The Lost-and-Found Prince: A Creative Project Exploring Fairy Tales and the Parable of the Prodigal Son

by

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For those who feel lost, for those who are searching,

and for my Father.

Thank you to Dr. Patricia Gaitely, who provided invaluable expertise, guidance, encouragement, and conversations about birds. Thank you also to my family and friends, including Elizabeth Ward, Dennis Ward, Eli Ward, and Noah True, who lovingly read and gave feedback on the many iterations of this project.

Above all, thank you to the Good Shepherd and King.

Abstract

This creative writing project explores the intersection of fairy tales, their illustrations, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son. I discuss the foundational aspects of the parable, what it means as both a biblical and literary text, and the countless ways it has been adapted in order to determine its key features. Then, the Grimm brothers' literary fairy tale form is examined as an influence on culture and as a distinct style of narrative. Next, fairy tale illustrations' impacts on art movements and the stories in which they're found are investigated to understand their use and importance to the genre. Finally, I retell the Prodigal Son parable as a fairy tale in the literary style of the Grimm brothers, and I create accompanying illustrations that converse with the narrative, exploring the shared ground between faith and fantasy and the importance of a happily ever after.

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Introduction

Those familiar with the parables of Jesus of Nazareth likely find none more compelling or relatable than the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This is because it is very possible we ourselves have been the prodigal son, straying from what we know we ought to do, facing the consequences of our decisions, then coming 'home' to our right ways.

We've probably been the other son, too, though: annoyed at the gracious reception of someone we feel doesn't deserve mercy and caught up in our own self-righteousness. Perhaps some of us have even been the father. We've faced the difficult decision to either reject or accept the apology of someone who has done us immeasurable harm—but we've chosen to welcome them home anyway.

This parable dives into the messy realities of human relationships, affirming and subverting expectations all at once. It asks readers to reconsider the definition of mercy, and when understood as the message of the gospel of the Kingdom of God that it is widely accepted as, it requires a radical comprehension of our Father's love. It is a timeless tale, about which some academics argue no other story is as "perfectly shaped and phrased" (Jack 2).

This parable, however, is not the only timeless tale. Another story form that spans millennia, ethnic divides, and oceans is the fairy tale. When surveying folk stories from around the globe, readers will recognize common structures, plot devices, and character tropes that create the "cauldron of story" J.R.R. Tolkien theorizes all storytellers draw from (Tolkien 10). There seems to be some global spirit of story-crafting that leads people to tell certain kinds of tales—kinds that nestle into the imaginations of

generations, passing from one to the next, morphing in ways that suit each era but with the same recognizable heart.

In an exploration of the popular and familiar Grimm brothers' literary fairy tale collection, this 'cauldron of story' is obvious. Additionally obvious, however, is their inspiration from other sources: biblical stories and elements drawn from Judeo-Christian faith. In their story "Simple Hans," a daughter who has risen to a position of authority, unrecognized by her visiting father, tricks him into returning to her kingdom by hiding her golden goblet in his baggage, then sending her guards to search him, find the goblet, and bring him back. Only when he returns does she reveal herself as his daughter. If this sounds familiar, it is because the same story is told in Genesis, chapters forty-four and forty-five, taking place between Joseph and his brothers.

Biblical tales and fairy tales have long been intertwined, and this project intertwines them even more so. It draws from the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which is "one of the longest and most narratively complex … parables attributed to Jesus" (Jack 2) and therefore one of the biblical stories most suited to creative expansion. It combines this with the literary fairy tale modeled by the Grimm brothers, whose "major accomplishment in publishing their two volumes … was to *create* an ideal type for the literary fairy tale, one that sought to be as close to the oral tradition as possible" (Zipes xxv).

In summation, this project retells the Prodigal Son parable as a Grimm brothers-styled literary fairy tale. Additionally, part of the Grimms' equation is illustration; therefore, this project is illustrated as well.

This project takes a story some with religious hesitations may be resistant to consume and combines it with an easily accessible, well-beloved tale form. Presented as a fairy tale, then, the parable retains its vital gospel truth—the fall of man, the need for forgiveness, and the radical love, mercy, and will to reconcile of the Father—but is carefully stripped of what C. S. Lewis calls its "stained-glass and Sunday-school associations" (Filmer 15). This method, which Lewis employs himself in works like *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, is effective in sharing the gospel. About this, Kath Filmer, scholar of Lewis's works, says:

> By adhering strictly to the Form of the Fairytale and providing a simple, surface meaning which can be appreciated for itself, while also providing deeper, and more profound levels by the use of metaphor and symbol, Lewis succeeds in "baptising the imagination," making it receptive to holy things, so that he invites from his readers an imaginative, as well as a spiritual, response. (Filmer 15)

The deepest desire for this project is that a reader unfamiliar with the Jesus-story discovers in the tale an echo of the truth only found in the arms of God—then pursues that Truth.

Definitions

Before continuing, it is imperative to mention that 'fairy tale' and its related terms are relatively disputed and ambiguous among many scholars. Within the realm of this project, here are my working definitions for this terminology:

Folk tales are stories from the everyday people of a country or region. They are passed down from generation to generation orally.

A literary folk tale is a transcribed folk tale; it was once told orally and that version of it has been frozen in writing.

A literary tale or literary fairy tale originated in writing and was never orally transmitted.

'Fairy tale' is an encompassing term that can refer to any of the above, as well as stories like those of Brer Rabbit, beast-fables, and the like, although popular consensus is that fables are not fairy tales. (Beast-fables are fairy tales where the main characters happen to be animals, like "The Wedding of Ms. Fox," "The Wren and the Bear," and "The Nightingale and the Blindworm." Fables are stories, often with personified or anthropomorphized animals as their main characters, that aim to teach a moral lesson and generally do not feature magical elements. Commonly known fables include the works of Aesop.)

So, while this project focuses specifically on the Grimm brothers' model of literary fairy tale, I may refer to their stories simply as fairy tales or, for variety, as Tolkien calls them, fairy-stories.

To ensure clarity, here are a handful of additional definitions for terms that arise in this project:

A parable is a story told by Jesus of Nazareth found in one of the four Gospel books of the New Testament.

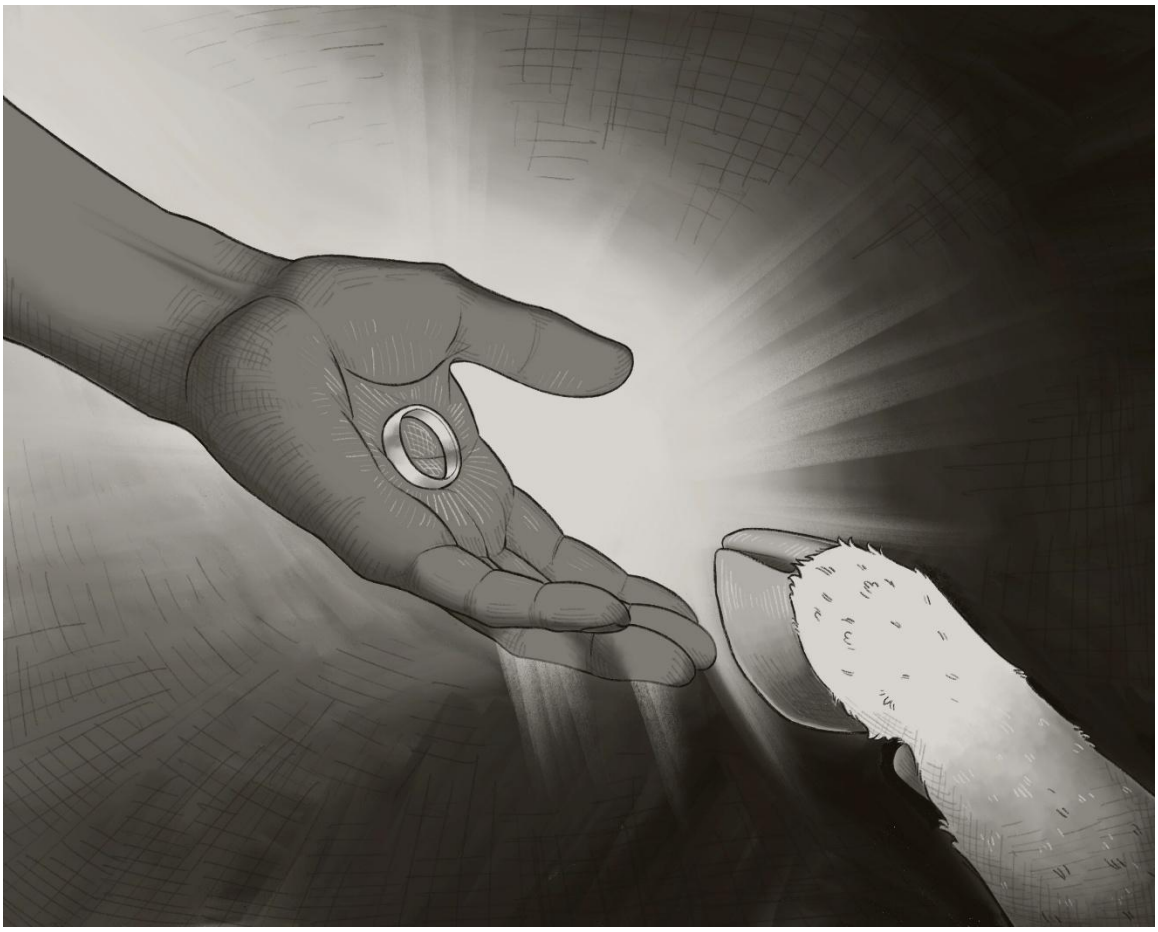
'Fairy tale illustration' refers to any illustration that accompanies a literary folk or fairy tale.

'Fairy tale artwork' refers to outside works of art whose subject matter is derived from fairy tales, but the art was not originally meant to be printed alongside a tale.

‘Pseudo-medieval’, in reference to artwork, illustration, or narrative setting, means the settings and characters reflect an ‘old-world’, pastoral quality, but they are not historically accurate to any specific place or time period.

Part 1

The Lost-and-Found Prince



Once upon a time, when the Lord still walked upon the earth, there lived a king who had two sons whom he loved more than anything. Their castle, full of gilded furniture, every kind of good food, and beautiful artwork, was nestled in the greenest valley where every crop sowed reaped a harvest one hundred-fold. Among all this richness, instead of using his position to become a scholar or doctor, study an art, invent something new, or otherwise fill his time in a meaningful way, the king's younger son grew bored.

One day, the young son met a peddler passing through the valley who sported expensive clothes and was selling exquisite wares from distant lands. He told the young prince he had collected everything on his travels, where he had also seen marvelous wonders and experienced all of life's rich pleasures—things that weren't to be found in the quiet valley. The young son was enamored and immediately went to ask his father for his inheritance in order that he may also go travel and see the world.

His father was deeply saddened by the request because he would greatly miss his son, and he worried that the prince would wander into danger he was too inexperienced to face. Despite this, though, the king agreed to give him half of the kingdom's wealth he was set to inherit in due time, all in gold ducats and fine traveling clothes. The king also gave his son a gold ring. The young prince packed his handkerchief with the freshest bread and richest cheese, tucked it in his pocket, and left his father's valley kingdom.

It wasn't long before the prince found himself on the edge of a vast forest. Enticed by the birdsong, fresh pines, and glint of ripe berries, he left the path and entered the trees. Soon, however, he found himself lost and alone as dusk began to set in. Suddenly, a bright white dove landed on the forest floor in front of him.

“What are you doing here alone at nightfall?” the dove asked. “Don’t you know this forest is enchanted, and you may never find your way out?”

“Well, I’m travelling the world,” the young son answered. “I want to walk as far as the sky is blue and see what there is to see. But I am indeed lost.”

The dove replied, “I know the way. If you follow my directions, you’ll be out in the morning.” The prince agreed to do whatever the dove told him to do. The bird instructed, “Keep walking, and soon you’ll find two inns in a clearing. One will be bright and

raucous, full of travelers and music and games. The other will be quiet and dim, and only an old maid tends it. Stay the night in the quiet inn. The path out will be clear when you wake."

The young son thanked the dove and traveled until he came upon the clearing with the two inns, one shrouded in evening's haze and the other illuminated by many lanterns. He could hear faint music and laughter from the one brightly lit, but he remembered the dove's instructions and said to himself, "I will stay in the quiet inn."

He was about to turn that way when a window flung open and a voice called to him from the merry inn, "Brother! Join us for a round of cards!" Cheers and a chorus of "Just one round! Just one round!" beckoned to the prince.

"Well," he said to himself, "one round can't hurt. Then I'll leave and stay the night at the other inn."

But as soon as he stepped into the rowdy inn, he forgot the dove's instructions entirely! He was welcomed to a table of boisterous travelers and added a handful of ducats to the pile. Someone dealt him into the game, and someone else pushed a frothy drink into his hand. The young prince forgot he was only intending to play one round, and it wasn't long before he had gambled away all his money on games. The sun was rising just as he paid out his last ducat, and when he saw the daylight, he remembered the dove's words. But it was too late. Stumbling out of the inn, the young son realized the way out of the woods was no clearer than before.

He comforted himself with the knowledge that he still had his clothes, his gold ring, and the food in his pocket, and he set off in a direction of his choosing.

The prince walked for half the day through the woods before sitting to rest and eat under a tall pine tree. Then, a voice called to him from the branches above.

“Why did you not heed my advice, young prince?” twittered the white dove.

“Hello, dove.” The young son hung his head. “I’ve certainly suffered for my folly. I’ve lost all my money, and I still can’t find the way out of this forest.”

The dove took pity on him and said, “I can still help you find your way. If you follow my directions, you can be out before the sun sets.” The prince agreed to do as the dove said. “Keep walking, and soon you’ll find a path. Follow it east until you reach the fork. One path will be wide, flat, and well-worn. The other will be narrow, overgrown, and rutted. Take the narrow path. It will lead you out of the forest.”

