

Fairy Tales



Storytelling – Oral Tradition

- Since the beginning of time, people have used story telling for many reasons.
- 1. Storytelling was a way to teach the customs , values, and traditions of a people.
- 2. It was how the people learned the history of their ancestors, the great battles, accomplishments, and heroes of their past.
- 3. It was a way to make sense of a very confusing world long before there was science to explain natural occurrences.
- 4. It was a form of entertainment. There were no computers, TV's, radios, even books. Storytelling helped fill the time especially in winter when there was little else to do.

Types of storytelling



A. Myth:

1. Cultures all over the world tell traditional stories about their gods and beliefs about life.
2. Myths often explain the creation of the world, people, and nature.

Example: These myths may explain how people were created, why it rains, or why there is evil in the world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW3Bbav7w4A>

Folktale



B. Folktale:

1. Folktales are another form of story common to all cultures. They can be very similar to myths. Folktales take many forms. They may be funny, scary, or tell of exciting adventures.

2. Some folktales tell about strong heroes. Other folktales feature clever “tricksters” who fool other characters. Other tales may tell of witches, thieves, ghosts, cowboys, talking animals, or common villagers. Fables and fairy tales are types of folktales.

- Example: Paul Bunyan

Fable

C. Fable:

1. A fable is a type of folktale that teaches a lesson or moral.
2. Fables are usually amusing stories featuring animals that talk and behave as people do.

Example: “The Lion and the Mouse”

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPybpc-xuG0>

Fairy Tales



D. Fairy tale: type of Folktale

1. Fairy Tales are a kind of folk story about magical events and creatures.

2. They often tell about a young person meeting fantastic beings such as fairies, witches, giants, or dragons. Stories such as "Cinderella", "Little Red Riding Hood", and "Sleeping Beauty" began as spoken folktales with no one author. Fairy tales focus on the concepts of good and evil.

E. History of Fairy Tales



1. Originally not written for children, but for adults. Early versions differ from today's versions
2. Evolved from oral tradition -spoken stories passed through generations.
3. European collections include those of the authors:
 - a. brothers Grimm in Germany,
 - b. Hans Christian Andersen in Denmark
 - c. Charles Perrault in France.

II. Fairy Tale Motifs

The essence of the fairy tale is the predictable pattern, or **motif**, things/characters readers expect to be in a fairy tale.

Example: “Once upon a time...happily ever after.”





A. Character Motifs

1. This is based on what the character DOES in the story. The characters rarely change or develop.
2. Characters in fairy tales are stereotypes, that is they are patterns rather than fully developed persons. One prince is the same as another.
3. There are five major character types in fairy tales.



1. The Elder

- a. Usually a king or a father
- b. Stationary and often neglectful, mean, weak or absent (Stays home. The hero does the adventuring)
- c. Sometimes disabled (May be sick or impoverished).



2. The Hero (male or female)



- a. A young protagonist who gets the most out of the story
- b. Is tested; goes on adventures
- c. Usually wins in the end

3. The True Love (male or female)

a. Object of hero's affections

b. Hero battles for his/her “True Love”



4. The Villain



(Evil deeds can be done before the story opens, as in Frog Prince, Beauty and the Beast, etc.)

- a. Antagonist who opposes hero
- b. Force of evil (can be a traditionally evil creature such as a witch, giant, gnome, etc.)



*The Witch Must
Die*

5. The Helper



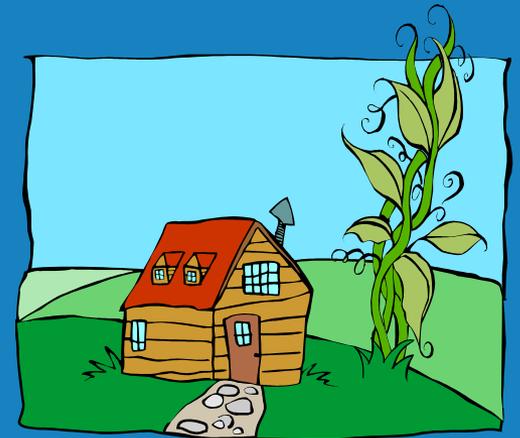
- a. Often a powerful, magical person (fairy godmother)
- b. Gives advice or a valuable gift to the hero (example: glass slippers)
- c. Sometimes may provide tests or challenges (be back by midnight)

