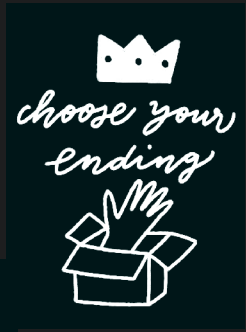

MARTA SÝKOROVÁ

NOT SO FAIR FAIRY TALES

PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Palacký
University
Press

Marta Sýkorová

NOT SO FAIR FAIRY TALES

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PRESS

FOREWORD

If these lines are the first you are reading and you are wondering who this fairytale book is for and what it is about, then it is time for a short theatrical introduction. Yes – precisely the kind of theatrical introduction that precedes a theatre performance. You are opening a book that is, in many ways, theatrically alive, and whose creation was preceded by a rehearsal on the stage of life itself. A book that will draw you in so deeply that, thanks to the Not So Fair Fairy Tales – and their even worse endings – you, too, may become the main protagonist.

But first, I am turning to those of you who are still unsure whether to read on. You should read the Not So Fair Fairy Tales if:

- it feels as though everything in your life is falling apart;
- you sometimes – or more and more often – feel like shouting Enoooooough!
- if you believe that joyful endings do not apply to you, or that you do not deserve them;
- you live to bring joy primarily to others;
- you feel like having a good laugh;
- you need to wrap yourself in a blanket of kindness;
- you need to be reminded that adults need fairy tales as much as children – perhaps even more so, because they often forget what wisdom and joy they contain;
- you are not afraid to accept fairytale lessons and want your own story to have a joyful ending.

If you nodded in agreement to at least one of these, you are in the right place. If none of the points above seem to fit you, stay anyway, you may need this book even more. Would you rather give it as a gift? It would be a perfect present for someone who:

- → needs a change in life;
- → is standing on the threshold of adulthood;
- → is facing a major life change;
- → is searching for their own direction;
- → needs a gentle touch for the soul;
- → needs to find trust in themselves;
- → needs a reminder that everything will be all right;
- → is standing in front of you every morning in the mirror.

Yes, in the end, I most strongly recommend giving this book to yourself. Take the opportunity it offers and bravely allow it to draw you into interactive reading.

But for now, let us move – in our theatrical introduction – to the author. I have known Marta since childhood: her mother co-led children's exercise classes in our village and I took part in them as a little girl. What I remember most from those classes were the special fairytale days. I remember wearing a ladybird costume, excitedly taking a handmade puppet in a cone from a magical tree and being drawn into worlds that nurtured my imagination. I think it was there that my, and possibly Marta's, sense for the theatre, love of fairy tales and belief in worlds where everything is possible began to take shape. For about a year, we also explored the world of art together at the local art school (even though what I mainly remember from that time is the smell

of sweet raisin pastries that her mother once bought us for a snack in the car) and later we studied the basics of music together at a music school, before we lost touch with each other for a while.

We met again only a few years later, when she and her twin sister attended the eight-year grammar school with me for two years, before they moved away. From that brief grammar school experience, however, I remembered her as always energetic, with her head full of crazy and incredible ideas, determined to change the world and brighten it not just with smiles. That is why I was surprised when she later directed her path towards molecular biology and genetics. How come it was not something more artistic, perhaps something musical instead? Had I ever heard her talk about such a field? I was clearly assuming that, at the time, I myself was still holding on to my childhood dream of becoming a journalist. It did not occur to me that this dream no longer quite fit me either, and that it is perfectly fine to search for and have new dreams, ones that do not constrain you, even if that sometimes means changing direction completely.

And so, quite suddenly, after three years of studying journalism, I found myself at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts. I moved to Brno – and there I ran into Marta again! At first we occasionally contacted each other about possibly playing music together on the street, which never quite worked out, but after some time we finally met in the Lužánky Park. And we talked. Unexpectedly, we talked about dreams, but also about the obstacles and inner battles we carry within us. We were quite similar in that respect. At the time, she was beginning her doctoral studies in Olomouc, starting a band, doing a million seemingly unrelated things – but her heart was clearly burning for all of them. At last, a kindred spirit who understands that everything has its time. That it is all right to run from one joy to another. And yet, in many

ways, we were both experiencing overload and forgetting ourselves. Each of us was searching for her own form, for a place where we could use everything that interested us and everything we longed to explore. It was then that Marta first mentioned to me that she had started writing fairy tales.

