

Why Fairy Tales?

Alaska State Literacy Association
Anchorage, AK, February, 2014



MINDY DWYER

What is a Fairy Tale?



short story featuring
fantastical characters:
fairies, goblins, elves, trolls,
dwarves, giants, witches,
or mermaids



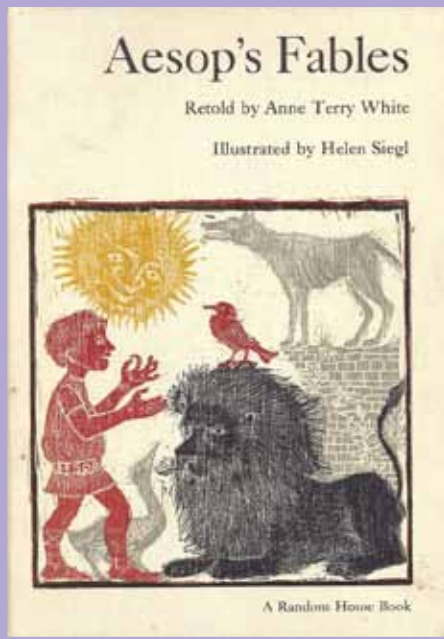
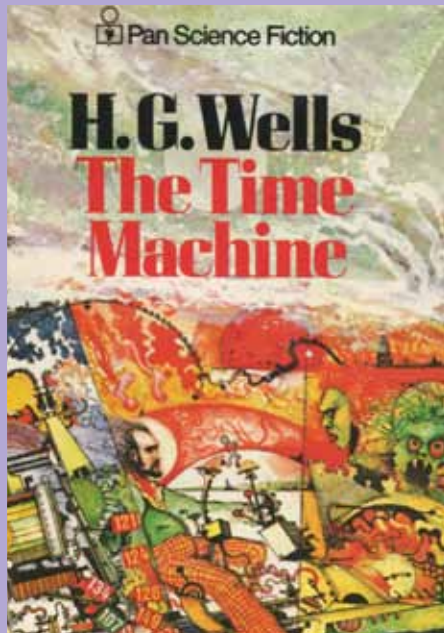
magic or enchantments
taking place once upon a time
rather than in actual times



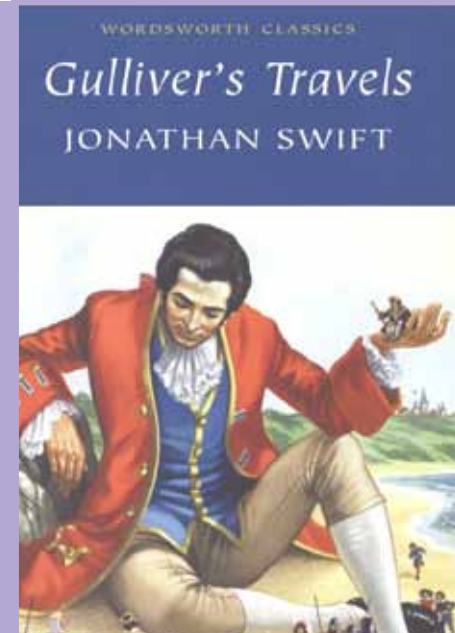
definite structure
with attempts made in threes

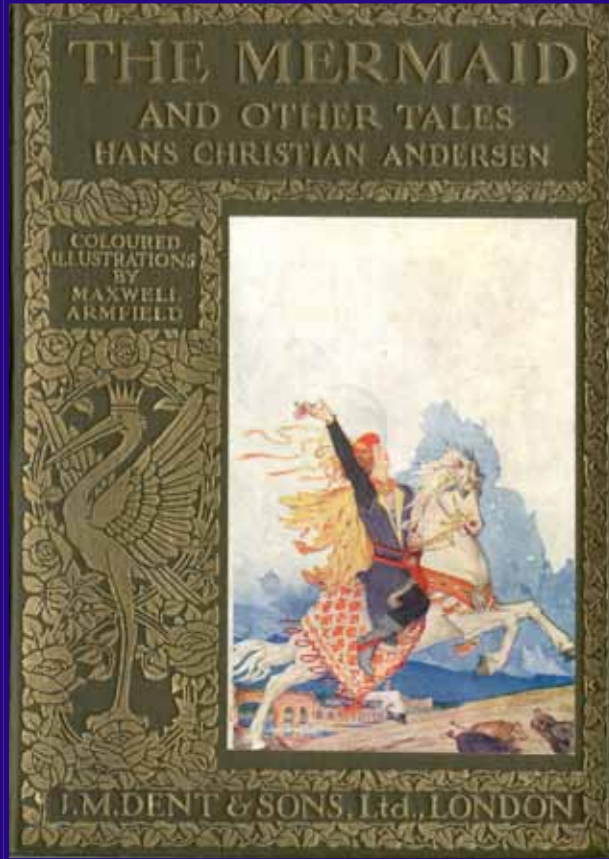
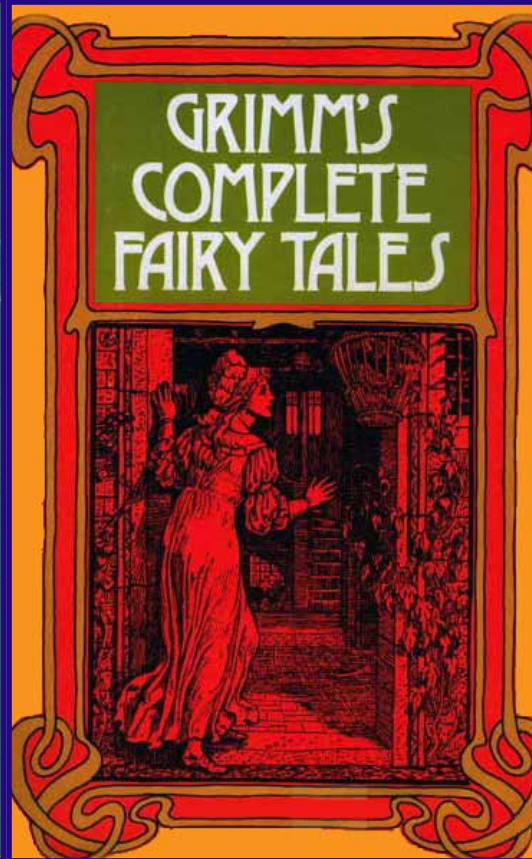
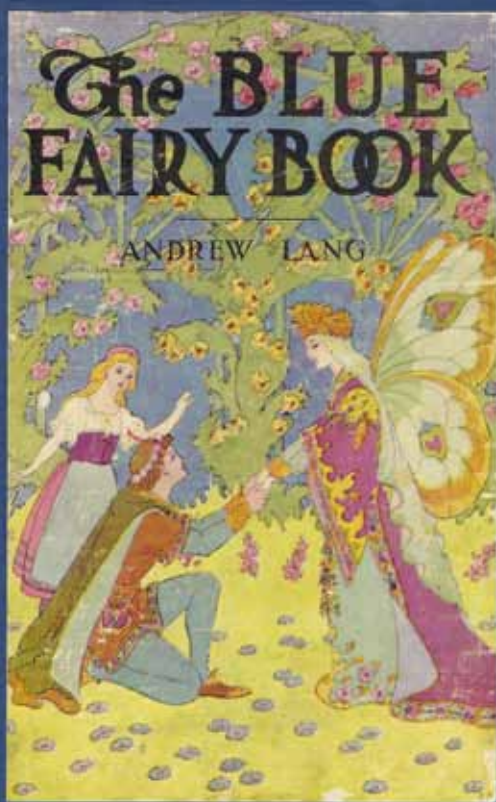
improbable events
lead to a happy ending





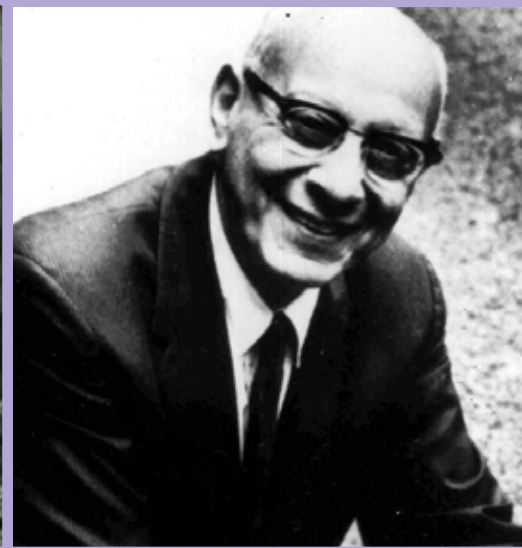
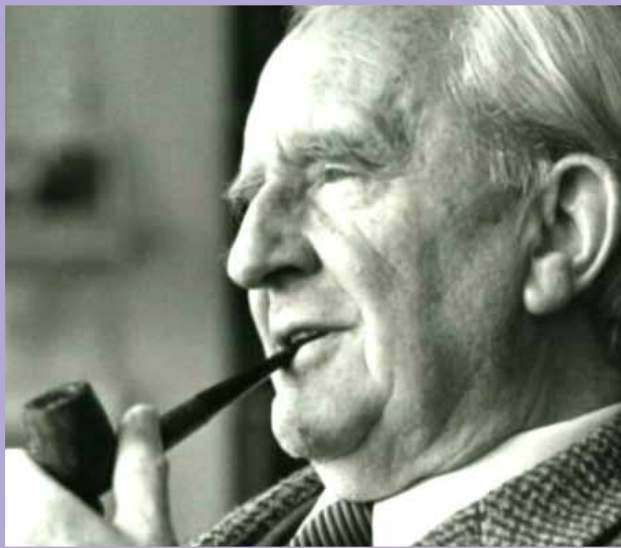
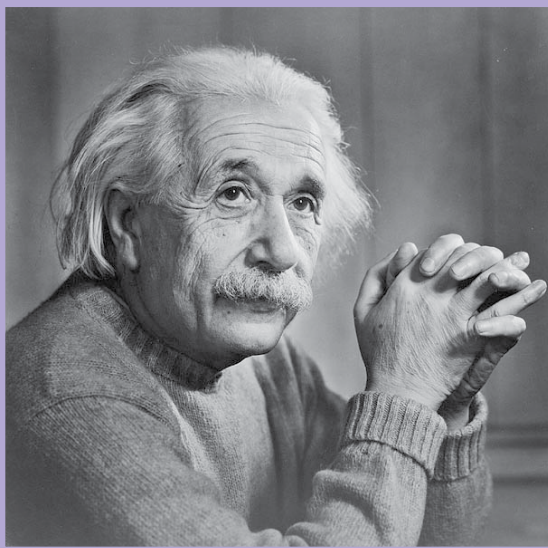
not
traveller's tales
science fiction
beast tales
or dream stories





Not today...





Einstein
Tolkien
Bettleheim

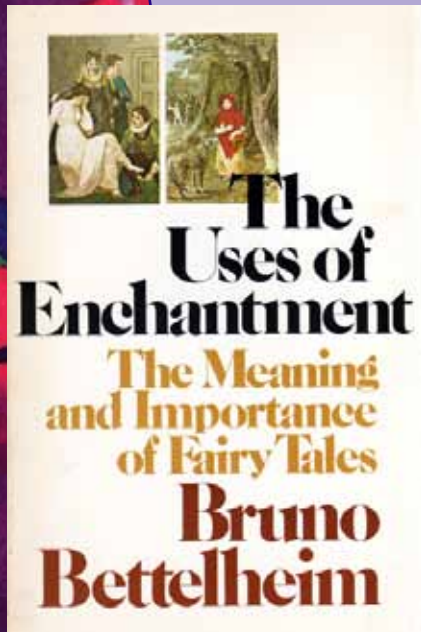


Bruno Bettelheim

Vienna 1903 (America 1939) -1990

scholar and educator
of psychology and psychiatry
published sixteen books
& many scholarly papers

1977 National Book Award
National Book Critics Circle Award
The Uses of Enchantment



decisions are up to us
if we choose to make any

respond to hidden meanings
make application to our own life

or simply enjoy the fantastic events



Bruno Bettelheim

fairy tale hero performs miraculous feats
child with imagined or real inadequacies
can identify with the hero's transfiguration
in the end is returned to reality



Bruno Bettelheim

deepest meaning will be different
for each person

at various moments in his life

entertains and enlightens child
about himself fosters personality



Bruno Bettelheim

fairy tales
offer meaning on so many different levels
to enrich child's existence

“Children's play should be regarded as their most
serious actions.”



Bruno Bettelheim



“Each fairy tale is a magic mirror which reflects some aspects of our inner world, and of the steps required by our evolution from immaturity to maturity. For those who immerse themselves in what the fairy tale has to communicate, it becomes a deep, quiet pool which at first seems to reflect our own image; but behind it we soon discover the inner turmoils of our soul – its depth, and ways to gain peace within ourselves and with the world, which is the reward of our struggles.”

