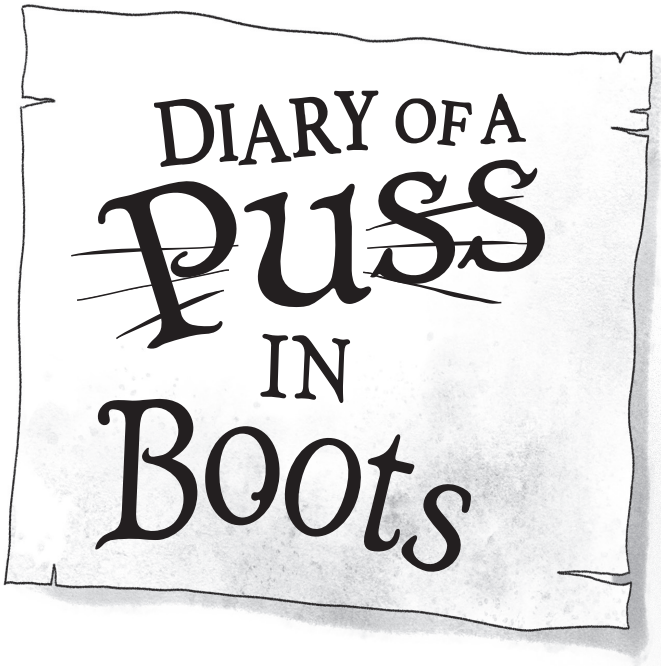

DIARY OF A
PUSS
IN
BOOTS

More magical adventures

from Ben Miller:

