

The Last Granted Wish

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Once upon a time there was a massive land that was secretly a magical and fairy guarded place of happiness. This place was named Bis Beatus. The king and queen who ruled over this place were very happy and content with what they had, but should have taught their daughters how to be content too. The four daughters of the king and queen were so unruly and constantly in disagreement, fighting over who can wear this today and who can't go there today—we can all relate in a way. The princesses were aware of their fairy guardians of the land and often visited them. The fairies were constantly in a state of happiness and contentment, except when the princesses visited. They pranced around their land like unruly lion cubs and often scared the fairies half to death by playing horrible tricks on them all day.

But one day the eldest princess, Princess Clara, fell in love with a young fairy man named Adrianus and was soon to be married to him in a grand fairy wedding ceremony. Fairy wedding ceremonies were always held in the great white dome in which the rooms shone with sunlight and pink tinted light. Even fairies from distant mystical woods gathered in the great white room that seated four thousand fairies and fourteen human-sized beings. The fourteen seats were for the kings and queens of the seven large kingdoms. Princess Clara's sisters would not need to be seated because they would be accompanying her to the altar, but if additional humans wished to view the ceremony they certainly had enough room in the back. The wedding dresses for the brides-to-be were always of the latest fashion and were specially made by the seamstresses that lived in the great dome. It was always said that no matter what the dress design, the fabric always shone with exceptional radiance.

Before the ceremony, Clara was told that she was to be escorted to the top of the Bellus Mutatio Carmen Mountain where the old, wise magic-breathing fairy lived. "It is the only way that you can be transformed into a fairy," her leading fairies told her, "Without the old wise Azure's magic you will remain human and only fairies can marry fairies..."

"Then lead me, my faithful ones; I do not fear."

"Oh no, no! You must fear her! For it is easier that way. She doesn't like to be talking all day with a mortal."

"Then she is an immortal being? She knows no pain?"

“Oh no, princess,” whispered the fairies as they quickly led her to the woods, “She knows more pain than one can imagine.” The guardian fairies feared her with all due respect and only visited her when there was absolutely no choice. She had so much magical power that just by uttering a word she could transform them into some ugly creature or some unspeakably beautiful thing. She would often transform herself into an unknown beast, so that no one recognized her at first.

On the journey up this mountain, Princess Clara’s leaders told her the stories that they had heard from their great-grandfathers about the old wise fairy. “She was once a fire breathing dragon,” said one. “Say one wrong word to her and she’ll turn you to stone, they say!” said another. “Oh,” said Clara, for what else could she say—she had ever right to get out of the chair they were carrying her in and run as far away from this old lady as possible! But she loved Adrianus so much that she thought it better to be turned to stone trying to be transformed into a fairy than to run away in fear of never coming back. While she was thinking of this, the third fairy leader shouted, “Maybe she’ll turn into a large beast and eat us for dinner! Well, we’d be dessert and our little princess would be dinner before she could be transformed into fairy dessert!” The whole crowd roared with laughter, but Clara frowned. “Stop it!” she exclaimed. “Stop it, all of you! Don’t you think I’m scared enough?!”

The first leader, Aquarius, answered, “We’re just kidding, princess, just kidding.” Clara didn’t even want to talk to the fairies anymore. She just wanted them to be quite.

As they came even closer to the top of the mystical mountain, a light fog of red, small, dust flew in the air over them. “What is this?” Clara almost whispered. “It smells sweet but spicy and looks red but green,” said Silas the second fairy. “No, no, no! It looks purple!” exclaimed the third, Atticus. “You are both wrong. It is most definitely a light orange. No, a light yellow, really,” Augustus, the last fairy, concurred. The furious fairies argued for almost three days, never moving one inch. As the fairies argued, Clara felt like she wanted to cry but had no idea why. So during these long dark, but colorful days Clara cried. She sobbed so loud that the mountain echoed the sound throughout the surrounding forests. On the first hour of the third day, the fairies were finally too exhausted to utter another word and instantly fell into a deep sleep. Before Clara could do the same, she noticed a dark shadow moving closer to them. She tried to wake the fairies. They were so

deep in slumber that one might mistake them as dead. As the large dark figure drew nearer Clara attempted to run but her limbs were numb. The colorful fog started to lift and the large shadow almost became fully visible. But Clara drifted into the same slumber that over took the fairies.

