

1. Adana the Beautiful
2. Rebekah Knight
3. Russian Fairy Tales, Russian 0090
4. April 11, 2003

Once upon a time, in a place called Pittsburgh Pennsylvania not too dreadfully long ago, a girl named Adana lived with her father. Her father was a quiet man who worked in a factory and mostly kept to himself. He loved his daughter more than anything else in the world and wanted only the best for her. Adana's mother died from breast cancer when Adana was only weeks old, opting to go full term with her pregnancy before accepting any sort of treatment for her illness. Adana was the most beautiful girl in school. Everyone who knew her thought she was the most bright and lovely girl they could ever meet. She always got straight As in her classes and was very popular with her classmates. Adana resembled her mother in appearance so much that every time her father looked at her he thought of his beloved wife. A time came when Adana's father began to think that Adana needed a mother figure in her life. She was reaching the age that young girls need a female in order to mature properly. Adana's father knew that he could not give her that which a woman in her life could so he began dating and soon found a widow who had two daughters of her own. Jeanne had been married to a man who died only several months before she met Adana's father. She was the type of woman though who could not stand to live long without a husband. As a matter of fact, Jeanne had been widowed twice. Her daughters, Carly and Casey were both very close in age to Adana and Adana's father thought they would have a lot in common. He was very fond of Jeanne, she was beautiful, intelligent, and seemed to be a wonderful mother to her two daughters. Adana's father decided to ask for Jeanne's hand in marriage. The two

were wed and soon after Jeanne and her two daughters moved into their home in Squirrel Hill with Adana and her father.

Adana adjusted quite well to her new ‘mother’ and step-sisters. She tried her best to make the new addition feel as comfortable as possible. A couple of years passed and more and more Adana began to feel like an outsider in her own home. Her step mother would take her two step sisters to ballets and shopping in the afternoons and Adana never got invited to go along with them. She usually just dismissed the feelings of sadness that would come over her after having not been invited somewhere and simply rationalize her thoughts by thinking that they must have just forgotten to ask her. Being such a kind hearted girl, Adana never held any sort of a grudge or ill feelings toward her step mother. Adana kept herself busy doing chores around the house, such things her sisters would never do, and studying hard to keep her grades up in school.

One day in school, Adana passed a bulletin board in the hallway with a poster hanging on it stating that a beauty pageant was going to take place in town and the committee was looking for beautiful, talented girls to participate. The winner of the pageant would win a full scholarship to college or university of her choice. Because of her humble nature, Adana would never have given this poster a second glance if it had not been for the scholarship opportunity. She fondly thought of the idea of taking burden of tuition off of her father.

After school, Adana hurried home to tell her father about the pageant but found he wasn’t home from work yet. Her step mother, Jeanne was in the kitchen preparing supper. Adana told Jeanne that she was going to enter the pageant and before she could finish, Jeanne interrupted, “why, you could never win that pageant. You would only be

an embarrassment to your father and to me. Now, stop talking about that nonsense and do your chores before your father gets home”.

Adana’s heart was broken. She went to her bedroom and began to cry. She never thought she was the most beautiful girl in the world, but she thought at least she might qualify to enter the contest. Adana decided not to tell her father, she just wanted to forget all about the ridiculous pageant. The last thing in the whole world she wanted was to embarrass her father, she wept.

Later that evening at dinner, Carly and Casey bragged about entering the beauty pageant and that one of them would surely win. Jeanne sat at the table and smiled proudly. Adana’s father looked at her and said, “Well, of course you are entering too, right Dear?” Adana jumped up from her seat and ran to her bedroom. Her father did not follow her, but stayed at the table to ask his wife if she knew what was wrong with Adana. Jeanne told him that she had already asked Adana if she wanted to be in the pageant and Adana had declined. Jeanne said that Adana didn’t want to participate because she had to concentrate on her studies; that she didn’t want to be bothered with all of the ‘girly’ things that went along with such a contest. Her father felt bad, but decided not to say anything to Adana for fear of upsetting her again.

