

Introduction

What is a fairy tale? It may be a story about kings and queens. It may be about poor people. It may be funny or frightening. But fairy tales are different from other stories. They usually happen in a place 'far, far away'. They are about times 'long, long ago'. Fairy tales have magic in them. Animals can speak. People can suddenly do strange things. Most fairy tales have a happy ending. Good and clever people win. Bad people lose.

Two brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, collected over two hundred stories like this. Here, we meet a boy no bigger than his mother's thumb. We meet a girl with very long hair. Other stories introduce us to foolish giants, a speaking bird and a magic fish. The stories take us to palaces and a tall tower. They take us into the dark forest. They lead us into fairyland.

About the Brothers Grimm

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were born in the 1780s in Germany. They both became teachers. And they both became interested in old stories and fairy tales. They did not want people to forget these stories. They asked friends to tell them the stories they knew. The brothers wrote down over two hundred of these stories. At first, their stories were for older people. Later, the 'Brothers Grimm' made the stories easier. They added pictures. The stories became favourite children's books. Grimms' fairy tales are famous around the world.

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The Brave Little Tailor:

Part One

'Seven at one blow!'

It was a summer morning, long ago. A little tailor was working in his shop. He was sitting at the open window. He had scissors, pins and needles. He was making a jacket. Beside him, at the window, was a bird cage. The little bird inside it was singing happily. 5

A woman came along the street. She was carrying a heavy basket. 'Sweet jam! Buy my jam!' she called.

The tailor put his head out of the window. 'I'll buy your jam,' he called out. 10

The tailor tasted every pot of jam in her basket. Then he bought one pot. 'This jam will make me strong,' he said cheerfully.

The tailor went to his cupboard. He took out some bread. He cut a piece and put some of the jam on it. 15

'No! I mustn't eat yet. I must finish this jacket first,' he told himself. He put the bread by his side. He picked up his needle and started to sew.

The smell of the sweet jam filled the air. Flies came through the window. 'Out! Out!' shouted the tailor. He waved the flies away, but they came back. 20

More and more flies came in. They could smell the jam. They began to eat it. The tailor took off his belt and hit them. He looked down. There were seven dead flies on the table. 25

'Seven dead flies! At one blow!' he said. 'I will tell everyone in the town about this.' He picked up his needle again. He sewed these words on the belt in big letters:

SEVEN AT ONE BLOW!