

## Once Upon A Time

A bedtime story has carried many a youngster off to sleep, safe and warmly tucked under the covers. These stories are read from books or are oral tales made up or recalled at the telling. It has been suggested that bedtime stories for children foster a deep love of reading but can also be kindling for stretching an imagination. Often the tales read begin with the phrase “*once upon a time.*”

History tells us that the use of “*once upon a time*” can be traced back to the year 1380, found written within a history of France. “*Onys..uppon a day..he slow kynges thre.*” We’ve seen it used in Aesop’s Fables written in 1486. In 1566 a poet wrote “*Once on a tyme, a Greeke poeme I dreamed to indite.*” In 1697, the French author of a Cinderella story, Charles Perraults, began his version of the fairy tale with “*il était une fois*” that translates to English as “*once upon a time.*”

The Brothers Grimm wrote their version of *Cinderella* in 1812. They began with the German phrase “*es war einmal,*” literally meaning “*it was once.*” Danish author, Hans Christian Andersen wrote one hundred and fifty-six fairy tales all beginning with “*es war einmal,*” which translates to English as “*it was once.*”

The use of “*once upon a time*” or other similar word pattern structure has been used in cultures across the globe and across time. Usually these phrases indicate that a fairy tale, fable or legend is being told. Are they true tales? Maybe. Maybe not.

In the spinning of “*once upon a time*” tales there are lessons passed down from unknown times and places. The vagueness adds to the mystery, leaving the listener to safely imagine “anywhere” and “anyone.” It is real life cloaked in palatable fiction. At the end of these stories all is well, as everyone “*lives happily ever after.*”

For the purpose of this exhibition, we asked photographers to submit photographs that inspire tall tales. Additionally, we called on writers to spin stories real or fabricated but roused from a photograph in this *Once Upon a Time* exhibition. We will hold an event where the stories will be read and photographs will be displayed celebrating the power of word and image. Are you inspired to write a tall tale? We hope you will.

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