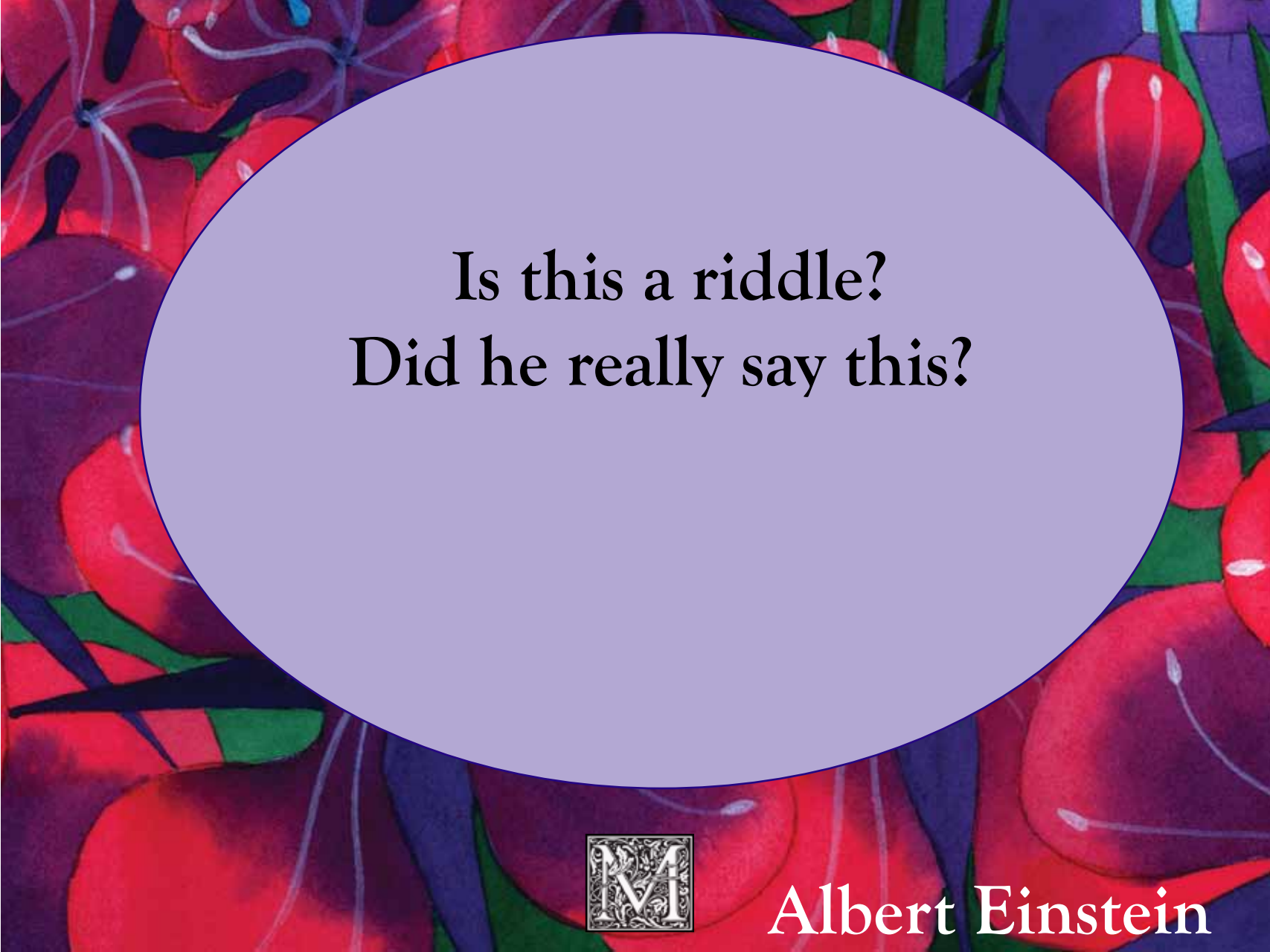
—Bruno Bettelheim



“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.”



Albert Einstein



Is this a riddle?
Did he really say this?



Albert Einstein

not intelligence
but how to prepare for a career in science

As with folk tales, this information comes from
someone who knew someone.

Folklorists call this FOAF,
which stands for “Friend Of A Friend.”



Albert Einstein

folktales = foaftales

The story goes...

there was a woman who was a friend of Dr. Albert Einstein who hoped her son might become a scientist who asked Dr. Einstein's advice about the kind of reading that would prepare her child for a career in science...



Albert Einstein

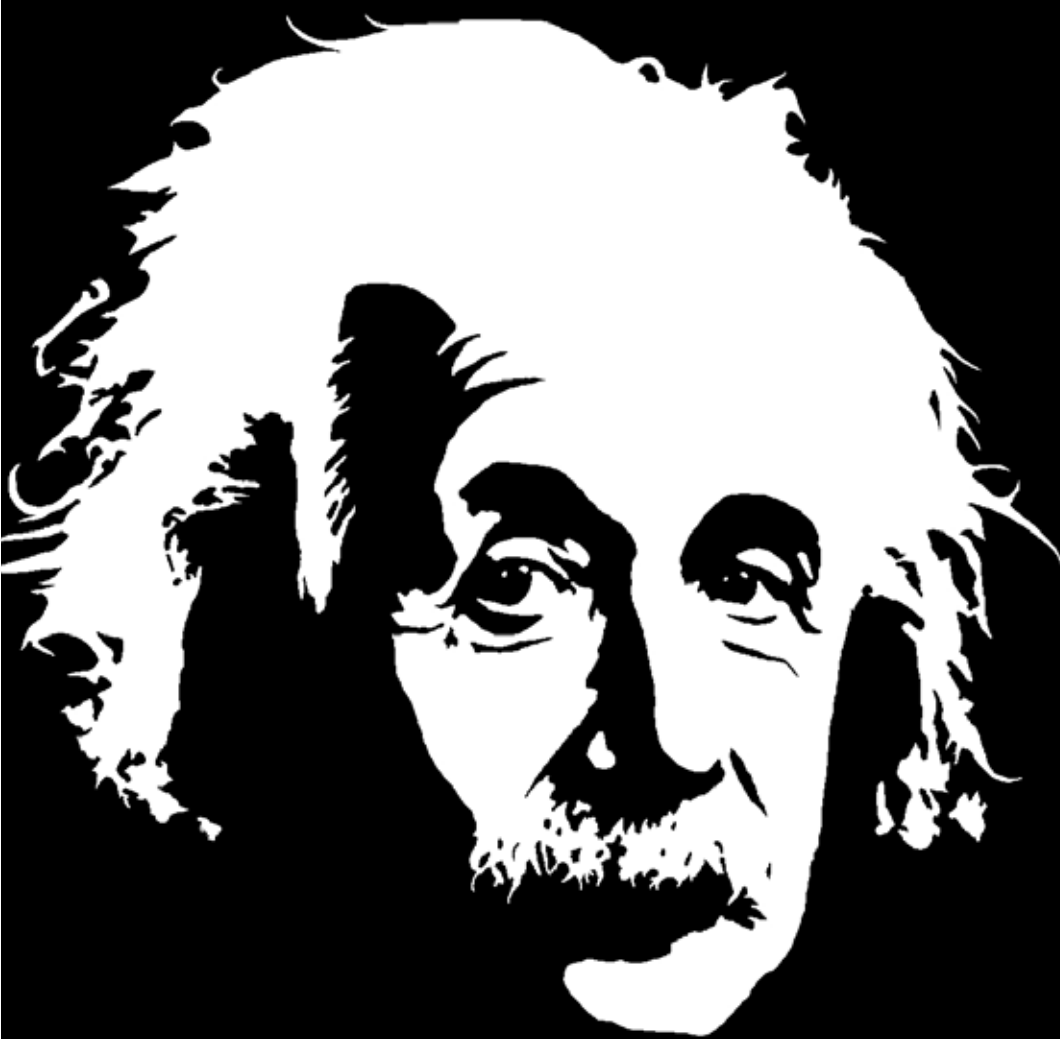
“Fairy tales and more fairy tales!”

Creative imagination is the essential element
in the intellectual equipment of the true scientist

fairy tales are the childhood
stimulus to this quality



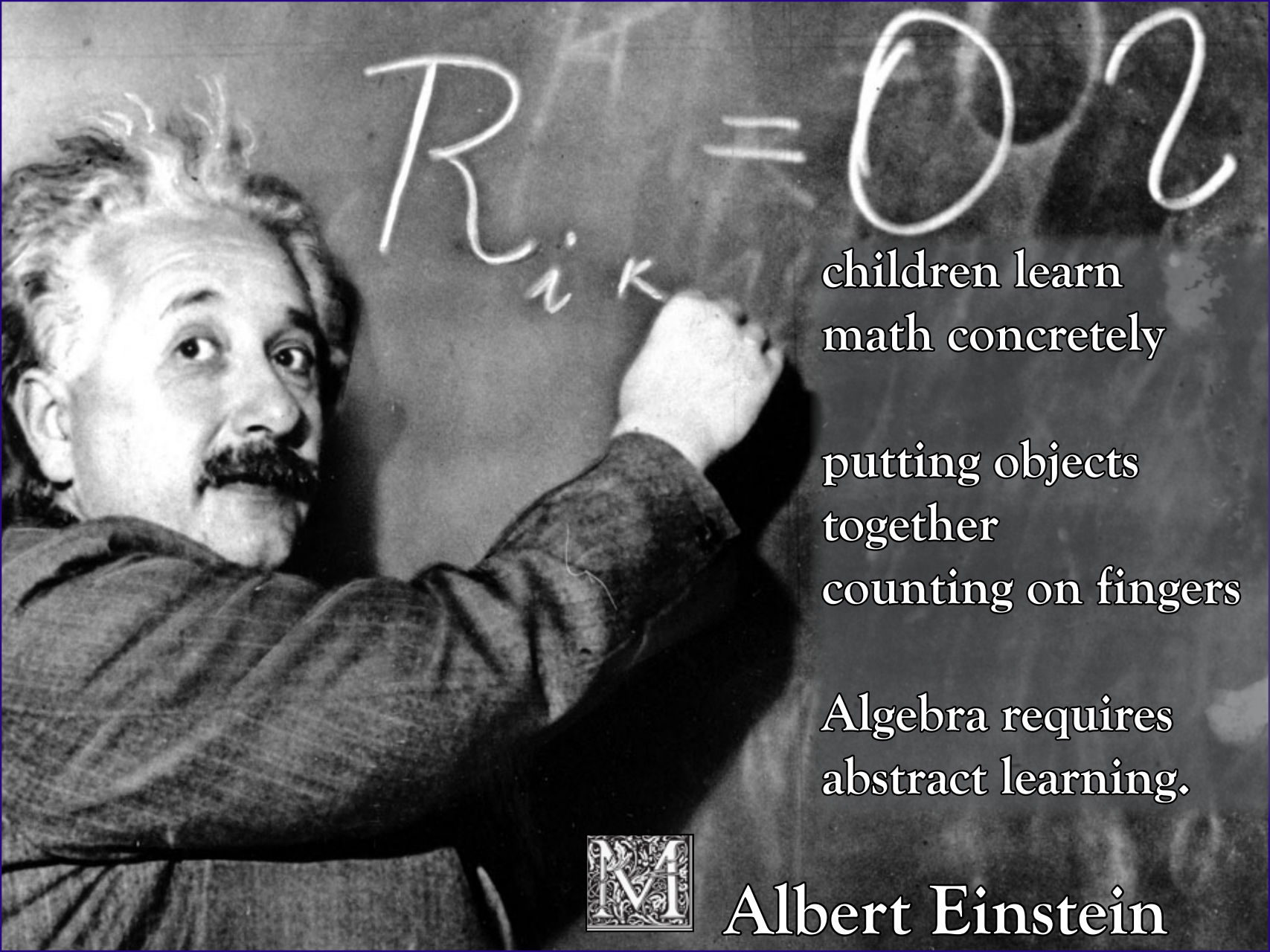
Albert Einstein



“When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking.”



Albert Einstein



$$R_{ik} = 0$$

children learn
math concretely

putting objects
together
counting on fingers

Algebra requires
abstract learning.



Albert Einstein



When children hear a story that begins in “once upon a time” they are entertaining ideas in their heads. They know it didn’t actually happen and they are thinking abstractly in a basic, graspable form.

“ Play is the highest form of research.”



Albert Einstein



presence of magic

transformation is the key feature of the genre

takes the child on a trip into a wondrous
world, at the end returns the child
in a reassuring manner



JRR Tolkien



presence of magic

transformation is the key feature of the genre

takes the child on a trip into a wondrous
world, at the end returns the child
in a reassuring manner

a truly good fairy story is marked by joy



JRR Tolkien



“Far more powerful and poignant is the effect of joy, when the sudden turn comes, we get a piercing glimpse of joy, and heart’s desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through.”



JRR Tolkien

How is a fairy tale different from fantasy?



