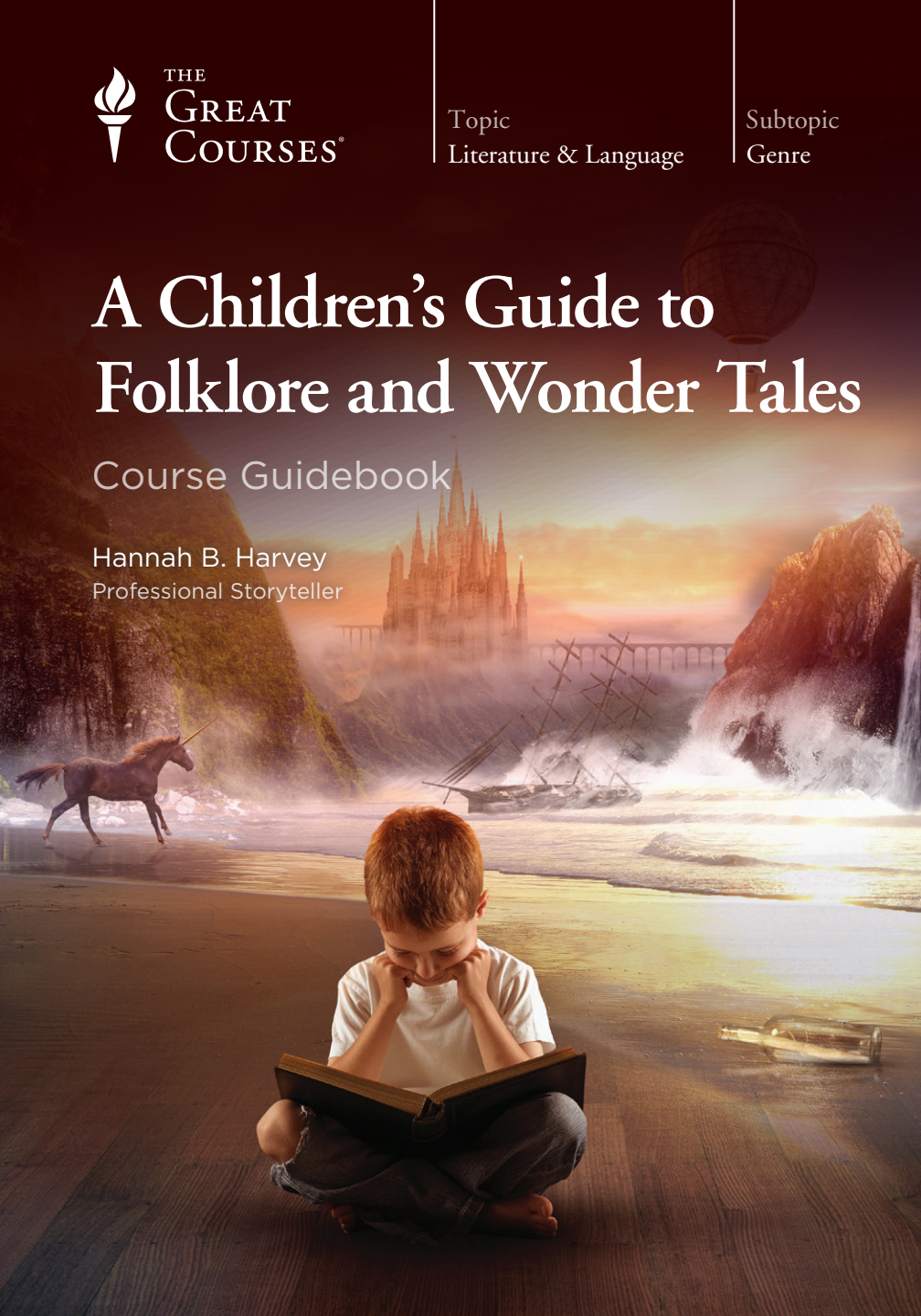
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A Children's Guide to Folklore and Wonder Tales
Course Guidebook
Hannah B. Harvey
Professional Storyteller

PUBLISHED BY:

THE GREAT COURSES
Corporate Headquarters
4840 Westfields Boulevard, Suite 500
Chantilly, Virginia 20151-2299
Phone: 1-800-832-2412
Fax: 703-378-3819
www.thegreatcourses.com

Hannah B. Harvey, Ph.D.

Professional Storyteller

Hannah B. Harvey is a nationally known professional storyteller and an internationally commended performer. She earned her Ph.D. in Communication Studies, with a concentration in Performance Studies, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel

Hill, where she was also a teaching fellow. She earned her B.A. from Furman University. Dr. Harvey is a past president of Storytelling in Higher Education, the professional organization for scholars of storytelling within the National Storytelling Network. As a scholar-artist, she studies storytelling as a pervasive cultural force and an everyday artistic practice.

