

Edith Edits a Story



Lauren Teague

Edith wrote the last sentence of her story. THE END, she added. Edith put her pencil down just as Ms. Polk walked by.

“How’s it going, Edith?” Ms. Polk asked.

“Good! I’m done,” Edith said cheerfully. She waited while Ms. Polk read over her shoulder. Ms. Polk smiled and said, “What a great first draft! You have some really creative ideas! We have time left in Writing Workshop so you can go ahead and start making your edits. Keep up the good work!”

Edith’s shoulders slumped. This was the part about Writing Workshop that she found confusing and a little frustrating.

Writing Workshop wasn’t like doing a math page. Solve the problems, write down the answers, check it over, and it was done. Writing Workshop was different. She wasn’t sure how to “keep working” on a story that was finished.



Edith checked the whiteboard to make sure she followed all the directions.

WRITE A STORY ABOUT SOMEONE GOING ON A QUEST

HE OR SHE SHOULD COMPLETE AT LEAST THREE TASKS

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

SPEND TODAY PLANNING

IF YOU HAVE TIME, START WORKING ON YOUR FIRST DRAFT

Edith read over her story.

The Princess and the Treasure

Once there was a princess who had to find a treasure the treasure was guarded by a troll a dragon and a lava lake. she had tree wishes to help run past the troll over the lava lake and around the dragon She dug up the treasure chest and inside was her princess tiara. The princess put the tiara on and the kingdom cheered that she had been so brave The king threw her a parade. The End

Edith smiled to herself. She liked her story. She liked the idea of a princess being brave to find her tiara. She had three tasks- the troll, the lava lake, and the dragon. Her handwriting was neat. What else could she do to keep working?

She shrugged and spent the rest of Writing Workshop erasing and rewriting a few letters, tracing over her title, and waiting for time to be up. At long last, Ms. Polk told everyone to line up for recess.

As soon as they got outside, someone yelled, “I’ll be it!” Everyone scattered in different directions. Edith ran all the way to the edge of the school yard.

Roar! Edith stopped running. What was that? *Roar!* She heard again. “Is that coming from the willow tree?” Edith peeked through a few branches.





At first she thought it looked like a regular space under a willow tree. But then she noticed some of the branches were pulled back. "They look like curtains," she thought. "And this rock in the middle is a perfect size for a seat. It's a little willow theater."

Edith stepped inside.

The next *Roar!* was louder. She looked through the branch curtains.

She saw a troll. A stomping, grouchy looking troll.

Her legs went weak. She plopped down into the rock and stared.

