

## Episode 3 Part 2- Fairytales Continued

*[A delightful sound of choir leading into plucked guitar and different voices introducing the show, with guitar continuing underneath]*

**Woman's voice:** Ah everyone, you are listening to Gather

**Child's voice:** You're listening to Gather

**Woman's voice with dog bark in background:** To Gather

**Woman's voice with American accent:** Gather

*[Same guitar doing a sweet little riff with the faint sound of pencil scribbling beneath. Sound of guitar continues beneath the host's introduction]*

**Amy Tsilemanis (Gather host, *smooth and calming*):** This is Amy Tsilemanis and this is Gather, with Minerva's Books and Ideas, where we'll explore the lives of books and the ideas they ignite and illuminate.

*(sound of children singing plays)*

**Woman's voice (host Amy Tsilemanis):** Hello it's Amy here and welcome to Episode 3 Part 2: Fairytales Continued. In Part 1, we explored the way that different kinds of stories and art are used to transfer knowledge and also question narratives and look at what we want to keep and change going forward into the future.

This inspired the idea of a kids writing competition themed Change the Story, Change the World and we'll hear some of the entries, read by their talented writers later in the show for our creative segment Things Found in Books, or in this case, things reworked or reimagined from books. They're heaps of fun. As part of this we will also hear a specially created song by local father-daughter duo Tom and Freya McGowan.

*(A short audio snippet of a song plays by Tom and Freya McGowan)*

**Amy:** And throughout the episode we'll hear some of Tom's beautiful soundscapes under his moniker Button Jar Canyon. Thanks Tom.

Our guests are Sarah Hart, who you met at the end of part 1 and heard one of her fairytale inspired poems.

*(A short audio snippet of Sarah reading her poem plays)*

**Amy:** Ellen Sorensen who will talk about her creative work and read us a tale by local artist Deborah Klein.

*(A short audio snippet of Ellen Sorensen speaking plays)*

**Amy:** ...and Lucy Taylor a 6 year old heroine who showed me around the local Fairy Park...

*(A short audio clip of ambient sounds from the Fairy Park plays along with Lucy and Amy speaking briefly)*

**Amy narration:** Our book seeds this episode are by Australian writers that tell stories that range from 17<sup>th</sup> century France through to the 2000s in Ballarat. Melissa Ashley's *The Bee and the Orange Tree* is a work of historic fiction about Marie Catherine D'Aulnoy, described as 'the untold story of the woman who invented fairy tales'.

Ashley has said in an interview that Marie Catherine's fairy tales time and again, offered templates, if you will, archetypes of female heroines who were resourceful, crafty, cunning, kind, and intelligent, using all of their wiles and ways to adjust to and perhaps even subvert, a future in which at least materially, they had very little control. Marie Catherine's heroines, through the arts of conversation and connection – very modern ideas I think – managed to find ways to cope with the constraints in their lives. They did this by forming meaningful relationships with significant people, kindred spirits perhaps. At heart, this is what Marie Catherine's fairy tales were about, agency and being able to choose who you lived with and hung out with, who you loved, surely the most fundamental choice we ever make.

And the second book, Ballarat based artist Deborah Klein's *There was Once... The collected Fairy tales* (accompanied by her beautiful art prints) described as contemporary takes on traditional fairy tales, although like all the stories in the collection, they also draw from extensive personal mythology.

Our indie shout out this episode is the gorgeous Playing in the Attic, a magical shop in Ballarat where you can pick up a copy of *There Was Once...* along with beautiful notebooks, cards, toys and art all lovingly curated by Trudy McCloughlan.

And so, here we'll consider women using different forms of storytelling, like fairy tales, music, tapestries to voice and critique their experiences, as a way of taking control, or making meaning of their lives through art and narratives. Or bringing new perspectives through the retelling of old tales, with themes of empowerment and transformation.

Gather round make sure you're comfy, maybe with a cup of tea, or a wine, and enjoy these chats, tunes and tales.

**Woman's voice (host Amy Tsilemanis):** So my lovely guest Lucy here. Can you tell me your name and your age?

**Child's voice (Lucy Taylor):** My name is Lucy and I'm six.

**Amy:** And you were telling me about one of your favourite books.

**Lucy:** The Magic Faraway Tree. There are kids and they want to find a magic tree and inside the magic tree is the whole fairy land.

*(Sound of guitar strums and then Lucy reads from the book)*

*One day mother said that since she had to be out for the whole day she would prefer if the children asked the old saucepan man to come and stay with them and bring any other two friends they had made. 'Good' said Joe, 'who will ask Moon Face and Silky?' Beth wrote a note and gave it to the little white goat to take to Moon Face.*

**Amy:** And what do you think of when you think of fairies?

**Lucy:** I think of magic and light bright colours, like purple and pink and sparkly colours.

**Woman's voice (Abbie, Lucy's mum):** What about when we get those flowers and you blow them and all the fairies come out.

**Lucy:** Oh yeah. There's all different types of fairies and they're all look different. Or some of them look the same. They usually fly around and look for food to eat and for their families.

