



# Ten of the Best Fairy Tale Collections for Children

Article Author:

[Ann Lazim](#) [1]

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Article Category:

Ten of the Best

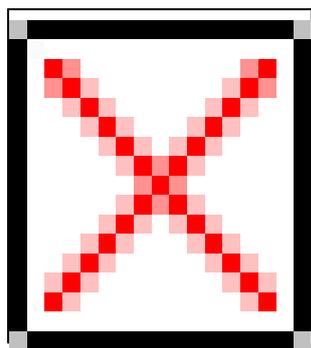
Byline:

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I've always been fascinated by folk and fairy tales and how similar stories appear across countries and cultures. The collections described here are beautifully produced volumes well worth sharing in the home and classroom and, importantly, read aloud well, reaching back to origins in oral tradition. A 'fairy tale ending' doesn't always mean they lived happily ever after!

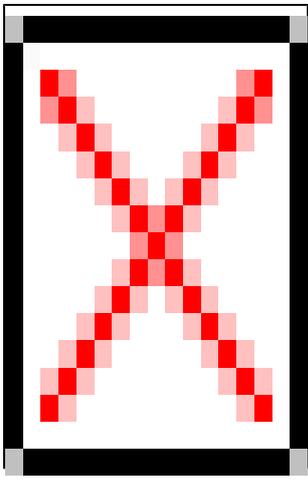
## **Yummy: My Favourite Nursery Stories**



Lucy Cousins, Walker, 9781406328721, £12.99pbk

My preferred collection for young children. Lucy Cousins' signature style, using bold colours with stalwart figures strongly outlined in black, is well suited to illustrating traditional tales, here retold in spare and straightforward language. The eight stories include *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Henny Penny* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Sensitive adults beware graphic moments such as the wolf swallowing Little Red Riding Hood's Grandmother and the hunter chopping off his head, but most children will relish them.

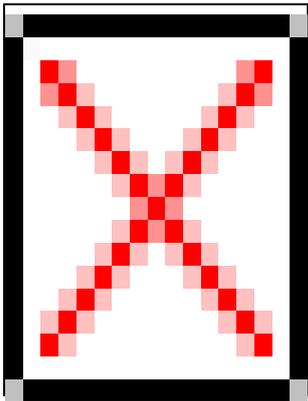
## **Grimm Tales: For Young and Old**



Philip Pullman, Penguin Classics, 9780141442228, £9.99pbk

Philip Pullman's versions of fifty of the tales collected by the Brothers Grimm were not published specifically for children but then traditional tales were generally not first told with child audiences in mind. This is a perfect book for a family or a teacher to own and share with young people. The realisation that similar stories exist across cultures, evidenced by the notes appended to each tale, may capture the imaginations of older children, resulting in a lifelong interest in folk and fairy tales.

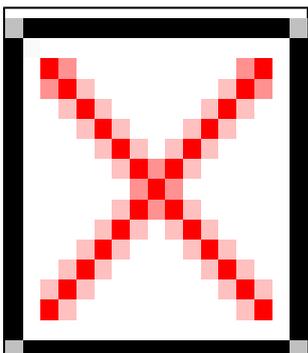
### **The Singing Bones**



Shaun Tan, Walker Studio, 9781406370669, £19.99hbk

The dark side of Grimms' tales is evoked by photographs of stunning sculptures illustrating significant moments from the stories with accompanying related text on the opposite page. A summary of each complete story can be found at the end of the book along with further recommended reading lists. The sculptures make readers ponder why Shaun Tan might have chosen to depict this particular moment in the story, for example Cinderella is shown in the opening to a hearth at the bottom of a chimney, a golden head with her eyes closed.

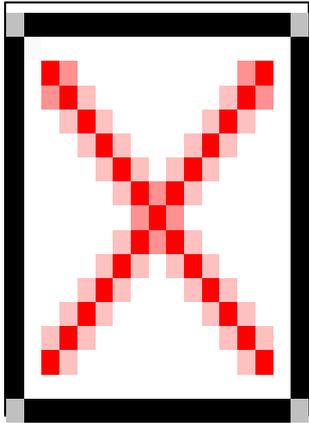
### **Tales of Hans Christian Andersen**



Hans Christian Andersen, illustrated by Joel Stewart, translated and introduced by Naomi Lewis, Walker, 9781406317466, £9.99pbk

This compendium of thirteen of Andersen's fairy tales includes most of his best known, such as Gerda's search for her lost playmate in *The Snow Queen* and the circular journey of *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*. Each story is prefaced by fascinating information about its origin and place within Andersen's work. The subtle illustrations are a mix of muted colours and small sepia vignettes and are well suited to the light and dark of the tales.

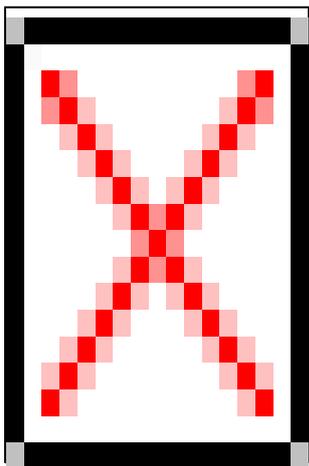
### **The Lion & Unicorn and Other Hairy Tales**



Jane Ray, Boxer Books, 9781910716502, £15.99pbk

One of three exquisite collections of beastly tales by Jane Ray in which she has inhabited and interpreted several stories and expressed the retellings in words and pictures. Included is *The Singing Ringing Tree*. I've discovered that many people of my age have vivid memories of the East German TV film of this story! Jane Ray has also illustrated Berlie Doherty's **Classic Fairy Tales** (Walker 9781406365962, £14.99hbk), portraying characters familiar from fairy tales mostly taken from Western European tradition with a variety of skin hues.