“Thank you, dove.” The prince bowed in gratitude, then left to find the path. He soon came across it and followed it east. After a little while he reached the fork in the trail. Indeed, one path looked like easy traveling, while the other was enveloped in branches and marred with tree roots. The prince saw thorn bushes and brambles choking the trees lining the narrow road, and he thought of his fine clothes. “They’ll get torn to shreds walking that narrow road,” he muttered, saddened. But when to his eyes it seemed the two paths ran parallel, he thought no more of his dilemma and decided to take the wide road.

But the prince didn’t realize that the two trails curved slowly away from one another! Soon, the sun was setting, and he was no less lost than before. It was then that he came upon a group of travelers sitting by the wayside, watching him approach.

“Hey there, little fellow!” one traveler called. “Your boots are still awfully shiny. You must be new to walking!” The group laughed.

“Hello,” the young son answered. “My father recently gave them to me.”

“Oh, I see,” replied the traveler. “And your cloak? It’s very clean. You must not come to this mucky forest often.” He stood, and others in his group shifted.

“Yes, indeed—it’s from my father.”

“And what a nice snack you’re carrying there,” continued the traveler. “Could someone like you have a taste for food like that?” The group behind him laughed again.

“My father wanted me to have what I needed for my travels.”

“Well,” the traveler said, approaching the young prince, “since your father is so generous, I know he wouldn’t mind if I had your things instead.” The rest of the group began to draw near, and the prince’s stomach curdled, but he knew not why.

He tried to step away from the group, but they were too quick for him. One grabbed him by the arm and held him tight, so the prince kicked him, then turned to run. This angered the travelers, who were indeed highway robbers. They were all much faster than the young prince, and the group soon overtook him, knocked him down, and beat him. They stripped him of his beautiful clothes and left him only his golden ring, which they had failed to see, before disappearing into the trees.

The young prince cried, pulled himself off the path, and found a hollow tree to spend the night in. He tended to his bruises and scrapes as best he could before falling asleep.

The next morning he decided to continue following the trail, and he walked for a long time. As the sun began its descent, just when he thought he would never meet another soul, who appeared on the path before him but the wealthy peddler!

“Hello there, peddler!” the prince called. “It’s me, the young prince from the valley kingdom.”

“Why, prince! You look worse for wear,” the peddler said.

“Oh, yes. I’ve had a miserable few days.” And the young son explained his predicament.

The peddler considered all this before saying, “You know, prince, you and I could make a deal.”

“What kind of deal?”

The peddler shed his jacket, and he was suddenly transformed into a crooked man with goat's feet, sharp horns, and a whip-thin tail!

"If you can accomplish one task I set before you, everything and more will be returned to you. Indeed, you will need only to reach into your pocket to find more ducats than you could spend. You would need only to speak a wish aloud for it to be granted. But if you fail at completing this task, I will come in seven years to claim your soul." And the devil was snickering, for he knew the prince would fail.

The young prince was frightened because he had never met a devil before, but he asked him what the task was.

"You must enter the cursed castle and awaken the princess sleeping as though dead within." The devil gestured behind himself, where a black stone turret stabbed the sky above the trees.

The prince trembled, but he shook the devil's hand. The crooked man disappeared in a puff of smoke, and the young son was left all alone once more.

He dragged his feet toward the castle, distressed because he didn't know how to awaken the princess. But the white dove had heard the exchange and flew down to meet the prince.

"Oh, young prince, you're in a load of trouble now."

"Yes, dove," the young son cried, "I am."

Once more the dove took pity on the son. "I can help you, if only you're sure to follow my instructions."

"Please, dove! Help me one more time." The prince promised to follow his directions exactly.

"Alright. I'll help you once more—but only if you give me the golden ring on your finger." The prince was reluctant, but he handed the ring to the dove. The dove continued, "When you enter the castle, all the guards, servants, and maids will be asleep because of the curse. You will find the princess at the top of the tallest turret. You must wait for night to pass, and at the first light of dawn, you must draw back the curtain on the east-facing window. The sun's first-most ray must land on the princess, and then she will awaken. But, young prince, take heed! If you touch the princess at all before she awakens, then all hope is lost. You mustn't touch her before the sun's ray does!"

The prince promised he would follow the dove's instructions exactly and set off for the castle. It was just as the dove said: everyone inside was sleeping as though dead, and the young son had no trouble finding the princess in her tower. She was lying peacefully on her bed, her silky hair curling around her soft face and pink cheeks. He was overcome by

her beauty and said to himself, “I love her!” But he remembered the dove’s instructions and did not touch her.

However, the night grew long and the prince became restless. He stood from his seat by the east window and gazed at the beautiful princess. Just then, a draft blew a lock of her hair across her face. Instinctively, he reached out to brush it back into place. But as soon as he touched her, she was transformed into a red rosebud. The devil appeared in the tower in a rush of smoke and snatched the rosebud from the princess’s bed.

“You fool!” the devil laughed. “Your soul is mine! I will come to collect it in seven years’ time—unless you can find the one thing that breaks this bond.” But because devils

don’t play fairly, he did not tell the prince the secret to freedom. So he disappeared the way he came.

The prince tore at his hair and was nearly overcome with despair. He was contemplating throwing himself from the turret when he realized the devil would not take his soul early. He had to live out his seven years, during which time perhaps he could uncover the mystery. So he left the castle and wandered the forest, searching for a way to break the devil’s hold on his soul. But no one could help him, and he remained stranded in the forest, for he soon forgot about the white dove in his pursuit of others’ advice. He slowly lost hope of ever finding freedom and one day, having accepted his fate, he came across a small farm. The farmer agreed to let the young son sleep in his barn, as long as he tended the pigs. He grew cold every night and filthier every day, and the only food he had to eat was the pigs’ slop. Years passed as the son fell deeper and deeper into despair and resignation.

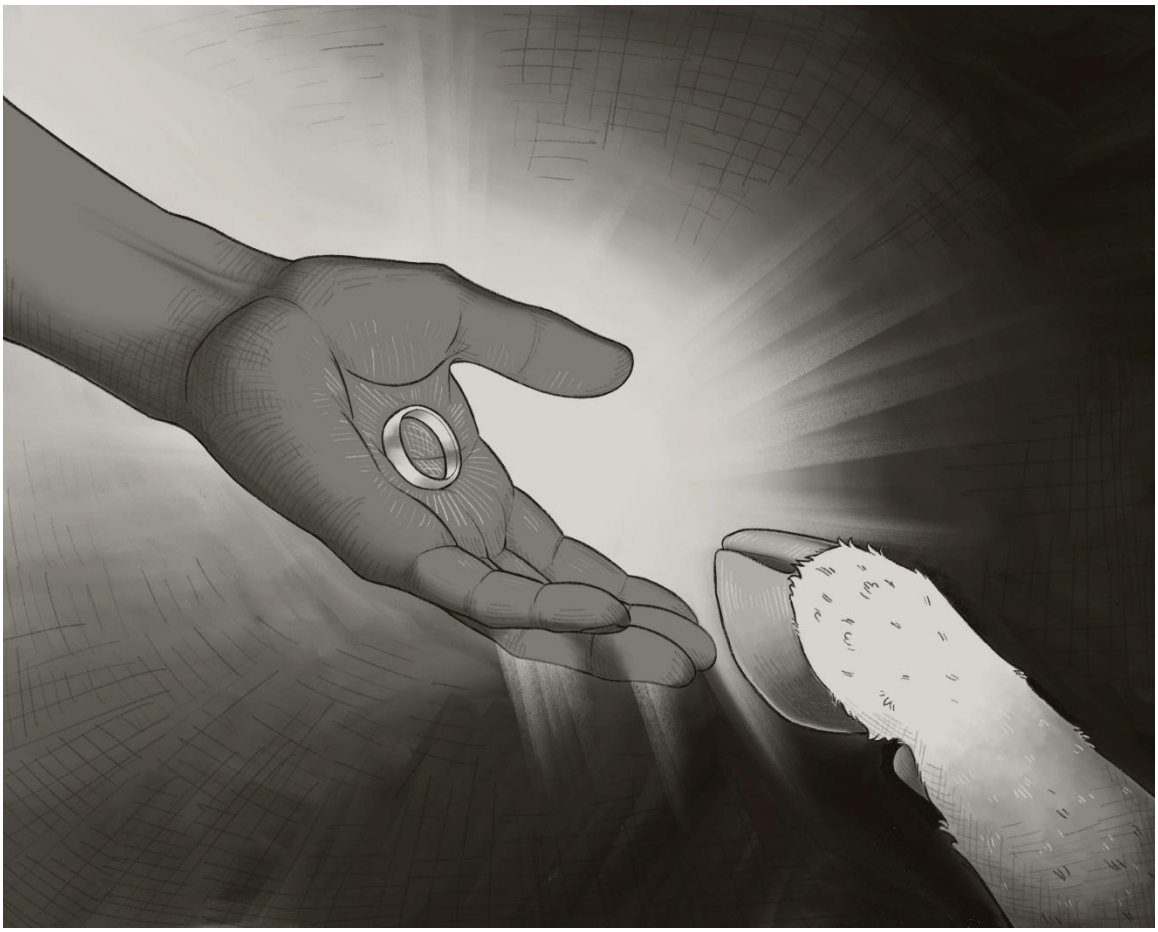
One day, a shepherd passed by. He saw the prince in the pigsty and asked him, “Son, what are you doing? Surely you don’t belong there.”

“I’m tending the farmer’s pigs until seven years have passed and the devil comes to claim my soul. My time is almost up,” the young son sighed, defeated, for he had thought of his fate every day since he failed the task.

“Why would you wait around for that?” the shepherd questioned.

“What else am I to do? I have nowhere to go and no one can help me. I would still be lost in the enchanted forest even if I left the farm.”

“I can help you,” the shepherd said. “Look, am I not familiar to you?” And he held out a golden ring to the prince. It was the same ring the son had given to the dove all those years ago. Then he realized the shepherd was the white dove, and he took the ring from his hand.



“Oh, thank you! Is there truly hope for me yet? Only tell me what to do and how to be free,” the young son pleaded.

“Look through the ring,” the shepherd commanded. “Tell me what you see.”

“I see a kingdom in splendor. It’s lovely and green, and the castle is magnificent. I see a king and his son walking together through manicured gardens. I see hired hands dining and dancing at the end of the workday. I see laughter and conversation … I recognize all

this!" And the young son remembered his home and his family. "My father's servants have more than enough to eat, and here I am starving in squalor. I know what I can do—I can go home and throw myself at my father's feet and beg for his forgiveness. I have wasted his wealth and surely he is disappointed in me. I am not worthy to be called his son. Perhaps he will have me as a hired hand. At least that way I won't starve."

The shepherd held the prince's hand and said, "Truly I tell you, you have broken the devil's bond by remembering your homeland and your father. Let me lead you out of the forest."

The young son went with the shepherd, and it wasn't long before they reached the edge of the enchanted forest. The son saw the road to his father's kingdom spread out before him. He thanked the shepherd profusely before starting down the path.

Soon the prince was looking down into father's lush valley, but his stomach was churning.

"How can I face my father again after all that has happened?" he asked himself.

Just as he was saying this, a speck appeared on the road ahead, far in the distance. The son watched as the speck grew into a shadow, then a figure, then his father. The king of the valley was running to his son. The young prince stepped forward and his father caught him in an embrace. He held his son tightly, kissing his cheeks and laughing.

“Father!” the prince cried. “I’ve come to hire myself out to you. I have made so many mistakes. I am not worthy to be called your son.”

But his father responded, “My child! Home at last!” And he called to a servant, “Bring the best clothes! And a nicer ring! And get the best from the harvest and prepare it, for we are going to feast and celebrate.” And looking at his son, he continued, “For my son was dead, and here he is alive again! He was lost, and now he is found.” And the king’s heart was so full of joy he thought it might burst.

When they reached the castle, a magnificent feast had been laid out in the great hall, and every citizen in the valley was celebrating. But the older son was nowhere to be found among the party.

“Let me go and find your brother and speak to him,” said the king. So he went out to the far pasture where the older son liked to be alone. He found him sitting on a rock and brooding.

“Father, you haven’t once thrown a party for me like this one. And here comes my brother, having wasted your money in stupidity”—for he had heard from servants the reason for the celebration—“and this is how you repay him? I have never done you evil like he has.” And the older son was deeply hurt.

But the king replied, “My son, all that I have is yours. The kingdom itself will belong to you someday. Come and join the party! We need to celebrate that your brother has returned from the dead.”

And the older brother was persuaded to leave his anger behind and come to the feast table.

While they were returning to the castle, they crossed paths with a certain wealthy peddler. However, not knowing his true form, they invited the traveler to join the party. He gladly followed them into the great hall, but the younger prince immediately knew him as the devil.

Fearing he was there to claim his soul regardless of what the shepherd had said, the young prince ran to hide in his chambers. Upon his bed he found a small wooden chest, unadorned and simple. The prince was nervous to touch it, but he was more curious than he was nervous, and opening it, he found some gold, a few gemstones, and a single red rosebud. The peddler had followed the son from the great hall, and he spoke:

“Young prince, I cannot claim your soul today because you managed to break my bond on it. Therefore, I leave you that small treasure to serve as your reward.” And the peddler disappeared from the castle and was never seen again in the valley kingdom.

When the young son looked back upon the rosebud, he remembered his love for the lost princess. He set the chest in front of his window and drew back the curtain so sunlight could fall on the flower. It began to bloom, and as it opened the princess emerged and stepped out. She embraced the prince and thanked him for freeing her and her kingdom from the curse. She was so grateful she agreed to marry him that very day. When she sent word to her family, they traveled to join the celebration.

