
Marigold

A Social Inequities Fairytale

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MARIGOLD

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Marigold

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Princess Marigold Doylei of the Kingdom of Glimmerstone remembered a time when her kingdom was free. She remembers the last time she was able to play in the sun. She remembers the last time her mother braided flowers into her hair. She remembers the screams of her mother and father as the flames from the dragon's mouth burned them alive.

There once was a time when human warriors and dragons lived peacefully amongst one another. The humans would leave the dragons to their own devices, allowing them to practice their own cultures and beliefs in peace. The dragons gave the humans the same respect, that is until one fateful day 5 years ago. Dragons lived above the kingdoms of Glimmerstone and Frostspire, each being ruled by their respective families.

Marigold remembers when they first attacked. She was peacefully asleep in her room, her window open to allow the crisp autumn air to fill her senses. She was awoken by the sound of screaming and when she looked out her window, she could see her home and people being burned. Not everyone survived that day, her parents among them. What did survive was her will to live.

When the dragons and their leader Nyx annexed her kingdom, she was devastated by the laws that they put in place. While most of the laws affected the rich men of her kingdom, it doesn't mean she was left to live her life in peace. She was banished to her family home, where she has spent her days wishing she could do more to save her kingdom.

Nyx's reign over her kingdom was like a disease. It affects different groups more harshly than others. Marigold can help but see the similarities between his reign and an ancient disease that affects humans during a time where it was thought that dragons didn't exist. The dragons corralled her kingdom's men into the cattle barns like animals. The dragons assigned all of them a number the larger the number the more worth they provided to the kingdom.

Ironically the poor men of the kingdom all were given a rating of eight or higher, so they were left to live their lives without much change. It's how the dragons treat the rich men of her kingdom that causes her the most pain. The dragons believe that rich people are the poison of the world and therefore they should be treated as such.

Her people were thrown into what her parents named the canyon. Forcibly sterilized using a spell her mother created for women who didn't want or were done having children. This was more a punishment for the women of her kingdom than the men. As they are now forced to have children with the dragons who now pollute her kingdom. She could see her mother rolling around in the mass grave she shares with the other victims. Her heart aches as she thinks of her fiancé Lord Viden Aldway of the Kingdom of Frostspire. When the dragons attacked, he was called to fight them. She would have gone to fight them as well if her father hadn't insisted on her going to the dungeon in order to prevent her family or more accurately her family's monarchy from being wiped out.

Viden died that day along with the rest of her family. All she has left of him is his shield, sword and the imprint he left on her heart, she doesn't know how they ended up at the front of her family's castle, but she's learned over the years not to ask questions. Her thoughts are

broken when the strangled sounds of her kingdom screaming starts once more. Contrary to what Nyx believes Marigold is not some damsel in distress who will spend the rest of her days mourning her family while her kingdom is burned to the ground.

Her mother was a fighter before she married her father and became queen. She was the head of her kingdom's fighters. For as long as she could remember her mother taught Marigold everything she needed to know when it came to fighting. Her father on the other hand was skilled in craftsmanship. In fact, he was the one who made her wedding dress and her wedding band. He taught her how to make almost everything herself, including her own armour.

She's been waiting for this moment for years. Nyx made one mistake when banishing her in her family home. He gave her time, lots of time and most importantly he gave her lots of time alone. As she laces up her armour and braids her long blonde hair in the same style that her mother used to wear. She can't help but remember what she is doing this for. Yes, she could die today, does she want to die, no but is she okay with dying if it means her kingdom will be free, yes.

As she picks up her shield and sword, running her hand over the handle feeling the imprints of her husband's hand. She breathes deeply taking one last look at her family home and hoping that the next time she sees it, it would be a brighter world.

Marigold knew that her kingdom would look different from the last time she saw it. What she didn't account for was how different it would be. The dragons have destroyed everything good about her kingdom. What was once bright is now dull, what once was happy was now sad. As she stands above where she knows Nyx hides within her kingdom, she breathes deeply, resisting the urge to cough due to the smoke in the air. She takes her sword and runs the blade across her hand. Dragons can smell blood, and she knows for a fact that Nyx has trained himself to smell hers.

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The ground shakes and everything around her goes still. She strengthens her gaze as Nyx's dark scaly form comes into view. His eyes bore into her as she pulls out her sword. While he might be at least three times her size he doesn't intimidate her. He speaks to her, threatens to kill her, but she just laughs knowing that he underestimated her.

What most people don't know about dragons is their hearts are the most accessible organ to humans. Luckily for Marigold she's the perfect height to access Nyx's heart. Marigold doesn't hesitate; she takes her sword and slices it through Nyx's heart, freeing not only herself but her kingdom from further heartache. As the dragon falls to the ground she feels a soft feeling against her hair. She smiles knowing the ones she loved were here the whole time.