**Abbie:** There's a pretty famous fairy. Can you think of the famous fairy?

**Lucy:** The tooth fairy.

**Amy:** Yeah. There are lots of fairies you don't think of like that that have all sorts of jobs to do. And yeah do you have a favourite fairytale or something that comes to mind when you think of fairytales?

**Abbie:** Oh yeah. We were talking about Frozen weren't we?

**Lucy speaks:** Yes it's like kind of, there's no fairies, it's kind of like a cross between a fairy tale and not a fairy tale.

**Amy:** There's something about magic isn't there? When there's magical elements.

**Lucy speaks:** Yeah.

**Amy:** If you wrote your own fairytale, what do you think it would be about?

**Lucy:** I think it will be about Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White and her sisters and then they split a pot in the middle and then they... know the thing not a sister isn't that fun. So then they came sisters again. After they be sisters they will do everything together because they don't really want to split up again.

**Amy:** All right, well should we get on our adventure. Where are we off to?

**Lucy:** The fairy park!

**Amy:** What do you think we will see?

**Lucy:** Unicorns and fairies and maybe tiny caterpillars.

**Amy):** ooh I hope so. *(laughs)* Thanks so much for being my guest Lucy.

**Lucy speaks:** OK bye!

*(guitar strums and then we hear ambient sounds from the Fairy Park.)*

**Amy narration:** And thus, we bring you the bizarre yet charming Fairy Park, an amusement park atop a hill in the regional Victorian locale of Anakie. I am told it's the same as when visited in the 1980s complete with talking dioramas. I had to see and hear it for myself.

*(ambient audio sounds from the Fairy Park play and snippets of conversation between Amy and Lucy (and little sister Grace))*

**Lucy:** The green ones and some of the purple and blue ones are like swooping up and then the other ones are just curvey. Gracie what do you think?

**Grace:** There's lots of mushrooms

**Lucy:** Yeah there is. Let's keep going. Woah look at the magic tree. Do you think it's big Gracie?

**Amy narration:** Magic trees and mushrooms and wishes come true, there's a fascinating lightness but also darkness to the world of fairies and fairy tales... as the Australian Fairy tale society put it...

*Fairy tales can include magic, supernatural creatures, metamorphosis, happy endings, true love, superstitions, swordfights, cross-dressing, and even morals, but there are no rules and no definitive claims on authenticity. A tale can be simple and spare, generating uncomplicated archetypes like a king or princess, or a tale can be complex and sophisticated, filled with a myriad of well developed characters. There are many kinds of fairy tale.*

Here we hear about how they have influenced Ballarat artist and musician Ellen Sorensen...

**Woman's voice (Ellen Sorensen):** My name is Ellen Sorenson. My creative practice is multifaceted. I'd say that I'm a storyteller first and foremost. I write a lot of songs. I sing and play piano under the name Shadow Feet and I also have a practice and paper cutting illustration. So I make very miniature light boxes out of paper that are multi layered and often have multi layered stories to them.

**Amy:** So this episode is all about fairy tales, which I know are dear to your heart.

**Ellen:** Very much.

**Amy:** Can you talk a bit about why you love fairy tales and how they've influenced your work?

**Ellen:** I think... like it probably came from my mom when I was little. My sister a little bit too. My mum always indulged my love of fairies when I was quite young. I remember making Tupperware pools of like fairy statues like porcelain figures and like little egg cups of chocolate chips in hundreds and thousands. And then putting them on the kitchen table and coming in to check them in the morning and the 'fairies' (quote) had written me tiny, tiny letters and said how much the baby fairies had loved splashing in my pools of water. And then the chocolate chips all over the table because they were messy and sorry about that in the letter. So I think yeah there's definitely, that's definitely been something that was sown early on. But I think maybe as I have grown up and I going to art school was definitely the jumping off point for that and living with two musicians and learning to write songs and playing music publicly it was definitely the jumping board for sort of weaving those into my practice.

**Amy:** Are there any particular artworks or songs you want to talk about that sort of use the fairy tale imagery and inspiration?

**Ellen:** Yeah I think probably the obvious one is the Woodcutter's Children and that was one of my first finished sort of paper cups that I made when I was at art school and that came from writing a subconscious streaming story about my identity in my family. But in the context of a fairy tale and I took a frame of that and made that into my first finished paper cut.

Storytelling was and is just a way to have a happy power or agency of your own world. Paper cutting for me has been about creating my own stories and maybe creating them quietly in ways that help me to process my own experience. I think storytelling is really important for that.

There's definitely a few songs of mine that talk about voyaging and often alone. I think a lot of the characters that I think about and my songs with Shadow Feet are solitary and seem to be sort of going on their own path.

*(A short audio snippet of Ellen singing with her band Shadow Feet plays.)*

**Amy narration:** So, from the time of Marie Catherine women have used fairy tales, with their associated magic and transformation to explore themes and experiences otherwise difficult or forbidden to speak of. Today they are a rich source for retelling, as Sarah Hart has described as both a mirror and a challenge to the ways we live, or might choose to live.

We're about to hear Ellen read Deborah Klein's 'The Moth and the Butterflies', which Klein says contains autobiographical elements and is loosely based on other human beings whose lives have touched hers in either positive or negative ways. She says 'Fairy tales can help us to make sense of our lives and in retrospect, I think some of my stories were an attempt to make sense of mine. Beyond this, I hope I've captured something that is also universal to the lives of others.'

