

THE FAIRY TALE

By Jim Martyka

Lights up on a mother tucking her child into bed. He lays there content, while she gently strokes his head. He looks like he's falling asleep. She takes a second to stare at him lovingly and then gives him a soft kiss on the forehead. She gets up to leave.

SON: Mom?

MOM: Yes dear.

SON: I don't know if I'll be able to fall asleep.

MOM: Oh, I think you'll be just fine ya little stinker.

SON: No, I mean it. I'm not sleepy.

MOM: Well, my angel, you need to just close your eyes, think of how much mommy and daddy love you and wait for the sandman to come and whisk you away to Dreamland.

She starts to leave once again.

SON: Mom?

MOM: *(patiently)* Yes, my love?

SON: Can you please tell me a story?

MOM: Oh, not tonight darling. Mommy's had a long day and she's very tired.

SON: But mom...

MOM: No, no, no. Get some sleep.

SON: I really think you should.

MOM: *(laughing softly)* Oh yeah? Why is that my little negotiator?

SON: You know how you have sex with Mr. Peterson whenever dad goes out bowling with the guys?

Mom stands there stunned for a beat.

MOM: Uhh...what?!

SON: Yeah, I'll tell dad.

Long beat.

MOM: What kind of story would you like to hear?

SON: A fairy tale!

MOM: A fairy tale, huh?

SON: Yeah.

She goes to sit on the edge of the bed as he gets comfortable.

MOM: How about the one about the poor, struggling mother who had a little demon for a child?

SON: No, I've heard that one lots of times. Tell me something new!

MOM: Hmm, okay...well how about the one about the fairy who was born with a tale?

Silence.

SON: A fairy tale...about a fairy...born with a tail?

MOM: Yes.

SON: Well, that's convenient.

MOM: Look, do you want to hear a fairy tale or not?

SON: Okay, okay.

MOM: Okay. Get yourself settled in.

The son starts to settle in and get comfy and then has a thought.

SON: Wait! I need Mr. Poopsy!

MOM: Sweetie, we talked about that. You don't—

SON: *(yelling)* I SAID ME, GOD DAMMIT!

MOM: Okay, okay!

SON: Yay!

MOM: *(under her breath)* Fuck my life.

SON: What, mommy?

MOM: Nothing.

Son plays with Mr. Poopsy, getting him settled and Mom takes a flask out of her bra and steals a swig while her son is distracted. Son just smiles at her and she takes another big breath.

MOM: Okay, there once was—

SON: Wait, we have to cuddle!

MOM: No.

SON: Why not?

MOM: Because you're...too old...*(quietly to herself)* you're like 23...mommy's back hurts.

SON: Oh.

MOM: Sorry honey.

SON: Maybe you can ask Mr. Peterson to fix your back when you see him later, huh?

Mom lifts her arm begrudgingly so her son can snuggle in.

MOM: Okay?

SON: Mmm, that's better.

MOM: Okay, so there once—

SON: Mommy?

MOM: What?!

SON: Do you love me?

MOM: Oh, just sooo much.

SON: Good.

He cuddles back in.

MOM: There once was—

SON: Mommy, I'm thirsty.

MOM: *(blurts out)* Oh fuck you!

Son just stares at her wide-eyed, looks like he's going to cry.

MOM: Oh God. Sweetheart, I'm sorry.

Son slow builds to an actual breakdown cry.

MOM: Oh, honey, don't. I'm sorry. Please stop crying. Mommy made a mistake. Here, I'll go get you some water.

She runs offstage. As soon as she's gone, the sobs quiet down and bit and then the moment she comes in with the water, turns into loud sobs again.

MOM: Here, baby, here. Drink some water. Shh, shh, stop crying. You're making Mr. Poopsy upset.

Son takes a sip of water and calms down. Mom settles back in.

MOM: Now, how about that story, okay? You still want to hear a fairy tale?

SON: Yeah.

MOM: Okay. There once was—

SON: I'm done with my water.

Beat.

Mom very slowly grabs the water glass and slowly stands up and slowly takes it offstage and comes back to sit down.

MOM: There once was—

SON: Mom?

MOM: (*rapidly*) a fairy born in the Land of Fairies and it was a very strange fairy in that it was born deformed with a tail so it was a total outcast to all his friends, family and all the freakin' fairies in Fairy Land and one day—

SON: MOM!

MOM: Oh dear God, what?!

SON: I was just going to say—wait, did you say he was rejected by the other fairies because he was born different?

MOM: Yes.

Beat.

SON: And let me guess, he had to deal with being an outcast his whole life, right?

MOM: Well, yes, and—

SON: But all that hurt and rejection made him strong and he eventually grew up to be a beautiful fairy, yes?

MOM: Well, okay, yeah.

SON: Yeah, that's The Ugly Duckling except with fairies. It is seriously THE laziest and lamest fairy tale of all time. But, oh wait, you know what you could do? You could switch it up and have him learn how to use his tail and then at some point the townsfolk will need him and his tail and then—oh wait, no, no, no, that's mother-fucking Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Well done, mom. Way to put some thought and originality into this quality time with your son. Me and my lack of sleep applaud you.

MOM: Okay, to hell with this. I'm gonna go.

SON: Where?

MOM: MR. PETERSON'S YOU UNGRATEFUL BASTARD! THE CASINO! THE BAR! FUCKING NORTH KOREA! ANYWHERE BUT HERE! ANYWHERE BUT RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW! I AM GOING TO LITERALLY DRAIN MY BANK ACCOUNT AND GO TO THE AIRPORT AND ASK THE PERSON AT THE COUNTER TO PUT ME ON THE ONE FUCKING FLIGHT THAT GETS ME THE FARTHEST FROM HERE! I DON'T CARE WHERE IT IS. THE POINT IS IT WILL BE AWAY FROM YOU!

Silence for a very long beat.

SON: Before you go, can you tell me one more quick story?

MOM: AAAHHH!!!!

SON: Make it a good one this time, please, mommy.

MOM: AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

She runs to the bed, throws him under the covers, violently tucks him in, throws Mr. Poopsy into his arms, pats his head mock lovingly.

MOM: YOU COMFY?!

SON: Yes mommy.

MOM: YOU COZY?!

SON: Yes mommy.

MOM: YOU READY FOR YOUR STORY?!

SON: Yes mommy.

MOM: GOOD, FINE, WONDERFUL! OKAY, THERE ONCE WAS—

SON: Goodnight, mommy.

Son rolls over and goes to sleep.

Lights out.