



As we've learned by reading fairy tales in class and discussing the historical contexts in which they emerged, magical acts in tales are often simple guises for real-world issues: the maiden losing her hands may represent a lack of feminine agency in a patriarchal society; combing jewels out of one's hair can allude to the public health issue of head lice; Bluebeard's 'bloody chamber' may speak to the fear and danger of arranged marriages.

For your second major essay assignment, you will write a **creative essay in which you fictionalize an important moment from your own life as a fairy tale**. Like fairy tales, your essay should tell a story: there should be a beginning (which sets up the story), middle (which presents the main conflict), and end (which can be happy or unhappy, but should leave the reader with the lesson learned from the experience). In addition to the creative essay, you will also submit **a reflection that explains the choices you made in the story**. Here are steps to follow:

1. **Choose a story from your own life.** You can choose any moment you want, but ultimately, you should write about an experience that *taught you an important lesson*. Many fairy tales have a moral at the end; what would be the moral of your story?
2. **Consider how you can fictionalize the details of your story using fairy tale tropes.** I assume most of you haven't battled ogres or met talking cats, but the details of your stories can be translated to fairy tale tropes. Ever feel annoyed at your little brother? Turn him into a wicked step-sister. Ever feel the need to escape a bad situation? Sleep it off... for 100 years. You can use any of the tropes we've discussed in class, but your final paper should include *at least three* specific fairy tale tropes and should generally **follow the order outlined in Propp's 31 functions**.
3. **Write an outline and discuss with me.** Before you begin writing your story, make sure you have it all planned out in an organized outline. Each student will then attend a short meeting with me in extended office hours to discuss the assignment. Because meetings are mandatory for every student, you can only sign up for *one* timeslot, so be sure to make the most of your visit!
4. **After you've written the creative component, you should then write a reflection** in which you describe how/why you chose the fairy tale tropes in your story and how the magical acts metaphorically represent the life story you decided to write about. This reflection should make it clear to me that your story was planned and executed with attention to class lectures, course readings, etc.

### LOGISTICS

- This essay should be about 1400 words total; 800 words for the creative essay and 600 words for the critical rationale. The word cap for the creative component is flexible; if you need more space to tell your story, I'm ok with exceeding the suggested word count. Please keep the rationale as close to 600 words as possible.
- On or before the day the essay is due (October 18<sup>th</sup>), you should post it in the ICON Dropbox as a single document. A physical copy is not needed, and will not be accepted in lieu of a Dropbox submission.

### IMPORTANT DATES

Tu. 9/26:	Essay assigned
Th. 10/5:	<b>Due: Outline;</b> bring one-page outline to class.
W. 10/4-Th. 10/12:	Consultation period: you must meet with me in my extended office hours during this period to go over your outline (and partial draft, if preferred).
Th. 10/12:	Story time! Come to class with an edited draft of your tale.
W. 10/18:	<b>Due: Final draft;</b> post to ICON Dropbox by midnight.

### GRADING CRITERIA

Your essay will be graded according to how well it meets the following criteria:

- **Content**  
Did you link your life story to at least three fairy tale tropes we discussed in class? Did your story ultimately teach a lesson? Was your choice of topic interesting/engaging to read? Did your rationale engage meaningfully with course concepts?
- **Organization**  
Did your story have an introduction, present the conflict, then conclude gracefully? Did your outline show careful consideration for how the story would unfold (i.e. when characters were introduced, at what point the conflict was resolved, etc.)? Did you follow the general order outlined in Propp's 31 functions?
- **Clarity**  
Was your essay presented in clear, precise language? Did you vary sentence structure and use standard grammar, punctuation, etc.?