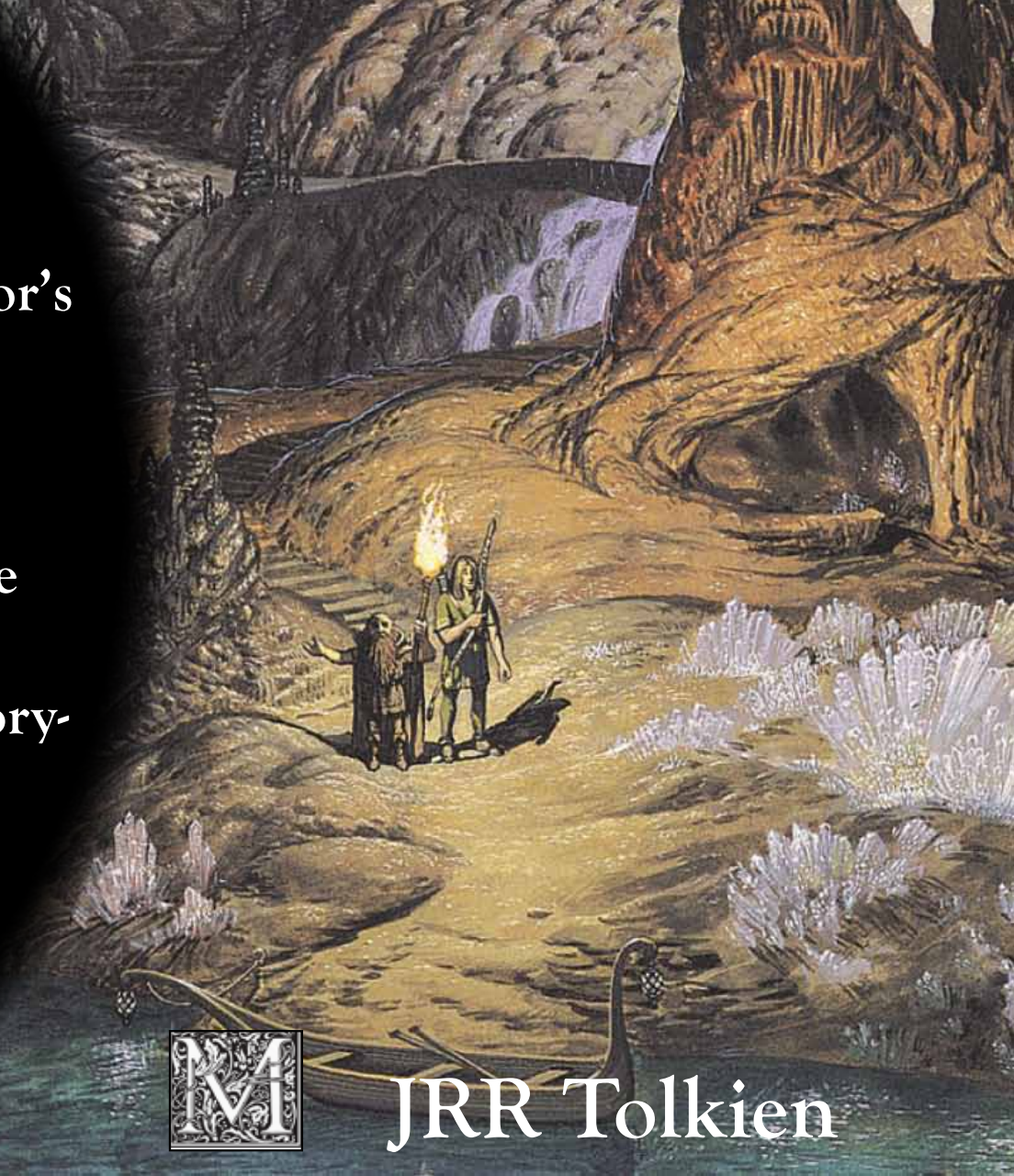
JRR Tolkien

fantasy writing

alternative world
recognisably the author's
as the setting for
speculative fiction

Secondary Belief is made
possible by art
when done right is story-
making in its most
potent mode

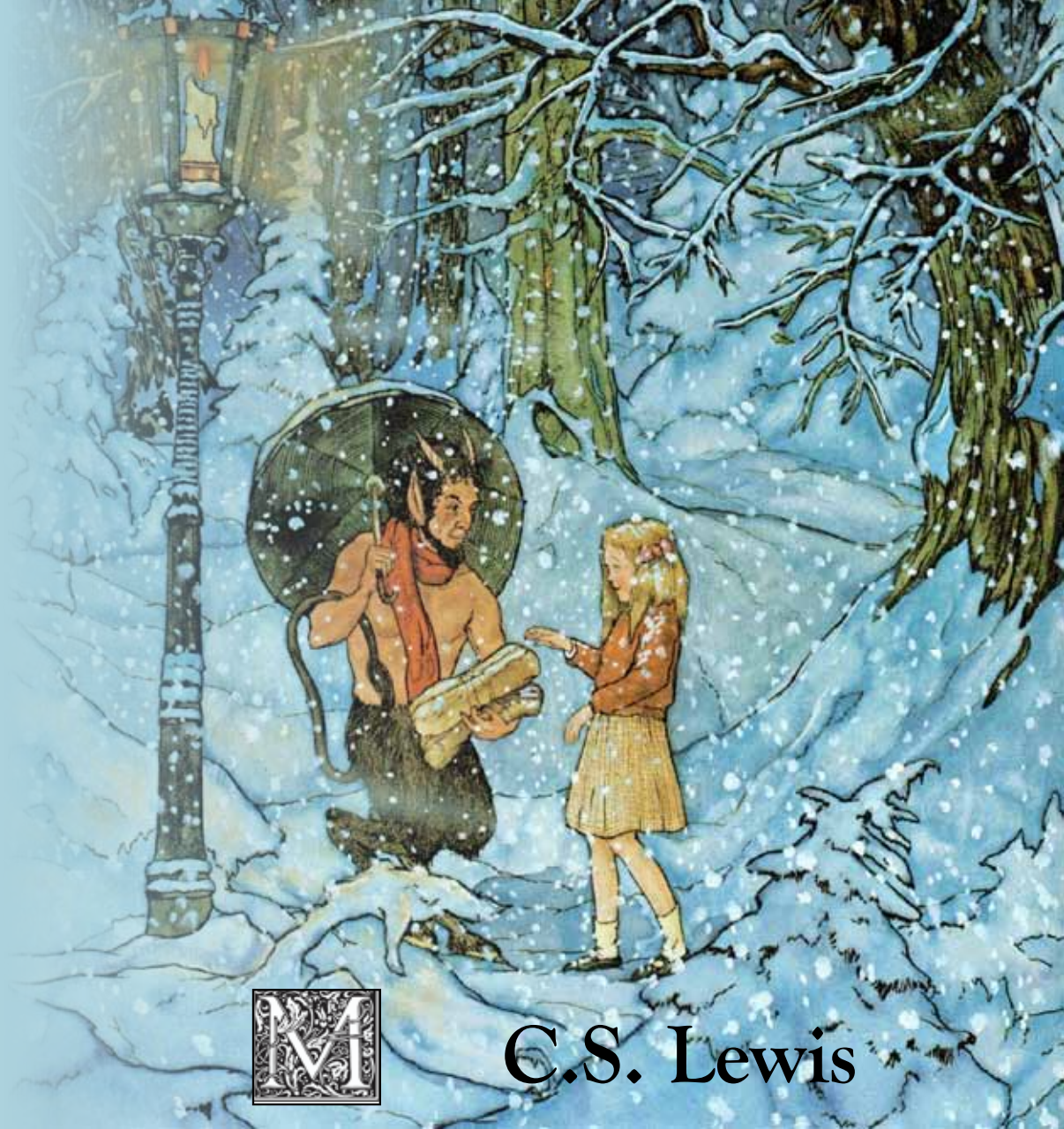
Tolkien and
C. S. Lewis
were the first



JRR Tolkien

a consistent
and rational
world

rules outside
the normal
world



C.S. Lewis

Real vs True

story as credible

no figment or illusion

magic must be taken seriously

not laughed at or explained away



JRR Tolkien

Real vs True

“Fairytale are more than true, not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.”



G.K. Chesterton

Real vs True

Children's feelings are more complex than their language can support.

Fictional children are given a language that honors their intuitions, or inner life returning a child's helplessness to dignity.

—from *What Maisie Knew*, 1897



Henry James



Truth

What every fairy tale hero yearns for is
not pearls kingdoms or gold but
real treasure - the truth



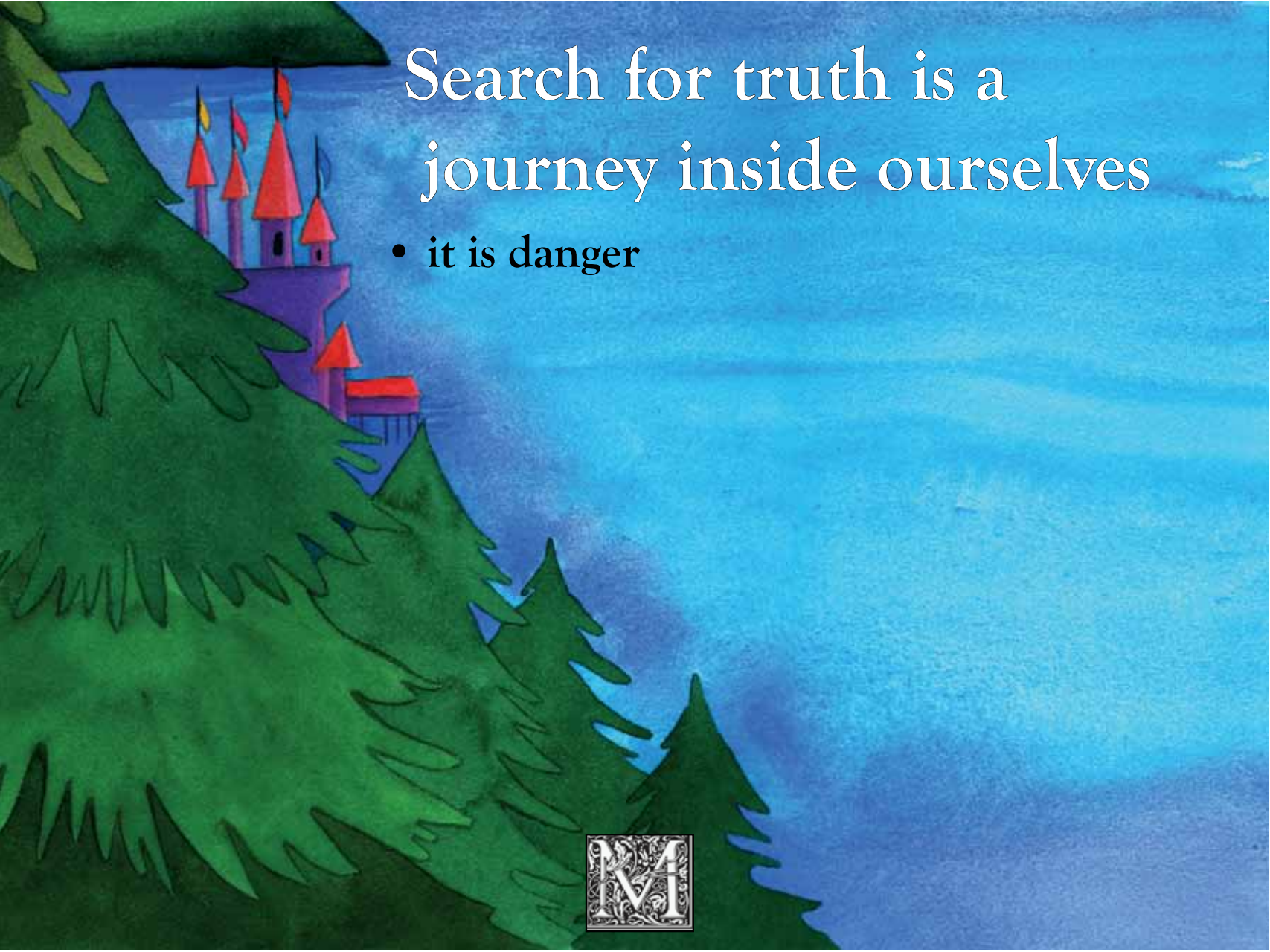


Truth

What every fairy tale hero yearns for is
not pearls kingdoms or gold but
real treasure - the truth

