

FAIRY TALES AND THEIR INNER MEANINGS

~ Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp ~ Cinderella ~

~ Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs ~

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H P Blavatsky points out that there is one universal esoteric or 'mystery' language underlying all the sacred traditions of history. She writes that 'all the ancient records were written in a language which was universal and known to all nations alike in days of old, but which is now intelligible only to the few.'

Fairy tales are a sub-genre of the artistic and literary genre known as 'fantasy,' the latter being a genre in which life---or at least some aspect of life---is depicted in an 'unnatural' (ugh) and highly imaginative manner. The problematic word 'unnatural' does not mean 'unrealistic' or 'supernatural' (whatever *that* means), but, in fantasies, imagination, wonder and fancy all play very important roles. The characters often engage in 'fantasies,' that is, visionary fancies and other kinds of mental images including dreams, daydreams and hallucinations. A 'fantasy' ordinarily involves the following elements: first, a quest or journey of some kind, often involving tests, trials and tribulations, with a battle between 'good' and 'evil'; secondly, a fictitious or legendary place in which strange, 'unnatural' events occur; thirdly, the presence of strange, 'unnatural,' fanciful, even grotesque, characters and capricious forces; and fourthly, lessons in how to live, evolve, and relate to others and a power-not-oneself that is capable of freeing oneself from the bondage of self.

Fairy tales are not just about fantasy. That grand master of modern fairy tales J R R Tolkien wrote that fairy tales have four main uses: escape, consolation, recovery, and fantasy. I have already spoken, albeit briefly, about fantasy. The ideas of escape and consolation are fairly straightforward, but the notion of recovery is a fascinating and most important one. Recovery is, yes, all about regaining what seemingly, and perhaps actually, has been 'lost.' I think the notion of recovery will become quite clear when we start to look at a number of highly familiar and popular fairy tales.

Now, most fairy tales are not about 'fairies' at all, although they are very much about *faerie*. The latter has two meanings: first, the land of fairies, and second, enchantment. The second meaning is more applicable. On the subject of fairy tales as a source of enchantment, there's a wonderful book entitled *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* by the late Bruno Bettelheim, who was one of the greatest psychoanalysts of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the most important thing about fairy tales, apart from the sheer enjoyment that comes from reading or listening to them, or watching them on film, is this---fairy tales are *mythological* in nature, and their inner or more esoteric meaning is cloaked in allegory, parable and symbolism. Nearly all fairy tales are encoded spiritual and moral lessons ('road maps') of great importance---just like the parables of Jesus in the *New Testament*---and they almost invariably incorporate more than a few fragments ('gems') of Ancient Wisdom, with the spiritual ideas and themes being portrayed in a highly figurative and literary manner. On the surface, or exterior, they largely present as stories for children---*Kinder und Hausmärchen* ('Children's and Household Tales'), in the words of the Brothers Grimm---but their inner or 'true' significance is hidden (that is, 'occult').

If there is one theme or underlying message contained in the great religions of the world it is this---we come from God, we belong to God, we are never truly separate from God, and we are all on our way back to God. Of course, not all the world's religions use the word 'God,' or express this idea theistically, but that is largely immaterial. The idea is still there. Fairy tales graphically depict the Platonic/Neoplatonic idea of involution and evolution of the soul, or, in the language of the great American mythographer Joseph Campbell, the 'hero's journey' of self-discovery through trial, tribulation and adversity. This is sometimes referred to as the Ancient Wisdom, and I will use that terms quite a few times in the course of this address.

Now, back to this so-called 'secret' (or 'sacred', or 'mystery') language. Most of the sacred scriptures of the world---as well as many mythological and literary stories---are written in this language. I have already referred to and quoted H P Blavatsky on this matter. Now, we can be very grateful to writers such as the New Thought minister Dr Emmet Fox, and the equally eminent Theosophist and Liberal Catholic priest Geoffrey Hodson, for they have helpfully

explained that there are certain 'keys' which, when properly understood, assist us in our interpretation of sacred or 'occult' literature and teachings.

