

PENGUIN CLASSICS



JACOB AND WILHELM  
GRIMM

SELECTED TALES



**Dornröschen.**

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## Jacob and Wilhelm Grim Selected Tales 格林童话精选

1812年德国格林兄弟出版了他们的童话集。这些自民间搜集来的美丽童话具有极大的魅力，成为世界上最著名，流传最广的文学著作之一。

本选集共包括65则童话，其中如《白雪公主》等已是全世界家喻户晓的故事。

格林兄弟年长者名亚柯勃，生于1785年，死于1863年，年幼者名惠灵姆，生于1786年，死于1859年。他们两人自幼就非常亲密（除他们外，全家还有三个兄弟，一个姐妹），保持终身合作，成为普鲁士王国的著名学者。他们见到城市化和机械化的迅速发展，担忧古老传统的丧失，自1806年（或1807年）开始搜集民间故事，后来出版了举世闻名的格林童话集。

JACOB AND WILHELM GRIMM:  
SELECTED TALES

JACOB LUDWIG KARL, the elder of the brothers Grimm, was born in 1785, and Wilhelm Karl in the following year. They both studied at Marburg, and from 1808 to 1829 mainly worked in Kassel as state-appointed librarians, Jacob also assisting in diplomatic missions between 1813 and 1815 and again in 1848. Both brothers had been professors at Göttingen for several years when in 1837 they became two of the seven leading Göttingen academics dismissed from their posts by the new King of Hanover for their liberal political views. In 1840 they were invited by Frederick William IV of Prussia to settle in Berlin as members of the Academy of Sciences, and here they remained until their deaths (Wilhelm died in 1859 and Jacob in 1863).

Jacob, one of Germany's greatest scholars, is justly regarded as the founder of the scientific study of the German language and medieval German literature. His most monumental achievements were the *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819-37) and, with his brother's assistance, the initiation of the great *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, the many volumes of which were not completed by later scholars until 1961 and which has become the equivalent of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Between them, and often in collaboration, the Grimms were responsible for pioneering work on medieval texts, heroic epic, legends and mythology, and for many other contributions to the study of ancient German culture. One of their most remarkable publications was the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812, with many subsequent editions), which remains to this day the most famous collection of folktales in the world.

DAVID LUKE was born in 1921 and was a Student (Fellow) and Tutor in German at Christ Church, Oxford, until 1988. He has published articles and essays on German literature and various prose and verse translations, including Goethe's *Selected Verse* (1964) for the Penguin Poets, Kleist's *The Marquise of O and Other Stories* (1978) for the Penguin Classics, Goethe's *Faust Part One* (1987) and *Roman Elegies and The Diary* (1988), and Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice and Other Stories* (1990).

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GRIMM  
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*Translated with an Introduction and Notes  
by David Luke*

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## INTRODUCTION

The modest, almost deprecating title under which what are often called the 'Grimm fairytales' appeared in Germany in 1812 and thereafter was *Kinder- und Hausmärchen, gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm*. This wording may remind us of three things: first, of the still not wholly stale controversy, to which we must later revert, about whether they are in fact stories 'for children and the household'; secondly, of the difficulty of translating the word *Märchen*; thirdly and most importantly, of the fact that they were 'collected by' the brothers Grimm, who were of course their transcribers and editors and not their authors. Etymologically *Märchen* is simply a story or tale, like *conte* in French or *skazka* in Russian, the diminutive *chen* being no more significant than the *ka* of *skazka*. The common English rendering 'fairy tale' is misleading. It is not quite true to say that hardly any of these stories concern 'fairies', since in a number of them there is a supernatural being referred to as *Fee* in the 1812 edition, after which the Grimms for reasons of linguistic purism altered it to *Zauberin* (enchantress, sorceress). But they are certainly not peopled by creatures such as those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the word 'fairy' thus has inappropriate associations for English readers. On the other hand the majority, and nearly all the most interesting and famous of the tales, operate in a world of wish-fulfillments and magic events, usually involving the laying and/or lifting of some magic spell (*Verwünschung*, a bewitching, literally a 'bewishing'), and the word *Märchen* has by traditional usage taken on this more specialized meaning of a 'magic tale' or 'tale of enchantment' (*Zauber Märchen, volshebnyaya skazka*); Tolkien indeed, in his well-known essay 'On Fairy-Stories', finds the term acceptable provided that 'fairy' is taken to mean not an elvish creature but simply magic or enchantment, the realm of *féerie*. The word *Märchen* is also more loosely applied to the

