

A Quest to Redefine Feminine Heroism:
Heroines of the Brothers Grimm and Angela Carter

by

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Literary fairy tales facilitate a specific inquiry into heroine quests. Due to the flexibility of the fairy tale genre, a variety of heroine tales have been produced. The specific stages of a heroine quest must be described in order to understand the direction and goals of these quests. In order to be considered a heroine, heroines must experience four stages: separation, isolation, confrontation, and resolution. These stages can be used to compare and contrast tales. Highlighted in this study are the works of the Brothers Grimm, “Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen” and “Fitchers Vogel,” alongside Angela Carter’s tales “The Bloody Chamber” and “The Tiger’s Bride.” Evaluating both sets of heroine quests provides the opportunity to determine if there is an overarching goal between heroine quests written over 150 years apart by authors influenced by different cultures.

Bachelor of Arts in International Studies in English Literature

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the collection of Oregon State University. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request. I also affirm that the work represented in this thesis is my own work.

Kelly E. Butler, Author

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	6
1.1	Creating a Heroine Quest.....	8
1.2	Fairy Tales	10
1.3	The Brothers Grimm.....	13
1.4	Angela Carter	16
2	Analysis.....	19
2.1	Chapter 1: Heroines Leave Home.....	19
2.2	Chapter 2: All Heroines Must Experience a Period of Isolation	23
2.3	Chapter 3: All Heroines Must Confront Danger.....	26
2.4	Chapter 4: All Heroines Experience a Resolution	31
3	Conclusion	35
	Appendix: Story Summaries	38
	Works Consulted.....	43

1 Introduction

My purpose is to expose forgotten heroines as well as show how modern heroines redefine the goals of the heroine quest. My interest in fairy tales stems from a childhood spent reading and rereading favorite fairy tales. As a child, I caught wind of a version of “Cinderella” that existed in which birds peck out the eyes of the evil stepsisters who cut off their heels and toes to fit into the slipper. This tale radically altered my view of fairy tales—it was scary and cruel. As I grew up, these tales slipped to the back of my mind until I studied in Germany where my interest in tales resurfaced, and I indulged my curiosity by reading the original tales by the Brothers Grimm in German. The Brothers Grimm are famous for having collected fairy tales. Within this collection there exists a forgotten world of heroic women: one woman who travels around the world, one woman who fights her mother-in-law, and one woman who outwits and kills her kidnapper. It is tales like these of the Brothers Grimm I intend on revealing because these heroines are not dainty princesses, but sensible, middle-class girls who are fighting monsters.

During my senior year of college, I was handed a book called The Bloody Chamber. Reading Angela Carter for the first time is shocking. While plot elements and characteristics of her heroines are the most obvious modifications to the older tales, Carter threads deeper meaning into her tales. Her heroines modernize the heroine quest through their experiences of becoming conscious of their sexuality; Carter achieves these awakenings through blunt images and graphic language. She is trying to draw her audience in to a fantastical world which suddenly surprises the reader into thinking about how her changes affect ideas about heroines. People are familiar with fairy tales; seeing these tales warped into something unfamiliar is confusing to readers. This is Carter’s method of drawing attention to her work. She is waking readers up from the simple

fairy tales, which readers rarely question. Carter wants her tales to be compared to older versions and to be questioned. Carter gives readers a traditional happy ending, yet the idealistic fairy tale world is abruptly ruptured—the happy ending portrayed is uncertain. Is the heroine truly better off than when she began her quest?

The women portrayed in Carter's tales defy the preexisting notion of women in older fairy tales like in those of the Brothers Grimm. Carter readjusts the heroine quest in order to break apart the idea of a superwoman or sleeping beauty as a heroine model. These are unrealistic models. Dana Heller says, "What feminist critics have discovered is an absence of a heroic female self-image."¹ If women look at sleeping beauties or at the Grimms' common girl battling a dragon, they receive mixed messages about what it means to be a heroine. The Grimms' heroines seem too infallible, too heroic; however, according to modern writers, waiting around to be rescued by a prince is also unrealistic. The heroines in the Grimms' tales may have been appropriate models during the Grimms' lifetime, but these heroines are outdated. Heller implies that modern quests ought to reflect a modern sensibility. Beginning with the Romantics and continuing on through the Modernists, the quest began to move inward. There is more to questing than defeating a dragon. Heroines must defeat the dragons within themselves; the quest becomes internalized. "It was demonstrated that a hero need not slay dragons, fight wars, or traverse oceans in order to attain heroic status Romantic internalization confirmed that the individual mind could be as vast and as challenging as the world."² If the understanding is that battles in the mind are more challenging than physical challenges in the outside world, then is it necessary for women to ever leave home? The home limits the heroine's capability to see

¹ Dana A. Heller, The Feminization of Quest-Romance: Radical Departures. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) 6. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

² Heller 5.

inward—being removed from home makes her focus on herself and her capabilities. Today, becoming a heroine is dependent on understanding the internal struggle.

If a heroine quest is to reveal the ideas, thoughts, and fears of women, then heroine quests ought to be written by women. The Brothers Grimms' tales originally came from female orators—giving the Grimms material for heroine quests, but these quests conform to the hero cycle: they leave, they quest, they go home. The reality of the Grimms' tales is that they began as heroine quests told by women who used the tales for entertainment. In altering the tales to be suitable teaching material for children, the feminization of the heroine quest was lost. Consequently, the tales reflect the Grimms' ideal women and are not tales of women undergoing trials in order to become a woman. There are few heroine quests seen through the eyes of a woman or written by a woman.³ Carter accomplishes telling a heroine's tales through a female narrator, and because Carter is woman herself, she adapts the heroine quest into a woman's time of transition.

Comparing and contrasting the Brothers Grimm and Angela Carter reveals insight into the worlds of authors with completely different mind-sets and attitudes towards heroines. Exposing forgotten heroines while showing how modern heroines redefine heroism reveals expectations and asks readers to question their beliefs.

1.1 Creating a Heroine Quest

In order to create a heroine quest, I must begin with the question: What is a heroine? In discussing myths, Joseph Campbell explains a typical Grimm heroine: "Fairy tales...very often they're about a little girl who doesn't want to grow up and be a woman...Many of the Grimm

³ Heller 9.

tales represent the little girl who is stuck. All of these dragon killings and threshold crossings have to do with getting past being stuck.”⁴ Famous examples include Cinderella, who is stuck at home with her step-mother and sisters, or Snow White, who must live with the Dwarves for personal safety. Because they have not had a chance to experience a life outside of their castles or wooden huts, these girls are struggling to realize their identities and potential as women. Elizabeth Harries suggests: “There might be a muted tradition of tales in which women were admirable, active, clever, and self-assertive participants.”⁵ This muted tradition exists. Active and assertive women exist in the forgotten stories where women battle monsters, evil husbands, and ruthless parents, among other things. These experiences test the heroines—facilitating their struggle in unfamiliar situations. In seeing heroines tackle the same monsters and battles as heroes, Maria Tartar believes that readers ought to rethink the idea of a hero when there are heroines accomplishing the same tasks.⁶ Taking action allows women to be heroic and the need for heroes diminishes. In scrutinizing some of the Grimms’ heroes, their function seems less important when compared to the role of the heroine. The word hero conjures up images of long journeys, knights fighting dragons, and winning battles. Due to the tendency of cultural groups to send men off to war and hunt, writers like Joseph Campbell have outlined the hero’s journey. Campbell presents a flexible hero pattern: departure, initiation, and return.⁷ This cycle is one issue Tartar wants readers to rethink. Women should not be coerced into roles designed specifically for men. The same heroic cycle cannot be applied to women who are usually left

⁴ Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1968) 168. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

⁵ Campbell 137-8.

