

Adult Fairy Tales and Folk Tales



Once upon a time, it was trendy to write down folk tales. Stories that were told orally for generations were captured, polished ... and read by adults. In 17th century Italy and France, stories were written down in the literary style of the day. Later, the Brothers Grimm collected stories in the area that is now Germany. The stories were eventually part of the movement that swept Europe in the late 1700s to save traditional stories and colloquial language. Even Hans Christian Andersen's tales from the early and mid-1800s have links back to earlier stories.

These fairy tales and folk tales weren't the children's stories we think of today. If you ever read an original Brothers Grimm or other similar stories, you would learn just how gory they were before they were sanitized. In Andersen's *Little Mermaid*, the mermaid is given the ability to walk but only with terrible, knife-like pain as the price. Victorian era children inherited fairy tales when they became unfashionable for adults and when a good strong moral could be applied for instruction.

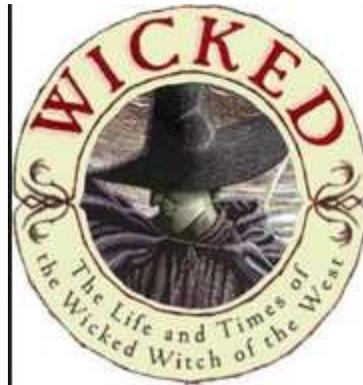
The early versions of these stories were stripped of darker and sexual elements as time passed. Heroines become more passive in these retellings as well, reinforcing female roles at the time. Andrew Lang's anthologies were released between 1889 and 1913 and pulled fairy tales from around the world. These collections were very popular, and readers remembered the color coded titles like *The Blue Fairy Book*.

Today, adults have reclaimed fairy tales. These modern fairy tales tend to fall into several categories:

- **Retelling the tale in a way that is fairly true to the story but expands the details to novel length:** Robin McKinley has retold a number of fairy tales, which are popular with readers. Her *Beauty* or *Spindle's End* stay faithful to the original story line, rather than modernizing the characters.
- **Revisionist versions, reversing the moral center of the story:** *Wicked*, a retelling of the *Wizard of Oz*, tells the other side of the story from the Witch of the West's point of view rather than Baum's spin on it. *Sleeper and the Spindle* explores the world of Snow White after she awakens and is about to marry, which may not be her destiny after all. Other tales may also have their setting changed either in location or time frame. Yolen's *Briar Rose* ties the story of *Sleeping Beauty* to a family's Holocaust history.
- **Borrowing motifs from older fairy tales to create original stories:** It might be a place or characters like witches, fairies or princesses who have fairy tale attributes. The *Wizard of Oz*, *Wicked*, and *War of the Flowers* are among the many books using those themes in new context. For example, J.R.R. Tolkien used Norse, Germanic and

Anglo-Saxon folklore to create a new detailed world. Others took recognizable characters and placed them in a new world. Terry Pratchett plucked the witch in the gingerbread house from the woods and placed her in his series, *Discworld*.

- **Teen retellings:** Fairy tales often explore the road to adulthood and feature characters with little power in the beginning, which changes across the tale. Marissa Meyer has upended traditional fairy tales with her *Lunar Chronicles* series. Her *Cinders* has Cinderella as a cyborg, but the underlying themes still resonate.
- **Erotic retellings of fairy tales:** One of the early authors in this genre, Anne Rice as A. N. Roquelaure, startled readers of her vampire books with her 1980s *Sleeping Beauty* bondage series. This became a popular sub-genre for e-book readers and is a part of WVDeli's collection. <https://wvdeli.overdrive.com/>



Wicked by Gregory Maguire

A Small Sample of Authors at KCPL

(Please note that not all of their works fall into the adult fairy tale genre.)

- Beddor, Frank -- <http://bit.ly/2gS8OJ1>
- Bradley, Marion Zimmer -- <http://bit.ly/2g1UjON>
- Brom -- <http://bit.ly/2f10hU4>
- De Lint, Charles -- <http://bit.ly/2gS0Pvl>
- Dickerson, Melanie (Young Adult) -- <http://bit.ly/2gS87jb>
- Gaiman, Neil -- <http://bit.ly/2fHYvCy>
- Hines, Jim C. -- <http://bit.ly/2fMOZ4n>
- Kagawa, Julie (Young Adult) -- <http://bit.ly/2gS6XUS>
- Lackey, Mercedes -- <http://bit.ly/2gCloM5>
- Lawhead, Stephen -- <http://bit.ly/2flbcNu>
- Lee, Tanith -- <http://bit.ly/2fMYC2Q>
- Maguire, Gregory -- <http://bit.ly/2gCh9jN>
- Meyer, Marissa (Young Adult) -- <http://bit.ly/2gSfMOU>
- McKillip, Patricia -- <http://bit.ly/2gt4WL5>
- McKinley, Robin -- <http://bit.ly/2gt8L3e>
- Pearce, Jackson (Young Adult) -- <http://bit.ly/2gClvra>
- White, T. H. -- <http://bit.ly/2fyig49>
- Williams, Tad -- <http://bit.ly/2gF3Qev>
- Willingham, Bill (graphic novels) -- <http://bit.ly/2fyp6a5>
- Yolen, Jane -- <http://bit.ly/2gS6vG3>
- Zelazny, Roger -- <http://bit.ly/2gSD4Um>

Lists of Books on the Web

Good Reads Adult Fairy Tales:

- Popular Adult Fairy Tales -- <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/adult-fairy-tale>
- Adult Fairy Tale Remakes -- http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/19476.Adult_Fairy_Tales_Remake
- Popular Teen Fairy Tales -- <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/teen-fairy-tale>
- Popular Erotic Fairy Tales -- <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/erotic-fairy-tales>
- Twenty Must Read Retold Tales by Janea Schimmel -- <http://www.rantingdragon.com/top-20-retold-fairy-tales-an-introduction-to-the-genre/>
- Novelist -- *Fairy Tales Retold: Once Upon a Twisted Time* (Young Adult) -- <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=neh&tg=UI&an=443670&site=novp-live&scope=site>

Print Resources on the History of Fairy Tales:

Irresistible Fairy Tale by Jack Zipes -- <http://bit.ly/2gFSya7>

Spinning Straw Into Gold by Joan Gould -- <http://bit.ly/2fNxa4U>

The Witch Must Die by Sheldon Cashdan -- <http://bit.ly/2gCOZ8d>

Other histories -- <http://bit.ly/2g2D3cx>

Andrew Lang Fairy Tale collections at KCPL --

http://kana.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default/search/results?qu=andrew+lang&te=&lm=PUBLICLIBRARY&rt=false%7C%7C%7CAUTHOR%7C%7C%7CAuthor