THE END

The Academics Behind Marigold

The Facts That Inspired The Fiction

My Fairytale Marigold is inspired by many things going on in today's world. It's also inspired by some literature. The elements within Marigold are either metaphors or retellings of what is happening in today's society especially related to the topics of Gender, The Inequities of the Covid 19 pandemic and the rise of fascism. With the assistance of outside sources used during this course as references. I will explain and explore my thinking and reasoning behind my fairytale and how it helps explain the social inequities throughout today's society.

The main overarching plot of Marigold was mainly inspired by the exploration of gender during the course. I wanted to explore the concept of having the male characters in the story being rescued by a strong female character. Unlike with what we see in most fairytale literature and their multiple different adaptations such as Disney's adaptations of the Brothers Grimm fairytales Snow White or Sleeping Beauty. In those stories the woman is saved by the man but in my story, I wanted to explore the reverse of this concept. The plot was also inspired by the topic of the inequities of covid-19. We learn from the materials provided for this topic that covid affected lower class people more than the upper-

class people. As referenced in the article ‘Taking Aim and Sellers inflation’ written by Isabella Webber. The Covid pandemic caused what Webber dubs Seller’s inflation which the article explains as “when the corporate sector manages to pass on a major cost shock to consumers by increasing prices to protect or enhance its profit margins.” (Weber, 2023) Inflation often effects lower- and middle-class families and people more than upper class people. With Marigold I wanted to explore this concept but because I do enjoy an interesting plot point instead of my antagonist affecting the poor. It affects the rich instead. Another part of the overarching plot is the concept of women being forced to carry babies. This is inspired by the consequences of the United States overturning Roe V Wade. Roe V Wade is the ruling that made abortion legal in all fifty states. The lawsuit was on the bases that it was unconstitutional for Texas to ban abortion especially when it’s to protect the life of the mother. (Supreme Court, 1973)

The ranking system within Marigold was inspired by the book *The Handmaid’s Tale*. In the book there is a government enforced hierarchy. For example, Handmaids are below wives in the Handmaid’s Tale, and they are forced to bear children for the state of Gilead. (Atwood, 1996) For Marigold I wanted to take this concept and turn it on its head. In Marigold the higher the rank the more worth you are given. In the handmaid’s tale commanders, which is the highest rank in the hierarchy are often men with a high amount of influence. (Atwood, 1996) In Marigold it is the poor who are on top of the food chain so to speak. However, with this in mind it also goes to say that while the poor have the highest rankings. There is a sour note to it, they have more power but because they are poor, they are powerless to stop the dragons reign on their kingdom.

The character of Nyx and the whole species of dragons in general within Marigold was inspired by two things. One the inequities of Covid-19 as well as the exploration of the concept of fascism. The dragon takeover of the Kingdom of Glimmerstone can be seen as similar to a fascist regime. In the book *How Fascism Works* by Jason Stanley

the author explains the different elements of a fascist regime. One of these elements is a mythic past which the book explains as “In all fascist mythic pasts, an extreme version of the patriarchal family reigns supreme, even just a few generations ago. Further back in time, the mythic past was a time of glory of the nation” (Stanley, 2018) In *Marigold* the dragons believe that the rich are the problem and in can be inferred that they used the concept of a mythic past to make everyone else believe it to be true. Problem is the Heroine of *Marigold* doesn’t quite believe what they are pushing and well it leads to their demise. Nyx and the dragons were also inspired by Covid. In particular the concept of it affecting lower class people more than upper class as explained above. For *Marigold* I wanted to take this concept and reverse it making the impacts heavier on the rich than the poor.

The character of Viden was a character created out of necessity every good heroine needs something to fight for and due to traditional gender roles in today’s society I felt that *Marigold* needed something more to fight for than just her kingdom. As women it is easy sometimes to not help men especially when they don’t help women in return, we see this in things such as the overturning of *Roe V Wade*. The character of Viden was used to give *Marigold* something to fight for other than saving the men of her kingdom.

The family dynamics within *Marigold* were once again inspired by our exploration of gender during the course. In *Marigold* I wanted to explore the idea of gender roles by flipping them upside down. *Marigold’s* mother was a warrior, a true fighter and taught *Marigold* everything she needed to know about fighting. *Marigold’s* father was a craftsman teaching her how to make everything she would ever need. Traditionally in fairytales the woman would not be the one fighting, she would be the one crafting. It would also be traditional for the men to go out and fight. While I have this in *Marigold*, I used it to further move along the plot. Whereas most traditional fairytales would use it a major plot point.

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Finally, the character of Marigold was inspired by many things, but it was mostly inspired by the concept of gender. For Marigold I wanted to write a strong independent heroine who also had a heart and a sense of compassion. I wanted a strong female lead who not only had physical strength but also emotional strength to fight for what she believed in. Typically, in traditional fairytales the women are portrayed as damsels in distress and in need of a man usually an eventual lover to save them. I wanted to reverse that notion and have the woman save the men instead.

My fairytale Marigold was inspired not only by my imagination but also different topics throughout the course. I wanted to explore these topics in a non-traditional light and think outside the box with them while also satisfying my need to creativity. In conclusion my fairytale Marigold was inspired by the course's exploration of gender, covid and fascism.

Acknowledgments

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