⁶ Marie Tatar, Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 47.

⁷ Campbell 1.

behind at home; however, the cycle should not be applied to women who do quest because the reasons for hero and heroine quests might be fundamentally different. Focusing solely upon the heroine quest, questions arise: Is there a heroine cycle? What are the quest stages? Is there an overarching goal of the quest for each woman to fulfill? How can heroine quests be compared?

I translated the tales of the Brothers Grimm in order to make them comparable with tales by Angela Carter. Some commonality between the tales has to be established in order for the tales to be systematically comparable. Four dissimilar tales reveal four basic stages that each heroine experiences, creating an outline of a heroine quest. These stages provide the chapters of this study. The stages necessary for a heroine quest are: the heroine must leave home, she must spend some time in isolation, and she must confront or battle something in order to finally resolve her quest. The moment of conflict in fairy tales is significant in heroine quests, because it provides a possible answer to the question: What is the goal of the quest? The conflict offers a point of departure for every woman, because each woman faces a different task that will allow for her fulfillment of the quest. The Grimms' and Carter's tales share these basic quest moments; the stages of both tales must be placed side by side to illustrate how Carter's modern perspective redefines the heroine quest when contrasted with the Brothers Grimm.

1.2 Fairy Tales

Literary fairy tales expressively address the heroine quest and provide a genre within which the heroine quests in tales by the Brothers Grimm and Angela Carter can be examined. Understanding the origins of fairy tales and their authors is essential because tales can change to reflect distinctive ideas of the authors. Literary fairy tales originate from the oral tradition; tales have been passed down through multiple generations of a group. Tales served as a means of

recording traditions or showing the change in traditions and values. As stories interchanged between different cultures and groups, traversing many regions, the details changed, so a common thread of story would exist, but the stories would come to reflect that region's characteristics. Fairy tales have one thing in common; Jack Zipes says fairy tales are "miraculous with a sense of wonderment."⁸ The unlikely is always going to occur, and it is the sense of surprise in a fairy tale that is so appealing; broad audiences have been entertained for centuries with tales.

Before books were available to the general public, adults told each other tales. The purpose of oral tales was for the amusement of adults while they worked or rested; however, children would also listen. Tales became indirect methods for teaching children good behavior. However, there were consequences of teaching these somewhat terrifying tales—they frightened children instead of helping them learn. The tales served as a means of controlling the children. When listeners accept these tales as truth, the danger within all literature becomes noticeable. Listeners fall victim to the author's purpose and accept the tale without question. The same can be true about written fairy tales; they should be examined to reveal an author's intentions.

Eventually, as literacy and writing became more prevalent, these tales began to be written down, and during the 1690s, the fairy tale began to be received in the court as acceptable literature.⁹ Before this time, fairy tales and the oral tradition were considered beneath the aristocratic taste because peasants, governesses, and pastors would use the tales as a means of entertainment and a source of teaching. Women writers, who frequented the salons, began writing long, elaborate, marvelous tales, combining and mixing stories together. These women

⁸ Zipes, Dreams 12.

⁹ Jack Zipes, When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition (New York: Routledge, 1999) 12. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

were writing to amuse themselves and their friends, and while doing so, they allowed for this genre to be more accepted by those who had access to education, writing ability, power, and influence. French writers like Mme. Marie—Catherine D’Aulnoy wrote and published tales that became popular because they were entertaining and directed at women. The significance of these stories is that not only were they appealing to the women of this era, but the women could identify with the characters. Tales like “Beauty and the Beast” presented an outlet for women who “fully expected to be given away by their fathers to men who might well strike them as monsters.”¹⁰ These men at first may be seen as monsters, but these love tales, explicit intrigues between lovers, had themes intended for an adult, female audience and obviously focused on heroines. Fairy tales, like their oral predecessors, are valuable because they are flexible; every generation has the chance to write old fairy tales according to new thoughts and ideas. Fairy tale conflicts and resolutions are symbolically reflective of the eras in which they were written. This is the ultimate goal of any piece of literature: reflect a reality to which the reader can relate.

Fairy tales, because of their close connection to female orators like those who told stories to the Brothers Grimm, allow for women to be the protagonists. Understanding who the Brothers Grimm were and why they collected fairy tales is vital because their personal values influenced their tales. They were also attempting to preserve a cultural moment in time. Literary fairy tales can be passed on to subsequent generations allowing for contemporary authors to use and reinvent earlier works. Angela Carter, a twentieth century British author, was influenced by traditional fairy tales while writing her fairy tales that provide insight into the ideas about the contemporary heroine quest.

¹⁰ Marina Warner, From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994) 278. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

1.3 The Brothers Grimm

The Brothers Grimm are renowned for adapting oral tales into written texts; they did not create the stories but captured a composite sketch of tales circulating around their region of Germany in the early nineteenth century. Oral stories supplied scholars, such as the Brothers Grimm, with material. “Wilhelm and Jacob [Grimm] never actually wrote any of the tales included in their volumes. They merely compiled them, relying on friends and relatives to supply them with stories that had been circulating throughout central Europe for centuries.”¹¹ These friends and relatives were mainly women; consequently, many of the tales are interested in stories about women. The Brothers Grimm, Jacob Ludwig (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Carl (1786-1859), are infamous for their contribution to fairy tales; their history and background serve as enlightenment towards their ideologies, methodologies, and influences which affect their collections of fairy tales. The Brothers Grimm were educated on the classics, but also were brought up within the stringent Reform Calvinist Church. “Jacob and Wilhelm remained deeply religious and set high moral standards for themselves.”¹² Calvinism stresses the idea of inherent human depravity, but the Grimms believed in the importance of good behavior, which they attempted to teach with their tales.

As young men, their rigorous education fueled their voracious ambition of collecting and understanding of literature. Through their efforts, they amassed a vast number of tales, preserving the oral fairy tale while at the same time ensuring the demise of the tradition of oral story telling by making the book available to the public. The first edition of their book of fairy

¹¹ Sheldon Cashdan, The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives (New York: Basic Books, 1999) 7.

¹² Jack Zipes, The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to Modern World (New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc., 1988) 2. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

tales, Kinder und Hausmärchen,¹³ was published in 1812. Naturally, subsequent editions were edited. “Wilhelm did take more care to refine the style and make the contents of the tale more acceptable for a children’s audience, or, really, for adults who wanted the tales censored for children.”¹⁴ Wilhelm Grimm’s revisions took stories used for adult entertainment and changed them into stories in which children learn moral societal behaviors. His reworking of the stories allowed the book to be acceptable according to the beliefs and values of his family during his lifetime. This appeal to entertain and educate children means that the tales were adapted from thematic material aimed at adults into tales in which children could easily comprehend morals.

Not only were the Grimms attempting to help portray socially acceptable behavior but also they were working toward the preservation of German culture. “Enormously active and productive scholars, [the Brothers Grimm] made many contributions to the study of German culture apart from their fairy tale collection.”¹⁵ The Grimms were important in establishing German as a language while working toward the unification of Germany. They not only collected tales but wrote the first German dictionary as well as the first German grammar book—the fairy tales are an extension of this cultural preservation. The development and recognition of language and cultural works like the fairy tales were part of their attempt to help unite their countrymen with a shared sense of culture and what it meant to be German. This is significant due to the fact that many tales are a reflection of the middle-class, middle-age women who were telling the stories and interested in heroines. The Grimms captured this interest.