Princess Clara dreamt of strange happenings that might be considered too scary to bear but also too wonderful to be real. She woke up swiftly but found that her limbs were still numb and she could not lift her eyelids. But she could hear voices a few feet away. “You always are so gracious to grant us our requests and you are always so good to us—“ Clara could make out this voice as Atticus. “Do you not understand anything that I have just told you?!” boomed a voice that made the ground shake and the very walls around them quiver noisily. “Well, we heard you but we do not—“

“Quiet now. She is awake,” whispered the tremendous voice and she began to sing in a tongue that no one on land could understand. Immediately Clara’s eyes opened and she was able to move. The first thing she saw was a huge dragon-like beast that’s scales were sharper than any sword; head was the size of the castle Clara lived in back home. But in the beast’s radiant emerald eyes Clara could see sadness, loneliness, and pain. She immediately felt compassion for this beast— all the compassion that one could feel for a large creature that could devour it at any given time.

“Mmm and I suppose this is the young princess,” The beast hissed, “so cute. And she wants to marry a fairy huh? Wants to have a magical happily ever after?” She snickered. “Happily ever after,” she smirked mockingly.

“Yes, I do wish to be turned into a fairy,” Clara tried to stand her ground. “Please, if I am in your favor—“

“In my favor?” cried the beast. “No one is ever in my favor! No one wants to be in my favor. They only want to be granted wishes! Only want to have a few new diamonds around their necks.” Her voice grew louder and more pronounced with every word she said. The ground shook uncontrollably and rocks fell from the top of the cave that secured them. Clara lost her balance and the fairies rushed to her aid. “No help. No love,” the beast sobbed softly and the rumbling died down, “Nothing for Azure, only pain.”

As she sobbed, Clara walked slowly over and kneeled beside her. "I'm sorry," she whispered, "I'm sorry we have caused you so much pain." She got up swiftly, caught the fairies by their feet and walked out the cave. "Princess, what is happening?" they asked. "You do know that you are still human right?" asked Atticus. "Listen to me all of you," Clara said firmly, "I am not going to burden her anymore with what I want. We are going home." "But princess," said Silas, "that means that you will not be able to marry Adrianus." Clara frowned and cast down her eyes. "I know. I know," she breathed, and a tear rolled down her cheek.

They walked for about a half an hour shedding tears and leaning on each other for support until Silas spoke up. "Where are we? Do we know how to get back home?" "We were asleep on the way here so we don't know how to get back!" exclaimed Atticus. Aquarius tried to fly atop the trees and find the path home but there was fog that blocked his sight. "We must keep searching!" Princess Clara shouted. "Yes, let's split up then," suggested Silas. "How will we be able to communicate?" asked Augustus. "No. Let us stay together so no one is lost," decided Aquarius. They searched for the path for one week eating only the few berries and crackers that were left in their pouches and the very little water that was left in their canisters. "Will we ever reach it?" they asked hungry, thirsty, and tired. After searching for ten days, they found a path with golden pebbles lining it.

"Is this it?" they all breathed full of hope, "Can this be our path back home?" they were dirty and tired that it didn't matter what the path led to; just as long as the place had a fresh spring, food, and more comfortable ground to rest on. They followed the path with hanging heads and tired eyes. "I wish there was fruit on these trees," muttered Augustus. Instantly, fresh, ripe peaches appeared on the trees beside the golden pebbled path. "What is this? What is going on?" they pondered as they walked up to the trees. They picked the peaches of the trees on examined them. "I will taste them first," said Atticus, "for if I die it will not be as bad a loss." Atticus bit into the most beautiful peach and his face lit up. "It's the most soft, juicy, delicious fruit ever!" he exclaimed and took another bite as the others quickly tasted it for themselves. "This is wonderful!" Clara proclaimed. "I could eat these everyday for the rest of my life!" declared Augustus.