Dr. Harvey's research and teaching specialty is performance ethnography, which unites theater with anthropology: Scholars investigate everyday storytelling as an embodied cultural practice. As a performance ethnographer, she develops oral histories into theatrical and solo storytelling works that highlight the true stories of contemporary Appalachian people. Her ongoing fieldwork with disabled coal miners in southwest Virginia culminated in a live ethnographic performance of their oral histories, *Out of the Dark: The Oral Histories of Appalachian Coal Miners*, earning her a directing award from adjudicators at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in 2007 and three year-end regional awards from professional critics in 2005.

Dr. Harvey served for four years as managing editor of the journal *Storytelling, Self, Society*. Her written research has been honored by the American Folklore Society and featured in *Storytelling, Self, Society*, among other publications. Dr. Harvey's research has been presented at the National Communication Association, the Oral History Association, the International Festival of University Theatre, and the Canadian Association on Gerontology.

Dr. Harvey is an award-winning director and performer and has delivered workshops in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Morocco. She has also given workshops for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health-care providers on storytelling and rural health care, for lawyers on storytelling and representation, for psychiatrists at Yale University's Grand Rounds lecture series on storytelling and mental health, and for pastors and rabbis on storytelling in ministry.

Dr. Harvey's energetic style brings to life humorous and compelling stories from the worlds of personal experience, oral history, folklore,

and myth. Critics have called her work "very funny" (*Theatre Guide London*) and "deeply moving" (*Classical Voice of North Carolina*). As a solo storyteller, she has been featured at the National Storytelling Festival and in the International Storytelling Center's Teller-in-Residence program. Her international performances as a member of the North Carolina–based Wordshed Productions earned a five-star review in the *British Theatre Guide*. Dr. Harvey has led workshops in storytelling at the National Storytelling Festival in Tennessee; in the adaptation and performance of literature at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland; and in cross-cultural storytelling at Université Hassan II de Casablanca in Morocco.

Dr. Harvey's students at Kennesaw State University selected her as an Honors Program Distinguished Teacher and for the Alumni Association Commendation for Teaching Impact. She is proud of her Storytelling students' achievements, from garnering professional credits (including a four-star review from the *British Theatre Guide* for her students' group-storytelling adaptation of *Beowulf*) to simply enjoying and becoming more critically aware of storytelling in their everyday lives.

Dr. Harvey's other Great Course is *The Art of Storytelling: From Parents to Professionals*. ■

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Scope

A Children's Guide to Folklore and Wonder Tales

People love stories—but why? As children and adults, we interpret the adventures of our daily lives through narrative. Classic narratives give us ways to see ourselves as heroes, tricksters, and maybe even villains; they also give us a way to interpret the foes and obstacles we encounter and to defeat them first in story, so that we can go out with the strength to tackle them in reality. Stories circumnavigate, rather than directly penetrate, themes and questions. They draw a circle around listeners and pull us closer to common understandings and meanings—and to each other, too. This is the vision for this course: to draw your family closer together as you hear stories and explore the deep themes and questions of powerful classic tales.

This course's lectures cluster around the basic genres of folktales (folktales, animal folktales, pourquoi stories, fables, fairy tales, and legends). Each lecture is relatively independent, allowing you to jump to your favorite stories or the ones your family happens to be in the mood for that day. With this in mind, the lectures do refer back to one another and build on some key concepts, so completing the lectures in order will enable you to feel a sense of trajectory.

Key concepts this course covers include rites of passage, the role of trickster heroes, and the differences between oral stories and written texts. Animal folktales and "magic" numbers also receive attention. And the lectures discuss how stories vary across the world; for example, three interconnected lectures on "Cinderella" explore versions of the tale from France, Russia, and Iran, each showing a progressively more proactive protagonist.

The course builds toward one concluding lecture, which returns to previous tales to discuss the overarching themes and questions that link genres and tale types. That lecture includes a final tale that combines many of the themes and recurring motifs of the course. The course concludes by pointing you toward recommended tale collections and resources to continue your storytelling and sharing of classic oral folklore and wondertales.

Lecture 1

"Sleeping Beauty": Once Upon a Time

This course will cover familiar versions of classic stories and versions from cultures all over the world. This lecture focuses on a familiar tale: "Sleeping Beauty." The lecture mainly zooms in on the French version of the story, the full title of which is "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood." At the end of this lecture, and all others in this course, are a set of discussion questions you can use to talk about the story with whoever you're enjoying the course with—or to just consider on your own.