¹³ Children and Household Tales

¹⁴ Zipes, Brothers 12.

¹⁵ John M. Ellis, One Fairy Story too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983) 5.

Two tales of the Brothers Grimm with specific emphasis on the heroine quest will be examined: “Das singende springende Löweneckerchen,” and “Fitchers Vogel.” Brief summaries of each tales follow.

“Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen”

A father leaves on a journey and is captured by a Beast to whom he promises his daughter in exchange for his life. The daughter arrives and marries the beast; sadly, he is transformed into a pigeon and must fly around the world for seven years, and the heroine must follow him to break the spell. She does so after defeating a dragon that was an enchanted princess. The princess steals the heroine’s husband, so the heroine follows and bargains with the princess to regain her husband. They flee the kingdom and live happily ever after.

“Fitchers Vogel”

A wizard begging for food bewitches each girl who offers him a bite to eat. Once bewitched, they must jump into his bag, and he takes them to his house in the woods. Once there he forbids them to enter one specific chamber of the house. Each girl enters the room when the wizard is away. There she finds the dead bodies of the women who were kidnapped before her. The wizard returns and kills her once he learns of her disobedience. One girl, the heroine, outwits him. Once she enters the chamber and sees her sisters’ bodies there, she rebuilds them, they come back to life. The heroine and her sisters trap Fitcher and his friends inside his house, burn it down, and go home.

These tales reflect details specific to the Grimms' culture and era. In attempting to capture the essence of what it meant to be German, the Brothers Grimm wanted to reflect the beliefs they thought that all Germans should share, so the Grimms continue the tradition of oral story telling through third person narrators. Third person narrators keep the Grimms' heroine quests straightforward whereas in Angela Carter's tales, modern ideas can be seen in her use of first person narrators. The heroines' consciousness infiltrates Carter's fairy tales in a way that was never seen during the Grimms era, compounding the quest beyond the idea of women fighting beasts; heroine quests are also about women struggling to understand themselves. Consequently, this broader meaning of quest enables Carter's fairy tales to address women's issues.

1.4 Angela Carter

As a woman, Angela Carter, (1940-1992), was obviously interested in heroines and wrote a book of short stories, The Bloody Chamber, published in 1979, which contains nine tales of heroine quests. Carter uses her tales as a means of dispelling the portrait earlier fairy tales attempt to paint of women and their lives. Carter uses traditional tales as a reference; she knows that as her tales are read, readers will continually be comparing her tales to the old tales. Carter uses this to her advantage. "I'm in the demythologizing business. . . . Myths . . . are extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree."¹⁶ Carter does not want to promote lies, but she also believes that myths have a chance at being useful to readers because of the ability of myths to connect with reality. Carter is not rewriting the old fairy tales in order to reinforce their use as moral devices. She is using tales as something that people are familiar with in order to get them thinking about ideas about women. Carter says, "Although I try, when I write fiction...to present

¹⁶ Angela Carter, "Notes from the Front Line." Critical Essays on Angela Carter. Lindsey Tucker, ed. (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1998) 25. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

a number of propositions in a variety of different ways, to leave the reader to construct her own fiction for herself from the elements of my fictions.”¹⁷ Carter looks at one story from more than one point of view allowing for multiple interpretations; she is saying that with every different viewpoint available there still will not be a clear picture of the situation, but this leaves space for the reader to consider other perspectives that Carter may not include. Carter accomplishes this by using a first person narrator in many of her stories. Elizabeth Harries explains the shift of narrative style: “Instead of presenting their stories as somehow immutable—one ‘true’ version for all time—recent storytellers tend to stress the subjective unreliability of their narrators. Each new tale is only one version of the many possible versions.”¹⁸ It is for the reader to ponder which view point that Carter relates and how this understanding might change when seen from another perspective. Carter’s choice of first person narrator for these two particular tales is a contemporary idea used in order to pose a contrast to traditional tales told in third person. In such cases like rewritten fairy tales, intentional changes of narrative style alter the original perspective of the tales—allowing readers to compare the tales they knew with her tales.

The two tales of Carter’s selected are “The Tiger’s Bride” and “The Bloody Chamber,” with brief summaries below.

“The Tiger’s Bride”

The girl of this story relates her tale. She is lost to the Beast by her father in a game of cards. She is taken to the Beast’s palazzo and told that she will be set free only when she reveals her naked body to him. She refuses and is locked away. The Beast offers her the chance to go

¹⁷ Carter, Notes 24.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Harries, Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale. (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2001) 101-102.

ridding, but once in the woods, the Beast says if she will not reveal her body to him, then she must see his body. He removes his clothes and mask, and she is so moved that she takes off her clothes as well. She feels liberated, but she is taken back to the palazzo. There she is told she may go home to her father at any time. She sees her father in the enchanted mirror counting out money. She then runs to the Beast. He licks her to comfort her and with each lick his tongue rips away her skins, revealing beautiful fur.

“The Bloody Chamber”

A young girl tells the story of her marriage to a rich Marquis. Her mother, who grew up in the East Indies fought tigers and pirates as a girl, does not want her to marry the Marquis if she does not love him. She marries him anyway and is taken away to his castle on the sea. There she is told she may go anywhere in the castle except for one small room while her husband is away. Once he leaves, she searches the castle and enters the room. There she sees the Marquis' previous wives; all three of them are dead. She flees the room only to see that her husband has returned. He demands the keys which he left in her possession. She dropped the key to the chamber in a bloody pool, and the blood would not wash out. Once the Marquis sees the bloody key, he condemns her to death by decapitation. At the last moment, her mother arrives and shoots the Marquis in the head. In the end, the girl marries the blind piano tuner and they buy a house near Paris and live with her mother.

2 Analysis

2.1 Chapter 1: Heroines Leave Home

Heroines must leave home in order to experience a quest. Home is a limiting experience designed to teach women domestic chores. If continually challenged by the same tasks, these women can not grow—the quest allows for other opportunities and challenges to be experienced and the world outside the home to be explored. Leaving home is what allows for the woman to grow beyond the role of daughter, and the heroine quest is the opportunity for women to realize their full potential as a woman. These heroines understand what it means to be a daughter, so their quests help them experience other roles beyond that. Leaving the childhood home signifies a transition to this unidentified role. The four stories analyzed are divided in this chapter by an important element: the parental role in the heroines' removal from home. In two stories, the father's are directly implicated in the heroines' removal from home, while the second pair of stories shows other factors that remove women from their home. In either case, the heroines are unprepared for their new role. This makes these stories particularly interesting: these women must leave and face the unexpected.