The Night I Met Father Christmas

The Boy Who Made the World Disappear

The Day I Fell into a Fairytale

How I Became a Dog Called Midnight

The Night We Got Stuck in a Story

Once Upon a Legend

Robin Hood, Aged 10 3/4

Diary of a Big Bad Wolf

Diary of a Wicked Witch

Diary of a Dreadful Dragon

The Elf Chronicles

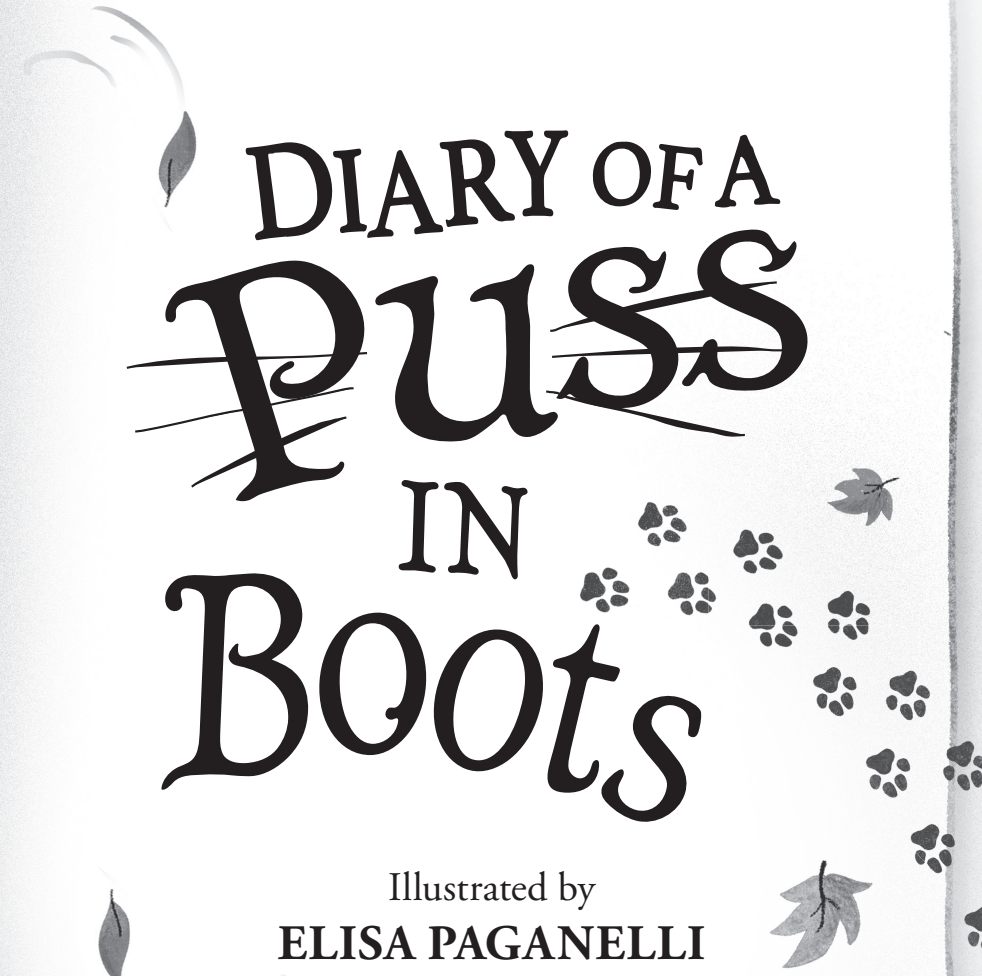
Diary of a Christmas Elf

Secrets of a Christmas Elf

Adventures of a Christmas Elf

BEN MILLER

DIARY OF A PUSS IN BOOTS



Illustrated by
ELISA PAGANELLI

SIMON & SCHUSTER

London New York Amsterdam/Antwerp Sydney/Melbourne Toronto New Delhi

First published in Great Britain in 2025 by Simon & Schuster UK Ltd
This paperback edition first published in 2026

Text copyright © Passion Projects Limited 2025
Illustrations copyright © Elisa Paganelli 2025

This book is copyright under the Berne Convention.
No reproduction without permission.
All rights reserved.

The right of Ben Miller and Elisa Paganelli to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Simon & Schuster UK Ltd
1st Floor, 222 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8H

For more than 100 years, Simon & Schuster has championed authors and the stories they create. By respecting the copyright of an author's intellectual property, you enable Simon & Schuster and the author to continue publishing exceptional books for years to come. We thank you for supporting the author's copyright by purchasing an authorized edition of this book.

No amount of this book may be reproduced or stored in any format, nor may it be uploaded to any website, database, language-learning model, or other repository, retrieval, or artificial intelligence system without express permission. All rights reserved. Inquiries may be directed to Simon & Schuster, 222 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8HB or RightsMailbox@simonandschuster.co.uk

www.simonandschuster.co.uk
www.simonandschuster.com.au
www.simonandschuster.co.in

Simon & Schuster Australia, Sydney
Simon & Schuster India, New Delhi

The authorised representative in the EEA is Simon & Schuster Netherlands BV, Herculesplein 96, 3584 AA Utrecht, Netherlands. info@simonandschuster.nl

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

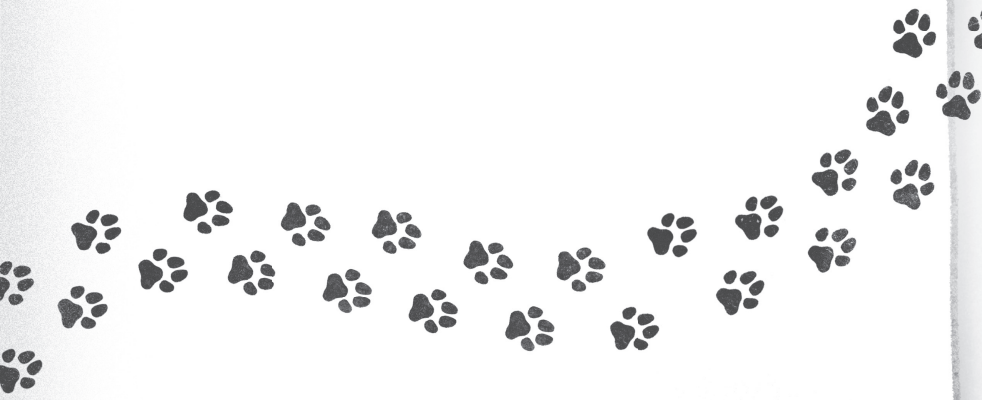
PB ISBN 978-1-3985-3041-6
eBook ISBN 978-1-3985-3042-3
eAudio 978-1-3985-3040-9

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual people living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Typeset in the UK by Sorrel Packham

Printed and Bound in the UK
using 100% Renewable Electricity at CPI Group (UK) Ltd





For Achoo, a most distinguished cat . . .