Summary of "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," Part I

- There once was a king and queen who wanted one thing more than anything else in the world: a baby. After trying prayer and pilgrimages and other measures, the queen eventually had a baby girl.

- The king and queen invited seven fairies to the child's christening. All went well, and after the christening, everyone sat down to a feast. But an old fairy came through the door and interrupted; she was mad she hadn't been invited. The king and queen had thought her long dead or cursed. The old fairy sulked throughout dinner because she hadn't received goldenware to eat with like the other fairies.

- After dinner, it was time for the fairies to bestow gifts upon the child. The fairies, one by one, gave her beauty, wit, grace, and the ability to dance, since, and play music. But the seventh fairy had overheard the old fairy grumbling, and remained hidden behind a curtain.

- Eventually, the old fairy came over. She said, "I will give you a gift—as nice as the one that was given to me. You will be beautiful, sing, dance, and play the music—for a time. But in your sixteenth year, you will prick your finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel, and you will die!"

- She began to hobble away. Everyone in attendance began to cry. But the seventh fairy emerged from behind the curtain and said, "I cannot undo this curse. But! I can soften it. When she reaches 16 years of age, she will prick her finger on a spinning wheel, but she will not die. No, she will fall into a deep sleep for 100 years—and at the end of 100 years, she will wake up, and there will be a prince beside her, the son of a king. Do not fear."

- Time passed, and the events of that day faded from everyone's mind. But eventually the girl turned 16, and the old fairy's prophecy came to be: She pricked her finger on a spindle and fell into a deep sleep. Nothing her family and attendants tried to wake her worked.

- A dwarf saw these events transpire. He put on his seven league boots—which allowed him to cross seven leagues of distance in one step—and went to fetch the magical seventh fairy, 21 leagues away. When she heard what had happened, she returned to the kingdom.

- The fairy used her wand to put everyone in the castle—the cooks and undercooks, the butler and the governess—asleep. The king and queen ordered the place to be shut up, and so the fairy raised high, brambly vines and hedges around the castle. People could no longer see it from the outside.

- A hundred years passed. People forgot about what had happened in that castle—the brush grew so high they even forgot that a castle was there—until one day, a son of a king came riding by. He saw the beautiful turrets and spires of the castle and said, "Oh, I have never noticed that castle before. What is there?"

- Some people told him an ogre lived there; others said witches and sorcerers met there. But an old, wise man came over, and he said, "I have heard that there is a princess sleeping in that castle, waiting a hundred years for a prince to come and rescue her."

- The son of the king said, "Well I am a prince—perhaps it is me!" He used his sword to cut his way through the brambles. He made his way into the courtyard and saw people sleeping.

- He walked up some steps until he came to a room with a beautiful bed, the princess sleeping in it. He went over, and he kneeled by her knees, and at that very moment, her eyes opened, and she sat up.

- She opened her eyes and looked over and saw him. She said, "Oh, so you are the prince? You have waited a long time to come, eh?" And they fell in love. The cooks, undercooks, and butlers who had all been sleeping too all woke up at that very moment. That day, the son of the king and the princess were married.

The Takeaway

- Note that the prince doesn't wake her up in this version of the story. The fairy says she will wake on her own and at the right time—and there he will be for her.

- This is what many parents hope for their children—not that they'll be rescued by someone else, but that *at* the right time, their eyes will be opened, and they will finally see the one they're meant to be with.

- That's something many children may not think about when hearing this story, but it can be a very engaging and interesting part of the story for adults.

- The meanings of folktales change the older we get—we need different things from the stories as we get older, and the stories that continue are the ones rich enough to provide layers of meaning throughout our lives.

- In many versions of this story, the princess and the prince are married, and that's the end. But in other versions, the story continues, as it does in the next summary section.

Summary of "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," Part II

- The marriage of the prince and princess had to be a secret. That's because the prince's father was a human king but his mother was an ogress who wouldn't like the princess.

- Whenever the prince went home, he'd claim to have been off visiting a woodcutter. Then he'd leave the next day to spend time with his wife. This went on for years. Eventually, the prince and princess had two children: Morning (or Aurora), the daughter, and Day, the son.

- One day, the king in the prince's own kingdom died. That meant the prince was the new king and had no need to fear showing off his wife. He brought the princess back along with their children.

- They were as happy as could be, until eventually war broke out. The new king had to go off to war to lead his troops, leaving his wife and children with the ogress.

- The ogress did not like girls, except to eat. One day, she ordered the cook to bring her Morning for breakfast. The cook thought this was horrible, so he hid Morning and prepared a lamb in her place. He served the lamb to the ogress, who enjoyed it.

