

## Once Upon a Marigold by Jean Ferris

When I read Once Upon a Marigold by Jean Ferris it felt like I was back in preschool begging my mom to read me another story out of a big thick treasury of fairy tales. Only this time around, I was evidently not a 3 year old and the normal "princess saved by prince" plot was a bit twisted and a tad more complicated (which makes the novel more entertaining for young adult readers).

The story starts out when a lonely but kind old troll named Edric found a run-away little boy named Christian near his cave in the dangerous forest where dragons and other medieval creatures lurked. Not wanting to leave the little boy to get eaten alive, Edric took him back to his cave made of rainbow colored crystals. As soon as he arrived home, Christian is immediately content living with Edric and threatened to tell his family that he was kidnapped by him if he ever returned him to his family. He claimed that his family let him have no fun and never let him invent things- his favorite thing to do. The troll basically had his hands tied and had no choice but to raise the little boy until he located his family. Despite Christian's stubbornness, he, Edric, and the troll's two giant but cowardly dogs lived happily in the wondrous cave scavenging items that passing travelers dropped behind in the forest. Christian had found spent some of his free time peering through a telescope and watching the royal family in their castle across the river- mostly one dark-haired princess who no one dared to touch or pay much attention to except for the king himself. Christian was so curious and was developing a crush towards the princess and wanted to know all about her so he finally worked up the guts to send her a message via Edric's pigeons (a.k.a P-mail). After writing, Christian found out her name was Marigold and they kept messaging each other, becoming better and better pals. Marigold told him that her mother wanted her to marry as soon as possible and she dreaded all of the suitors that came, and absolutely did not want to have an arranged marriage. He helped her out of course and his advice always worked for her. After watching Christian admire the princess from afar, Edric could sense that his boy Christian was growing up and was ready to leave the cave and venture out into the world by himself. Over dinner he told Christian that he needed to get out into the world and have new experiences. Christian agreed and the next day he took a ferry across the river, got a job as a servant, anxious to see Princess Marigold up close for the first time. While fixing the terrace outside, Christian overhears Queen Olympia talking to her beloved pet ferret about how once Marigold is out of the way and chooses a Prince and moves away, she would take over the throne and rid of the king. And if Marigold married un-royalty and stayed at the castle, she would get rid of them both. Unsure what to do, Christian is faced with many difficult decisions about how to save the kingdom from the evil queen and win over Marigold's heart before she marries another.

I recommend this novel to anyone who is into fairytales and loves short, pleasant reads. I unconditionally love every single part of Once Upon a Marigold and found it to be one of my favorite books of all time, and after you read it you might experience a warm and fuzzy feeling (I know it had that effect on me).

A Book Review by Katlyn Williard

