyn is fine."

I blocked her highness's path. "Miri, show her." I held up the mirror for her to see.

Miri began to glow again and then showed a series of images that made the Evil Queen's normally stoic—or angry—face look worried. And she never worried. There was her beloved younger sister, not more than ten-years-old, being hauled away by the Dwarf Police Squad for illegal use of magic. She watched, as I did, as the Royal Court, learning of Jocelyn's identity, discussed what to do with the girl. Some wanted her banished. Snow, however, took pity and sent her to me at FTRS. The final image her highness saw was a sad-looking Jocelyn sitting by a window at school looking out at the grounds.

"You release her at once, Flora! I command you!" her highness bellowed.

"You are not my queen, Harlow, and I don't take orders from you," I said.

"Besides, the Royal Court would never allow Jocelyn to go free. She's caused too much trouble—burned down buildings, cursed other children, and been growing in evil ways

that mimic your own. She may never leave FTRS at this rate. She doesn't try at all. She's stubborn, angry, and lonely. If anything, she only grows worse by the day."

"She's an outcast?" her highness asked, her voice unsure.

"It's hard to make friends when you're the sister of the famous Evil Queen," I reminded her. "And unlike the other students who have family visitors, she is completely alone in this world."

"Alone," the Evil Queen echoed quietly. "It's like being in your own private prison. One I've lived in all my days." The Evil Queen's lip began to tremble, however hard she willed it not to.

"Unless..." I said.

"Unless?" Miri repeated.

"Unless?" the Evil Queen asked as if it were a question.

"Unless you come with me to help guide her," I said, eagerness returning to my voice. "I know it won't be easy to get you into Enchantasia—helping your sister is one thing. The Royal Court will throw a fit if they hear you're back in town, but if I can prove you're there to help your sister not turn out the way you did, I will have a shot. I may even have a job for you." She raised one perfectly groomed eyebrow at the thought.

I took the Evil Queen's cold (yet very soft, I might add) hand. "Don't let Jocelyn grow up alone. Help me help her—and you."

The Evil Queen was quiet for a moment. I could hear the spring bubbling behind us and the steam escaping in loud spurts. The seconds ticked by like hours or days until finally she spoke.

"Okay," she said quietly. "I'll do it. For Jocelyn."

I tried not to smile, but I couldn't help it. "For Jocelyn," I said, knowing this was about more than just a lost little girl. It was about a lost queen, too, who may finally have found a way home.