They ate sitting in a circle on the path until they could eat no more. "We should take some of this fruit with us for the journey," Silas thought aloud. The group agreed but as they turned around the fruit on the trees started to disappear.

they all shouted, got up and ran off the path to try to catch the fruit on the trees before they disappeared. Once they had followed the trees until the fruit was completely gone they were lost in the forest again. "Now that's just perfect. We're lost again!" Atticus breathed, quite angry that they had only caught one peach. A loud noise came from behind them. They turned and saw enormous vines stretching out from the trees and tangling together to form a large net that blocked their way back to the golden pebbled path. "Well that option is closed," Aquarius concluded, "forward and into the forest."

They walked for another whole day. They were out of water and the dehydration was starting to get to their heads. "Ouch!" yelled Atticus, "You stepped on my foot!" "Did not!" Augustus exclaimed, "You stepped on mine!" "Did not!" "Did too!" Atticus shoved Augustus into Silas. "Ouch!" Silas shouted, "Stop it!" "He stole my canister!" accused Augustus. "Well he stole my biscuit!" Atticus hollered. "You never had any biscuits!" Clara chimed in. "And that's because he stole them first," Atticus crossed his arms. The four of them kept arguing until Aquarius shouted, "Enough!" Their voices died down and looked at Aquarius with ashamed eyes. "We need water! You all are just tired and dehydrated. No one stole anything from anyone," Aquarius said with all the seriousness and sanity that the others lacked. "I wish there was a spring of fresh cold water here," whined Atticus. Instantly a large spring of water appeared before them.

"Unbelievable!" exclaimed Clara. "Anything we wish for appears before our eyes!" The group drank all the water they needed that moment. "We should take some water for our journey," suggested Silas. The water vanished just as fast as he said that sentence. "Not again!" Clara said exasperated. "I still have some water in my canister," Aquarius said, "Now let's move on."

The forest seemed to be getting very dark and mysterious. The trees started drooping and the dirt on the ground turned to a jet black. The group could not tell whether it was night or not, and the air started to get cold and windy. "It's so cold in this part of the forest," shivered Clara. "And dark," whispered Silas. "Something is wrong," Aquarius shuddered. "What is it? What's there?" asked Silas. "Shh, listen, hear that sound. Something's following us," Aquarius stepped forward to defend the others. There was silence, and then a sharp cry of a bird. Something swooped in the sky closer and closer to them. "Whatever I say, do,"

swooped down at Aquarius and grabbed him with its claws. “Run!” He yelled, “Run now!” The group was hesitant at first but as soon as the second bird came flying down they went flying in the opposite direction as fast as they could fly and running as fast as ever. “Silas! Silas fly faster! He’s on my tail!” Atticus screamed. “I’m flying as fast as I can!” cried Silas. Clara grabbed all three fairies and carried them as she ran as fast as her legs could carry her. “It’s better if I carry you guys,” Clara breathed trying to run even faster, “That way we have less chance of losing anyone.” The birds cried and even more birds filed in. They started swooping at them in every direction. The birds were almost as black as the soil beneath them. Their shrieks were so horrible it made Clara cry and fall on the ground. Clara screamed as the biggest black bird swooped at her and carried her away with the fairies in her hand. She heard the bird shriek one last time and then fainted.

When Clara gained consciousness she felt soft gray pebbles underneath her, and the sky was blue and clear. She sat up and found that Atticus, Augustus, and Silas were all asleep about six feet away from her. She looked around and noticed the path on which she lay, and the bright plants and trees around it.