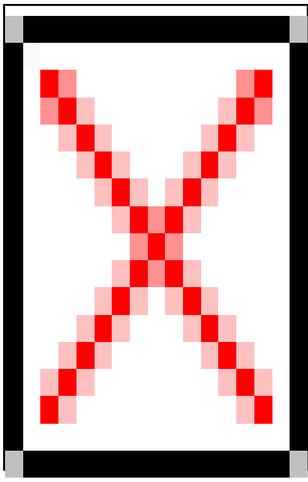
### **Faery Tales**



Carol Ann Duffy, illustrated by Tomislav Tomic, Faber & Faber, 9780571314270, £20hbk

Carol Ann Duffy uses colloquial everyday language for many of her retellings, making them great to read aloud and harking back to the oral tradition from whence many of them came. Many of the stories emanate from the Brothers Grimm but there are also nods to the literary French tales (*Blue Beard*, *Beauty and the Beast*) and Andersen (*The Emperor's New Clothes*) and some of her own stories (*The Stolen Childhood*, *The Lost Happy Endings* and others) drawing on fairy tale elements are also included.

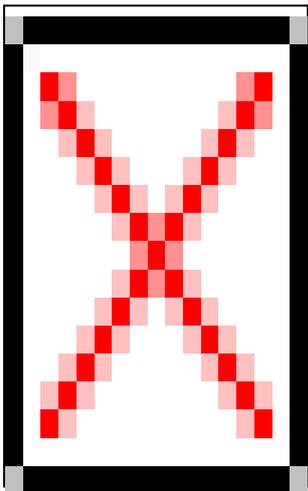
### **One Thousand and One Arabian Nights**



Geraldine McCaughrean, illustrated by Rosamund Fowler, Oxford University Press, 9780192750136, £8.99pbk

A selection of tales from the **Arabian Nights**, stories that have had a huge influence on European wonder tales. The framework of Shahrazad telling these stories to her husband King Shahryar in order to postpone her death draws you on to read just one more story. They include *Sindbad*, *Ali Baba* and *Ala al-Din* and many other less well known stories. Children will recognise the familiar themes such as heroic quests and voyages, magical objects and transformations, and the struggle between good and evil.

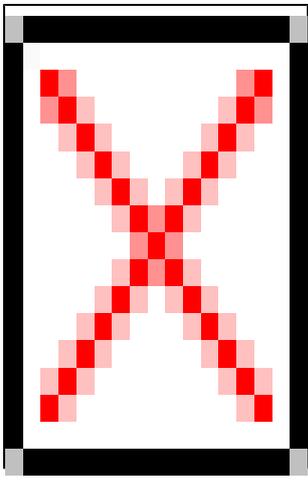
### Fairy Tales



Hilary McKay, illustrated by Sarah Gibb, Macmillan, 9781447292296, £9.99hbk

Hilary McKay has taken ten well-known fairy tales and given them a fresh twist by retelling them from a variety of viewpoints, often framing them in unexpected ways. The youthful protagonists of traditional tales are turned into parents and grandparents so if you ever wondered what happened following the 'happy ever after' you may find some suggested answers here.

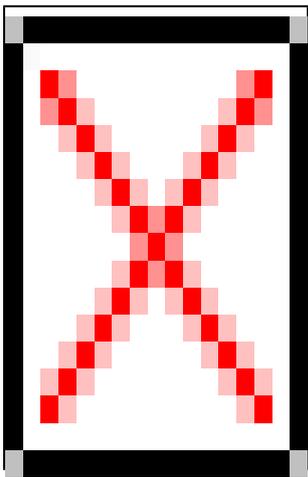
### Blackberry Blue and Other Fairy Tales



Jamila Gavin, illustrated by Richard Collingridge, Tamarind, 978-1848531079, £6.99

Jamila Gavin has fashioned her own set of fairy tales, drawing principally on the European traditions with which she grew up. With the expressed aim of increased inclusivity, she has created characters who are people of colour. For example, the heroine of the title story, which has elements of the Cinderella variant *Mossycoat*, has 'skin as black as midnight' and 'lips like crushed damsons'. None of the stories is a direct retelling of a traditional story but each incorporates tropes recognisable from folklore and fairy tale.

### **Tangleweed and Brine**



Deirdre Sullivan, illustrated by Karen Vaughan, Little Island, 978-1910411926, £12.99hbk

Deirdre Sullivan recreates fairy tales for young adults in a manner that draws on the earthy and salty language of Angela Carter and is reminiscent of the truncated sentences of her countrywoman Eimear McBride. Birth, babies and burgeoning sexuality are very present as the young women familiar to us from traditional stories emerge into adulthood. Red Riding Hood tells of her life now she is 'The Woodcutter's Bride?', remembering 'When I was a small girl something happened to me in the forest.' Many stories are in the second person, leaving room for the reader to work out who is speaking and who is being addressed.

**Ann Lazim** is Literature and Library Development Manager at the [Centre for Literacy in Primary Education](#) [3] in London which houses a large collection of traditional tales in its reference library

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