



The Story of Mistress Make Believe

Fashion & Fairytale Competition

Primary Teaching Resource

fashionandfairytale@gmail.com

Background

Children's author and Fashion and Fairytale creator, Cindy Beadman, has provided this story as an optional supporting resource to be read to primary aged children seeking to submit entries to the Fashion and Fairytale design competition.

The competition will run alongside a retrospective exhibition of Cindy's iconic ballgowns at the Assembly Rooms in August 2020.

The story can be used as a source of inspiration, alongside any outdoor explorations. Mistress Make Believe's fairy gown is also available to view for free at the Bath Fashion Museum. If you would like to arrange a visit, please get in touch.

The Story

Once upon a time across the island mist of our forgotten past, when mermaids still sat on rocks gazing out to sea, and pixies and elves and faeries still played their mischievous games out in the hedgerows and fields, there lived a very magical lady known as Mistress Make-Believe.

Folk said she might even be part fairy herself because she could speak to them in their own language. Just imagine that! So, whenever she was roaming in the woods and fields and felt a little hungry, all she had to do was ask them where the wild strawberries or beech nuts grew. Of course, some of the goblins and brownies were not always that helpful, but that was because they didn't like humans spoiling their natural habitat.

Now I know some you might not believe in these little creatures, but thanks to a young boy who was playing truant from school one day with his camera and butterfly net, we actually have some photographs of her special fairy friends to show you.

One of her favourites was the glamorous golden fairy she called Sulky Sunbeam. That was because the naughty creature refused to get out of bed unless the sun was shining. I'm sure we all know what that feels like. Even so some say it was Sunny who showed her where to find her lucky six-leaved clover.

Show video under Design Competition page of Fashion and Fairytale website: 8 nature creatures made from woodland debris. Grandfather Gringle-Wood, Wanda Faraway, Woody Woeful, ending on Sulky Sunny.

Others said she made wishes and dreams come true just by truly believing them. Of course, it's a well-known fact that she also had a huge imagination, and as we all know, a dream can't possibly come true unless it has first been imagined.

The again the Fisher folk claimed they'd spotted her swimming with her mermaids and mermen, an according to them, it's the mer-people who guard all the secret knowledge. It was rumoured that she even

spent her holidays with them in a glittering grotto on the ocean bed and would you believe it, only a few weeks ago, a deep-sea diver who was searching for shipwrecks off the westerly isles, discovered the very grotto. He even managed to take a short film of it for you to see.

Show video of the Secret Grotto on our website under Design Competition.

So, there you are children, Mistress Make-Believe had so many grand adventures and travelled to such mysterious places that some folk said she was as old as the original forests. Some said she might even be as old as the very stars themselves. In fact, those who were lucky enough to catch sight of her, say her eyes did indeed sparkled like stars, especially when she told her wondrous tales of how she rode the four great winds all around the universe and back.

Nevertheless, she always said her favourite place in the whole world was the countryside – probably because that was where it was said she grew up. It was also where the nature creatures showed her the long-lost art of weaving stories and fairy tales into our daydreams and oh what stories they were. Oh how the little ones used to listen wide-eyed as they gathered at her knee. In fact, it was rumours that she had hundreds and thousands of them tucked away in the pockets of the big hooped gown she wore, just waiting for some curious child to reach into and discover for themselves. Oh, what fun they would have had, for some stories only had one word, yet others had so many they could never be counted, and some were made into puzzles and little edible fairy cakes. Others were written with magical numbers and symbols and invisible ink.

Show image of exhibition fairy tale ballgown above – available to visit at the Fashion Museum.

The thing is you see, Mistress Make-Believe, had such a huge imagination, and she so loved children and woods and flowers and meadows, with all its little magical beings and nature folk, even the naughty ones, that she's probably still out there somewhere dreaming up her stories and fairy tales all the way to eternity and back.

Sadly, however, no one has actually seen her since that fateful morning in 1927 when the famous day-star, 'Odin's Eye' passed over. In fact, country people thereabouts are adamant that she went away with it on another of her grand star-light adventures. Because that very same morning, Old Harry the game-keeper, came across her very gown hanging on his favourite beech tree. I expect it was just too awkward for space travel don't you?

The trouble is, when the local dignitaries searched the pockets of the gown all they found was some stale cake crumbs, a few odd-looking instruments and this strange little rhyme.

*In the deepest countryside,
Where fairy beings love to hide,
Their magic spells they sit and weave,
Whilst children dream of make-believe.*

I think she wanted to remind us about all those little nature creatures out there don't you? After all, they work so hard weaving their magic spells, just so that all your wishes and dreams can come true.

So, you see children, it's up to you to go out into the countryside and encourage them. I'm sure if enough of you wrote a magical fairy story, or drew a little nature creature, or even made one from bits of tree bark or leaves or flowers, who knows Mistress Make-Believe might even come back one day from her star light travels and tell us more of her magical tales. One thing's for sure, it would make her really happy to know that you all cared for nature as much as she did.