Here's Ellen...

**Ellen:** I liked idea of... I won't give any spoilers but the moth and the story sort of follows her own... has her own value system and she's undeterred by what other

people are doing. I think.. it sort of ends badly for everybody else but she sort of sticks to her guns and kind of comes out on the upper I think I liked that.

*(gentle guitar music plays beneath Ellen's reading by Tom McGowan)*

### *The Moth and the Butterflies.*

There was once a poor orphaned moth who is forced to fend for herself and the great big world. She eventually found herself a job as a governess to twelve young butterflies who lived in the magnificent garden of a great mansion. The butterflies were all very clever and charming, unfortunately they were also selfish vain and flighty. But the governess put this down to their youth and an experience, although she could not help but notice that the parents were little better. The moth was genuinely fond of her charges and believed that they felt the same way about her. Like most moths she was a creature of the night but in the shade of sheltering trees in her employees garden, she was able to thrive even by day. She had been taught the values of hard work, kindness, loyalty and respect for her fellow insects. And tried to impart this to the butterflies. They hung on her every word to her face but as soon as her back was turned they not only mocked her wise advice, they sneered at her brown and gray colouring, which seems so drab and dreary compared to the glorious colours and lace like patterns of their own wings. They constantly neglected their lessons. It was much more fun to play in the sun.

They knew full well how its rays showed off the dazzling hues to truly wondrous effect and cared little for the danger in which their full hearty behaviour sometimes placed them.

It is not easy to be criticized no matter how constructive it might be and the butterflies found it increasingly more difficult to hide their contempt for her. It was easier than facing the truth about themselves. But the moth loved them and was still blinded by their beauty and pretty words, much as she would have been by a candle flame.

One day she came to take her class and found the classroom empty, she could hear the sound of distant laughter and it did not take long to discover its source. Her students were flitting and fluttering shamelessly in the sunshine. She called to them in vain, they only replied that they found her sad and boring, they had no intention of resuming their lessons, ever. She lost her patience with them for the very first time and angrily ordered them back to class or she would have to come and get them. The clear and unforgiving sunlight really did show them in their true colours which now seemed merely loud and garish.

They told her to remember her station and reminded her that she was a night flyer, so she would never be capable of carrying out her threat. Like everything she had ever told them, they said, her words were meaningless and empty she felt hurt and betrayed but she still loved her charges and believed that she could help them to be better insects. She went to their parents and told them what happened. Their father and mother professed sympathy but they were too like their own spoiled brood to take the moth seriously. The moth had lived a very sheltered life, she had never had the chance to explore her own dark world before having to make her way in life in whichever way she could. Although she had been told repeatedly that it was vastly inferior to this one, she had also been brought up to believe that she could only exist in the world of sunlight if she remained in the shadows. Now she was an outcast in both worlds and felt a fool for ever thinking she could fit into the glamorous sundrenched world of the butterflies. Penniless as she was she still had her pride,

she gave the butterfly's parents her notice. They begged her to stay and promise things would change but she realized that they never would while their parents continue to indulge them and never chastise or criticise them for their selfish and hurtful behaviour towards others. Let alone the danger in which they foolishly placed themselves.

She set off in daylight curious to see what would happen. Would she shrivel up and die in the sun's hot rays? The sun rays were too bright for her to navigate her way and in no time at all she was lost and more alone than ever. But apart from a slight headache she was still healthy and alive. She decided to stop and take a nap high up in the cool fragrant leaves of a eucalyptus tree. When she awoke it was night. Yet it wasn't really dark.

Down below and all around her was a wondrous world of birds, animals, insects and night blooming flowers, all lit by the silver light of a full moon. And her own brown and gray wings were every bit as shiny, silvery and magnificent as the moon herself. To her amazement she realised that when she had lost her way in the sun's bright clear she hadn't really travelled very far at all.

She hadn't even left the garden of the great house. The world she sought, her own world, was there all along. She only had to know where and when to look. She was home at last.

The moth was very happy in her new home and in time came to forgive and even feel sorry for the family of butterflies. She realised that their good looks would just get them so far in life before their self absorption and arrogance brought them to grief. One night she was flying by the great house. It was in darkness apart from a single lamp shining through an open window.

Like all moths she could not resist lamplight and she flew silently in. Keeping to the shadows she made her way slowly until she became accustomed to the gloom.

With a sudden shock she realised she was not alone in the room. The figure of a human being, a young man was hunched over a mahogany desk and was peering at something on the desktop through a huge magnifying glass. She flew still closer until she hovered over him. He was so immersed in his task he was not at all disturbed by the beating of her wings

What she saw was so terrible and heartbreaking, she momentarily lost her concentration and nearly dropped onto the soft black velvety shoulder of the man's smoking jacket.

Inside a glass case were fourteen neatly pinned butterflies.

**Amy narration:** That was *The Moth and the Butterflies* by Deborah Klein, read by Ellen Sorensen. And now we hear from another talented local multidisciplinary artist,

Sarah Hart, who is currently working on a creative PhD project based around her fascination with fairy tales and their contemporary use through a feminist lens.

