



*Reluctant Press*

# Ecole Maternelle

Elizabeth Anne Nelson



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISTY MALVEAUX

---

**A 'YOUNG ADULT' NOVEL**

---

*Copyright © 2002, Friendly Applications, Inc. - All Rights Reserved*

## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

This story is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. All situations and events herein presented are fictional, and intended only for the enjoyment of the reader. Neither the author nor the publisher advocate engaging in or attempting to imitate any of the activities or behaviors portrayed.

Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder.

## *Protect Professional Fiction on the Internet!*

We need *your* help! We want to keep providing our readers with low cost, professional quality fiction on the Internet. We spend thousands of dollars to edit, illustrate and typeset *each story*. It is important, therefore, that everyone works to help keep professional fiction alive on the Net.

This story is protected by US and International copyright law, and is owned exclusively by Friendly Applications, Inc, DBA Reluctant Press, which retains exclusive rights to publish these materials. The civil penalties for copyright infringement can be severe, including substantial monetary damages, injunctive relief, and liability for attorneys' fees incurred in prosecuting a case. If a court determines that the infringement was committed willfully, statutory damages of up to \$100,000 for each copyright infringed can be awarded. Even if not found to be acting willfully, a defendant can still be held liable for statutory damages of \$500 to \$20,000 for each copyright infringed. **These penalties apply even if money was not charged.** In addition, criminal penalties may be imposed if someone willfully infringes a copyrighted work for commercial advantage or private financial gain. This crime is punishable by up to five years imprisonment, up to \$250,000 in fines, or both. State civil damages and criminal penalties vary from state to state and country to country, but are always severe.

The best way to keep professional illustrated fiction available on the Internet is to do *YOUR* part to protect the author's and publisher's copyright. *You can be part of the solution.* Encourage others to purchase our stories. Never share the access rights you've purchased. **You** make the continued availability of TG fiction on the Internet possible. Thank you for your cooperation!

## Introduction

Once upon a time there was a little elf named Ella, who lost all his clothes when he went to visit his adopted stepmother, who was to make Ella into a good elf.

In his new home he found wicked stepsisters who were determined to make him like them ...so he ran away. But one of his sisters caught him.

His foster mother turned him into a fairy baby in punishment. She gave him nice things as he learned nursery rhymes to amuse his sisters. He was such a good fairy baby that when his true mother came to rescue him from this enchantment she resolved that he should grow up as a fairy baby to become a *princess*.

And thus we have our little fairy tale...

# ECOLE MATERNELLE

By Elizabeth Anne Nelson

## Chapter One: The Good Elf

Already the skies were turning wine dark from the setting sun as high fleecy clouds drifted over the surrounding mountains. Along the listing mountain road the bus paused at an isolated country road that led down into a deep already night filled valley.

“Tumbling Ten Ranch,” muttered the driver as he swung open the front door and wondered where his passenger’s ride was. It was a pretty isolate spot to leave a child, especially one that seemed so young. As the childlike one came to the door to leave the driver asked, “are you sure your mommy knows you are on this bus?”

“Mommy?” the little one asked in wonder and then shrugged leaving the bus. “Thanks, dad, I’ll make out.”

In a single movement the bus pulled forward closing its door as it gathered speed up the highway leaving Ella Gay Rogers to his thoughts and the all but silent mountains. He was used to being alone, just as he was familiar with the fact that most people considered him to be far younger than he really was. It was all but impossible for him to adjust to the fact that at age 15 was just under four feet tall. Ella the elf was his name and it suited his size and only gave him one more cross to bear.

All his life he had been too small because of a birth defect that doctors were unable to correct. All they could say was that he would not be deformed in any way. But, he would never be any taller than four and a half feet. Because of this he had to buy his clothes in the boy’s department and undergo the constant reminders of others that he looked like a child, a beautiful or good elf as his name implied.

Perhaps he was an elf in outward appearance but the similarity ended there for he certainly was not “good”. What he lacked in height he made up in aggressive pugnaciousness which brought him the nickname of “Terrier”. His anger against the world caused him to fight with words knowing that his small sue really protected him from bigger peers. When he did fight it was a burst of fury combined with a ripping tenacity usually backed up with a shiver. In time even the biggest ones respected his rights and the other outcasts of his peers tolerated his presence. Because of this he soon became involved in juvenile crimes that brought him again and again before the court. His size

had an ability to play the misled child to the hilt usually left him on probation under the care of first his parents, and when they died in a car crash his maiden aunt, Mrs. Brundy.