“We’re back!” she shouted, “We’re back! This path! We can get home now!” She was shouting so loud that the others awoke and started to celebrate with her. But as they were dancing on the path and singing the happy tunes on their ancestors, the red fog started to form around them again. “No!” Clara fell on her knees and covered her eyes with her hands. “What are we going to do? We lost Aquarius! Our dear friend, Aquarius!” Clara’s voice began to fail and the fog was getting thicker. But the dark shadow that she saw before flew up and Clara saw that it was much like a lion. The lion roared and the red fog turned to a light blue shimmering in the daylight. Then the lion approached Clara and the three fairies. It was huge and its fur shone so bright that fairies had to shield their little eyes from such a strong light. It came up to Clara and looked at her with smiling but sheepish eyes. “I know those eyes,” Clara said. “Azure!”

“Hello, Princess. I have come to apologize for how I acted when we had first met,” she said regretfully. “I was so selfish and that was the reason I have this spell to this day. But I sent my bird friends to help you and the fairies get back home.” “Wait, those are no friends! They took Aquarius! Aquarius isn’t here!” complained Atticus. “Oh, yes,” Azure answered sheepishly again. She bent over

slid off her back. "Aquarius!" they all exclaimed. "Shh. He is asleep. And will be for at least two more days," Azure whispered, "but now I will grant you your wish." Then fairies' eyes widened in surprise. "But Azure, you told us that you'd be giving away your last feeling of happiness," Augustus said with confusion in his voice.

"Is that true?" Clara asked, "Is this wish granted with your last feeling of happiness?" Azure smiled sadly and nodded her head. "No," Clara declared, "I won't let you do it."

"You cannot stop me Clara," Azure laughed knowingly, "Also, I want you to be happy with your fairy prince. I was told if I wished to be beautiful again I had to give my last feeling of happiness to someone who deserved it most. And you, my dear, definitely deserve it out of all that I have met." Clara smiled and agreed to accept Azure's gift. Azure whispered some magic chant and the light blue fog in the air swirled around her. She closed her eyes and listened to Azure's transforming words.

Clara awoke in the room that was given to her a month before in the great white dome. "I'm in my room," she thought. "But how did I get here?" Her blankets felt heavier than ever and she felt as if her bed was engulfing her. She heard a knock on her door.

"Princess? It is your seamstresses. The wedding is today and we would like to fit you to your dress."

"The wedding? Today?" Clara thought. She look at herself, and then at the bed. Then back at herself. "Oh! I am a fairy! Azure turned me into a fairy!" she exclaimed. She jumped out of bed. "Oh, wait! I can fly!" she laughed. She flew around the room three times and then heard another knock. "Um princess? May we come in?" they asked. "Oh! Yes! You may," Clara said as she opened the door.

The wedding was the most splendid wedding anyone could imagine. Clara looked so radiant and happy, and Adrianus looked like the happiest groom anyone had seen. After the wedding, Atticus, Augustus, and Silas approached the new couple at the reception. "Splendid wedding!" they proclaimed, and the group laughed and made jokes about their travel. "And you all couldn't have forgotten me already?" said an approaching voice. "Aquarius! Where have you been?" Clara laughed aloud and embraced her friend. "I had just awoken when the people started to file into the dome! I had to find some clothes appropriate to wear to

a grand wedding,” Aquarius answered. “I’m so glad you could come! I missed you terribly” Clara exclaimed. “I brought a friend with me, too.”

Aquarius moved and revealed a beautiful older woman with a smile that shone just as brightly as her beautiful eyes. “I was so glad to be able to see your ceremony! It was the most beautiful wedding I think I’ve seen in my life,” said the woman.

“Thank you,” Clara exclaimed. As the latter bowed, she did the same. As the woman swiftly walked away, Clara pondered aloud, “Her eyes were such a beautiful color, like emerald diamonds almost, like no others in these seven lands, but I feel as if I have seen them before.” She soon stopped pondering and forgot about the old woman’s mysterious looks as all the festivities of the night and the greatest feeling of happiness overtook her.