

Name:

Teacher:

Class:

Date:

HISTORY of Fairy Tales



A fairy tale, or wonder tale, is a kind of folktale or fable. In these stories we meet witches and queens, giants and elves, princes, dragons, talking animals, ogres, princesses, and sometimes even fairies. Marvelous and magical things happen to characters in fairy tales. A boy may become a bird. A princess may sleep for a hundred years. A seal may become a girl. Objects too can be enchanted — mirrors talk, pumpkins become carriages, and a lamp may be home to a genie.

The oldest fairy tales were told and retold for generations before they were written down. French fairy tales were the first to be collected and written down, but now we can read fairy tales from almost any culture. When these stories were studied together, something amazing was discovered. From countries as distant and different as Egypt and Iceland similar fairy tales are told. Both Egypt and Iceland have "Cinderella" stories, as do China, England, Korea, Siberia, France, and Vietnam; and the list doesn't stop there. There may be a thousand versions of the Cinderella story, each with a unique telling which carries cultural information about the time and place the story was told. One thing is for sure; people everywhere like stories in which truth prevails over deception, generosity is ultimately rewarded, hard work overcomes obstacles, and love, mercy and kindness are the greatest powers of all.