In both “The Tiger’s Bride” and “Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen,” the fathers lose their daughters to a beast in a selfish move for their own behalf and this provides the necessary first step of getting the heroines out of the house. The fathers’ cowardice is the catalyst for their daughters’ adventures. The Grimms father tells his daughter: “Mein liebstes Kind, den kleinen Vogel habe ich teuer gekauft, ich habe dich dafür einem wilden Löwen versprechen müssen.”¹⁹ In order to live, the father sacrifices his daughter. Since the heroine asked her father

¹⁹ “My darling child, the little bird came at an expensive price. I had to promise you to a wild lion.” “Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen.” [Projek Gutenberg-DE](http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/grimm/maerchen/loewen.htm), Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm. 13 March 2005 *Der Spiegel*. 2 March 2006. <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/grimm/maerchen/loewen.htm>>. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

for a lark, she understands that her desire is the cause of the problem, and she willingly accepts that she must go to the Beast in exchange for the lark. Should she refuse to go, the Beast will kill her father. Instead of saying that her father has forsaken her, she accepts her fate, which will keep her father alive. She says, “Liebster Vater, was Ihr versprochen habt, muß auch gehalten werden: Ich will hingehen und will den Löwen schon besänftigen.”²⁰ Instead of blaming her father, she accepts the consequences of her desires.

The Grimms’ heroine’s courage and responsibility reflect an idea of an idealistic, compliant daughter who will willingly walk into danger because her realization that her wish almost killed her father. This attitude contrasts with Carter’s heroine in “The Tiger’s Bride,” whose opening sentence is, “My father lost me to The Beast at cards.”²¹ As the first sentence of the entire story, it seems to emphasize that it is the heroine’s father who is at fault for the heroine’s situation. She is appalled that her father uses her as leverage, and she is making herself out to be a victim. The heroine takes no responsibility for her situation even though it was she who attempted to secure a location with no casino and unknowingly chose the place in which all guests must gamble with the Beast. In her anger at her father, she blames his gambling addiction for her plight. “I watched with the furious cynicism peculiar to women whom circumstances force mutely to witness folly, while my father...rids himself of the last scraps of my inheritance . . . he is in such a passion to donate all to The Beast.”²² The heroine understands that at this moment all she can do is watch her father lose. Her sarcasm is the first exposure of tendency to blame other for her problems. She takes no action, she does not refuse to be a gambling chip, and

²⁰ “Beloved father, what you have promised must be kept. I will go and calm the lion.” Grimms, “Löweneckerchen.”

²¹ Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979) 51. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

²² Carter, *Bloody* 52.

by portraying herself to be a victim, the heroine exonerates herself of any fault. As a result, the situation she experiences is a consequence of her father's actions. The heroine wants readers to pity her circumstances. Carter, however, is showing women as objects in a more direct manner than the Grimms portray. Some women are not capable of speaking out even as they witness folly. Carter wants to imply that life is not as simple as the Grimms portray, and Carter wants to show that being handed over to a Beast is not as simple—Carter portrays the feelings of her heroine who feels abandoned and betrayed by her father.

Other heroine quests do not always begin with the parents losing their daughters. In “Fitchers Vogel,” the heroine is forcefully removed from home by a wizard, and the parents never appear in the story. The wizard only had to touch her and “sie mußte in seine Kötze springen.”²³ The wizard kidnaps the heroine; she is caught completely off guard and presented with no choice. This heroine, like the previous two, has no voice in deciding whether she wants to go on a quest or not, and these heroines are suddenly thrust into a quest. The forcefulness of the experience generates the idea that many girls are not mentally or physically prepared to have the quest experience. The quest is to enter womanhood. No woman can prepare for this transition; they have not been brought up with the idea that they must go out into the world, rather they prepare to leave one home and enter another.

There is one obvious, sometimes less forced opportunity that allows for women to leave their childhood home: marriage. This is exactly the choice of Carter's heroine in “The Bloody Chamber.” Her decision to marry the rich, older Marquis stems from her desire to escape her poor, student life in Paris as well as to make better decisions than she believes her mother made.

²³ “she had to jump into his sack.” “Fitchers Vogel.” Projekt Gutenberg-DE, Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm. 13 March 2005. *Der Spiegel*. 2 March 2006. <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/grimm/maerchen/fitchers.htm>>. Subsequent citations will refer to this edition.

Her mother “had gladly, scandalously, defiantly beggared herself for love.”²⁴ In the daughter’s opinion, her mother sentenced herself to a life of pain because soon after their marriage he was killed in the war. Marrying for love was uncommon and in following her heart’s desires, the mother was left with nothing but heartache. The mother seems hesitant to let her daughter wed without love. Her mother asks, “‘Are you sure you love him?’ ‘I’m sure I want to marry him,’ I said.”²⁵ This situation is different from the other three tales in that the heroine is choosing to leave home. The heroine’s mother seems very hesitant to let her daughter go; it is as if she does not want her daughter to experience a quest and is reluctant to have her daughter leave home. Even though the mother experienced pain, she is uncertain that she should allow her daughter to marry for money. Consequently, the heroine realizes the only opportunity she has to experience any life other than the one she has is to accept the Marquis’ offer of marriage. Fairy tales rarely illuminate what happens after the couple marries, so Carter uses the opportunity in order to portray the heroine choosing to step into a role that is completely foreign to her. Perhaps the heroine does not see her marriage as a quest experience, but she is aware that she is entering “into the unguessable country of marriage.”²⁶ This heroine acknowledges her choice and accepts the consequences of entering unfamiliar territory. She is willing to take this risk, and this divides her again from the other three heroines. Her decision portrays the transition from daughter to heroine more clearly. In the early moments of her marriage, the daughter slowly comprehends that she and her mother are being separated. “And, in the midst of my bridal triumph, I felt a pang of loss as if, when he put the gold band on my finger, I had, in some way, ceased to be her

²⁴ Carter, Bloody 7-8.

²⁵ Carter, Bloody 7.

²⁶ Carter, Bloody 7.

child in becoming his wife.”²⁷ The idea of shifting positions is important: the heroine recognizes that her role is changing. The transition from daughter to wife is sudden. The girl declares her marriage is a triumph; in ceasing to be a daughter, the heroine is removing herself from home and unknowingly towards a quest.

2.2 Chapter 2: All Heroines Must Experience a Period of Isolation

Once the girl has been removed from her home, she experiences a time in which she is alone. “The fairy-tale hero proceeds for a time in isolation.”²⁸ Isolation is necessary for the protagonist to contemplate her situation in life; she is in a period of transition. Her understanding of home is changing, and she is grappling with the consequences of being removed from this home. Isolation can differ in means—physical or mental isolation—either allows for heroines to contemplate their current position, and they come to a realization that they are responsible for their actions. As this is the heroine’s first experience outside of home, triggering the heroine’s thoughts about how this change is affecting her life, she can no longer rely on anyone other than herself. Isolation is necessary for the heroine to mobilize her assets and become self-sufficient.

After her husband is transfigured into a pigeon, the heroine from the Grimms’ tale of the lark experiences isolation as she follows him around the world for seven years. “Als sie so fortging, fiel kein Federchen mehr und auch kein rotes Blutströpfchen, und als sie die Augen aufschlug, so war die Taube verschwunden. Und weil sie dachte: Menschen können dir da nicht helfen.”²⁹ Due to the nature of her husband’s enchantment, coupled with her travels around the world and the isolation of her location, the heroine is aware that she is alone and that no one can

²⁷ Carter, Bloody 7.

²⁸ Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1975) 11.

