

WHY I RETELL FAIRY TALES by Mike Klaassen

Folktales are old stories originally communicated orally from generation to generation. The invention of the printing press enabled the Brothers Grimm to record German folktales and distribute them far and wide. Today, the stories published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm are cherished as classics of Western literature.

The Grimm Brothers' tales were first published in the early 1800s, when the conventions of storytelling, punctuation, and grammar for written fiction were in their infancy. Today's readers expect a more fully developed, unobtrusive presentation that allows readers to immerse themselves into the story as if they were living it.

Like many Westerners, I first experienced fairy tales when they were read aloud by my parents. Over the years I recognized those same stories in movies, on television, and in commercial advertisements. These tales are integrated into our culture.

My interest in folktales didn't rekindle until I began writing nonfiction books about the craft of writing fiction. I discovered that fairy tales provided a handy backdrop for the creation of examples. While writing *Scenes and Sequels: How to Write Page-Turning Fiction*, I had a blast re-imagining the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. From then on, I was hooked.

My interest progressed from developing examples to retelling entire stories as a means of demonstrating the techniques expounded in my books about writing fiction. But what really keeps me going is that I'm having fun. Revisiting these stories makes me feel young. I defy you to read my version of *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Frog Prince*, *Cinderella*, or *Jack and the Beanstalk* without feeling like a kid again.

LEARN MORE

Mike Klaassen is the author of *Third-Person Possessed: How to Write Page-Turning Fiction for 21st Century Readers*, which is available for order at traditional and online bookstores. You may "Look Inside" the book at Amazon.com.

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