

# FRACTURED FAIRY TALES

“Grandpa, tell me a story!”

“I don’t know any, sweetie.”

“Oh come on. What about Cinderella? Everyone knows that.”

“Must I. Oh all right.”

“I’m listening.”

“Once upon a time there was a girl called Cinderella. But there was a problem. She was incredibly ugly. She had a face like a goat’s behind. Despite this disadvantage, still she wanted to be a princess...”

“Grandpa, she was *beautiful*. You’re confusing her with her stepsisters.”

“Stepsisters? That’s right, the weird sisters. They were witches, weren’t they?”

“NO! They were just gruff and mean.”

“Of course. *I* knew that. And there was a horrible stepmother. Boy, was *she* a shocker. She had hair like snakes. One look at her and you’d turn to stone.”

“That was Medusa! Concentrate, Grandpa.”

“Right, right. Anyway, Cindy had a problem. Medusa, Gruff and Mean wanted her out of the way, so they gave her a poisoned apple and she fell into a deep sleep.”

“No she didn’t. That was Snow White. You remember, she had seven dwarfs.”

“Did she? Anyway, Snow White put Cindy into a deep sleep, but fortunately a nice Troll, who just happened to be in her neck of the woods, came by and kissed her. And she was as right as rain again.”

“Grandpa, the Troll belongs to a different story. Anyway, what about Cinderella?”

“Cindy was helping her godmother clean the house for Medusa, and trying to stay away from Snow White, when a letter arrived. It said something like this:

“Hear ye, hear ye, lend me your ears, pay attention and all that nonsense. My son, Prince Charmless, desires a wife. I’m dead keen to get him out of the house, where he does nothing but play video games and eat pizzas. So I’m having a big bash next Saturday night. Come and check him out, and if anyone reckons they’re prepared to take him, good luck to them.

Signed King Arthur“

“Now Medusa and Gruff and Mean were keen to rock up to this party. They reckoned that even if Charmless was a dope, at least he was a prince. And hey, they could still live the high life if one of them could get him over the line.”

“What?”

“You know – bag him, tie the knot, drag him to the altar. And if he was a handsome frog in disguise, then they could keep him as a pet.”

“No, Grandpa. That was the Frog Prince. She was a princess and he was a prince in disguise. Under a spell cast by a nasty witch.”

“Witch. That’s it. Cindy was cleaning a lamp, when a witch appeared in a puff of smoke and said, “You are the fairest one of all. Your wish is my command!”

“No she didn’t. That was the genie.”

“Jeanie? Jeanie with the light brown hair? Don’t think so. So anyway, she said, “Can I help you, Snookums? What you wanna do, girl?”

“I want to go to the Prince’s party,” said Cindy, looking the witch up and down in surprise. She was an old hippie with tattoos and a nose ring, and she could have done with a bath.

“What’s your name?” said Cindy.

“Rumpelstilzkin, but you can call me Tilly for short. You sure you wanta go to this gig, Babe?” said the witch. “There might be wolves there looking for sweet little girls like you.”

“I can look after myself,” said Cindy. “I’ve got a black belt in karate.”

“Fair enough,” said the witch. “Well, let’s make your dream come true, Honey.”

Tilly grabbed the seven dwarfs and hitched them up to the coach. She pushed the godmother into the driver’s seat. She took Cindy’s little dog Toto and bunged him on the back as footman. She was starting to shove Cindy into the coach when Cindy said,

“As *if*... I can’t go out like *this*!”

“Whaterymeant?” said the witch. “I’m dressed just the same.”

“Yeah,” said Cindy sweetly, “but you look like c\*\*p. I need a sexy dress, and some high heels.”

“OK,” said the witch, “I can do it. But there’s a catch. At midnight, it all goes.”

“Why?”

"I go off duty. The wicked witch of the east comes on after me, and trust me she makes me look like Princess Diana. So prepare yourself, Darl, for an early night."

"But Grandpa, Princess Diana isn't in any fairy tale."

"But she's a princess, right. Who's telling this story anyway?"

"So Cindy goes to the party dressed in this fabulous red dress, with high heels to match. As she comes in, everyone does a double take..."

"Hey, who's the stunner?"

"She looks ace!"

"Do I know her?" said Gruff to Mean. "Are you sure you locked Cindy in the cellar? This chick looks familiar."

"Hi girls," said Cindy, "Here I am, no thanks to you."

"I'll kill her," said Gruff, clawing at Cinderella.

"Girls, stop that," whispered Medusa. "The Prince is watching."

"But Grandpa, I thought you said the Prince was a drip."

"He was. But he sure could dance. He made John Travolta look like he had a wooden leg. Anyway, it was a wild scene. Everyone was rocking and rolling. The place was packed. Charmless was vowing the ladies with his rap dancing. Suddenly..."

"The clock struck..."

"No."

"The dwarfs and Toto disappeared..."

"No."

"Well?"

"It was supper time. Cindy rocked up to the buffet and made straight for the sticky date pudding. "This one's too hot," she said. "This one's too cold." She tapped her finger on the last one. "But this one's just right." And she wolfed it down without a moment's hesitation.

"At this point Charmless arrived.

"Someone's knocked off my crème brûlée," he said. "Own up, you guys, or I'll have you shot at dawn."

“But just as he said this, he saw Cindy. He took in the little red dress. He took in the high heels. His mouth dropped open, and he said “Whaaaoh! Wanna rap?”

“It was love at first dance. They really dug one another.

“Do you like video games?”

“Sure.”

“What about pizza?”

“Love it.”

“Charmless knew she was the girl for him. But then...

“Midnight?”

“Yep. Cindy dropped everything and ran, and as she went she turned back into an ugly duckling. So Gruff grabbed the Prince, and they were married and lived happily ever after.”

“No they didn’t!”

“Why not?”

“Well, Gruff wasn’t a nice girl. Cinderella was the nice one. We can’t have Gruff and Mean and Medusa winning. Cindy needs to win in the end.”

“Does she?”

“Of course. Here, let me help you, Grandpa. Cinderella was at home next day when...”

“When what?”

“When the king’s messenger arrived. He was looking for the owner of the red shoe. Go on...”

“The red shoe? Why was that important?”

“So he could find Cindy.”

“Oh yes. So he tried the shoe on Gruff. She stuffed in on her foot. The back split in two.

“Look, it fits,” she screamed.

“No it doesn’t,” said he.

“He tried it on Mean. She stood up and the heel broke off.

“It’s mine,” she bellowed.

“Choose either one,” growled Medusa, “I don’t care. They’re both lovely girls.”

“I guess I’ll have to use the mugshot,” said the messenger. And he pulled out his phone.

“The Prince put this photo up on *Facebook*,” he said. And he held up the phone.

“It was a picture of Cindy, sticking her fingers into the last of the crème brûlée.

“Does this girl live here?”

“Here I am,” said Cindy. She held up the red shoe – the missing one.

“How did you get in?” screeched Gruff. “We locked you away.”

“Toto heard me crying. He barked so much the seven dwarfs came to investigate. They couldn’t free me, so they went and got the Troll. And he smashed the door down.”

Sure enough, behind her were a dog, seven small men and a giant Troll.

“Come this way, my lady,” said the messenger. “The Prince is waiting for you. He’s got a new game to show you.”

“So all ended well. The Prince married Cinderella, as you know. Cindy forgave Gruff and Mean and Medusa – they came and ran a creche for Cindy’s twelve kids. And Tilly started a New Age shop in town. The Troll joined a circus, along with the dwarves. And the Frog Prince married Snow White, and so they all...

“Lived happily ever after.”