The young prince was reconciled to his older brother, who forgave him after a sincere apology. Their father the king couldn't be happier to have both of his sons home safely again, and the wedding of the young prince and the princess was celebrated throughout

both kingdoms. And if they have not died, then they are all still living in the valley kingdom, happily ever after.

Part 2

Research

This project required research into three different realms: the Parable of the Prodigal Son itself and in adaptation, the structure and key features of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales, and the purpose and effect of fairy tale illustration.

1. The Prodigal Son

Since its first telling by Jesus of Nazareth, the Parable of the Prodigal Son has been read and reread by millions and interpreted in numerous ways. The story, found in the Gospel of Luke, chapter fifteen, goes as follows:

> Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.
>
> "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.
>
> "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

"'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" (Luke 15:11–32, ESV)

Many theologians, historians, literary academics, and writers have tried their hands at uncovering this story's heart. To discern how this parable can be understood and the

ways in which it has affected literature and media, it is key to approach it from multiple perspectives.

The Prodigal Son as a Biblical Text

In the previous ten verses of chapter fifteen, Jesus told two other parables: the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Lost Coin. In the English Standard Version (ESV), the heading for verses eleven through thirty-two is "The Parable of the Lost Son." It's clear that Jesus is teaching on a theme in this chapter. In His stories, one sheep from a flock of one hundred is missing, then found and brought home; a woman loses one silver coin from her collection of ten but finds it again; and, of course, one son sets off, loses all he has, and is welcomed home again.

What surrounding context prompts Jesus to speak so repetitively on the idea of 'lost and found'? In the first two verses of the chapter is an answer: "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them'" (Luke 15:1–2, ESV). A crowd has amassed to hear Jesus speak, but the religious teachers are displeased because the people in the crowd are social outcasts: tax collectors, hated for their dishonesty and collaboration with Roman occupiers (BBC), and known sinners—all people the Pharisees would not welcome in their own company because of their supposed impurity (Hatch 160). In answer to their remark, Jesus tells the collection of parables. The Lost Sheep parable ends with this line: "There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Luke 15:7, ESV), and the Lost Coin parable concludes in this way: "There is

rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10, ESV). At the end of the Prodigal Son parable, the father disagrees with the angry older brother, telling him they "had to celebrate and be glad" (Luke 15:32, ESV) because of the younger son's return.

By placing the Prodigal Son parable in the context of the rest of the chapter, it seems like Jesus tells it at least partially for the sake of the indignant religious teachers (Jack 4). He wants them to understand God finds more joy in repentant sinners—potentially the people who had gathered to hear Jesus speak—than the Pharisees' outward displays of religion. Based on these three parables, God is in the business of searching, rescuing, and bringing home the lost. His concern lies with those who have wandered astray, a statement echoed by the father's actions in the Prodigal Son parable.

This is my own interpretation of the text in the context of the entire chapter. However, there are many broadly accepted (and not-so-broadly accepted) interpretations from theologians and historians to consider, ones that delve more deeply into the contents of the parable itself.

Alison M. Jack, in her book *The Prodigal Son in English and American Literature: Five Hundred Years of Literary Homecomings*, collected and discussed many of these interpretations. She states, "In early Christian interpretations of the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father in the narrative is universally identified with God" (Jack 6). This is consistent with God's own self-identification as a 'Father' throughout the Old and New Testaments, and with this in mind the parable is a story of mercy and grace extended from God to His repentant child. Mercy is evident because the prodigal son does not receive the punishment he probably does deserve; grace is present as well, as the father

lavishes him with luxuries and a party he probably doesn't deserve. From this view, the parable is "a presentation of the Gospel in miniature" (Jack 14).

In these early Christian interpretations, then, diversity was found in opinions about the roles of the two sons. According to Jack, there are four categories of interpretation:

> In ethical readings, the older brother acts as a symbol of the righteous, and the younger brother is a symbol of all sinners …. In ethnic readings, the older brother is associated with Israel, and younger with the Gentiles, who might also be considered ethically sinners because they worship idols. … In penitential readings, the older brother represents unmerciful Christians who cannot be reconciled with baptized believers who thereafter sin and then repent. … Finally, in a very different and specialized category, gnosticizing readings take the older brother as a symbol of angels, and the younger as a symbol of humanity. (Jack 6–7)

The ethical, ethnic, and penitential readings are all valid and applicable understandings of the parable when using it for instruction in Christian faith; each holds merit depending on the current audience and circumstance. The gnosticizing reading would be applicable to those interested in or holding to Gnostic tradition.

Outside of interpretations regarding the two sons, both individual plot points and the story as a whole have sociohistorical understandings to consider. When reading the parable through the eyes of a first-century Jewish person, different things stand out. For instance, with the context provided by the Torah in mind, one sees, through the father's ready acceptance and celebration of the younger son's return, the "tradition of God

favouring the younger son: as he does with Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob" (Jack 10)—at least at first. Jack continues: "However, the unexpected twist is that the father in the parable also reaches out to the older brother" (Jack 10). Jesus subverts the audience's expectations. If one only had the stories of the brothers from the Torah to compare with, it would make sense for the story to end after the homecoming, never revisiting the older brother. But Jesus had a broader message of mercy and reconciliation to convey to His audience, one that included both sons.

In this same vein, some believe the parable's focus should be on the older son, not the prodigal. In translations like the ESV with a "Lost Son" heading instead of a "Prodigal Son" heading for this story, one could better see this idea. Amy-Jill Levine, as Jack writes, believes "the father's 'fault' is in losing sight of the blameless but alienated older son, whom he has to go and search out" (Jack 11). Here, the father is not equated to God. Instead, he is a man who must grapple with the results of his favoritism.

Others take this reading even further, leaning into a sociological approach to interpretation. Richard L. Rohrbaugh holds this idea, arguing that "the father's agreeing to split up the family's land represents gross weakness and stupidity which would have provoked the outrage of the village" (Jack 10–11). In order to pacify the community, then, the father was forced to offer a feast and promote reconciliation between his two sons. However, critics note that this reading requires a "strained" exegesis of the narrative and role of the villagers (Jack 11).

As is obvious from the varied interpretations offered by historians and theologians regarding this parable, Jesus' story is not as straightforward as one might initially think. Many moving pieces and characters, alongside the context of the surrounding text, the

foundational and prior texts, as well as the culture of the time, result in a parable with depth and intrigue. It remains applicable to numerous situations and eras, and each reader is bound to get something as unique from it as their own experiences. The parable may speak in different ways to different individuals, because, as the author of Hebrews reminds us, "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12, ESV).

The Prodigal Son as Literature

When approaching the parable as a work of literature rather than as gospel, it must be noted that the text immediately loses something. It will have been stripped of the divine authority many believe it has, and it will have become just another piece of writing, albeit a long-lasting, influential one. With this in mind, though, there are the structure, plot, and characters to explore.

Observed from an overarching view, the structure of the parable is a "circular journey from unity, separation, and back to unity" (Jack 17). In other words, there exists somewhere that can be left, a leaving of that place, and then a homecoming or return to that place. We see this in the younger son's journey most obviously; however, the structure of unity-separation-unity also seemingly repeats with the older son. It can be assumed that the older brother was not upset with his father before they split the property up—the first instance of unity—but the separation is obvious when the father must seek out his older son, and they have a disagreement. While not directly stated, by giving the father the final word in the debate between justice and compassion, Jesus implies that

mercy and grace—and therefore unity—proceed from the conclusion of the parable (Jack 12). This is a fairly simple, broad structure that has been reimagined and applied to other stories for centuries.

Of equal importance from a literary perspective is the role of the characters. There are three main characters in this parable, the father and his two sons, as well as two other mentioned characters, a foreign citizen and the household servants. The prodigal son is perhaps the most interesting character from a literary standpoint; he is the character that goes on a physical journey, suffers, changes, and returns home. The father and the older son are both the characters 'left behind'. One embodies compassion and the other justice or judgment.

Following from the structure, the characters, and the plot, there are many literary themes at play in the parable. Jack acknowledges five major themes: wealth and poverty, life and death, humiliation and exaltation, compassion and mercy, and celebration and friendship (Jack 13). Add to this the themes of family relationships, home, and homecoming, and the material to explore is vast. It's no wonder that the "prodigal son" has become a literary trope and the parable a common undercurrent running beneath centuries of literary works.

The Prodigal Son in Adaptation

Jack explores the Prodigal Son parable as a metanarrative over the course of five hundred years, focusing on English, American, and Scottish works. However, the literary trope reaches far beyond the bounds of English-speaking media. In a collection of classic Chinese fables published in 1908 we find "A Chinese Prodigal Son" (Davis and Leung

167). A Russian dramatist Nicolay Kolyada "adopt[s] the famous parable of the Prodigal Son originating from the Holy Bible" in his works from the 1990s (Liu 82). More recently, too, in 2023, African author Timendu Aghahowa published *The Bishop's Prodigal Daughter*, which plays into the parable's tropes in a lighthearted romance set in south Nigeria (Alpha). As a trope, the prodigal son is global and timeless, and there are numerous unique ways that works have used the parable's characters and themes to explore ideas of family, reconciliation, and returns.

A key feature of the retellings Jack explores is the son's return—the many ways it has been altered, and how that subverts expectations or changes the meaning of the character of the prodigal son. She writes, "The parable may speak of something universal, such as a longing for home which is unresolved, but it is heard in different ways in different genres and literary contexts" (Jack 157). For instance, she argues that in many American short stories, "'something is not quite working in the way it should: even though the prodigal son comes home, life in that household will never quite be the same'" (Jack 94). Case in point: Not all homecomings are accepted. In Hamlon Garland's "Up the Cooly," the brother who has left home offers to return and help his struggling family. However, his brother, who stayed home, refuses the aid, turning him away. Jack writes, "The notion of home as a place of comfort and acceptance is … questioned" (Jack 105). The return has been a failure here; there was no father running to meet him. It was better, in fact, for the son to have left home because he was able to make a living for himself. In many American short stories like this one, "the decision to leave is natural, even heroic, whether or not the return is successful" (Jack 112). Indeed, "it is the return which is problematic" (Jack 117). This completely capsizes the original intention of the parable,

turning expectations on their heads, utilizing the story and its structure in a uniquely surprising way.

Another instance of a thwarted homecoming can be seen in the character of Robinson Crusoe and the twentieth-century poetry about him. In "Crusoe in England" by Elizabeth Bishop, the man has spent some years settling back into Great Britain, distanced now from the island he had been stranded on for many years. However, instead of feeling like he was back home, "he has no witness to his experience, he is imprisoned within the self, and home has lost its significance" (Jack 151). Here, in this case, homecoming becomes "'a movement away as well as a return'" (Jack 152). Even though the 'prodigal' has made it home, it no longer *feels* like home. Crusoe is still stranded, not physically but emotionally and socially. Again, this subverts the expectations of the prodigal son trope, but not in the previously explored way. He is allowed to return home; however, home is not what he remembers. He is rejected not by the ones who stayed behind but by the homecoming itself.

Another way stories have adapted the Prodigal Son parable is through the use of the main characters and the relationships between them; they redefine what being a prodigal, a 'father', or an 'older brother' means. They also explore what it looks like for one character to fulfill multiple roles. In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Jack asserts, "it is the figure of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in the person, ironically, of Cordelia rather than the father in the play" (Jack 66). The daughter in this work, rather than her father, is the one offering a forgiving welcome to the person who has strayed—in this case, King Lear himself. The elements of the parable are still there, but the expectation of a welcome from a parent figure is overturned.

Additionally, in Margaret Oliphant's *Kirsteen*, the titular character takes on multiple Prodigal Son roles: "by being actively sent from home by her father, and by creating a new home for other 'prodigal sons' which is welcoming and accepting[, t]he exiled 'son' becomes the loving 'father'" (Jack 91). The roles of 'prodigal' and 'father' are still there, and the heart of the parable (reconciliation, homecoming, familial love) remains, yet the story has strayed from the blueprint by merging two character tropes into one person.

The parable remains recognizable as an undercurrent in literature like this, even with changes like these ones, because the most crucial elements are still present, regardless of what form they take. Jack states that "the experience of loss and a yearning for homecoming are at the heart of the parable and much of the literature which relates to it and shares its language and concerns" (Jack 166). As the Prodigal Son parable is adapted into literature, it lends its powerful themes, giving life to new stories.

Key Features of the Prodigal Son

When looking to adapt this parable into a fairy tale, I wanted to understand what the most basic components of the story were—what was essential for it to be recognizable, and what could be left out or changed for creative expression. From my research done on the parable as a biblical text, as a literary text, and in adaptation already, there emerged a handful of critical building blocks for this story.

Most broadly, a story must feature or center around the idea of 'lost and found'. This theme is central both to the story as Jesus told it and to most (if not all) of the retellings I have explored. Secondly, a story should ask questions about the idea of home

and what reconciliation (or lack thereof) looks like. Another important theme, but perhaps not mandatory, is family relationships. These subjects are at the core of the parable.

As far as the plot of the story must go, my research concluded that there were only two essential actions: a leaving and a homecoming. However, sometimes, even a true homecoming was unnecessary; simply the desire to return made a story a Prodigal Son retelling. Regardless, a story must have some place that can be left and returned to, or at least desired.

When dealing with characters, again, I found only two fundamental ones: a prodigal and someone who stayed. There must be someone who leaves and someone who is left behind, still there when the prodigal returns. Of course, to make a retelling a better parallel to the parable, there should be a father character and an older brother character waiting for the prodigal, but in some adaptations explored, there was only one or the other.

Not many of the myriad thematic devices and plot points remain vital to the story when stripped to its core components. However, these few themes, actions, and characters are essential to a Prodigal Son story. Naturally, though, a retelling is welcome to borrow more elements from the original story than the ones listed here. In fact, a key 'tell' for a retelling is the use of certain words, like "riotous" and "swine" (Jack 65); yet, even without these added details, a story can hold that same spark Jesus' original telling does by making use of the parable's most fundamental ingredients.