First, many of the recorded events in the story or tale, although seemingly 'real' in an objective, material, worldly sense, actually occur in the mind or consciousness of the reader. In other words, the story is about you, and me, and what can and does occur in consciousness. Secondly, each character in the story or tale portrays a state or condition of our character, consciousness, spiritual development or human nature. In other words, it is about our strengths, weaknesses, and potentialities. Thirdly, each story or tale is a graphic, figurative description of some phase or phases of the evolutionary journey of the human soul toward its ultimate perfection. Fourthly, objects (eg rivers, mountains, valleys, deserts, trees, ladders, staircases, inheritances, giants, men, and women, and so forth) all have their own allegorical or spiritual meanings.

Let's now look at three popular fairy tales---*Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp*, *Cinderella*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp

First, the story of 'Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp'---or, more correctly, 'The Story of Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.' Here's an outline of the story, which is very Eastern in nature. Most of you will know that this tale can be found in a wonderful collection of ancient tales entitled *Tales from the Arabian Nights*---or *One Thousand and One Nights*. It is said that these tales were written down by the ancient Arabians who had heard them from the ancient Persians, who had heard them from the ancient Hindus in India.

Many of these tales have a distinctive, Sufi-like flavor to them. Persians, Tartars, Arabs, and Indians move through these tales as 'real' human beings---as people of every day---just like you and me! It seems that these tales were first written down in Arabic, after having been passed down from generation to generation by nomadic, tribal Arabs. In the early 18th century a French scholar named Antoine Galland collected a number of these tales and was the first to translate them into a European language. Galland apparently had heard and took down at least some of the tales, of which there was until then no written record, from the lips of a Syrian friend who

had heard them told by wandering Arabs. There is the tale of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,' 'Sinbad the Sailor,' 'The Enchanted Horse,' and several others---including 'The Story of Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.'

Aladdin is an impoverished young ne'er-do-well in a Chinese town, who is recruited by a sorcerer from the Maghreb. This sorcerer passes himself off as the brother of Aladdin's late father Qaseem, convincing Aladdin and his mother of his goodwill by apparently making arrangements to set up the lad as a wealthy merchant.

The sorcerer's real motive is to persuade young Aladdin to retrieve a wonderful oil lamp from a booby-trapped magic cave of wonder. After the sorcerer attempts to double-cross him, Aladdin finds himself trapped in the cave. Fortunately, Aladdin retains a magic ring lent to him by the sorcerer as protection. When he rubs his hands in despair, he inadvertently rubs the ring, and a genie appears who takes him home to his mother. Aladdin is still carrying the lamp, and when his mother tries to clean it, a second, far more powerful genie appears, who is bound to do the bidding of the person holding the lamp. With the aid of the genie of the lamp, Aladdin becomes rich and powerful and marries Princess Badroulbador, the Emperor's daughter (after magically foiling her marriage to the vizier's son). The genie builds Aladdin a wonderful palace – far more magnificent than that of the Emperor himself.

The sorcerer returns and is able to get his hands on the lamp by tricking Aladdin's wife, who is unaware of the lamp's importance, by offering to exchange 'new lamps for old'. He orders the genie of the lamp to take the palace along with all its contents to his home in the Maghreb. Fortunately, Aladdin retains the magic ring and is able to summon the lesser genie. Although the genie of the ring cannot directly undo any of the magic of the genie of the lamp, he is able to transport Aladdin to Maghreb, and help him recover his wife and the lamp and defeat the sorcerer. The sorcerer's more powerful and evil brother tries to destroy Aladdin for killing his brother by disguising himself as an old woman known for her healing powers. Badroulbador falls for his disguise, and commands the 'woman' to stay in her palace in case of any illnesses. Aladdin is warned of this danger by the genie of the lamp and slays the imposter. Everyone lives happily ever after, Aladdin eventually succeeding to his father-in-law's throne.

'Everyone lives happily ever after.' *That* is the proverbial ending of almost all fairy tales. After much turmoil, struggle and strife the human soul and the human spirit are brought into conscious union and return to the Source. Salvation, enlightenment, nirvana.

The name 'Aladdin' means 'servant of Allah.' Aladdin is 'on the Path,' so to speak. He is fast becoming an adept, an illuminated one. The burning lamp is the lamp or light of Truth, spiritual intuition, divine knowledge. It is that 'true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (Jn 1:9), that can *never* be extinguished.