And so here I am, reading them some two (or three?) years later and after further not-so-coincidental meetings. And I am in awe. How wise they are. How truly fairy-tale-like they are. How gently they touch the soul, how each of us can find ourselves in them and how they lead us to search for ourselves. How they show us that we can be brave, that we ourselves matter and that we can achieve whatever we truly want. How they break through the wall of opinions telling us change is not possible.

I find myself smiling from ear to ear, because Marta has managed to take all that searching we once talked about in Lužánky Park and transform it into something beautiful. No matter how disparate her many activities may seem, she proves that if you have a desire and follow it, no matter what anyone says, you can create something unique. Something that only you can create, with what you have.

That is why I invite you not to be afraid to immerse yourself in her fairy tales, head to toe. Learn from the bad endings – and rewrite them in your own life into the best ones possible. Because only by acknowledging bad endings can you fully understand the meaning of the good ones. It is often more difficult and more painful to fight for them, but what fairy tale ever ends well without the effort of its hero and their self-overcoming (that is, stepping out of the comfort zone)?

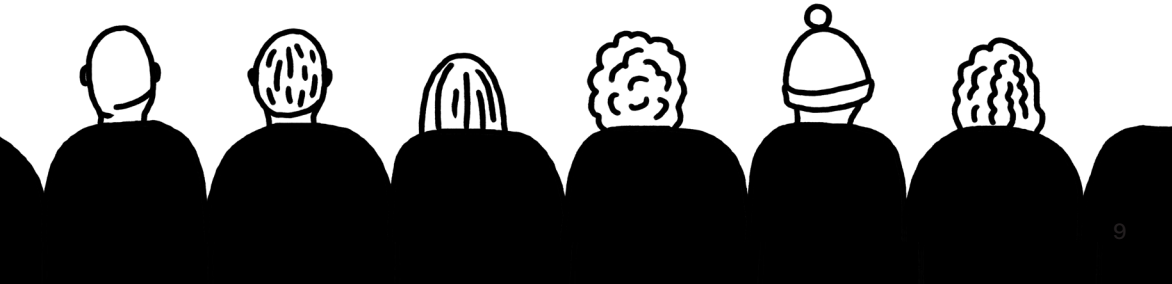
And so give this book a place not only on a shelf in your bookcase, but above all inside yourselves. For I believe that many of us will grow with it – and that it has the power to brighten someone's day and, perhaps, even to save a life.

But wait – you do not yet know what awaits you! I will not reveal that here; instead, I am going to build the suspense by saying that through everything she does, Marta has found an absolutely brilliant way (theatrically speaking, a dramaturgical arc) to draw you into her fairy tales. Or perhaps to draw the fairy tales into our world? Maybe both. If you take this opportunity, you will be different after reading them.

The bad endings may frighten you. But it is precisely thanks to them that you can begin, right now, to work on making your beginnings more pleasant and your endings turn out differently. I sincerely wish this to all of you. And to the fairy tales, in turn, I wish that they may change the world. Change often hurts; we often do not want to hear why something is happening, we scorn unsolicited advice, we barricade our souls and let no one in, not even ourselves. But these fairy tales can change that. Tested for you.

Have a beautiful theatrical experience – and even more beautiful endings in life!

Sára Matušová



DISCOVER
YOUR TRUE
SIZE

YOU ARE

BIGGER

THAN

YOU THINK.

YOU ARE SMALLER
THAN YOU THINK.

and that is all.

INTRODUCTION

Bigger than you think? Smaller than you think? You say that you don't understand? It doesn't matter. I don't understand life either. I dare say that none of us humans truly does. We live on this planet for a short time only, learning as we go. All of us, in the same way, are searching for our place – and all of us, from time to time, are equally at sea.

There are eight billion of us here. Eight billion! And all searching for ourselves. How can we be ourselves and still be part of a whole? Where does I end and we begin? Me? Us? Too little? Too much? Am I not accommodating enough, or too self-destructive?

"As we grow older, the scenery and the colours change, but the play remains the same and the challenges repeat themselves," Professor Šmardová once said to me. She wrote a book about her own searching entitled What Tumours Teach Us.* Whether we are young or old, men or women, as long as we breathe, we try to find balance in our lives. To play our part on the stage of the world as well as we can, together with others. Professor Šmardová has already danced her dance on Earth and I believe she found the answers to these questions. As for us, we are left to search until our final breath. How? By creating – by co-creating this world and shaping ourselves.