Wednesday 29 March

Okay, that's it. Enough is enough. Every cat has their limit! Once can be forgiven; twice, overlooked; but three days in a row without so much as a drop of milk for breakfast?

I can't believe I'm saying this, but yet AGAIN this morning I came down to find my bowl was full of WATER.



YEURK.

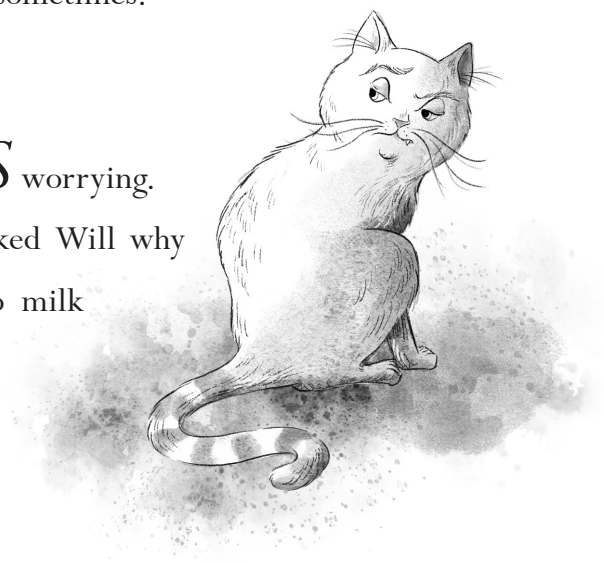
So *thin*. So tasteless. It simply isn't creamy enough to wash down these horrible dry biscuits.

I'm a reasonable cat, but this has gone on long enough. A moggy needs his morning milk.

And I know, I know, it's hard work running a mill, and everyone's busy, *especially* Will, my master, as the old miller works him to the bone.

But – HELLO – there's a dairy literally next door. Do I need to go round there and milk the cows myself?

Ahh, here comes Will now. Time for some stern words. Honestly, I sometimes feel like I'm the master, and he's the pet. Humans really are quite useless sometimes.



Well, this *IS* worrying.

When I asked Will why there was no milk

in my bowl, he just shrugged and said, 'Sorry, Mittens, we haven't had a delivery all week.'

'Well, don't you think that's ODD?' I asked pointedly. 'Jack from the dairy normally comes every day. Maybe something's happened? Why not go round there?'

You have to be firm with humans or they just dither about doing nothing. The trouble is, they don't THINK.

You see, the milk isn't the first thing to go missing around here lately.



First, it was the mice from the wheat fields. Then, it was the birds from the trees. You can barely hear a cricket at our end of the woods these days. It's not *natural*. And what, I ask, is a cat supposed to DO with the day if not chase mice and birds? Except perhaps a *little* bit of napping, but where's the fun in napping if you haven't tired yourself out with a good chase first?

And now NO MILK? Surely the cows can't have disappeared too?

Mark my words – something is AFOOT. Animals are being eaten, or scared away, and NOT by me. Something else is prowling these woods, and every day it creeps closer to the mill.

Of course, my master hasn't a clue. The boy's head is in the clouds.



'I'm sure Jack will come tomorrow, Mittens,' was all he said. 'If not, I'll go and have a word, okay?'

Then he gave me one of his nice firm strokes all along my spine. It felt so nice as I paced back and forth, arching my back up into his hand, that for a moment I completely forgot who and where I was . . . . and by the time I remembered again . . . he was gone!

You have to watch out for these humans . . . They do have a few tricks up their sleeves. They give you a stroke and then you feel all sleepy and nice and just want to curl up in a ball and have a little nap.

Well, perhaps just a quick one. Then I'll go and investigate.