category of comic or joke tales (*Schwänke*, jests) which do not necessarily involve magic; thus if we include both senses it comes to mean much the same thing as *Volksmärchen*, 'folktale'. And in fact these stories cannot really be appreciated unless they are to some extent viewed in the international perspective of anonymous folklore (which is not to say that they can be fully understood in that perspective either). We can here, since I am not a folklorist, take no more than a rather random glance into this vast field, the exhaustive exploration of which is still being carried out by experts, the first of whom indeed were the Grimm brothers themselves. Although deeply Germanophilic, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm had no illusions about the folktale being an essentially German or Germanic phenomenon. As their own learned annotations to even the first edition of the tales indicate, they were well aware that the stories they lovingly collected had, as wholes or in part, innumerable parallels or equivalents outside as well as inside Germany. They were simply looking for German versions, German variants, of what they already knew to be not only ancient but very widely dispersed material.

In their 1822 preface to these annotations the Grimms write:

We have carefully recorded points of similarity with foreign traditions which are often far separated in time and place, for we feel we are right to attach importance to such resemblances, precisely because they are not easily explicable. In some instances it is possible or even probable that there was direct communication, but in the majority of cases we cannot suppose this to be so, and the phenomenon thus remains unexplained and all the more remarkable . . . Our accumulated evidence attests the existence of folktales in different epochs and among different peoples . . .

With hindsight it may be said that these were nothing if not understatements. The sheer extent of the historical and geographical dispersal of folktales is still not fully appreciated by the ordinary reader, who may indeed be familiar with this or that non-German equivalent of some of the more famous of the 'Grimm' tales, but may still be surprised to learn, for instance, that for the 'Cinderella' story alone analogues are to be found

not only in England, Scotland, Ireland and France, but also in the Baltic and Scandinavian languages, Icelandic, Faroese, Dutch, Basque, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Romanian, Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Greek, Turkish and Armenian. There is even a Chinese version (connected apparently with the admiration of the Chinese for women with small feet) dating from the ninth century B.C., and another ancient tale is reported by the Greek geographer Strabo (first century B.C.) in which a slipper belonging to the beautiful courtesan Rhodope is dropped by an eagle into the lap of the Pharaoh of Egypt and so enamours him that he has his entire kingdom searched until he finds its owner. We meet Cinderella under an international variety of names, all connected with ashes or soot or dirt: Cendrillon, Cenerentola, Aschenputtel, Pisk-i-aske, Askepott, Ashpit, Ashiepattle, Pepeleshka, Chernushka, Zamarashka, and many others. Similarly we encounter Rumpelstiltskin as Tom-Tit-Tot, Trit-a-Trot, Whuppity-Stoorie, Ricdin-Ricdon, Titteliture, Zorobubù, Taradandò, and so forth. The Grimms' annotations have been expanded and updated by two twentieth-century scholars into a massive five-volume standard work of reference (Bolte and Polivka, *Anmerkungen zu den Märchen der Brüder Grimm*, 1912-32) which is now basic to world folklore studies. Even quite cursory consultation of this, or of the equally important index by Stith Thompson called *The Types of the Folktale* (1961, based on Antti Aarne's *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*, 1910 and 1928), reveals that what applies to the Cinderella and Rumpelstiltskin stories also applies in comparable degree to all or most of the others with which we are here concerned. And this is not simply to say that this or that collection of folktales has been much translated, but that the various tales themselves are based on traditional stories which have been endlessly circulating for many centuries in a manner that defies analysis. It has been thought that there is a roughly identifiable 'Indo-European' area, extending all over Europe and into parts of Asia, to which a complex of recognizably similar stories belongs, but this is disputed, as is the theory of the 'diffusion' of tales from India or some other original centre. The possible oral and/or written

lines of transmission are inextricable, and the existence of folktales is a world-wide phenomenon. In the case of many basic stories or story-situations ('motifs'), there can be little doubt that for profound human reasons they have come into being independently ('polygenetically') in quite separate cultures.

