

Fractured Fairy Tales

by Avah Dodson
2018 Royal Nonesuch Humor Writing Contest
Young Writer Category - Second Prize

The Kind Of Maybe Prologue

Once upon a time...

...there was a spirit. The spirit was a princess. The spirit was a witch. The spirit was a wolf, a magic spell, a unicorn, a gingerbread cookie. The spirit was inside of you. Waiting.

Waiting for you...

To let it out.

Awake

I don't know how it happened. All I remember is Maleficent appearing with a bang in green smoke, curling and wisping my brown hair and circling around me. Maleficent uttered words I've never heard before, and the Kingdom slept. Maleficent then disappeared, and now I'm waiting for some dumb true love to kiss me (according to that mumbo-jumbo spell) and wake my mom, who will probably say I'm too young to date and kick him out of the palace. Sigh. I'm supposed to be sleeping—everyone's heard the tale. But I'm completely awake, and the castle isn't surrounded by thorns or anything because Maleficent just didn't have time for that. Maybe she had to catch a flight to Florida? Sigh. Sounds nice. But I'm just stuck here in this quiet castle and I'm SO BORED. Everyone—*everyone*—is asleep, even my cat, Puff. I can't play in the garden because the gardener is conked out and it's gotten too overgrown. I can't write in my journal because my ink is empty. And I'm living off bitter dandelion greens because the chef is curled up on the stove. Even the fairies are asleep! If they were awake, they could probably find a helpful spell, but they are gently floating six inches off the ground in dreamland.

Wait, that's it, a *spell*! I get off my unmade bed, sliding down the grand staircase, and into the library. I finger the books, reading each lightly... There! *Advanced Spells and Magic*. I grab it and run into the courtyard where the fairies are fast asleep. It's a good thing Maleficent's curse kept them from snoring; I don't think I could have heard myself think with Merriewether sawing logs. I pluck a wand from one of the other fairies—either Lucinda or Carrina, I can never tell who is who—and flip through the pages until I find the right spell.

“Undo thy sleeping!” I cry, waving the wand in a pattern. *Not a very fancy-sounding spell*, I think, but then Mom and Dad start waking! Merriewether rubs her eyes, while Carrina—I think—gives a soft yawn and then stares at her wand in my hand.

“Allura?” Dad asks, blinking. “Did *you* wake us?”

I sure did, I think, smiling broadly. *Looks like this story doesn't need a prince.*

Little Red, Kung Fu Master

Boy, chickens are really hard to get these days. As a wolf, I need to eat, but SINCE EVERY SINGLE CHICKEN LEARNED KUNG FU, it's getting harder and harder every day. Even the squirrels are beating me up now. I've tried the traps on my list like the pit, the trusty banana peel, the pie-in-the-face, and, when all else fails, the jump-out-and-snatch. Boy, I came back with bruises all over after that last one. The only thing left to do is what all the other wolves have done: take up gardening. No, that's already crossed off my list. Never ever: I am a *carnivore!* I need something better. Like a disguise. I know what you're thinking—the disguise bit failed in the Great Granny Dress-Up of 1813. But I'm desperate, and I hear Little Red is back in the forest. So I pack my supplies and leave.

I skip the whole going-through-the-woods thing and run straight to Granny's house. Sliding through the window, I pull on the bonnet Granny wears, snuggle under the horrid plaid sheets, and wait for Little Red. I wait for what seems like forever until I finally hear, "Granny!"

"Yes, dear?" I call softly.

Red walks into the room and sees a full length mirror. "Oh, Granny, aren't my cheeks so rosy?" she asks.

"Uh, yes, dear, and your lips are like...like the color of fresh tomatoes," I reply.

"And aren't my ears just the perfect cuteness?"

"Why, yes, they are like half-moon apple slices. And your hair is like chocolate over vanilla ice cream! And your eyes! Like pools of brown gravy." I'm drooling a little at this point. "Come closer, dear," I whisper.

Little Red seems suspicious, but she moves a little closer. And closer.

Suddenly, her hand shoots out and rips off the bonnet, revealing my wolf ears.

"Wolf!" Red yells.

I spring. She steps back, wheels around, and kicks me in the stomach. Then she smirks. "Didn't you hear? I've been taking Kung Fu. I just got back from my lesson." She swipes aside her scarlet cloak to reveal...a black belt. Bam! Whoop! Kablooi! Battered, I run away from that awful place as fast as I can.

You know, maybe I should take up gardening.

Glitterhorn the Unicorn

One day, a white, tinged-pink mare with a sparkly horn clomped down the path in Sparkwing Forest. Her name was Glitterhorn. Glitterhorn was beautiful, with pink fluff, large blue eyes, and a long golden-blue mane and tail. Glitterhorn, though, was as vain as she was pretty.

