



Rosie, 1986

W. H. Moore
Retold Fairy Tales

“And what brings you here today,” she said, scrutinising the passport, “...Rosie?”

“Visiting family.”

“Look at me,” she said. “You’ll need to take down the hood.”

Soundlessly, Rosie removed her hood.

“Excellent,” she said with a firm slam of the stamp onto Rosie’s passport. “Welcome.”

“Thanks,” Rosie said, flipping her hood back up and snatching her passport back. She then jogged right through to baggage claim. The carousel had already begun by the time she got there; several groups of people stood in an aura of chatter, impatiently staring at the hypnotic strip of plastic hauling their bags along.

Rosie, of course, had packed lightly. When travelling, there were easy ways to save time, and refusing the lure of a well-packed suitcase was one. No, thank you, Rosie would just need her personal items, maybe a change of clothes. Once outside, Rosie swung herself into the nearest taxi, uttered a few syllables to the driver, and lit a cigarette.

“You can’t do that in here,” said the driver, motioning with her head to the no smoking sign attached to the plastic barrier between her and Rosie. “Not in here. The cigarette.”

Rosie soundlessly threw it out of the window and blew the smoke in her lungs into the passenger seat beside her. “Sorry,” she offered.

The drive would take about seventeen minutes, maybe. To get from this side of the city, across the river and into downtown, seventeen minutes. Enough time. Rosie pulled out her notepad and began leafing through the pages. There was barely a moment to pull out her pen when the cab came to a stop.

Traffic.

Rosie sighed. She had barely gotten a word onto her notepad. She was hoping for some sort of release, something to distract her. The pen began relentlessly scribbling on the page, Rosie marvelling at the ink all at once liquid, sticky, glossy and dry. Outside the window, skyscrapers loomed. Dumb luck she managed to get to a taxi so quickly in this area.

It wasn't seventeen minutes. The trip, all being told, took about forty. By the time Rosie got there, the tall, rugged man was waiting outside, smoking his own cigarette. The page on her notepad was nearly pitch black. The man stood, glanced at the taxi, and flicked his cigarette into a drain. Rosie saw his distinctive wolf tattoo on his forearm, revealed by his rolled sleeve.

She got out, handed the driver the fare and added a crisp five with it, apologising for the smoke. Rosie then turned to the man, who was now towering over her, arms by his side.

"Hi sis. Flight okay?" he began.

"Fine. Where is Grandma?"

"Inside. But – "

"I'm sorry I'm late. Take me to the room? I don't know where it is."

"Yes, but Rosie – "

"What?"

"She's not..." He couldn't seem to bring out the words. "...doing well. She's conscious, but only so much..."

"Like I said, I'm sorry I'm late."

He stood for a moment, then led her in.

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