²⁹ “As she continued on, no more feathers or drops of blood fell, and as she blinked, the pigeon had disappeared. She thought, ‘People can not help you with this.’” Grimms, “Löweneckerchen.”

help her during her quest. The isolation forces her to confront her circumstances, which reveals that in order to be successful in disenchanting her husband, she must rely on herself; she must use her knowledge to the best of her ability. Carter contrasts this idea in her tale by implying that contemporary women do not first think to use their knowledge to help them out of their troubles. As “The Tiger’s Bride” heroine rides away from her father in the Beast’s carriage toward the Beast’s palazzo, she sits alone and ponders her fate. Having grown up with tales about a tiger-man, she wonders at his beastliness. This moment is essential because this heroine is preparing for a life with another male. At this point, marriage is not the goal of the heroine. She adapts a resolute mindset as to what she suspects the Beast will propose to her. She explains to the reader: “For now my own skin was my sole capital in the world and today I’d make my first investment.”³⁰ She is seventeen years old, not a child, but an adolescent, yet she understands the value of her beauty and virginity. Comprehending the situation in which the Beast accepts a person as his winnings in gambling, the heroine prepares herself to lose her virginity to the Beast. She is willing to accept money for it—her goal is to gain the means for her survival. Isolation forces her realization of what she must do to ensure her survival—prostitution. She expects that to be released from discharging her father’s debt, she will have to sleep with the Beast to free herself.

Prostitution, when seen next to the context of the Grimms tale in which the heroine is attempting to rescue her husband, seems outrageous. The notion that a heroine could prostitute herself implies a serious shift in ideals and beliefs of women’s capabilities. The difference seen here is that two women who realize that they are alone and that no one will come to their aid. So, they must make the effort to alleviate the situation. Their isolation makes them confront

³⁰ Carter, Bloody 56.

possibilities which they never would have dreamed up had they continued their life at home. It is a realization of possibilities that confront the heroines during this isolation.

In the other two tales, location physically isolates the heroines. The wizard takes the women “in einen finstern Wald zu seinem Haus, das mitten darin stand.”³¹ The house in the dark forest presents an ominous setting for a woman. The forest presents the heroine with two challenges. She must first escape the wizard and his house as well as face the dangers of the forest. The forest is not completely enclosed, which is pertinent because although the forest represents isolation, there are no walls incarcerating her. This is the type of isolation seen in Carter’s tale, “The Bloody Chamber.” The heroine is now a married woman, and she is taken to her husband’s home. “His castle . . . its courtyard, its spiked gate . . . cut off by the tide from land for half a day.”³² His castle is reminiscent of a prison with turrets and a spiked gate as well as being almost inaccessible for most of the day. Her marriage has manifested into a prison—her situation is inescapable. These inaccessible locations compound the sense of lack of available help. The heroines must face these dangers alone. These women are then further isolated when left at home alone. The wizard in the Grimms tells the heroine, “Ich muß fortreisen und dich eine kurze Zeit allein lassen, da sind die Hausschlüssel: du kannst überall hingehen und alles betrachten, nur nicht in eine Stube.”³³ The Grimms heroine of “Fitcher’s Vogel” understands that the chamber holds something which the wizard does not want her to see. There is only one room to which she had no admittance, and the wizard demands only that she not enter the room. Because he gives no details, as soon as the wizard is gone, she wanders the house and enters the

³¹ “To his house, which stood in the middle of a dark forest.” Grimms, “Vogel.”

³² Carter, Bloody 13.

³³ “I must go away and leave you alone for a short time. Here are the keys to the house—you can go anywhere and see everything, except one room.” Grimms, “Vogel.”

chamber. The same situation occurs for Carter's heroine. Only hours after their arrival for their honeymoon, her husband leaves the castle because he is called away to conduct business. He offers her keys to the house and tells her to use all but one, because it is the key to his private chamber. "There I can go, you understand, to savor the rare pleasure of imagining myself wifeless."³⁴ The Marquis expressly elaborates on the room's use: only in this space can he continue to be a single man, whereas the wizard is vague and simply forbids her to enter. In allowing the women the run of the house, both stories create suspense for the reader as well as the heroine. Without this isolation, the heroines would not experience the opportunity to explore. The forbidden room symbolizes the ultimate isolation because of its forbidden nature, and it is in these rooms that the heroines ultimately must tackle a conflict: their isolation is meant to be the opportunity to prepare for the danger they must eventually confront.

2.3 Chapter 3: All Heroines Must Confront Danger

There must come a moment in which the heroines act; it may not necessarily be a fight or a battle but a moment in time which the heroine faces an obstacle that presents a personal threat to her life. This stage is much more difficult to compare due to the idea that the Grimms reveal the heroic struggle in very simplistic terms: characters resolve problems by following advice and acting in the moment, whereas Carter presents a much more complicated struggle resulting in a moment of realization. The Grimms characters are idealistically noble as they help rescue others while Carter's heroines are fighting a battle for their own lives—their bodies and sexuality are revealed to be the heroines' weapons.

In "Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen," the heroine must face her husband's adversary to rescue him. "Sie zählte die Ruten am Meer und schnitt die elfte ab, damit schlug sie

³⁴ Carter, Bloody 21.

den Lindwurm, und der Löwe bezwang ihn; alsbald hatten beide ihren menschlichen Leib wieder.”³⁵ In order for her husband to be released from the spell, the girl must follow certain steps of advice given to her by the southwinds. She never questions their advice and never second guesses her own actions. This obedience allows her to successfully carry out the task of freeing her husband from battle with the dragon; however, she must bargain with the evil princess in order for her husband to be restored to her, and to do so, she uses the gifts she received from the sun and moon. In strategically giving up these treasures, she tells the evil princess that in exchange for the golden dress and magic cupcakes what she wants: “Laßt mich eine Nacht in der Kammer schlafen, wo der Bräutigam schläft.”³⁶ Negotiating shows the capability and determination of the heroine while giving her the advantage in the situation—she knows that the evil princess cannot refuse because her desire for the gifts is so great. The gifts received by the heroine help her gain control of the situation and allow for her to have the power in bargaining. Bargaining is the link between these two tales, but Carter’s heroine in “The Tiger’s Bride,” who expects to be prostituted upon arriving at the Beast’s palazzo, is caught off guard by the Beast’s proposed deal. The valet tells the heroine of his master’s wishes: to see her naked body. The heroine’s confinement will end only once she reveals her body to the Beast. Although she is a virgin, she is in no way naïve about the ways of the world, yet her reaction reveals her shock. “I let out a raucous guffaw.”³⁷ She finds the proposal ludicrous, yet the situation is humiliating to her, so she refuses. The valet then informs her of the consequences of her refusal. If she will not undress for him, then she must be prepared to see the Beast—naked. “I

³⁵ “She counted the reeds at the sea, cut off the eleventh, and hit the dragon with it. The lion defeated it, and immediately, the lion and the dragon had their human forms again.” Grimms, “Löweneckerchen.”

³⁶ “Let me sleep one night in the room where the groom sleeps.” Grimms, “Löweneckerchen.”

³⁷ Carter, Bloody 58.

did not think that I could bear the sight of him, whatever he was.”³⁸ The heroine panics at the idea of the removal of his clothing; she is not prepared to handle what sort of beast lay beneath his costume of human clothing and a mask with a human face. In proposing the idea that he will reveal himself to the heroine, the heroine comprehends that the Beast is going to force her to reveal her body. She has no control and is going to be forced into a confrontational situation. Sarah Gamble offers the idea: “Realising that ‘the tiger will never lie down with the lamb;’ he acknowledges no pact that is not reciprocal.”³⁹ Once the Beast reveals his true identity, so must the heroine undress to uphold the deal. This is the root of the heroine’s struggle, yet as she sees the Beast’s “great, feline, tawny shape whose pelt was . . . the colour of burned wood,” she says, “I felt my breast ripped apart as if I suffered a marvelous wound.”⁴⁰ Her breast rips, her heart underneath is exposed, and the wound is the pain she feels—she and the Beast suffer from the same predicament. He willingly unmask himself, and this leads to the moment of realization for the heroine. Once undressed, she says, “I felt I was at liberty for the first time in my life.”⁴¹ At first, the heroine found this request horrific, but the bargain allows her to experience freedom. Through his bestial request, the heroine finally experiences life without restraints. The costumes that both the heroine and the Beast wear constrict their freedom. By wearing these costumes, they are conforming to what others believe they should be. The circumstances that affect Carter’s heroine have negative connotations—prostitution and captivity—whereas the Grimms heroine marries at the beginning of the tale and is bound by duty to rescue her husband. The significance is that Carter’s heroine experiences a realization of freedom and understanding of boundaries and

³⁸ Carter, Bloody 63.