By making mystakes and starting again

≠ i

My own searching crystallised into these Not So Fair Fairy Tales. I like to say that these fairy tales guide me. I relate to them more like a pupil to a teacher than like a writer to a book. Sometimes they try to discipline me; at other

times, they lead me to rebellion. I am very curious to see what they will do to you and I will be glad if you share your experiences with the fairy tales with me.*

The fairy tales are intended primarily for adult readers. From time to time, you may encounter technical terms or something unexpected. The texts reflect the fact that I straddle many different worlds. I studied molecular biology and genetics; I sing and play in a band; I work with embodiment techniques and theatrical improvisation; and I am completing doctoral studies at a theological faculty. Don't let this put you off – let yourself be surprised.

Why "not so fair"?

Fairy tales carry messages preserved for generations. Personally, I love fairy tales for their hopeful "and they lived happily ever after". Yet these fairy tales end badly – and therefore, they are not so fair. Each fairy tale tells the story of a good idea that leads the leading character to a bad ending. Are tragic endings really inevitable? Yes, because they are meant to prompt us to change. Should the fairy tales end well, we would not take them seriously and their lessons would miss their mark. This way, their message gains weight.

At the same time, precisely because they are "not so fair", you may find it easier to write or draw in the book. Don't be afraid – you are meant to do this. Use the book however you like: make notes, scribble, and if you disagree with something, feel free to rewrite the story!

Walk the talk

Each fairy tale is accompanied by a section designed to help transform what is read into what is lived, so that it isn't just talking the talk. From the ideas

offered, you can make an experiment – a time-limited, manageable task that you are able to integrate into your everyday life. On pages [xxx– doplníme při sazbě], there is a table that can help you with this. In addition to invitations to step out of your comfort zone, you will find tips for working with the body, based on the embodiment techniques.*** Embodiment teaches us that just as thoughts and emotions influence the body, the body, in turn, influences processes in the head and in the heart. Through our physical posture – or by changing it – we can significantly influence and transform our perception and experience. For example, when I straighten up and smile, my thoughts also become a little brighter. Some positions or movements may annoy you at first; you may not like them. Take the self-hug position, for instance. Most people are not used to taking care of themselves, which is why this posture often feels very uncomfortable at first. Over time, however, this can change. Don't take my word for it, try it out for yourself.

And now, enough explanations. If you are reading the Not So Fair Fairy Tales on a train, in a queue at the checkout, or during a short break on the loo, I am happy and grateful. Because it means that in your busy day, you found a precious piece of your time and devoted it to this book – and thus to yourself. And if you have deliberately set aside time just for reading, I am twice as happy and invite you to make yourself some hot chocolate, wrap yourself in a blanket and dive in…

Oh – and don't worry, there is always a version with a good ending as well. I just couldn't help myself.

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* What Tumours Teach Us: Parallels in Cell and Human Behavior, Jana Šmardová.
** Either at velmispatnepohadky@gmail.com or via the website www.velmispatnepohadky.cz.
*** Inspired by the Embodiment course by Mark Walsh (embodimentunlimited.com).

you are the creator...

WHATEVER YOU SEND OUT INTO THE WORLD
WILL LIVE ON THERE.

Prelude to Fairy Tales

In a gallaxy far, far away, beyond nine starry nebulae of doubt, beyond nine clouds of desperate tears, and beyond nine black holes of procrastination, there lay the planet Earthia. This planet was very much like Earth – except that on Earthia, things invisible to the human eye could be seen.

On Earthia, there were cities and villages organised into lands, and those lands were grouped into continents. In one of those lands, there was a city; in that city, a house; and in that house, a room – a bright, colourful room, full of photographs, paintings and books. In that room sat Magdalene, writing a book. And while the woman worked diligently, the book blossomed and branched out with tales of mischief-making trolls.

Perhaps you know this already, or perhaps you do not – whatever you devote yourself to in life, from cooking or regular exercise to the writing of a book, sooner or later the trolls will come. They are one-eyed, narrow-minded, and under all circumstances wear only a single sock. In our world, of course, they are invisible. Their life's purpose is always the same: to thwart every human effort.

The moment the book had reached three hundred and fifty-six pages, trolls swarmed in from every direction. They flew in through the windows, crawled up from the floor and poured in from all sides. Each carried a different weapon, each intent on getting past the young woman to reach the book and destroy it.

A black-haired troll wielded the Not-Good-Enough Needler, another had brought along the Dunce Dagger, and yet another dragged the All-Wrong-and-Late Launcher. From the north came a giant troll aiming at

Vážení čtenáři, právě jste dočetli ukázku z knihy ***Not So Fair Fairy Tales*.**
Pokud se Vám ukázka líbila, na našem webu si můžete zakoupit celou knihu.