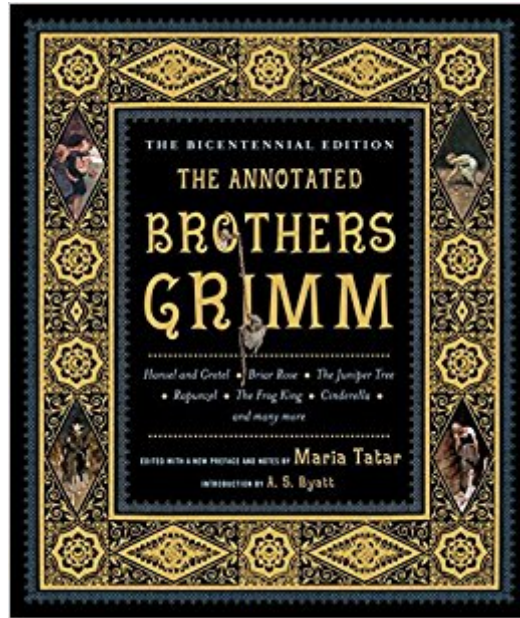


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The Annotated Brothers Grimm (The Bicentennial Edition)



Synopsis

Celebrate the 200th birthday of the Brothers Grimm stories with this lavish volume now richly expanded for a new generation. Publication of the Grimms' Children's Stories and Household Tales in 1812 brought the great European oral folk tradition into print for the first time. The Annotated Brothers Grimm returns in a deluxe and augmented 200th-anniversary edition commemorating that landmark event. Adding to such favorites as "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Snow White," and "Rapunzel," Maria Tatar includes six new entries, among them "Four Clever Brothers," "The Water of Life," "The White Snake," and "The Old Man and His Grandson." The expanded edition features an enhanced selection of illustrations, many in color, by legendary artists such as George Cruikshank and Arthur Rackham; annotations that explore the historical origins, cultural context, and psychological effects of the tales; and a biographical essay on Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. A perennial favorite in the acclaimed Norton Annotated series, this magnificent volume will draw both children and adults into the enchanting world of fairy tales. 75 color, 75 black-and-white illustrations

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Customer Reviews

Like the others in this series (The Annotated Wizard of Oz, The Annotated A Christmas Carol), this volume is beautifully illustrated and annotated with details that personalize the age-old tales, revealing original publishers names and themes, a behind-the-scenes peek at the historical background of those fairy tales we have loved since childhood. In a very personal introduction, A.S. Byatt speaks of her own yearning for myth and fantasy as a young girl: talking birds, unicorns,

princesses, imps and spun gold, hair cascading down the length of a turret. Byatt cautions us to remember the violent nature of the past and that the acceptance of violence was a part of everyday life; hence, the physical became part of the narrative, public hangings common to the times. The beauty of fairy tales is that limbs grow back and the sleeper awakens, once more alive. The editor/translator has reassembled original Grimm stories in the order they were first seen by the public. There are the most familiar, Rapunzel, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood and The Golden Goose; but Tater goes even further, adding stories that were removed, most originally meant for adults, later considered too bawdy for the consumption of children. And Tater has another surprise in this volume: a biographical essay on the Grimm Brothers, their personal lives and political views, as well as the original prefaces. This book is a treasure on many levels, the early appreciation of fantasy read as a child, the historical implications of those tales, the psychology that underlies the power of story and man's need for images to act great battles of good and evil.

This edition has a great deal to go for it. It is beautifully illustrated, contains the "authoritative" direct 1857 versions of many of the Grimm's collected tales, and it includes several tales which have been bowdlerized out of more modern editions, such as "The Jew in the Brambles." Despite these virtues, however, it has two distinct flaws. 1) It is not complete. Rather than include the complete collection of stories, it focuses on the better-known stories such as Rapunzel, Hansel and Gretel, etc. It does include many lesser-known stories, but it doesn't have them all. 2) I personally found the annotations somewhat pointless. Rather than provide new information, or explicate the period Germanic background from which the tales were derived, or provide much information about the Grimm's scholarly research, they merely provided the annotator's own personal interpretation of the story, i.e., "fetched some large stones and filled the wolf's belly with them. The stones have been read as a sign of sterility, but they are more likely an appropriate retaliation for the incorporation of Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother." I'm not sure this volume ever really made up its mind as to its target audience. It includes too many stories with clearly offensive themes (again, "The Jew in the Brambles") to be suitable for young children, but at the same time, the annotations do not appear to be aimed at scholarly readers, and the wealth of illustration gives the impression the book is aimed at young audiences after all. I personally would have been happier with a volume that included the entire collection of Grimm's tales and detailed, factual annotations.

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