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Life Coaching for Creative Women: Mixing Magic with Mindfulness

Make a Light and Shadow Lifeline

As soon as she was alone the little man came in, and said:

‘What will you give me to spin the gold for you this third time?’

‘I have nothing left,’ said she.

‘Then give me your promise that when you become Queen you will hand me your first-born.’

The miller’s daughter dried her tears.

‘That may never be,’ thought the miller’s daughter, and as she knew of no other way to get the task done, she said she would do what he asked. Round went the wheel again to the old song, and the little man once more spun the heap of straw into nine reels of gold.

~ Rumpelstiltskin

(adapted from Grimm’s Fairy Tales, first published in 1812).

In the fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin*, the miller’s daughter is given a task that she does not think she can fulfil. She is asked to do the impossible – to spin straw into gold. If she does not, her life will be forfeited. The goblin Rumpelstiltskin appears to her, and tells her he knows the secret of spinning straw into gold. But the miller’s daughter pays a high price. First, she must give away her mother’s gold necklace, then her mother’s gold ring. She is actually giving

away parts of herself; for in fairy tales, a mother represents a heroine's higher self, her inner wisdom. Then she must give away the most difficult of all – her firstborn child. She barter away her future.

You will have met Rumpelstiltskin, in some form or another. You will have had times when you have been so frightened, so desperate, that you have given away pieces of yourself. The dungeon was dark, cold and miserable. You gave away the gold; you made withdrawals from your mother-lode. At the time, you may have felt that you had no choice but a bad bargain. There was no escape from the dungeon.

In the fairy tale, when the miller's daughter has become a Queen, Rumpelstiltskin returns to exact his price. But the miller's daughter is no longer a foolish young girl. She is a Sovereign Queen. She is determined to find a way to save her child. She sends out her riders across the land to learn the goblin's name. She uses all her resources, all her power, and just in the nick of time, she succeeds. She learns his name: Rumpelstiltskin. When she owns her power and names her demon, Rumpelstiltskin vanishes, like a shadow.

On the surface of the story, it may seem that Rumpelstiltskin should get what he is owed. The miller's daughter made a bargain, and she should keep it. But the tale reveals a deeper magic, a deeper justice. The miller's daughter made her poor bargain in fear for her life, needy, abandoned and alone, locked up in a dungeon. She was held to ransom. Once a Sovereign, the miller's daughter recognises this. She is self-forgiving. She does not punish or berate herself for the bad bargain she made. She owns her reality; she faces facts; she names names. She speaks her truth, she is honest about her past, and does not try to hide or ignore it. She brings it into the light, and the shadowy wraith of Rumpelstiltskin disappears. She keeps her gold, her crown, and her child, for the deeper truth is; they are rightfully hers.

Things are not always as they seem on the surface. There are great riches to be found within you. There is a deeper power. As C. S. Lewis put it in the *The Lion, the Witch and the*

Wardrobe: “It means,” said Aslan, “that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still that she did not know.” In your Dungeon is not all darkness. On the contrary, the deeper you go, the braver you are, the more you are prepared to dig, you will find, instead, what writer Josephine Griffiths calls your golden shadow: “By the golden Shadow is meant all the wonderful creative potential that has not been realised into consciousness, nor brought into life. Discerning our golden shadow and allowing it to live and move is a great responsibility.”

The phrase *embarras de richesse* means an embarrassment of riches. In the language of *romanz*, the word embarrassment, which we use today to describe feeling ashamed or awkward, actually means *imbarrare*: to bar in. We often bar in our golden shadow, through embarrassment, or shame. But brought into the light, you will see the gold you rightfully possess: the rich inner resources, the powerful part of yourself that got you through.

“And she is all of solid fire, and gems, and gold,” wrote the mystical poet William Blake. Let your creative self rise, like a fiery phoenix, from the ashes of your past. “The more you get past pain, the more it goes from coal to diamond,” writes the novelist Jodi Picoult. Your golden shadow deserves to be called back from exile, honoured, and restored to the throne. Your golden shadow will dull and tarnish if buried too long. Reclaim your riches. Reclaim your power. Your creativity is not to be forfeited.





REDGOLD CREATIVITY Exercise: Mixing Mindfulness with Magic

There *is* magic,” writes Sidney Sheldon, “but you have to be the magician. You have to make the magic happen.” Like the miller’s daughter, turn the straw of your experience into gold. Let your deepest memories rise to the surface. Allow this to occur naturally. Don’t hurry or force it. Write down what you have buried. Own your reality. Tell your truth. Name names. Next, rewrite the incident you have brought up as short story, written in the third person, using ‘she’.

