

Rendersella is a heartfelt and hope-filled modern fairytale that sweeps readers into a world where art, identity, and grace intertwine. With fresh, engaging prose and characters who leap off the page, Amy Anguish delivers a story brimming with heart. I could not get enough of Ella's journey to embrace her God-given worth and find love along the way. Inspiring and charming, this book is perfect for fans of sweet romance with a redemptive core.

— TABITHA M. CORVIN, AUTHOR OF
MALICE IN WONDERLAND

Real-Life Fairy Tales
Book One

Rendersella

Amy R. Anguish



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For my dear friend, Katie Gilchrist. She's a great cheerleader, always up to be a second set of eyes, and the one who introduced me to West Virginia. Here's to 25 plus more years of friendship.



PROLOGUE

Fourteen years ago

“Once upon a time”—Daddy used his best fairy-tale voice as he read the story, snuggled on her bed — “there was a girl named Rendersella.”

“Daddy!” Ella wiggled her shoulder against his side. “That’s not what it says.”

“It’s not?”

“No, silly.” Ella pointed to the page. “It’s Cinderella.”

“Oh, so it is.” Daddy lifted a brow. “But I like Rendersella better.”

“Why?” Ella looked up at her Daddy’s face. He had been so serious lately. She liked him much better this way, like he used to be.

“Because it uses our name. Renders. And your name, Ella.” He poked her in the belly. “And besides, it’s funnier that way.”

“I don’t know if I want to be like Cinderella, though.” Ella leaned against Daddy’s strong arm.

“Oh? Why’s that?”

“She has to do all the work for her mean old stepmother and stepsisters.” Ella shrugged. “Who would want to do that?”

“Good point. But she also gets the prince in the end, so then she never has to work again, right?”

Ella pinched her lips together as she considered his words. “I guess. But do you have to marry a prince to have a happy ever after, Daddy?”

“Nope. But I hope whoever does marry you—many, many years from now—treats you like a princess.” He drew her closer to his side. “Because that’s what you are.”

They sat quietly for a moment, and Ella soaked in the extra attention. It had been a good day. Mommy had even been able to go for a short walk with them earlier. That hardly ever happened anymore.

“Daddy, can we read the story now?” Ella could only sit quietly for so long.

“Of course, Princess.” He smoothed out the page and began again. “Once upon a time ...”

This time, he said the name right, and Ella settled in for her favorite story. Cinderella was full of dreams, and Ella had lots of dreams of her own. She wanted to grow up to be an artist like Mommy. The days when Mommy got out the paints and gave Ella her own brush to use were her favorite.

They would go outside and find a pretty spot, and Mommy would say, “Ella, let’s see if we can capture a little bit of God’s beauty on this paper today.”

Mommy was a wonderful painter. She could mix colors and make shapes that were almost exactly like God’s. Ella was still learning.

Leaning over Ella’s easel next to her own, Mommy would press a kiss to Ella’s head, her headscarf tickling Ella’s cheek. “You have to start somewhere. I wasn’t always this good, either.”

Other days, they would use pieces of charcoal. Or colored pencils. It didn’t matter. Ella loved them all.

“As Rendersella rushed from the ballroom, she gasped. She had slobbered her dropper!” Daddy’s silly voice brought her back to the present.

“Daddy!” Ella tried to frown, but her giggles took over. Especially when Daddy added some tickles.

“What? Did I do something wrong?” Daddy set the book aside and blew a raspberry on Ella’s cheek. “Huh? You sure are picky tonight.”

Ella shrieked with laughter. Daddy always found the most ticklish spots.

“What’s going on in here?” Mommy stood in the doorway, a cardigan pulled close around her thin body.

“Ella is being super picky about the way I’m reading the story tonight.” Daddy glanced over at Mommy. “So I’m retaliating.”

“Hmm. I thought you were trying to get her to calm down so she could sleep soon.” A small smile winked at the edges of Mommy’s mouth.

“I’m just wearing her out.” Daddy winked. “Want to help?”

Mommy came closer and started tickling Daddy.

“Hey! No fair.” Daddy didn’t fight back, though. He told Ella the week before that they had to be extra careful with Mommy because her medicine to kill the bad germs was making her body weak. Ella joined in and helped Mommy instead.

A few minutes later, they were all in a heap, a few giggles still escaping.

“Well, Ella, are you worn out?” Daddy puffed beside her.

“I don’t think so, Daddy. I still need to hear the end of the story.”

He poked her in the side. “Somehow, I figured you’d say that.”

Mommy pressed a kiss to her forehead. “A seven-year-old can’t go to sleep not knowing how the story ends.”

“Right.” Ella nodded.

“You’ve heard this story so often you can quote it with me.”
Daddy bopped her nose.

“Daddy, please?” Ella blinked up at him, knowing she almost always got her way when she gave him this look.

He huffed again. “Fine.”

They all snuggled in, Mommy on one side of Ella and Daddy on the other. He read the words right this time and much too quickly reached the “happily ever after.” Ella sighed. The end was her favorite part.

She couldn’t wait to grow up and have her own happy ending.