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Hansel and Gretel! The Goose Girl! Grey Wolf, Prince Jack and the Firebird! The Three Heads in the Well! The Six Swan Brothers! The Snow Queen! The Seal Hunter! Cockadoodle-doo, Mr Sultana! Mossycoat! Rumpelstiltskin! Rapunzel! The Twelve Dancing Princes

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Editor's Choice:

Editors Choice

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Almost all the distinguished retellers (contemporary writers or poets to a person) do more than justice to their respective story in this new series of traditional tales. Garner's **Grey Wolf, Prince Jack and the Firebird**, Cross's **The Goose Girl**, Fine's **The Twelve Dancing Princesses** and Doherty's **The Snow Queen** amongst others combine simplicity with taut and gripping narratives that will have young readers or listeners on the edge of their seat.

Wilson's **Rapunzel** fits uneasily into this company with such infelicities as 'the husband and wife steered well clear of their neighbour' and 'by the time she got to eleven it was obvious (Rapunzel) was growing into a stunning beauty'. Such cliched modernity strikes a jarring note. Mitton's selkie story, **The Seal Hunter**, is told in verse and just about carries it off; it will read aloud better than it reads on the page.

One might have hoped for some acknowledgement of Andersen and the other sources for the tales in these books. The spines are blank and while it is difficult to print a title onto the spine of a 48pp paperback, booksellers may find this an irritation. These are, however, cavils. The books are attractively illustrated with decorative borders and vignettes and the typeface is large. Above all, thirteen traditional tales at a £1 each is amazing value given the overall high standard of retelling from authors skilled at their craft. An eminently collectable series and a bold publishing venture.

Running Order:

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