About a week or so later while in class, Adana was called to the office. When she arrived there her father was standing with the principal and several other teachers. Adana feared that she was in trouble until she walked closer and saw that they all were smiling at her. The principal announced, “Adana, the school faculty has chosen one girl to sponsor in the upcoming beauty pageant. This means, the school will pay any expenses incurred throughout the contest”. Adana sincerely didn’t understand why they would be

telling her this. At first she wondered to herself if they were telling her so that she wouldn't be upset when she found out that it was one of her stepsisters that they had chosen. Then she thought, "Why is my father here, and why is he smiling so?"

The principal announced, "We have chosen to sponsor you, Adana, congratulations". Adana smiled an uneasy smile at her father. He rushed over to her and gave her a hug whispering into her ear, "I know you can win this, your mother won the very same pageant many years ago. I am sorry I never told you". Adana didn't know what to say. She thought her father didn't want her to participate and she never knew that her mother was the winner of a pageant herself. This was all very shocking, but Adana was happy. She only wanted to make her father proud.

When Jeanne found out that her husband was encouraging Adana to be in the pageant, she became enraged with jealousy. Of course she didn't let him know this but she began planning a way to make sure Adana would fail.

The first step of being in the contest was for all of the girls to practice walking. On this particular Saturday afternoon, Jeanne got all three of the girls ready with their dresses and shoes and accessories to take to the convention center. Casey and Carly were so beside themselves with excitement and arrogance that Adana felt very uncomfortable. Adana sat humbly in the car, though, trying not to let her step sister's songs and vain chants bother her.

When they arrived hundreds of young girls and their mothers scurried around trying to find their nametags and dressing rooms. There was a buzz of great enthusiasm within the building. Adana began to feel a little nervous and then just thought of her mother, being in the same situation. Adana thought if her mother could do it, then, so

could she. More importantly, she could make her father very proud by going through with the pageant and if she could win it, he wouldn't be troubled with the expensive college tuition.

Adana found her dressing room, which was right next to her two step sisters, and started unpacking her wardrobe. Her clothes and shoes were not brand new like her step sisters, but she began to feel more confident that she was in the right place. She started to feel a strange sensation, like she could feel her mothers hand gently on her back, assuring her that she would be fine. Before it was Adana and her sisters turn to enter the auditorium to learn to walk like girls in real beauty pageants, Adana's step mother told her that someone from the hair and makeup department was looking for her. She told Adana that she could find them in the next room. As soon as Adana left her dressing room, Jeanne, her stepmother proceeded to break the heels off of all of Adana's shoes. Quickly, she left the dressing room to join her two daughters who were waiting in the hallway.

Adana returned to her dressing room, not having found anyone looking for her, hastily grabbed a pair of shoes and ran to catch up with her stepmother.

Carly walked across the runway following about fifty or so girls and made them all look as if they were walking on hot coals. Jeanne gleamed. Next, it was Casey's turn and she also looked lovely. Adana slipped her shoe on her foot and could not believe it, her shoe was broken. The heel, she thought, must have broken while it was packed in her suitcase, while Jeanne sat quietly with a faint smirk on her face.

It was Adana's turn to walk and she began to tremble. The announcer called her name a second time and suddenly she felt the same sensation she had felt before on her

back. Adana stood up from her chair and to Jeanne's amazement, took her place on stage. As Adana started walking across the runway, the crowd that had previously been buzzing with chatter became silent. Adana floated across the stage with such grace that she captivated every single body in the auditorium. She felt magical for the first time in her life. Jeanne sat in her chair looking around at the audience. She became hot with rage, in disbelief of the audience's reaction to Adana. When she reached the end of the runway, the audience applauded.

That evening on the way home in the car, Adana felt as if she were alone. This was a good feeling, she thought, her step sister's bickering and step mother's sharp reactions to them didn't bother her in the least. She had a kind of epiphany that day. That night at dinner Adana was her usual self, only for the first time, she felt rather comfortable. She modestly told her father about her day while being interrupted by her step sisters arguing and childish behavior.

A week later the girls were to have another afternoon at the convention center to prepare for the pageant. This particular day was devoted to teaching the participants about the importance of beautiful skin and makeup application. Adana was known for having perfect skin; her step sisters envied her that. She never wore makeup because she didn't have to but, used a moisturizer on her face that her mother had used. On the night before the second meeting at the convention center, Jeanne devised a marvelous plan to ensure Adana would not make it into the pageant. After Adana had fallen asleep, Jeanne replaced the moisturizer with a solution of acetone, oil and paint thinner. This had a foul smell that Jeanne could not hide so she added a touch of the real moisturizer to hide the odor.