2. Fairy Tales

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is only half of this project's foundation. The other half is the fairy tale genre. Academic research on fairy tales is vast; it's not feasible that all of it will fit into the scope of this project. Instead, a brief overview of the genre will be given, then focus will be turned to the Grimm brothers' literary fairy tale and its key features. Because this is the medium into which the parable will be translated, much of this discussion will be diagnostic in nature as opposed to analytic in a literary or interpretive sense.

Fairy Tales in Culture

In their fifth edition of *Folk and Fairy Tales*, Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek describe Tolkien's 'cauldron': "the stock (!) of material, whole or fragmentary, that has been accumulating ever since human beings first discovered the need to tell stories" (Hallett and Karasek 211). It's probable that this stockpot of ideas is older than we could prove with written records, and Tolkien says,

> It is plain enough that fairy-stories (in wider or in narrower sense) are very ancient indeed. Related things appear in very early records; and they are found universally, wherever there is language. … The history of fairy-stories is probably more complex than the physical history of the human race, and as complex as the history of human language. (Tolkien 10)

Scholars hypothesize that there exists a common, global source of stories, written into our histories, collective memories, and cultures. Our folk and fairy stories originate from this source; this is the cause of overlap in tales between storytellers of different nations or

cultures. For instance, the Chinese tale “The Widow and Her Son” shares many aspects with the Grimms’ “Hansel and Gretel”: a family suffers because of famine, a mother figure plans to eat her children but is stopped by a father figure, a child must leave home, and a character goes on a journey and returns with life-saving wealth for the family (Davis and Leung 22, Grimm 58).

These stories build a common language and level of understanding for the world. Often, fairy tales are simple—simple in language, simple in structure, and simple to understand the driving forces behind characters’ actions. Of course, with many tales it is possible to dive much deeper than what lies on the surface, and in fact, it is probably a good exercise, but it remains that fairy tales are easy to read. They are accessible. They are predictable (in part because of their familiarity, creating a self-perpetuating cycle). Additionally, they are enjoyable for an audience of all ages. While fairy tales historically have been associated with children—likely because of their unrealistic and ‘un-grown-up’ components like magic and monsters—Tolkien claims, “If fairy-story as a kind is worth reading at all it is worthy to be written for and read by adults” (Tolkien 349). In fact, he continues, “It may be better for [children] to read some things, especially fairy-stories, that are beyond their measure rather than short of it. Their books like their clothes should allow for growth” (Tolkien 349).

We have seen this movement in audience of children to adults recently with an uptick in the popularity of fantastical stories made especially for the older population in all sorts of media, from books to movies to television shows. From 2020 to 2021, there was a 45.3% increase in sales of fantasy books (Curcic), with some theorizing the boom was due to the desire for escapist literature during the COVID-19 pandemic (Reynolds).

Increasing, also, is the number of child-free adults vacationing to Disney's parks—places built on the magic of fairy tales and historically catered to children. Betsy Hearne writes, "The Disney Olympus is centrally mapped as a pinnacle in the kingdom of childhood" (Herne 453), yet a company insider states, "Between 40% to 50% of typical crowds at the Orlando parks are composed of adults visiting without children … [and] that stat has been on a gradual uptick for several years" (Alexander). Consider that Disney has parks around the globe, in cities like Paris and Tokyo, and it's feasible this will soon be a worldwide phenomenon.

Fantasy, fairy tales, and magic are undoubtably popular around the world with a wide audience. Age is not a hindering factor to enjoying fairy tales, and neither is nation or culture of origin. They have been adapted countless times, from their original oral form, through literary tales, and into movies, books, and other media. Contemplate upon the journey of Cinderella from folk tale character to modern-day icon of the genre, her story now prolifically adapted and found on bookstore shelves and streaming service line-ups. The fairy tale genre is paramount across many diverse cultures, with plenty of room for more change and growth.

Yet, for this project, 'classic' fairy tales seemed the most suitable to draw from. This would ensure a retelling recognizable as a fairy tale, without added interpolations via modernization or other already-existent retelling lenses like feminism or Marxism, however interesting and applicable those versions may be. During my research into the genre, one 'family' of tales kept reappearing in discussions of foundational and influential stories: the fairy tales of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.

The Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales

It is almost inconceivable to imagine a literary world uninfluenced by the Grimm brothers' stories. In fact,

> By the 1870s the Grimms' tales had been incorporated into the teaching curriculum in Prussia and other German principalities, and they were also included in primers and anthologies for children throughout the western world. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the *Children's and Household Tales* was second only to the Bible as a best-seller in Germany, and it has continued to hold this position. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the Grimms' tales, published either together in a single volume or individually as illustrated books, enjoy the same popularity in the English-speaking world. (Zipes xxix)

Their fairy tales are widespread and often one of the first things to come to mind when one thinks of the genre (perhaps alongside or after Disney's animated movies, or Charles Perrault or Hans Christian Andersen's literary tales). To better understand the brothers' model of fairy tale, as well as their prominence in the genre today, it's key to consider where the stories originated from.

Jack Zipes, scholar of fairy tales, tells us that the Grimm brothers collected most of their tales from "educated young women from the middle class or aristocracy" (Zipes xxiv). For many folklorists, their tales are somewhat disingenuous, not being of true folk pedigree—i.e. "from the lips of doughty peasants" (Zipes xvii). Alan Dundes calls Grimm tales "doctored, rewritten composite text[s]", not reliable for the basis of true folk tale study (Dundes 390). I would agree with Dundes, in fact, that their tales would not be suitable for research into orally transmitted folk tales; both brothers edited the stories

they transcribed “to refine the style and make the contents of the tales more acceptable for a children’s audience, or, really, for adults who wanted the tales censored for children” (Zipes xxv).

However, the brothers’ doctoring and editing does not negate the popularity and profuse influence of their work. Frankly, their reworking only aided the tales’ dominance, as their motive in editing was to accomplish a few goals understandable to any creative writer:

> to make the tales stylistically smoother; the concern for clear sequential structure; the desire to make the stories more lively and pictorial by adding adjectives, old proverbs, and direct dialogue; the reinforcement of motives for action in the plot; the infusion of psychological motifs; and the elimination of elements that might detract from a rustic tone. (Zipes xxv)

By carefully editing the stories they gathered (which, by the way, were often stories the young women remembered from their nursemaids, servants, and governesses—not necessarily aristocratic ladies [Zipes xxiv]), they made well-crafted tales with strong, artful presences, more likely to be sold, enjoyed, remembered, and recommended to others. George Bodmer adds, “Just as folk music has been taken over by commercial record companies, fairy tales in order to be dispersed and published widely need[ed] to depart from their strictly oral, strictly organic nature” (Bodmer 121).

It’s because the brothers removed explicitly sexual elements, added references to Christianity and Christian values, and layered on ‘folk’-ish expressions that their stories were palatable to the growing middle class (Zipes xxviii). This initial popularity and the consistent standards over time for what is acceptable in children’s literature meant that

the Grimm brothers' fairy tales remain popular in the West today as a representation of the genre.

While they may not be genuine folk tales, these stories are masterful fairy tales that have stood the test of time. Therefore, they are what most people would consider a 'classic' fairy tale, and they are the colors with which this project is painted.

Key Features of the Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales

When researching the Grimm brothers' collection of tales, I began to realize very quickly that there was a strong and consistent style to their work. In order, then, to emulate this style for my project, it was paramount to catalogue the most notable elements. Some were purely questions of word choice, like using language that was reminiscent of medieval Europe, while others had to do primarily with story structure, character archetypes, or recurring plot points.

I read *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, translated and with an introduction by Jack Zipes. This edition of the Grimms' work, published in 1987, includes all 210 original fairy tales, as well as 40 additional tales that had not previously been translated into English.

Considering specific word choices or phrases, there are a number that stand out in the fairy tales. Of course, one of the most famous is the often-used first line "Once upon a time." Indeed, many of the Grimms' stories began with that phrase, and if not that exact one, one similar: "There once was," or "Once there was," or simply, "Once" (Grimm 55, 182, 252). Additionally, some other common story starters were phrases like "In the days when wishing still helped," "At the time when our Lord still walked on the earth," "Long,

long ago," or other time-setting phrases like "In ancient times" or "A few hundred years ago" (Grimm 451, 502, 473, 551, 553). If a story didn't start with the setting, then it jumped right into characters: "A widow had two daughters," "A man had a donkey," "A louse and a flea kept house together," or "A miller had been falling little by little into poverty" (Grimm 96, 105, 117, 118). Of course, other, less common beginnings like dialogue or a homey saying ("Mountains and valleys never meet, but people often do" [Grimm 385]) were present in the collection.

Within the content of the stories themselves, introductory words and timing words were very common. In just the first two paragraphs of "The Animals of the Lord and the Devil," sentences are started with these words: "However," "Then," "Yet," "Finally," "Now," "But," "Then" again, and "When" (Grimm 503). This, along with the use of past tense, creates a straightforward story structure that leaves little room for excessive setting description or other detail. Much of the focus is on the characters and their actions instead of the world they inhabit.

Another key feature of the Grimms' tales is their cast of characters. Many are recurring, like Hans, who has lived many lives in the stories "Clever Hans" (Grimm 123), "Gambling Hans" (Grimm 300), "Lucky Hans" (Grimm 302), "Strong Hans" (Grimm 535), and "Simple Hans" (Grimm 659). However, what is recurring about a character may just be their profession or title; readers meet countless kings and queens, princes and princesses, husbands and wives, witches, old maids, widows, soldiers, farmers, blacksmiths, tailors, maidens, carpenters, huntsmen, devils, giants, woodcutters, stepmothers, merchants, shoemakers, knights, and more. On the other hand, it is just as likely to find a recurring character trope. Often, there will be someone poor and

struggling who is awarded help for their kind nature paired with someone wealthy who is punished for their greed (Grimm 313, 639). Or, readers meet a trickster character who slips through loopholes to win the day (Grimm 204, 286). There are countless tropes like these in the stories, so ones more relevant to my project will be discussed in the implementation section.

Throughout all the tales, the Grimm brothers provide minimal explanation for most elements of any given story. For instance, this is the first paragraph of "Jorinda and Joringel":

> Once upon a time there was an old castle in the middle of a great, dense forest. An old woman lived there all by herself, and she was a powerful sorceress. During the day she turned herself into a cat or a night owl, but in the evening she would return to her normal human form. She had the ability to lure game and birds, which she would slaughter and then cook or roast. If any man came within a hundred steps of the castle, she would cast a spell over him, so that he would not be able to move from the spot until she broke the spell. If an innocent maiden came within her magic circle, she would change her into a bird and stuff her into a wicker basket. Then she would carry the basket up to a room in her castle where she had well over seven thousand baskets with rare birds of this kind. (Grimm 269)

Over the course of this story, there is no explanation provided for why the sorceress transforms into animals, why she enchants all men and only 'innocent' women who come near her castle, or what she does with the women-birds, aside from feed them. There are no authorities concerned with the literal thousands of missing people, either. In every

Grimm brothers' fairy tale, the elements and characters are simply allowed to exist, no matter how strange or illogical they may seem.

Finally, there are four things that are rarely excluded from a fairy tale in the Grimms' collection: magic, evil punished, good rewarded, and a happy ending. For many scholars, it is not a fairy tale if there is no magical element in some form or another. Nearly every story has some magical item, person, or location. One exception in this collection of Grimms' tales is "The Hare and the Hedgehog," which features no magic, only animal wiliness, and a moral at the end of the story. Because of this, however, this story would be sooner classified as a fable than a fairy tale.

Another key feature, Hallett and Karasek write, is "justice demands that the villains be punished and their victims compensated for the suffering to which they have been subjected" (Hallett and Karasek 196). Evil queens are danced to death, child- and grandmother-eating wolves are slaughtered, and murderous husbands are slain by vengeful brothers-in-law. On the other hand, innocent princesses are saved and marry princes, children and their grandmothers are rescued by woodsmen (and in some versions, sport fashionable new wolf-pelt clothing), and widows inherit estates and take care of their families' monetary needs. For a Grimm brothers' fairy tale, being 'good' (or at least innocent or beautiful) means you will be rewarded. Being 'evil' (or ugly) will likely result in your demise.

Hand-in-hand with punishing evil and rewarding good is the notable happy ending. Today, happy endings are practically synonymous with fairy tales; in fact, people will say "a fairy-tale ending", meaning something that wraps a story up in an almost unbelievably perfect way. For instance, this is the ending to "The Queen Bee": "Now the

magic spell was broken, and everyone was set free from the deep sleep. All those who had been turned into stone regained their human form. Simpleton married the youngest and loveliest daughter and became king after her father's death, while his two brothers were married to the other two sisters" (Grimm 253). Every loose end is tied up, and every character is accounted for. While rarely realistic, these endings are satisfying. It is usually during the conclusion that characters receive their due punishments or rewards. Often, too, the final words or final sentence takes a form like one of the following: "and lived happily ever after," "if they have not stopped dancing, then they are still at it even now," "In time they reached a ripe old age in peace and happiness," or "And there they are still living this very day" (Grimm 123, 150, 70, 79). Fairy tales most often end in celebration, peace, happiness, or all three.

By making use of these elements common to the majority of Grimms' fairy tales, as well as building a personal 'cauldron of story' through consumption of their narratives, I can better understand the underlying structure and therefore craft a fairy tale that is reminiscent of these brothers' work.

3. Fairy Tale Illustration

Hallett and Karasek claim that "no publisher nowadays would dream of trying to sell a volume of fairy tales that was not accompanied by illustrations" (Hallett and Karasek 320). The increased inclusion of illustrations in fairy tale anthologies and books began in the eighteenth century as printing techniques improved and stories for children were rising in popularity (Bodmer 121). Now, it is unusual to find a fairy-story with no

accompanying illustrations; some scholars even argue that the story itself has become of secondary importance to the artwork on the page (Hallett and Karasek 320).

