

The Complete Fairy Tales
of the
BROTHERS GRIMM

Translated and With an Introduction by
Jack Zipes

Illustrations by John B. Gruelle



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THE COMPLETE FAIRY TALES OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM
A Bantam Book

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if he had been out fishing one day
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1 you come to a big black dog,
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nd get a glass of water from the
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l now been released from the
nan, and they were all glad to

have found each other again. Once inside the house, they hung the birdcage
on the wall. But the second son was still restless. So he took a bow and went
hunting. When he became tired, he took out his flute and began playing a lit-
tle tune. The king, who was out hunting too, heard the music and went
toward it. When he saw the boy, he said, "Who's given you permission to
hunt here?"

"Nobody."

"Who're your parents?"

"I'm the fisherman's son."

"But he doesn't have any children."

"If you think I'm lying, come along with me."

The king did so and asked the fisherman, who told him all that had hap-
pened. Suddenly, the little bird in the cage began to sing:

"Oh, King of noble blood,
your children are back for good.
But their mother sits in prison
with nothing much to live on.
Her sisters are the wicked ones,
who took away your daughter and sons
and left them to the river's fate,
but the fisherman came 'ere it was too late."

When they heard the song, they were all astounded. The king took the
little bird, the fisherman, and the three children with him to his castle, where
he had the prison opened and his wife released. However, she had become
very sick and was haggard. So her daughter gave her a drink of water from
the well, and she regained her health. But the two wicked sisters were burned
to death, and the daughter married the prince.

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The Water of Life

Once upon a time there was a king who was sick, and nobody thought he
would live. His three sons were very saddened by this and went down into
the palace garden, where they wept. There they met an old man who asked
them why they were so distressed, and they told him that their father was so
sick that he would probably die. Nothing seemed to help.

"I know of a remedy," the old man said. "It's the Water of Life. If he
drinks it, he'll regain his health. But it's difficult to find."

"Well, I'll find it," said the oldest, and he went to the sick king and requested permission to leave and search for the Water of Life, for that was the only cure for his illness.

"No," said the king. "The danger is much too great. I'd rather die instead."

But the son pleaded so long that finally the king had to give his consent. Deep down the prince felt, If I bring him the water, I'll be my father's favorite and shall inherit the kingdom.

So he set out and, after he had been riding for some time, he came across a dwarf, who called to him and said, "Where are you going in such haste?"

"You meddling twirp," the prince said contemptuously, "that's none of your affair!" And he rode on.

But the little dwarf became furious and put a curse on him. Meanwhile, the prince found himself traveling through a mountain gorge, and the further he rode, the more the mountains closed together until the way became so narrow that he could not proceed. Nor could he turn his horse or get out of his saddle. He sat there as if he were in a prison.

The sick king waited a long time for the prince, but he did not come back. Then the second son said, "Father, let me go and search for the Water of Life," and he thought to himself, If my brother's dead, then the kingdom will fall to me.

At first the king did not want to let him go either, but finally he gave in. So the prince set out on the same road that his brother had taken and met the dwarf, who stopped him and asked where he was going in such haste.

"You meddling twirp," said the prince, "that's none of your affair!" And he rode off without turning around.

But the dwarf put a curse on him, and he ended up in a mountain gorge, where he became trapped like his brother. Indeed, that is what happens to arrogant people.

Now, when the second son also failed to return, the youngest offered to set forth and fetch the water, and eventually the king had to let him go too. When he met the dwarf and was asked where he was going in such haste, he stopped and answered, "I'm looking for the Water of Life because my sick father is on the brink of death."

"Do you know where to find it?"

"No," said the prince.

"Well, since you've behaved yourself in a proper manner and are not arrogant like your faithless brothers, I'll tell you how to get to the Water of Life: you'll find it gushing from a fountain in the courtyard of an enchanted castle, but you'll never make your way inside unless I give you an iron wand and two loaves of bread. You're to knock three times on the castle gate with the iron wand, then it will spring open. Inside are two lions lying on the ground. They will open their jaws, but if you throw a loaf of bread to each of them, they will be quiet. Then you must hurry and fetch some of the Water of Life before the clock strikes twelve. Otherwise, the gate will slam shut, and you will be locked in."

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The prince thanked him, took the wand and the bread, and went on his way. When he arrived there, everything was just as the dwarf had said. After the third knock the gate sprang open, and when he had calmed the lions with the bread, he entered the castle and went into a big beautiful hall, where he found enchanted princes sitting all around. He took the rings from their fingers and also grabbed a sword and loaf of bread that were lying on the floor. Then he moved on to the next room, where he encountered a beautiful maiden, who was delighted to see him. She kissed him and said that he had set her free and could have her entire kingdom as reward. If he would return in a year's time, their wedding would be celebrated. Then she also told him where to find the fountain with the Water of Life, but that he had to hurry and draw the water before the clock struck twelve. So he went on and finally came to a room with a beautiful, freshly made bed, and since he was tired, he wanted to rest a little. Once he lay down, however, he fell asleep. When he awoke, the clock was striking a quarter to twelve, and he jumped up in a fright, ran to the fountain, and drew some water in a cup that happened to be lying on the ledge. Then he rushed outside, and just as he was running through the iron gate, the clock struck twelve, and the gate slammed so hard that it took off a piece of his heel.

Nevertheless, he was happy that he had found the Water of Life, and on his way home he passed the dwarf again. When the little man saw the sword and the bread, he said, "You've managed to obtain some valuable things. With the sword you'll be able to defeat whole armies, and the bread will always replenish itself."