In the morning, the girls all took showers and prepared to leave for the convention center. When Adana came down stairs from her shower, she had a worried look on her face and tears in her eyes. Jeanne asked, in her most convincing concerned tone, “Well, what has happened, why do you look so sad, Adana?” Adana stood at the bottom of the stairs and replied, “I don’t know what has happened, but my face has started to burn a little and I think I have a rash. I’ll never make it into the pageant with a rash on my face.”

Jeanne had thought this through of course and told Adana that everything would be alright, to get her things ready and get into the car with her sisters. Jeanne’s devious plan was to let the judges see her face with sores and pocks and deny her access into the competition. Adana had begun to feel a very uncomfortable itch on her face and began to cry while she looked out the car window. The tears stung her face as they rolled down her cheeks. When they arrived, Adana started having the same tingling sensation on her back and remembered her mother. She vowed to go through with this day for her father and also for her mother’s memory. “I can just explain to the judges that something terrible has happened, that my face will clear up by the next week”, she rationalized. Adana promised herself that she would not give up.

When it was Adana’s turn to have a facial by the makeup artist, it took every bit of strength she had not to run away. When she reached the table the woman gasped. Jeanne stood nearby to hear Adana’s heart be broken but to her utter disbelief, the woman at the table smiled and said to Adana, “We’ll see you next week, don’t worry”. Adana was so happy; she found her step mother and told her that she was right. They did

understand that her face would be okay by the next week, “Thank you, step mother, thank you for talking me into coming today.

Jeanne’s blood practically boiled. She decided that by the day of the pageant, that Adana would no longer have a chance. She thought and thought and by the middle of the week she had come up with the most wonderful idea. Jeanne decided that to pull this off, she needed to include her two daughters into the scheme. Carly and Casey were overjoyed to hear their mother’s plan to rid Adana from the contest.

The next morning at breakfast after Adana’s father had left for a few hours, the phone rang and Jeanne answered it. All three girls listened to the sound of amazement in Jeanne’s voice impatiently. When she hung the telephone up she turned and looked at the girls with a solemn look on her face. She said, “The pageant was cancelled today”. All three girls began to protest loudly. “Wait, wait, wait, not for good. It is only temporary; there was a bomb scare in the convention center this morning. They have rescheduled it to next week”. Carly stormed out of the kitchen in a huff, Casey ran out to the back porch and sat on the steps. Adana remained at the breakfast table thinking that this was actually a blessing. This would give her another week to prepare. Jeanne walked over to her and said, “I’m sorry Adana, perhaps a nice shopping trip would make everyone feel better”. Jeanne knew all along that Adana hated shopping and would say no thank you. Because of this she had already packed the car with Carly and Casey’s clothes for the pageant. Just as planned, Adana declined. She said she could spend the time studying or doing her chores.

Minutes later the car left the driveway. Adana went to her room to do her homework. Suddenly, she remembered that her father was going to meet them at the

convention center and didn't remember her step mother calling him to that it had been cancelled. She hurried to the phone thinking of the danger he could be in if there was actually a bomb. He might park in the parking garage and not know about any possible threat. She quickly found her father's number and called him. He answered, "Hi, I'm at the convention center, are you on your way? I wanted to arrive early so that I could get the best seat in the house". Adana warned him, "You have to leave, there has been a bomb threat called in, you may be in danger father". Her father laughed and said that they're were thousands of people in the building, "Here is your step mother, Adana, what is going on-where are you?" Adana went numb. The phone fell from her hand to the floor. How could they do this to her, what did she do to deserve to be treated like this she thought, she cried. Suddenly, she realized that her father had nothing to do with this; he didn't know what was going on either.

Jeanne evidently had forgotten to pretend to call her husband while the girls were at the breakfast table earlier that day. She had neglected to think of that one small detail.

Adana's father called her back immediately and drove home to pick her up to take her to the pageant. Adana won first place in the beauty pageant and her two step sisters were disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct. One month later Adana and her father lived alone again in their house in Squirrel Hill. Adana attended the University of Pittsburgh the following fall and was married two years later. She and her father lived happily ever after.