

A Classical Twist

By Yean Ly

Once upon a time, there lived a princess who wasn't trapped in a tower, abused, or living happily ever after. Her name was Lynie and she lived in a happy little kingdom that was surrounded by woods; those long ago woods where dragons and werewolves can pop out of nowhere. She was a very brave and clever girl, and many people liked her for her optimistic and outgoing personality. Those who didn't like her were evil-born or out to kill her, literally.

One day, she heard that a prince was imprisoned in a tower by his evil stepmother, so she decided to set on an adventure to rescue him. The next dawn, she set out with her sidekick Spike, a talking dog that everyone seem to have these days. Lynie didn't know she was followed by the evil knight Stephan Smother. So through the woods they went, and before noon they encountered Little Red Riding Hood, except it didn't look like she was wearing a red hood now, it was actually... fur.

"Hi there lil' red," said Lynie.

"Hello, uhm, can you direct me to the village?" She asked kindly.

"Oh sure it's just north of here," replied Lynie.

"Thank you," the little girl with a wolf-fur cape thanked as she went skipping north.

“Hmm gee I wonder how she got that cape,” Lynie wondered sarcastically to herself.

The sun was high in the sky by the time Lynie and Spike reached a small meadow. In the opposite end, two children were carrying what looked like a person. As the two approached, Lynie saw that it was Hansel and Gretel. The two looked like they were holding a half eaten gingerbread-witch.

“Hey guys, whatcha got there?” Lynie asked.

“Oh nothing much, just this uh, wicked tasty witch,” said Hansel.

“They’re eating the witch, but didn’t the witch wanted to eat them?” Spike whispered to Lynie.

“We’re right here you know, and yea she was, until we found out that she was also made of candy when she almost melted near a fire,” Gretel told them.

“I would’ve gotten away with this... How can I get caught by mere children...?” the witch droned on and on.

“Boy is she a talker. Should’ve eaten her head first, huh,” Hansel joked.

Lynie gave a giggle and said, “Well I’m afraid me and Spike here have to continue on our journey. Do you guys happen to know which way it is to The Tower?” Lynie asked.

“Yea it’s just west of here. Go past this meadow and you’ll know when you start to see creepy-looking trees and heavy fog. Go through, and continue on,” Gretel directed them.

“Ok thank you, and have a safe day,” Lynie thanked and continued on.

Just as the two were heading into the eerie forest, Spike suddenly stopped dead and slowly turned his head.

“What’s wrong Spike?” asked Lynie.

“I don’t know. I thought I felt a presence...” Spike said, still looking back.

“Well, maybe it’s just a ghost or something,” Lynie assured him.

What they didn’t know was that, amongst the shadows of the trees, a darker specter had been silently pursuing them.

As they were walking, they came upon a sparkling blue river. Lynie and Spike decided to stop for water. As they stopped for water, Spike’s ear abruptly perked up and he growled and barked towards the other side of the river. *Twang!* An arrow had barely missed Lynie’s arm. Shocked by the sudden attack, Lynie fumbled around looking for a quick but solid defense. She had barely deflected another arrow when she realized that the object she held up for protection was alive.

“OWWWW,” the furry creature exclaimed.

“OMG I am so sorry Spike!” Lynie cried out when she realized that she had held Spike up to protect herself, but it was all an accident!

“Spike, oh my! Are you ok?!” Lynie exclaimed to Spike as she gently laid him down.

“Well, besides the fact that I have an arrow in my buttocks, I’m fine,” Spike replied critically, “but I guess I’m supposed to guard you, so happy to be at service.”

Spike only winced as Lynie pulled the arrow out. Lynie started to wonder how they were going to defend themselves, and who would try to attack them like this.

Out of nowhere, a young man with a celestial shield stood in front Lynie; just in time also, as another arrow struck dull into the shield. The boy looked old, in maturity, but he didn't seem any older than Lynie was. When he was certain that no arrows will fly, he cautiously lowered his guard and turned to offense as he pulled out a beautifully crafted bow and sharp arrows. Lynie watched in amazement when the light of the weapons reflected as he sent a shower of pointy arrows towards the enemy. There was a dreary thud as the foe hit the ground. The young man turned to Lynie, and asked her, "Are you alright miss?"