*

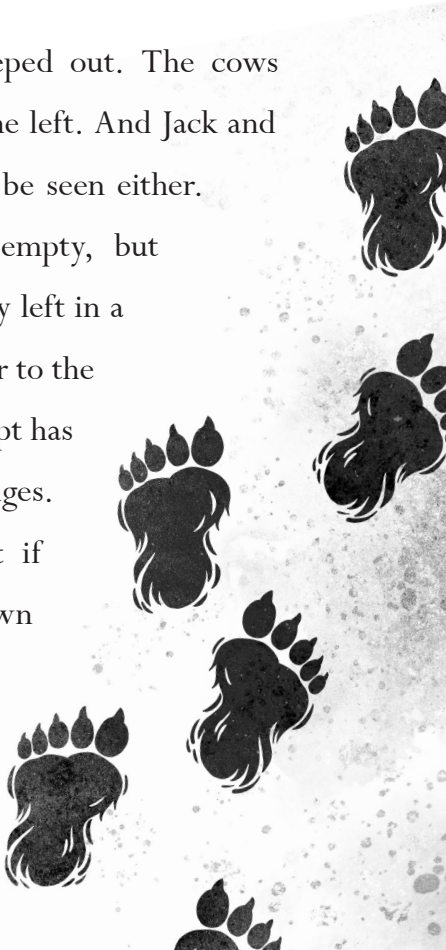
Yawn! Oops. Overslept . . . Now feeling a bit groggy. Still, nothing a bit of fresh night air can't fix. I must admit, I do love the view from up here on the roof. You can see right across the Fairytale Woods, all the way to the village, and – perched just above it – the palace. Ahhhh, the palace . . . Its towers and turrets all lit up and shining brighter than any stars! The stuff of dreams! I bet you wouldn't have to beg for a saucer of milk over there. It'd be cream served twice daily on a silver platter, with a side of dormouse!

A cat of my brains and breeding should be living in a place like *that*, not cooped up here in this tatty old mill, choking on flour dust, without so much as a SIP of milk to ease my parched throat.

Which reminds me . . . Time to head to the dairy and investigate.

I can see from here that all the lights are on, which is odd, since it's the middle of the night.

Okay, now I'm really creeped out. The cows are all gone! Not a single one left. And Jack and his mother are nowhere to be seen either. The house is completely empty, but the lights are all on like they left in a hurry. Worse still – the door to the barn where the cows are kept has been ripped clean off its hinges. I wondered for a moment if a storm might have blown through.



Except a storm doesn't leave huge hairy footprints . . .

What sort of creature has feet that big? I could curl my whole body into just one of those footprints.

I must tell my master – we should leave the mill immediately. Before it's too late.



Thursday 30 March

I told Will about the giant footprints last night, but what did he do? He *laughed*.

'A monster stealing your milk?' He chuckled. 'Poor Mittens. We'll go to market at the weekend and get you some more, I promise.'

Then I felt it – a tickle at the back of my throat. I hacked once, twice, and then . . .

YEURK.

Up came a furball, right at his feet. Serves him right!

'See?' I said. 'The stress is killing me!'

Then he did his little strokey trick, this time under my chin, and while my mind was distracted and my eyes were blissfully closed . . . he walked away again!

'By the weekend, we could all be dead!' I shouted after him.

Honestly! It was almost like he didn't believe me at all.



Friday 31 March

Just a handful of dried biscuits again for breakfast this morning.

YEURK!

I hate those things. My mouth is drier than a dustpan. And the fact that they're shaped like

little fish when they clearly AREN'T fish only makes it more insulting. Note to humans – you're not fooling anyone!

No fish, no cows, no mice, no birds.

And now no customers at the mill either. No one's brave enough to venture down here, and an eerie silence has fallen over this end of the woods. It's enough to put a cat's fur on edge and make his tail swish around anxiously.



Even Will's dad, the old miller, has heard the rumours by now. The whole of the western woods is abuzz with talk of an ogre taking up residence in

the old, abandoned castle on the hill.

But still the humans carry on, business as usual – harvest the wheat, grind it into flour – day in, day out.

'You do REALISE no one's even coming here to buy flour any more?' I said to Will as I wound restlessly between his legs.

I mean, HELLO?? Wake up and smell the ogre!

But as usual, my master just smiled his goofy smile and shrugged. 'Even if it's true, Mittens, what am I supposed to do about it? We can't leave.'

'But why NOT? There's more to life than grinding flour, you know . . .'

Trouble is, the boy has no VISION. No imagination.

‘You know Dad would never leave this place . . .’

Right on cue, the grumpy old miller steamed in, shouting,

‘BACK TO WORK, YOU LAZY OAF. THAT FLOUR WON’T GRIND ITSELF!’

