

Mp3 Wendy Dodd - Stories For Fertile Soil



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A collection of traditional and near-traditional fairy tales told for the young adult and imaginative adult audiences 14 MP3 Songs SPOKEN WORD: Storytelling, SPOKEN WORD: Educational Details: Notes: Stories for Fertile Soil Now, you can pull these little stories apart for analysis, or simply let them snuggle into the most welcoming parts of your being. Here are a few notes, perhaps to tell you the reason I put them there, or the route they took to get there. Maybe they'll touch off a discussion, with others, or inside yourself. Fairy tales, unlike myths, which are immortal beings having human experience, are about humans having a supernatural experience. As such, they present the unique opportunity to show us the consequences of choice, good, and not-so good, and guide those choices in a non-preachy way. Planxty Irwin I imposed my will upon Bea to play this one, as the theatrical side of my nature is attributed to my grandfather, Robert Irwin. He and his father were performers in vaudeville and USO. He got me interested in music and shows, and always asked how I was doing with it. The word planxty has no origin in either English or Gaelic (the language of Ireland, where this tune is from). Some people think that the word is of fairy origin. The Story Begins An invocation is an important part of ceremonies like graduations and public awards. They set the tone for what is about to happen. This one includes a few thoughts on why storytelling is important. Bridget, who is mentioned, is the goddess of knowledge, metalsmithy, and the hearthfire in Irish mythology. We are a storytelling species. Our neo-cortex has the largest portion dedicated to the tongue (for speech) and the thumbs (for gesture). The ability to carry knowledge defines us. The Green Man of No Name A minor attempt at epic storytelling. You know, there was a day when a story would last for hours, or even consecutive days to tell. Makes 10 minutes sound like nothing, doesn't it? I've replaced the hero's original tasks with animal-related tasks in order to connect him more to the earth, and beef up his Green Man importance. The Green Man is kind of a guy version of Mother Earth,

and his leafy face is seen throughout Celtic and Anglo-Celtic art, especially in continental Europe. The young man has to learn that he has a place in his world, and that life isn't all fun and games. The King of All Birds This is part of the Wren celebration and show that we do as part of BogSkippers band. It explains, in part what a small dead bird has to do with Christmas. Light of the world, brought by a king, indeed. Sometimes these things have more than one explanation, like this one. The wren is also blamed for tapping his beak on a drumhead, giving away the position of Celtic warriors who were being attacked. He is celebrated on St. Stevens Day, Dec. 26, the day when family secular celebrations take place. The Wren Boys (and girls!) are costumed carolers who perform in exchange for offerings taken in the name of the wren. The Universal Fool A few years ago I went off on a hare-brained tangent (perhaps a fools errand?) researching fooling traditions around the world, and found many common traits. This piece is a partial list. The things we can learn from the least among us! The Feast of Fools was a common celebration on April 1st, when the bishop and an altar server changed places, in accord with the scripture the first shall be last and the last shall be first. This is the origin of our April Fools Day. However, the observance of a day of foolishness and socially condoned chaos is more or less universal, with the central fool having many names around the world. The Lost Jewel A brief (well, not that brief!) rant against celebutantes. For moral of the story, see above notes. The Fool and the Mule Buncha Guys, no effective male leadership, no mother in sight, not good. There was a womans love yet to be earned, foolishness left behind, a long lost father gained. This story is dedicated to the delightful bunch of puppy-guys my son has dragged through my kitchen. The Two Kates This story is about two young women finding beauty in the depth of their own character. These are the kind of women you want to know. They follow their intuitions, complete their tasks, and are loyal and brave. As a result, they ultimately find their places in the kingdom. There are many typically Celtic motifs here, referred to in other the stories. The fairy mounds, the fairy celebration, hazel nuts of wisdom, which the baby fairy can only play with, all these things are very classic. The choice of the wren, likewise, as in the oldest and most universal beliefs, it was once believed that if one hunted or consumed a substance in the material world, its spiritual or symbolic essence was likewise taken in. This young man was pre-ordained to be king, but was, as yet, too frail and vulnerable to rule much of anything. By absorbing the merest essence (broth) of the wren, the king of all birds, he was fortified for his task. Jack and his Lantern How many of us know how our holiday customs came to be? Will we keep practicing them if we dont? What a shame to lose