After his latest escapade, breaking into a liquor store and stabbing a night watchman that caught him in the act, the juvenile authorities informed his aunt that he would be sent to reform school and prison since he seemed to a habitual offender. When she told him about this he merely shrugged and said he planned to quit school as soon as he became 16 anyway. As a teacher she knew that he just did not understand his fate and so she began to see if she could somehow keep him out of prison. Finally, her widowed sister in Colorado offered to take him in if Mrs. Brundy would be willing to teach at the local county consolidated school. Once the two sisters had reached an agreement Mrs. Brundy managed to convince the judge that the isolated ranch might be a better place to send the youth. The court transferred his custody to his new guardian, Mrs. Peals of the Tumbling Ten Ranch, quite glad to get the youth out of the state to a new environment that may correct his way of life.

Ella's only regret was that he would have to leave the Famished Five, his rock and roll band where he played the portable electronic organ. But now he was no longer dressed in the mod rags of his group and all that remained of his past musical activities was his overly long blond hair. Mrs. Brundy wanted to cut the hair off, but feeling that her sister should solve that problem she merely dressed him in a neat blue suit, white short sleeve shirt, and tie and placed him aboard the flight to Denver promising to send his trunk of belongings. Somehow the suitcase he took with him on the flight got lost in the shuffle causing the airline agent to promise its prompt delivery to the ranch once it was located.

Thus, he stood empty handed at the road junction feeling the evening chill grow along with his feeling of loneliness. As the clouds turned black the wind began to blow the misty chill of evening rain causing him to seek the limited shelter of a nearby pine tree. Although he secretly liked the idea of working on a ranch this new wet discomfort only confirmed his displeasure over this exile.

After about twenty minutes he looked up from his watch to see a truck winding its way through the trees below along the gravel road. Soon it reached the road junction and turned around. The battered front door swung open.

"Get in, you must be soaked to the skin," ordered a somewhat husky female voice. As he clambered into the front seat along side of a large boned woman that must have been all of six feet tall he heard her amused laughter, and watched silently as she closed the truck door. "I'm your aunt. Judging by my sister's description you must be Ella Gay."

"Yes."

She frowned and looked out at the rain. "Where are your things?"

"My trunk is coming up by freight and the airline lost my bag. They said that it would be sent up by the mail stage." He smiled over the word "stage" remembering that the bus he rode bore that name painted on its side.

“Ok, hang on.” With this warning she shifted gears and the truck lurched forward down the twisting gravel road gathering speed until he gripped the side of his seat in surprise watching the sheer dropoffs appear on either side so close that he wondered if she knew how little room she had left on that narrow road. After a few minutes he felt secure enough to look at her strong featured face that lacked make-up to cover its weather beaten deeply tanned skin. She was a powerful looking woman, who fitted his image of a tough ranch owner stuck in this mountain country.

“I was held up by a flat at Dead Man’s Creek,” she shouted over the muffler rear. And then silence returned to the truck cab for what seemed to be hours until the straining truck slowed down and passed through the archway of trimmed logs and barbed wire that marked the limits of the Tumbling Ten Range. She stopped the truck, dismounted, closed the gate, and again they were rolling through rich grasslands whipped by the night rains.

About three hours later the truck topped a slight rise and drove down into a wooded valley. Tall log and barbed wire fences bordered each side of the road as the black form of barns and feeding lot sheds appeared. Soon the truck turned unto an oiled driveway into a densely wooded grove surrounded by a high rough stone fence.

Suddenly the bedlam of barking dogs broke the windy night and he saw before them the massive rough stone walls of a farm house surrounded by a well kept lawn and high hedges. In a single motion the truck again turned and stopped before a garage shed.

Without a word she reached over and opened his door before she dismounted from her side to meet the barking dogs. Pausing she saw that he had not made a move to leave the truck. At his side stood a huge hound greeting him with large curious eyes and wagging tail.

“He won’t bite you,” she shouted, walking over and grabbing the dog by the scruff of the neck. A trace of amusement touched her lips and she waited until he cautiously crawled from the truck. Leading the way she took him through the dog pack to the back door of the house where she shooed away the dogs and opened the door for Ella to reveal a summer kitchen. “You want a bite to eat?”

“No.

She shrugged leading him up a back stairway to open a doorway off of the second floor hallway. Turning on the light she revealed a bedroom decorated with pink flowered white wallpaper and furnished with a pink satin and lace canopy bed, dressing table, bureau, vanity, desk, nightstand, and bookcase in white French Provincial style. On the vanity was a white radio and a doll lamp that had a nightlight under its skirt.

On closer inspection Ella noted that the all too feminine bed was actually one of those youth beds that could be converted into a large crib. The whole room seemed to mark the little girl nature of its past occupant.

“This was Sally’s room before she decided to become a tomboy. It’s your room now.” She pulled back the satin spread to reveal pink sheets.

“No thanks,” he muttered. “I’m not living in a girl’s room.”