And he clipped my poor master round the ear!

I winced and looked away. Humans are a strange breed. I don’t even like it when my ears

are *lightly brushed*. If anyone tried any of that ear-clipping business on me, they'd see my backside as I walked away, tail held high. Thank you and good night.

But leave my master? That's the one thing I'd never do.

So I guess we're all stuck here.



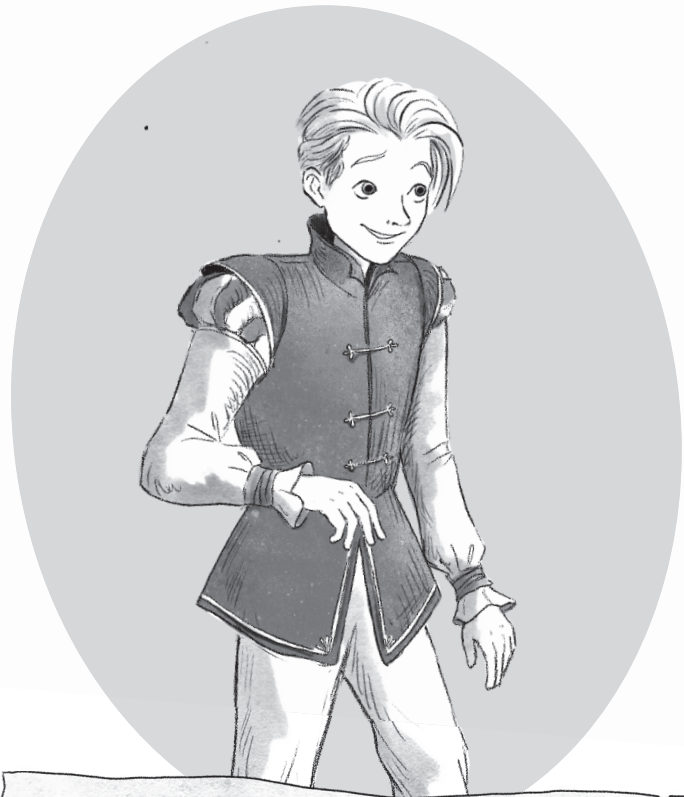
Meet Everyone in Puss in Boots



MITTENS

A cat who always gets what he wants. I'm not a snob, simply a cat with standards.

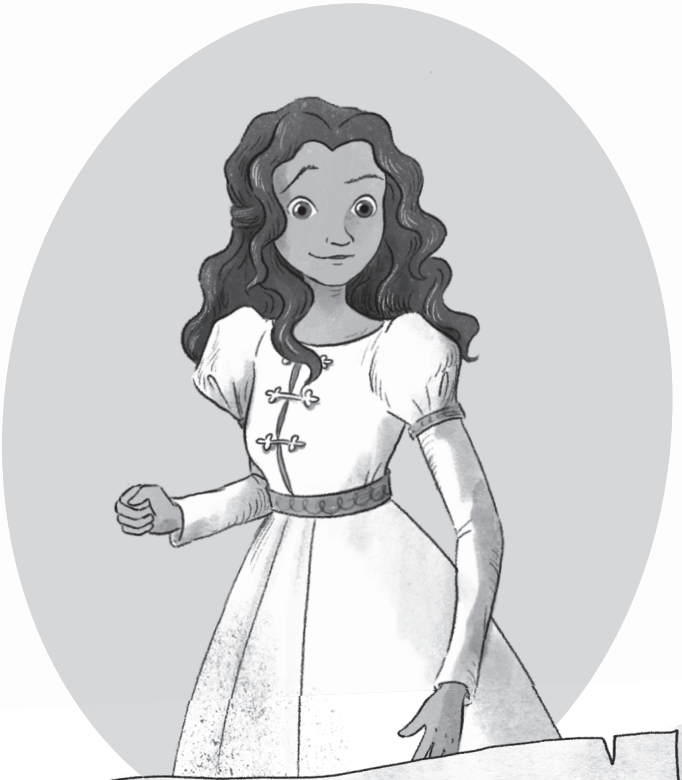
CAT-CH PHRASE: a cat in gloves catches no mice, but a cat in BOOTS always triumphs



WILL

My master, the miller's son. Even if he's not much of a go-getter, he gives excellent back scratches.

