

Princesses, Knights, and Curses, Oh My

By Sylvia Webster

Scene I

Narrator:

Once upon a time, in a faraway kingdom, there lived a princess named Aylish. Now, this princess, like just about every other princess, was cursed, and her parents were dead. In this case, she was cursed to speak in nothing but Haikus, and she was raised by two aunts.

(Exit: Narrator. Enter: Two Aunts then Prince Pompous)

Prince Pompous:

No More! I cannot stand those dreadful Haikus any longer. I simply cannot marry Aylish. Every word out of her mouth is a decimation of poetry. Prince Pompous does not marry freaks.

(Exit: Prince Pompous)

Aunt Gertie:

That one lasted a whole week.

Aunt Myrtle:

We simply must do something about Aylish, we've almost run out of eligible princes.

Aunt Gertie:

We could always lock her in a tower guarded by a dragon and say that the prince who rescues her will have her hand in marriage. Princes always love a good challenge.

Aunt Myrtle:

No. Dragons are too expensive.

Aunt Gertie:

Well, there is another option, I don't know if it would work though.

Aunt Myrtle:

What is it?

Aunt Gertie:

Far off in the Mildewed Forest, there lives a witch who, if you go to her, she can undo your curse.

Aunt Myrtle:

Do you think it's possible? We've no time to waste, let's get Aylish and assemble some knights to escort

her to the forest.

(Exit: All)

Scene II

(Enter: Aylish, Two Aunts, Sir Picoock, and Group of Knights)

Aunt Myrtle *(To Aylish)*:

Now, remember, dear, brush your hair 100 strokes a night.

Aunt Gertie:

And for goodness sake come back speaking normally.

Aunt Myrtle:

And if you meet a handsome prince on the way, be sure to accept any proposal of marriage.

Aylish:

(Brush Brush)

I will then

And dearly, I shall miss you

But why must I go?

Aunt Gertie:

You know why you have to leave.

Aunt Myrtle:

We'll miss you, Aylish. *(To Sir Picoock)* I trust she is in good hands?

Sir Picoock:

The best. I trained these men myself, and I am the greatest fighter in all the kingdom.

Have no fear, Lady Myrtle.

(Exit: All)

Scene III

Narrator:

They set off and soon came to the Gloomy Forest, where strange things began to happen.

(Aylish, Sir Picoock, and Group of Knights Enter the Gloomy Forest)

Aylish:

Tell me Sir Picoock

So dark and gloomy, it grows

What forest is this?

Sir Picock (*Laughs Condescendingly*):

Are you afraid, little princess? I will protect you.

(Knights start to disappear, and Sir Picock is oblivious.)

Aylish:

Sir, have you noticed

Were there not more men before

There used to be more.

Sir Picock:

Nonsense girl, there couldn't be... *(He notices the missing men.)* Say, where are Hamhock and Gristle?

(Knights look around in consternation and fright. More disappear one by one until it is just Aylish and Sir Picock left.) Who has taken my men? Come out and face me like a man.

Aylish:

Be quiet good sir

No earthly hands have done this

No corporal fight here.

(Reticent Knight appears)

Reticent Knight:

You fools, do you intend to wake the whole forest? Your men are gone. Leave them to their own dark fate and get out of the forest.

Sir Picock:

How do we know you aren't the one who took my men? How do you get around the forest?

Reticent Knight:

As she said, no corporal being could have done this. I do not disturb the forest, and the forest leaves me alone, I cannot say the same for you.

Aylish:

Please, sir knight, tell me

Knowledge of these paths, have you

Lead us out, can you?

Reticent Knight:

Yes.

Aylish:

What of other paths

What of the Mildewed Forest

Can you take us there?

Reticent Knight:

Yes. But no good things lie there. What does a fair young maiden such as yourself want there?

Aylish:

A Princess am I

My aunts sent me for a cure

I am cursed, yes, cursed.

In Haikus, I speak

For a Princess, unseemly

Such broken discourse.

Pay you, my aunts will

Quite handsomely I am sure

If you lead us there.

Sir Picock:

Are you insane? He's a Reticent Knight. He's in it for the money and has no affiliation with a kingdom.

Reticent Knight:

Honor and glory don't put dinner on the table. Half the time, those whose honor you're defending never had their honor put to the question before you came along. I am called reticent because I don't serve under a king. I am my own man. Do you want me to help you or not?