One day, Glitterhorn was humming to herself a tune she felt matched the winter weather and, of course, her gorgeous mane. As she passed a frozen puddle, she couldn't help gazing in.

Glitterhorn did not realize a fairy was trapped in the ice. Thinking the fairy was her reflection, Glitterhorn cried out and clomped the ice, breaking it and freeing the fairy.

The fairy thanked Glitterhorn, telling the unicorn that if she were ever in danger, to call out the word "Althezar." The fairy warned her, however, that she must use the word only in times of true danger or she would lose the protection it provided. Glitterhorn nodded, the fairy's words flying over her mane, and then she continued on her walk.

Suddenly, a giant, snarling beast jumped out in front of her. Glitterhorn cried, "Althezar!" and the beast disappeared.

This is awesome, thought Glitterhorn.

She came to a ditch that she probably could have leapt over rather easily but thought, *why should I have to jump and perhaps mess up my mane or get dirt on my legs?* "Althezar!" she cried. A bridge formed, and she pranced over it like a queen.

Glitterhorn said the word more and more, getting vainer and vainer, until she could hardly stand her own beauty.

One day, when she was out for another forest walk, the same giant, snarling beast leapt out in front of her. "Althezar!" Glitterhorn cried. But the beast did not disappear. Fearfully, Glitterhorn cowered in front of the beast as it prepared to strike...and the beast turned into a fairy...the same fairy whom she had saved from the puddle! The fairy patted Glitterhorn's mane sadly and vanished in a sparkle of dust.

From that day onward, Glitterhorn had to fend once again for herself. She even had to brush her own mane and tie her own tail-bow!

The Moldy Rocks and the Hare

One day, a brown rabbit was walking—

“Hare!”

Ok, sorry. One day, a brown *hare* was walking up his hole, happily—

“Burrow!”

Wow, uh, okay then. Up his *burrow*, and when he came to the top, the hare noticed three turtles. Now, you know this hare. He was the loser of the Great Tortoise Race, and he wanted revenge. He challenged the three turtles to a race. Then, without waiting for an answer, he said, “ReadySetGo!” and sped off.

But the three round things weren’t turtles. They were moldy rocks.

The moldy rocks smiled, then hopped into the burrow, one by one. The smallest rock landed on the sofa, bouncing off the cushions and straight into a bowl of porridge. The middle-sized rock landed on the sofa and bounced into a rocking chair, where she rocked happily. The biggest rock jumped, landed on the sofa, and absolutely crushed it. The chair, rocking with the medium moldy rock, catapulted her into the biggest moldy rock, causing the biggest rock to plop into the porridge bowl, which sent the smallest rock splashing out into the rocking chair where the medium rock had just been. Exhausted from all this activity, the tiny moldy rock rolled out of the chair, across the floor, into the hare’s bedroom, and into his soft bed. She snuggled under the covers and heard a slam as the big moldy rock, obviously still having fun, crushed the bowl, bounced onto the rocking chair, and smashed that too.

Suddenly, they heard panting breath and padding feet and realized the hare was coming home. The hare entered, triumphant, and saw two turtles sitting on all his broken furniture.

“OUT! Out of my house!” the hare screamed.

“Burrow,” the medium-sized moldy rock corrected.

“BURROW!” the hare screamed, throwing the big moldy rock and the middle moldy rock out of his burrow.

Dejected and exhausted, the hare trudged to his bedroom. This had *not* been a good day. He yawned, stretched, and climbed under the covers and said, “That’s it for this rabbit today—”

“Hare,” said a small voice next to him.

“AAAAHHHHH!” yelled the hare. He leapt out of his bed, ran up the burrow, and into the forest.

In the bed, the tiny moldy rock chuckled, rolled over, and went back to sleep.

Raja's Jasmine

I guess you're wondering how I got Raja. We have a special bond. He guards me from evil or silly men who think they're so handsome and can win my heart. *Hah.*

I was pretty lonely when I didn't have Raja. I don't have any siblings. One day, my father, the Sultan, surprised me and let me stray from the castle walls to get a pet. I hugged him happily. I loved the city with its lights, sellers, peddlers, and merchants selling everything you could imagine. It was so beautiful.

Father directed me to a store that was selling cats. He didn't know that they were actually tigers! I looked at each one purring happily and wrestling. Two were snoozing, tangled in each other so you couldn't see whose legs were whose, and another was chomping on meat.

"Let the cats choose you," the seller said, and pushed me into the cage. The tigers awoke and, one by one, encircled me. A few came up and sniffed my fingers, but none really liked me, it seemed. But then one came up to me and looked at me with its huge amber-gold eyes. My eyes were exactly the same color. He purred, wrapping around me, and jumped upon my lap. He faced the other tigers, growling, then turned to me with a purr.