**Woman's voice (Sarah Hart):** I grew up in far north Queensland and you couldn't really get anywhere further away from the European fairytale tradition. But I still remember my primary school library and the exact spot on the shelves where they kept the fairytales and the folklore and that's where I would go and sit, because clearly I was a nerd even at the age of seven and eight and I'm fascinated. It was the tales and it was also the woodcuts and the illustrations and just the beauty of it. So think it came from there and yeah and then you know 5000 years later I'm doing a PhD based on that.

Fascination... it follows on from an honours project, really my area of interest. The long description for my work is I'm looking at positive collaborative relationships between women in contemporary retold feminist fairytales. So rather than looking at the fraught relationships which you often see in mothers and daughters. That really competitive element, I'm looking for relationship that are positive and happy and in general sort of reflect the lived experience of women that I know who wouldn't survive their lives without the company and support of other women.

My PhD is a creative PhD so I'm working on a illustrated novel as the greater portion of the research and then there's the research component as well. So my novel is a retelling of sleeping beauty, VERY loose. I'd say more a thematic retelling.

There's an Australian writer called Danielle Wood who talks about different ways that fairytales can be used and one is a straight retelling as a source material and the other is sort borrowing stylistically and I'd say I'm both styles and I'm both themes. I'm working on the themes of sleep and waking up. In traditional sleeping beauty it is the prince who does the waking up. And there are themes of passivity and waiting and being disconnected and I guess ultimately looking for connection.

So that's really what I'm looking at but I would like to have the princess in my story or there were multiple women who could act as princesses being woken up by other women. True friendship really or support or being awakened to new ways of living their lives rather than just a straight up romantic kiss from a complete stranger.

One of the threads I guess that runs through my story is an element of stories becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. So there are characters who when any part of them comes off... so the hair or whatever it's gold. So it's a danger and it's sort of representation of women's bodies being open slather in many ways. And then there's someone else whenever she touches somebody they turn to stone and so there's an element of disconnection and how do you work with that.

So the elements of transformation and I guess embodied power in people and in women in particular I think. One of the things that I get out of fairytales.

It's who is telling the story, who they telling it to, you know the time that they are telling, the social context that they are telling it in, the age of the person they're telling it to, the need of that person, whether they were meant to hear it whether they were not and they all of that plays into how the stories are received and how it might be passed on and I think because I'm coming at everything from a feminist perspective. Voice for women has always been an interesting space because there have been so many periods in history where women have not had a voice at all or their ability to say what they need to say has been compromised and that's right back from Philomela.



Anyways so her story is told in greatest detail I think in Ovid's Metamorphoses and that's about the tragic things that happened to her and so that she couldn't tell anyone and Tiresias cut her tongue out but anyway she went off and lived in the woods and made a tapestry that told her story and sent it to the court and then revenge was had etc. And she turned into a nightingale or a swallow or whatever version you happen to think and so that has come through from you know before Christ and that was written of and from Greek mythology and made its way into the fairytales with every mute heroine so then you have the tales of the seven swans and so forth and how do you tell your story if you're voiceless and so one of the ways that women will do it will be through weaving which is a theme. It'll be telling someone by a fire side under the cover of housework or in the French court when it was under the cover of gossip or women just getting along sort of thing so. I'm very into the context of stories and how they're used what's behind them.

**Amy:** What do you think working in this space today can you can do for the retelling of women stories or opening up.

**Sarah:** Yeah well this is my real soap box. As I feel like Disney has done fairytales a great disservice.

*(short audio snippet of classic Disney production followed by a record scratch sound)*

**Sarah:** So the mass production of certain types of fairytales told in certain ways has become most people's experience of fairytales. So if you said Beauty and the Beast to anyone growing up today their immediate associations would be with the Disney version.

And there is so much more to that. But the problem with Disney is that it was based on these conservative American sociopolitical agendas and so we come for today and we think of people saying things like 'I want a fairytale wedding. I want a fairytale this and that.' And I think 'come on, there's so much more to it. So fairytales have traditionally been there to reflect how we live but also challenge it and make it better and say this is what we can do, we can get rewards.

So I think if you're writing in that space today there's a lot going on, you won't find a princess anymore that's not feisty, that's fair enough. But you're still find princesses who don't have any female friends and I just don't think that's, you know, a consummation devoutly to be wished. It sounds like a horrible life. You go through all these trials, you escape whatever cave or tower you've been trapped in and you bag a man and you still don't have any friends. Where's the fun?

And that's not good for society either because if you're isolated you're disempowered so that's my particular hobby horse, but there's lots of other things so there's lots of work going on in fairytales at the moment around more diversity, including queer characters and this is a matter of course, except Disney.

I think we can use stories to tell ourselves how we want life to look. I think they can really... they can operate in two different ways. They can be revealing of what is happening today but they can also you know, be optimistic and say this is how we want to be and this is how we can live. These are the things that we value and would like to carry forward and write those stories and they will become self-fulfilling prophecies.

