

A Magical Fairytale for the 21st Century
(a bedtime story for the now)

by MJ Perrin

RYAN

Tonight's bedtime story is, "A Magical Fairytale for the 21st Century". Once upon a time, there was a father who loved his son very, very much.

GINO (RICO)

Angio, are you ready to go?

ANGIO (RONDO)

Father, must I do this? What if she only wants your money?

GINO

She comes highly recommended. You remember my friend Geppetto. She was the one who made Pinocchio real. He gave me her card, and with it, I get a ten percent discount.

ANGIO

But father, how can you trust a woman who tricks children so she can bake them?

GINO

Do not listen to those lies! It was not her. It was her neighbor, several trees away. I have it on good authority.

ANGIO

From what authority?

GINO

I forget her name. The nice lady down the street. On the corner. Who lives in that crazy house. With all the kids.

ANGIO

Mrs. Hubbert?

GINO

Yes. And she would know. One of her children has a friend, someone you know, I have seen you all together, who is cousin to someone who lives next door to the family who lives in the candy house. The stepmother, I am told, is quite the bitch, and has terrible rotting teeth.

ANGIO

Which friend might that be, father? The space-cadet who keeps falling down the hill? Or the jerk who likes to watch the village panic every time he cries wolf?

GINO

I hate that kid. He needs professional help. But, no, it wasn't him. I'm almost certainly sure, with very little doubt, that it was that idiot girl who keeps losing her sheep. How many times must you lose your sheep before you realize you should not be in the sheep herding business?

ANGIO

Apparently more than an infinite number.

GINO

Oh, we must go. She charges extra if we are late. And sometimes, when she is very busy, she bumps people.

ANGIO

There must be another way for me to obtain my heart's desire.

GINO

She's in the neighborhood—more or less. And it is good to support local businesses. (beat) Angio, have you been messing with the wigs again?

ANGIO

I was trying to organize them.

GINO

They are organized. You disorganize them. When I go to find a wig for my puppets, I cannot find the one I want. You take them to clean or to comb or to trim. I do not need you to take care of my wigs. Now, I wish not to tell you again. Stay out of the wig chest. Understood?

ANGIO

Oh, father, look at the time. We should go.

GINO

Yes, yes, we should. Come.

(the journey is RONDO & RICO crossing a row of seats in the audience where the thorns are the knees of those intruded upon)

These hills, they exhaust me.

ANGIO

Soon father, once we cross the ledge, it will be all downhill from there.

GINO

For which I will be grateful. Be careful as you go. The ledge is so narrow and the thorns so sharp. She is indeed a strange one, to live where the journey is so treacherous. ... At last, safe ground to rest. It should be easy now for an old man like myself. And there, I see her house.

ANGIO

Can we stop and talk, please?

GINO

What is there to talk about?

ANGIO

The other day a fellow approached me saying he could make my heart's desire come true. He said he could beat the witch's price by 20%.

GINO

Shush! Do not call her that. She is a wizard. She went to a very famous school in England. Did this fellow who approached you, go to a wizard's school?

ANGIO

I didn't ask.

GINO

So you know nothing of his worth. What if he is nothing more than a con? I have heard of such men. Vultures. Besides, I paid in advance and there are no refunds for changing your mind. And, she guarantees her work. If she can't do it, she gives you credit towards another wish. Does your fellow do that?

ANGIO

I didn't ask.

GINO

Did you even ask for his name?

ANGIO

I did. But he said I had to guess it, and I couldn't.

GINO

Then we shall continue on our way.

LILY (RIGHTEOUS)

Ah, right on time. (beat) Angio, I understand you would like to be a real boy. (beat) Or do you?

GINO

It is all he has talked about for the past year.

ANGIO

Father, this is your wish for me.

GINO

He does not want to admit it. He worries about the cost, but I think only of his happiness.

LILY

Angio, you spend a great deal of time with the shepherd boy, and the sheep of course, do you not?

GINO

He does. I must always call him down from the hills.