Lynie, speechless from his gaze on her, stuttered, "Oh I'm fine thank you."

Lynie thought the mysterious savior resembled Robin Hood greatly, so she asked, "Are you Robin Hood?"

"No, I'm Richmond, Robin's brother," Richmond answered her in a gentle voice.

Lynie had taken notice of Richmond's sweet chocolate eyes, heavenly features, and musky scent of an adventurous soul. Embarrassment ran through Lynie's body when she realized she must've been staring at him and that he was still holding her in his arms. She quickly moved away and turned towards Spike.

"Well thank you very much Richmond for saving us, but I must bid you farewell, for I have to continue on my journey," Lynie awkwardly said to Richmond while looking down to hide her blushing cheeks.

“Oh, well, if you don’t mind I would be honored to assist you on your voyage,”

Richmond said in his ever-sweetly voice.

“Really? Are you sure? It’s probably much more dangerous here on out to the Tower,”

Lynie said in a surprised voice.

“Well, what shall I ever do if any harm comes to you, my lady?” Richmond insisted.

A smile played on Lynie’s lip and she replied, “I supposed any help is to be greatly appreciated.”

They both were smiling at each other until Spike said, “Well, I don’t mean to break your lovey-dovey moment here, but we got less than 6 hours to make it to the Tower.”

“Oh, right. C’mon u guys, let’s move,” a flushed Lynie said.

After crossing a thick forest and river, they finally came to the mass green field that lay before the Tower. The lush field was beautiful, covered in bright grass and smiling flowers of every color. The Tower seemed to yearn for them to occupy it. None of them took another step forward; they knew that underneath the serene scenery, dangers of their worst nightmare might be lurking.

“So, are we going to move to it?” Spike broke the strange silence of fear and uncertainty.

“There’s nothing to fear, right? As long as our backs are watched, nothing can surprise us,” Lynie tried to assure the pack.

“Ok, we shall take each step cautiously, and be aware of every sound and movement,”

Richmond added.

The pack moved into the grassland, carefully watching each other's back. Nothing seemed to be there, so by the time they were at the center, their guards had lowered a little.

Lynie, Richmond, and Spike all froze to the loud galloping of a horse behind them. They turned around just in time to dodge as a black knight on a midnight horse ran past them. The knight turned the horse around and let the horse canter towards the group. Lynie noticed a tear in the knight's armor; that must've been the one who had attacked them.

"Oh no, it's the evil knight, Stephen Smother," Richmond whispered to a frightened Lynie.

"But what does he want from us?" Lynie fiercely whispered back.

"I don't know, but it might spell trouble for us," Richmond told Lynie.

"Heads up guys, something wicked this way comes," Spike said.

As the knight approached them, a scarily stunning dragon trailed behind the knight. The dragon's scales sparkled like diamonds of every color and made it hard to tell what its true colors were. It seemed to belong to the knight, for their steps seemed to match in pace. When the knight came closer, he spoke, "So you think you pathetic children can ever cross into my territory? We'll just see about that."

Without warning, the dragon flew forward and breathed out superhot blue flames from its mouth. Richmond stepped in front of them with his shield held out, just in time to save them again.

“Run! I’ll get the dragon!” Richmond exclaimed at the top of his lungs over the dragon’s mighty roar. He was leading the dragon away from Lynie and Spike, shielding himself from each of the intense fireballs hurling from the dragon’s fang-filled jaws.

“So, is the little girl going to run now? Or does she want to be my dragon’s chew toy?” the knight cackled.

“DO NOT CALL ME LITTLE!” Lynie angrily shouted at Stephen.

“Oh he’s done it now,” Spike said and sat to watch as Lynie charged at the shocked knight.

Clangs and *clashes* went off as sword went against claws between Richmond and the dragon. Stephen the knight was overwhelmed by Lynie’s sudden surge of power. The two were going all out with their blades, reflecting sunlight off of their sword’s metal surface. Lynie was slowly gaining a winning edge against Stephen when he tripped her with his sword, swiping it at her feet. In a quick impulsive action, Lynie swung her blade towards Stephen’s head and knocked his helmet off.

Everyone gasped in shock when long black hair fell onto Stephen’s back. The knight had a horrified face when she realized what had happened.