**Amy narration:** Thanks so much to Sarah, and to Ellen and Deborah for this inspiring work with fairy tales, and now to continue we turn over the mic to our young writers and their reimagined tales. They combine humour, love, sadness, cups of tea, and common themes of kindness, overcoming prejudice, female empowerment, and I even learnt a new word, thanks to one of our winners Ishika and a character in her story, an enby, meaning non binary. Along with these stories you'll hear the specially created song by Tom and Freya McGowan titled Turn the Page Today for the theme of the writing competition, Change the Story, Change the World, and for this episode's segment of...

### **Things Found in Books segment intro**

Woman's Voice speaking slowly *[with a vintage sound playing beneath]*: Things found in books

Old radio style male voice *[archival audio, with jaunty music beneath]*: You'll hear a new intimacy and richness

*[Jaunty music continues beneath]* Man's voice putting on Louis Armstrong singing voice: Things found in books

Music of Melanie Safka song, Look at my Song Ma: I wish I could find a good book to live in.

*Music fades out*

**Child's voice:** My name is Annabel and I'm seven years old. Yeah and I got the idea from a big book of fairytales that I got at home.

*Annabel reads her story-*

There once was three little pigs, they were scared as a snail. Or not all of them. Number three was very brave. So he usually had to drag them around. The wolf who lived in the woods wanted a cup of tea but he didn't know where to get it from. He saw the number two had forty eight tea bags and one really good kettle so he ran to number two's house. It was a stick house. He said can I have tea with you? Number two was so scared that he said no and locked the door. "Oh no" said the wolf, "I need tea." He ran to number one. Number one had thirty eight tea bags. He said to himself 'not as much, but it will have to do.' Because when he ran to number one's straw house and said 'can I have tea with you?' the same thing happened. He locked the door and said no again. So he ran up to number three's house and said 'enough is enough and I will puff until I get tea. Number three pig came out of his house and said 'okay I will just boil my kettle.' The end.

**Woman's voice (host Amy Tsilemanis):** We're going to have to drink some tea to celebrate.

*(Audio snippet of song by Freya and Tom McGowan plays.)*

**Child's voice:** My name is Ishika and I am 10 years old. Here's my story about Cinderella.

Cinderella moaned and rolled her eyes as she looked out the window to see her two step sisters giggling ridiculously as they skipped along, occasionally pulling out a mirror and dabbing on some blush. They really were ridiculous sometimes. As if anyone would care how pink their cheeks were.

The thing was, though, people did care. They cared about all these things Cinderella would never in her life understand or live up to. Stereotypes, she supposed.

Nightfall came and Cinderella was still cleaning the house. She didn't know why she didn't stop when her troublesome sisters left. Maybe she was hoping something would happen. Maybe she was just lonely. Through the window, she spotted a shooting star and, quick as a flash, she crossed her fingers and thought to herself; Please let me go to the ball, oh, PLEASE.

Nothing happened, and Cinderella realised it was hopeless. What did she expect, did she want a whoosh of glitter and then a magical unicorn to appear and magic her messed up life to normal? No. That would never happen. What did happen was that an orb of blue light grew out of seemingly nowhere, illuminating the room in beams of light as it pulsated gently, like a subtle heartbeat.

Without thinking, Cinderella reached out and grabbed the orb, holding it close to her chest. Nothing happened. Then a show of fiery sparks and a grey-haired woman she recognised materialised. She was tall and thin and pale. She carried a walking stick and leaned against the doorframe as if it were where she'd grown up. She seemed perfectly at home.

"Um..... Who are you?!" Cinderella demanded. The woman snorted.

"I am Elder Kiafswaki. Not that it matters. It will not change your life in the slightest. You may know me as your fairy god-mother. I am here to grant your wish... No need for conversation, I have no time, enjoy your night."

And just like that, the woman was gone.

"Wait!" Cinderella stumbled after her, but it was no use. She had so many questions.

"No.... NO!!"

Cinderella screamed as she realised that this was it. No last chance of freedom. This was life... forever.

Then she was at the ball, poised and elegant, apparently invisible to her sisters, because they showed no signs of recognition as she walked right past them. Slowly, Cinderella looked up. It was an illustrious castle, beautiful and quaint... but what really caught her attention was the dark-skinned enby in a canary yellow dress dancing... single.

"Hello." The enby said, approaching her. "You're late... Cinderella, was it?"

"Um, yes."

"Your sisters are horrible. No offense."

"None taken."

"So.... care to dance then?"

She looked over shoulder.

I think SIR FANCY OVER THERE IS LOOKING AT US!" They waved in the general direction of a guy. He looked like a Sir Fancy.

"Um... Sure."

They danced. It was amazing. Cinderella had never felt like this before... It was breathtaking. She didn't know how to describe it. It was like pure magic. Like walking on a cloud in the rain.

Then the music swelled to a crescendo and they leaned in and whispered, 'Run wild'.

There was a knock on the door of a snow-white house with a light brown door and roof. There were streaks of blue and the word 'Pride' painted all over it. It was quite beautiful.

A black-haired young woman stood at the door. It was evident that she had recently been crying.

A wonderful noise of song from inside stopped. Then someone of about 23 opened the door, smiled and said quite plainly, "You'll be wanting Cinderella then. You better plan to be decent, I bite."

There was a joking air in her voice, but not on the word 'decent'.