Fairy tales have impacted art outside the pages of books as well. “In the Victorian period,” Dr. Michael Newton says, “[fairy paintings] explode as a genre” (Gipson). What began in the Romantic period with art inspired by Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* erupted in popularity in the Victorian age, as artists drew from fairy tales to create their works (Gipson). While in the early- to mid-nineteenth century the fairy tale genre was considered to be “geared for children”, it attracted a high volume of adult painters and illustrators (Gipson). Perhaps, Dr. Newton explains, this is because “Victorian fairy painting … was a site for erotic desire. They’re highly sexualized paintings” (Gipson). Much Victorian-era fairy tale artwork focused on the female form, often nude or sleeping. However, this genre also allowed for an immense amount of creative expression. The artists were at liberty to create a fantasy world as they saw fit. “The fairy tale is a space for dreaming,” says Dr. Newton (Gipson), and after the Romantic era of art, which focused on “violent and terrifying images of nature” as well as personal introspection and emotional states (Galitz), the dream-like, imaginative play offered by fairy tale artwork could have been a welcome relief.

Illustrations seemed like a vital piece of this project, then, since fairy tale illustrations have been so impactful on the genre over the last two hundred years, as well as on the history of art in general. To utilize illustration to the fullest extent in my own fairy tale, it was imperative to understand the impact artwork has on the words around it. Identifying key features of fairy tale illustrations was also important to achieve the most significant results and honor the long history of the art of fairy-story illustration.

Impact of Illustration on Fairy Tales

It is not a contentious idea that illustrations change the story they're placed inside. Where fairy tales are vague ("Once upon a time") and often lacking details that other prose fiction may include ("An old woman … was a powerful sorceress"), illustrations make these elements concrete through their visuals. Suddenly, readers know more or less when a story takes place and where, and they're given a clear image of what characters look like and more exact details about their roles in the story. Hallett and Karasek, in their exploration of fairy tale illustrations, say, "Our imaginations can rarely achieve the vividness and specificity that can be found in a good illustration" (Hallett and Karasek 320–321).

They also discuss how the illustrator is fulfilling an age-old role: "The evolution of the oral tale into printed text has all but obliterated the services of the storyteller, leaving room for the intercession of a new intermediary" (Hallett and Karasek 320); in other words, the illustrator is doing what the orators of folk tales did when they added their unique interpretations, emphasis, and approaches to folk tales, now through visuals instead of tone, word choice, and body language. The illustrator works with the author's text like the orator would work with the story framework to build something new.

Fairy tale illustrations reveal new details about the story, and they also tell tales about the illustrator, "reveal[ing] something of the assumptions and values of the artist and of the culture to which he or she belongs" (Hallett and Karasek 321). The illustrator imparts upon a story their own perspective, impacted by their upbringing, culture, and beliefs, both consciously and unconsciously. Just as a fairy tale can reflect the ideals of a time or culture from where it originated, it can also reflect the illustrator's ideals.

With all this in mind, it is easy to understand why mixed opinions exist about the benefits of illustrations inside fairy tales. Bodmer converses with scholars like Bruno Bettelheim, whom he quotes as saying, "'If we let an illustrator determine our imagination, it becomes less our own, and the story loses much of its personal significance'" (Bodmer 122). Bodmer responds, "Of course, I would say that the fairy tale is infused with the imagination of the illustrator, and likewise it is enriched by it" (Bodmer 122). Others question if illustrations actively harm children: "Does the inclusion of illustrations stifle the reader's imagination by imposing a visual representation upon it[?]" (Hallett and Karasek 320), but some would argue that the reverse is true, and illustrations in fact open developing minds to alternate ways of thinking and perceiving ideas (Joosen 475).

Whichever idea is more accurate, it cannot be denied that the illustrations work in conversation with the narrative to create a new level of understanding. An unspoken dialogue exists between the story and the artist, centered around details added, definitive visuals for abstract ideas created, and scenes either illustrated or left to the imaginations of readers. Whether one believes fairy tales are better left unillustrated or not, art has been a key component of published tales for hundreds of years. This having been said, part of my research for this project delved into the ways fairy tale illustration has changed stylistically over time.

Fairy Tale Illustration and Style

When perusing the early fairy tale collections from the nineteenth century, one will encounter illustrations of a certain kind. Likely, they will be black and white, more

realistic in proportion or the general way scenes have been drawn, and full of hatching and cross-hatching that build value. As book printing improved, artists were drawn to wood block engraving and printing methods. This medium allowed for an illustration to be reused repeatedly and quickly, without an artist having to redo much work for each print. Artists that used this medium (and the style that fit it best) included Walter Crane, Arthur Hughes, Gustave Doré, George Pinwell, John Tenniel, Arthur Boyd Houghton, Frederick Sandys, J. E. Millais, James Whistler, and William Holman Hunt (Bodmer 124).

Artists learned to work within the limitations of this medium, chiefly the need to build up texture and value with hatching, and the result was that "certain motifs developed to contrast the light and dark of the image, such as an external light source provided by a fireplace or a window" (Bodmer 124). With this came an emphasis on the juxtaposition on indoor and outdoor compositions, too. Artists were also limited by the size of the illustrations they could provide, as journal publications of this time were often printed in double columns (Bodmer 124). Wood block printing could also be done in color, as seen in Walter Crane's pieces for *Beauty and the Beast* (1874) (Bodmer 122); however, these specific works did not feature the characteristic cross-hatching, but instead built value through color.

Some of these artists illustrated with what will be referred to here as a 'pseudo-medieval' style, described by Vanessa Joosen as "romantic and detailed, sometimes even photographic … radiat[ing] a timeless, idyllic atmosphere" (Joosen 476). They place the tales within "the atmosphere of a medieval Europe, with traditional professions (millers, spinsters, and tailors), little technology, a powerful monarchy, and no industry" (Joosen

476). This style was popularized by German artists like Franz von Pocci, Ludwig Emil Grimm (a brother of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm), and Ludwig Richter (Joosen 476; Zipes xvii).

Developing in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and popular alongside pseudo-medieval illustration, was a more comically bent style. Artists of this strain included George Cruikshank (Joosen 476) and John B. Gruelle (Zipes 749). Both artists were known as caricature or comic artists in their days, and their work featured less realism and more humor. Gruelle in particular "sought to emphasize the humor and optimism in the Grimms' tales by choosing scenes that captured both the mood of each tale and the manner in which a child might view the scene" (Zipes 749).

When Disney released *Snow White* in December of 1937, they captured both the idealism and pseudo-medieval setting of the earlier pseudo-medieval style as well as the humor and cartoon aspects of the later comic style. This combination granted them "particular commercial success", and it was hugely influential, widely replicated by fairy tale artists in an attempt to appeal to Disney's vast audience (Joosen 477).

The late twentieth century and now the twenty-first century have brought about an immense diversification in fairy tale illustration style. For instance, in the 1960s and 70s, artists Warja Lavater and Jean Ache illustrated tales with minimalistic, abstract visuals composed of colored dots and squares (Joosen 474). In 1991, Molly Bang investigated shape and color language in *Picture This: How Pictures Work*, where she created illustrations for "Little Red Riding Hood" out of only circles, rectangles, triangles, and a trim handful of colors (Bang).

A short browse of the shelves of any children's section in a bookstore reveals the wide variety of illustration styles present today. Hallett and Karasek selected a collection of illustrations to showcase this variety in their chapter on illustration, including the following: the jarring black-and-white photographs of Sarah Moon (1983); the bright, busy illustrated work of Roberto Innocenti (2012); the soft, muted watercolor-esque work of Mireille Levert (1995); the unsettling, sometimes humorous collages of Susanne Janssen (2007) and Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (1992); the exaggerated comic-book styles, utilized differently by artists like Sean Dietrich (2008), Bill Willingham (2012), and Joe Tyler and Ralph Tedesco (2005); the more abstracted, painterly, and color-driven work of Alan Barrett (1972), Stasys Eidrigevičius (1990), and Daniel Egnéus (2011); and the quirky, cute, 1970s-inspired ink drawings of David Roberts (2003) (Hallett and Karasek 322–337). Artists are no longer limited by printing technology, so individual styles and wild experimentation are celebrated. Through the use of different media, styles, and image-making techniques, artists can challenge and change the interpretation of tales even more drastically than before.

Key Features of Fairy Tale Illustration

With such diversity in style, it is impossible to pinpoint very many key features universal to all fairy tale illustration. In fact, the only thing relevant to all illustration for these stories is the fact that they visually represent a fairy tale in some manner. So, instead of focusing on a comprehensive exploration of key features, this section will explore the features most notable for my own project.

When reading about the illustrator for the edition of Grimms' tales I read, I found that his philosophy of illustration aligned well with my own creed for this project: "For Gruelle, a fairy-tale illustration always had to point to the possibility of attaining a happy end" (Zipes 748). Additionally, he "contrasted the figures of good and evil in his line drawings in a way that induced an atmosphere of hope" (Zipes 749). Like a common interpretation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, endings are happy (full of reconciliation) and ripe with hope for the future. It seems only fitting that the illustrations will mirror this and indeed shine a spotlight on it.

Outside of this general theme, there were a handful of features I wished to pull from stylistically in my work. First, I wanted to draw from the pseudo-medieval atmosphere of nineteenth-century illustration. This style reflects the setting of many fairy tales themselves, and specifically, the setting of my fairy tale; in mimicking the Grimms' literary fairy tale, it makes more sense to lean into that setting rather than borrow the more twenty-first century trope of re-setting the tale in a modern time or place. Additionally, from this era of illustration, I desired to imitate its realism as far as general proportions and representations of characters and their environments. In other words, I would not be drawing characters abstractly, nor did I plan on manipulating them into overly cartoonish caricatures, and surroundings would be given an appropriate level of detail rather than something like hazy blurs of shapes and colors. My aim, though, would not be photorealism.

However, from the pseudo-medieval tradition, I did not wish to emulate entirely the wood-block print style. While I will incorporate hatching, cross-hatching, and strong lighting where applicable, it did not seem realistic for the bounds of this project to learn

an entirely new method of creation. Instead, I will pay homage to the myriad of fairy tale illustrators before me by adding a personal touch to this project, like they all have done with the tales before them. By illustrating in a style that nods to nineteenth-century, classic fairy tale illustrations, but ultimately looks original, I am doing my due diligence as an illustrator: shaping the fairy tale before me into something personal with a new, different perspective.

Part 3

Implementation

With consideration of each area researched, I wrote "The Lost-and-Found Prince," a fairy tale reimaging of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. I utilized the parable's main story threads as a foundation, then layered the characters and plot with fairy tale themes and tropes.

Over the course of this project, my focus shifted. Initially, I desired to craft a story that perfectly emulated a 'traditional' fairy tale, but as I learned about the history of fairy tales and their evolution over the centuries, I realized there was really no such thing as a 'traditional' tale. Instead, there are folk tales, difficult to capture for study and with historical records that can be quite unreliable. There are the early literary fairy tales, which are closest to what I was imagining. There are countless reinterpretations, retellings, and new stories that have been written since fairy tales rose in popularity, and these allow for boundless exploration of the genre.

With this in mind, I decided instead to narrow the scope of this project and focus on emulating the Grimm brothers' literary style, as I was already familiar with their stories and research confirmed that they were indeed popular. Refining allowed for a clearer idea of my end goal, as well as an easier guide to measure my product against. I can more definitively know if I have created something that could fit into the Grimm brothers' canon, compared to attempting to write something that is styled after multiple different authors of the time.

However, change to the goals of this project came not only through limitation. Early in the thesis process, I wanted to illustrate my tale with artwork that resembled the

woodblock prints of the nineteenth century. After researching fairy tale illustration and considering the various styles artists have used (and the way those styles impacted the tales), I decided instead to follow in their tradition and converse with the fairy tale through a unique illustrative look. This meant I had the freedom to explore ways to represent characters, ideas, and settings without being confined to recreating what others had done before me. I could nod to their influence and allude to their impact without being beholden to them.

Now, we can explore the ways in which I implemented my research in my creation of "The Lost-and-Found Prince."

1. Building and Writing from a Personal Cauldron

Hallett and Karasek broaden Tolkien's idea of the cauldron of story, saying that "along with the 'universal' cauldron that contains all the stories ever told, there is the 'personal' cauldron, large or small, that belongs to each storyteller and from which he or she draws the story or combination of story-segments from which a new story is being created" (Hallett and Karasek 211). This idea captivated me and compelled me to think about what stories and story segments were brewing in my personal cauldron. To create a story that felt like the Grimm brothers' writing, then, I had to fill my personal cauldron with their work.

As previously mentioned, I read Jack Zipes's translation of the Grimm brothers' 210 stories, plus an additional forty stories that hadn't been previously published in English. I wanted to note their language style, repeated tropes and characters, and other commonly used bits, pieces, and story segments. As I read, I wrote down interesting

stories and story segments, ones I thought I could utilize in my own writing. These included common phrases, bits of plot, repeatedly used tropes, and tales that already adapted biblical stories in order to consider how they drew from the same source I would.

As I worked through the Grimms' collection, I would occasionally return to the Prodigal Son parable, both the original biblical story and places where the story had been adapted into something new, often through song or film. However, in my meditation on the parable, I began to see it more often in my life and the lives of those around me. Peers would share moments from their day, and in them I would hear the voice of the younger son, the father, or the older son. By thinking often of the parable and what I had learned in my research of it, as well as consuming all of the Grimm brothers' tales, I prepared myself to write my fairy tale.

"The Lost-and-Found Prince" began as a series of plot points, just the most major incidents that were needed in the story: the son leaves home, he faces three trials and fails them all, he ends up living in a pigsty, he remembers his father and his home, and he is joyfully reconciled to his father. Then, ideas from the Grimms' stories were added, an environment began to take shape, characters were developed, and plots became more detailed as I expanded upon my initial outline. For instance, I knew I wanted the father to be a king, and therefore his sons would be princes. I knew I wanted a deceiver character, an animal helper, and a trial featuring two inns, all story segments and tropes found in the Grimm brothers' tales. Pulling from my personal cauldron fed by their stories enabled me to fully realize my fairy tale's shape.