³⁹ Sarah Gamble, Angela Carter: Writing from the Front Line. (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1997) 134.

⁴⁰ Carter, Bloody 64.

⁴¹ Carter, Bloody 64.

limitations. She is liberated from her constraint, whereas the Grimms' heroine never realizes her restriction.

A liberating experience does not exist for the Grimms' heroine of "Fitcher's Vogel" who is informed that she will be the wizard's bride. The wizard believes that this girl has passed his obedience test because the egg is not covered in blood. The wizard believes he is rewarding the heroine by marrying her. Because the wizard will wed the heroine, "Er hatte aber jetzt keine Macht mehr über sie und mußte thun, was sie verlangte."⁴² This moment seemingly portrays a reversal of power; the wizard's loss of power due to the arrival of an obedient woman triggers her ability to fight back. She has already defeated him in the sense that he has lost power over her because in reality, she is not obedient. This is her opportunity to save her sisters. "Sie rief den Hexenmeister herein und sprach 'nun trag den Korb fort, aber daß du mir unterwegs nicht stehen bleibst und ruhest, ich schaue durch mein Fensterlein und habe acht.'"⁴³ In assuming a position of power by saying that she will be watching his every step, she has the advantage over the wizard and uses the time that he is away to concoct a plan.

The Grimms' heroines continually confront danger and gain the upper hand over their adversaries, allowing the heroines to be able to rescue others. Carter's heroines are rarely able to acquire this power. The heroine of "The Bloody Chamber" tries in the only way she can to fight her husband. She must seduce her husband so that he will forget about the keys. "I forced myself to be seductive....And I saw how he almost failed to resist me."⁴⁴ Lying on the bed, the heroine now tries to appeal to the sexual beast inside her husband. The heroine, until this point, has never

⁴² "He had now no more power over her and had to do as she ordered." Grimms, "Vogel."

⁴³ "She called the wizard and said, 'Carry the basket, so that you do not stand and rest, I'll be looking out my little window watching you.'" Grimms, "Vogel."

⁴⁴ Carter, Bloody 35.

used her body or her sexuality to charm men. So now without practice, she tries the only thing she believes will save her life. Her attempt to be seductive almost works. When her husband demands the keys and she returns them, she understands that she is forfeiting her life. The heroine recognizes that help is incapable of reaching her, and she is finally forced into facing the reality that her husband will kill her. It is her realization of her possible fate; heroines do not seem to consider death a possibility. By acknowledging the fact that in entering the chamber and discovering that the Marquis is a murderer, she “had been tricked into my own betrayal I must pay the price of my new knowledge.”⁴⁵ This is the heroine’s moment of realization. She has two levels of understanding: the most obvious is that she now understands the nature of her husband, and that he will kill her for her disobedience. The other realization she has is that of her own sexuality. Only since the beginning of her relationship with the Marquis has she had any understanding of her captivating innocence; the heroine says, “I sensed in myself a potentiality for corruption.”⁴⁶ She failed to seduce her husband and because of this failure, she cannot overpower him. The heroine realizes that her life is at its end because of her inability to see her husband’s trickery.

Carter’s heroine is battling for her life, while the Grimms’ heroine is fighting to save her sisters. Carter requires for her heroine to go through moments of realization, in this case sexual and mortal, while the Grimms’ heroine physically and mentally outwits her adversary in order to acquire the power needed to save others in peril. The moment of conflict provides Carter with the situation she needs in order to shock the readers. Traditional heroines do not have an insightful moment informing them about their sexual or mortal possibilities.

⁴⁵ Carter, Bloody 34.

⁴⁶ Carter, Bloody 11.

2.4 Chapter 4: All Heroines Experience a Resolution

After confronting her dilemma, the resolution of each heroine is described. Since each conflict of the tales is so strikingly different, it is interesting how similar the final resolutions are. In every tale, the heroine is united with someone, either family or a new figure who is more suitable for a woman who has just experienced a quest. Fairy tales are famous for their happily ever after endings, but it is unclear whether this type of ending is seen in each tale. It appears that Carter gives in to the public's demand for a happy ending, but it is unclear. Her resolutions present significant variations of the definition of heroine when compared to the resolutions of the Brothers Grimm.

The heroine the Grimms' lark tale continues to bargain with the evil princess and is ushered one last time into the room in which her husband sleeps. The prince pretends to sleep, and once he hears the story of his wife, he jumps up: the spell is broken. "Jetzt bin ich erst recht erlöst, mir ist gewesen wie in einem Traum, denn die fremde Königstochter hatte mich bezaubert daß ich dich vergessen mußte."⁴⁷ The heroine's husband was enchanted—there was no possibility of him escaping or aiding the heroine throughout her quest. She had to remove the spells herself. The determination of the heroine releases her husband not only from his curse but also from his entrapment but the evil princess. There was one moment in which the heroine believed she could not save her husband, but her persistence is eventually rewarded. The Grimms seem to portray that a woman cannot simply marry a husband. In this tale, the quest is not the marriage, but the heroine's opportunity to prove herself worthy of marriage. She, a common girl, must show that she is amiable and deserving of a prince for a husband. The quest ends after they flee the kingdom of the evil princess and arrive home—where their child awaits them.

⁴⁷ "Now I am truly free. It was like I was in a dream, for the foreign princess bewitched me so that I would forget about you." Grimms, "Löweneckerchen."

The Grimms' heroine had to make the choice to continue her struggle, and this notion that heroines must make decisions affects the resolutions. If the heroine makes the wrong or a bad choice, she may not live happily ever after. The resolution of "The Tiger's Bridge" stems from the moment when the heroine is presented with two options and must choose between them. "I took the looking glass . . . and I did not see my own face in it but that of my father . . . I saw he was smiling with pure gratification . . . he was busily engaged in counting out a tremendous pile of banknotes . . . then I saw my father's trunks were packed."⁴⁸ He is not smiling at her but at the pile of money her exposure earned him. His indifference to her care shows the heroine that returning to life with her father is not an option—living with her father was unbearable; however, this moment in which her father reappears in her life is necessary. Carter's heroines are on quests to discover an understanding of their capabilities as women. Without this parental intervention, the heroine might have returned to her life with her father, and her moment of liberation would be wasted because she did not choose the path that leads away from her life a woman subjugated to her father's entrapment. The magical mirror gives the heroine the ability to see her father's true nature; the heroine rejects returning to him, choosing to remain with the Beast. The experience of removing her clothing for the Beast and the awareness of the similarities of their situations offers her comfort. The heroine runs to the Beast. She shows no fear at his growls and allows the Beast to lick her. "Each stroke of his tongue ripped off skin after successive skin . . . and left behind a nascent patina of shining hairs. My earring turned back to water and trickled down my shoulders; I shrugged the drops off my beautiful fur."⁴⁹ The heroine has found a replacement life—that of the Beast's—and the physical suffering she endures

⁴⁸ Carter, Bloody 65.

