

# Origin of the Grimm Fairy Tales

**F**airy tales are often taken for granted. Our generation assumes that Walt Disney himself created these tales for our innocent enjoyment as children. However, these ideas are shot down when we later discover another version of Cinderella or Snow White. These discoveries are only copies of stories many, many years old.

Jacob and William Grimm, otherwise known as the Grimm Brothers, are credited with discovering many tales for children. They didn't originally author any of them, but they did collect and publish these stories. They collected stories from all across Germany, allowing Germany's people to speak to them.

The brothers' journey begins with an interest in linguistics. Their work took them all across the country, where they listened to elders tell them stories. The telling of these stories exposed the brothers to many different dialects of the German language. Story-telling really helped their advancement in their study of the German language.

The brothers were interested in

preserving a piece of Germany's past by collecting Germany's stories. Though the stories may not have had strictly Germanic origins, they definitely demonstrated a distinct Germanic flair.

Tales collected by the brothers were not the nicest of tales. They tended to be very gruesome and violent, often containing sexual undertones. It is because of society's views on these stories that the brothers changed the stories some. They wanted to reflect what was socially acceptable for children during their time period.



## Grimm vs. Disney

*The differences between the Grimm and Disney versions of some popular tales.*

### Snow White

Grimm:

- Step-mother requested to have Snow White's heart for supper.
- Step-mother comes to dwarf house three times, each time with a new plan to kill Snow White; the last attempt was with the poisoned apple
- Apple is jostled from Snow White's throat on the way to the Prince's castle.

Disney:

- Step-mother requested Snow White's heart in a box
- Step-mother comes to dwarf house once with poisoned apple.
- Snow White awakens with a kiss from the Prince

### Sleeping Beauty

Grimm:

- There were wise women.
- A thirteenth wise woman cursed the princess.
- The girl stayed in the castle.
- Prince had to get through a hedge of thorns.

Disney:

- There were fairy godmothers.
- A witch cursed the princess.
- The girl was taken from the castle.
- Prince had to fight a dragon.



A common scene from both versions of Snow White.

### Cinderella

Grimm:

- Cinderella's father was alive during the story
- There were three balls on three separate nights.
- A magic tree provided Cinderella with her dresses.
- The step-sisters cut off parts of their feet to fit into the shoe.
- The step-sisters were punished by having their eyes pecked out.

Disney:

- Cinderella's father died at the beginning of the story.
- Only one ball was held.
- Cinderella had a fairy godmother.
- The step-sisters simply couldn't fit into the shoe.
- The step-sisters, nor the step-mother, were punished.

The Prince finds Sleeping Beauty in the tower.