But the prince did not want to return home to his father without his brothers, and so he asked, "Dear dwarf, could you tell me where my two brothers are? They went out looking for the Water of Life before me and never came back."

"They're trapped in between two mountains," said the dwarf. "I put them there with a magic spell because they were so arrogant."

Then the prince pleaded until finally the dwarf decided to release them but not without a warning. "Beware of them," he said. "They have evil hearts."

When he was reunited with his brothers, he was happy and told them all that had happened: how he found the Water of Life and was now bringing back a cupful to their father, how he had rescued the beautiful princess and was going to marry her after waiting a year, and how he would receive a vast kingdom after their marriage. Once his story was told, he rode on with his brothers, and they came to a country plagued by war and famine. The king was already convinced that he would soon perish because the situation was so desperate. But the prince went to him and gave him the bread, which he used to feed his people and satisfy their hunger. After that the prince also gave him the sword, which he used to defeat the enemy armies, and he was then able to live in peace and quiet. So the prince took back the loaf of bread and the sword, and the brothers rode on. However, they passed through two other countries plagued by famine and war, and on each occasion the prince gave

the king his bread and sword. In this way he was able to help save three kingdoms.

Later on they boarded a ship and sailed across the sea. During the trip the two older brothers plotted together against their brother. "The youngest found the Water of Life, and we are empty-handed. So our father will give him the kingdom that is ours by right, and our brother will deprive us of our happiness."

Overcome by a desire for revenge, they planned to put an end to their brother. They waited until he was sound asleep. Then they poured the Water of Life from his cup into their own and replaced it with bitter salt water. When they arrived home, the youngest brought the cup to the sick king and told him to drink it and he would get well. No sooner did the king drink the bitter salt water than he became sicker than ever. And as he began to moan the two oldest brothers came and accused the youngest of wanting to poison the king, while they, on the other hand, had brought the true Water of Life, and they handed it to their father. As soon as he drank some, he felt his sickness on the wane and became as strong and healthy as in the days of his youth. After that the two older brothers went to the youngest and belittled him. "Oh, we know you found the Water of Life," they said, "but we're the ones who've received the reward for all your trouble. You should have been smarter and kept your eyes open. We took the water from you when you fell asleep at sea, and in a year's time one of us will fetch the beautiful princess. Still, you had better not expose us. Father will not believe you anyway, and if you breathe a single word about it, your life will be worth nothing. If you keep quiet, we'll let you live."

The old king was angry at his youngest son because he believed that his son had wanted to take his life. So he summoned his ministers and ordered them to sentence his son to be shot in secret. So, one day, as the prince went out hunting, suspecting no danger, one of the king's huntsmen had to accompany him. When they were all alone out in the forest, the huntsman looked so sad that the prince asked him, "Dear hunter, what's the matter?"

"I can't say," answered the huntsman, "and yet I should."

"Tell me," said the prince. "Whatever it is, I'll forgive you."

"Ah," said the huntsman. "The king has ordered me to kill you."

The prince was taken aback by this news and said, "Dear huntsman, let me live. I'll give you my royal garments, and you give me your common ones in exchange."

"I'll gladly do that," said the huntsman. "I couldn't have shot you anyway."

They exchanged clothes, and the huntsman went home, while the prince went deeper into the forest.

After a while three wagons loaded with gold and jewels arrived at the king's castle for his youngest son. They had been sent by the three kings who had defeated their enemies with the prince's sword and who had nourished their people with his bread. The wagons were an expression of their gratitude, and when the old king saw that, he began to think, Perhaps my son was

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innocent? And he said to the people at his court, "If only he were still alive!
Now I regret that I ordered him to be killed."

"He's still alive," said the huntsman. "I didn't have the heart to carry out
your order," and he told the king what had happened.

The king felt greatly relieved, and he had it proclaimed in all the sur-
rounding kingdoms that his son was free to return and was back in favor with
the king.

In the meantime, the princess had decided to build a glittering gold road
that would lead up to her castle. She told her guards that whoever came rid-
ing to her straight up the middle of the road would be the right man and they
should let him enter. However, whoever rode up on the side of the road
would not be the right man, and they were not to let him enter.

When the year of waiting was almost up, the oldest son thought he would
get an early start and pass himself off as her savior. Then he would get her for
his wife and the kingdom as well. So he rode forth, and when he came to the
castle and saw the beautiful road, he thought, It would be a terrible shame if
you rode on it. So he turned off to the right and rode along the side. But
when he got to the castle gate, the guards told him that he was not the right
man and he had better go away. Soon thereafter the second prince set out,
and when he came to the gold road and his horse set its hoof down on it, he
thought, It would be a terrible shame if you damaged the road. He turned to
the left and rode along the side. However, when he reached the gate, the
guards told him he had better go away, for he was not the right man.

When the year was completely over, the third son prepared to ride out of
the forest and hoped to forget his sorrows in the company of his beloved. As
he set out he kept thinking about her and wishing he were already with her.
When he arrived at the gold road, he did not even notice it, and his horse
rode right down the middle of it. Once he reached the gate, it opened, and
the princess welcomed him with joy. She pronounced him her savior and
lord of the realm, and they were blissful as they celebrated their wedding.
When it was over, she told him his father had sent for him and had pardoned
him. So he rode home and explained to his father how his brothers had de-
ceived him and why he had kept quiet about it. The old king wanted to pun-
ish them, but they had taken flight on a ship, sailed away, and never returned
as long as they lived.