⁴⁹ Carter, Bloody 67.

as he rips off her skin is not comparable to the pain she felt under her father's care. By changing her skins, she is removing herself from her father's power and ending her quest. Marina Warner suggests, "The change of appearance casts the heroine out of family, out of the fold, and even out of society."⁵⁰ As a heroine, she was removed from a familiar world into an unfamiliar situation which leads to her realization of liberation—from her father as well as from society. Her transfiguration into a beast signifies the heroine's readiness to embrace her sexual capabilities. The Beast licks her, like he would a newborn baby animal, initiating her into his world and ending this particular quest. The notion that a heroine could change into the shape of a beast is a somewhat shocking idea, because tales with beasts returning to their human form are so prevalent. Carter uses surprise endings because they are useful in helping her attract attention to issues she wants her readers to compare with the older tales.

Surprise endings like those of Carter's can also be found in some of the less well known tales of the Brothers Grimm, such as "Fitcher's Vogel." Dressed as a bird, the heroine sneaks out of the house, past Fitcher's friends, and fools Fitcher himself. The heroine and her sisters "schlossen alle Thüren des Hauses zu, daß niemand entfliehen konnte, und steckten es an, also daß der Hexenmeister mit sammt seinem Gesindel verbrennen mußte."⁵¹ Once the house has burned down, the heroine and her sisters return home to their parents who are now wealthy due to the heroine's ingenuity of demanding gold from Fitcher. Although the girls are not married, the return home signifies that this is the place where women belong. Not only does the heroine escape but also kills the wizard and his friends in her hope that it will end any more kidnapping and killing of other young girls. This is a situation in which the lesser of the two evils is

⁵⁰ Warner 355.

⁵¹ "shut all the doors of the house so that no one could flee, and lit it on fire so that the wizard and his guests burnt to death." Grimms, "Vogel."

portrayed as the better choice. All three girls disobeyed the wizard, two were punished; the third was clever enough to see that the wizard was discriminatorily killing girls. For the Grimm Brothers, this justifies the heroine's actions. This strong vengeance is surprising in a heroine tale; killing is not common for many heroines, but it is common of the heroes who save heroine's.

Carter uses the idea of a heroine killer in her tale, "The Bloody Chamber." "Now, without a moment's hesitation, [the heroine's mother] raised my father's gun, took aim and put a single, irreproachable bullet through my husband's head."⁵² The mother releases the daughter from the task of killing her husband—a task for which her quest did not prepare her. The heroine is the woman on the quest, but she needed to be saved. She rebelled against the eccentric ways of her mother, who in the early pages of the text is described as a lion-killing, pirate-fighting woman. The heroine did not want to follow her mother's footsteps, for this reason the heroine married for money unknowingly choosing a path that would lead to her own awakening. This is the distinction between mother and daughter: the mother is a fighter and the daughter learns of her own sexual corruptibility; her quest was not to be able to kill her husband. The heroine's resolution ends with her report of her pending marriage to the blind piano tuner, and they live with her mother outside of Paris. Even though she was incapable of saving her own life or disposing of her evil husband, the heroine feels rewarded. The heroine faced marriage to a stranger, the realization of his murderous nature, and an awakening to her own sexuality. Carter twists the idealistic notion that a heroine must be manly and capable of killing in order to be considered a heroine, but Carter wants the reader to question the notion of happily ever after. Carter's heroines, who understand their sexuality and position of being entrapped by men, seem to live happily ever after just like the heroines of the Brothers Grimm. Carter wants to draw significant attention to this moment: fairy tales have happy endings, but are they truly happy?

⁵² Carter, Bloody 39-40.

3 Conclusion

What is interesting in all of these tales is that all heroines return, in some form, to a home situation. The Brothers Grimms reinforce the notion that good behavior will be rewarded: both of their heroines return to a happy home life. Carter's heroines, however, are removed from their original home, but it is unclear if their final location is a happy situation. This uncertainty is a result of Carter's tendency to end the tale in mid-action. The last sentence of the heroine of "The Tiger's Bride" is that she has her skin licked off—exposing what she describes as her beautiful fur. This transformation is ambiguous. She has escaped her father, but now has accepted a life with another male figure and she has fur instead of skin. Does her new fur equate a happy ending? The heroine of "The Bloody Chamber" is going to be married to a poor, blind piano-tuner, and the couple lives with her mother. This resolution is hardly a fantastic, marvelous fairy tale ending, yet the heroine seems satisfied. She may seem content due to Carter's use of first person narration. First person narration allows for heroines to narrate and resolve their quests, presenting one of the greatest challenges in comparing Carter to the Brothers Grimm.

The traditional, oral tales adhere to a third person narrator; this narrator relates what happens to the heroine and then the tale is finished, serving the Grimms' purpose of being moral teaching tools. The Grimms want only one interpretation of their tales, so they accept this narrator and use it as a God-like figure to control the heroine and the tale: the tales are resolved because the narrator resolves the action. Carter's heroines leave the tale in a semi-resolved state, a characteristic of a modern heroine quest. Carter presents the possibility of multiple interpretations and she wants to break the idealistic, naïve heroine mold by placing young women in situations that test their character beyond obedience. Carter attempts to redefine the meaning of heroine through her tales, which expose heroines as more than mere obedient wives

and daughters; they are women who make mistakes. Her heroines undergo a realization about themselves as sexual beings. Carter refocuses and embellishes tales. In allowing for a sexual awakening in order to challenge contemporary audiences, Carter pushes readers to re-evaluate ideas and myths from the older, well known fairy tales. Tales like those of the Brothers Grimm in which heroines are not capable of a realization of their sexuality, because that was not socially acceptable during their era. An important notion seen in their tales is that the women are outside of the kitchen and the house, but this is as far as the women ventured. As seen through their tales, the Brothers Grimm did value intelligent, assertive women; however, the Grimms' heroine quest is resolved by returning the balance of home, not by realizing their potential as sexual beings.

In contrasting the Brothers Grimm and Angela Carter, one importance of the quests lies within the cultural context: the resolutions in Angela Carter's fairy tales are possible due to her contemporary audience. This audience lived during the period of women's liberation—Carter's ideas of women attempting to use their sexuality as either a weapon or a defense was a prevalent view she kept in mind as she wrote her fairy tales. This reveals the suppleness of fairy tales. Carter's tales were created out of tales similar to the Grimms—tales which were intended to present a world that reflected the beliefs of the Brothers Grimm; a world where women are as capable as men in defeating monsters and going into the world. However, the Grimms' portrait of these women as obedient yet undefeatable is not acceptable to Carter. Women are fallible, they make mistakes, and they cannot always save the day. Carter is crumbling the myth of women as super-women. While capable of questing, Carter shows heroic women in need of rescue—the heroine cannot always save herself, but that does not make her unheroic.