If we distinguish particular 'motifs' from whole stories, this impression of the antiquity and ubiquity and universality of folklore materials is reinforced, and the distinction is also useful in other ways. The most casual reader of the Grimm collection will notice that the tales are not only often variants of each other, but consist for the most part of combinations and permutations of certain typical constituent elements. Motifs may be situations, actions, events, characters or objects: the motif of the forgotten (but eventually re-acknowledged) bride, the animal bridegroom (eventually rehumanized), the enchantment or disenchantment of the prince or princess, the helpful animal or dwarf, the cruel stepmother, the magic purse which always contains gold. They are abstractions or models, the details being secondary and differing according to the variant: thus the typical situation (motif) of the hero outwitting the stupid giant or giants is the same whether the hero is a prince, a young huntsman, a tailor's apprentice, a retired soldier or Tom Thumb. The purse of gold may be a jug of oil that never empties or a tablecloth that always lays itself with a good meal, and closely analogous to this motif is of course that of the bird that lays golden eggs or the donkey that excretes diamonds or gold coins (as in No. 41 of the present selection from the Grimm tales\*). Motifs demand endless classification and subclassification, and this has been done in Stith Thompson's monumental *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1955-8) in which the gold-giving donkey, for instance, is motif No. B.103.1.1. They constantly recur in all kinds of contexts and often seem to have a kind of autonomy or independence of their own.

Some examples will illustrate the curiously ancient echoes

\* For convenience I shall here identify these tales simply by the numbers given to them in this selection, which do not correspond to their numeration in the complete editions. The official Grimm number of each tale and its original German title are given in the Notes.

that may be heard in modern collections such as that by the Grimms. We can only guess that folktales already existed in the Babylonian-Assyrian period, but it is notable that the epic of Gilgamesh, dating from about 1700 B.C., contains some elements which we would now think of as folktale-motifs: the hero's fights with monstrous supernatural adversaries, the trees that bear precious stones as fruit (compare Nos. 25 and 30), the quest for a magical means of preserving or renewing life (No. 18). In 1852 a whole story was discovered on an Egyptian papyrus of about 1250 B.C.: this tale of two brothers, Arup and Bata, shows several 'constant' motifs, including that of the magic token which, when the brothers are separated, warns one of the fate or peril of the other (No. 16) and that of the magic flight (that is, the hero and/or heroine escaping from their pursuer by means of magically interposed obstacles, as in No. 35). In another Egyptian papyrus of about 1000 B.C., there is a fragmentary story beginning rather like No. 6: a prince, the first-born after his parents' long childlessness, is cursed at birth by seven supernatural beings who prophesy that he will be killed by a certain animal, a fate which his father tries to prevent, etc. Motifs in the Old Testament narratives include the exposure of a child (Moses) in a boat (Nos. 26 and 51); the father (Jephtha) who promises to sacrifice whatever living creature he first meets on arrival home, only to find that it is his child (Nos. 40, 51 and 56); the king (Saul) promising his daughter to the slayer of the monster (Goliath) (No. 16); Elisha's never-emptying oil-jug (No. 41); the one forbidden act (prohibition-motif) as in the Garden of Eden story (compare the forbidden room in No. 57 and elsewhere, or the forbidden well in No. 37). The tale (No. 4) of Red Ridinghood, the little girl swallowed by the wolf and then cut out alive from inside it, has even been thought to be reminiscent of the story of Jonah being swallowed and disgorged by the whale. It is certainly reminiscent of the ancient Greek myth of Cronos swallowing his children, who are then cut out of his belly and replaced by stones. The Greek classical texts from Homer onwards tell or allude to such stories, strongly suggesting the existence of an oral folktale tradition. Motifs include the magic transformation of Odysseus's men

