The Queen's New Hairdo

Once upon a time lived a Queen who had very, very long hair. In fact, her hair had been cut only once in her life, and the hairstyle she received was horrendous. The Queen banished the hairdresser from the kingdom forever and vowed to never cut her hair again.

Over time, the Queen's hair grew so long it touched the floor. Of course, the Queen cannot have her hair dragging on the ground behind her because it is such an unqueenly thing to do, so she hired someone to carry her hair for her.

As the years went by, the Queen's hair became more and more of a problem. As it grew longer, another hair carrier was hired, and then another and another. Eventually, there were so many hair carriers they sometimes bumped into one another, pulling the Queen's hair and the Queen did not like her hair pulled. Brushing the Queen's hair took hours and the bows and ribbons decorating it were enough to make clothes for five small children. The Queen soon grew sad because she could no longer ride her favorite horse or go swimming or play tennis. She couldn't even go for a stroll without sixteen hair carriers following her, and sometimes the Queen's cat got tangled in her hair more than once, and it was a real headache to get him out.

The Queen didn't know what to do, and with her long hair, she couldn't do anything. She asked her friends, advisers and even the hair carriers for a solution to her hair problem and they all agreed on one two word solution, "Cut it."

So the Queen broke her promise of never cutting her hair and announced throughout the kingdom she wanted a new hairdo. Whoever gave the Queen a beautiful, stylish cut would get one million gold coins and a lovely house on the hill next to her
castle. But, if the Queen did not like the hairdo, the hairstylist would be banished from the kingdom forever.

Word quickly spread of the Queen’s desire, but the hairstylists were afraid. They remembered their friend who’d been banished before and the only thing she was allowed to cut now was the grass in the kingdom next door. The hairstylists didn’t want to be evicted, and they certainly didn’t want to mow lawns. Days went by, then weeks and the Queen was still miserable with her long hair. No one was brave enough to cut it.

On the outskirts of the kingdom lived a poor sheep shearer with his poor family and his poor grandma. He had cut plenty of hair and was an expert at it, but he had never cut people’s hair, he had only sheep’s hair. When he heard of the Queen’s hair dilemma and how no one wanted to cut it, he wondered if he could possibly do it. He and his family could certainly use the million gold coins, and the new house would be much better than their old shack. He decided to take up the Queen’s challenge, but he needed to practice cutting hair on a person first. He took his shears and cut his son’s hair, but it looked awful. He tried again with his daughter and cut her hair so badly she cried for days. He carefully cut his wife’s hair and, though he tried his best, it still came out a horrible mess. When he attempted to cut Grandma’s hair, she stopped him.

“You’ll never be able to cut hair like the stylists in the kingdom,” said Grandma.

“I know. I’m a failure,” admitted the sheep shearer. “We’ll never get the million gold coins or the house on the hill.”

“That’s not what I mean. You can’t cut hair like the stylists because you don’t know how.”

“That’s true, but what do I do?”
“It’s simple. Cut the Queen’s hair the way you’re used to,” said Grandma.

“Cut her hair like I shear the sheep?” asked the sheep shearer. It was a terrifying thought, and if he failed, he would definitely get banished. He started to protest, but then an idea sprang to his mind. “You’re right, Grandma. Thanks!”

Early the next morning, the sheep shearer took his old sheep shears, said goodbye to his family, and started his journey. When the people of the kingdom heard the sheep shearer was going to cut the Queen’s hair, they laughed at him all along the way.

When he arrived at the castle, the sheep shearer was brought before the Queen. She looked at his dirty, ragged clothes and his worn-out, rusty shears with some concern. She turned to her advisers. “Is there anyone else besides him?” she asked.

“No, Your Majesty,” they replied.

She looked back at the sheep shearer in disgust. “You know the penalty if I don’t like the hairstyle you give me, right?” asked the Queen.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” said the sheep shearer. “I’ll be banished from the kingdom forever.”

“Because no one else is willing to cut my hair, I guess I have no choice but to let you do it,” said the Queen. “I can’t stand another minute of it, anyway. You may proceed.”

She closed her eyes, and the sheep shearer stepped up to her throne. He sheared the Queen’s hair just as he sheared his sheep, cutting every single hair off her head. Two of the Queen’s advisers and one of her hair carriers fainted at the sight.
The Queen felt instant relief from the heavy hair and smiled, but when she saw her reflection in the mirror, she became furious. "Of all the hairstyles you could have given me, why did you choose this one?"

"Your Majesty, I haven’t given you one hairstyle, I have given you hundreds," said the sheep shearer.

The Queen was puzzled. "Hundreds? How?" she asked.

The sheep shearer picked up one end of the long hair he’d cut off. "Your Majesty, with all this hair, the wig makers can make you any kind of hairstyle you could ever dream of, and you can change hairstyles at any time of day and as often as you like."

She looked at the long river of hair then smiled at the sheep shearer as she imagined all the possibilities.

The Queen had her hair made into hundreds of wigs, and she became the envy of all the other Queens throughout the lands. She gave the sheep shearer the million gold coins and the house on the hill next to her castle and the Queen and the sheep shearer, with his family, lived happily ever after.