- The next day, the ogress ordered the boy, Day, for dinner. Again, the cook hid the child and served lamb, and again the ogress was fooled. But next, the ogress wanted to eat the queen. This time, the cook warned the queen and served a deer in her place.

- The cook thought he'd gotten away with all this until one day, the ogress, while stomping around, overheard Day crying through the wall where the cook had hidden them.

- She was furious, and ordered the cook, queen, and children all brought to her. She filled a pot with frogs, toads, snakes, and other horrible things. Just as she was about to throw the humans in, the king came riding up.

- The king asked, "What is happening?" The ogress saw that now she'd never get away with her scheme, so she jumped into the pot.

That was the end of her. The king lived happily ever after then, with his queen and their two children, Morning and Day.

The Takeaway

- The fate of the ogress in this story is an old story: The ogress suffers the fate herself that she'd planned for others. This motif occurs in a long line of stories throughout history.
  - In the book of Esther in the Bible, the villain Haman has constructed a platform on which he intends to hang the good man Mordecai. But the king discovers the plot, confronts Haman, and in the end, Haman is strung up in the very noose he intended for Mordecai.
  - Shakespeare included this motif in Act 3 scene 4 of his play Hamlet, where a character is "hoist by his own petard," or blown up by his own little container of gunpowder.
- It's useful to hear different versions of these stories, because they give us different roles for the heros and the heroines. For example, in the first part of the story, both the princess and the prince are passive—their fates are decided for them by the fairies, and they act out the drama fated to them.
- This first part of the story has more to do with the parents and the fairies—they are the ones who act and make decisions.
- But the children (the prince and princess) grow up, have children of their own, and live out the sacrificial love that the first set of parents modeled: The prince defends his children by battling enemies away at war; the princess defends her children by battling enemies at home.
- It's a repeating cycle of nurturing, protecting, and eventually letting go of the ones we love. The names of the children—Morning and Day—continue to cycle us into the future.

Suggested Reading

Basile, *The Tale of Tales*.
Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language*.
Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die*.
National Storytelling Network website, www.storynet.org.
Pellowski, *The World of Storytelling*.
Perrault, *The Complete Fairy Tales*.
Thompson, *The Folktale*.
Uther, *The Types of International Folktales*.
Warner, *Once Upon a Time*.
Zipes, *Happily Ever After*.
———, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does the second part of "Sleeping Beauty" change the story for you? How do the hero and heroine change as a result of this second part of the story?
2. The parents in this story have to give up their most treasured loved one—their daughter—and trust that the fairy's predictions and presence will keep her safe. Have you ever had to trust something or someone special in your life into the care of someone else? What did that feel like?

Lecture 2

"Beauty and the Beast" I: The Sleeping Prince

The idea of transformation is both exciting and scary. This lecture is about a traditional story from Norway that combines two French tales: one of the tales in the last lecture, and one that will be examined more in the next. This story raises questions like: How brave would you have to be if this happened to you? How far would you go to rescue a friend? The story is called "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," from Norway. In Spain and Greece a similar version of the story is known as "The Sleeping Prince." In Ancient Greece, it was known as "Cupid and Psyche."

Summary of "East of the Sun and West of the Moon"

- One evening, a woodcutter, his wife, and his three daughters were approached by a bear. The family was poor, and the bear offered

the woodcutter riches in exchange for his youngest daughter. The bear left them for a week, giving them time to decide.

- After a week of debate, the daughter consented. The bear returned and took her, telling her not to be afraid. They traveled until they reached a warm, bright room, full of golden items. There was also food. The daughter ate her fill. The bear gave her a silver bell, and said, "You ring that whenever you want anything. And now I must go." Then, the bear left.

- Just before sleep, she found herself in another room. She heard something come in the room, go to sleep, and begin snoring loudly. She was exhausted, too, so she fell asleep eventually. The next day, the snoring thing was gone.

- When she came to the table in the morning, it was full again, and she ate. The bear was there, and she talked to him, asking, "What was the creature who came into my room last night?"

- The bear's reply: "Do not ask about the creature. Do not ask about me either. You can have anything you want, but you ask no questions." She lived for days more under that pattern: Plentiful food, sleep with a mysterious creature in the room at night, and no questions. Eventually, she became sad, and the bear asked why.

- She said she missed her family and wanted to see them one more time. The bear agreed to take her, but warned her not to talk to her mother alone, or else bad luck would come to both the bear and her.

- When they got back to her home, a huge mansion had replaced the tiny cottage she'd left. Her sisters were playing outside. Her parents were there, too. All were well fed.