Riddle disguises our deepest
truth written in blood,
glass, bone, hair and stone

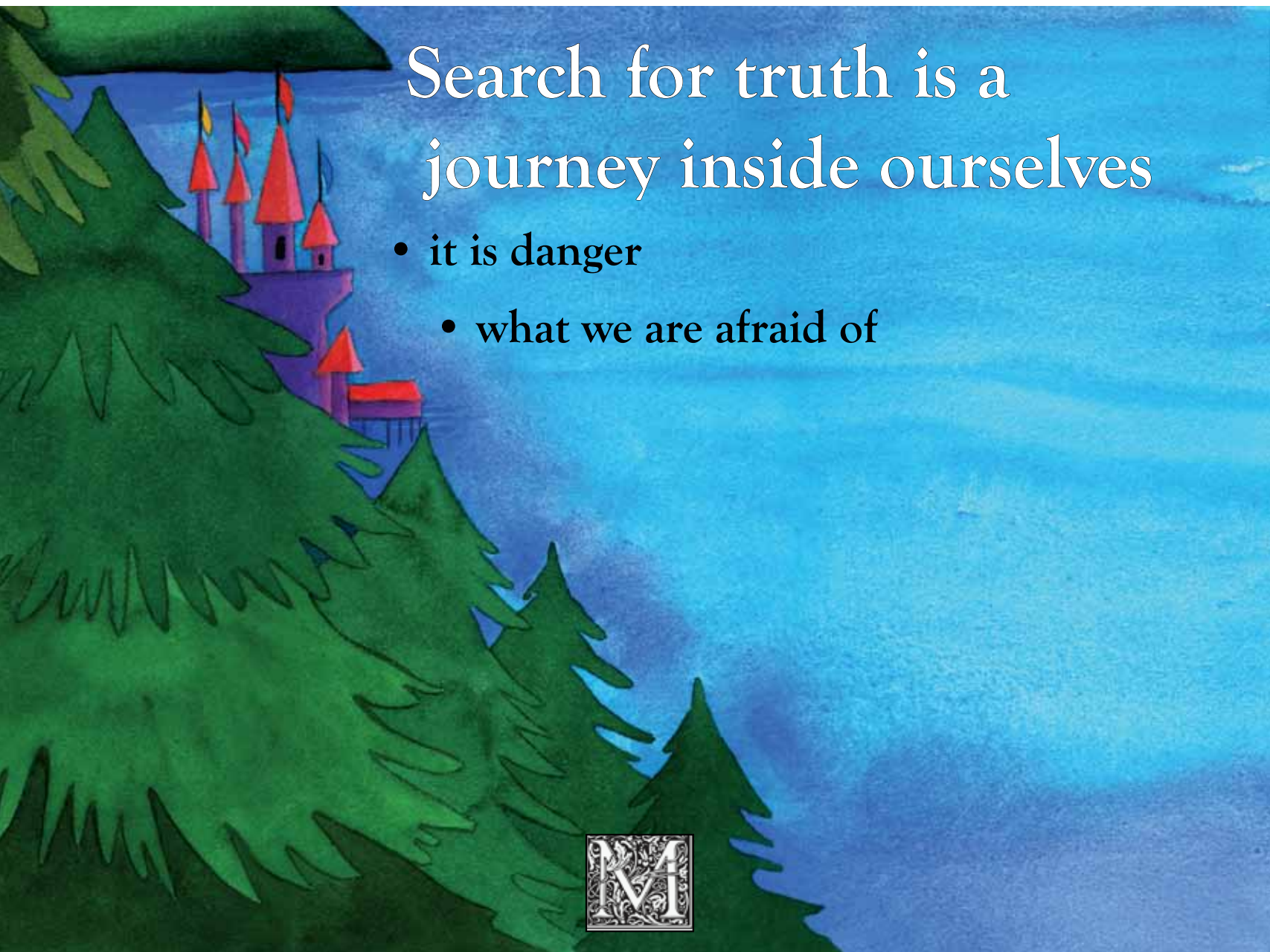




Search for truth is a journey inside ourselves

- it is danger

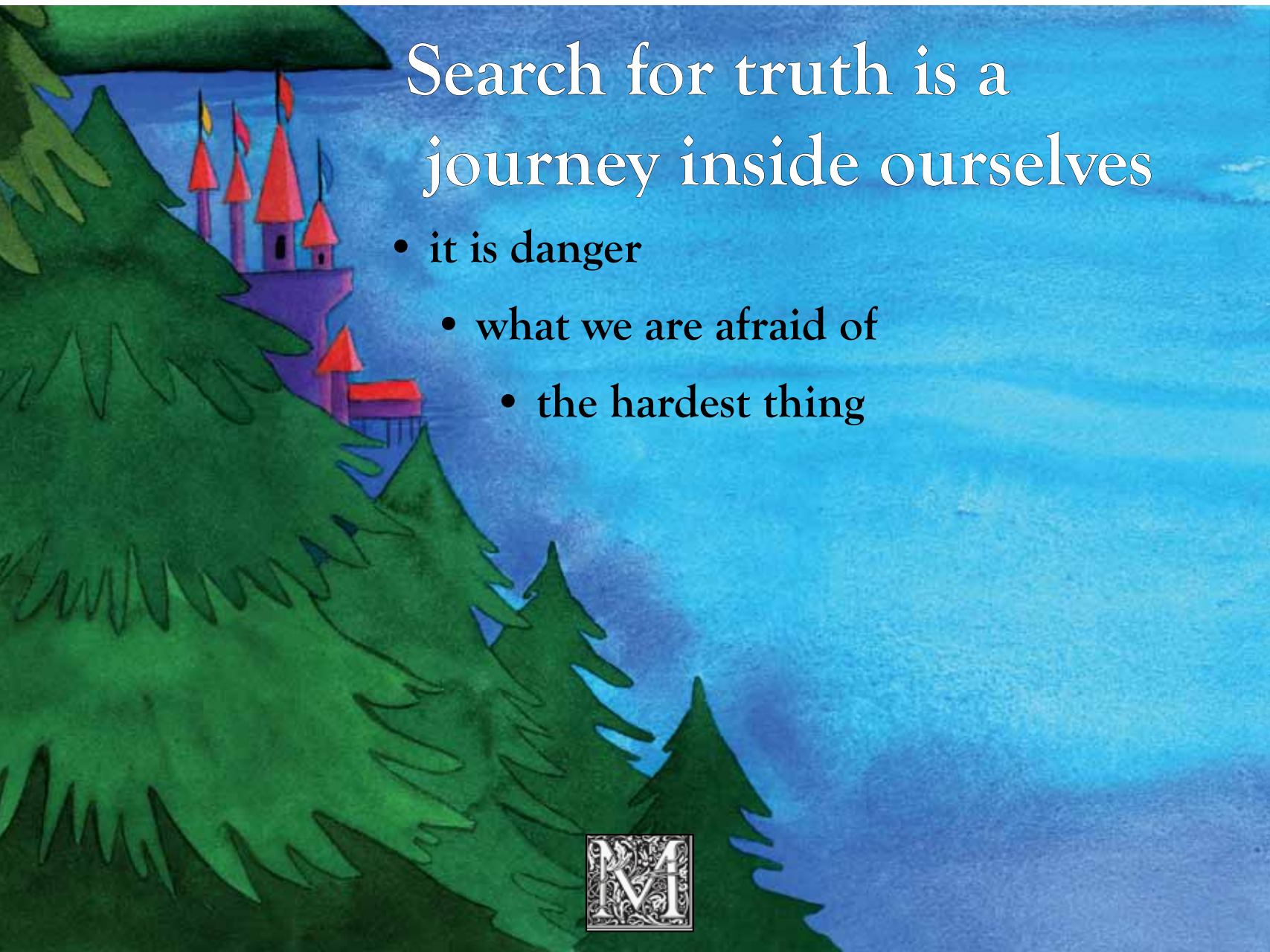




Search for truth is a journey inside ourselves

- it is danger
 - what we are afraid of

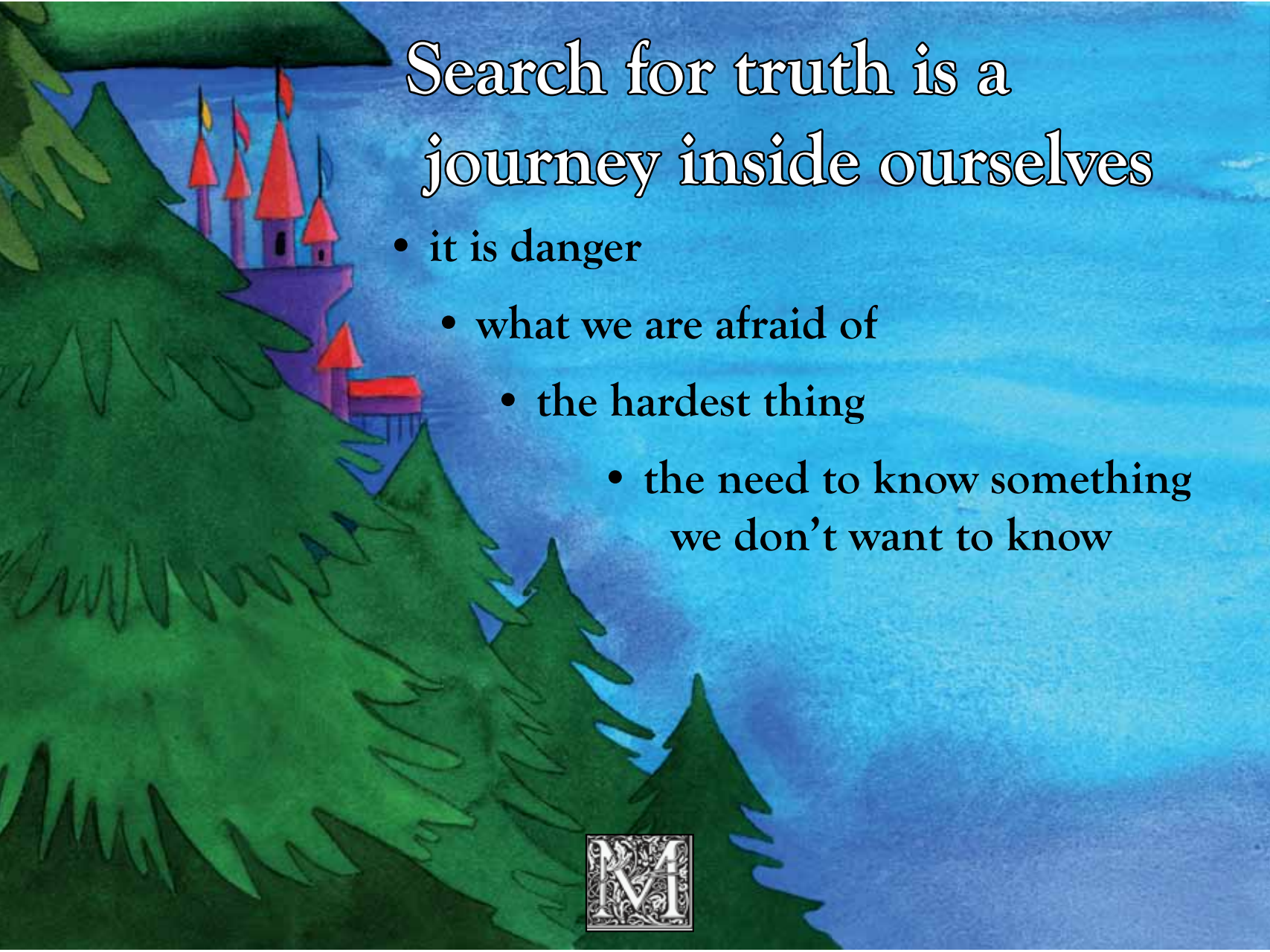




Search for truth is a journey inside ourselves

- it is danger
 - what we are afraid of
 - the hardest thing

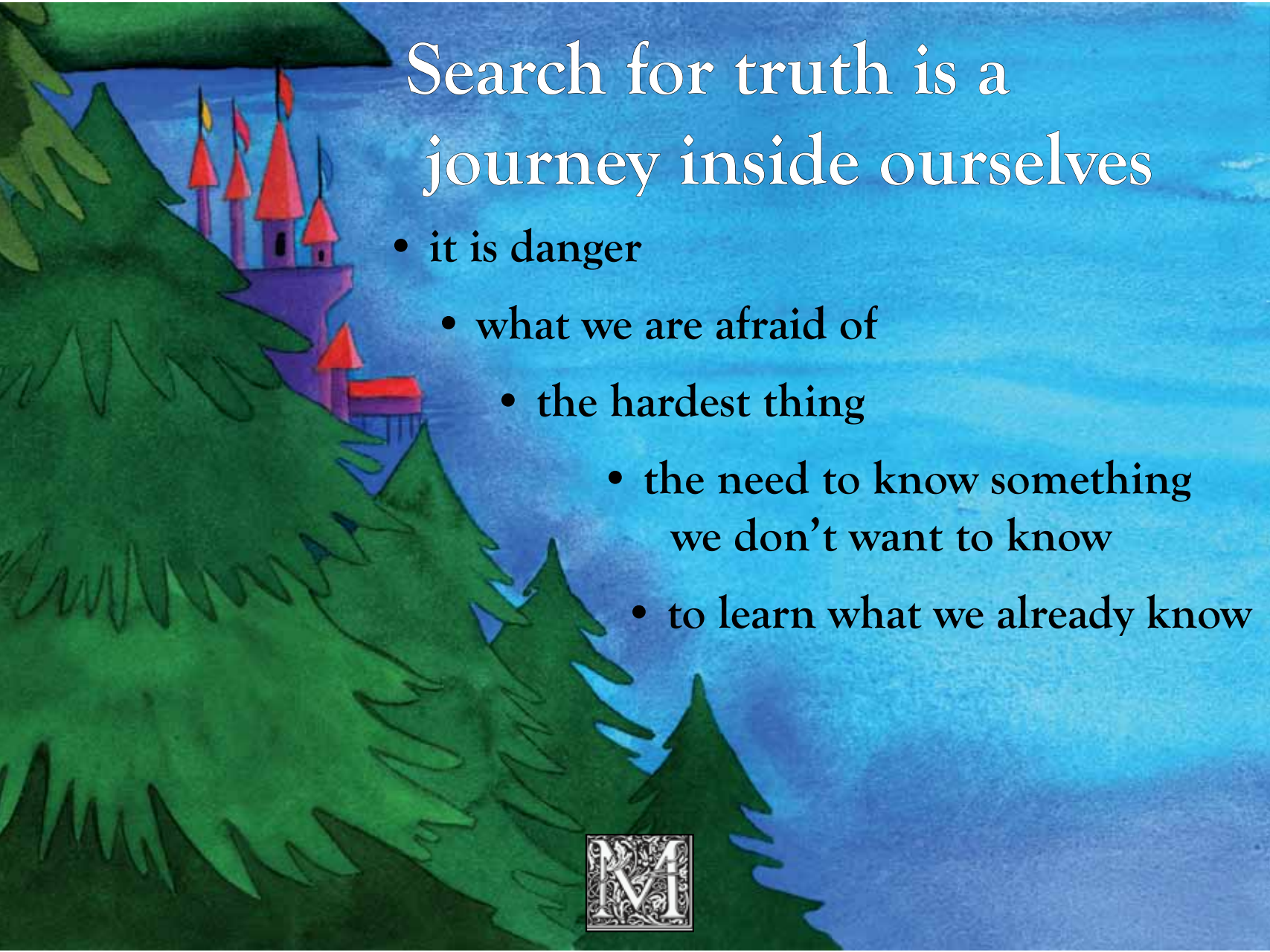




Search for truth is a journey inside ourselves

- it is danger
 - what we are afraid of
 - the hardest thing
 - the need to know something
we don't want to know