On one interpretation of this tale, Aladdin represents our True Self---also known as our Christ Self, or spiritual self---that is, the God-Self in us. When Spirit descends into matter, into flesh, it is like being in a cave. Remember, Aladdin was entombed in the cave, and on the third---yes, the third---day, he escapes from the cave. The cave is the prison-house of self, bondage to self, bondage to the many false selves that we create and present to the world. (As I see it, we have literally hundreds and thousands of these false selves---these 'I's' and 'me's'---that we constantly manufacture in our consciousness from one moment to the next.) The supposed uncle, the sorcerer, is an imposter---not at all unlike these false selves that purport to be our True Self, because we mistakenly and foolishly identify with them and take them to be our True Self. Yes, this supposed uncle symbolically represents our lower, selfish mind, which is not truly related to us, that is, to our spiritual self, although it claims to be. He wants the riches, the treasure, that rightfully belongs to Aladdin. That treasure is not the uncle's by right of consciousness. That is why he---the uncle---cannot possess the lamp. It will never be ours, while we live from and according to our false or illusory selves.

In the tale there are two genies. There is the genie of the ring, and there is the genie of the lamp. The first genie can be said to represent the law of karma, the law of cause and effect---the law of reaping what one sows. It is a law for mind only, and the Ancient Wisdom makes it unambiguously clear that it is indeed possible to rise above even the 'Great Law' of karma. You see, when we use the genie of the ring, we are working *to*, or *toward*, principle. When, however, we use the genie of the lamp, we are working *from* principle---from the law of the Christ, that is, the Law of Love, which is a higher law, being a law of spirit and not just mind. In the tale, the genie of the ring is a lesser genie, being unable to undo any of the magic of the genie of the lamp. In that regard, I am reminded of these words from Albert Einstein: 'We can't solve our

problems by the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.' Wise words. Well, collectively the genie represents law---both mental and spiritual.

Rubbing the genie refers to spiritual practice of various kinds---devotion, aspiration, prayer, and meditation. So, we either experience---'suffer'---the consequences of our actions or we wipe them out by invoking the Law of Love. The choice is ours. In the words of Dr Fox, it's a case of 'Christ or Karma.'

There are many interpretations of the tale of 'Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp.' Here's another one---a little more mundane, but no less important. Aladdin can be seen to represent our conscious mind. The genie represents our unconscious (subconscious) mind. The lamp, and the action of rubbing the lamp, refer to the proper actions and working of the mind. We all know that over ninety per cent of our mental activity occurs in the unconscious or subconscious mind. Professor William James wrote, 'The power to move the world is in the subconscious mind.' Indeed. In the tale of Aladdin, the genie says, 'Your wish is my command.' Yes, as William James also pointed out, we tend to do whatever is our strongest, or most dominant, desire. Never forget that. Rubbing the lamp sets the dominant conscious thought into action, so as to influence the genie (that is, the unconscious or subconscious mind). So, in this interpretation of the tale, Aladdin's lamp represents the intelligent utilisation of our thoughts and, perhaps more importantly, our creative imagination.

Whatever interpretation we adopt---and I am sure there are others as well---the important message is this. We must make the mind---our mind---the obedient 'slave' of our True Self, that is, the *real* person that each of us is.

Now, let's turn now to the enchanting fairy tale, 'Cinderella.'

Cinderella

There's a widower who remarries. (This is a very common motif in fairy tales---namely, a widower and his not-so-nice second wife.) Now, the man's second wife is ill-natured, indeed cruel, and she has two daughters who are just as unpleasant as her. The man has, however, a beautiful, gentle daughter of his own, but she soon becomes the servant of her evil stepmother

and stepsisters. They make her do all the chores around the house. The beautiful daughter is named Cinderella, after the cinders (or ashes) she sweeps out of the fireplace. (The word 'Cinderella' means 'living among ashes.' Not a bad description for our earthly lives.) Anyway, Cinderella misses her mother greatly, and each day---even in winter---Cinderella visits her late mother's grave.