Although the Grimm's tales and Carter's tales differ in their intent, all four heroines fulfill heroine quests; the heroines all experience separation, isolation, confrontation and a

resolution. The conflict stage proves to be the most interesting—heroines fight monsters. These monsters can be real beasts or beasts within themselves. The heroine quest is redefined because of Carter's heroines' realization of their sexual nature as well as their capability to declare their happy ending. The modern heroine quest adhere to the traditional fairy tale stages; however, it is through the ending that Carter subverts the original tales and asks her readers to question whether or not these heroines truly are happy and whether they are heroines. This is the revelation of the redefined, modern heroine quest: the ability to question all accepted beliefs.

Appendix: Story Summaries

“Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen” by the Brothers Grimm

Before a father leaves on a journey, he asks his three daughters what gifts would like him to bring back. One replies pearls, the second diamonds, and the youngest wants only a bird - a lark. The father buys the pearls and diamonds, but he can find no lark. On the way home, he sees one in a tree and as he attempts to take it a lion jumps out and threatens to eat him. The father explains the gift, but the Beast tells the father that the only thing that in order to live, he must send him the first thing he meets on his way home. The father knows it will be his youngest daughter. The girl's fate is revealed to her once he arrives home, and she willingly goes to the Beast. The Beast is actually an enchanted son of a king, and during the day, he takes the shape of a lion, as do his people and servants, but at night they all return to their human form. The girl goes to the prince, and they are married at once. The girl attends the wedding of one sister alone, and asks her husband to accompany her to the second wedding of her other sister. He says no, it would be too dangerous. Should one ray of burning light hit him, he will change into a pigeon and fly with the pigeons for seven years. She convinces him to come, but he is struck by light, changes into a pigeon, and says that every seven steps he would let drops of blood and a white feather fall to the ground to show the girl his path. She must follow to help free from the spell. One day, after seven years have past, the blood and feathers cease to fall, but the pigeon disappears. The girl asks the Sun, Moon, and the southwinds if they have seen the white pigeon, and the southwinds tells her it saw the pigeon fly to the Red Sea and change back into a lion. The girl travels there, and with the wind's advice she frees her husband from battle with a dragon, who is actually an enchanted princess. Once they are transformed back into their human forms, the enchanted princess flees—taking the prince and deserting the girl, who sits down and cries but

decides not to give up. She follows the couple, and she finds a dance ball being given in order to celebrate the prince and princess's engagement. She remembers the gifts that the Sun and Moon gave her. Opening the box from the sun, a dress as golden as the sun appears, and the girl enters the ball. The enchanted princess is envious of the dress and wants it for her wedding gown. The princess tells the girl this who agrees to give it to her, but in exchange the girl wants to spend that night with the prince. The princess only agrees after deciding to give the prince a sleeping potion. The girl tries in vain to tell him what has happened, but he sleeps in spite of her attempts. She gives up the dress but then opens the egg that the moon gave her, and it is full of twelve little golden cupcakes, and they were more beautiful than anything in the world. The enchanted princess wants them as well, and the same agreement is made: the girl wants another night with the prince. Meanwhile, back at the palace, the prince asks his valet what all the mumbling and noise was the night before. His valet explains what happened, and the prince tells the valet to pour the potion out and the prince waits for the girl, his wife. She comes, tells her story, and the prince is finally disenchanted. They steal away into the night, return home and find their child, who has was born and grew up to be beautiful while her parents were gone, and they lived until the end.

“The Tiger’s Bride” by Angela Carter

Travelers and outcasts from their native Russia, the narrator and her father visit an insignificant town in Italy where, everyone must gamble with The Beast; the narrator's father is a gambling addict. The narrator watches her inheritance be gambled away, and then to her own distress, she too is risked and lost by her father into the ownership of the Beast. The next day, she is taken to his palazzo. The valet brings the narrator to the Beast, continually hidden behind a

mask with a man's face, gloves, and clothes. The Beast asks only to see her naked then she will be returned, with all of the father's lost money as well as gifts of jewels and furs, to her father. The narrator laughs. She offers this answer to the Beast: she will pull her skirt up to her waist, and put a sheet over her face where the Beast may visit her once, and then she is to be dropped off in town with a gift- should the Beast see fit to give her one. The Beast knows the narrator loves to ride horses, so she, the Beast, and his valet ride out into the woods where the Beast then insists that if she will not undress for him, than she must be prepared to see the Beast- naked. After she sees the Beast's body, she undresses for him. The valet tells the narrator that she may return to her father at any time she wishes. Then, seeing her father counting out bundles of money in an enchanted mirror, the narrator runs to the Beast—in his natural skin of furs—where she allows herself to be licked by the Beast, each stroke of his tongue removes the narrator's skins, and she is changed into a beast.

“Fitchers Vogel” by the Brothers Grimm

Fitcher is a wizard who enchants women. He bewitches them to jump into his bag, and then steals away to his house to test the women: can they resist their curiosity and not enter the secret chamber after he warns them not to? Fitcher steals the heroine's two older sisters who fail the test and are subsequently killed. Then, Fitcher returns for the youngest sister. Fitcher says he must go away for a while, and that the heroine must keep the house while he is away. She receives the keys and a small egg and is told to go everywhere in the house except one small chamber. Once Fitcher leaves, the heroine carefully puts away the egg and enters the forbidden chamber. She finds her sisters bodies hacked into pieces. She puts their bodies back together which reanimates them immediately, and then she devises a plan to save them all. Fitcher arrives

and the girl returns his keys and egg. Because they are not covered in blood, Fitcher believes he has finally found an obedient woman. Fitcher says he will take the girl for his bride and because she is to marry him, he no longer has any power over her. She asks that Fitcher carry a basket of gold to her parents while she prepares for the wedding. She tells him not to rest until he arrives, for she will be watching from her tower. The girl conceals her sisters in the basket and he leaves. Whenever he stops, the girls cry from within, 'I can see you from my window,' urging Fitcher, who is somewhat frightened of what he believes is his fiancé's magic, to continue the journey. He leaves the basket at her parent's house and returns home. During this time, the heroine has taken a head from one of Fitcher's victims, placed a veil on it, skewered the head on a stick, and left it in her tower window, as well as invited all of Fitcher's friends for the wedding at the house. She disguises herself as a bird and fools Fitcher and his guests as they arrive for the wedding. Fitcher and the guests enter the house. The heroine, with help from her sisters who secretly returned, locks the doors and burns the house down. Afterward, they all return home.

"The Bloody Chamber" by Angela Carter

Set at the turn of the twentieth century, this story places the heroine in the Paris with mother, waiting for her marriage to the Marquis, a rich, older man with a reputation for his many past wives. After an austere wedding, the narrator is whisked away towards the castle as she contemplates her future and her wedding night with this man. Suddenly, the Marquis is called away on business. He hands her keys to the house and tells her she may go anywhere in his splendid palace except one small chamber. Naturally, her curiosity overcomes her and heads to find the forbidden room. After she enters the room, she realizes she has entered a torture chamber; the dead bodies of his past wives lay in the chamber: one still in the Iron Maiden, one

hanged, one strangled. The narrator drops the key into a pool of blood, grabs it hastily, and runs from the room. Instantly, she thinks to call her mother, but the phone is dead. The poor, blind piano tuner, hired to tune the girl's piano everyday, appears and she relates her tale. They believe they have time in which to plan an escape, but the Marquis returns early and demands to have his keys. Immediately, he knows that she has disobeyed him from the blood stained key; the stain, to the girl's dismay, would not wash off. He sentences her to death: decapitation. As she is about to die, the pounding of horses hoofs is heard—her mother races up unexpectedly and shoots the Marquis in the head. The girl marries the piano tuner and they live with her mother in a house near the sea.

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