"I think he's chosen you," said the seller, opening the cage. "What will you name him?"

I looked up, smiling. "Raja."

While I waited for my father, Raja in my arms, a silly looking man dressed in tons of robes with a stupid turban on his head came up to me. *Wow, I thought, I'll bet if you took away his clothes and jewels, he would be an ugly street rat, which should match his personality just fine.*

"Princess Jasmine," he said, "I am Price Ali, but you may call me Aladdin, and I am here to win your precious hear—"

"Let's see what you can do, boy," I told Raja, petting him. When this Ali guy saw Raja, he jumped, screeched, "TIGER!" and sped away—but not before Raja bit off a hunk of his pants, showing polka-dot underwear beneath. I giggled.

I stroked Raja's fur again.

"Good boy," I cooed. "I think we are going to be the best of friends."

You probably have a name like Tom or Frank or Jeremy. Nice names. Not too long, but normal, nice-sounding names. And you are all probably the right size. Well, guess what? My name is RUMPELSTILTSKIN AND I'M TWO-FOOT-SIX!!!!!! And everybody always teases me.

I decided that I needed to do something impressive to stop the teasing, so I snuck into the king's palace on the fourteenth floor (I'm not saying how I got up there). Inside was straw everywhere. Everywhere! And a spinning wheel. And a locked door. And a girl sleeping on the straw. She had the coolest brown hair and was wearing a soft blue gown. An opal rimmed with emeralds was atop her finger.

Gently, I slipped the ring off her finger and put it on mine. Then, I spun the straw into gold. As she was stirring, I grabbed as much gold as I could carry and jumped out the window. If you have a name like Rumpelstiltskin, you don't want to introduce yourself to a beautiful maiden. Trust me.

When I got home, I showed the gold and ring to my friends, and they were amazed. The teasing stopped for a little while. But five hours later, they had forgotten what I had brought, and they were right at it again.

So I went to the tower's fourteenth floor again the next day. The spinning wheel, locked door, and sleeping girl were all still there, but the gold I had left was gone, and there was even more straw piled high everywhere. I carefully unclasped the diamond and sapphire necklace from her neck, put it around mine, and started spinning gold. Once again, I left with my pockets full of spun gold just as she was waking.

The people were again amazed, but, again, the teasing started up, this time after just three hours. I was so frustrated, I packed up and ran away. In a faraway town, I sold the ring, the gold, and the necklace and bought a spinning wheel. I convinced a farmer to let me stay in his barn for a few nights. I spun all night until all the straw in the barn was gold. With the gold, I bought a nice house and a regular supply of straw, and soon I was the richest man in the town. And even better, everyone knows me as "Tom."

The Gingerbread

There once were an old man and an old woman who loved gingerbread. They loved placing the icing over the fresh-baked, warm dough in patterns and shapes for the gingerbread boy's clothes, and sticking on candy hair and chocolate-chip eyes. But there was one thing wrong. The gingerbread boys always came to life and would run away from them, singing "You can't catch me!" The old man and the old woman tried making gingerbread girls. They came to life and ran away, too. Those gingerbread children were *so* mischievous.

One day, the old woman had an idea. "I know," she announced, "we'll just make gingerbread and not decorate it as a person. We'll just use icing!"

"Great idea," replied the old man. So the old couple mixed the dough and shaped it into a heart-shaped cookie. They set it in the oven, baking it until it was warm and brown.

The old woman took it out, and they both held their breath. But the gingerbread did not come to life. It did not jump up and run out the door. It didn't sing or be mischievous. It just sat there, blank and still in the pan.

The old couple smiled. It was decorating time. They stripped off their oven mitts, grabbed the icing, and got to work. Thirty minutes later, the gingerbread was ready. It was a miracle! The old man and the old woman shared the heart-shaped cookie together. The whole time, it stayed right where it was supposed to be. They ate the whole thing.

"Well," said the old woman finally. "That was boring."

The Little Fluffy Sheep Who Never Even Wanted To Make Bread

Once there was a little, fluffy sheep named Alex. Alex's maaaa was always trying to get him to do work and help out, but he preferred to frolic and bleat. One day, his maaaa told him to make some bread. He really, really didn't want to, but his maaaa told him she would pay him five baaaa bucks if he just would do something productive and make the bread for the family dinner. So Alex took the money and went into the fields of wheat.

"Who will help me cut this wheat for bread?" he called. The flock was silent. Alex thought for a minute, then he said, "Who will cut this wheat for me for one baaaa buck?" Sheep came running. Alex forked over a baaaa buck, and the wheat was cut.