Allow yourself some time and kindness while you recover and rewrite your story, as you dig deep in old ground. It might be painful as you own what you have buried: a foolish mistake you made, your poor bargain, your bad choice, the part of yourself that you no longer believe in, the part of yourself that is unloved, the part of yourself you do not want to know or name, the part that was damaged, the person you want to forget: the Self you have banished. But dig deep enough to claim the gold that is yours. Use all your resources, all your strength. What has come out of the bargains you made? What power did you find in yourself? What was the golden lining?

If you are more visual, draw a map or time-line of your life in your *Liber Regalis*. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, the author of *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, suggests using the symbol of a cross on a life timeline to show the ‘little deaths’ you have suffered. Use other symbols of your own on your timeline too, to mark recovery and new life. You will soon see a pattern of shadow and light. Use your symbolic flowers for times of growth; a butterfly for a rebirth; a symbol of shelter, such as a cottage, castle or church, for where you received sanctuary; your symbolic shape for when you used your mind’s power to overcome; a gemstone sticker for depths plumbed and mined; a sun or moon for illumination. Or simply mark your recovery point in gold.



Anne Anderson: The Miller's Daughter



About the Author

Hello, my name is Eliza Redgold. It's based upon the Gaelic meaning of my full name, Dr Elizabeth Reid Boyd. English folklore has it that if you help a fairy, you will be rewarded with red gold. I'm an author and academic. I write fiction (as Eliza Redgold) and non-fiction (as Elizabeth Reid Boyd).

There are some exciting new releases in 2017. Out in March is *The Secrets of Mindful Beauty* to be published by Skyhorse Publishing, New York. These revolutionary techniques in anti-ageing and self-care will change how you look and how you feel - forever.

In 2017 the first in my Ladies of Legend fiction series will be released as an audio book. Listen out for NAKED: A Novel of Lady Godiva on Audible.

Also in progress is a non-fiction book about the spirit of fairy tales and how you can transform your life with a forgotten fairy tale philosophy.