One day, the father travels abroad and asks his daughters what presents he should bring back for them. Not surprisingly, the two un-nice stepdaughters ask for beautiful clothes and jewels respectively. (Obvious symbolism there---isn't that the modern Western world, whose real religion is consumerism?) Cinderella---bless her---asks for the twig which brushes his head when he returns home. (In due course, Cinderella plants this hazel twig on her mother's grave, which she proceeds to water with her tears. It grows into a beautiful tree, and there is this little white bird which comes and throws down whatever Cinderella asks for. (Beautiful!))

Now, there is a king, and he needs to find a bride for his prince, so he throws a huge ball. The evil stepmother and stepsisters are invited, but Cinderella is only allowed to go one condition---her stepmother orders her to separate lentils and ashes which have been mixed in a dish together, within an hour. Cinderella manages to successfully complete this seemingly impossible task, with the help of some birds (again, note the symbolism). The condition is repeated, this time with two dishes of lentils. Again, the birds help. The evil stepmother still says 'no' to Cinderella's attending the ball.

After the others leave for the ball, Cinderella's fairy godmother appears and changes her dirty rags into a beautiful gown with glass slippers. (In one familiar version of the story, we have Cinderella going to the tree on her mother's grave, and asking for gold and silver garments (symbolically, spiritual riches or wisdom). In some versions of the tale, the fairy godmother changes a pumpkin into a coach and some mice into footmen. Before Cinderella leaves, the fairy godmother warns her to be home before midnight, because the spell would only last till then.

Cinderella is a big hit at the ball. The prince falls in love with her and asks her name. Just then the clock strikes midnight, and Cinderella runs away. She is in such a hurry that she loses one of her glass slippers. It is the only clue the prince has to find his true love. The prince goes to

every home in the kingdom and has every single young girl try on the slipper to see if it fits. The evil stepsisters can't fit the slipper, but Cinderella can. The prince marries her and, guess what, they all live happily ever after.

Once again, the widower's first wife---Cinderella's mother---symbolically represents the loss of the Ancient Wisdom spiritual tradition. (Of course, in a deep sense, the Ancient Wisdom is *never* truly lost---but it often appears to be the case that it's been lost. At least, we often lead our lives as if there were no such thing.)

Cinderella's thrice-daily visits to her mother's grave symbolically represent that soul which is truly on the Path---the soul that is very much spiritually alive, and ever-open to the influx of the spiritual truths embodied in the Ancient Wisdom. Perhaps there is also here the idea that the dead can continue to influence the living. Once again, the figures of the stepmother and the stepsisters represent those negative, retarding forces that we all have to battle and overcome---those forces that would seek to break off all connection with the indwelling divine life. And what about the symbol of the twig which brushes the father's head? Well, that appears to be a reference to the divine life, or life force, which comes from above---hence the reference to 'brushing' the father's head. At any rate, this is no dead power. No, it stimulates new life, and so we have the beautiful tree that the twig turns into.

The little white bird---note, in the sacred or secret language birds ordinarily represent spiritual, ethereal thoughts and blessings (unless they are ugly, nasty birds)---represents those blessings which come to us from the spiritual world, at least when they are sought prayerfully and mindfully. (Note that Cinderella visits her mother's grave thrice daily, and waters the twig with her tears, the latter symbolic of devotion and spiritual adoration and affection.) And, just like the other stories, it is made unambiguously clear that the human soul, if it is to grow and prosper, must undergo trials and tribulations of various kinds. Note, in that regard, the task of separating lentils and ashes. Like Cinderella, we too must learn to differentiate between the essential and the inessential. In order to be able to do that successfully, we need the gift of spiritual discernment. In time, the soul is purified.

Then we have this king, who wants to find a bride for his prince. Spiritual forces are at work here. The presence of the birds also makes that clear. The element of the 'glass slipper' is quite

important. It needs to fit. The true ego or human spirit seeks to unite with the purified soul—and it has to be a perfect fit! Yes, in the end our prince marries Cinderella and they all live happily ever after.

And, now, the beloved German fairy tale, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.'

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

At the beginning of the story, a queen sits sewing at an open window during a winter snowfall when she pricks her finger with her needle, causing three drops of blood fall onto the snow on the ebony window frame. Admiring the beauty of the resulting colour combination, she says to herself: 'Oh, how I wish that I had a daughter that is as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as that wood of the window frame'. Soon after, the queen indeed gives birth to a baby girl as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and with hair as black as ebony. They name her Snow White, and not long after, the queen dies.

