



# An Illustrated Treasury of Grimm's Fairy Tales

Books Reviewed:

[An Illustrated Treasury of Grimm's Fairy Tales](#) [1]

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[George Hunt](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Versions of the Grimms' fairy tales appear very frequently on the children's book market, while stories from other traditions are relatively neglected, so it takes a distinctive approach to make an impression. This collection from the Edinburgh based Floris Books is exceptional. The publishers' commitment to high quality production values is realized in a robust, large format book with clear text setting. Drescher's delicate but vivid illustrations consist of full and half page paintings for each of the 30 selected stories, punctuated by pencil sketches and silhouette motifs. The paintings are in the magical romantic tradition, depicting vulnerable women and children, for the most part, confronting natural and supernatural terrors. Many of the classic stories appear, but the uncredited translator and editor have nobly avoided any Disneyfication or Bowdlerization of the plots. Thus, we read a version of Cinderella in which help comes not from a fairy godmother but from birds and trees, and in which the ugly sisters' eyes are pecked out by pigeons. In two of the stories, evildoers are punished by being rolled to death in nail-studded barrels. Beauty is unapologetically conflated with virtue, and disfigurement with evil. Less familiar stories, such as the Two Kings' Children, provide fascinatingly rambling plots with surreal little twists suggesting their deep pagan origins. Traces of the oral tradition are preserved in sign off lines like 'And the mouth of the person who last told all this is still warm', while happily ever after is accompanied by such grimmer conclusions as Rumpelstiltskin ripping himself in half. This is an invaluable collection, which re-imbues these seminal narratives with much of their thought-provoking and talk-provoking vividness.

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