

"Fairy Tales"

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Everyone is familiar with the Disney-style retellings of old myths and fairy tales. What many people may not realize, however, is that fairy tales were not originally meant for children. Beginning with the Grimm brothers to the present, fairy tales have been edited into versions acceptable for children. The books in my collection are also versions of these fairy tales, but like the originals, they are not meant for children. The authors have brought these tales back to life by showing a darker, more realistic side. Some have happy endings, others do not. These are not just retellings of the originals; many of the authors have placed the tales into modern or future settings. Neither are these versions set in fantasy worlds, like Tolkien's Middle Earth. These are all tales from our world.

In addition to their wonderful tales, many of these books are beautifully illustrated. To me, reading illustrated editions, or even just books with interesting covers, enhances the overall experience of reading. However, what makes some of these books special are that the illustrations inspired the story, rather than the other way around. For example, in the Faerieland's series, artist Brian Froud created a set of paintings from which each author chose the pictures that spoke to them. Each book in this series has a common theme; how the magic of our lives, represented by Fearie, is in danger.

This is a collection of books that bring fairy tales to life, with both words and pictures. I began collecting them serendipitously, as part of my general reading in fantasy. When I realized how much I enjoyed the fairy tale books in particular, I actively began searching them out. For new books, the best resource is each new edition of *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*, edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling. In each volume are essays that discuss the books that have been published in the current year. I also look for out of print books in used books stores. For me, finding a new fairy tale is almost as much fun as reading one. I look forward to adding more titles to my collection in the future. These books let you imagine, just for a moment, what it would be like if a character from mythology showed up on the doorstep. It might not be what you or I would expect.