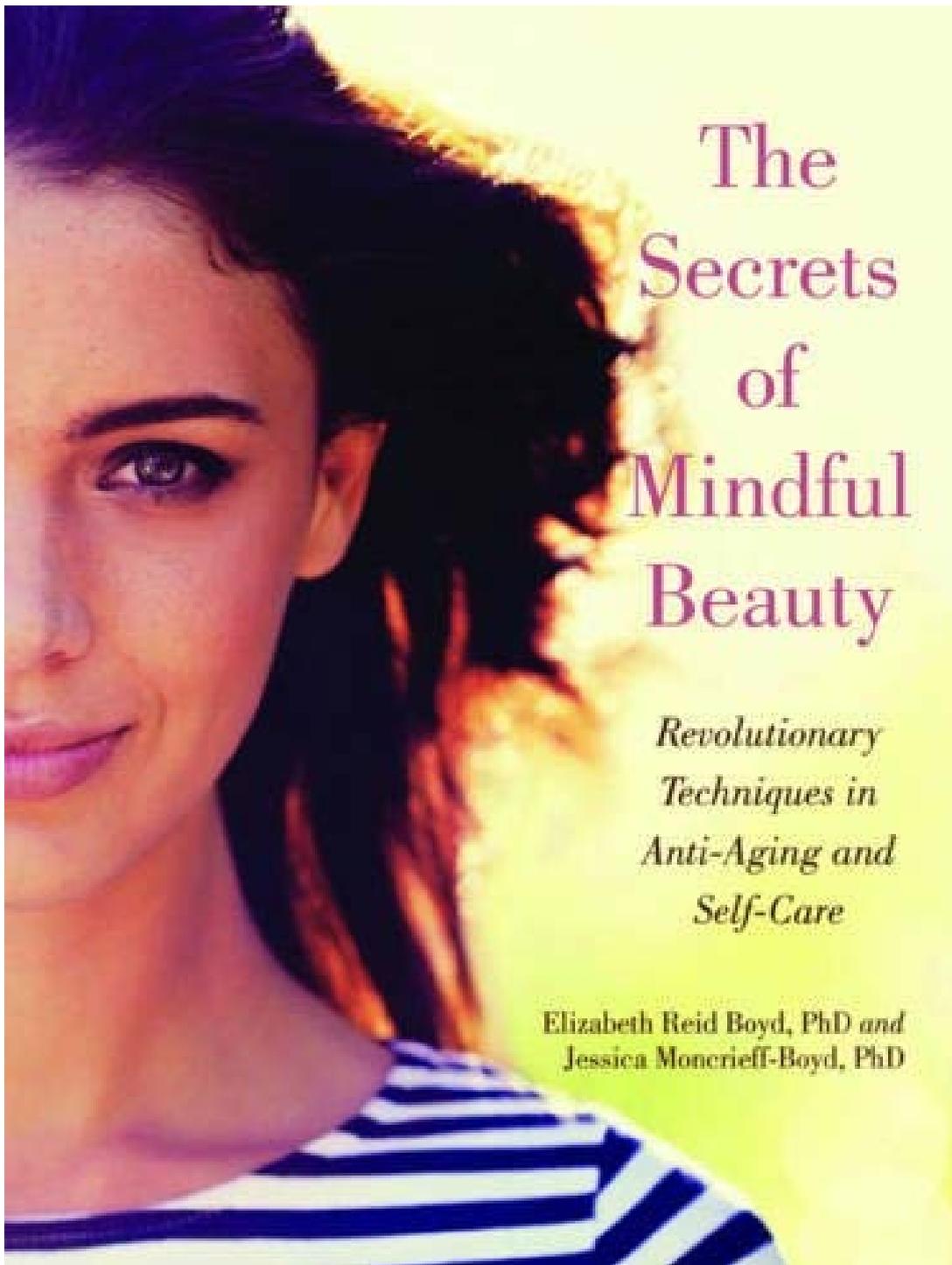
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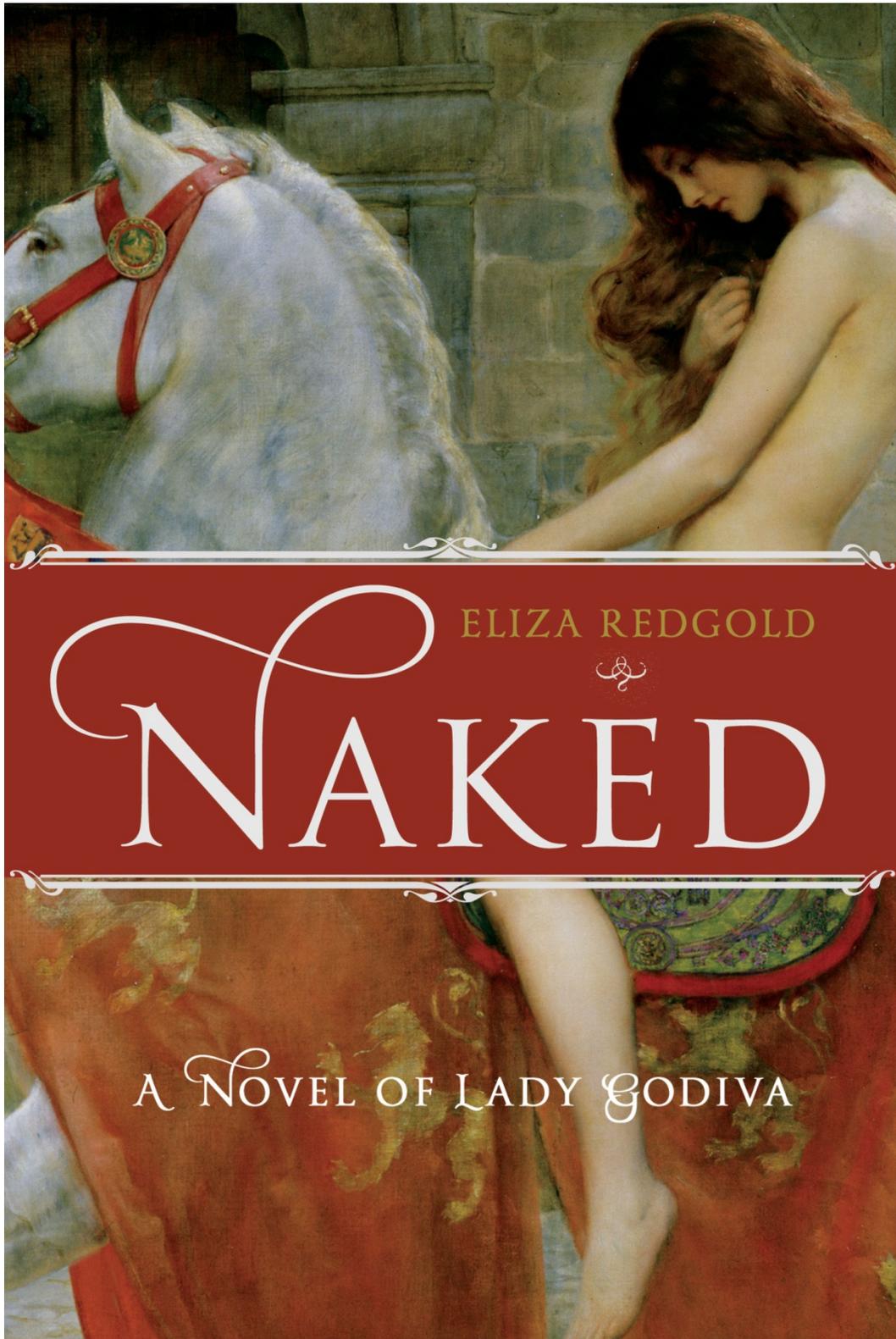
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