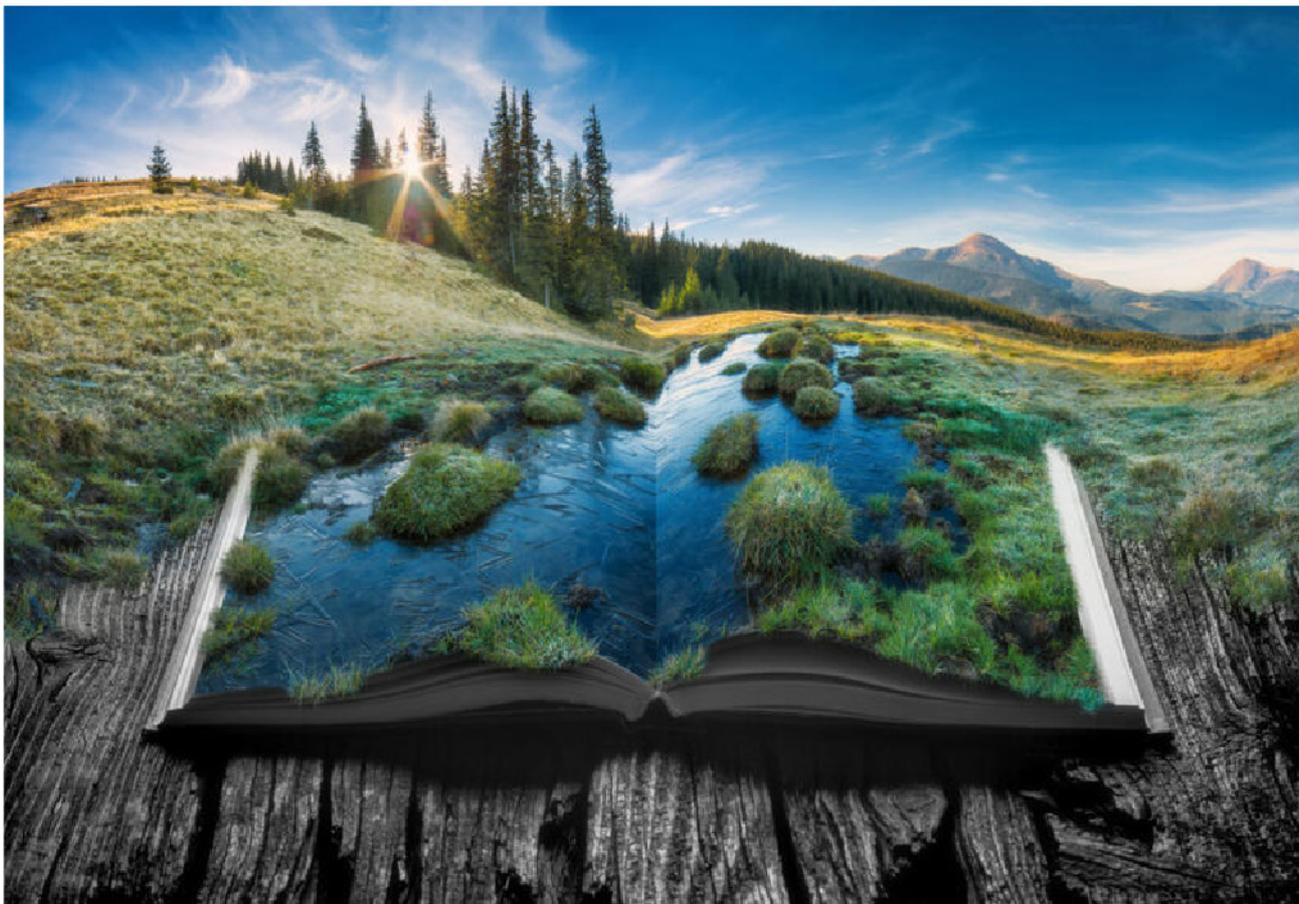


Fairy Tales

Engelsk



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Fairy tales – genre definition (1,61 ns)

Fairy tales are a type of short stories. They usually involve different fantasy characters known from European folklore, such as elves, dwarves, mermaids. Oftentimes, magic exists alongside the normal world, and everyday objects can have magical abilities.

Although fairy tales share some features with e.g. legends, it is important to distinguish them from each other. For example, legends tend to rely on the readers or listeners believing the events to be true, whereas a fairy tale can be thought of as having true elements but not being entirely truthful.

The distinction between fairy tales and legends is somewhat blurred when dealing with tales from cultures that believe in witches, demons, dragons, etc. However, legends are still meant to be grounded in actual historical events and therefore contain more detailed references to locations, religion, actual people, times, and events. Fairy tales are more vague and do not offer details about actuality.