- She talked to the family for a while. In the evening, despite the bear's warning, her mother got her alone. She asked what had been going on with the daughter, and the daughter told her about the snoring creature. The mother warned her about the creature,

saying it could be a troll, and gave her a candle. She told her to find out what the creature was.

- The next day the bear came back to retrieve her. The girl told him her mother had given her advice; the bear warned her not to listen to it. They went back to the bear's home. That night, just as she was about to fall asleep, the girl heard the snoring creature again.

- She took her candle out and lit it, revealing the face of a man—the most beautiful man she'd ever seen. She leaned in for a closer look, but three drops of tallow from the candle dripped on the man, waking him. The man reveals he is the bear, who had been cursed by his stepmother.

- Had the girl been able to wait a year, he would've been free, but now he must return to the stepmother, a troll. She lives in "the land that is east of the sun and west of the moon." The bear/prince must now marry her daughter, a troll with a nose three yards long. He left. The girl cried herself out, then set out to find him.

- She walked until she saw a high cliff face. At the bottom, there was an old woman carrying a golden apple. The old woman gave the girl the apple and a horse to ride.

- The girl rode until she came to a second cliff face, where there was a second old woman. She gave the girl two golden carding combs (which are used to comb out sheep's wool before the wool is spun into yarn).

- The girl rode off once more, riding until she came to a third cliff face with a third old woman. This one gave her a heavy golden

spinning wheel and a horse that knew how to get to east of the sun and west of the moon.

- Next, the girl encountered the east, west, south, and north winds. The first three passed her along until she encountered the north wind. The north wind deposited her in the land east of the sun and west of the moon.

- When she landed, she could see a castle with an open window. A nose three yards long stuck out of the castle window; this belonged to the troll princess the bear/prince was due to marry.

- The girl sat underneath that window, took out her golden apple, started to play with it—very conspicuously throwing it up and down. This lured the troll princess out.

- The troll princess agreed to trade one night with the trapped prince in exchange for the golden apple. But that night, when the girl visited the prince, he wouldn't wake up.

- A similar process happened the next day: The girl traded her golden carding combs for another night with the prince. But again, the prince wouldn't wake up, even when she shook him.

- Finally, the girl traded her golden spinning wheel for one more night. She tried to think of ways to wake the prince. Inside the castle, some other people who had been captured by the trolls had heard the girl in the prince's room.

- They stole into the prince's room before nightfall, and they said,

"You must know that someone comes in the middle of the night. She tries to wake you up, but you will not wake up."

- The prince knew what was happening. The princess had been giving him sleeping potions, so that night, when she offered him a drink, he waited for her to turn her head and threw it over his shoulder.

- He got into bed and pretended to sleep. The princess came back, threw the girl in the room, and shut the door. The girl came over and prepared to shake the prince awake. But before she could shake him, he opened his eyes and said, "Hello!"

- The girl told him of her travels, and the prince told her he had a plan that would end with their marriage. The next morning, the prince took out the shirt that had been stained by those three drops of tallow.

- He took it over to his stepmother, the troll. He said, "I want to see what kind of girl I am about to marry. I want to see if she can wash the tallow off of this shirt and make it clean." And the troll stepmother said, "Well, anyone can do that—give it to her!"

- She took the shirt and she gave it to the princess whose nose was three yards long. The princess tried to wash it, but she only made the spot larger, until in the end, the shirt was just a sooty, black mess.

- Finally the prince said, "There's someone over there, let's see if she can do anything with it." The girl came over, and she took that shirt. As soon as she dipped it into that water, it turned white. The stains were gone. The prince said, "That is the girl I will marry. And none of you can do anything about it."

- At that, the troll princess with the nose three yards long started hopping up and down. She was so angry that she hopped until she popped into pieces. Her stepmother did the same thing, also popping. The rest of the trolls followed suit.

- The popping trolls made a sticky mess. But the prince and the girl cleaned themselves off. They rode back home on the back of the north wind—because at last, they had each other, and they were not afraid.

The Takeaway

- In life, it's wise to be cautious whom we trust. It's only by seeing the bear's true form that the girl finally trusts him—and then it's too late. He's gone. Happily, in fairy tales—as often in life—it's never too late to turn the story around. But it took a lot of bravery for her to pull off the happy ending for herself and for her prince.

Suggested Reading

Anderson, *Fairytale in the Ancient World*.

Maggi, *Preserving the Spell*.

Phelps, *The Maid of the North*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. In "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," the girl decides to leave her home so that her family would be provided for. Would you have made the same choice? Why or why not?
2. In the end, the trolls all explode—which is quite a satisfying ending after they caused so much trouble for the hero and heroine! What do you think this story would sound like if it were narrated from the troll's point of view? How would the characters be described? How would this final scene be described?

