

## The Miracle of the Roses

January had just arrived. In Coimbra, the convents of Santa Clara, which were almost destroyed by the overflowings of Mondego, were quickly rebuilt. This was only possible thanks to the Queen, Dame Isabel, who veiled for them.

When unfortunate souls found themselves in an unhealthy environment with no bread to eat, they would immediately seek for the Queen. Even if they came back still sick, at least they brought bread in their mouths, with the beautiful words spoken by the Queen still resonating in their ears, which were just enough to comfort their spirits.

The Queen took care of them as if they were family. She was even willing to supervise the labor executed in the convents herself. And the workers, enchanted by her presence and with her monetary contributions, worked even harder.

However, like it naturally happens in this world, the Queen did not only have friends. One day, a displeased courtier decided to tell King Dinis what her wife was secretly doing:

— My lord, our money is suddenly... vanishing. It's due to the Queen's alms and loans, her gifts, her donations to convents... it's simple foolishness, sir! Your intervention is needed.

The King of Portugal, filled with rage, immediately screamed:

— Enough! Leave me alone, I need to think on what to do alone.

The courtier agreed and abandoned the King in silence. He knew the King beforehand, and he was aware of his behavior.

After being left alone, the King let his body rest in a chair, while murmuring to himself "That's it! I have to put an end to the Queen's excessive acts of mercy once and for all!"

Some days later, the Queen Dame Isabel, accompanied by her courtiers, was leaving the palace of Coimbra to go to Santa Clara, where she would offer alms to the unfortunates. Suddenly, the King approached and courteously greeted her:

— Good morning, my lady! I was just going hunting, but I thought of greeting you first.

— I appreciate it, my lord – said the Queen, smiling, but instinctively and slowly retreating, trying to disguise what she was bringing in her lap.

However, her gesture didn't escape King Dinis' perspicacity. He then asked:

— Can you tell me where you are going so soon?

Dame Isabel blanched. Her heartbeat increased and, after some hesitation, she answered with a lowered voice:

— I'm... going to decorate the altar of the Monastery of Santa Clara.

The king looked at her, highly suspicious. His voice became less pleasant, and his polite smile faded from his lips, while he asked:

- And what do you carry in your lap, my lady? You seem quite nervous. I hope you're not going to give alms to your beloved beggars... That would contradict all my orders and advice. Tell me, what are you carrying in your lap?

The queen blanched even more and, for a brief moment, she stayed still. She ascended her mind, asking for God's help, asking afflictively for his divine assistance. Alarmed, her companions looked at the King, afraid of his rage.

King Dinis stared face to face at the Queen, who seemed to only be there physically. He felt his composure slipping away, and screamed:

- Do I have to start believing in the rumors I'm surrounded with, my lady? Is it true that you're in fact carrying money and bread to offer to the beggars you so kindly protect?

Queen Isabel looked at the King as if she had just woken up from a dream. She suddenly blushed, and a small hint of confidence escaped from her lips as a gentle smile. In her melodious and paused voice, she answered:

- You're wrong, my Sir... What I bring in my lap are roses to decorate the altars of the Monastery!

King Diniz smiled in irony:

- Roses? How dare you lying to me? Roses in January? I guarantee you: if you're being greeted by my presence, it means someone told me you were carrying money... do you understand?

Dame Isabel's expression didn't expose a single sign of untruth. Surrounded by the affliction of her companions, she insisted firmly:

- You're mistaken, my lord, as well as the person who informed you. I'm carrying roses on my lap!

King Diniz clenched his teeth. The cholera on his eyes shone bright, and his voice became even more severe:

- Are you insisting in your lie, my lady? Show me the roses, then!

Serenely, before the glare of the King's eyes and the looks of everyone who were there, Queen Isabel showed her lap and revealed a branch of marvelous roses, while murmuring:

- Look, Sir... look with your own eyes!

A slight murmur from her companions could be heard. The King, looking at such candid evidence, contemplated the flowers and the Queen's hands, without even pronouncing a word. He was sure something supernatural had happened. Something which deeply perplexed and impressed him. He took a moment to come back to his senses and, then, he smiled and apologized:

— Forgive me, my Lady, if I offended you... But I never expected to lay my sight in such wondrous roses at this time of the year!

She smiled gently. There was a glow of joy in her eyes, in her smooth expression, in the kindness of her smile. Greeting her with gallantry, the King stepped away, letting her pass.

Shortly after, the whole city of Coimbra knew about the event. The crowd proclaimed with tears in their eyes “It was a miracle! It was a miracle! Our Queen is saint! Blessed is God who helped our Kingdom!”