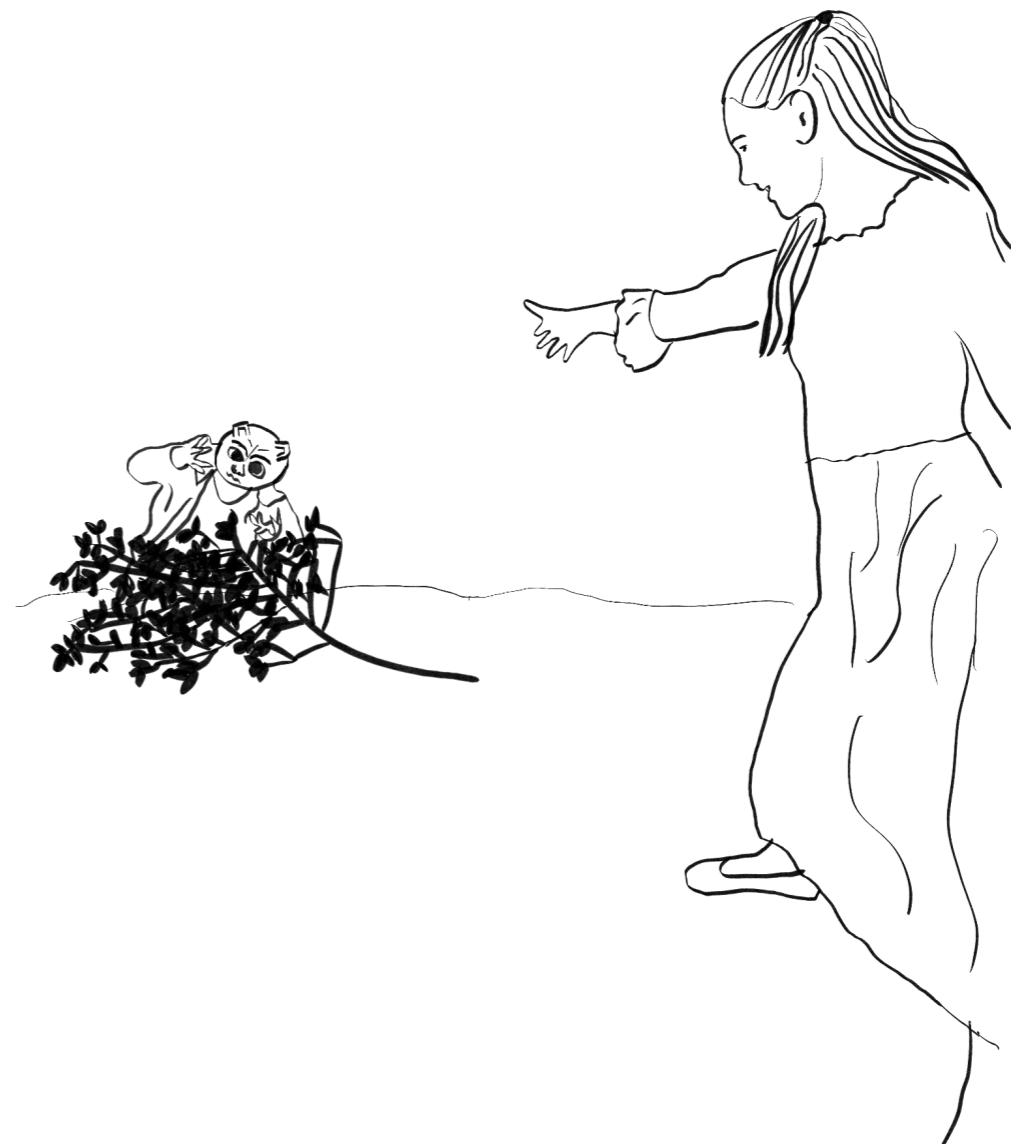
The troll was roaring at a girl. The girl was wearing a long, fancy, and flowy dress. “A princess?” Edith wondered. Neither the troll nor the princess seemed to notice Edith at all.



The princess was dragging small trees behind her.



She threw one at the troll and sprinted past him.





She reached the shore of a bright red, bubbling lake.

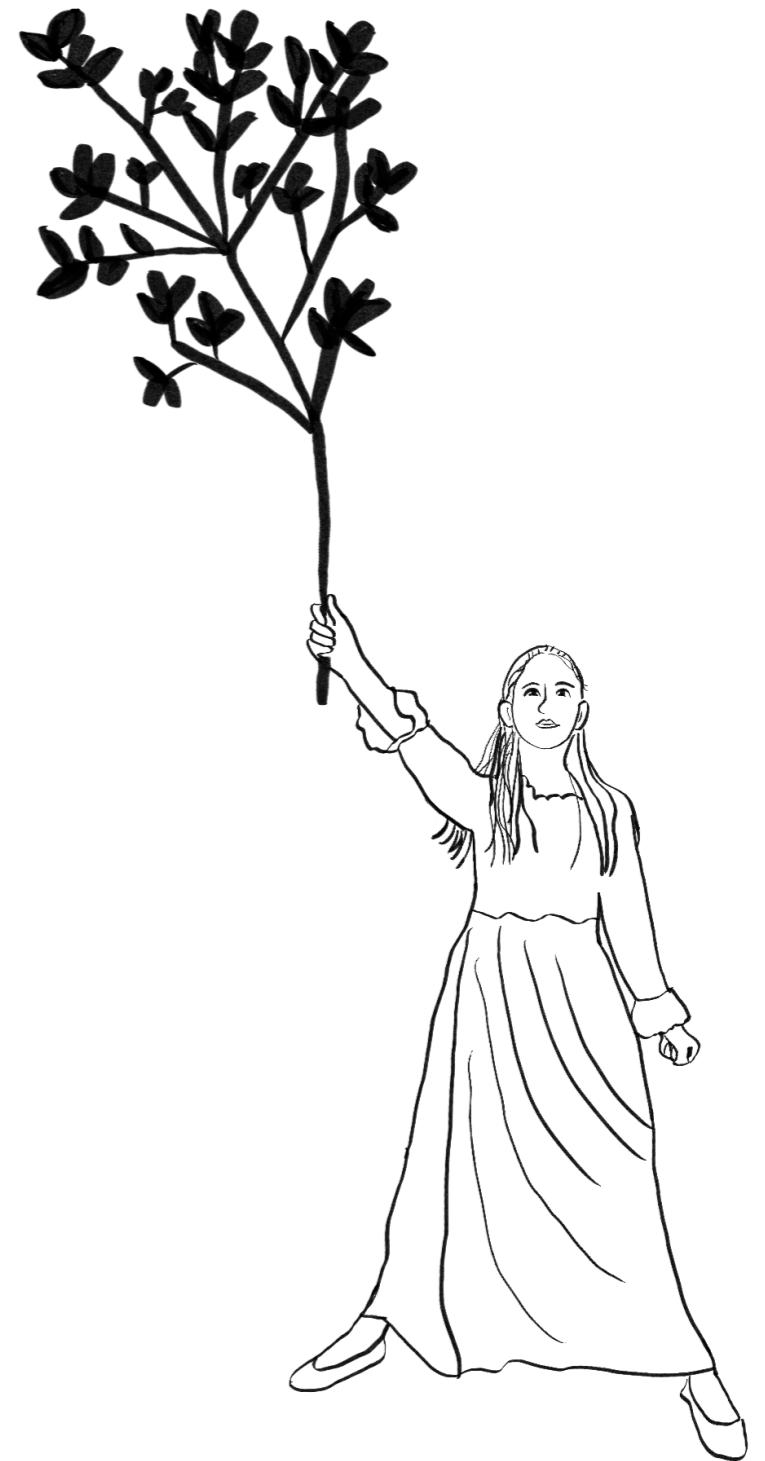
“A lava lake?!” Edith stared. A princess, a troll, and lava lake? This was her story!