Then, with a detailed outline to refer to, I wrote the first rough draft of my tale. It had no title, a vaguely motivated protagonist, and a rushed ending. Then, I let people read

it. My family, close friends, and thesis director Dr. Gaitely read the story and gave me feedback. I talked through rough areas and my intentions and desires for the story with trusted peers who helped me work out the tale's kinks and issues. With their advice in mind, I returned to the rough draft multiple times to clean it up and work toward a final manuscript, which can be found in Part 3.

2. Use of the Prodigal Son

For many Prodigal Son adaptations, they utilize the story in its trope form, or in more of its literary form than its biblical form. However, for my project, I wished to use the parable as both a piece of literature and as the words of God. Incorporating the literary tropes of the characters (a prodigal son and a waiting father) and the plot structure (a leaving and a homecoming) would aid in recognizing the source material from which my story comes. However, it was also vital to my goals that the story retained at least a touch of the divine truth I believe is found in Jesus' story. Therefore, in my adaptation, I am not treating the parable as just an ancient work of literature but as a biblical text with inherent authority and moral teaching that can be translated into my retelling.

As previously discussed, there were only a handful of features vital to a retelling of the Prodigal Son parable: exploring lost-ness and found-ness as themes, a character that leaves, and a character that stays. Of course, these are included within my fairy tale. However, there were many features of the parable besides those few that I also thought pertinent to keep.

I kept all characters, major or minor, in some form. There is the king as a father character, his older son as, of course, the older son, and his younger son as the prodigal

figure. The servants mentioned in the parable are also mentioned in my story, as is the citizen of the foreign country who sends the prodigal to feed his pigs, who in my story is a farmer who lives in the enchanted forest. Retained also is the lack of names for any of these characters. In the parable, they are known by their relationships to other characters or by their job title, and it is the same in my fairy tale.

There were a number of details or plot points that I used from the parable. The prodigal wants his inheritance, and he gets it. He leaves home, squanders what he was given, and finds his way to a pig pen to try to survive. He still remembers his father's household when things get tough, and he still is welcomed home by his father. In fact, I draw from the parable's language almost directly during those scenes, including details like the father directing the servants to bring the prodigal better clothing. I also retained the celebration, the upset older brother, and the scene where the father seeks out his older son. Additionally, I included the keyword "raucous".

These details were all suitable for the fairy tale genre, as I had either seen them in Grimms' tales already or felt they could easily fit in that world of story. There were countless tales about sons leaving home, learning hard lessons, and coming back changed. In some, like "The Queen Bee," readers are given details like these: "Once two princes went forth in search of adventure, and after they fell into a wild, decadent way of life, they never returned home again. Their youngest brother … went out to look for them" (Grimm 252). This story features the idea of lost and found, is centered on familial relationships (especially those of brotherhood), explicitly has characters living the stereotypical 'prodigal' lifestyle, and in its ending has all three brothers settle into a home. The Grimm brothers were not strangers to the prodigal son as a trope.

However, I discarded numerous details from the parable as well. To begin, I didn't feel the famine was necessary for my plot on top of the prodigal's current obstacles. He was facing enough trials, and famine didn't fit naturally into the story's framework. Additionally, I left out direct mentions of prostitution. While this was a commonly used plot device in other retellings, it is not a suitable theme for my intended audience, which includes children. I also discarded the fatted calf mentioned during the reconciliation scene, as I knew I would be working mainly with animal characters in illustration and didn't think meat consumption would be acceptable. Finally, I didn't follow the original parable's structure in thirds; one-third of the story is spent on the prodigal son's departure and fall, one-third is spent on his homecoming and reunion, and the final third contains the older son's distress and his father's words to him. Instead, most of my story is spent on the prodigal's journey away from home and into trouble, and the next largest section is on the aftermath of his homecoming.

I decided to retain more than strictly necessary of the original parable because I wanted the fairy tale to be immediately recognizable as the Prodigal Son story. While it was helpful to understand the core of the story so those features wouldn't be neglected, I found that many story segments or plot points were perfectly suitable for my retelling, and there was no reason not to include them. Indeed, most of my alterations to the parable were through expansion rather than detraction, and most of these added details were initially found in the Grimm brothers' fairy tales.

3. Use of the Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales

When creating the more structured and detailed outline of "The Lost-and-Found Prince," many of my additions drew from the Grimms' tales and were added to the parable's skeleton. Building a story in this way felt very much like spooning out content from a personal cauldron, finding the right story segments to create a cohesive 'flavor profile' for the story. There were many segments I considered but found they didn't fit well; the following are the ones I settled on, as they all meshed nicely but still felt original.

As every Grimms' tale takes place in a pseudo-medieval sort of setting, readers only encounter characters whose professions or roles align with the imagination of that indiscriminate time period. Therefore, my characters follow in this tradition. Scores of the Grimm brothers' tales are about kings, queens, princes, and princesses. So, rather than have my prodigal's family be woodcutters, tailors, fishermen, or other everyday professions, I decided that the father figure would be a king and his two sons would be princes. This aligns with the common interpretation of the Prodigal Son parable that says the father in the story is a representation of God the Father, who is commonly referred to as a King of a Kingdom. Other professions or roles I chose for other characters in my story are merchants, travelers, highway robbers, innkeepers, farmers, servants, and princesses. Additionally, I wanted my language choices to reflect the pseudo-medieval setting and the tradition of the Grimms' tales, so instead of "coins" or "money," I specify "ducats", and other such details.

Then, to begin fleshing out the tale, I needed a setting in which to place my characters. Enchanted forests are a staple of many Grimms' tales, such as the woods in

"Brother and Sister." Two siblings find their way into a forest, where a witch has placed a curse on every stream inside it. The water speaks to the children, telling them not to drink it or they will be transformed into various animals, from tigers to fawns (Grimm 42). Other enchanted forests have different properties, such as the one found in "The Two Brothers." This tale says, "Nearby was a forest, however, that was said to be enchanted. Whoever entered did not return very easily" (Grimm 244). Indeed, one brother in this fairy tale gets stuck inside the forest and must be rescued by the other brother. An enchanted forest that is difficult to leave seemed like the right setting for my prodigal son character to find his way into, as it facilitated a struggle in lieu of a famine, it mirrored the Christian tradition's understanding of the sticky pattern of sin, and it allowed for many other story segments to fit into place.

For instance, once I knew that my prodigal would be trapped in an enchanted forest, I was at liberty to provide for him an animal helper. Many Grimm brothers' stories feature an animal helper, sometimes in the form of a bird, like in "Cinderella," a fox, like in "The Golden Bird," or any other kind of creature. In "The Two Brothers," for example, each brother has a menagerie of animal helpers: a hare, a fox, a wolf, a bear, and a lion (Grimm 233–234). Generally, these animals are woodland creatures, and they help the protagonist through tests or trials, often taking place inside forests (but not limited to this setting). In my fairy tale, I gave my prodigal a white dove helper. The dove provides instructions for how to overcome trials, and he shows up when he is most needed. I modeled my animal helper off of the fox in "The Golden Bird"; in this tale, three brothers each meet the fox separately, spare his life in exchange for helpful advice, and then either take his advice or don't: "Like the oldest son, [the second son] too met the fox, who gave

him good advice that he did not heed" (Grimm 217). Like the sons in this tale, my prodigal also disregards his animal helper's sound wisdom.

Next, I wanted there to be a driving force behind the prodigal's choice to leave, more than provided in the original parable. So, I found that a devil character could play this part by convincing the prodigal that he will find something better if he leaves his father's home. Using a devil character also meant that he could be recurring, driving the plot forward in other places of the tale. Devils are fairly common in the Grimms' tales, and they're found in stories like "The Devil's Sooty Brother," "Bearskin," and "The Peasant and the Devil." In these tales, the devil appears, sometimes in disguise, and offers a deal to the tale's protagonist. The protagonist will accept the offer, which seems impossible, but he or she will always manage to outsmart the devil and be granted a reward. Occasionally, the devil will bargain for the protagonist's soul, but other times he will make an offer of wealth in exchange for a set time period of poor hygiene and manners, as seen in "The Devil's Sooty Brother" and "Bearskin." A common length of time for this kind of deal is seven years, seen in both of the previously mentioned tales (Grimm 367, 371), so I utilize this span of time as well. Also, it is notable that in the Bible, the number seven often represents completion or perfection. In my tale, too, I knew I wanted the devil to be able to disguise himself and to be after the prodigal's soul, much like how in a Christian worldview, Satan "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8, ESV). The prodigal in my tale would be partly a victim of the devil's schemes, but I also wanted to give him the liberty to make his own poor decisions.

Many Prodigal Son retellings focus on the wayward child's behavior out in the wider world. For my retelling, I knew that this was where a majority of the action would take place, so I decided to give the prodigal three trials in the enchanted forest. Common to fairy tales is the "rule of three," where a pattern is formed through the repetition of a task or outcome three times (Forsyth). Usually, the pattern is broken on the third time to teach a lesson or emphasize a certain idea. For instance, looking again at "The Golden Bird," the first two brothers fail in their mission because they don't follow the fox's advice. However, this pattern is broken by the third brother, who does follow the fox's instructions and is able to complete the trials before him (Grimm 217). In "The Lost-and-Found Prince," however, the prodigal does not break the pattern but again fails on the third trial. This cements his need for outside help and will ultimately cause him to decide to return home.

Choosing trials for the prodigal meant delicately walking a line; I wanted to be true to the source material and let him live "raucously," but I also wanted to be considerate of my audience. While anyone can consume fairy tales, I geared this particular story to children about eight to ten years old, or older elementary children. I chose language that would likely be a bit difficult for children younger than that, but I did not want to lean into an older audience because current practice is that short stories accompanied by illustrations are generally for children. Therefore, I could not choose trials that perfectly reflected some of the worldly activities found in other Prodigal Son retellings, like partaking in prostitution, getting excessively drunk, or other forms of "debauchery," as those would certainly not be age-appropriate for elementary school

children. So, in developing my story, I consciously searched out tasks from Grimm brothers' tales that could nod to worldly behaviors without being explicit.

The first trial my prodigal encounters is the choice between two inns. This trial is also found in "The Golden Bird." The fox tells the first brother, "'Tonight you'll come to a village where you'll see two inns facing each other. One will be brightly lit with a great deal of merrymaking inside. Be sure you keep away from that place. Instead, you should go into the other inn, even though it looks dismal'" (Grimm 216). The first man did not follow the fox's advice, and "he went into the cheerful inn, lived to the hilt like a king, and forgot the [golden] bird, his father, and all the good lessons he had ever learned" (Grimm 217). In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, readers infer that the prodigal manages to spend all of his money in a relatively short amount of time. An audience-appropriate way to incorporate that idea into my fairy tale was through gambling on card games, and found in the two-inn trial was an easy way to include that challenge. In my tale, the prodigal is given a similar setup—a loud, cheerful inn and a quiet, dark inn—and he is convinced to step into the merrier inn against the advice of the dove. He, too, forgets "the bird, his father, and all the good lessons he had ever learned," and loses all his money gambling, failing the first trial.

The second trial my prodigal faces (and fails), which will be discussed in a later section, does not originate from any Grimms' fairy tale, but the third trial he encounters is found in many other stories. Here, the devil character reveals his true identity and makes a deal with the prodigal; if he can wake a princess cursed to sleep, then he will be rewarded, but if not, the devil will claim his soul. Sleeping princesses are notorious in fairy tales, likely due to the popularity of "Brier Rose", or as titled by Disney, "Sleeping

Beauty." This trope is found in other stories, too, like "The Queen Bee." However, enchanted girls of many stripes are common: for example, in "The Three Black Princesses," the princesses reside in a castle which has enchanted everything to be black (Grimm 489); in "The Glass Coffin," a princess has been cursed to remain imprisoned in a glass coffin by a sorcerer (Grimm 522); and in "Sweetheart Roland," the beautiful maiden is transformed into a flower (Grimm 214). For the third trial, therefore, it was fitting to test my prodigal with an enchanted princess. She (and her entire kingdom) is cursed to sleep, and when the prodigal fails the task, she is transformed into a red rosebud.

However, as seen in countless Grimm brothers' tales, that is not the princess's final fate. Where readers are introduced to an enchanted princess or maiden, they also see her set free. The sleeping princesses in "Brier Rose" and "The Queen Bee" are awakened by princes, in "The Three Black Princesses," the girls can be rescued by a man if he does not look at them nor speak to them for one year, the princess in "The Glass Coffin" is rescued by a tailor, and a shepherd breaks the magic keeping the maiden a flower in "Sweetheart Roland." Like the protagonists before him, my prodigal is eventually able to free the princess and her kingdom from the curse.

By breaking the curse, again following in the tradition of the Grimms' tales, the prodigal is rewarded with marriage to the princess. For many fairy tales, again like "Brier Rose," "The Queen Bee," and "The Glass Coffin," the tales end with a wedding ceremony between the freed girl and the man who freed her (Grimm 189, 253, 527). For many tales of this caliber, the princess or maiden is so grateful that she consents to these sudden marriages: "'I had been hoping for a long time, my savior, that you'd come.…

Heaven has chosen you as my husband'" (Grimm 525). Additionally, it is common for other Grimms' tales not involving freed princesses to end in a wedding. Therefore, to capture that true "fairy-tale ending," I decided to end "The Lost-and-Found Prince" with a marriage ceremony as well.