CAT-CH PHRASE: even a cat may look at a king (or become a prince…)



CLEMENTINE

I can always respect someone who knows their own mind, and the princess most definitely does! Much more at home in the kitchen than the castle.

CAT-CH PHRASE: the cat's pyjamas – as long as those pyjamas are actually an apron



KING AND QUEEN

I suppose if you spend all your life living in a palace, you get use to bossing people around. But the king and queen love their daughter – and each other – very much.

CAT-CH PHRASE: the cats that got the cream, but are usually happy to share it



FLUFFYKINS

Smart, cunning, and very loyal to her mistress. With enchanting blue eyes, the softest white fur and the sharpest wit… Obviously not my type.

CAT-CH PHRASE: loves to play cat and mouse (and I'm the mouse!)

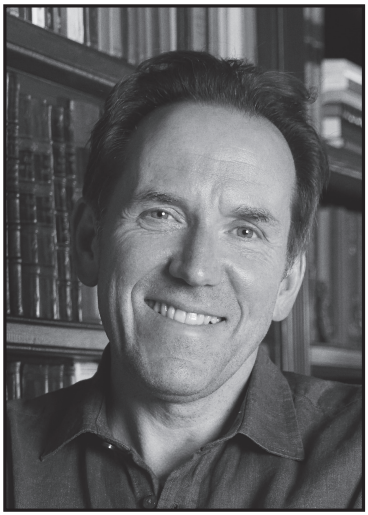


OGRE

Likes: yelling, shapeshifting, and eating people.

Dislikes: being eaten.

CAT-CH PHRASE: roars like lion but is really as weak as a kitten



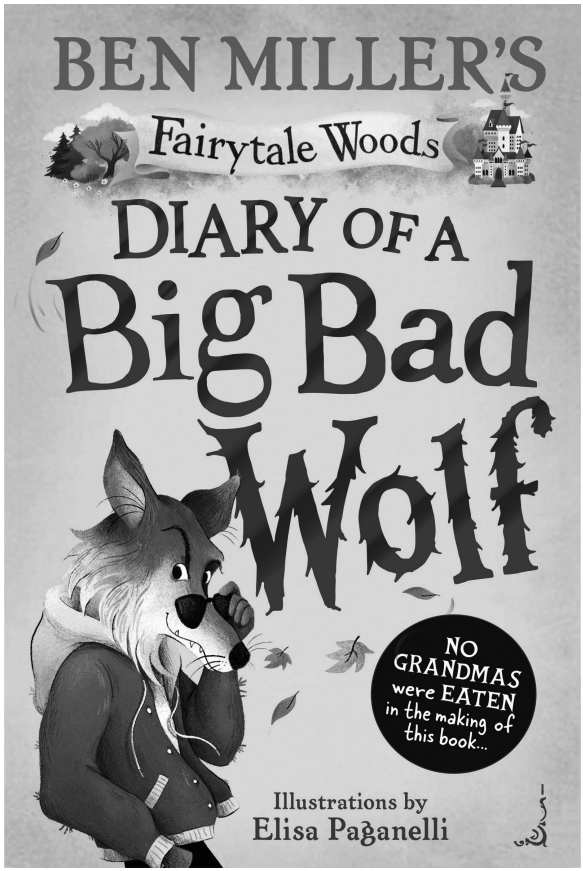
Author photo © Faye Thomas

BEN MILLER is the bestselling author of magical stories for all the family: *The Night I Met Father Christmas*, *The Boy Who Made the World Disappear*, *The Day I Fell Into a Fairytale*, *How I Became a Dog Called Midnight*, *The Night We Got Stuck in a Story*, *Once Upon a Legend*, *Robin Hood, Aged 10 3/4*, *Diary of a Big Bad Wolf*, *Diary of a Christmas Elf*, *Secrets of a Christmas Elf*, *Adventures of a Christmas Elf.*

He is an actor, director and comedian, best-known for the Armstrong and Miller sketch show, the Johnny English and Paddington films, BBC's Death in Paradise and Netflix smash, Bridgerton.

@actualbenmiller

It's not easy being the BIGGEST, BADDEST WOLF *in the Fairytale Woods.*



HOWWWWWL!