LILY

I know more of you than you think. Your father believes you want to be a real boy. Is this so? For I want to make sure you are truly getting what is in your heart.

ANGIO

If you speak the truth, then you must know what my heart longs for. And if my father has paid you for this longing, then make it so. Or refund his money, for you have proven yourself to be a fraud and this a scam.

LILY

So be it. When your son returns, Gino, he will be the person his heart cries out for.

GINO

Son, for me, I am happy. But for you, I am happier. Your dream is about to come true.

ANGIO

I hope you're right father.

LILY

Enter, Angio, and have no fear.

(the sound of magic)

This takes a little bit of time, but not much.

(a timer rings)

See. Here now, Gino, is your beloved child.

GINO

What is this? What have you done? What evil trickery is this? My son was right. You were not to be trusted. You are a witch indeed. You have turned my most favorite day into a day of mourning forever. You must undo this. If you do not, I will tell the bounty hunters where to find you, and they will burn you at the stake for the witch that you are. I will pour water on your sister and watch her melt and there will be a smile on my face.

ANGIO

Father, has the mere sight of me, though happy as I could be, turned your heart cold and left it without compassion? Do you not seek out the goodness in those around you? Has all that you have taught me vanished so quickly? I fear to ask, are you still my father?

GINO

I am still your father, but you are no longer my son. Please, return to me my beloved Angio, without whom, I have no reason to love—nor to live. (beat) Is it more money you want? I'll give you my 401k, my money market savings, the cash under my mattress, my American Express with unlimited credit—

LILY

Gino, isn't your life's saving Angio's college fund, so you won't need to get a student loan?

GINO

I will gladly sacrifice tomorrow for my happiness today. You must make this right, I beg of you. Does not the crying of an old man break your heart? Please, restore the joy I once had.

LILY

Never say I am without compassion. Enter, and I assure you, my magic will make you happier than before. Or I'll grant you another wish—with a five-year guarantee. Not something I do often, but I am sympathetic to Angio's future life. She will need a loving father by her side.

GINO

Do not worry son. I will make everything right again. For this is what a father does for his beloved child. All will be well.

GINO enters.

LILY

This is easy magic. It'll only take eight seconds. So, Angio, I have given you your heart's desire and to your father,

(a timer rings)

I have returned his joy. Behold...the man who still loves you, unconditionally.

ANGIO

Father, tell me without delay. Have you found happiness again?

GINO

I have, for where once stood my beloved son, now stands my beloved daughter smiling. Let us go home to celebrate.

ANGIO

Yes father, let's.

(they exit)

Wait. We forgot to thank the wizard. I'll be right back.

LILY

Did I not give you everything you wished for, and then restored your father's happiness? Who am I to you now?

ANGIO

You are the greatest power of all time, worthy of the faith I now put in you.

LILY

If only Merlin could hear this. He refutes the evidence of my power. Fake magic my cushy.

ANGIO

Then I wish I could face-time him and give testimony to your greatness. Or sing of your mighty power like a cut out bird from the highest tree. For sure, there is no way I can ever thank you for the blessing you have bestowed upon me.

LILY

Talk me up. Word of mouth still brings in more customers than mystical waves through the air.

ANGIO

I shall do exactly that.

LILY

One last thing. You will experience many changes, both inside and out. You may lose your friends. Strangers will fight to keep you from your happiness. Others will conspire to do you harm. I wish I could keep these events from happening, but no wizard has magic strong enough to do so. Do not regret who you are. Only the heart has the power to fight evil. So go Angio, live your true life, but keep close the words I have said.

ANGIO

You and your words will remain forever in my heart.

(rejoins her father)

Father, I would rather take the scenic route home. It's longer, but less treacherous. It'll give us time to talk.

GINO

I would love that too. (beat) So, what shall I call you now? I have a name in mind if you want to hear it.

ANGIO

I would love to, father. What is it?

GINO

Caitlyn. I have it on good authority, it is the name of Olympians.

RYAN

And, of course, they lived happily ever after, as they should have.