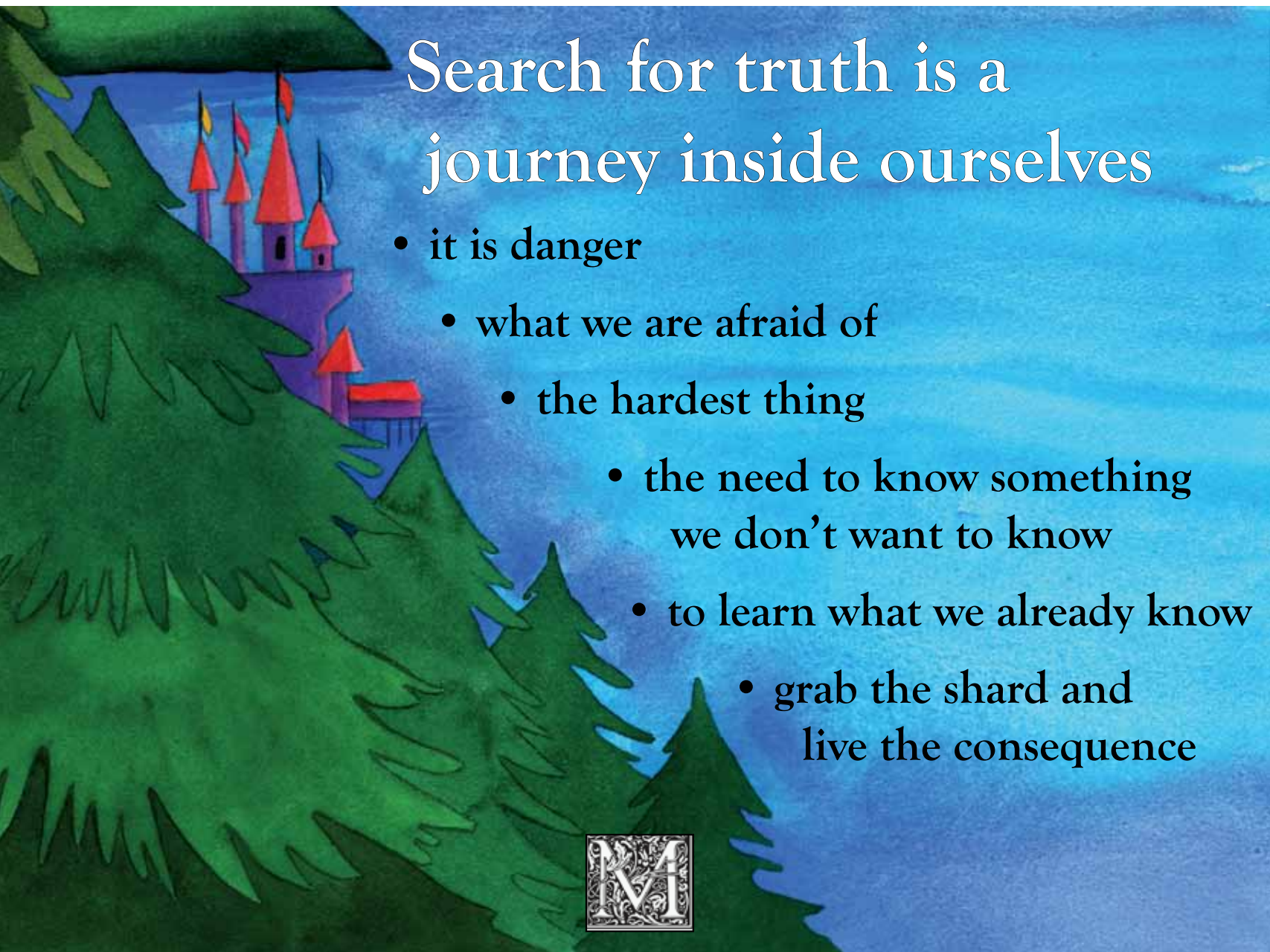




Search for truth is a journey inside ourselves

- it is danger
 - what we are afraid of
 - the hardest thing
 - the need to know something we don't want to know
 - to learn what we already know





Search for truth is a journey inside ourselves

- it is danger
 - what we are afraid of
 - the hardest thing
 - the need to know something we don't want to know
 - to learn what we already know
 - grab the shard and live the consequence



story is the search

light disguises truth

truth

is the treasure
in the dark
unknown



story is the search

light disguises truth

truth

is the treasure
in the dark
unknown

riddle

clues are
written in
stone, blood,
tears, bone,
snow

logic is fluid
hero must
learn



story is the search

light disguises truth

truth

is the treasure
in the dark
unknown

riddle

clues are
written in
stone, blood,
tears, bone,
snow

logic is fluid
hero must
learn

threshold

a door to open

the “aha!”
moment



story is the search

light disguises truth

truth

is the treasure
in the dark
unknown

riddle

clues are
written in
stone, blood,
tears, bone,
snow

logic is fluid
hero must
learn

journey

right way is always
the hardest
try three times

threshold

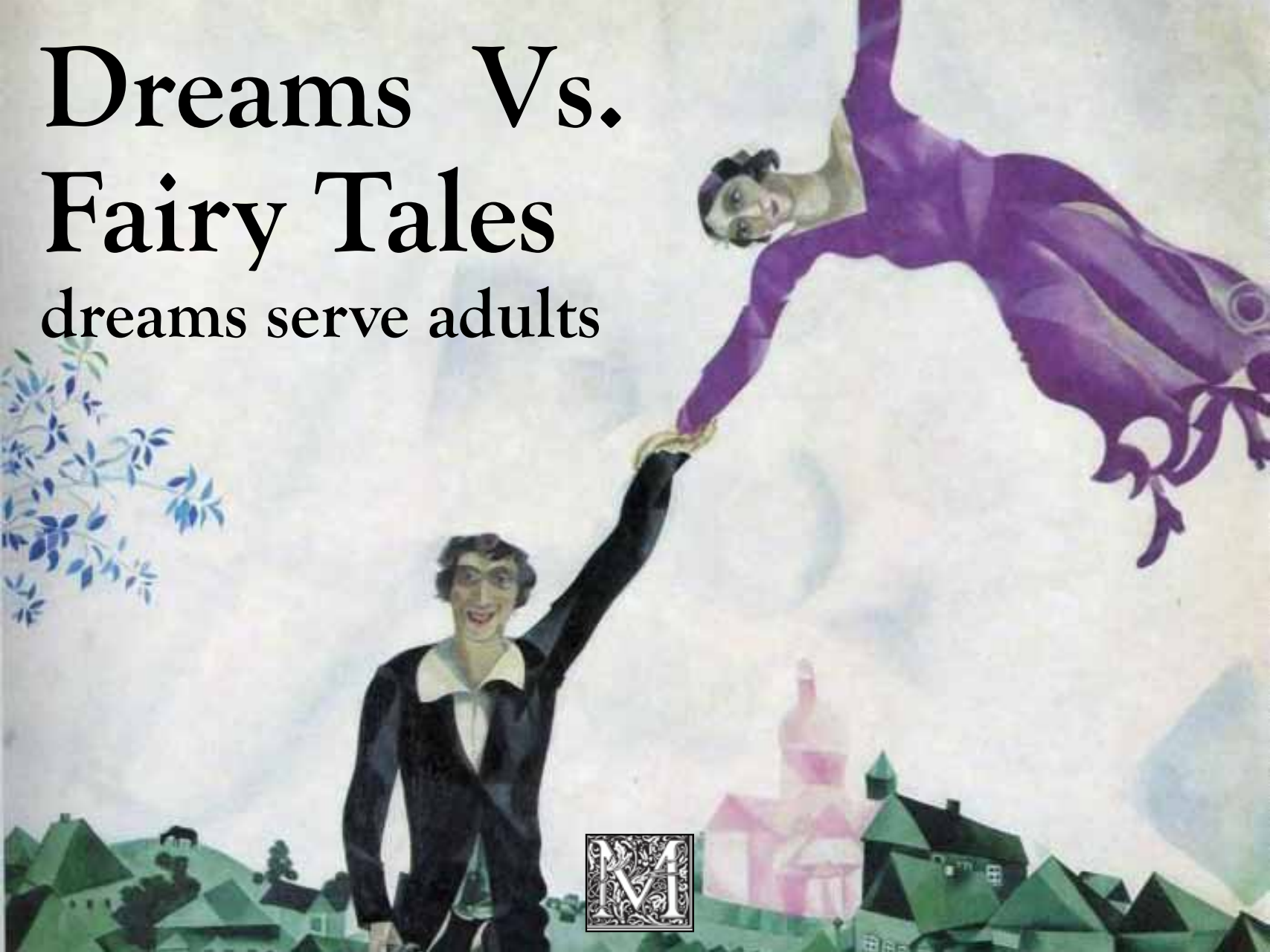
a door to open

the “aha!”
moment



Dreams Vs. Fairy Tales

dreams serve adults



Dreams Vs. Fairy Tales

complex elaborate content
awake better able to meet
the tasks of reality



Dreams Vs. Fairy Tales



Dreams Vs. Fairy Tales

fairy tales have
dreamlike features

consistent structure

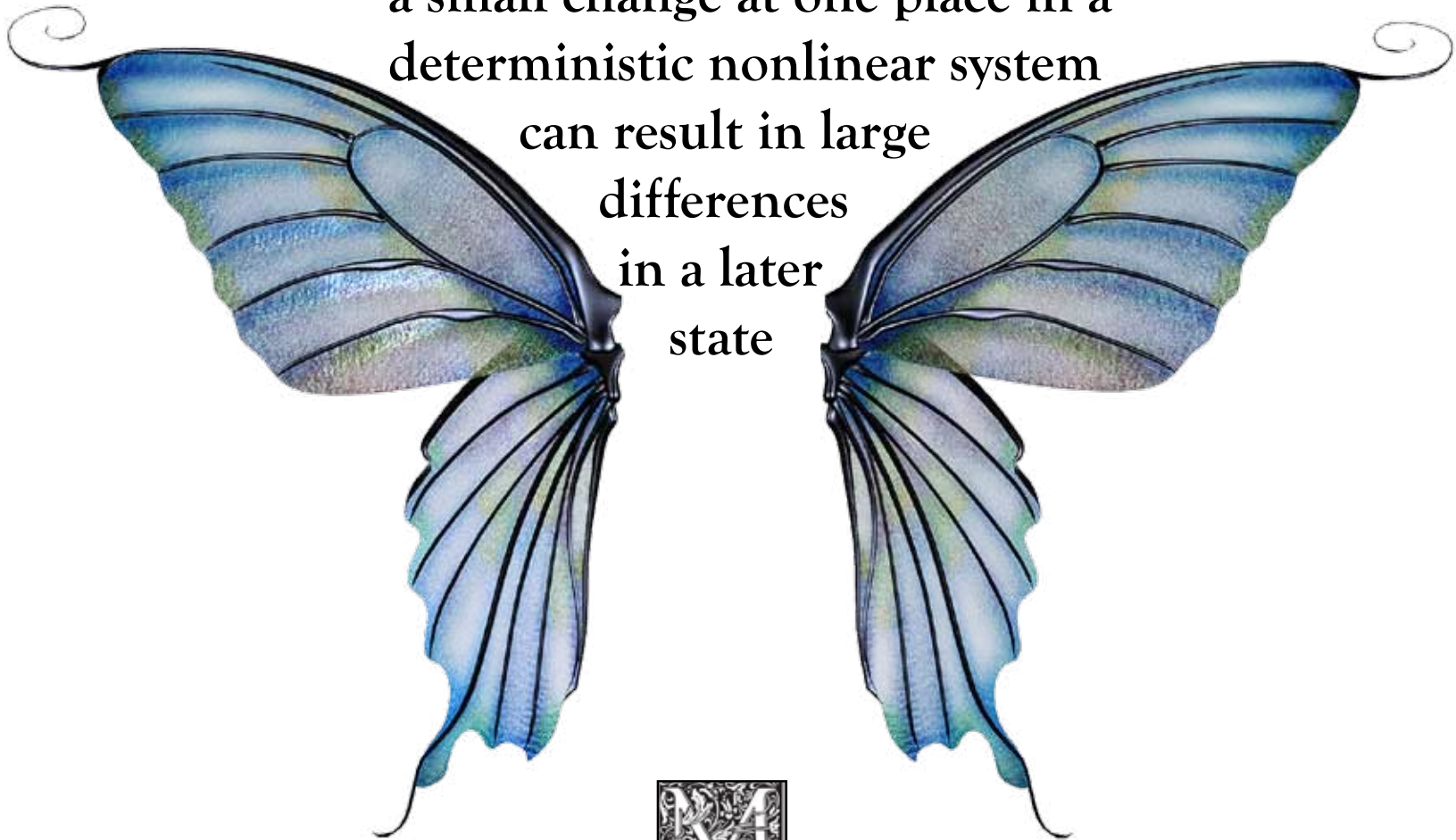
definite beginning

plot that moves toward
a satisfying
solution at the end



Chaos Theory:

a small change at one place in a
deterministic nonlinear system
can result in large
differences
in a later
state