Well, sort of. She didn’t write anything about the princess having trees.

The princess threw another tree onto the lava lake as a bridge and rushed over.

“If this is my story, then there should be a dragon right about now...” Edith looked up.

Sure enough, a dragon dropped out of the sky and landed in front of the princess. She waved the last tree in the air to distract the dragon as she ran around him.





The princess knelt down and began to dig with her hands. She uncovered a wooden treasure chest. She opened the lid and took out a tiara. As she placed the tiara on her head, a crowd of people suddenly appeared. They threw flowers and cheered as the princess walked and waved. A man in a crown looked on proudly. “The king!” Edith realized.

Then everything was gone.

Edith sat very still. Her story! She'd seen her own story!

At least, it was very close to her story. But it wasn't the exact same one she'd pictured in her mind earlier that day. "Why did the princess have trees? How did trees stop the troll and the dragon? Why did everything happen so quickly?"

Edith was so deep in thought, she almost missed Ms. Polk calling for everyone to come back inside.



The next day, when it was Writing Workshop time again, Ms. Polk told everyone to get out their writing folders. Edith started to look over her story. She got to the sentence that said, "she had tree wishes."

a princess who
easure the treas
a troll a dragon and
had tree wishes
the toll over the
d the dragon

Tree! She'd meant to write three! Edith felt her stomach flip. Was that why the princess had those trees?



That wasn't what Edith planned at all! She needed to fix the spelling. She grabbed her red editing pencil.

"Remember to check your punctuation. Commas and periods help your story flow!" Ms. Polk reminded the class.

Edith almost slapped her own forehead. "Of course!" she thought. The story I saw yesterday! It went too fast! I forgot the commas and periods!"

"Ooh, Mark, I like how much dialogue you included in your story!" Ms. Polk encouraged the boy next to Edith.

"Dialogue! That makes characters talk!" Edith was so excited, she didn't realize she spoke aloud. Several kids in class giggled. Edith was too busy adding quotation marks to notice.

a princess who
caused the treasure
a troll a dragon and
had ~~three~~ wishes
the troll over the
& the dragon.



The moment Edith's shoe touched the grass at recess, she sprinted to the willow tree. She pushed through the branches, sat on the stone seat, and looked through the willow curtains.

“My daughter,” Edith heard the King’s regal voice just before he stepped into view. “Today is your tenth birthday. You are old enough now to find your royal treasure.”

“How can I find it?” the princess asked as she walked next to him.