A year passes. The king takes a new wife, who is beautiful but also unutterably wicked and vain. (As in *Cinderella* and *Hansel and Gretel*, we again have the familiar appearance of a nasty stepmother. Makes you wonder if there are any nice stepmothers out there! I'm sure there are plenty of them---nice ones, that is.) The new queen has a magic mirror which she asks every morning: 'Magic mirror in my hand, who is the fairest in the land?' The mirror always replies: 'My Queen, you are the fairest in the land.' Time passes, and when Snow White reaches the age of seven, she becomes as beautiful as the day and even more beautiful than the queen. So, when the queen asks her mirror, it responds: 'My Queen, you are the fairest here so true. But Snow White is a thousand times more beautiful than you.'

This comes as a great shock to the queen, to put it mildly. (Funny, isn't it? We only like to hear what we want to hear.) The queen becomes yellow and then green with envy. Her heart turns against Snow White. Indeed, with every following day she hates Snow White more and more. Envy and pride, like ill weeds, grow in her heart taller every day, until she has no peace day or night. The queen orders a huntsman to take Snow White into the deepest woods to be killed. She demands as proof that Snow White is dead that the huntsman return with Snow White's lungs and liver. The huntsman takes Snow White into the forest, but he is unable to kill her. He

leaves her behind alive, convinced that the girl would be eaten by some wild animal. Instead, he brings the queen the lungs and liver of a young boar, which is prepared by the cook and eaten by the queen.

After wandering through the forest for days, Snow White discovers a tiny cottage belonging to a group of seven dwarfs. Since no one is at home, she eats some of the tiny meals, drinks some wine and then tests all the beds. Finally, the last bed is comfortable enough for her and she falls asleep. In due course the seven dwarfs return home and discover the sleeping Snow White. She wakes up and explains to them what happened and the dwarfs take pity on her, saying: 'If you will keep house for us, and cook, make beds, wash, sew, and knit, and keep everything clean and orderly, then you can stay with us, and you shall have everything that you want.' They warn her to be careful when alone at home and to let no one in when they are away delving in the mountains.

Meanwhile, the queen asks her mirror once again: 'Magic Mirror in my hand, who is the fairest in the land?' The mirror replies: 'My Queen, you are the fairest here so true. But Snow White beyond the mountains at the seven dwarfs is a thousand times more beautiful than you.' The queen is livid. Not only did the huntsman betray her, worse still Snow White is still alive. She keeps thinking about how to get rid of Snow White. She disguises herself as an old peddler, walks to the cottage of the dwarfs, and offers Snow White colourful, silky laced bodices. She convinces Snow White to take the most beautiful bodice as a present, then she laces it so tight that Snow White faints. The queen leaves her for dead. However, the dwarfs return just in time and Snow White revives when the dwarfs loosen the laces.

Next morning the queen consults her mirror anew and the mirror reveals Snow White's survival. Infuriated, the queen dresses as a comb seller and convinces Snow White to take a beautiful one as a present. She brushes Snow White's hair with a poisoned comb. Snow White faints again, but is revived by the dwarfs. The next morning the mirror tells the queen that Snow White is still 'a thousand times more beautiful' than the queen. The queen is apoplectic with rage. She secretly consults the darkest magic and makes a poisoned apple, and in the disguise of a farmer's wife she offers it to Snow White. Snow White is at first hesitant to accept it, so the queen cuts the apple in half, eats the white (harmless) part, and gives the red (poisoned) part to Snow White. Snow White eagerly takes a bite and falls into a state of suspended animation.

This time the dwarfs are unable to revive the girl because they can't find the source of Snow White's poor health and, assuming that Snow White is dead, they place her in a glass coffin.

Time passes, and a prince traveling through the land sees Snow White. He strides to her coffin, and enchanted by her beauty, instantly falls in love with her. The dwarfs succumb to his entreaties to let him have the coffin, and as his servants carry the coffin away, they stumble on some roots. The tremor caused by the stumbling causes the piece of poisoned apple to dislodge from Snow White's throat, awakening her. The prince then declares his love for her, and soon a wedding is planned. The couple invites every queen and king to come to the wedding party, including Snow White's stepmother. Meanwhile, the queen, still believing that Snow White is dead, again asks her magical mirror who is the fairest in the land. The mirror says: 'You, my Queen, are fair so true. But the young queen is a thousand times fairer than you.'