III. Setting Motifs

A. Home (The hero's home)

1. An ordinary place, not magical
2. Often the starting and/or ending place of the story (home-adventure-home)

Example: Jack's home,
giant's castle, Jack's home



B. Limbo (very often a forest)

1. Transitions occur, deals are made
2. Seems dangerous, but isn't
3. Shadowy, mysterious



(Hansel and Gretel are frightened in the forest, but they are not in danger there. Cinderella is transformed in the garden, and Jack has to climb the beanstalk)



C. Paradise

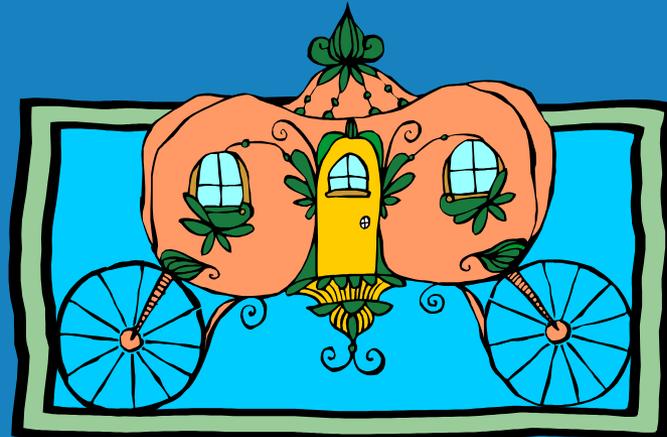


1. Where the hero gets heart's desire
2. Appears perfect, but first a monster must be overcome. (For example, in Hansel and Gretel, to hungry children the gingerbread house is paradise, but they must first overcome the witch)
Examples: Giant's castle, Prince's Palace

IV. Motifs of Objects

A. Ordinary objects with magical powers.

Examples: magic beans, pumpkin carriage, golden goose, magical instruments, glass slipper





V. Motifs of Action

A. Actions of the Hero

1. Quest (find or fight something)

Example: Jack's climbing beanstalk

2. Tasks to perform, usually 3

Example: spin straw into gold 3 nights in a row



B. Means of success for Hero

1. Cleverness or wit

(Hansel and Gretel tricking the witch)

2. Virtue (Cinderella- kind, helpful)

3. Courage and strength

(Jack steals from and kills the giant)

C. Rewards of the hero

1. Wealth (Poor become rich)
2. Love (Love match instead of an arranged marriage)
3. Status (becoming important-commoner to royalty)

(Why would people from the middle ages desire these things?)



VI. Motifs of Style

A. Use of number 3

The “rule of three”:

1. Three characters (“Goldilocks and the Three Bears”, “The Three Little Pigs”, “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”)
2. Three wishes
3. Three tasks that a prince (or princess) must do to win his (or her) true love

More Style Motifs



B. Opening and closing **lines** ("Once upon a time, ...happily every after")
Other cultures have different patterns

C. Repeated **Phrase**: the inclusion of a song, rhyme, chant, incantation, etc. in story (like "Mirror, mirror on the wall," or "I'll huff and I'll puff, etc.")

VII. Themes in Fairy Tales

A. Fairy Tales teach lessons to the listener.

B. Common themes include:

1. good wins over evil
2. appearances can be deceiving
3. inner strengths such as courage, ethics, and cleverness are rewarded.



VIII. Stereotypes in Fairy Tales

A. Reinforce gender roles

1. Women are weak, passive; need to be saved.
2. Men are strong, adventurous, heroic



B. Emphasis on physical appearance

1. Moral goodness and success are equated with beauty.
2. Ugliness is equated with evil and failure.

Fractured Fairy Tale

...And Then the Prince Knelt Down and Tried to Put
the Glass Slipper on Cinderella's Foot

by Judith Viorst

*I really didn't notice that he had a funny nose.
And he certainly looked better all dressed up in fancy clothes.
He's not nearly as attractive as he seemed the other night.
So I think I'll just pretend that this glass slipper feels too tight.*



VIII. Fractured Fairy Tale

A. It is a story that uses fairy tales you know and changes:

1. characters

2. settings

3. point of view

4. plot

(Ever heard of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* told by A. Wolf?)

Why write fractured fairy tales?

B. Purpose

Often the “fractured” changes are used to:

1. create humor (*Hoodwinked*)
2. to modernize tales (*Enchanted*, *Beastly*)
3. to examine common stereotypes.
(*Shrek*)