“NO! How could you?!” The she-knight shrieked out.

“So, you’re a Stephanie..?” Spike wondered out loud.

“Stephanie Smother... Stephanie Smother... Stephanie Smother!” Lynie thought out loud. Lynie scratched her sword into the ground and wrote out ‘STEPhanie sMOTHER’. “You’re the captive prince’s step-mother aren’t you?” Lynie pointed out.

The shocked Stephanie ran to her horse and mounted it, riding away as she yelled, "He's going to stay my captive no matter what!"

"Oh no! Richmond! She's getting away!" Lynie shouted to Richmond before realizing he had his hands full dealing with the dragon. Lynie and Spike quickly ran to help him, and they managed to keep the dragon at bay.

"Ok, I got a plan," Richmond breathed out tiredly to Lynie, "First, we have to somehow fit onto my shield, then, get the dragon to fire us off towards the Tower."

"Brilliant! Ok, you back the shield onto our backs and hopefully the shield's surface will reflect sunlight enough to get the dragon's attention," Lynie said. Surely enough, the shiny light got the dragon to spew out severely hot fire and sent the trio blasting to the Tower like a rocket. Spike made a quick face at Stephanie as they shot by.

"Richmond, how are we going to get off?!" Lynie yelled out.

"Well, unless we want to crash face first into hard bricks, we have to turn this thing around so we'd get deflected off and land onto the ground," Richmond yelled back, barely loud enough over the shrieks of the dying fire that was sending them through the air.

Lynie yelled, "Ok, on my count. One, two." As Lynie said three they all turned and twisted their bodies so the shield would turn. The shield hit the brick wall with a hard scraping noise and sent the trio to the ground.

"Ok, I guess that worked, but not as well as I thought," Richmond groaned as he got up; landing into hard earth was never painless.

“But we’re here at the Tower, and Step-Mother’s way behind. I suggest we go on,” Spike said.

They searched around the gigantic tower base for a door that would lead them in. Luckily, Spike was able to sniff out a hidden secret staircase. By the time the trio reached the stair top, they were out of air.

“Man that was a long climb,” Spike panted.

A silhouette was swiftly moving around the dim room. Lynie, Richmond, and Spike rushed to one another to back each other up.

“Hello!” an excited voice popped out of nowhere.

The trio jumped at the sudden voice, but relaxed when they saw that it was the captive prince.

“I’m Prince John,” the prince said, “I’m guessing you’ve already met my stepmother?”

“Yes, and you need to come with us if you’re going to get out of here. Your stepmother’s got a dragon, you know,” Lynie said as she motioned for John to follow her down the staircase.

“Uh, yea, thing is, I don’t really want to leave,” the prince said slowly.

“Why not? Why?” Richmond asked. They were all shocked at the prince.

“Well, my stepmother might’ve been a witch to you guys, but she’s pretty nice to me. She took care of me and stuff,” the prince explained.

Just then, Stephanie came through the tower window, thanks to her sparkly dragon, and exclaimed in delight, "Oh my precious boy! I was sure you were going to leave mommy all alone, but you really do love me!" The now-loving stepmom swept her stepson in for a hug. "Now if you want, I'll let you go with these guys. You might get bored staying up here for the rest of your life, honey," the stepmother told her son.

"Well, that depends," he took a big step towards Lynie and, trying to be charming, asked her, "I suppose you uh, want to marry the rich prince and live happily ever after?"

Lynie took a step back in disgust and told him, "Ok, not to be mean, but you're a bit of a wimp. I really don't need to be settling down right now or in the near future, especially with someone like you. Besides," she took a step towards Richmond and smiled, "I think I'm going to be spending a great deal of time with someone else."

The prince seemed astonished by the princess's answer. "But that doesn't make sense. That's not how it's supposed to be! Fairytales always end with 'happily ever after.'"

"Well, maybe this is a different fairytale," Lynie said as she and the gang were heading towards the entrance with Lynie and Richmond holding hands. As they headed down, Lynie shouted to John, "Anyways, good luck with your life, Prince John. Bye!"

The prince started to stutter in shock as they were leaving him, and he whined, "You guys are so going into my Diary of a Wimpy Prince!"