(Exit: All)

Scene IV

Narrator:

The Reticent Knight led them safely out of the gloomy forest, and they soon entered the kingdom of Vulgarian.

(Aylish, Sir Picock, and the Reticent Knight Enter Vulgarian.)

Aylish:

What Kingdom is this?

Extremely pungent, it smells

Must be barnyard waste.

Reticent Knight:

This is the kingdom of Vulgarian. That's the palace stables you're smelling. You can smell them from miles away.

(They approach a farmer.)

Sir Peacock:

You there, peasant. Do you know the distance to the Mildewed Forest?

Farmer:

Nope, can't say I do. Wouldn't want to go there though, seeing there's a witch in those woods and all. My cousin Newgal had a witch gave him foot fungus. Nasty stuff got worse and worse 'till he couldn't wear shoes and couldn't walk 'cause of the itch. He was a dung cart driver. Collected the stuff in the streets. Kept stepping in it. One day he noticed his fungus was getting better. We figure with all that time spent stepping in fresh cow patties, those cow patties killed his fungus.

Aylish:

Thank you, good farmer

We will think of what you said

We must be going.

(Exit: All)

Scene V

Narrator:

They promptly left Vulgarian, but they entered a kingdom called Vainglory that was even worse.

(Aylish, Sir Peacock, and the Reticent Knight Enter Vainglory. They come to a group of citizens dressed like fashion runway models. The citizens look at them like they are maggots.)

Citizen #1 *(To Aylish)*:

Oh, my goodness, isn't it ugly?

Citizen #2:

My gosh, you're right. It's not even exposing its ankles.

Citizen #3:

Really, would some exposed cleavage be a crime?

Citizen #4:

What about some makeup?

Citizen #5:

It's almost like it crawled out of a hole.

Citizen #6:

It's all covered in clothes.

Citizen #7:

I know; it's like she's trying to ward guys off.

Citizen #8:

Yeah, but if that's the case, what are those two doing with her?

Reticent Knight:

Excuse me, ladies, but my companion's a she not an it.

Aylish:

I want to be liked

Because of my mind and soul

Not for my body.

There is dignity

Dignity in modesty

Beauty in it too.

(Exit: All)

Scene VI

Narrator:

They exited Vainglory as quickly as they could and were rewarded by finally reaching their destination.

(Aylish, Sir Piccock, and the Reticent Knight Enter the Mildewed Forest and come upon the witch)

Sir Piccock:

The Mildewed Forest, at last. *(to the witch)* You, where is the witch of these woods?

Witch:

I'm the witch of these woods. Can't you read the sign? I'm only available for weddings and christenings from 9-5 on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Aylish:

Madam, excuse me

You don't look much like a witch

No broomstick or hat.

Witch:

I only wear the costume during business hours. Now, what do you want? Some baby girl cursed. I can curse her to turn into a deer when exposed to sunlight, or her beauty to wax and wane with the moon.

That's always popular.

Reticent Knight:

No!

Witch:

Ooo, looking to do something exotic, are you? How about cursing a boy, no one ever does that? How about a curse that when he grows up, he kills his father, marries his mother, and then once their children are grown, their sons kill each other, and their daughter kills herself.

Sir Picock:

We don't want to curse anyone. We want you to remove a curse from her.

Witch:

Oh, why didn't you say so? What's your curse, sweetie?

Aylish:

In Haikus, I speak

Yes, my very words are cursed

Broken is my speech.

Witch:

Mmm, I see, that can easily be fixed. Let's see, we'll need the pus from a pimple on a chicken, the saliva of a poet, part of your soul, and a piece of a broken mirror.

Aylish:

Miss Witch, excuse me

What was said about my soul

Did I hear you right?

Witch:

Oh, yes, a part of your soul. Not a very important part, just the part that contains compassion for others. I

assure you; you won't miss it.

Reticent Knight:

Isn't there another way?

Witch:

No, I'm afraid not.

Aylish:

Do this, I cannot

To me, it is not worth it

I want to go now.

Sir Peacock:

You can't leave. You must go through with it.

Reticent Knight:

She has to do no such thing.

Aylish:

I don't mind my curse

My real friends, it has shown me

Those who really care.

This is all I know

If I could speak normally

I'd still choose Haikus.

I will not conform

It is unnecessary

I am fit to rule.

The End