

The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales: Expanded Second Edition


By Maria Tatar

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Murder, mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and incest: the darker side of classic fairy tales figures as the subject matter for this intriguing study of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's Nursery and Household Tales. This updated and expanded second edition includes a new preface and an appendix containing new translations of six tales, along with commentary by Maria Tatar. Throughout the book, Tatar skillfully employs the tools not only of a psychoanalyst but also of a folklorist, literary critic, and historian to examine the harsher aspects of these stories. She presents new interpretations of the powerful stories in this worldwide best-selling book. Few studies have been written in English on these tales, and none has probed their allegedly happy endings so thoroughly.

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Review

"Tatar's main concern is with the enduring hold of the tales on children's imaginations. Why should they enjoy stories about other children sent out to die in a wood, or being victimized by cruel stepmothers, or given impossible tasks to perform, and (if female) forced to marry frogs or bears? . . . *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*--related in language that is sharp, lively, and free of jargon--is delightful evidence that Grimm scholarship can give pleasure to the general reader."--**Janet Adam Smith, *New York Review of Books***

"For scholars, students, and general readers, Tatar's book is a balanced, sensitive, and informative guide to the content and context of Grimms' fairy tales."--**Merle Rubin, *The Christian Science Monitor***

"Tatar takes detours into literary history here and into comparative anthropology there. What results is at once intelligently eclectic and refreshingly commonsensical, a thoughtful ramble through the dark childhood woods that haunt our adult dreams."--**Carl Maves, *San Francisco Chronicle***

"A clear, imaginative and fascinating illumination of the stories we thought we knew."--***Los Angeles Times Book Review***

About the Author

Maria Tatar is the John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. She is the author of "Annotated Classic Fairy Tales" (W. W. Norton), "Off with Their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood", and "Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany" (both Princeton).

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