into beasts by Circe; the mermaid-like Sirens whose song would lure them to destruction; Odysseus outwitting the giant Polyphemus. A father, Thyestes, is tricked by his brother Atreus into eating his own sons in a stew (compare No. 8). The hero Peleus captures and marries a mermaid, and cuts out the tongues of slain beasts as proof that he is the slayer (Nos. 16 and 17). Medea helps Jason to perform tasks set by her father (No. 35) and flees with him, throwing down her brother's severed limbs to hold up their pursuers (magic flight, No. 35). Oenomaos deters his daughter Hippodamia's suitors with a task (the chariot-race) and displays the losers' heads on stakes (No. 24). Aëdon tries to kill an enemy's son as he sleeps but by mistake kills her own son Itys whose cap, put on to distinguish the children, has fallen off; this motif occurs not in the Grimms but in their seventeenth-century French precursor, Perrault, whose Tom Thumb tricks the ogre into killing his own sleeping daughters instead of him and his brothers by exchanging their headwear. Comic motifs such as thumb-size midgets are also alluded to in Greek comedy and proverbial sayings. The listing of such motif-analogues could be much further pursued, and we must here pass over the various possible examples from medieval (Latin, French, German, English) literature and from the sagas of the Norse Edda, mentioning only the now (thanks to Wagner's versions) especially famous stories of Tristan and Yseult (the fight with the monster, the voyage in the drifting boat, the forgotten bride) and of Sigurd (Siegfried) and Brynhild (Brünnhilde): the young man of supernatural strength (as in No. 47), the fight with the monster, the hero waking the sleeping heroine after penetrating the obstacle surrounding her (No. 6; this analogy was one of the first to be pointed out by the Grimms themselves); and again the forgetting of the bride as in Nos. 33-5.

For the reader of folktales, the identification of quasi-autonomous motifs is also illuminating in that these may often be seen to combine with each other in an apparently random fashion, making up in some cases a story which is obviously not one story but a mixture of two or more. Why, for example, is No. 38 called 'The Frog King or Iron Harry'? The concluding



passage about the faithful retainer with 'iron bands . . . round his heart' which break with joy at his master's disenchantment seems an inconsequential and scarcely relevant coda to the main story, which should logically end at the happy union of the disenchanted frog-prince with the princess. But the Grimms knew another version continuing beyond this point, in which the prince leaves on a journey, forgets the young princess and is about to marry another. The heroine and her two sisters have set off to find him, disguised as knights, and join his wedding escort: three 'bands' then successively and audibly break from round the supposed retainer's heart, till her prince remembers, acknowledges and marries her. This is in itself a mixture or 'contamination' of the animal-bridegroom-disenchantment motif (as in Nos. 39 and 40) with that of the forgotten bride, but in the version they finally chose the Grimms left out the latter, retaining only a vestige of it in the minor motif (also constantly attested) of the faithful henchman whose heart is constricted, breaks with joy, etc. This final version makes imperfect sense, but illustrates the fact that a certain inconsequentiality is one of the characteristics of the folktale. Only a few have the complete and compelling dramatic unity of the one about the fisherman (No. 1). Other examples of 'mixed' tales here are Nos. 16, 21, 35, 37, 51 and 52; the latter part of No. 17 also makes poor sense because of the variant chosen (see the note to this story on p. 402).

In modern times the publication of collections of stories from local oral tradition seems to have begun in Italy with Giovan-Francesco Straparola, of whom little is known except that his book *Le Tredici Piacevole Notti* ('Thirteen Agreeable Nights') appeared in Venice in the mid-sixteenth century. The tales are set in a 'frame-narrative' in the manner of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, and a number of them are of the magical and/or comical *Märchen* type. More distinguished than Straparola, and with a claim to be considered the first great European collection, was *Lo Cunto de li cunti* ('The Tale of the Tales') which appeared in Naples in five volumes between 1634 and 1636, shortly after the death of its compiler Giovan-Battista Basile (1575-1632). This book later acquired its better-known title *Il Pentamerone*