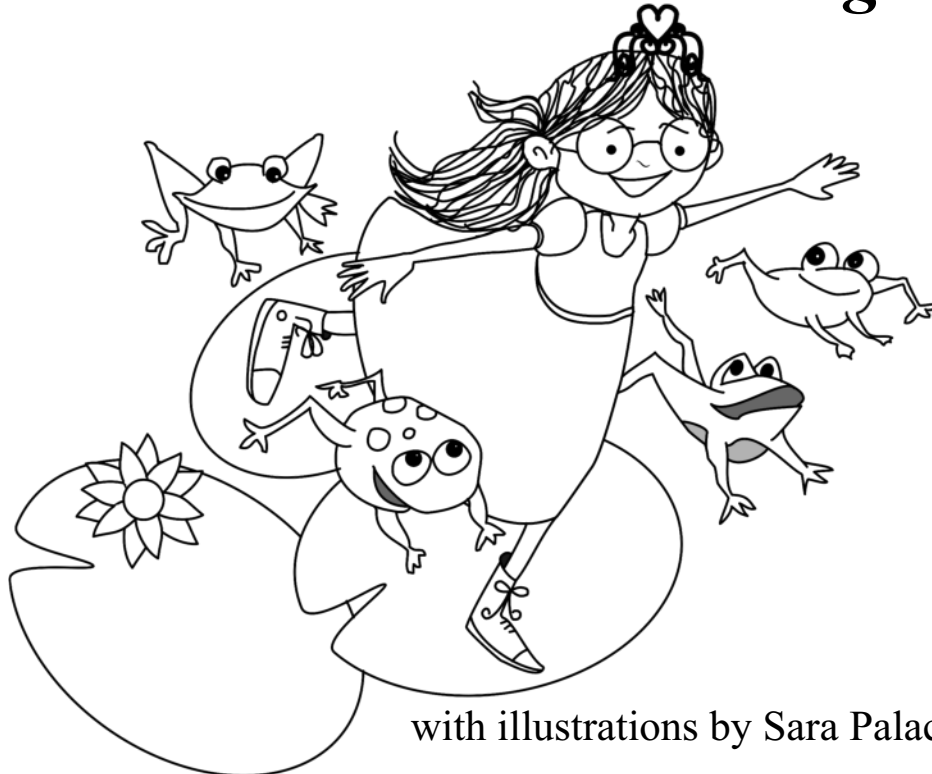# *How to Fracture a Fairy Tale*

by Veronica Bartles, author of
The Princess and the Frogs

with illustrations by Sara Palacios

How to Fracture a Fairy Tale

by author Veronica Bartles

"What if…?" is a magical question! Start with your favorite fairy tale, myth, legend, or   any story that is familiar to you (even your own experiences). When you ask "What if?" the possibilities are limitless! A few ideas to get you started:

Turn it Upside Down - *What if the princess didn't want to marry a prince? What if she really just wanted a frog? But what if she kept kissing the frogs and getting princes instead?* Twist the happy ending everyone expects and turn it on its head. What would happen if the main character didn't want the storybook ending we are familiar with? What would they do differently? How might this change your story? (example: *The Princess and the Frogs,* by Veronica Bartles)

Switch POV - *What if Sleeping Beauty was snoring so loudly that a mouse who shared the castle couldn't sleep? What if he had to find a prince to kiss her awake before he could get a decent rest?* Tell the story from someone else's perspective. This could be the villain, the sidekick, the pet dog, or even a piece of furniture! How does this change the story? What might happen differently? Is the "happily ever after" ending still a happy one for your new main character? How might you write it differently? (example: *Snoring Beauty,* by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen)

Change the Setting - *What if Little, Red Riding Hood wasn't walking through the woods to Granny's house, but trying to win an ice-skating competition instead? What if she needed a partner, and the wolf was a pretty good skater as well?* Setting plays a big role in the story. How might your story be different if it happened in a big city? In outer space? Under the sea? Which other elements of the story would change if the setting was different? (example: *Little, Red Gliding Hood*, by Tara Lazar)

Give Your Character a New Skill - *What if the three little pigs went to ninja school to learn how to fight back, instead of hiding from the wolf?* Sometimes, our favorite tales have very passive main characters. How might your story be different if your main character had a more powerful skill set? What if they had a hobby? How might they approach their troubles differently? (example: *The Three Ninja Pigs*, by Corey Rosen Schwartz)

Other ideas for fracturing fairy tales:

- **Be Punny -** a clever play on words might spin your tale in an entirely new direction!
- **Change One Important Element -** Instead of glass slippers, what if Cinderella wore her favorite, ratty sneakers to the ball?
- **Role Reversal -** What if Beauty *was* the Beast? What if Snow White had to wake the prince from a sleeping spell?
- **Switch Genders -** Would the story be different if the princess was rescuing the prince, instead of the other way around?
- **Substitute other creatures/objects for your main characters/antagonists -** How might the story change if they were dinosaurs? Race cars? Sharks? Bugs?
- **Time Travel -** How might the story change if it happened today, instead of Once upon a time? What if it happened in the far-off future? Or in ancient Egypt?

What other "What if?" possibilities can you imagine?

Fracturing Fairy Tales & Other Familiar Stories

1. **Start with a Story:** *What is your favorite fairy tale, myth, or legend?*

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2. **Identify what you Already Know:** *Briefly summarize the original story. What happens in the beginning? Middle? End?* _____

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3. **Ask "What if…?":** *Make a list of all the ways the story might change when you follow the "What if…?" prompts listed.* _____

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Fracturing Fairy Tales & Other Familiar Stories

4. **Alter the Narrative:** *Pick one "What if…?" from your list & apply it to your story. How does it change things?* _____

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5. **Ask "What next?":** *When one thing changes in a story, other parts of the original story might not make sense anymore. What else might need to change?* _____

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6. **Write your New Story:** *Continue to ask "What if…?" and "What next?" as you write, until you have a story all your own!* _____

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Now try it with your own real-life story! What happened yesterday? What might happen tomorrow? Or the day after? Ask "What if…?" and "What next?" to rewrite your own narrative!