Edith was watching and listening so carefully, she almost forgot to breathe. They were speaking the dialogue exactly as she had written it! It was working!

“The treasure is buried over there. There are three guards who will try to stop you. But you have three wishes to help you.”

The princess ran to the roaring troll and called out, “I wish to get by!” and ran by him. She made her second wish “I wish to cross the lava lake!” and floated across the red, bubbly lava. As she touched the ground safely on the other side, the dragon flew down. “I wish to go around the dragon!” she called out.





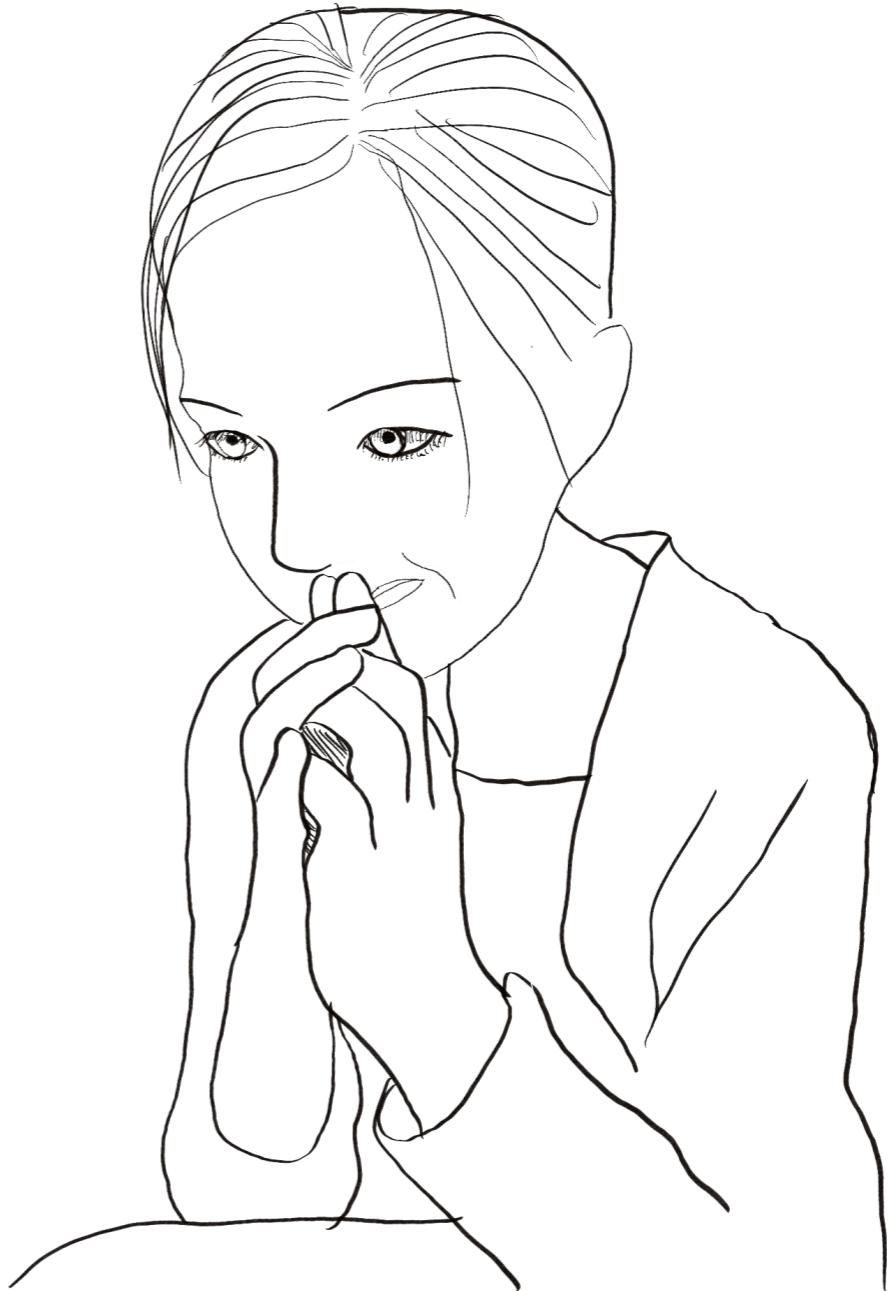
The rest of the story played out much like it had the day before. She dug up the treasure chest, discovered the tiara, and a crowd of people appeared. “Three cheers for our brave princess!” they cheered.