Butterfly Effect

Fairy Tales

If the tiniest actions reverberated through the universe in
invisible and unexpected ways,
changing everything,
anything is
possible
and
magic
is true





girl who sleeps 100 years does so
because of one choice to thread a needle



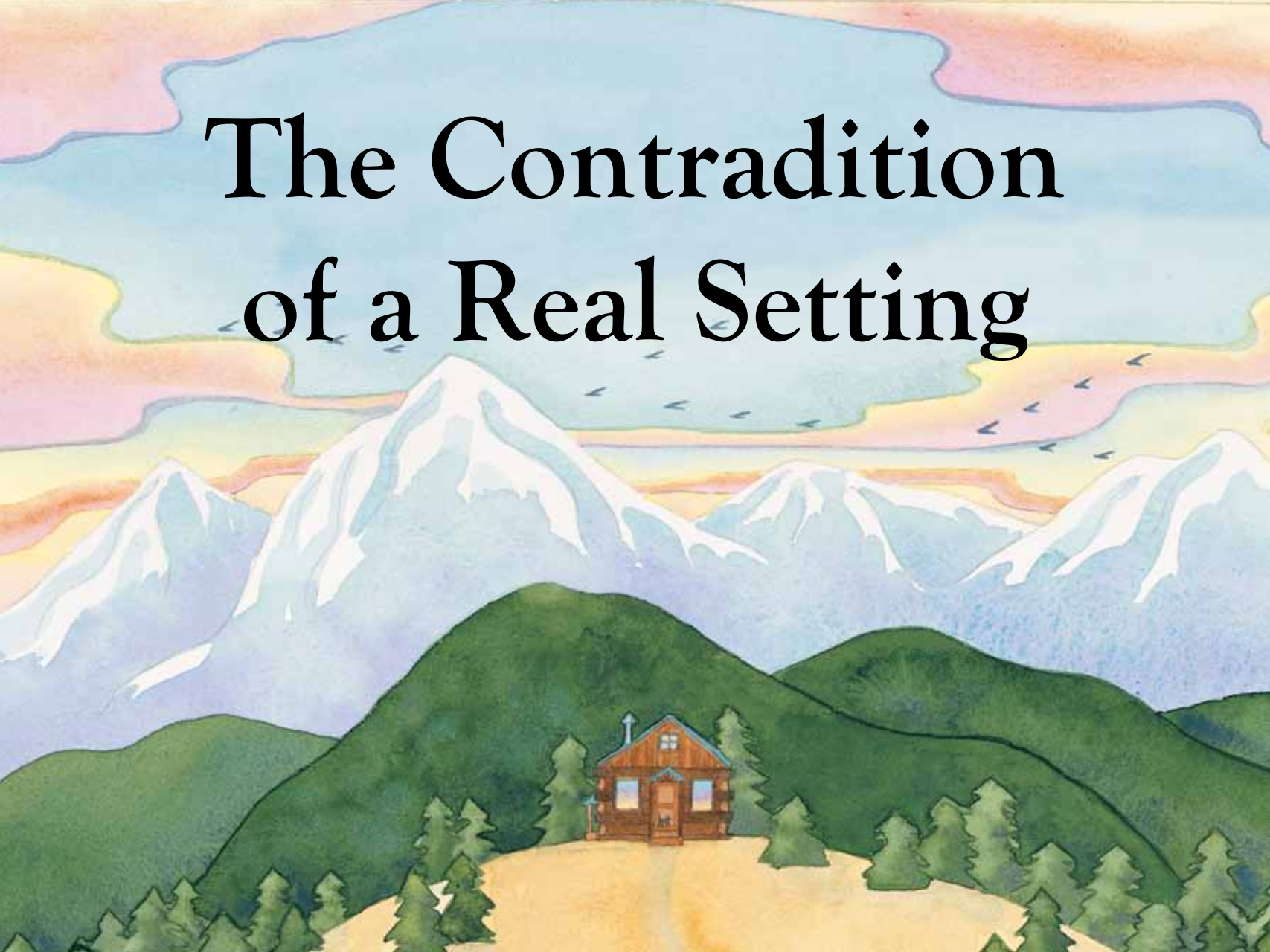
golden ball
falls down a well
changing
everything



“The world is full of magic things waiting for
our senses to grow sharper.” WB Keats



The Contradiction of a Real Setting





What
makes a
story
Alaskan?



The background is a watercolor illustration of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a dirt path leads to a small wooden cabin with a chimney, nestled among green evergreen trees. Behind the cabin are rolling green hills. In the background, there are large, jagged mountains with patches of white snow or ice. The sky is a mix of light blue, yellow, and pink, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. Several small black birds are flying in the sky.

northern

setting

What
makes a
story
Alaskan?

history

lifestyle





What
makes a
story
Alaskan?

northern

weather

extremes

nature

animals

setting

lifestyle

history





What
makes a
story
Alaskan?

natural
world

lifestyle

weather

extremes

wilderness

northern

setting

animals

cultures

history

lifestyle

legends


tradition

rugged
individuals

icons

fierce
independence





What makes a story Alaskan?

northern

natural world

avalanche

snow glaciers

northern lights

wild animals

wilderness

fatta morgana

history

history

gold rush

animals speak

legends

native cultures

tradition

weather

cold & hot

light & dark

extremes

nature

setting

animals

bears moose

lifestyle

fishing

icons

fierce independence

home-steaders

rugged individuals

outdoors





What makes a story Alaskan?

northern

natural world

avalanche

snow glaciers

northern lights

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cold & hot

light & dark

nature

bears moose

animals

fishing

lifestyle

rugged individuals

fierce independence

icons

home-steaders

outdoors

magic

magic

magic

magic



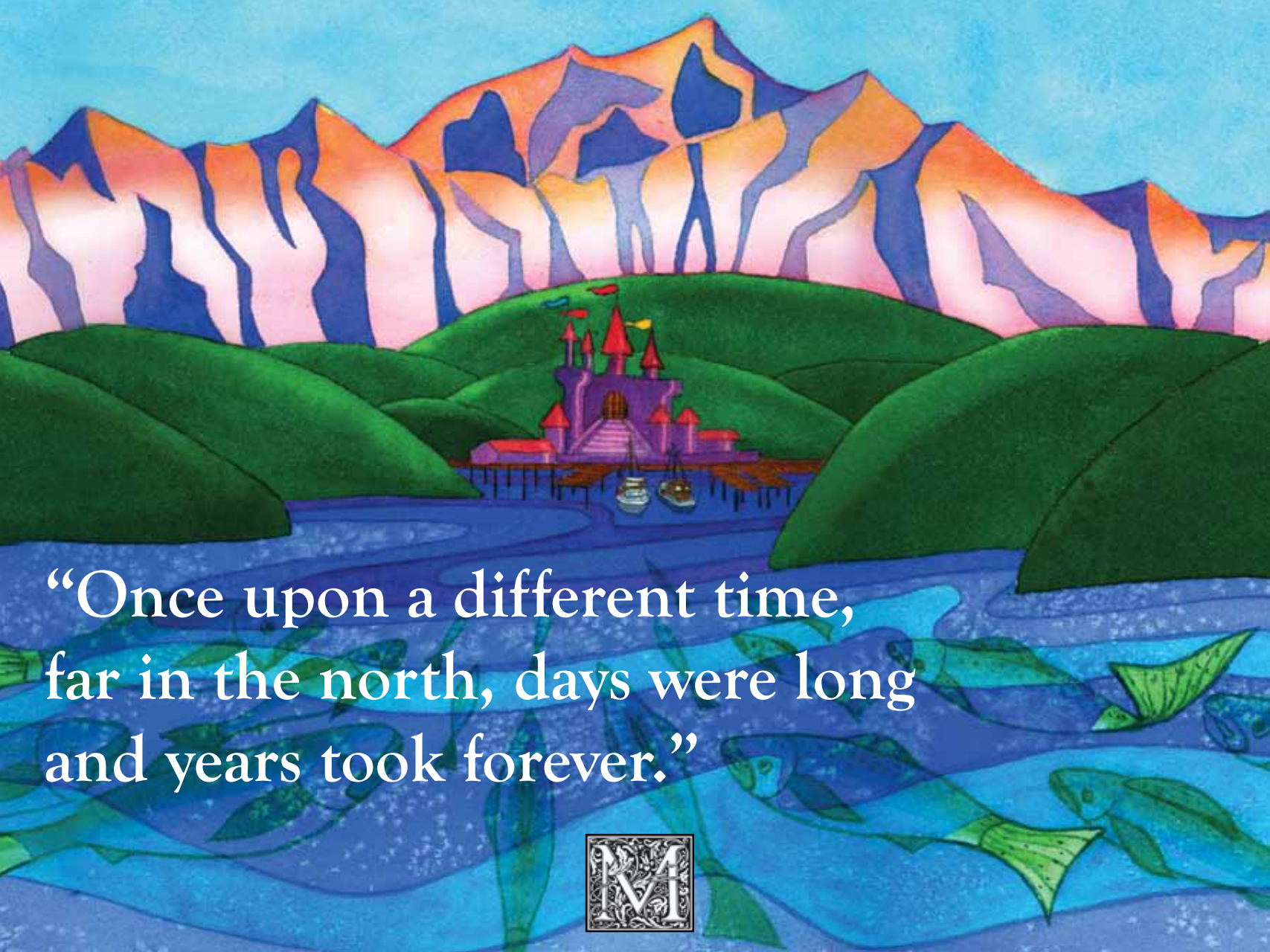
a story place
a state of mind



signals a time
outside of now

outside of ordinary reality





“Once upon a different time,
far in the north, days were long
and years took forever.”



There once was a place
where a girl could walk
across the sea on the
backs of so many salmon.

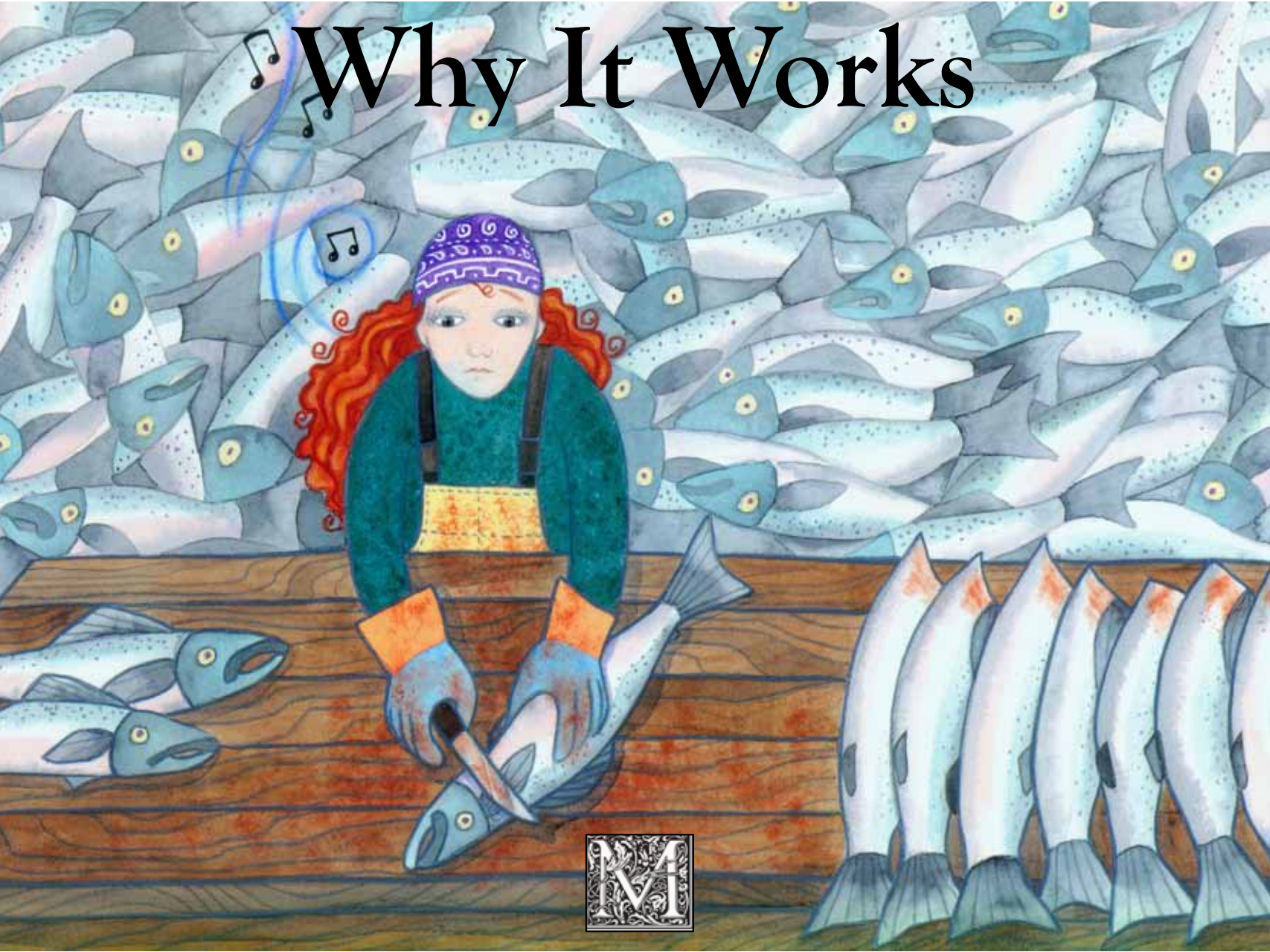




Daily reminders of the shifting natural forces of powers greater than ourselves, this is Alaska where magic dancing in shadows from an ancient world, is still happening or still exists.