these things, which are part of childhood memories. Before we began to be concerned about the mess of real pumpkins, and began using synthetic, we had a living lesson of the seasons. The shell is cracked, the carving, and the eventual decay of the vegetable. But, in that fruit, given over to celebration, there are the seeds, and springtime promise. Originally, Halloween, or All Hallows (holy) Eve, was a seasonal celebration Samhain (sow-en), lasting four days, which on the old Celtic calendar made up for a four-day shortfall on the lunar-based 28 day month. There was no need for a leap year. When the Roman based, European calendar came into vogue, it became a day assuming some of the old ways of reverence for the ones who came before, but in the story of this calendar, the fears and misgivings of mortality give way to the shining hope of All Souls/ All Saints Day, Nov. 1st. Back to Jack. The original Jack O Lanterns (a jack is generic name for elemental being or fairy, O is a contraction for of the) were turnips and other common veggies and fruits of the region. You would choose the best, definitely, and do your best job, as this was your rural flashlight. Pumpkins are a New World veggie, and much better suited to the task, such that they are now the gourd of choice where lanterns require jacks. Snow-White and Rose-Red Sorry, no dwarves. While I would hesitate to declare this to be the original story (what, exactly, does that mean in oral tradition?), it is certainly an older variant than the one most know. Its also, I think, far more powerful, as our young lady shows tremendous will and courage to persevere in the face of ridicule, false accusation, isolation, and even horrific death. She rightly earns her voice. Her mother-in-law is everything to the contrary, sneaky, and nasty, with an evil imagination to concoct such an evil plot. She is the mother-in-law because no one could imagine a mother being so awful, yet she symbolizes the sort of individual who will not allow the young lady (in herself) to come into her power. The brothers are commissioned to recall that their job is to nurture and protect, not destroy, and this they do beautifully.

The Gardeners Son This is truly an adult fairy tale, but not it its content, which would pass any ratings system. No, although it is his son who carries the action, it is the father whose attitude requires adjusting. He has allowed himself to become isolated, insular, and hoarding. He is quick to condemn the actions of the young. As a result, the kingdom suffers. The older brothers, like wise, do more than fulfill the storytellers rule of three, they also serve to show us that distraction and self-indulgence will not carry the day. It is the young mans selfless interest in the happiness of the older household, which pays big dividends. The kingdom is revived when all these male energies integrate to a single purpose, and selflessness and community spirit (the bird) win out. Scissors, Comb and Whistle This one arrived at my

door in kit form. It was adapted (or maladapted!) for a children's book, and it didn't entirely survive the trip. Motifs lying about, plot contrivances for the sake of a happy ending. Bit of a fixer-upper. But man, what bones! Every time I pull it out, something new pops out at me. The Sorceress cold silent breast, her heart concealed else where is repeated in other tales. The prince described as a dog at her door, until he proves his worth. And you've got to love the princess quiet resolve. The crystal fountain is frequently mentioned in Celtic bardic tradition, as are the marble halls. How fitting is it that the kingdom of eternal youth be ruled, by a young couple, united? On this disc, it is an ending which is also a beginning. Ideally, every fairy tale should deposit you back in your own world, but with a new understanding of your place in it. Fairy Tale Ethics Fairy tales, not all of which involve actual fairies, have their own ethics and code. Contrary to popular belief, they are not meant for children alone, but are meant to assist through any rite of passage. The ones meant for little ones contain themes of fitting within family structure. Those intended for adolescents involve the selection a path in life, and/or a mate, and recognition of the ones talents and responsibilities. Those for adults often involve themes of fidelity, spiritual endurance, contentment with ones chosen path, and an awareness of what will be left behind. Stories like *The King of All Birds* endeavor to explain the way in which the world works, our world, and where we fit in it. Some stories have been stripped of their adult themes during the Victorian era, when puppets, stories, many street (now, nursery) rhymes and the like were Bowdlerized for children. Fairies are popularly accepted throughout the world as elementals, neither good nor evil, but merely acting in accord with what is. They value and reward community, generosity, neatness and good grooming, beauty for its own sake, wholesome food, and a stable environment. It is a wise human who does a fairy a favor, as these observers of human progress will tend to rescue hapless humans when no other help is in sight. The blundering, insensitive and greedy human will often feel the sting of fairy justice. Fairies are often immortal, or at least extremely long-lived. Not all are pleasant, but all represent some aspect of the world, which fancifully mirrors our own. Suggestions for Study I strongly suggest that you not introduce the story with notes and analysis, or even the moral of the story. Rather, create an atmosphere of attention, play (present) the story, and let the story settle in, as it will. Stories have an amazing way of customizing themselves to the listener, such that the listener will tend to hear what they need to hear, no more, no less. What the listener hears (processes) will alter as the person, big or small, develops. Of course, were talking about lending academic value, and a shared experience of the story. So, once the mood shifts

from listening, and fidgeting sets in, then this is a good time to begin discussion and semiotic breakdown. Art and craft projects relating to the story can help it sink in a subtle, but meaningful fashion. Bio Wendy Dodd is the choreographer/dancer and occasional vocalist for the Irish-American family-friendly group The BogSkippers and director of The So. Cal. Ceili Co. She is a long-time folk theatre writer and performer, authoring a number of scripts for community, civic and liturgical production, including Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, and George and the Lady: a Dragons Heart.

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