The black-haired woman nodded. The enby called out in a singsong voice, "Ella!" "Coming!" Came the reply. The singer winked and left.

There were footsteps, and Cinderella arrived at the door with the words, "What do you need?" They were spoken with no spite or hatred in them, just a gentle coolness. The black-haired woman burst into tears.

"Cinderella!" She cried hysterically. "I'm so sorry, when you left, Mother made us do it and—and..."

It'ssohardandmysisterleftandmotherchasedherandshe'shurtandlostandIneedyourhelp, PLEASE!"

Cinderella stared. Then she nodded.

"Okay," She replied quietly. "We can talk about this."

**Amy Tsilemanis:** Amazing. I'm guessing you read a lot.

**Ishika:** Ah yeah.

**Amy:** What kind of books do you like.

**Ishika:** I like kind of fantasy worlds where the main character gets dragged into a fictional world like Nevermore or Harry Potter.

**Amy:** Yeah. Amazing language too, so many descriptive words. We read it a few times over to get all the details because it was so well written.

**Ishika:** Thank you.

**Amy:** Fairytales. What do you think of when you think of fairytales?

**Ishika:** Actually I honestly think of re-writing them. Which is why it was perfect when this competition started.

**Amy:** And why do you think they should be re-written?

**Ishika:** They're just so old fashioned and weird. And just ... hmmm.

**Amy:** Do you think you'll write more.

**Ishika:** Yeah. Maybe not exactly fairytales but something like that. And when I grow up I definitely want to get a career as an author maybe.

**Amy:** Keep writing for sure. It's an amazing thing to create worlds for people to enter isn't it? Well thank you so much, we loved the story.

*(short audio snippet of song by Freya and Tom McGowan plays)*

**Child's voice (Orlani):** I'm Orlani and I'm ten years old, almost turning eleven.

**Amy:** Well tell me about your story, how did this come about?

**Orlani:** I got inspiration from Ever After High. I really like Ever After High and all the stories and stuff and I also foraged through all the kind of fairytales and stuff and it popped in my head and I kind of changed it.

**Amy:** I love it. Did it all just flow out then, the idea?

**Orlani:** I liked to write about stories and I've noticed that every time I do that when I do it goes onto another story.

**Amy:** Cool, cool. Alright, well do you want to read us the story.

**Orlani):** We all know the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but do we all know the REAL story?

Once upon a time in a cottage not far from the woods lived a petite girl named Little Red Riding Hood and her mum, Mary.

One normal sunny morning Little Red Riding Hood's grandma fell worryingly ill. While Mary was cooking up some delicious eggs and bacon she thought "I'll send Red out with some cookies for the old dear, but no doubt that wolf will be skulking around, thinking up a mischievous scheme." She summoned young Red down the spiral staircase.

"I want you to take these cookies to your poor ailing grandma, and DON'T talk to any strangers," requested Mary. Handing her daughter a basket with a red-checked hankie draped over the top of some cookies, Red obediently did what she was told, and off she went.

Red had only been skipping for a few minutes, when a scruffy but handsome wolf interrupted her. "Where are you going on this fine morning, young girl?" he toothily grinned. Completely forgetting what her mother had instructed her to do, she replied "To take these cookies to my ill Grandma."

He bent down and picked a bunch of flowers. "I'm sure she'll love these red tulips, won't she?" he insisted. Red politely took them from his grip and continued down the path. Knowing that this was his chance, he waited till she was out of sight, then he turned on his heel and took his own short cut. In no time he was knocking on Red's Grandma's cedar door. As soon as she had answered, he raced in like lightning. He

took her knitting wool and enveloped her in it; duct tapped her mouth shut, and slammed her in the wardrobe.

“Much better way to stop her, than eating her,” he said to himself, as he pulled on her pink frilly nightgown.

Little Red Riding Hood arrived not long after and noticed something strange about her grandmother. Being the smartest girl in her school, she knew straight away that this was a wolf! “Where is my grandma?” she demanded. Hesitantly the wolf replied “Let me explain!” He cleared his throat and continued, “Your grandma is evil! She and one of those hunters,” he gestured outside, “worked together and killed MY whole pack for their pelts. I managed to get away but it’s left me scarred for life. Please, will you help me prevent her from doing it again, to another wolf pack? You don’t have to like me, I know I’m a wolf, but I really need your help, I don’t think I have the courage to do it on my own,” he concluded. Red’s face began to soften as she processed this. “I do like wolves and this one is desperate. That was a horrid thing my grandma did. I’ve made up my mind - I’ll help him!” She thought. “I’ll help you, Mister Wolf!” she said. “Please, call me David,” and he held out a paw.

They chatted on and on about themselves, becoming closer and closer friends as they discovered similarities. They laughed and the talked, ignoring the bumps and grumbles from the wardrobe. They made a plan.

Later that night the two snuck into the hunter’s log cabin home. They tiptoed into the room of the overweight woodsman. There was double bed at the far end of the room with a rocking chair yielding the rifle. As the two crept toward the rocking chair, the floor boards beneath them squeaked loudly. Red gritted her teeth hoping the hunter wouldn’t wake up from his slumber. David snatched up the gun and they both ran. As soon as they got out, the wolf jumped for joy and Red grinned with pride. They had finally ended the reign of terror those two had brandished over the woods! With Grandma tied up and the hunter now gun-less, they couldn’t hurt any more wolf packs.