Why It Works





Why It Works

daily routine heightens realism
makes magic realistic

we wonder how we would react
encourages speculation
gives license to wonder

relieves us of our need for order
allows us impossible irrational desires
knowing we will be returned to reality





magic object changes
the heroes life fairy tale

gives dignity to the smallest achievements
and wonderful consequences come of it



encourages
the child to trust
that his small real
achievements
are important
even though these events
happened once long ago in
a far and distant land

it offers hope not simply
realistic accounts of
what the world is like
here and now

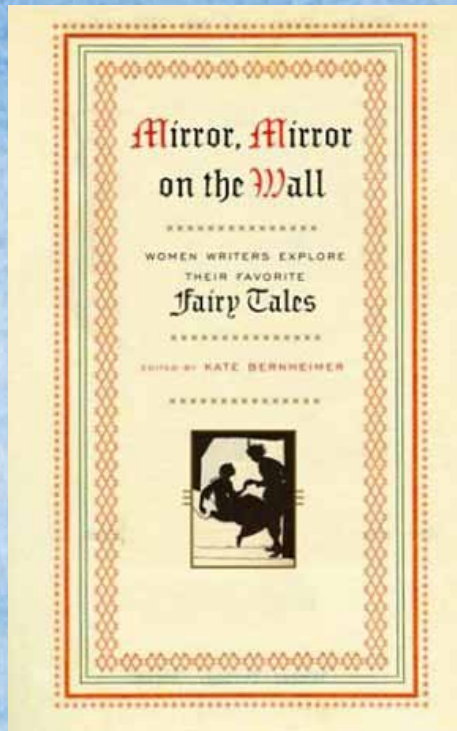


But why?
Do we still need
fairy tales?
Any relevance in
today's world?



What about Feminism?
Business?
Parenting?



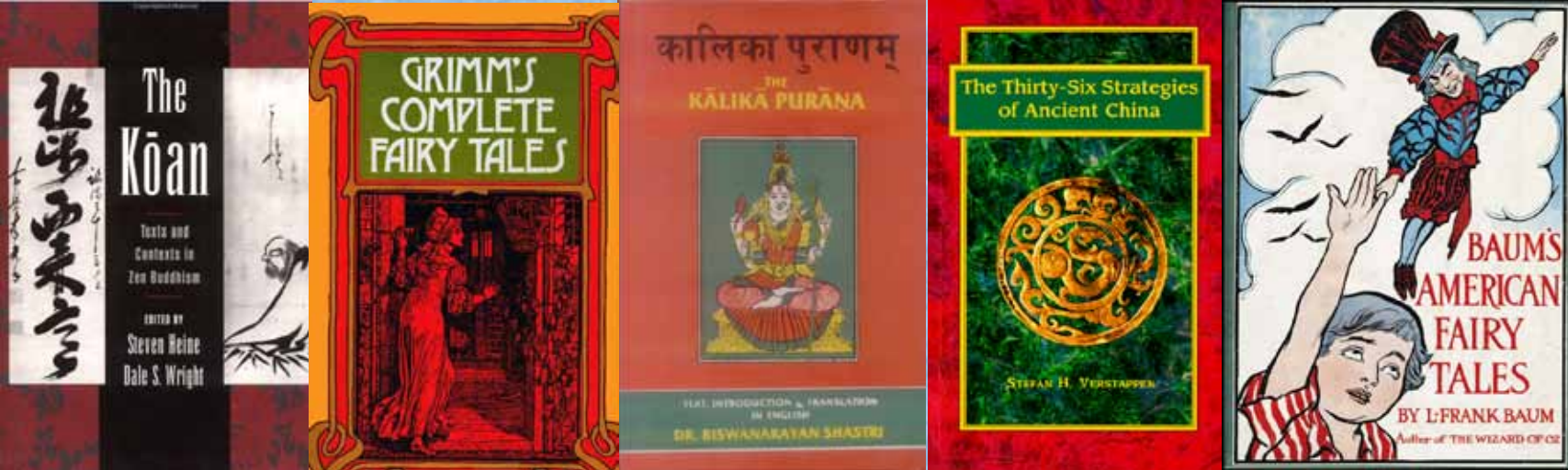


28 leading women
contemporary writers
write penetrating
commentaries

how fairy tales
helped shape their
imaginations, their craft,
and our culture

Alice Adams, Julia Alvarez, Margaret Atwood, Ann Beattie, Rosellen Brown, A. S. Byatt, Kathryn Davis, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Deborah Eisenberg, Maria Flook, Patricia Foster, Vivian Gornick, Lucy Grealy, bell hooks, Fanny Howe, Fern Kupfer, Ursula K. Le Guin, Carole Maso, Jane Miller, Lydia Millet, Joyce Carol Oates, Connie Porter, Francine Prose, Linda Gray Sexton, Midori Snyder, Fay Weldon, Joy Williams, Terri Windling





Japan

Europe

India

China

America

“Narratives are culturally embedded, as children we are told tales that are meant to guide us in our lives.”

-Kaihan Krippendorff





www.kaihan.net

interactive stratagem tool
answer questions
solve a problem

takes “story” to a new level
paths for success in business

36 Chinese Stratagems: old military tactics (synonymous with ruse)
not the same thing as a strategy (being a long-term plan or outline)

like proverbs or folklore
part of the “collective unconscious” of most Chinese people

“Create Something Out Of Nothing”
“Coordinate The Uncoordinated”
“Take Away A Goat In Passing”

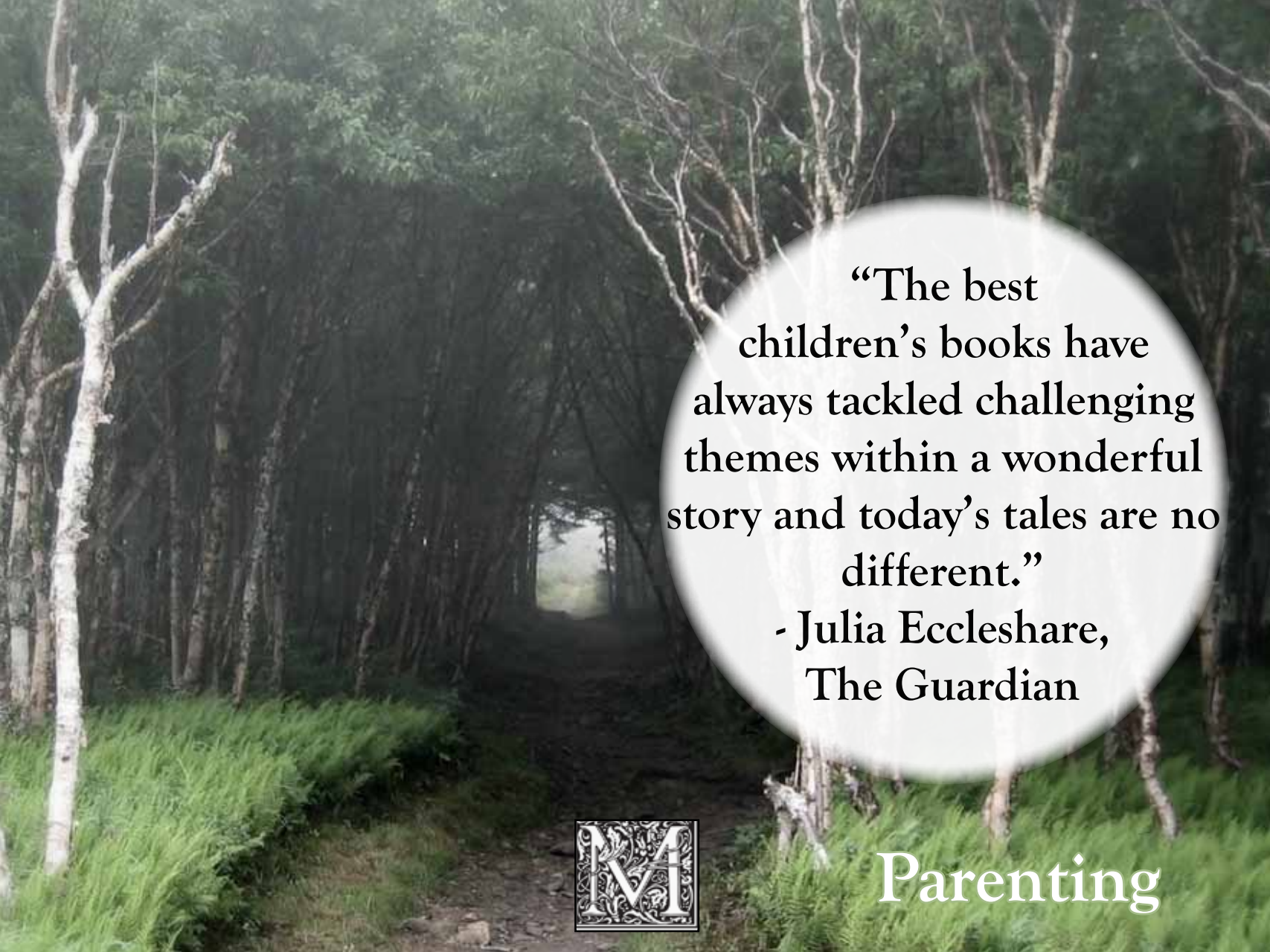


Business

“Are children’s
books darker
than they used
to be?”



Parenting




“The best
children’s books have
always tackled challenging
themes within a wonderful
story and today’s tales are no
different.”

- Julia Eccleshare,
The Guardian



Parenting

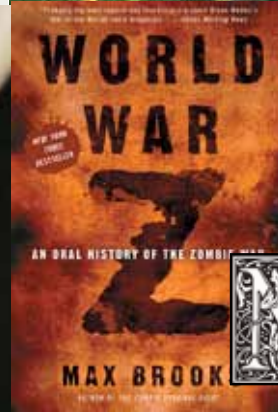
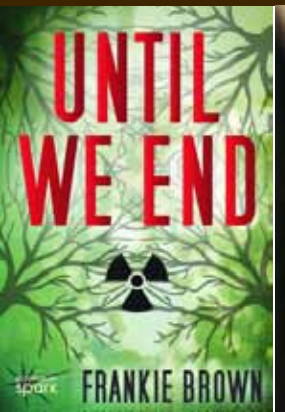
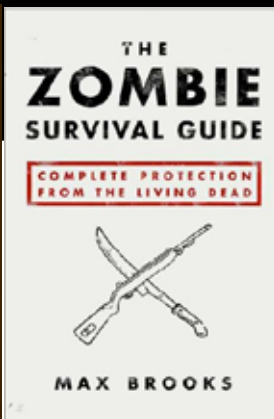
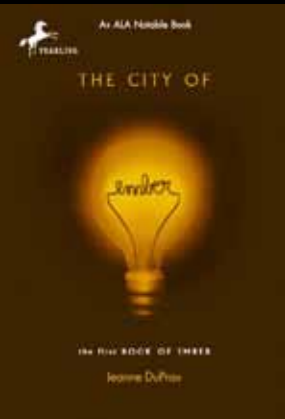


underneath
the best adventure
stories are characters with
personal struggles
dealing with magic, mystery,
hard times, tragedy, face
fear, and find resilience



Parenting

contemporary stories are set in imaginary dystopian futures
children face current worldly problems
not the familiar historic settings of our childhood stories
necessary worlds where children must learn to fend for
themselves, take risks and take charge of their lives, or die



Is that as grim or grimmer than the poisoned apple,
evil step-mother, eye-poking,
child-eating creatures of fairy tales?



This is a dark scary fairy tale forest where Hansel and Gretel could get lost. These truths stay with us through our lives. I can still hear my mom say, “don’t run with scissors or you will poke your eye out!” Just like a fairy tale, it didn’t seem real, but what a scary thought.