The king looked on proudly, the princess walked through the crowd as they threw flowers, and it was over.

“Hmm,” Edith mused. Her story was better than the day before. It had also gone slower and smoother this time, so adding the commas and periods helped. She liked hearing her characters talk. The trees were gone- the princess had three wishes to help her on her quest, which had been Edith’s plan all along. Still...

Edith tapped her fingers together. Some details of the story were making her think. The princess calling out the wishes was okay, but they all sounded similar. “What if she made wishes that were funny?” Edith loved funny details when she read books. Also, the part where she used a wish to cross the lava lake seemed a little ... pointless. The princess could have run around the lava lake.

Mrs. Polk announced that recess was over. She was actually looking forward to the next Writing Workshop. She had work to do.



When she reread the story the next day, she thought back to everything she'd seen in the willow theater- especially the lava lake. She still liked the idea of lava. What if the lava wasn't a lake? What if it was...

Edith sat up straight. She knew what to do! She grabbed her red editing pencil.



Edith grinned. That would make the lava hard to cross. And it could surround the treasure! That would work!

Now to figure out how to make the wishes a little funnier. What would make a troll funny? Edith was so caught up in making changes and planning that Mrs. Polk had to tap her on her shoulder. Writing Workshop time was over.

Everyone was impressed with Edith's writing focus the next few days. She added details, took out ones that didn't fit, read it over quietly to herself, and stared into space to imagine what else her story needed.

Then every recess, she hurried to see her story play out in the little willow theater. She sat and watched and thought.

Back in the classroom, Edith edited and reflected and erased and changed her mind back again. Her story got better and better.



Then one day, after about a week, she watched her story play out and decided it was exactly what she wanted it to be. She was finished.

Well, almost. She needed to publish it. After rewriting the story without the red marks and in her neatest handwriting, Mrs. Polk asked if Edith wanted to share it with the class.

Edith sat down in the Author's Chair and began.



Once there was a princess. On her tenth birthday, the king told her she was old enough to find her royal treasure. "Father, is it true the treasure is guarded?" she asked.

"Yes, there are three guards. But you will have three wishes to help you," the King said. A fairy flew down and gave the princess three fluffy dandelions.

They heard a roar. "That's the first guard," the King said.

The princess bravely walked toward the roar. It was a very rude and grumpy troll.

