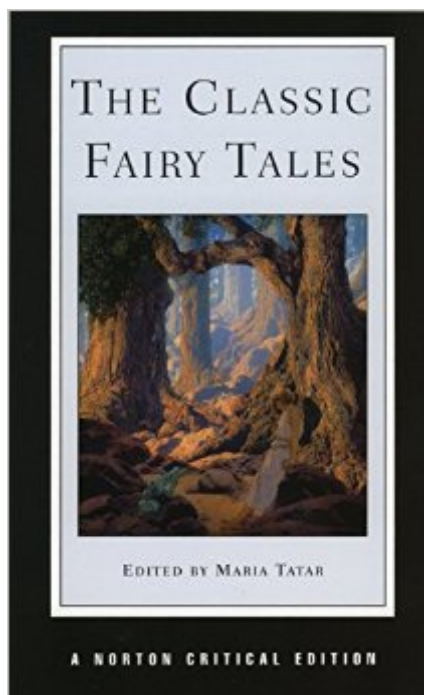


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The Classic Fairy Tales (Norton Critical Editions)



Synopsis

Fairy tales shape our cultures and enrich our imaginations; their narrative stability and cultural durability are incontestable. This Norton Critical Edition collects forty-four fairy tales, from the fifth century to the present. The Classic Fairy Tales focuses on six tale types: "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty and the Beast," "Snow White," "Cinderella," "Bluebeard," and "Hansel and Gretel," and presents multicultural variants and sophisticated literary rescriptings. Also reprinted are tales by Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde. "Criticism" gathers twelve essays that interpret aspects of fairy tales, including their social origins, historical evolution, psychological drama, gender issues, and national identities. A Selected Bibliography is included.

Book Information

Series: Norton Critical Editions

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1st ed edition (November 4, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393972771

ISBN-13: 978-0393972771

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.9 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (64 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

An excellent collection which highlights the grislier, taboo aspects of fairy tales that are often sanitised for today's consumption. As well as traditional versions of the most popular fairy stories, editor Maria Tatar has also included feminist re-tellings of "Bluebeard" and "Beauty and the Beast" by Margaret Atwood and Angela Carter. This fascinating anthology helps to deepen our understanding of the cultural implications of the fairy tale form, and includes essays from important contributors to the field such as Vladimir Propp, Bruno Bettelheim and Marina Warner. If you thought that fairy tales were just for children, then you'll find this collection an eye opening experience.

A good mixture of browsability and serious reading. For the storyteller this book is a godsend - several variants of each story compiled for easy comparison, with an authoritative commentary for background research. And the variants are often not obvious or well-known, so giving real discoveries and delights. The scholarly essays cover a fair range of subjects, but for those just interested in the stories there is plenty in the rest of the book to satisfy. If this book interests you, try 'The Classic Fairy Tales', by Iona and Peter Opie - same title, similar approach, except that variants are only discussed rather than given in full.

Tatar has contributed several works to fairy tale scholarship, but this is one of the best for an introductory course. The book offers essays and fictional variations for well known fairy tales including Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Bluebeard, etc. The collection includes a story by Margaret Atwood, poetry by Anne Sexton, and more traditional versions of the tales from older sources. New translations by Tatar of some tales are also presented. I highly recommend this book.

(This is an old review I wrote somewhere else before, 20th April 2005.) This book is a collection of both classical fairy tales and contemporary ones, though you never get the contemporary ones without their former classical models. Mostly, the book is divided into some six or seven sections devoted to the most well known tales out there: Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Bluebeard, Snow White, Hansel and Gretel. There's also a section about Andersen and one about Wilde. For each section there is an introduction by Maria Tatar, usually an excellent one. Also, since this is a Norton Critical Edition, you get a whole part of the book devoted to essays by the most recognised critics of fairy tales. Some of those are dubious, and bashed by other essays included there, and rightly so. Be careful about the psychoanalytical ones. But basically it's interesting to see how thoughts evolve from one essay to another, because they're put in such an order that they exist in a continuous current of thought, and that gives a neat unity to this book, as far as the essay side of it is concerned. Excellent book to get into fairy tales with a critical mind.

A collection of fairy tales that have lasted throughout the years, "The Classic Fairy Tales" also offers many essays by the experts in fairy tale. The very best critics including Jack Zipes and Maria Tater, have written well-thought out essays varying from Disney's involvement in fairy tales to the sexuality of these tales. These essays along with the eight stories (Little Red Riding Hood, Beauty and the Beast, Snow White, Cinderella, Bluebeard, Hansel and Gretel, four short tales by Hans Christian

Anderson, and three by Oscar Wilde) and you get a book which will help you understand not only the tales themselves, but the ideologies, social connections, and cultural importance. This book is definitely a good read.

The Classic Fairy Tales which has been edited by Maria Tatar is quite an extraordinary read which I found fascinating and helpful, cover to cover. It is a collection of fairy tales which most of us are familiar with on one level or another. Maria Tartar has covered Little Red Riding Hood, Beauty and the Beast, Snow White, Cinderella, Bluebeard, Hansel and Gretel, and given us a good introduction to the works of Hans Christian Anderson and Oscar Wild. Each section of this work, and indeed each of the fairy tales noted here comprise an entire section, is accompanied by a scholarly introduction which is quite readable and very informative. The author has, in each case, given us a fare selection of the variations of each of these tales as presented by different cultures throughout the world and different eras. This work is well researched, and I say this not lightly. I am modestly familiar with this particular genre, its history and its place in the pantheon of our literature...the author has done her work well. Not only do we get an accurate rendition of the original tale (as close to original as we probably ever will get, as many of these tales received their origin so far back into the mist of time, that it would be impossible to be absolutely accurate as many of them began strictly through oral tradition), but the author has in several cases given us a more modern version of the tale from a feminist view point. If we take the story of Cinderella, we find that over the past several hundred years that there have been literally hundreds of versions of this classic myth. Tatar has given us a good sampling; not all inclusive, I grant you, but good never the less. The comparisons are stark, well presented and do indeed give us a wonderful overview. I also appreciated the authors various and many comments as to the impact Disney has had on these timeless stories. This is a very readable book. It can be read cover to cover (which I feel is best), or can be used to research and edify specific stories that the reader might be interested in specifically. Reader be warned though, some of these stories are absolutely grim and a far cry from the diluted and sanitized nursery stories we are now fed. I have always felt that the Brother Grimm, were...well grim, but I find that their rendition of these old stories were far and away more civil than the originals that they made their compilation from. The Brothers actually dropped much of the gore, sex and taboos such as incest, rape and sheer butchering from their versions. This is a very good and very informative read and a must for anyone interested in the classic fairy tale. Like any such work though, the reader should not stop with just this work, but continue and consider the opinion of other scholars in this field. On the other hand, and this is just a personal observation, for what it is worth,

some times a good cigar is just that; a good cigar. Likewise, sometimes a good story is just that; a good story. I always try not to loose sight of that fact. Don Blankenship The Ozarks

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