15 years later...

From that moment in life the mismatched pair had grown to love each other and thrived together. David and Red got married and settled down to have a family. They had two wolf-girls, Ash and Leto. They moved out of the woods and into an apartment. Red works at a supermarket and David is a teacher. And they all still live happily ever after.

In case you were curious the grandma was found and rescued by the hunter. The pair realised the error of their ways after their experience with the wolf and Red, and never harmed another wolf.

**Amy:** Ha ha ha. I love the happy ending. I love that the wolf’s name is David as well. Where did that come from?

**Orlani:** I'm not really sure but it just like popped in my mind because I'm really good at naming characters.

**Amy:** So do you write lots?

**Orlani:** Yes I do.

**Amy Tsilemanis:** What do you like writing about?

**Orlani:** Fantasy and sometimes mystery because I like mystery.

*(Audio snippet of song by Freya and Tom McGowan plays.)*

**Child's voice (Josephine):** My name is Josephine McGinnis and I am ten.

**Amy:** excellent. you are part of this young authors group aren't you, can you tell me a bit about that?

**Josephine:** It's basically a group where we work with real published authors to polish our work, get advice on our work and... I actually got my young authors pack today which is like a book, pens, highlighters, things like that. And basically you're in a group on this app called Seesaw where you can see different peoples pieces, write feedback on them and get feedback yourself. And there's a whole bunch... there's ten different schools doing it.

**Amy:** Cool and what kind of stuff do you like writing?

**Josephine:** I like writing narratives more than anything. Yeah I like making stuff up.

**Amy:** Excellent so yeah this was a good challenge for you this story.

**Josephine:** Yes. But I find it hard to do things like basing it on a different thing.

**Amy:** You prefer to just imagine it from your mind?

**Josephine:** yes

**Amy:** I'm so excited to hear more of your writing like all these young people doing all kinds of styles and characters it's awesome.

**Josephine reads her story:**

Once upon a time there was a girl named Cinderella. She was anything but ordinary. You see she lived in a time when women were expected to marry. Cinderella didn't want to get married though. She wanted to be a knight. Fighting wars and commanding armies was what she really wanted to do. 'But only men can become knights', her stepsisters and stepmother would tell her. She knew she could prove them wrong. She told everyone about her dream. Everyone gave her the same answer. Women can't be Knights, but she was

determined. Cinderella sent an application to Knight school, hoping with all her might they would accept her.

She got in. But everyone made fun of her. She just ignored them but sometimes it was hard because their laughing voices echoed in her head as if they were standing right next to her.

She trained, ignoring their many yells and screams for ten long years until she graduated from knight school.

Cinderella slowly move up the ranks until she became general of the entire army.

Paving the way for women to follow their dreams no matter what.

CHARGE!

**Amy:** Yeah that's awesome. I love it. Do you have any dreams that you would like to achieve?

**Josephine:** I kind of want to be like a dancer or musician.

**Amy:** Cool, keeping it open.

**Josephine:** I'm not quite sure what I actually want to do.

**Amy:** There's plenty of time. Do you have a favourite book? Is that a hard question?

**Josephine:** Yes! Cause I like a lot of books. I have three favourite series. So I like the Wings of Fire series, which is about dragons and prophecy and things like that. And I like the Harry Potter series. That's very, very cool and I like the Nevermore series.

**Amy:** So do you know which house you're in, in Harry Potter?

**Josephine:** Hufflepuff.

**Amy:** OK I just did the test yesterday, what's Harry Potter's again?

**Josephine:** Gryffindor

**Amy:** Yeah that's me.

**Josephine:** I'm in Hufflepuff but I'm kind of in Huffleclaw. Some of the tests I get Ravenclaw but most of them I get Hufflepuff. I went to the store of requirement and got the hat there and yeah I was Hufflepuff but I've also been to like a Harry Potter party once. It was like a Hen's Night or something. I wasn't invited. I was like one of the people... it was a Harry Potter themed one... so I was one of the people outside like being a wizard. But then I also had to go inside. Crouch under a stool for three hours. With my hand up the sorting hat playing an iPod thing and then having to move its mouth to it. So that was kind of annoying.

**Amy:** Oh you've started your performing career already.

**Josephine:** Yeah I also do musical theatre productions and stuff.



**Amy:** Do you wanna sing us something?

**Josephine:** Sure.

*(sings with a beautiful voice)*

Dancing bears, painted wings.

Things I almost remember.

And this song, someone sings.

Once upon a December.

**Amy:** Awesome. Oh my God amazing. So yeah tell me about the place you go and do music stuff?

**Josephine:** I go to a place called BCMA. Which is Ballarat Centre For Music and the Arts and I'm working on Aladdin Junior at the moment. I am the sultan.

*(Audio snippet of song by Freya and Tom McGowan plays.)*

**Amy narration:** That was the beautiful Turn the Page Today written and performed by Freya and Tom McGowan especially for this episode. And with the theme change the story, change the world. You also got a treat from Josie giving us a little song in there. As she said she is currently appearing as the sultan in BRMC's Aladdin.