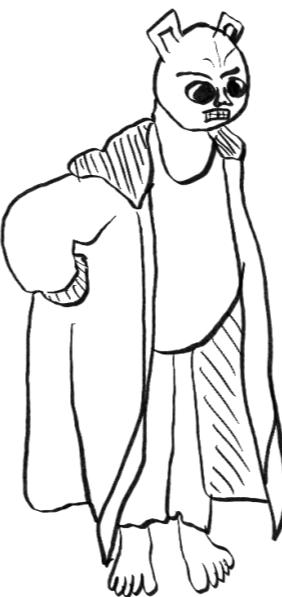


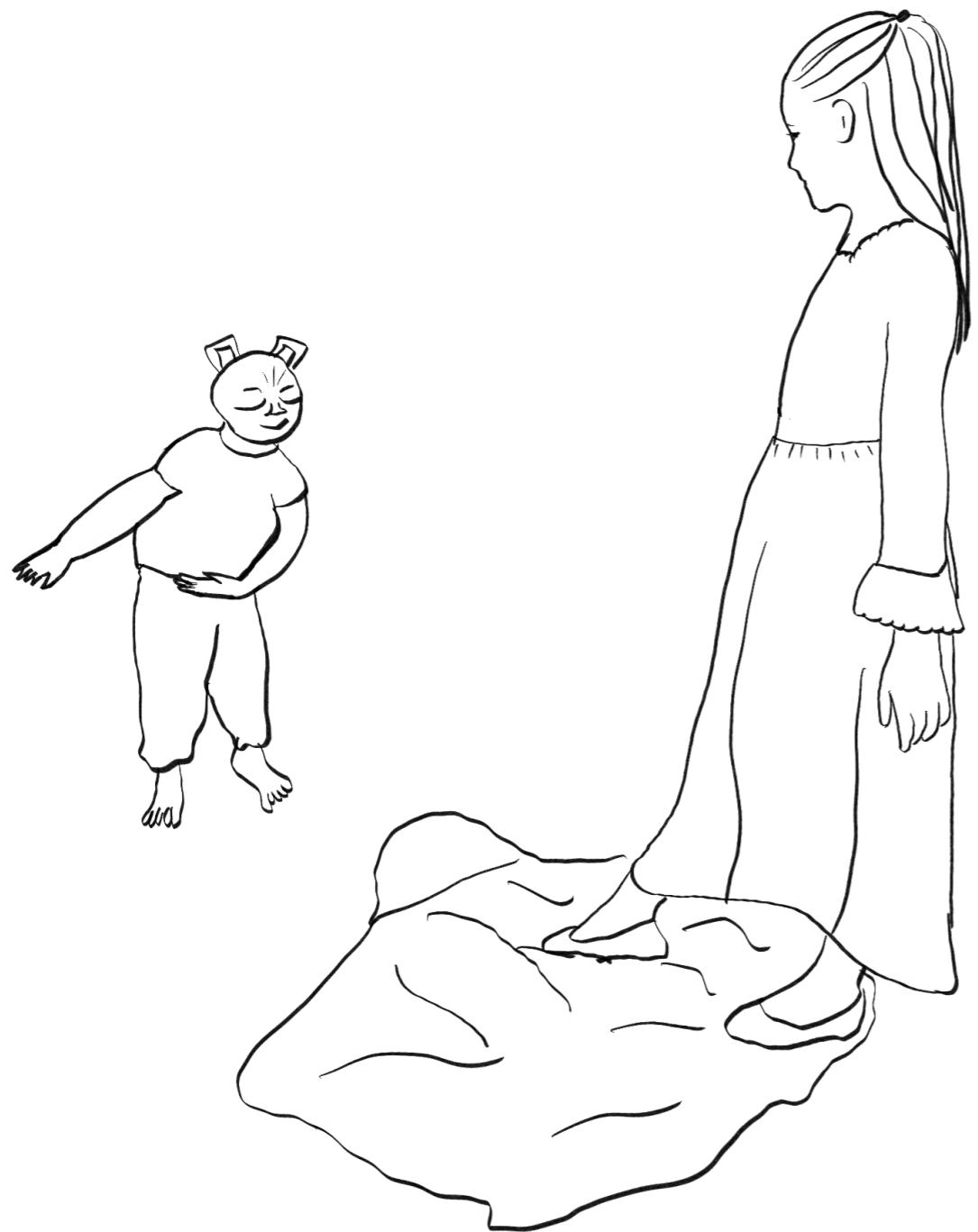
“Ew, you’re a human. I can’t stand humans. You take baths with all that gross soap and I can’t stand soap. You like eating fruit and I can’t stand fruit. Get out of here!” He roared. “Go away!”

The princess frowned. “You’re quite rude, you know,” she said. “I wish for you to be a gentleman and to let me pass.”

She blew one of the dandelions.

“Ew, fluffy stuff!” I can’t stand fluffy stuff!” the troll said. The dandelion fluff floated. When it touched the troll, her wish came true.





"I beg your pardon, your highness, where are my manners? Please, allow me to put my cloak on the mud for you. You don't want to ruin your lovely shoes. There you are. Do have a delightful afternoon. I shall go to the village and see if anyone needs help. Farewell, your highness!"

The troll bowed and left. The princess kept going to the lava moat that surrounded the treasure. She held up another dandelion. "I wish that you were not hot. I wish you were as cold as ice!"

She blew the fluff onto the lava moat and it turned into ice. The princess crossed the frozen moat.





A huge dragon landed in front of her and took a deep breath. He was about to breathe fire!

