

**H**ave you ever finished a movie or a story and asked yourself, “I wonder what happens now to those characters”? With fictional stories, what happens next to the characters is entirely conceived within your imagination. In the following excerpt, Gregory Maguire imagines how the seven dwarves in the Snow White fairy tale felt after she went off with the prince. The result is an epilogue—a piece of writing that attempts to bring closure to a story that concluded with loose ends.

- Before reading the selection, discuss the classic fairy tale “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves” with a small group of classmates.
- In the **Response Notes** column, record similarities and differences that you notice between this text and the original Snow White story.



from **The Seven Stage a Comeback** by Gregory Maguire

1. So that's how it is, fellows.  
The man with the crazed expression  
Clawed open her coffin,  
Kissed her awake,  
And carried her off.  
There goes our lovely daughter.  
All we have left of her  
Is the apple that tumbled from her lips  
And the glass box we nested her in.
2. We're better off without her.  
I always told you that.  
And you, and you, and you two, too.  
(*You, I rarely spoke to. Mop up your nose.*)  
Wasn't she always on us about something?  
“Can't you tidy the woodpile some?”  
“Hasn't anyone ever heard of a thing called soap?”  
“I don't trust little men with beards.”  
And then with the sighs.  
The expressive eyes.  
Followed by floods of agitated song.  
Frankly, when she ate that poisoned apple—  
Oh, yes, I was sad, I cried—  
But you want to know what else?  
I thought: *At last. A little peace and quiet around here.* ►

**Response  
Notes**

*This version is told  
by the dwarves.*



3. So why are your eyes all rimmed with red?  
You loved her as we all did.  
Her with her lips like October apples,  
Her hair like the wind on April nights.  
Or did you just like having someone to complain about?  
You kept your vigil as I did. As we all did.
4. And all that's left is the apple and the coffin.  
The fruit and the glass.  
And our troubled hearts.  
Let's worry a solution out of this.  
What could we do?  
Put the bit of the apple in the glass coffin  
And close it up again?  
The coffin keeps things pretty fresh.  
And for a good, long time, too, it seems.  
You never know when we'll need a bit of poison apple again.  
...
1. So listen, guys. Put down your beer steins.  
Life hasn't been kind to us.  
We find an orphan girl, we take her in.  
Locate some moldy blankets to keep her warm.  
Porridge in the morning, porridge in the evening.  
A little dwarf folk music to cheer her up.  
It was a humble life, but it was ours,  
And freely we gave it to her.  
No wonder we're still upset.  
No wonder we can't focus.  
On our plates, our gray beard hardens.  
In the cold cauldron, our soup grows a skin of scum.  
We have to shape up. We're falling to pieces here.
2. Easy come, easy go.  
We're better off without her.  
Remember, I always said that.
3. You are the one who speaks with the sharpest tongue,  
But you're the one who moans her name in your sleep.  
Face it. We all miss her.  
When's the last time any one of us laughed out loud?  
Sorrow has a name, and its name is loneliness.  
Sorrow has a shape, and its shape is absence.  
Sorrow is a sickness like any other.  
We don't manage to do what we should.  
We never go out with our iron-head hammer

To bash the jewels out of secret caves.  
Our hearts are bashed instead.  
But what can we do?

4. We could go find her where she is.  
We could beg her to come back.  
We could bring the glass coffin.  
We could lay her where she was.
5. Let's take the coffin on our backs  
And wander o'er the mountain tracks.  
Sing ho! for the life of a dwarf.
6. Please, would you stop your singing, please?  
It's hard to think.  
Though I'm not one for kidnapping old friends,  
She did leave us high and dry.  
She married that traveling prince.  
They could be nine kingdoms away by now.  
It has been months already.  
I doubt we could ever find her.  
But I'm a one for putting on boots  
And marching impressively right off a cliff.  
Better than sitting around with tears in our beards! ❖

❖ What do you imagine might happen next? Write the rest of the tale.  
Try to follow the form and style of the author, Gregory Maguire.

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❖ Read your tale aloud to a partner.  
Discuss how it is similar to and different from "Snow White." What do those similarities and differences suggest about your feelings toward the classic tale?

How does reading and writing an epilogue affect the way you make connections to "Snow White"?