Lecture 3

"Beauty and the Beast" II: Being Brave

The story "Beauty and the Beast" is part of a collection of stories in classic folklore called the animal-bridegroom cycle, in which the hero or heroine is faced with the (awful) idea of marrying an animal or a monster. "Beauty and the Beast" is all about transformations and tricks of the eye: We think we know what we're looking at, but we actually have no idea what's underneath the beast's fur. Stories like this one make us look at the world around us, and the people in our world, differently.

Versions of the Beast

- In some versions of "Beauty and the Beast," the beast transforms into the shape of other animals: He's not always a warm and furry mammal. For example, take the classic French story recorded in

1756 by Jeanne-Marie LePrince de Beaumont. In that version, the beast is a hissing, scaly creature.

- De Beaumont's story has as its source a text that is over 100 pages long. To hear a shorter form of it, refer to the audio or video lecture.

- In another version of this story from Germany, called "Beauty's Stone Sisters," the beast has a different form. Next up is a summary of that version.

Summary of "Beauty's Stone Sisters"

- This version is by the collector Ludwig Bechstein—he was a contemporary of the Grimms, and a more famous one at that. His version (from 1847) begins with the classic story, except that the youngest daughter, Nettchen, has a friend who is poor, called Little Broomstick.

- In this story, the merchant winds up at the home of the beast. The beast is "enormous … with a long ugly snout, ears hanging down, and a shaggy coat," along with long claws.

- The beast tells the merchant he must bring back his youngest daughter, Nettchen. But the merchant waits, and eventually instead takes Little Broomstick to the beast.

- But the beast takes Little Broomstick, pops her into an enchanted carriage, sends her back, and carries Nettchen home to him. And each night, the beast comes to rest and nuzzle by her in her bed, and she gradually comes to snuggle with him and feel sorry for him.

- Finally, one night, when he does not come, she searches for him and finds him dying. She weeps for him, and her falling tears break his spell.

- The beast explains: "My father wanted me to marry a woman I did not love. When I refused, he sent a sorceress to turn me into

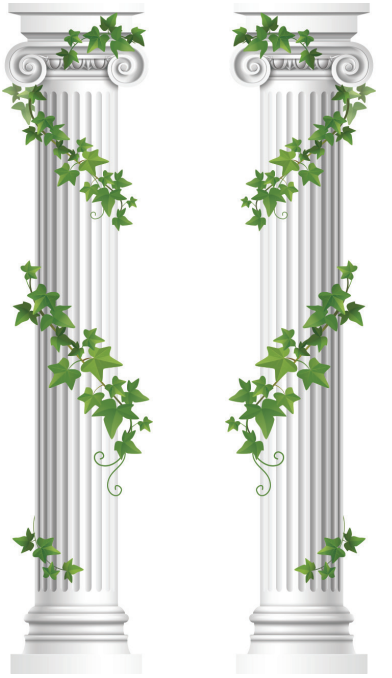
this monster, until a beautiful [young girl] would love me in spite of my ugliness and shed tears for me."

- They are married—but she must remain in the castle for a year. Through an enchanted mirror, she watches her father and sisters. As the months pass, her father appears to grow sicker while the sisters keep entertaining their friends with parties.

- When the year is out, the beast gives her magic herbs. Nettchen brings them to her father, and the herbs bring back his health. And Nettchen is so happy, she invites her sisters to visit her. But when the sisters see Nettchen's happiness, and the fine palace where Nettchen lives, they are so filled with jealousy they kill Nettchen.

- At that very moment, a fairy—the same one who had enchanted the beast—appears, and she brings Nettchen back to life. The fairy says that the sisters must be punished. Nettchen protests, but fairy turns the girls into two stone pillars.

- The fairy announced they would remain pillars until a man would fall in love with them. The columns "to this day are still standing in the garden of the splendid castle, for it has not yet occurred to any man that he should fall in love with cold, heartless stones." Nettchen, her husband, her father, and Little Broomstick lived happily ever after.



The Takeaway

- Consider this: Which version of the beast is scarier to you—the white bear in "East of the Sun and West of the Moon," the scaly snake-like beast in the French "Beauty and the Beast," or the German beast in "Beauty's Stone Sisters?"

- Often what we think of as beastly looks or behavior is culturally specific. That means the culture around us decides what looks appealing or unappealing. What is unattractive in one culture may be beautiful in another.

- We'll come back to this idea of cultural beauty in folk and fairy tales later in the course. For now, consider: How brave would you have to be to go off with a scaly, snake-like monster? Or a shaggy, bear-like beast?

