

PRAISE FOR AMY R. ANGUISH

Fairest Inn All is, hands down, one of the most delightful fairy tale retellings I've ever read. From an apple-themed inn to seven uncles and all the fun in between, Amy R. Anguish takes *Snow White*, plops it down in contemporary Georgia, and practically dares you not to swoon. More than a simple retelling, though, this faith-filled novel reimagines the entire tale while still holding fast to enough that you recognize characters and situations and cheer for the unique way Anguish presents them. My favorite part of the story (no surprise there!) is how she weaves faith elements you might not expect (and a few you do) into this story. Once you close the book, you can't help but take a satisfied sigh, eye it, and consider opening it up at the beginning again for just one more read.

— CHAUTONA HAVIG, PODCASTER AND
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Real-Life Fairy Tales: Book Two

Fairest Inn All

Amy R. Anguish



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For my friend Dawn Pasley, who has been one of my cheerleaders from the very start. She's always excited to join a launch team, offer encouragement, and read the next story. I thank God for putting her in my life so long ago in our writing email group.



PROLOGUE

Fifteen Years Earlier

Kari White skidded to a stop, bent in half, and rested her elbows on her knees just under her pink shortalls. No more. She couldn't let Jake boss her around.

"Why'd ya stop, Snow?" Jake swung his wooden sword back and forth. His shaggy hair was plastered to his sweaty temples. "We were just getting to the good part."

"Not good for me." Kari straightened and stomped her foot. "I don't want to play Snow White anymore. It's no fun."

"No fun? But you get to be the princess." Jake lowered his weapon and frowned.

"Snow White is a stupid princess. All she does is run away and fall asleep. It's no fun."

"It's lots of fun," her older brother argued.

"Yeah, for you. You get to be the hunter and sneak around, disobeying the queen. No cleaning a house for you. Or having to get kissed."

Jake chuckled and ruffled her hair, and she deepened her scowl. "I bet you'll want to be kissed someday."

“No, I won’t!” She batted his hand away. “I don’t want to live a fairy tale. They all have sad parts.”

“Aww, Snow. No they don’t.” Jake held up a finger. “They all end happily ever after.”

Kari shook her head and narrowed her eyes. “Don’t call me Snow. And no more playing this game. I don’t like it.”

“But you’ve always liked playing this game with me.” Jake tilted his head, his brown hair flopping over his forehead. “What gives?”

“I don’t think happily ever afters are real.” Kari turned her head to hide the wobble in her lower lip.

Jake flopped onto the ground and pulled her down with him. “What are you talking about? We’re practically living in one now. We have the inn with all our uncles, a mom and dad who love each other, and you have the best big brother in the whole world.”

Kari rolled her eyes, a skill she had learned early on with a sibling like Jake. “Mommy and Daddy don’t act like they love each other anymore.”

A huge sigh escaped Jake, and he rested back on his hands, fisting some of the pine needles cushioning them. “They do, Sis. Promise.”

“Then why don’t they act like it?”

“It’s hard to explain.” He glanced away, down the hill and toward the islands and the ocean beyond.

“Because I’m not seven yet, and you think I can’t understand things?” Kari was sick of being treated like a baby. She was supposed to start second-grade in the fall. Wasn’t that old enough to start knowing things?

Jake shrugged. “I didn’t understand as much when I was six, either. Like, why did I have to have a stinky baby sister when I asked God to give me a brother?”

She shoved him, though he didn't move much. At ten, he was sturdy enough to withstand her little arms. But as much as he liked to whine about having a sister, he was always there when she needed him. And he never complained about her being his only playmate when school was out.

"No." Jake huffed. "I mean, it's hard to understand why some things are happening. You know Mom has been sick. It's making Dad feel like he's not the hero anymore. Because he can't rescue her."

"Why doesn't he kiss her? Isn't that how things work in fairy tales?"

"Sometimes. But she doesn't have the kind of sickness that goes away with a kiss."

The inn's back door banged harder than normal. Jake and Kari leaned forward on their hands and knees as voices rose. Their parents paced the small patio area right outside the family den. It was hard to hear any real words, but their hands were moving almost as much as their mouths.

"What do you think's going on?" Kari whispered, even though they were far enough away that their parents wouldn't hear.

"Not sure." Jake motioned with his head. "C'mon."

He led them back into the trees and then slipped through to the other side of the brick wall next to the patio. There, he knelt behind a trunk and peeked around the edge, a finger to his lips. As if she didn't already know to be quiet.

"You can't be serious, Charles." Mommy motioned toward the inn. "We can't leave my brothers. The only reason the inn hasn't died before now is because we stepped in to help twelve years ago. This is the only home Kari has ever known."

"You think I want this to be our only option? You think I haven't considered every single angle a million times, only to

find it all coming back to this choice? Opal, if we don't go, we could lose you. And—" His voice wavered, and he turned away.

"I know." She moved behind him and wrapped her arms around his middle. "I know. I don't want you to lose me, either. But what will happen to the inn?"

"Your brothers will just have to make it work for a while. We can come back after you're cured. But if we don't leave and find you the treatments you need, we'll be even less help to them down the road."

Mommy buried her face in Daddy's back. "I'm the only family they have left."

"There are seven of them, Opal. They're hardly alone." Daddy turned and wrapped his arms around Mommy. "And they would want you to at least try the treatments. If the clinic were closer, I wouldn't hesitate to stay. But the best option is—"

"Less than an hour from your sister. I know."

"If you don't do it for yourself, do it for the kids and me."

Mommy nodded. "You know I love you all. But that doesn't make it any easier."

"The sooner we leave, the sooner we can get you better and come back." Daddy smoothed Mommy's hair the same way he did Kari's when she snuggled him.

"How will we tell the kids?" Mommy burrowed her face into Daddy's chest, making her words harder to hear. "They'll be heartbroken."

"It'll be good for them. Besides, they'll get to spend some time with my family. And that's not a bad thing."

Mommy and Daddy moved back inside the inn and shut the door. Kari raised wide eyes to Jake. His face looked red like Uncle Crispin's chili.

"We're leaving?" Kari whispered.

Jake gave a sharp nod.

“See? I told you.” Kari poked a finger into his shoulder.
“Happy endings aren’t true. Because this isn’t happy.”

“Snow ...”

“Don’t call me that!” Kari jumped to her feet and frowned as meanly as she could. “I don’t want to be in a fairy tale. They’re rotten.”