

Fairytale Journal
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The Sister, The Artist, The Princess

My sister's room. Pretty as can be. Fit for a princess. Swathed in the frilliness of all the comforters and throw pillows a young girl of eleven could ever want. Illuminated by fairy lights, (Tinkerbell, is that you?) dangling from the walls and curtains of a baby pink, coordinating terrifically with salmon walls and rose gold accessories and shiny stationary. A canvas print of a Parisian view of the Eiffel Tower hangs tastefully on a wall of best fit. A cutesy lightbox (like the ones you'd see in coffee shops), tells me to "Live, Laugh, Love", as if all the inherent problems plaguing our world today could just dissipate at the blink of an eye -- or, in this case, at the blink of a light. Every little thing, always to be put back into its rightful place, never to be abandoned by their lovely little lady of an owner, all coming to her aid in her time of need and artistry, as if they are something more than inanimate. For instance, she has a little rose-gold stapler and tape dispenser, which may as well squeak "Pick me!" when the little girl, my sister, "arts and crafts" her way through childhood. Her room is plastered with cartoonish drawings of sweets, pastries, and candies -- imbuing them with more life with every stroke of her neon gel pens as part of her extensive collection, with each pen retaining its own sort of personality and aura depending on its color. This imaginative pursuit of hers is deeply reminiscent of a belief in animism, and my attribution of it to stories like Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, and Snow White, in which certain animals or objects function to aid the princess protagonist in her endeavors -- comforting the child, restoring a faith in magical thinking and the beauty of symbolism. Perhaps my sister is a princess too, for her tools are those with which she hones her craft and breathes life into -- a deeply visceral experience, one that these princesses are familiar and in-tune with.



Celestial Dress

I am in the possession of a celestial dress. Yes, I'll admit it. Only few are aware of this, but it is definitely a perfectly-fitted, wearable constellation. Or maybe it is a macroscopic view of the universe instead, with every star and other assorted objects of light seeming infinitesimally small. Don't believe me? I bought it at a magical store, and at an other-worldly price! Nordstrom Rack, 1 cent. I don't know what happened, but the cashier said that I was lucky -- and indeed, I felt lucky that day, as if the stars were aligned in my favor to produce this exact outcome. Which is highly improbable, but I do not believe that a childlike obsession with magic ever truly leaves a person -- it is only buried by the mundanities of everyday adult life. Nevertheless, the thought of clinging to some kind of preordained destiny is comforting to some -- for my Piscean self at least, my choice of delusion is astrology. The alignment of the stars to produce the zodiac and the Jovian (gaseous) planets are of most interest to me. I feel like All-Fur, especially now, having read the tale -- with the lovely and fleeting celestially of her dresses and spirit, solidifying her

ambiguous destiny as a cunning wife or, more disturbingly, a daughter. But the motif of preordained destiny seems to be relevant to fairytales with magical, symbolic objects, ranging from talking mirrors in Snow White to a rose encased in glass in Beauty and the Beast -- but such objects are not to be hailed as providers of information in their literal form. We all cling to something, according to fairytales and the human psyche -- be it the dictation of a tenet or the perfect alignment of the stars.



Micro-analysis of *Crime and Punishment* Through Families in Fairytales

Upon reading Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment", I was struck by a rather formulaic instance of character development between Alyona Ivanovna -- the half-sister of Lizaveta Ivanovna -- a nasty, conniving, and parasitic old woman who mistreats Lizaveta and others -- and the latter, who is "idiotic" yet fair, with beautiful eyes and a sweet smile, tall, younger, vulnerable and completely without agency under her sister's control. I see a pattern here, alluding to the classical submissiveness of Cinderella, where her good-naturedness too matched her appearance, enough to slave over her sisters and allow them to stay in her castle once she is wed, paralleling the dutiful and chaste Lizaveta. Their labors are both exploited, as Lizaveta does Alyona's bidding. I see it again with One-Eyes, Two-Eyes, and Three-Eyes and The Magic Orange Tree, where the abuse of young girls by family members because of their

appearance or vulnerability is classically showcased. In the Magic Orange Tree, the stepmother leeches off of the fruits (literally) of the girl's labor, and in One-Eyes, Two-Eyes is taken advantage of by her power-concerned sisters, who seek to undermine Two-Eyes' beauty because they cannot cope with their own disfiguration. I trace this back to Alyona's relationship with Lizaveta, given that most abusers hold something over the abused, because of what they lack. Because the point of Crime and Punishment isn't to perpetuate the dysfunctional family dynamism of some tales, Raskolnikov had killed the gentle and submissive Lizaveta indiscriminately, selfishly, and completely contrastingly to his morality and utilitarian values, with the sharp edge of an ax. Such fairytales and Crime and Punishment fundamentally differ in that justice is not served for the vulnerable -- there is no justice in the cold-blooded murder of Lizaveta, which makes Crime and Punishment all the more wretched, mature, and grounded in reality. Classic literature may not scream "modernity", but Dostoyevsky's ideas and works are remarkably still recited in universities and elsewhere -- and much like how classic literature is revered in the modern world, with literature, archetypal fairytale elements follow -- and this is precisely where fairytales maintain their perennial influence.

Lyricism as Fairytale: A Modern, Marina Take

I have been listening to alternative popstar Marina Diamandis since middle school, when her song "Primadonna Girl" by Marina and the Diamonds (her former stage name) launched her absolute stardom with sonically eclectic blends of electropop, indie pop, and new wave melodies and lyricism that appealed to a demographic of sad, introspective, and defiant teenage girls. If I were to summarize her lyricism, I would say that is emblematic of the thinking of every teenage "princess" in her movement towards nonconformity and self-actualization. Her lyricism in songs like "Primadonna Girl" and "Sex Yeah" simultaneously mimics snobby, princess-like,

primadonna behaviors -- “Primadonna Girl, yeah, all I ever wanted was the world / You say that I’m kinda difficult, but it’s always someone else’s fault” while scrutinizing gender roles and society’s strict enforcement of them in female sexuality in “Sex Yeah” -- “If history could set you free (from who you were supposed to be) / If sex in our society (didn't tell a girl who she would be) / 'Cause all my life I've tried to fight what history has given me.” The damsel-in-distress stereotype is often challenged in her music and fairytales, given that feminist lenses of thought could be applied to both. But one song and tale that deal with this theme stick out to me -- Marina’s “Hermit the Frog” and the Grimms’ “Frog King, and Iron Heimlich”. “Hermit the Frog” deals with partnership -- partnership that is wrought with abuse, nastiness, and remorse -- “They call him Hermit the Frog / He's looking for a dog / Did you find your bitch in me?” Eerily enough, this parallels the character of the narcissistic, demanding and crude frog -- who expects the princess to give in to his every wish, sealing his transformation with a kiss -- a request that she rejects by throwing the frog against the wall, disposing of all lady-manners and niceties. Moreover, Marina’s coded lyrics can be interpreted to imply the losing of virginity to the wrong person or the breaking of a heart -- “When my heart just burst like a glass balloon / I let it fly too high and it shattered too soon.” The little princess too undergoes a less-devastating rite of passage upon losing her golden ball in the river, symbolizing the transcendence of childhood innocence. Marina seems to effectively bridge the gap between feminist badassery and princessdom, and her lyrics and the tale both contain lessons for young girls in their interactions with entitled men -- alluding to the proto-feminist undercurrent of music/fairytales in their moral takeaways.