Fairy tales were written to be read together
and not originally for children






I write fairy tales set in real places
right on the edge between believe and make-believe,
a place where you allow magic to be real.

Fairy tales give us permission
to live the promise we made as kids,
to remember that anything is possible and
that we are put on this earth to partake in adventure.

Magic is simply something we knew as children but
had forgotten.





Each year
we move
farther and
farther away
from it

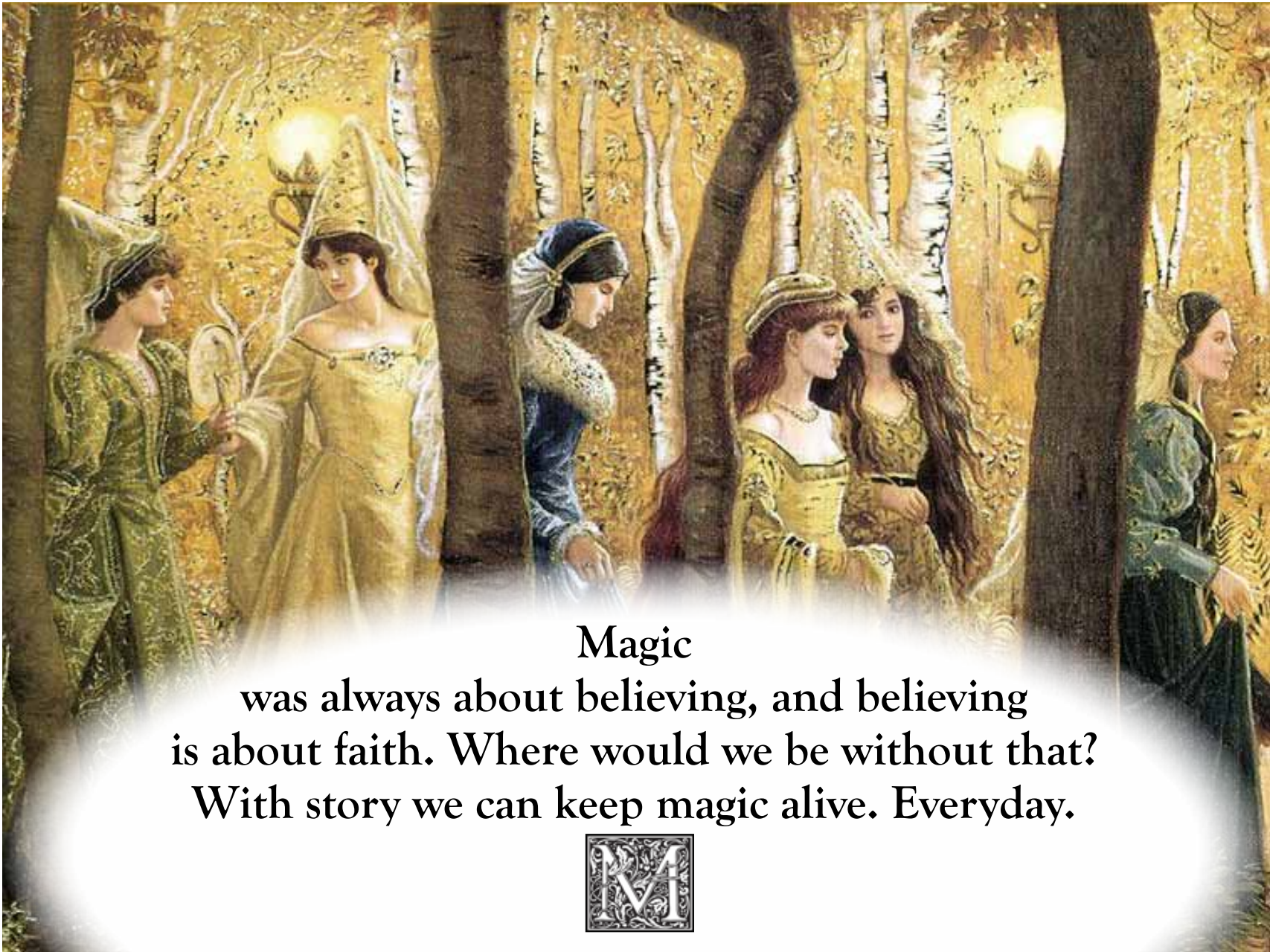
and when we are lucky
it appears in brief
flashes.





Not the magic of rabbits in hats,
but those briefest of moments when we step away
from ourselves, let ourselves be taken away by a
song, a memory, a beautiful sight, when we create
something from nothing, these are all glimpses at a
magical realm.





Magic
was always about believing, and believing
is about faith. Where would we be without that?
With story we can keep magic alive. Everyday.





nce upon a time
has always been
and is still.

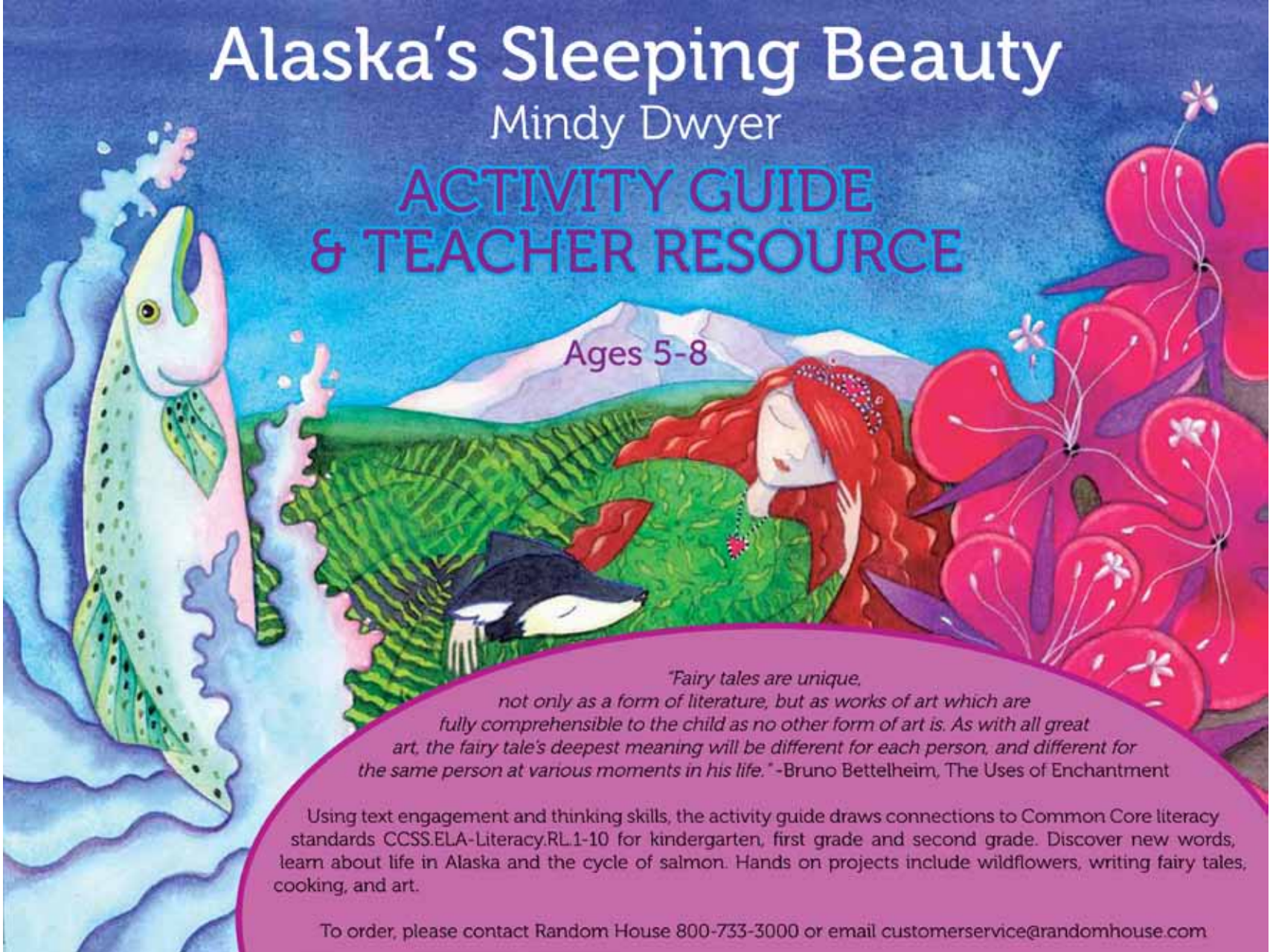


Alaska's Sleeping Beauty

Mindy Dwyer

ACTIVITY GUIDE & TEACHER RESOURCE

Ages 5-8



"Fairy tales are unique, not only as a form of literature, but as works of art which are fully comprehensible to the child as no other form of art is. As with all great art, the fairy tale's deepest meaning will be different for each person, and different for the same person at various moments in his life." -Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment

Using text engagement and thinking skills, the activity guide draws connections to Common Core literacy standards CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1-10 for kindergarten, first grade and second grade. Discover new words, learn about life in Alaska and the cycle of salmon. Hands on projects include wildflowers, writing fairy tales, cooking, and art.

To order, please contact Random House 800-733-3000 or email customerservice@randomhouse.com

Do you know any other books by Mindy Dwyer?

What do you see on the cover?

What do you think the book is about?

Do you know any other Sleeping Beauty stories?

How are they different?

How are they the same?

Do fairy tales have magic?

What is magic? Is it when things happen that you cannot explain?

Alaska has a lot of extraordinary things that are real, yet hard to explain: northern lights (Aurora Borealis), days with no night, Fata Morgana (mirage of the atmosphere), days with no light, giant flowers and plants, salmon that swim 1,000 miles, earthquakes, three colors of bears, and a sourdough pot that stays alive.

What it's about

Alaska's Sleeping Beauty is a fairy tale about a little girl that must sleep a long time before she is grown up. How can you tell it is a fairy tale? How do fairy tales begin? How do they end? What is the difference between a fairy tale and a fable?

What fairy tales do you know? Make a list.

In these fairy tales who is the main character? Who is the bad character?

Jack and the Beanstalk _____

Little Red Riding Hood _____

Beauty and the Beast _____

Cinderella _____

Rapunzel _____

Hansel and Gretel _____

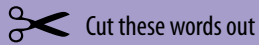
What magical things happen?

Who eats a poisoned apple? _____

Who finds a house made of candy? _____

Who has long golden hair? _____

Who wears shoes made of glass? _____



Cut these words out

bear
.....
princess
.....
witch
far, faraway
angry
queen
deep in the forest
ogre
lovely
mean
sad
long, long ago
edge of a lake
brave
grandmother
father
ugly
tall
strong

Make up some more words for your list.

Put the words in the right boxes

Work together on the chalkboard to organize the where, who, what, and how.

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| where | *who |
| what they look like | how they act |

*Which characters are usually bad? _____

Which ones are usually good? _____

Your own fairy tale

Fairy tales have recognizable parts:

1. begin in an imaginary place
2. good guys and bad guys
3. a serious problem
4. three repeating actions or words
5. something magical
6. the problem is fixed
7. happy ending

Put your words into the story box. Tell or write sentences to connect the words in the boxes and you will have a story!

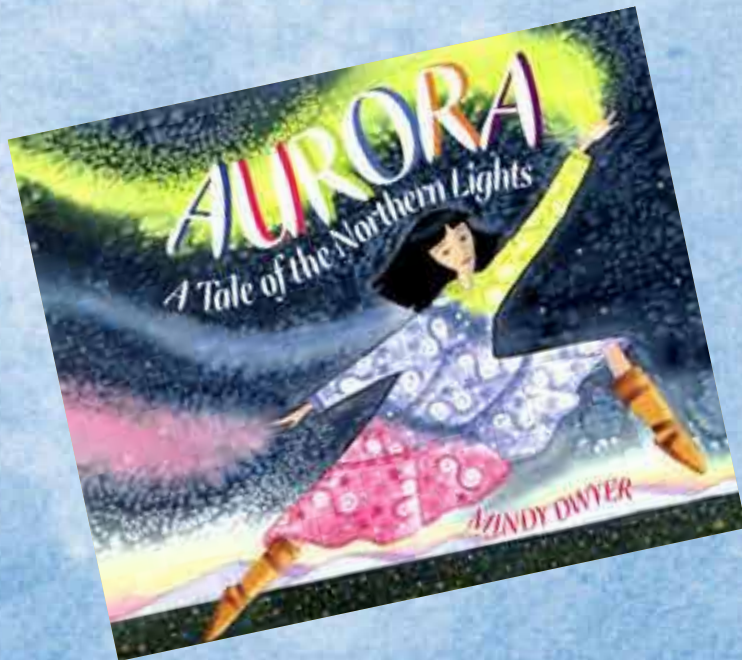
Try mixing up the story a little and see if it still works. Make a nice witch, or a lovely queen, or an ugly princess, or a sad bear.

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. where | 2. who- the good guys and bad guys |
| 3. The problem or a bad thing happened | 4. pattern of three |
| 5. the magic | 6. How is it fixed? |
| 7. happy ending | |

Books!

please write your email on a piece of paper
if you would like to be added my mailing list

I will draw 12 names



Thank
You