One final piece of my tale that I borrowed from Grimm brothers' stories were my opening and closing lines. I begin my fairy tale like this: "Once upon a time, when the Lord still walked upon the earth, there lived a king." As previously discussed in the key features of fairy tales section, both "Once upon a time" and "When the Lord still walked upon the earth" are recurring story starters for the Grimms' canon. Generally, the latter sentence starter begins stories where the Lord is featured as a character, interacting with other characters and often providing wishes or blessings. I decided to use both for my parable, as "Once upon a time" is a timeless indication of a fairy-story, and my tale does feature the Lord, although not necessarily identified by this title. Additionally, it gives readers a hint that my fairy tale is related to Christianity.

I close my tale with this line: "And if they have not died, then they are all still living in the valley kingdom, happily ever after." Again, as discussed prior in the key features of fairy tales section, a happy ending is more-or-less necessary for a fairy tale, and there are a handful of conclusion sentences reused throughout the Grimm brothers' stories that help to provide that happy ending. I borrowed two of them for my tale: "If they have not died, then they are still living," and "happily ever after." Ending the tale in this way provides the notion that these characters are actively enjoying a happy ending, which is important to retaining the hope found in Jesus' parable.

All of these story segments were chosen because they would add to the Prodigal Son parable without smothering the heart of the original story. They would cloak it in a fairy-tale dressing, hopefully making Jesus' narrative more palatable to a wide audience. To reflect more exactly the Grimms' literary fairy tale form, these story segments provided a concrete happy ending where the parable is more vague and left to audience interpretation. Also, they create a strong narrative and plot to fill in other gaps in the parable, such as how the prodigal wastes his wealth, and in what sort of raucousness he is living. Finally, the addition of story pieces like the devil character and enchanted princess form a more obvious dichotomy between good and evil, which was important for both the intended audience's understanding and the fairy tale form itself. In these ways, I utilized the Grimms' tales to further develop the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

4. Symbolism Outside of the Parable

However, I did not draw exclusively from either the Grimms' fairy tales or the Prodigal Son parable to create depth in my story. Some details were added because of their symbolism or allusions to other ideas or biblical sources. While not strictly pertinent to much of the research I conducted for this project, it seemed necessary to discuss these in order to explain some of the choices I made.

To begin with the most obvious deviation from the Prodigal Son parable itself, as well as many of the existing retellings, my prodigal character is a lamb. As far as Grimms' tales go, there were a multitude of stories that revolved around animal characters rather than humans, as well as some in which animals and humans interacted. My decision to make this prodigal a lamb was deliberate, and my intention is to bring to

mind the beginning of Luke, chapter fifteen, where the Parable of the Lost Sheep is found. In this story, Jesus tells of a man who has a flock of one hundred sheep. One goes missing, and the man leaves the ninety-nine others to search after and rescue the one that is lost. He finds the lost sheep and brings it home, rejoicing because it was found (Luke 15:4–6, ESV). By making my prodigal a lamb, my fairy tale references not just the Parable of the Prodigal Son but also the Parable of the Lost Sheep, which, as previously discussed, is included in the set of three parables Jesus tells that are explicitly related to one another thematically.

Additionally, from a literary standpoint and considering my audience, an animal protagonist allows for a quick connection between the reader and the narrative. Animals in literature are sometimes easier to relate to than a human character because they are not strictly representing a certain kind of person. In an animal, a reader can project many aspects of themselves without the barrier of appearance, gender, or other demographic features. Because I wanted my fairy tale to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, it seemed fitting to make the protagonist as general as possible.

Considering a lamb protagonist still, drawing from the Lost Sheep parable but also countless other Bible passages, I provided for my prodigal lamb a Good Shepherd character. The shepherd finds the lamb when he is at his lowest point, living in the pig pen and waiting for his demise. The shepherd speaks to the prodigal and asks him what he is doing there, and ultimately he is able to remind the lamb of his father's kingdom and lead him to freedom. This shepherd represents Jesus Christ, as "Good Shepherd" was a title He called Himself. In John, chapter ten, Jesus says, "'I am the good shepherd,'" and "'The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out'"

(John 10:11, 2, ESV). By representing Jesus Himself within my fairy tale, my desire is to further ingrain the truth of the gospel into my story.

Not only did I intend to depict Jesus in "The Lost-and-Found Prince," but also the Holy Spirit and God the Father. The prodigal is helped by a white dove, which is a symbol that has been used to illustrate the Holy Spirit for centuries. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter three, it says that "when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him" (Matthew 3:16, ESV). This connection between doves and the Holy Spirit is a biblical one; therefore, it was reasonable to utilize this symbol in my tale.

Then, God the Father is found in my depiction of the prodigal's father, the king, as I intend for my fairy tale to hold to the commonly accepted exegesis of Jesus' narrative, as previously discussed: the ready-and-waiting father, ecstatic to receive his lost son home, represents the Heavenly Father Himself.

Additionally, my portrayals of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit intend to depict the real individual roles each figure of the Godhead plays in Christianity. God the Father, in my fairy tale the king, rules a perfect kingdom, deeply loves his children, and is overjoyed at their return to him. The Holy Spirit, illustrated by the white dove, guides the lost prince, helps him, and shows up when he is in need. Jesus the Son, or the shepherd, seeks out the prodigal, calls to him and reminds him of his home, and then leads him out of bondage and into freedom. In my fairy tale, too, the shepherd and the dove are canonically the same character in different forms, like in Christianity. While it would have been more theologically accurate to include the king in the same personhood as the

shepherd and the dove, unfortunately there was no elegant way to portray that in my fairy tale.

Previously, I mentioned that the second trial my prodigal faces does not originate from the Grimm brothers' canon. Instead, it draws from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew, chapter seven, He speaks of a wide gate and a narrow gate—in some translations (New International Version, New Living Translation, etc.) a wide and narrow path or road: "'Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few'" (Matthew 7:13–14, ESV). Pulling from this passage, my prodigal is faced with a wide, easy path and a narrow, difficult one. He is told by the dove to take the difficult path as it will lead him out of the forest (read: "to life"), but he goes against those instructions and takes the easy path. This decision ultimately puts him in the company of highway robbers, who attack him—in other words, the easy path led to destruction.

What was also interesting about the second trial was my readers' reactions to it. More than one person told me they were expecting a "Good Samaritan" to appear and help the prodigal after he had been attacked. This makes perfect sense, as there are parallels to that parable as well: a traveler is attacked by robbers, they steal his clothes, and he is left half dead on the side of the road (Luke 10:30, ESV). However, that is where my fairy tale deviates, as there is no "Good Samaritan" to rescue my prodigal. Unfortunately, this was not a conscious choice. It would have added another layer of depth to my fairy tale if I had included further allusions to this parable of Jesus as well, but I simply did not think of it until after my readers mentioned it. However, this

omission does not detract from the fairy tale significantly, as only readers familiar with the Parable of the Good Samaritan could be expecting it, and the story still makes sense without it.

A further intentional biblical allusion and reference to Christianity lies within the princess's curse and the way it is broken. The princess and the kingdom in which she lives has been placed under a curse where every inhabitant is "sleeping as though dead." All throughout the New Testament are references to people being not dead but only sleeping. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14, ESV). A tenet of the Christian faith is that believers who have died will be raised to life again at Jesus' return to Earth; therefore, for Christ-followers, the state that the world calls 'dead' is more akin to being asleep. Death is only temporary.

Not only is this a core belief of Christianity, but it is also demonstrated by Jesus Himself in the Gospels, of course through His own death and resurrection, but also through His language surrounding others who had passed on. In John, chapter eleven, we read:

> [Jesus] said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am

glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." (John 11:11–15, ESV)

To Jesus, who can see beyond the bounds of our earthly reality, Lazarus was not dead but only sleeping, even though by the time Jesus had reached him, Lazarus had been buried for four days (John 11:17, ESV). However, Jesus raises Lazarus to life again, illustrating the difference between 'dead' and 'asleep' (John 11:44, ESV). We see this another time, in Matthew, chapter nine (also reported in Mark, chapter five): Jesus said, "'Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose" (Matthew 9:24–25, ESV).

In "The Lost-and-Found Prince," the princess's curse is meant to echo this idea. She is asleep, but it is a sleep like death, meaning she cannot be awoken by normal means, similar to the Christian tradition surrounding the dead. The white dove gives the prodigal the instructions on how to wake her up, and it is fairly straightforward: he must draw back the curtains on the east-facing window to allow the first light of the rising sun to touch the princess. This, too, is an allusion to Jesus, specifically Jesus as Savior. In Luke, chapter one, there is a prophecy describing Jesus: "'because of the tender mercy of our God, … the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death'" (Luke 1:78–79, ESV). Jesus is described as the sunrise, and in some translations, "the rising sun", "the Dayspring", and "the morning light" (New International Version, New King James Version, New Living Translation). The princess is sleeping "in the shadow of death," and the only thing that can save her is

"the morning light." In other words, Jesus comes as the Light to bring the dead to life again.

However, as expected, the prodigal fails at these simple instructions and touches the princess before the sun rises. Instead of being awoken, she turns into a rosebud. This trial, while full of biblical symbolism, is also meant to represent, in an audience-conscious way, a previously discussed common point of "raucous living" often described in other Prodigal Son retellings—prostitution and sexual immorality. Obviously, as previously stated, I could not depict my prodigal partaking in this if I wanted my story to be accessible for a younger audience, but I still wished to nod to it because it is found in so many other Prodigal Son stories throughout the centuries. So, instead, I boiled down the idea of sexual immorality to its core ideas. Of course, there is lust and physical desire, but additionally, perhaps a more childlike understanding is the idea of touching a woman when one is not supposed to (especially when looking at sex from a biblical perspective). Therefore, my prodigal is tasked with self-control. However, his fascination with and attraction to the sleeping princess means he slips up and makes physical contact with her, directly causing her transformation into a flower.

Recalling the Grimms' tale "Sweetheart Roland," readers see a similar transformation take place. However, in this tale, the maiden seems to be in control of her skill, turning herself into a flower to escape her evil stepmother. On the other hand, though, she still is freed from this form through a shepherd's intercession and not through her own ability (Grimm 214). Likewise, the prodigal's princess is eventually freed through eastern sunlight, causing the rosebud to bloom, from which the girl emerges. The rosebud and its blooming are additional allusions to sexuality and, therefore, are whispers

to prostitution. As discussed by Dorja Bogović in "Flowers – symbols of female sexuality in the art," it's generally understood that "for a long time there has been a strong link between flowers and sexuality.… [This] symbolism has existed since ancient times and pervaded history all the way to our times" (Bogović). Robin Bates, in his research specifically about the term 'rosebud', mentions that "in the nineteenth century, rosebud was a word applied almost exclusively to little girls and virginal debutantes" (Bates 5). In the time period during which fairy tales exploded in popularity, rosebuds were symbols of virgin girls and women. In "The Lost-and-Found Prince," this symbol extends to the princess; the prodigal's 'access' to her was restricted when he touched her, and her transformation into a rosebud symbolizes that purity. Then, when the rosebud blooms and she emerges, the prodigal is free to touch her—and indeed, marry her.

One final symbol in this fairy tale is the prodigal's journey from 'humanity' to a more animalistic existence, then back to 'humanity'. Since he isn't human, I use the term 'humanity' here to describe the civilized lifestyle he leads in his father's kingdom. The prodigal wears clothing, uses a currency system, eats at a table, participates in human ceremonies like weddings, and presumably lives a life rather like mine or yours. However, as he continues on his journey, again and again making choices contrary to the instructions of the dove, he slowly but surely loses these aspects of his human-like nature. In the first trial, he loses all his money and liquid wealth. He cannot make purchases or participate in a wider economic system. This is reminiscent of a good deal of our own human history, where those in poverty have long been dehumanized and subject to a long list of horrors. Next, the prodigal is stripped of his clothing, left only with his animal body. Then, he parts with his ring, the final physical connection he had to his father and

his civilized home. Finally, at the furthest point of his degradation into a true animal, he is found on a farm, in a pigsty, alongside other animals.

When viewing this journey in the light of a Christian worldview, one could argue that it also mirrors the state of nonbelievers. Without a connection to God, the giver of humanity and source of all morality, it can be easy to see 'man' as just another animal in nature. Indeed, without objective morality to tell us that human beings have innate value *because* of our humanity, there really is little difference between us and our creature neighbors. However, just as the prodigal is restored to his humanity through the aid of the shepherd, Jesus Christ restores us to our intended perfect nature through His gift of salvation and through a relationship with the Father.

As demonstrated, further depth is added to "The Lost-and-Found Prince" through allusions and references to outside sources of symbolism. Much of the fairy tale's plot, characters, and structure draws from the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the works of the Grimm brothers, yet this tale finds strength through its connections to a wider range of stories, sources, and ideas as well.

5. Illustrations

Like Hallett, Karasek, and countless other enjoyers of fairy tales before me, I found that my fairy tale could be improved with illustrations. Initially, and quite ambitiously, I aimed for thirty illustrations for the story. That many drawings would likely place it firmly in the picture book category. In actuality, I was able to complete nine illustrations for "The Lost-and-Found Prince." Before discussing each illustration

individually, it is important to note my main sources of inspiration for the artwork, as well as my methods of creation.

During my research into fairy tales and their illustrations, I often came across the works of Gustave Doré and Walter Crane. These nineteenth-century illustrators were the two largest sources of inspiration for my own pieces. Doré in particular captured lighting and dramatic scenes exquisitely in his woodcuts. Notably, he captured many biblical scenes alongside his work for fairy tales, including illustrations of the Prodigal Son parable. In his work, he utilized hatching and cross-hatching effectively to create value and layer depth. His illustrations were closer to realism than any other style, with realistic proportions and a high level of detail in the environments as well as the subjects of the artwork.

Crane, on the other hand, was less focused on contrast through value, instead creating interest through fluid color, dynamic figures, and clean and intricate linework. He used hatching and cross-hatching as well, but not nearly as much as Doré; Crane shaded with colors and line weight. His figures were more stylized and felt more romantic, with many of his women sporting long, Roman noses and sharp chins. His illustrations simply looked rich, decadent, and ornamental.