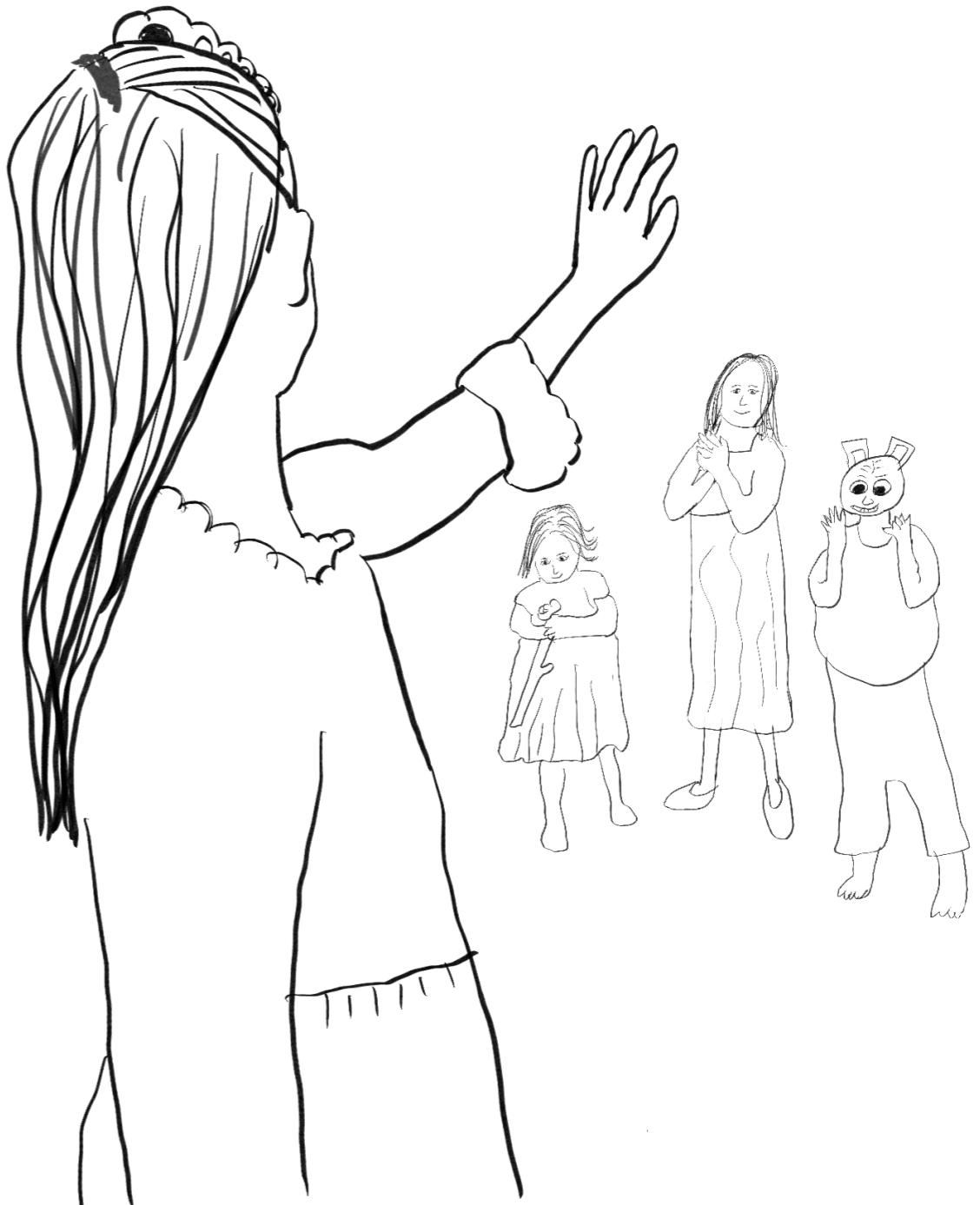
“I wish for your fire to be harmless! And something soft!”
The princess blew the last dandelion.

The dragon breathed out but instead of fire, he breathed pillows. Soft pillows landed on the princess. She wasn’t hurt at all. The dragon gave up and flew away.

The princess dug and found a treasure chest. Inside was something sparkly. It was a beautiful tiara. She put it on her head and walked back to the kingdom. When everyone saw her tiara, they knew that she had been very brave and smart to get past all the guards.

The king was so proud of the princess. He threw a parade to celebrate. Everyone came. Even the troll. They threw flowers and cheered. They all told her thank you because now the village had a helpful and polite troll, they never ran out of soft pillows, and they could ice skate whenever they wanted.

The end.



When Edith finished reading, her classmates gave her a round of applause. They spent the next few minutes talking about their favorite parts and what made Edith's story interesting. Some kids liked the dialogue. Others liked the way the princess figured out clever ways to use all her wishes. They all agreed that Edith must have put a lot of time and thought into planning and editing her story.

In other words... she kept working.





An original story by Lauren Teague

For more, visit literallylaurenteague.com.