She turned to look at her new ward with critically appraising eyes. "It'll do until I have a chance to order new furniture." With a shrug as if the matter were settled. "The bath room is the second room on the left. If you wish to take a bath your soap and towels are on the vanity."

"What am I going to wear tomorrow," Ella asked removing his suit coat and hanging it over the back of a chair by the desk.

"I would guess that your suit pants and shirt will do until your things come." With this she bade him good night and left warning him that he better wear something in the ball since her daughters lived nearby, and breakfast was served at six thirty sharp.

Deciding that a bath would be alright he undressed and wearing his pants he went to the bath room. After the bath he returned to his room and undressed completely before he crawled between the pink sheets and turned off the nightstand lamp seeing that when the bulb was off the nightlight was on. Turning from the light he soon fell into a deep sleep feeling the weariness of long travel.

Suddenly his deep sleep was disturbed by the twittering of thousands of birds and the morning crow of roosters. Outside of his window came the sounds of barking dogs, farm animals, and the load creaking of a windmill pumping water into the water troughs. Then came a sharp knocking on his door followed by a woman's voice telling him it was time to get up.

Feeling hungry he guessed he should get up and eat breakfast so he rolled out of bed and looked at his feminine surrounding in unbelieving disgust. Shrugging he dressed hearing the sounds of girlish laughter in the hallway soon followed by the sound of several footsteps leading down the back stairs.

Finding the hallway empty he went to the bathroom and cleaned up. Satisfied he went down into the large kitchen seeing his new family seated around a round table.

"Girls, this is your new brother, Ella Gay," Mrs. Peals announced glancing up at the youth with a smile of greeting. Those around the table looked up at him with curious interest mingled with amusement over his size.

"The smallest is Lucy, my two year old." The child looked at her mother from the highchair hearing her name and smiled pushing her eating spoon into her feeding dish.

"Next, is Molly, five going on six," she continued nodding towards a little girl dressed in white pull over knit blouse and pink cotton pants. Ella noticed that she was probably only an inch or so shorter than he was as she arose from her chair and politely said that she was happy to meet him.

"Terry, our little princess is seven," Mrs. Peals explained as a girl slightly taller than Ella also arose to greet her new brother. She was dressed in a pink sun suit and her long blonde hair was held by a large pink hairbow so that it trailed in a loose ponytail in back.

"And Sally, my oldest."

Sally didn't bother to arise merely nodding her greeting and saying, "Nice to have you here, Ella." She was dressed in blue denim shirt and jeans belted by a wide

leather silver buckled ranch style belt. Her hair was braided around the back of her head giving her the severe lines that her boys wear clothes emphasized. He could hardly believe that anyone like this could have ever lived in such a feminine room as his, and almost enviously he noted that she had enough influence on her mother not to surrender her new room to him. For he guessed that this girl, who was about a foot taller than he, probably lived in a rather masculine room.

Finally to complete my household," Mrs.. Peals announced as a rather tall heavy set matronly woman entered dressed in a blue shirtwaist dress and apron, "this is my housekeeper, Mrs.. Tall Bear."

"Anna, this is Ella Gay, my late sister's little man."

"Nice to meet you," the Indian woman greeted offering her hand only to notice his nod as he sat down by the table that reached to his chest. With a smile she pushed a youth chair by his side, but he ignored her.

The two women looked at each other for a second and Anna pushed the chair aside before placing a plate of ham and eggs before Ella. "You should like the ranch," she noted politely to make conversation. "There are a lot of things here to interest a young man, and I am sure that Sally would like to show you around while Mrs. Peals takes Terry up to the day camp bus."

He nodded silently as he began to eat trying to ignore the flood of questions asked by the girls around him.

"After breakfast," Mrs. Peals stated, "he will have time to meet you. He is new here and wants to judge things for himself."

The table fell silent and before long Mrs. Peals took Terry to the truck and drove off.

"I'll show you around," Sally offered putting on a black ranch hat sad waiting for him by the door as he finished.

"Me too, ". Molly exclaimed eagerly after leaving the table.

Without a word he arose and followed the two girls guessing that he should take a look at his new home.

"I'm in the sixth grade next year," Sally stated leading the way across the broad lawn of the house yard with Molly at her heels.

I'll be starting school," Molly added proudly. "How old are you?"

"Eighteen," he announced to her disbelief.

"You shouldn't lie, that's bad." With a look of self imposed disdain she looked disapprovingly at him knowing that he couldn't be much older than she was. "Sally is eleven and she is older than you are. She's bigger."

"He's a runt," Sally countered opening the fence to a barnyard as the dogs began to run up to them from their chase after the truck. As the pack neared she saw the momentary look of fear in his eyes. "They are farm dogs. If you leave them alone they won't hurt you." With this she received the full charge of a huge brute that jumped up and placed his paws on her shoulders to lick at her face. "Down, Rex, down."