- Being brave doesn't necessarily mean being fearless. Being brave means facing your fear. Fear is often inherent in bravery. Without it, bravery doesn't exist. It's OK to be afraid.

- Bravery simply means that we don't let our fears make our decisions for us. And in these stories, the girl faces her fears again and again. (That's life—we are constantly facing our own recurring fears throughout our lives.)

- In all of these versions of "Beauty and the Beast," it's the beast that gets transformed back into a human. The girl's bravery and inner strength of will and character make the magical transformation happen. Has there ever been a time when your bravery has transformed the situation you've found yourself in?

- "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" has many similarities to a much older story: the Greek tale "Cupid and Psyche." When you consider this story, think about how often the heroine's curiosity gets her in trouble.

Summary of "Cupid and Psyche"

- A king and queen had three beautiful daughters. Of them, Psyche was the most beautiful. She was so beautiful that the goddess Venus (the goddess of love and beauty) became jealous. Her son was Cupid, the god of love.

- Venus told Cupid to take one of his magical arrows—which make you fall in love with the first person you see—and touch the arrow to Psyche to make her fall in love with a monster. However, when Cupid goes to Psyche in her sleep, he's in awe of her beauty, and pricks himself with the arrow.

- Cupid flies away. Psyche's parents learn of Venus's prophesy, that Psyche would marry a monster. They take her to a high mountain, where Zephyr, the west wind, lifts her up and carries her off to a beautiful castle. At night, when all the lights are out, a monster comes into her room.

- Psyche convinces the monster to let her sisters visit. The sisters, in turn convince her that the creature who comes into her room is actually the monster she is destined to marry. They also convince her to take a light and a dagger and go kill the monster while he sleeps. But when she lifts the candle to the monster, she sees that he in fact is Cupid—and he is so handsome she falls in love with him.

- She leans over, but a drop of tallow from her candle falls onto his skin. In his anger, he flies away. Her sisters come back, hoping to steal

Cupid as their husband. They go to the mountain where they had first abandoned Psyche.

- Believing that the wind would take them to the castle, too, they leap off the mountain—but Zephyr knows their evil intentions, and never comes. The sisters fall to the rocks below. Psyche keeps searching for Cupid.

- To find him, she undergoes three tests from Venus:

    1. Psyche must separate grains of wheat, millet, and barley from each other. Cupid sends ants to help, and she succeeds.
    2. Psyche must gather golden fleeces from a heard of sheep by the river. The river god warns her that the sheep hate humans while the sun is shining. Psyche waits until the sheep seek shade from the noon sun, and then takes their golden fleeces.
    3. Psyche must go to Hades (the world of the dead), find Persephone, and bring some of her beauty back in a box. Cupid tells her how to get across the River Styx and past the three-headed dog Cerberus to reach Persephone, who gives her some beauty. But Persephone warns her not to open the box.

- Psyche leaves, but on her way back home, she peeks inside the box—and immediately a magical sleep comes over her. Cupid flies down to her, and says, "You just had to look. Once again, you just had to look."

- He wakes her up with one of his arrows. They go to Jupiter (Zeus), the king of the gods, on Mount Olympus. The gods give Psyche ambrosia, the food of the gods, and Psyche becomes immortal. At last, as equals, Cupid and Psyche can be together.

The Takeaway

- Greek myths often weren't about trying to find a happy ending; they were about mortals being tossed about by the whim of the gods. The beauty of this story is that Psyche defies the gods and

becomes an immortal (a goddess) in the end. Her bravery, spurred by love, drives her to face her fears, and go to Hades and back again for the person she loves.

- In all of this lecture's stories, it's not only the beast that transforms. It's the heroine herself. By facing her fears, she becomes a queen or an immortal.

Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Maggi, *Preserving the Spell*.

Phelps, *The Maid of the North*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. One idea from this lecture is that being brave doesn't mean you're not afraid; it means you may be afraid but you do the right thing anyway. Do you agree with this? What does it mean to you to be brave? Who in your life has been brave?
2. The lecture discusses how it's never too late to turn the story around. Have you had to turn your story around at any point in life? How? What was/were the result(s)?

Lecture 4

"The Sorcerer's Apprentice": Transformations

Our lives, like the seasons around us, are designed and destined for transformation. This lecture looks at two versions of a story about transformation. The first version is known as "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," from 1st-century Egypt. This version looks at the transformation of objects. The second version, "The Doctor and His Pupil" from France, looks at the transformation of people.

