



Mary Engelbreit

Mary Engelbreit's Fairy Tales
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1. *You've been drawing pictures since you were a young girl. What continues to make illustrating exciting for you?*

Life continues to inspire me. New experiences. Experiences with my family and my extended family at the Studios. Just when I think I am all out of ideas, more come to me—shockingly even after illustrating more than six thousand pieces of art. Sometimes seeing an old piece of artwork inspires me too. I always think I should've drawn it differently!

2. *What is your process for illustrating your books?*

I draw a scene multiple times. I sketch the ideas loosely in pencil; then I tighten up the sketches in pencil, ink the sketches, and finally apply color with marker and pencil. It's extremely time-consuming, especially coloring all of the detail. But, in the end, very rewarding.

3. *How long does it typically take for you to complete a full-page illustration?*

It depends on the depth of the illustration and the detail, but anywhere between forty and a hundred hours.

4. *You've said these stories are meant to be read aloud. Why do you think this is important?*

My mother always read to me as a child. I really believe that bonding time between a parent and child is so important and precious. I have lasting memories of those stories because the experience was special.

5. *Your illustrations are noted for their vibrant colors; do you have a favorite color?*

I really don't. I love all colors—that's why I use them all. The more the merrier!

6. *How do you continue to make your illustrations different from other popular representations that already exist for many of these fairy tales?*

I hope it's my style and interpretation and the fact that I draw each of these stories uniquely.

7. *What is your favorite fairy tale, and why?*

"Rumpelstiltskin," because the story is a nail-biter. It's very adventurous—like a little suspense thriller for kids—and in the end all is well.

8. *What do you want readers, young and old, to take away from this book?*

I hope they get lost in the colorful illustrations and story and cherish the memories of having these stories read to them.

9. *Where is your favorite place to work?*

At home in my studio. I like to draw late at night when the house is quiet.

10. *Do you have any advice for aspiring artists?*

Never give up and, if you're at the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on for a ride. It's a lot of hard work, but if you're good and love what you do and can't imagine doing anything else—then pursue your art.