The dog lowered himself and sniffed after Ella with curious interest. Holding his fear of dogs, especially large dogs, in check he walked by Sally's side as the dogs followed like a small parade sniffing out this new one half expecting him to pet them yet knowing the smell of his fear, somewhat like that of little Lucy.

"This is the dairy barn," Sally announced climbing unto a rail fence to watch the black faced cows as they moved from the barn yard towards the pasture. I milk them with the machine in the morning. I'll show you how in the morning. Mom says you are to help me with the chores • Ever been on a ranch before?"

"No."

"It's not bad." She kicked her boots against the rail.

"Does your mother run this place alone?" he asked crawling up to her side with a little difficulty seeing that Molly had beat him.

"No, the hands are up in the high ranch with the herd. It's a big leach, nearly 60.000 acres. Wish I was up there too. Mom rode down here last night to meet you since Anna had to join her husband yesterday on the reservation. Luke, our foreman, lives up the road a stretch and the boys live at his bunk house. His wife teaches at our school, and they have three girls about Terry and Molly's age and a boy going to summer school in Denver.

"I suppose you will be going to high school in Dexter,?"

"I'm done with school next year," he replied adjusting his place on the fence as she jumped down and began to walk across the pasture towards a pile of hay and a corn shed. Shrugging he crawled from the fence and followed her and Molly. "My aunt will be teaching here."

"Mom told me she expected her sister to be down in a couple of months. She says that you are small but a tough customer. Seems you stabbed a man and they sent you here. Is that true?"

"You don't look so tough to me," she half warned half observed with a shrug as they rounded the corn crib and walked towards the empty feeder lot. "You ride?"

"No."

"Guess not. You'll have to start with a pony. I'm afraid that a full grown mount might be too much to handle," Sally noted with inner pride, I have a horse of my own, Kingsmount. He is a prize Morgan stud." The sound of the returning truck caused her to look up and wave.

"How far are we from town?"

"About sixty miles to Dexter. The county school is in Bixby, a little gas stop about thirty miles up the road." She led the way past a large manure pile to a corral fence. "Terry is there at day camp with Mrs. Bixby. All the primary school kids go there for baby sitting and play school."

The tone of her voice told him that she didn't think much of the day camp and she was glad to be too old for such things.

“Is he really eighteen?” Molly asked in disbelief as she looked at him seeing that they were almost equal in height. “He is my size.”

“Yes,” Sally replied. “How come you are so small?”

“Birth defect,” he answered with a shrug not liking to go further.

“I don’t believe you. You’re both lying to tease me,” Molly protested. “He’s only six. See he is wearing little boys clothes. Paul is fourteen and he is bigger than you.”

“Look, I’m eighteen, and shut up?”

“She just curious.”

“You can’t tell me to shut up. I’m no baby. I’m a big girl, Anna says I am. I’m almost as big as you. And I don’t like being teased.”

He ignored her anger as she confronted him. As Sally began to walk back towards the house he pushed by Molly, causing her to lose her balance and fall down. In a second she was on her feet in an angry burst of fighting energy that stopped him and caused her sister to look back in wonder. Without thinking he slapped the little hellcat who accused him of pushing her. “Stay away, brat.”

“You can’t call my sister a brat,” Sally called as his little sister again charged.

Ruthlessly he struck out only to be spun about by Sally, who knew her sister was no match for his muscles. Sally doubled her fist and struck him on the side of the head with a left jab that all but knocked him down as Molly ran in tears towards the house crying for her mommy. Sally closed her attack using advantage of her height and weight over him as he backed away only to fall over a piece of wood to land in the wet ooze of the manure pile. Without pause she kicked him three or four times before he managed to crawl from the brown slime to his feet.

Turning to meet her attack he tried to reach her but she placed one hand against his head and held him helplessly at arms reach as she kicked him straight on knocking the wind from him as he fell to his knees holding his groin in pain.

Rex lunged between the combatants and his weight pushed the terror stricken boy back into the manure, only to reluctantly withdraw as his mistress pulled him away to drag Ella from the pile and allowing him to stand trembling before her.

She grabbed his long hair and began to slap him until tears of pain mingled with frustrated shame over being beaten by a mere eleven year old girl came to his eyes.

“Enough!” Mrs. Peals shouted pulling him away from her and shaking him until his teeth rattled. “How dare you hit my daughters, you rough neck.”

“If he wants to fight, mom, let me at him,” her daughter demanded in protest. “I can beat him.”

“You will kill the poor child,” Mrs. Peals noted looking at his dirty clothes in disbelief. “Go back to the house Sally, and take Molly with you to the kitchen.”

“Okay,” she murmured in half protest, but she knew better than to disobey. “Boy, are you going to get it.”