Next, Alex lugged the wheat to the grinding machine. "I'll give a baaaa buck to anyone who grinds this wheat into flour," he called. In no time at all, the wheat was ground and the baaaa buck was gone. Alex called again, "A baaaa buck for anyone who will knead the flour with water and yeast into dough!" The sheep stampeded up for the chance. Soon the dough was ready for the oven, and the fourth baaaa buck was gone. The last baaaa buck went to sheep who agreed to bake the dough in the oven and season it. Soon, the bread was ready.

Alex then carried the bread home. When his paaaa saw him with the bread, he congratulated Alex and gave him five baaaa bucks.

"You did it!" his maaaa said, adding, "*All* by yourself?"

"Yep," said Alex, smiling. "It was entirely me."

Two Greedy Children

My neighbor Gesty has always been an odd witch. She rides on her vacuum cleaner, has a sunhat and a dog, and, get this, has a house made of candy. The candy is genius because it really draws kids in where she can fatten them up to eat.

I remember the first day I met Gesty. I was flying atop my broom when I saw two fat children wandering around. I was circling, thinking of one of my darker spells that uses toads' eyes, when one of them cried, "Look! Food!" And they began to run into the trees.

I followed them and saw them arrive at a clearing. I could see now that the squat girl had brown hair, green eyes, and a small mole on her chin (*a perfect toad*, I thought), while the plump boy had blonde hair and blue eyes. They were standing wide-eyed at a preposterous candy house.

The kids started shoving handfuls of sweets into their mouths, from lollipops to chocolate to frosted gingerbread. As they ate, I readied my wand, pointing at the girl first. *I'll transform her into a toad for that spell I want to make*, I thought.

"You poor children, don't eat *my* house!" came a voice. The frosted peppermint door opened, and kind old Gesty with her blonde-dyed hair and sunglasses, which were covering her eyes, stood with a granny smile. The children couldn't see it, but I could—a witch! Such was my surprise that I accidentally fired my spell at a tree, which promptly shrank, turned slightly green, and hopped away.

The children heard the bang of my spell and looked up warily. "Come in, dears," Gesty said quickly. "This forest is full of ugly witches."

Ha, I thought. I swooped low, peering through the window. Gesty was serving the children pancakes. Suddenly, she grabbed the boy and shoved him in the oven. "You children are already so fat, I don't need to fatten you up anymore!" she cackled. The brown-haired girl looked horrified, the syrup on her chin a nice touch. Gesty lowered her sunglasses, and chipped a piece of candy cane off of her wall. She gave the girl a sweet smile, finally showing her crooked, yellow teeth. The children were trapped.

Hmmm, I thought as I flew away to my own house which did not have an icing roof. *Maybe I should try candy.*

The Three Ugly Warthogs and the Big Bad Wolf

Once upon a time, there were three warthog brothers. Their mother, who built the brick house and threw out her brothers as soon as the wolf was gone, followed her own footsteps and kicked her sons out of her house on their own with 20 bucks each. They did not know that a big bad wolf was watching.

The first porkchop bought a ton of straw and built a house and a straw bed next to a straw table. He had heard the stories of his uncle, but after buying and building he didn't care a thing for scary stories. He immediately got into the bed and snoozed, his giant snores drawing the wolf right to where he was sleeping. The big, bad, wolf came to the house, punched it, crumbling the house, and gulped down the first porkchop brother in one bite. The chin hair on the porkchop tickled a bit going down.

The second porkchop bought some cloth. He didn't even bother to make a house. He just tied the cloth into a hammock between two trees and fell right to sleep. When the wolf arrived, he untied the cloth and whipped it around his neck like a bib before swallowing the surprised second porkchop. The porkchop's nose ring almost got stuck in his throat.

The third porkchop, the most smart and witty, knew he was in danger of carnivores. So, the porkchop bought meat. A lot of it. He built a whole house out of the meat. Just as he was finishing up the walls, the big bad wolf came by. The wolf saw the house of meat and ate and ate and ate and ate and ate and ate and ate and ate until the whole house was gone. The third porkchop stood where the house once was, right in front of the wolf, but the wolf was so full, he couldn't move, and his stomach stretched to Kansas. Smiling, the third porkchop took a knife he had purchased and took care of that wolf.

With the wolf gone, the warthog brother didn't bother building any more houses. He mourned briefly for his siblings, then cried out in joy and ran hog wild until an evil bear came and caught him with the trusty banana peel. The last thing the warthog thought as he was being eaten up was, *I should have taken those kung fu lessons.*

About the Author

Once upon a time, there was a little princess (according to her parents) named Avah. She loved to write, and she loved fairy tales. So, one day, she wrote a book of them. And she did so to share with you. Perhaps you will read them to your little ones. But maybe not *The Three Warthogs and the Big Bad Wolf*. That one's pretty gory.