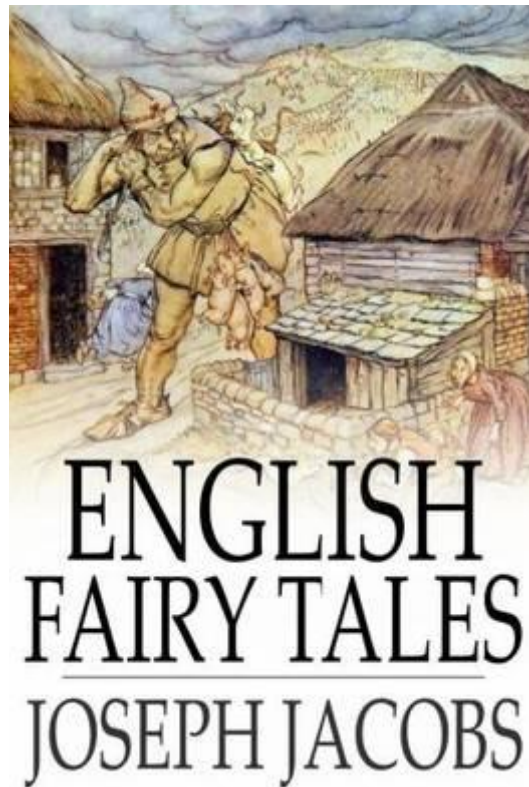


English Fairy Tales - Joseph Jacobs



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We have called our stories Fairy Tales though few of them speak of fairies (For some recent views on fairies and tales about fairies, see Notes.) The same remark applies to the collection of the Brothers Grimm and to all the other European collections, which contain exactly the same classes of tales as ours. Yet our stories are what the little ones mean when they clamour for "Fairy Tales," and this is the only name which they give to them. One cannot imagine a child saying, "Tell us a folk-tale, nurse," or "Another nursery tale, please, grandma." As our book is intended for the little ones, we have indicated its contents by the name they use. The words "Fairy Tales" must accordingly be taken to include tales in which occurs something "fairy," something extraordinary - fairies, giants, dwarfs, speaking animals. It must be taken also to cover tales in which what is extraordinary is the stupidity of some of the actors. Many of the tales in this volume, as in similar collections for other European countries, are what the folklorists call Drolls. They serve to justify the title of Merrie England, which used to be given to this country of ours, and indicate unsuspected capacity for fun and humour among the unlettered classes. The story of Tom Tit Tot, which opens our collection, is unequalled among all other folk-tales I am acquainted with, for its

combined sense of humour and dramatic power. The first adjective of our title also needs a similar extension of its meaning. I have acted on Molière's principle, and have taken what was good wherever I could find it. Thus, a couple of these stories have been found among descendants of English immigrants in America; a couple of others I tell as I heard them myself in my youth in Australia. One of the best was taken down from the mouth of an English Gipsy. I have also included some stories that have only been found in Lowland Scotch. I have felt justified in doing this, as of the twenty-one folk-tales contained in Chambers' "Popular Rhymes of Scotland," no less than sixteen are also to be found in an English form. With the Folk-tale as with the Ballad, Lowland Scotch may be regarded as simply a dialect of English, and it is a mere chance whether a tale is extant in one or other, or both. I have also rescued and re-told a few Fairy Tales that only exist now-a-days in the form of ballads. There are certain indications that the "common form" of the English Fairy Tale was the cante-fable, a mixture of narrative and verse of which the most illustrious example in literature is "Aucassin et Nicolette." In one case I have endeavoured to retain this form, as the tale in which it occurs, "Childe Rowland," is mentioned by Shakespeare in King Lear, and is probably, as I have shown, the source of Milton's Comus. Late as they have been collected, some dozen of the tales can be traced back to the sixteenth century, two of them being quoted by Shakespeare himself. Author: Jacobs, Joseph Publisher: The Floating Press Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: English Fairy Tales Pages: 00000 (Encrypted EPUB) / 00000 (Encrypted PDF) On Sale: 2008-01-01 SKU-13/ISBN: 9781877527166 Category: Fiction : Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, Legends & Mythology

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