I referenced both artists' works while creating my own. I wanted to use the hatching and cross-hatching they both utilized, the rich colors in Crane's, and the vivid expressions in Doré's. Additionally, though, I drew inspiration from the many modern fairy tale illustrators who work to create original art, and also I leaned into my own style and desires for my illustrations. They were created digitally through the iPad application Procreate, on canvases around 3000 by 2400 pixels in size.

I started illustrating with my character design for the prodigal. Many different iterations of the lamb were drafted before I settled on the one used in the story. This one was chosen because it balanced a stylized representation of the lamb as well as a bit more realism in his general body proportions and level of detail. I created a character turnaround that I could reference to ensure he would be consistently drawn.

Then, I chose which moments from the tale I wanted to capture in illustration. It was important to choose moments of action, or scenes, rather than moments that simply felt like an explanation or quick movement through time. For instance, the scene in which the father and prodigal reunite had action and conversation between the characters, versus the paragraph in which the seven years pass and the prodigal ends up at the farm simply moves through the time with no real scene. Also to consider, again, was my audience. It would likely not be very prudent to portray (at least in this style) the prodigal being attacked by the highway robbers. Instead, I chose to include an illustration of the characters right before the robbers begin heckling the lamb. This way, the scene is illustrated, but no terrible violence is explicitly shown, just as no violence is written out in explicit detail in the text.

The following were the moments I chose to illustrate: the wealthy peddler meeting the prodigal, the prodigal encountering the white dove, the prodigal and the highway robbers meeting, the devil making a deal with the prodigal, the prodigal admiring the sleeping princess, the shepherd finding the prodigal, the shepherd returning the prodigal's ring, the father and son reuniting, and the princess emerging from the rosebud.

The illustrations centered around the trials were done in black and white (really a light tan and dark brown), as well as scenes important enough to be illustrated but perhaps not the most emotional part of a scene. They needed to be included, but they did not need the added emphasis of full color. On the other hand, the moments of high emotional intensity, turning points, or important character introductions were drawn in full color. These are the most critical moments of the story. Something would be missing from these pieces if they were only in black and white, as opposed to scenes that a lack of color would not detract from.

I also wanted to consider moments where an illustration could change or add to the story. Of course, the most unavoidable change is that the prodigal is portrayed as a lamb. As previously discussed, this choice was deliberate from the beginning; however, it is not revealed through the words of the narrative. Instead, it is shown through the illustration. Without the pictures, this heavily symbolic choice would not be apparent, and other connected symbols would lose emphasis, such as a literal shepherd being the one to find and guide the prodigal out of the enchanted forest.

There are also other moments where the drawings alter or expand upon the message of the tale. For instance, in the opening illustration, the peddler is drawn as a wolf, and he is posed in a somewhat predatory way, almost appearing to be stalking. This is not a detail found in the text, but it adds to the interest and layers of meaning in the narrative, as wolves are predators that could—and sometimes do—easily devour lambs. There is an added sense of danger to the opening scene, one that cannot be inferred entirely based upon the words of the fairy tale.

Similarly, most other characters are illustrated as animals: the highway robbers are raccoons, the princess is another lamb, the prodigal's father is a heavy woolly ram, and even the devil has hairy goat's legs and a tail. Only one character is drawn as fully human: the shepherd character, representative of Jesus. By depicting this through the illustrations, it is emphasized that something is special and different about that character. He is not like the other characters in the tale, and that is most clearly shown through contrast in the artworks. (An expansion on this detail: the shepherd does still have an 'animal form', as it is true that he and the dove are the same character. This parallels Jesus' nature as believed in Christianity as both fully God and fully human.)

Finally, these illustrations add to the story simply through the level of detail that can be included. Instead of reading that the peddler showed the prodigal his wares, readers can see in the illustration an example of the items he was offering. In this case, the peddler exhibits an embroidered tunic, decorated with gemstones and golden thread and crafted from a royal purple fabric. Every illustration will fulfil this role to an extent, as it is impossible to share every single detail through text.

Many deliberate choices were made in the creation of each image in order to impart the most information to the readers. It would not be time-conscious to discuss each and every choice, so a discussion of just the most important details of each illustration seemed appropriate.

As mentioned, the first piece is the prodigal encountering the peddler in the valley. In this illustration, and as discussed above, the peddler is a predator looking intently on the young lamb, who seems entirely oblivious to the threat looming before him. I wanted to make it clear that the lamb was in danger, and that the peddler wanted

something from him—more than he initially let on—and also that the prodigal was more enchanted by the peddler's items and stories than he was aware of danger. The tunic the wolf is offering is also deliberately purple, the traditional color of royalty, because I wanted to convey that he was tempting the lamb with power, status, and authority—all things his father the king had and was, by logic, going to give to his son the prince in time. The peddler was just offering it quicker. The wolf in this illustration is inspired by Doré's wolf in his "Little Red Riding Hood" woodblock prints.

Next, the prodigal encounters the white dove in the enchanted forest. In this illustration, I wanted it to be clear that dusk was falling, so the shading is heavier and the forest grows darker and darker behind the lamb. This also creates a more threatening environment. The point of view is low to the ground in this piece, emphasizing the dove as the viewer is on his level instead of the lamb's. The dove is the lightest part of this work in order to draw viewers' eyes to him, and he is also the largest figure. The lightness of the dove contrasts with the darkness of the forest, which emphasizes the goodness of the prodigal's animal helper versus the more frightening or evil nature of the environment around him.

The prodigal then crosses paths with the highway robbers. The raccoons are grouped together, posed as if they're waiting to spring into action, and entirely focused on the lamb as he approaches. The woods are dark behind them, creating a threatening aura, as does the light vignette around the edges of this piece, as if the darkness is closing in on the prodigal. The lamb's eyes are wide in apprehension.

Next, the prodigal faces off with the devil. He is tall, gaunt, and smiling wickedly, displaying his wolf-like teeth. His hand is extended to the prodigal, offering a deal, and in

response, the lamb's own hands are curled in closely to his body. In this piece, I again wanted to emphasize the danger the prodigal was in. I also wanted the connection between the wolf and the devil to be apparent; for this, I gave the devil a similar silhouette as the wolf's, with slightly rounded horns like the wolf's ears, a pointy chin and large nose like the wolf's snout, and tufts of hair in similar shapes as the wolf's fur. Additionally, the devil is standing in a similar pose as the wolf with a hunched back and widely spread legs, as if he was ready to pounce. I also gave both characters the same eyes. Behind him, the negative space between the trees and the bushes creates a dark and jagged line like a bottomless crevasse the prodigal is facing. The lamb's wool along his spine is standing on edge, and the princess's dark tower is visible above the tree line.

Then, readers see the prodigal standing over the princess, his hoof extended toward her sleeping figure. In this illustration, I mostly wanted to create around the princess an allure through her satiny wool, long eyelashes, and delicate features. She needed to look like a fairy tale princess for this moment of the story to feel authentically Grimm-esque. Additionally, by contrasting her softness and darker color with the prodigal's shorter wool and sharper features, she feels much more feminine and magical than he does. I wanted to create a character who looked like she could transform into a rosebud. I placed them in a darker environment that felt more intimate than other scenes between two characters.

Then, we jump ahead to the scene where the shepherd finds the prodigal in the pigsty. In this full-color illustration, the shepherd stands with one hand on his hip and the other on his shepherding crook, his back to the viewer and his attention on the lamb seated on the haybale. The prodigal looks older, thinner, and downcast, sporting newly

grown horns and closed eyes. Around him, freckled pink pigs roam, and all the animals are enclosed by a wooden fence. In this illustration, I wanted to use lighting and composition to reveal more details about the shepherd. The lamb and the shepherd are the brightest figures in this piece, both mostly colored a light cream. However, the very brightest part of this illustration is found in the trees behind the shepherd. The leaves create a halo around his head, and this solidifies his divine nature, as does the purple sash he wears with his tunic, which signifies his royalty as a member of the Trinity. His face is not visible, creating mystery around him, a mystery only heightened by the emphasis placed on him. The shading is darker, like the other illustrations that take place in the enchanted woods.

Following this moment is the scene in which the shepherd returns the lamb's ring. This piece has high contrast in its values, with extremely dark darks broken by bright whites. I wanted to emphasize the hope found in the remembrance of the prodigal's home, so I depicted the ring as shining brightly into the darkness that shrouds the lamb in his despair. Also, by placing the ring in the center of the shepherd's palm, it is reminiscent of the holes in Jesus' palms from His crucifixion—His ultimate act of sacrifice that enabled the salvation of humanity.

Next, the prodigal is reunited with his father. In this illustration, the king is racing to meet his son, arms thrown wide and tears of joy in his eyes. The prodigal is also running, though it doesn't seem as quickly, and his arms are open but drooping slightly, much like a tired or distraught child seeking comfort in the arms of their parent. My focus for this picture was the emotion in the scene, so special attention was given to the characters' body language and facial expressions. Additionally, I wished to convey the

prodigal's true escape from the darkness of the enchanted forest and his emergence into the light of his father's kingdom. In order to do this, I surrounded the prodigal with greenery like the bushes and trees found in other illustrations of the forest, but his back is to them and his direction of motion is away from them and to the openness of the valley. Also, the light is shining from behind the king in the valley kingdom, so the prodigal is running from the darkness to the light when he runs from the forest and into his waiting father's arms. I made the king's clothing a dark, rich purple, specifically with the peddler's tunic in mind. Through this, I wanted to show the authentic royalty of the king by clothing him in a truer purple than the purple the peddler was offering, which is redder and lighter in comparison.

Finally, all is restored in the final illustration where the prodigal is shown helping the princess out of the blooming rosebud. For this piece, I wanted a traditional fairy tale's happy ending to be apparent, so both characters are smiling and appear enchanted with one another. The colors are vibrant, and the room and characters are elegantly detailed. For what felt like proper fairy tale ending, I decided that the princess needed a beautiful gown, so her dress is made from rose petals and its soft pink color underlines her femininity. The prodigal's clothing is also the most decadent we have seen him wear, with a purple cloak trimmed with white fur and an embroidered long sleeve shirt. The shirt he wears is a similar color to the vest in the first illustration, reminding readers of the restoration he has undergone. His purple cloak reveals how his father has rewarded him upon his return (although it still is not as rich and dark a purple as the king's cape). The prodigal also wears golden rings on his horns, which are embedded with gems that match the ones on the princess's dress. The light is emanating from the large window

behind the princess, and in the window's detailing is the shape of a shining sun to highlight the importance of the sunrise in freeing the princess from the curse.

Each illustration effectively adds to and converses with the narrative. They speak back and forth to one another, adding and confirming details and packing in symbols heightened by the accompanying illustrations. Through deliberate choices of framing, perspective, color, body language, and lighting, I have created a vital accompaniment to my narrative, one that equips readers with information essential to understanding the heart of my fairy tale.

Conclusion

Jack says of parables that "they are read for what they can reveal about truths beyond themselves" (Jack 16). I would extend that note to fairy tales as well, as both story-telling modes can be (and often are meant to be) drawn out of the fictional world in which they reside and applied to the real lives of the readers or listeners. Both instruct, warn, entertain, and guide their audiences. For "The Lost-and-Found Prince," my hope is that it, too, can reach that mark of being read for what lies beyond it. While I find value and purpose in storytelling for storytelling's sake, my conviction is that the true worth of a tale is found in its reflection of something greater than itself.

This takes many forms: stories like *The Hunger Games* or *The Handmaid's Tale* point to systems of power found in our real world, and they can be inspirational in fighting against injustice, human rights violations, and corrupt forces. The worlds that stories like these build extend beyond the bounds of their pages and into real-world belief systems. Narratives like *Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* also draw attention to something greater than the tales between their covers. They draw attention to the hope found in the Christian faith: the hope that there is a boundless source of courage and love available to those who seek it out, and that good will ultimately triumph over evil. At the heart of the Christian tradition is the happiest ending of them all.

Fairy tales, too, require a happy ending. Tolkien calls the turning point from despair to hope often found in fairy tales and works of fantasy the "Eucatastrophe" (Tolkien 33). Of the Eucatastrophe, he says, "It is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind" (Tolkien 34). Indeed, he argues that all happy endings, especially those in fantasy works, point back to humanity's own Eucatastrophe:

> The Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories. They contain many marvels—peculiarly artistic, beautiful, and moving: "mythical" in their perfect, self-contained significance; and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable Eucatastrophe. But this story has entered History and the primary world …. The Birth of Christ is the Eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the Eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy. (Tolkien 35)

The story of God redeeming His creation through the ultimate act of loving sacrifice reads like a fairy tale in every regard (and its detractors have often accused it of being just that), except that millions hold it to be true, and there is much historical and scientific proof that argues in favor of its verity. Fairy tales and the Christian faith have much in common—probably because the former often reflects the latter like a mirror reflects sunlight. Something about the gospel story nests into the hearts of people, and often it seems we were just *born* with an inclination to be drawn to its happy ending. We long to see it echoed in the endings of our favorite stories; perhaps many stories are our favorites *because* of their happy endings. It feels like instinct that the wicked witch or oppressive king should be defeated, that the great source of evil be driven back and vanquished, that light and joy and freedom should be restored to the people of the land, and that goodness should prevail. This does not seem taught or learned: it seems written into our deepest desires before we knew them ourselves.

"The Lost-and-Found Prince" was cultivated to echo the ultimate happy ending of the Christian doctrine. Its seed is the Parable of the Prodigal Son, one of Jesus' most

profoundly hopeful stories, and it has been grown in the rich soil of the literary fairy tale form. My hope is that its flowers possess even a glimpse of the beauty of God's Kingdom, and my prayer is that its fruit offers a taste of the love freely available to all. So, I paraphrase Tolkien when I say that God is King, of angels, of men—and of fairies.

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