Originally, fairy tales were handed down orally from generation to generation. Their nature of being told in person makes it hard to pinpoint exactly when the fairy tale genre began. The first description of fairy tales was made by Madame d'Aulnoy in the late 1600s, who dubbed them "contes de fées". The word literally means "stories of fairies" because many of the French stories had fairies in them. The tales had, of course, been around for a long time before that, only the genre did not have a name. In the 1800s, the Brothers Grimm wrote down popular German fairy tales that had only existed in a spoken form until then, and this idea caught on all over Europe.

Although fairy tales were actually intended for both adults and children, fairy tales have been associated with children for almost as long as they have been written down. For example, the Brothers Grimm's first collection of fairy tales was called "Children's and Household Tales", and the fantastic elements of the fairy tale genre speak to children in a certain way that many adults won't be able to understand. This style has been copied since the 1800s by writers like Hans Christian Andersen, who wrote new fairy tales in the style of the old tales collected by the Brothers Grimm.

Fairy tales are still around today. Not only have the older fairy tales survived through time, but today authors also write new fairy tales and stories with fairy tale elements to this day. The development of filmmaking has also made it a lot easier for the genre to survive, since fairy tales are very easily adapted to the big screen.

The Elements of a Fairy Tale

You have probably read many fairy tales already. But do you really know what makes them belong to the fairy tale genre?

Certain elements occur again and again in fairy tales from around the world. Some of the most typical fairy tale elements are:

- **the opening and ending lines:**
"Once upon a time ..." and "they lived happily ever after".
- **opposite elements:**
Fairy tales often include opposites such as good/evil, tall/short, rich/poor, beautiful/ugly, clever/stupid, light/dark, hero/villain, young/old, country/town, etc.
- **royal characters:**
We often meet royal characters such as princes, princesses, kings, and queens.
- **tests:**
The hero often has to go through a task or a quest to reach his or her goal.
- **repetition of numbers:**
Typical fairy tale numbers are 3, 7, and 9.
- **repetition of phrases:**
Fairy tales often include repeated elements such as rhymes, magic words, expressions, etc.
- **supernatural elements:**
Supernatural elements such as magic, witches, elves, fairies, dragons, monsters, talking animals/objects, etc. are often used.

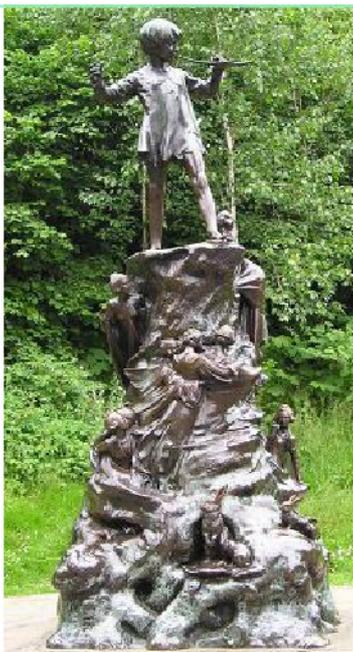


Fairy tales (1,14)

There are many types of fairy tales. Most of the fairy tales we know are from Disney, but the movies often change the original stories a lot. Let us look at some famous fairy tales and talk about the difference between the original story and the Disney version.

One of the most famous fairy tales is Peter Pan, where his friend is the fairy Tinker Bell. Maybe you remember Tinker Bell from the Disney film, Peter Pan, where she sprinkles fairy dust on Wendy, John and Michael to make them fly.

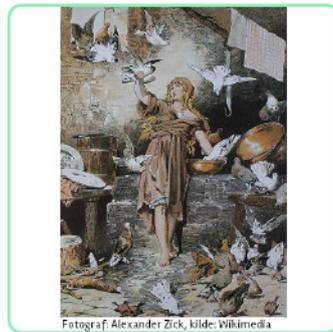
But the real story about Peter Pan is an old play called "Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up". In this story, Tinker Bell is in love with Peter Pan. She tries to take care of him all the time. She is jealous of Wendy. She tries to make Wendy leave Neverland by telling Captain Hook where Peter Pan and Wendy are, and almost gets Peter Pan killed.



Fotograf: Sebjarod,
kilde: Wikimedia

Another fairy tale that you may know is Cinderella. In the Disney version, Cinderella has a fairy godmother who helps her get a dress and go to the big ball.

But in the original fairy tale there is no fairy godmother. Instead, Cinderella plants a tree at her mother's grave and prays at it every day. And the ball lasts three nights, not just one. Every evening Cinderella finds a new dress at the tree by her mother's grave before going to the ball.



The Little Mermaid is a very famous fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen. It is known all over the world, and Disney has also made not one, but two film versions. In the films, the mermaid Ariel gets legs so she can join the prince on land, and make him fall in love with her.

But in the original fairy tale every step she takes feels like walking on glass, and she suffers constantly. In the fairy tale, the Prince also marries someone else, and the only way Ariel can become a mermaid again is by killing the Prince. But she can't do it, and so she turns into sea foam.