

A FAIRY TALE FOR OUR TIME

Gather round boys and girls,
Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin.

Once upon a time there was a land called Salway where the people were always happy, well some of them were, and where everyone went to work from Monday to Friday, well some of the did, and where everyone went out at the weekends and enjoyed themselves, well some of them did. Now children can you think of what they might have done at the weekends to enjoy themselves?

My word, what a lot of good suggestions, yes they met up with their family and friends and went to the cinema, the theatre, stay in nice hotels, play at the seaside, walk in the countryside, visit the zoo, play games and sports and of course go to the pub. Life was good, well for some of them.

The King of this land, he wasn't that bright and if truth be told, a bit lazy, but he had lots of people to help him and do lots of the work for him, because, well he was the king after all.

One long cold winter the people heard of rumours from a far off land that a wicked spell had been cast over the people there. This spell made people very sick and then they disappeared, it really was a very bad spell.

But it was a long way from their land so no one was too worried about it, but gradually people realised that the spell was coming closer to their land but the King and his courtiers said not to worry it was still a long way a way.

Somehow, suddenly the wicked spell reached the shores of Salway and guess who was the first person to get sick with the spell, yes it was the King, can you believe it! Any way the King became very sick but all the magicians in the land worked hard to save him, and they did, because they were very good hardworking magicians. All the people were so proud of their magicians that they went out one night and clapped and cheered for the brave and clever magicians.

The King was very happy to have recovered and not to have disappeared like so many other people, so he got together with his courtiers and they come up with a wonderful plan.

The next day he went on television and announced to the people that he was setting up a competition for all the magicians to come up with a special potion that would break the wicked spell and who ever won would win a million pounds and the hand in marriage to his daughter

Melanie, or have a one year contract to present The Sweet Spell of Success, a very popular television programme. Now the King had not thought this through very well and two people were really not very happy about this plan. His Treasurer in his counting house was very worried because he did not have a spare million pounds to give away and Princess Melanie was not happy at all because, well have you seen what magicians look like, most of them are very old and warty while she was young and beautiful and had her very own Instagram influencer account.

Anyway most people thought it was a good idea and all around the land strange flashes, bangs and very nasty smells came from the magicians workshops. After two weeks lots of spells had been submitted to the palace and the Grand Wizard managed to reduce the pile and chose one magician from each corner of the land and each magician could try two potions. The next big problem was to decide who was going to test these potions and the newspapers ran a competition for people to suggest who would do this because no one really wanted to in case they not work. What kind of people do you think were put forward? Yes that's right, murderers, robbers, cheating money men and lying courtiers.

Finally all was arranged and testing would take place on live television on Sunday night at peak viewing time.

It was a fine evening on the chosen Sunday but everyone was inside watching the programme. First to go was the magician from the east because the spell had come from that direction. The first man took a glass of green liquid from the magician, who was very warty indeed, and drank it down. Nothing happened at first, then he fell down and slowly disappeared. The next man was handed a glass of purple liquid but then the same thing happened, he fell down and disappeared. The magician from the south stepped forward now, he was very old and shakey, but he managed to hand over his potions to the two testees without spilling too much, but still they did not work. Unfortunately the magician from the west had no luck either but then most people thought he was really very stupid and did not expect much from him anyway. Then the magician from the north stepped forward and much to Princess Melanie's delight he was young and very fit. He only had one potion as he was so sure it would work. He handed the robber a glass of tartan liquid with an ice cube, a little pink umbrella and a slice of lemon. The robber knocked it back and licked his lips. "That was delicious!" He exclaimed and looked down and he was still there, it had worked.

How the people cheered and cheered. Their land was saved, the wicked spell had been broken.

Of course Princess Melanie married the handsome magician whose name was Joe and they became multi-millionaires, but not from the spell which he gave free to the whole world and not from the million pounds which he did not take because he knew the land could not afford it, but from The Sweet Spell of Success which he and Princess Melanie took over, the spin off books of spells, international speaking tours and royalties.

Indeed everyone lived happily ever after, well some of them did.

What did you expect, it is a fairy story after all.