Appalled in disbelief and with her heart full of fear and doubts, the queen is, at first, hesitant to accept the invitation, but she eventually decides to go. Not knowing that this new queen was indeed her stepdaughter, she arrives at the wedding, and her heart fills with the deepest of dread when she realizes the truth. As a punishment for her attempted murders, a pair of glowing-hot iron shoes are brought forth with tongs and placed before the queen. She is forced to step into the burning shoes and to dance until she drops dead.

So, what are we to make of all this?

The story begins with the old queen, who has a vision of ideal future humanity. This new human being will have overcome passions, have purified his instincts, and have become an enlightened soul, hence the three references to 'as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as that wood of the window frame.'

The wish is fulfilled, but the old queen dies. The new queen appears. Unfortunately, she is very vain and proud, and she seeks to use occult powers and wisdom for her own entirely selfish purposes. She finds it very hard, if not impossible, to accept that a new era---the era of Snow White---has dawned. In that regard, she is so much like those people in this country who find it well-nigh impossible to accept such things as multiculturalism, diversity of all kinds, 'boat people' and asylum seekers, and so forth. In another sense, the new queen is like those who

want what's on offer, but aren't prepared to earn it by right of consciousness. Indeed, it is not hers, or theirs, at all, by right of consciousness.

Now, who are these 'seven dwarfs'? What do they symbolise? Perhaps helpers on the other side. Perhaps members of the Brotherhood of Adepts, the Great White Brotherhood. Perhaps they are the 'seven mighty spirits before the throne,' or the seven major chakras? I tend to regard them as simply symbolising different aspects of our self. (For example, among others there's Happy, and Sleepy, and Bashful, and Dopey. The latter is *especially* me!) Anyhow, take your pick. One thing---they are *very* important, and they can help you and me.

The developing soul, Snow White, the ultimate symbol of purity and innocence, is attacked in various ways. It looks grim. Ultimately, a 'higher' power---a power-not-oneself---is needed to awaken her. That power is the power of one's higher self, True Self, Christ Self---call it what you will. In the story, that power comes, of course, in the form of the prince. At the end of the tale, the old powers---the old era---is dead. Ring bells! Blow trumpets!

There are several other possible interpretations of this tale. For example, the New Thought teacher and writer Florence Scovel Shinn, in her book *The Secret Door to Success*, writes that the cruel stepmother is a 'negative thought-form ...built up in the subconscious.' Remember how Snow White is kept in rags and in the background? Shinn writes, 'All cruel thought forms do this.' The queen is a graphic symbol of all our inner demons. Shinn also makes this comment about the woods, namely, that despite the threats and dangers present therein, there are nevertheless present many friendly animals and birds that surround and protect Snow White. These animals and birds symbolise 'our intuitive leads or hunches, which are always ready to "get you out of the woods".' And what about the seven dwarfs? Shinn says they symbolise 'the protective forces all about us.' And the prince? Well, according to Shinn he represents the 'divine plan' of our life. When that plan 'wakes' us up, the old, tired, negative thought-forces, along with our wild, untamed ego-self---all represented by the queen---are 'dissolved and dissipated forever' and we live happily ever after. Shinn writes: 'Find out what form of tyranny your cruel stepmother is taking in your subconscious. It is some negative conviction which works out in all your affairs.'

Now, there is another 'Snow White' fairy tale from Germany---'Snow-White and Rose-Red.' However, this 'Snow-White' is a completely different character, having nothing in common with the one we've just discussed, other than sharing the same name in English (albeit hyphenated), and having an encounter with a dwarf. Perhaps on another occasion I can talk about that fairy tales as well as others such as *Hansel and Gretel* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Bless you---every one of you. And may you all live happily ever after!

Note. Parts of some fairy tale plot summaries, albeit amended and revised in varying degrees, are courtesy Wikipedia. The author is also indebted to Roy Wilkinson, whose book *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (1984) was of great assistance. All rights reserved.

