

**Between Reality and Mythos**  
by Sean Dineen

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It is a well understood truth that storytelling is an effective way of explaining how the world works. It does so by distilling large concepts into a manageable and palatable framework of understanding. These concepts transcend race, class, gender, time and age.

The saga we all love was created for a generation growing up, as George Lucas said, "without fairy tales" and the lessons they teach.<sup>1</sup> This paper will thoroughly examine a modern fairy tale, finding the similarities it has with the *Star Wars* saga and the lessons it has to teach the world.

Karen Lynn's fictionalized autobiography, "The Broken Hoof," is the enchanting quest for a young girl to find the mental, physical, and spiritual power within herself. With that knowledge, she finds she can take on the universe and restore peace and harmony to herself, her world and the people around her.

Our tale begins with Kitten, our story's heroine, being struck down with a bad reaction from a shot and put in a deep sleep. This is common in earlier fairy tales, that the hero or heroine must be taken out of the ordinary universe to transcend an earthly reality. As Joseph Campbell, noted myth expert, declares: "We cannot experience our new life, in the middle of our old one. We must be called out upon our quest."<sup>2</sup> The sleep ends with Kitten awakening to find she has a twisted left side, cerebral palsy serving here as a version of the mark of the quest. Kitten's quest here is to live a life like everybody else and to be treated as everybody else, without the scorn of peers whose eyes cannot see the inner glow beneath the twisted body and facade of a broken outer shell.

Kitten is therefore a parallel to young Anakin Skywalker when he is near-fatally maimed in his duel with Obi-Wan Kenobi. He awakens to find himself encased in armor, but where he required the armor to survive, Kitten must shed hers to thrive in a world of non-supportive, self-absorbed people with no light. Her next step is finding her mentor. Just as young Anakin must race for his freedom and Luke Skywalker must travel in search of Obi Wan, so Kitten must go to her carnival to find Pegasus, the broken carousel horse who became much more. "Suddenly without realizing what she was doing, she found herself strutting towards the crimson booth of the carousel ride."<sup>3</sup>

Because of her deep willingness to be open to herself and her own spiritual energy, Kitten is the only person who can hear Pegasus speak. "This was a very thrilling moment for Kitten. Within a few minutes he began to talk to her. My name is Pegasus, what's yours? He whinnied. He began to utter words."<sup>4</sup> He serves as this tale's version of the midichlorians. As Qui-Gon explains, "They constantly speak to us, telling us the will of the Force."<sup>5</sup>

Kitten's openness, her willingness to listen, links her with her new steed. When he is assaulted, her heart bleeds, and she is the only one to bother to rescue him when the carnival closes and these blessed horses are left to rot. "Oh, how dreadful the silence sounded. Something has to be done to save Pegasus and the other horses." He was washed in shadows from the darkest room, buried in a cold hallway. It looked like the horses were tossed into one huge pile."6

Kitten's dedication to her development and the healing of those around her enables Pegasus to demonstrate his true identity. He drops his painted on essence and becomes his true spiritual self, as a reward for her faithfulness and selfless love. Just as Yoda, the greatest of all Jedi Masters, appears at first as a childlike gnome, so Pegasus can begin his teaching work unencumbered by the plastic coating hiding his true powers. For he is an angelic figure here, who shakes the world with his glory. "She looked, and looked, hoping Pegasus would be there, but he was not. Behind her she heard a sound building. It was Pegasus. The rainbow stallion trotted up to her."7 "Just then Pegasus awoke, he bent his neck, a neigh came forth. You are real, Pegasus, you are a real horse."8

He goes to work on Kitten's courage, developing within her a sense of her role as a messenger, showing her that a physical limitation doesn't have to mean loss of control over one's own destiny. Just as the Jedi use transcendence of matter and so called physical realities to teach spiritual awareness and connection with energy, so Pegasus creates physical strength in Kitten through running, as well as an inner peace to help Kitten face the world unafraid. The faith shown to her gives her a desire to make the rest of the world more in harmony. She too begins to stretch out her viewpoint to help others. "It's hard for me to believe it, but you have been transformed."9

Kitten slowly begins to explore her world. These new undertakings don't become the same kind of negative attachment for her that Padmé was for Anakin because they are not the only source of stability in her world. Kitten's awareness of her self is improving. She is now wise and patient, to paraphrase a disabled writers play. "She has value as a child of God."10 During the first Death Star battle, Luke is able to switch off his targeting computer because he has found faith in The Force. Kitten must undergo her own trial by fire in the form of discouraging white coated experts. Like Admiral Motti, who berates Vader for his reliance on the Force, these experts regard faith in anything they cannot touch and quantify and see as less than pointless.

Many medical experts are limited to what is earthly visible. Kitten's awareness of her special gift is a spur to overcome fear and self doubt in the classroom, with her self, and with the larger world – particularly those who see her disability as a mark of disgrace rather than the keystone to a broader more profound vision. It is obvious to Kitten that her greatest enemies come from those who cannot see past the body to her inner glory. As Luke was unable to free his X-wing from the swamp on Dagobah, those who are trapped in this "crude matter" often hinder

the great. Pegasus has been sent to remind Kitten that the spiritually awake need not be enslaved by physical trauma. "Particularly though, she felt honored, honored to have touched Pegasus, to have become his friend. He was safe and secure from the walls he left behind." Kitten ran and played the any other girl.<sup>11</sup> Her physical strength only exists as an outer reminder of the person she is being led to become.

Kitten is Anakin given proper encouragement, without his need to shape the world for his own benefit. Kitten is also very similar to Padmé, in that she has become wise through her own crucible, able to see the long term benefit of her own achievement. The new world she is being guided to create exists from her own heart outward. She no longer need fear her own body, but can harness it to give to those around her. She had redeemed the physical universe, just as Anakin at the very last possible moment came back into the light. Trapped within all that machinery and black will was the last remnant of his better self. His love for his son was the one thing that the dark side couldn't take from him.

The medical establishment in the real world and the *Star Wars* universe is overly mechanized. They see a client as someone to be altered, not listened to, just as Vader's medical droids put him back together without consideration for his pain. The rehab process, also very painful, is perhaps best understood to be a challenging of physical and spiritual energy, just like the force. Kitten has been able to motivate herself to see the eternal truth that relationships matter more than earthly pain and corporeal reality is as nothing compared to spiritual growth and union with the universe. This power within herself is the same essence which led our great Jedi, the Chosen One, to come back at the last possible moment, and in saving his son, save himself and the galaxy.

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Ms. Karen Lynn is one of the last of the pioneers in the movement for inclusion. She has been a mentor and adaptive dance instructor for more than thirty years. In 2005, she published her fictionalized autobiography, "The Broken Hoof". She also fought and won the first civil rights case in California, under the Rehab Act of 1973.

### Works Cited

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