

GRIMM

BROTHERS



Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm was born in January 4, 1785, in Hanau, Germany. Just over a year later, in February 24, 1786, his little brother Wilhelm Carl Grimm was born. Their father was a lawyer, and they had six more brothers and one sister.

In 1802, Jacob went to university to study law at the University of Marburg. As always, his little brother followed him, and entered law school in 1803. During their university years they began to collect folk and fairy tales. Folklore is stories that have been passed down from parents to children, by word of mouth, but at that time many had not been published in books. The Grimms were especially interested in stories that included Germany and German culture.

Jacob and Wilhelm published their first book of fairy tales – “Children’s and Household Tales” - in 1812. There were 86 folktales. Readers were so happy to see the stories they had been told as children all collected together that the book was a success. In the next volume of “Grimm’s Fairy Tales”, the brothers added 70 more stories. It went on growing like this for six more editions. Finally, the book contained over 200 stories! It is probably the best-known work of German literature. Even if you don’t know the Brothers Grimm, you definitely know a Grimm fairy tale.

If only all brothers were as close as the Brothers Grimm. They were always together – even when Wilhelm married his wife Henriette, Jacob continued to live with them! The Brothers Grimm were both professors and scholars. In fact, Jacob Grimm is considered to be the father of the study of German history. They both taught as professors in Germany’s capitol, at the University of Berlin. They became known throughout Europe as experts on anything to do with folktales, language, and anything German. They were so into books that they both became librarians as well! During their lifetimes they published many more very important books, including “German Mythology”, “Old German Tales”, “The History of the German Language”, and even the German Dictionary.

Grimm fairy tales include stories of kings, magic, and talking animals. Even though the stories are sometimes scary, fairy tales allow us to work through our fears. They often teach us a lesson about moral values, and right and wrong.