



Once Upon a Marigold by Jean Ferris

Subjects: Fairy tales; Princesses; Trolls; Family life

Award: Best Books for Young Adults

Book List: Gifted

Props: Telescope, book, flask, 2 dogs, princess crown, better telescope



Once upon a time in a forest far far away, lived a 3' 4" troll named Edric. He was an ordinary troll until the day he found something quite extraordinary. On that particular day, Edric had gone into the forest to gather. Some days nobody dropped a thing as they passed through the forest. But on that day he'd found (*Bring out items as you mention them*) a collapsible telescope, a book of Greek myths, and a flask half full (he knew there were some people who would have said half empty) of a quite palatable wine—rather frisky, with some floral notes and a nice, lingering, jaunty sort of finish. It had been a very good day indeed. (*Put telescope, book, flask down*) He was about to return home. It would be dark soon, and it was dangerous to be in the forest when the sun set—there could be wild animals, evil spirits, big glowing eyes attached to who-knew-what. But Edric's dogs (*Bring out 2 dogs*) were having such a good time sniffing under every bush that Ed was reluctant to spoil their fun. Then it happened. The dogs started yapping their heads off. Ed followed their yaps through the trees and saw them in front of a clump of bushes, carrying on as if they didn't have a brain in their heads. Noses were pointed, tails were straight out and quivering. The light was fading through the trees, casting long shadows that wavered and fooled the eye into thinking threatening things lurked in the gloom. Or maybe the shadows weren't fooling at all? Ed plucked up his courage and pushed his way between the dogs, extended the collapsible telescope and poked it gingerly into the bushes. "Hello?" he said tentatively.

It was a boy. (*Put down dogs*) A handsome little 6-year-old boy with big brown eyes and tousled brown hair. His name was Christian and he was wearing a blue velvet suit and had a gold phoenix charm around his neck. He had run away from home and planned to live the rest of

his life in the forest. It was dark, it was late. What could Ed do? He took the boy home to his cave, his beautiful, large cave with shiny brightly colored crystals on the ceilings. Ed gave Christian an oversized night shirt, and made a bed of furs for him in the dark-blue crystal room. Sleeping in there was like sleeping up in the night sky with the glitter of stardust all around you. The little boy looked quite happy. Both dogs flopped down on either side of him. With an arm around each furry neck, he murmured sleepily, "I'm never going home." And he never did. Eleven years later, Chris is still in the forest with Ed. Ed hadn't expected it but he had become a sort of father on that day so long ago. Thankfully, Chris has grown into a wonderful young man—adventurous, inventive, an excellent cook, and a great friend. But he is now seventeen and restless in a way that Ed unhappily suspects is normal for a young person bearing down hard on manhood. Ed had to admit the boy needed some friends besides an old troll.

Enter Princess Marigold. (*Put on crown*) She lives across the river and over the years Chris has kept a close eye on her and her royal family using his favorite invention—a bigger, better telescope. (*Bring out better telescope*) Basically Chris is gaga for Princess Marigold. But he was a commoner and lived with a troll in the forest. His prospects of romance were zilch. Then he discovers that Marigold's own mother is scheming to take over the kingdom and bump off Marigold to do it. (*Take off crown, put down telescope*) Chris knows he must do something! He's smart, he's inventive, he's handsome. But can he save the princess and win her heart? This happily-ever-after fairy tale is turned upside-down, inside-out, and completely over the top. (*Hold up book*) *Once Upon a Marigold* by Jean Ferris.