So that was our wonderful writing competition winners. Annabel with her take on The Three Little Pigs. Orlani's reimagined Little Red Riding Hood and runners up Ishika and Josie with two unique and inspiring versions of Cinderella. We loved having you in the studio. And to finish the comp we have Frankie's take on Medusa, sent in from Melbourne and to get a little myth busting in here too! Thanks to all the lovely parents who have supported this fun as well. Over to you Frankie.

**Child's voice (Frankie):** Hi my name is Frankie and I am six. I love great myths because they're very scary. I'm sorry for Medusa because she got turned into monster and it wasn't her fault. So I gave her a unicorn and a fairy one because that is kind and fair. Once upon a time I saw Poseidon made Medusa go into a temple. Medusa didn't even want to go in there.

It was Athena's temple. Athena got very cross because it was actually Poseidon's idea in the first place. Athena turned his hair into snakes. One thousand of them.

Athena gave Poseidon the power to turn everything into stone. Everything he loved, everything, even his parents.

And he was never allowed out of the city again and he took away his trident. Athena looked at Medusa and he said he's very sorry that Poseidon was mean.

And gave her a beautiful sparkly fairy wand with a little star on top.

She also gave Medusa a new unicorn called Seeker.

The fairy wand gave everyone in the world hope and happiness and life.

The end by Frankie Dickinson, the greatest!

Before we say goodbye and tell you about the next episode I've got Mr Minerva stopping in, aka Julian who was the judge of the writing competition and had lots of fun reading them.

*[Tom McGowan guitar music beneath]*

**Amy:** Are there any favourite moments?

**Man's voice (Julian):** There seemed to be an important kind of numerical detail, that there was first 48 teabags and then 38 teabags. I thought that was hilarious. I LOL'd actually.

**Amy:** You did LOL. He was with on the couch with Boots the cat having a good LOL. What do you think this sort of task achieves?

**Julian:** It encourages people to use their brains and think of new ways of telling stories. But more broadly it helps us to think about what storytelling and narrative is actually about for us as human beings and what significance storytelling has for us. It's how we think of ourselves as a culture and our own heroes of our own stories. We are all each the protagonist and the main character of our own the story but the telling of those stories relies on archetypal fairytales, narratives and so on, mythologies. But these aren't static they need they need to be dynamic and constantly redapted. And this has been a really good process I think for your participants.

**Amy:** And what role do you think different types of art can play.

**Julian:** Again it's all about storytelling and providing form. A world without art is a world without form and we would be completely lost.

**Amy narration:** Thanks so much for listening.

The next episode will be themed Coming of Age and our guest artist will be the amazing YA writer Leanne Hall who has a new book out called The Gaps.

We will also be collecting stories from you! Record us an audio message on your phone and send it through to be featured on the show. Tell us about your favourite books that influenced you as a teenager or young adult and why. Were you Baby Sitters Club? Lord of the Rings? Catcher in the Rye? How did they help you come through the other side?

This episode of Gather, with Minerva's Books & Ideas, was produced by me, Amy Tsilemanis with sound engineering by the amazing Dave Byrne.

Our book seeds were, The Bee and the Orange Tree by Melissa Ashley, published in 2019 by Affirm Press, and There was Once, the collected Fairy Tales by Deborah Klein, published 2009 by Moth Woman Press and available to buy at the wonderful Playing in the Attic at 119a Sturt St Ballarat Australia, check it out.

Music featured in this episode was the song Turn the Page by Tom and Freya McGowan and a selection of songs by Tom under the name Button Jar Canyon and the album Small Fire Brightly. Check him out on bandcamp (a great place to directly

support musicians by the way), where you can also find Ellen's music under her name Shadow Feet. We also heard the sounds of the Anakie Fairy Park.

Thanks again to guests Lucy and to Sarah, you should totally get along to Ballarat's Frolic Festival which Sarah is part of organising, an exciting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, & asexual (LGBTIQA+) arts & culture festival in Ballarat. Also check the Australian Fairytale society and their new anthology *South of the Sun* that features Sarah Hart, and a guest people might be familiar with coming up in a later episode, storyteller Anne E Stewart)

On our Minerva' Instagram TV you can also see me reading another tale from Deborah's book, along with many more. Find Minerva's Books and Ideas online. Thanks for your support we'll catch you next time.

### **Lyrics of the song Turn the Page Today:**

Thumbleina was a girl who travelled here and there  
But she never got to choose her path  
Now was that really fair?

Tumble, torn, to and fro  
Searching for a way  
Just for a chance to be herself for a single day

Woooo...

Cinderella in her house  
Sweeping, cleaning, talking to a mouse  
No one heard her quiet cries  
But did you ever question why?

Speak up for yourself  
Dream the dreams that you want to dream  
Know that you have the right to speak

Woooo...

Once there was a pair of elves who slaved away each night  
But who got rich because of this,  
Have you heard of workers' rights?

Tiny hands worked far too hard  
So cold in the candle light  
No credit due or words of encouragement

Always starts with once upon a time  
Always ends with happily ever after

But in between these bookends  
Caught deep within the page

There's brand new stories to be told today

Wooo...

Turn the page today

Turn the page today