



Why I left her in the tower

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Retold Fairy Tales

Once upon a time, there was a woman who lived alone in a tower. She had a pet cat but still felt lonely. She wanted to be a mother to a beautiful girl, but that was impossible for she could not bear children. One day she decided she would be alone no more, so she began the creation of a beautiful young girl. She designed her just how she wanted her; bright big eyes, soft flawless hands, and long luscious hair. She made a prototype of this girl from her scraps of trash from her previous electronics projects, all of which were mostly unsuccessful. The woman took pride in all of her work, functioning or not. “I will no longer be alone,” she said, “I will have a daughter as beautiful as the night sky, and her name will be Rapunzel.”

Day in and day out, she would work on her daughter, fixing glitches and re-soldering wires. She worked on every detail, from the hairs on her head to the nails on her toes. The future mother would run to the local market up to three times a day to pick up circuit boards, resistors, and clothing for her new daughter.

Finally she was done.

The robot opened her eyes and in confusion, examined her surroundings.

“What’s your name?” asked the mother.

“Why it’s Rapunzel! Why do I feel so tired mother?”

The mother had programmed the robot to know her name and use face recognition to identify the mother as her mother.

“You just have not had enough sleep, my dear. Go lie in your bed and take a nap.” The mother quickly hurried behind Rapunzel to plug her in for her to shut down and recharge.

Rapunzel rapidly gets accustomed to her surroundings and the woman falls in love with her new role as a mother. Their relationship flourishes and at times the mother forgets that Rapunzel is not a real human.

Every year on Rapunzel’s birthday, they celebrate with cake and the mother updates her operating system, making sure she keeps running smoothly without viruses. Rapunzel does not question all of the software updates and plugins because her mother shows her it’s normal by acting like she updates her own software.

This continued for sixteen years. Rapunzel had not once stepped out of the tower but began to have thoughts of what could be outside the four walls of her tower. The mother did not realize that on her sixteenth birthday, she had installed a program that gave robots the autonomy of their own thoughts.

“Mom, what’s outside the tower? Every week you leave to bring back food. Can I go? I want to see the market.”

The mother froze. How was Rapunzel capable of creating her own thoughts? All this time she would just respond to the mother’s actions and never initiate her own.

“Nothing but bad men who want to harm you my dear. Do not worry, you are safe in here.”

“What if I want to explore outside and find out about new things?”

“I’ll teach you everything you need to know! Now stop with your nonsense!” The mother snapped back.

As usual, the mother headed to the market to pick up some dinner items, for she gave Rapunzel the capability to eat, something never before attempted. She arrived back at the tower and called for Rapunzel to let down her long hair, her voice echoed.

“Rapunzel, please let down your hair! Rapunzel! Are you there?”

She then noticed a piece of her dress stuck in the branches below.

She had escaped.

She knew Rapunzel would be lost for she had not installed a map feature on her chip. She hastily ran back to the market to look for Rapunzel. She finally made it back to the market when she noticed a tumult of people in a circle mocking someone. The mother got closer and realized it was Rapunzel!

Rapunzel was fiercely holding her head as a result of a system overload. She did not recognize anything nor anyone. All of the sounds of people's voices hurling insults at her were overwhelming. Rapunzel's creator hurried towards her, grabbed her, and they ran away from the market as fast as they could.

"What did they mean I was not like them mom? How am I different?" she said sobbing.

"You aren't, my darling. You are just like them, if not better than all of them."

With her mother's reassuring words, Rapunzel head back to bed and shut down. Her mother then quietly went into her room and erased the memory.

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