Once upon a time, a gold coin lay buried in the ashes of a fireplace, neglected by a wicked stepmother obsessed with austerity, and by her two daughters. A mysterious metallurgist cleansed it. Circulated at the royal ball, it disrupted the market equilibrium of desire. The Prince fixated on it at once. But at midnight a pocket tore, and the coin slipped into the streets, a structural failure. An administrative nightmare ensued. State officials audited every vault and purse in the kingdom. The search ended, as it had to, back in the ash, where the coin had returned through the simple laws of gravity and neglect, indifferent to the court's longing. And ever after, they lived happily.

Paul Makowsky