



The Atlas of Fairy Tales

Enchanting Beings from Every
Corner of the World

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COVER
NOT FINAL

THE MEDITERRANEAN AND EASTERN EUROPE

1. THE GRATEFUL
ANIMALS

4. ILEANA
SIMZIANA

5. THE FIRST
VIOLIN

3. BAŞ ÇELİK

2. THE GOOSE
THAT LAID THE
GOLDEN EGGS

6. HODJA'S GIFT

Black Sea

Aegean Sea

PHOENIX

Mediterranean Sea



THE MEDITERRANEAN AND EASTERN EUROPE

Many of the world's most famous stories come from the Mediterranean in the form of ancient Greek

myths, but the whole of Eastern Europe is rich with tales that constantly cross borders. It is hardly surprising - when people hear a fantastic story, they want to tell it to other people, and they spread, changing a little each time they are told. The stories from this region are deliberately very long and very complicated, perfect for relating to rapt audiences on long, dark nights.

1. THE GRATEFUL ANIMALS: This

Hungarian tale uses many ideas that we see again and again in fairy stories - the number three, jealous brothers, magical potions, impossible tasks, horrible cruelty and kindness rewarded.

Ferko, who has been betrayed by his brothers but remains kind and helpful to the animals he meets, must perform three tasks set to him by an evil king. The first two tasks are completed with the help of a bee and mouse that Ferko helped heal. But for the final task, the wolf Ferko also healed has another idea. He and his pack tear the brothers and the king to pieces, leaving Ferko to live happily ever after. Fairy tales can be very violent indeed.

2. THE GOOSE THAT LAID THE GOLDEN

EGGS: Fables are a specific kind of story that have a moral - a truth that is useful to learn about life. They often appear in Africa and Southern Europe, but the most famous fable-teller of all was Aesop, from ancient Greece.

In *The Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs*, a couple have a magical goose that lays a golden egg for them every day. They don't want to wait for their riches, however, and, figuring that there must be a huge lump of gold inside the bird, they kill it, only to discover it was just an ordinary goose after all. The moral of this story: don't be greedy.

3. BAŞ ÇELİK: Baş Çelik, from Serbia, is an example of a very long story, filled with daring deeds, monsters and princesses to be rescued - something that used to be very popular, though today's princesses tend to prefer rescuing themselves.

The hero is curious about a room he is not allowed to visit. He sneaks inside and sees a man in chains, who introduces himself as Baş Çelik and begs for three glasses of water. The prince complies, not realising that Baş Çelik is really a monster who will bring about his ruin.

The 'forbidden chamber' is another feature found in many fairy tales, most famously *Bluebeard*, a French story.

4. ILEANA SIMZIANA: A lot of fairytales involve shapeshifting from human to animal, old to young, but in this Romanian story the heroine changes sex. Our heroine doesn't have a name, and she is, at the beginning, one of three sisters born to a cruel emperor who is disappointed that he didn't have sons. Oddly, her name isn't Ileana Simziana - that is the name of the princess who has to be rescued!

Our heroine goes out into the world disguised as a man and through a series of events, the young princess permanently becomes a prince and marries Ileana Simziana.

5. THE FIRST VIOLIN: The Roma people of Transylvania and southern Hungary are famous for their musical skills and tell of a princess will only marry a man who can do something that the world has never seen before. A boy is given a box and a stick by the fairy queen, who tells him to pluck some hairs from her head, and string them onto the box. He will be able to make people happy or sad by moving the stick across the hairs. The princess falls in love with the musician, everyone lives happily ever after, and the violin is brought to the world.

6. HODJA'S GIFT: Nasreddin Hodja is a very popular character in Muslim countries, but he is especially loved in Turkey. He often plays the fool, but is wise and witty.

One of thousands of stories about him sees him visiting Timur, lord of the Mongols, with a big bag of beetroots as a gift. On the way, he swaps the beetroots for a bag of figs.

Timur feels insulted at being given figs. He is so angry that he tells his soldiers to throw them at Hodja. Hodja merely offers thanks to Allah.

Timur is baffled. "My men are pelting you with figs. What are you thanking Allah for?"

"I am grateful I did not bring the beetroots," Hodja replies.

RUSSIA AND NORTHERN ASIA

1. VAZUZA AND
VOLGA

4. THE
CHRISTMAS
SPIDER

3. THE GOAT
AND THE RAM

8. THE MOUNTAIN
OF GEMS

5. POLOZ THE
SERPENT

6. THE MOST PRECIOUS
TREASURE

10. MOROKZO

BABA YAGA

2. THE GIANT
TURNIP

7. A TALE OF THE
MOON

9. THE PAPER
HORSES

FIREBIRD





CHINA, CENTRAL ASIA
AND JAPAN