Summary of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice"

- There once was a man in Egypt named Pancrates. He spent 23 years underground, learning magic from the Egyptian god Isis. When he emerged from underground with this great wealth of knowledge in spells and magic, Pancrates, whenever he needed water carried, never did it himself.

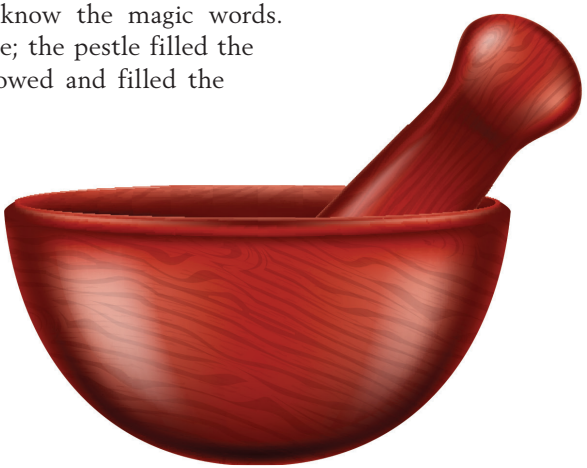
- Instead, he would get the wooden bar that locked the door, or the wooden handle of a broom, or even the wooden pestle that was used to grind the herbs in the kitchens, to do it. He would take that stick and put a shirt around its top, pants on its bottom, and a hat upon its head. Then, he'd say three magic syllables: "Yip, yop, yup!"

- Right away, the broom would spring to life and become for all appearances a man—dressed in a shirt, pants, and a hat—who would draw the water, cook the meals, wash the dishes, and so forth. This went on until Pancrates said, "Yim, yom, yum!" The broom would clatter back to the floor again, no longer a man—just a wooden stick with some clothes on it.

- The magician wouldn't tell anyone, not even his closest companions, what his magic spells were. But one day, a friend of the magician happened to overhear the magic words that Pancrates said to get the stick to come to life.

- As soon as Pancrates was away, the friend took a wooden pestle; stood it on its end; dressed it in a shirt, pants, and a hat; and said the words, "Yip, yop, yup!"

- The pestle jumped up. The friend said, "Carry water into that jar!" Sure enough, the stick carried in water and began to fill the jar. But when the friend tried to stop the pestle, he didn't know the magic words. On the water came; the pestle filled the jug until it overflowed and filled the house.



- In desperation, the friend took an axe and cut the pestle in two. Then, the two pieces of wood each began to bring

in water until the water began to run out of the house and into the streets.

- At this point, the magician Pancrates came in the soggy room, saw what had happened, and secretly said the magic words: "Yim, yom, yum!" Immediately, the two splintered pestles splashed to the soaked floor. Pancrates quietly slipped away, and the friend was left in the middle of the watery room to think about his misdeeds.

Summary of "The Doctor and His Pupil"

- Once upon a time there was a boy. This boy was 12 years old; he had been to school for six months, and he had learned how to read. This made him happy. But even though his head was full of knowledge, his belly was empty because his family was very poor.

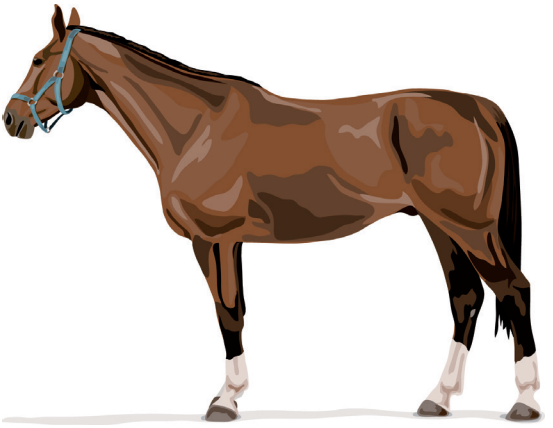
- He eventually found work for a man in a castle, but had to lie and say he couldn't read to land the job. The man fed the boy, gave him a feather duster, and explained his job: The boy was to dust each page of a particular book every day. With that, the man left for an entire year.

- The boy dusted the pages. But every page he dusted, he read. He came to realize the man was a magician and this book was one of magic spells. If you could cast the spells, you could turn yourself into any creature you wanted.

- After a year, the man came back. He praised the job the boy had done and doubled his wages, then left for a second year. The boy dusted and memorized the entire first half of the magician's book of spells. The cycle repeated for a third year: The magician returned, increased his wages again, and left. This time, the boy memorized the second half of the book of spells.

- At the end of the third year, the boy took the money and left to go home to his family. The family was happy: They had money to

eat. But eventually the money ran out and the family returned to being poor. They turned to the boy and were about to tell him to go out and find work again.



- The boy told his father he had an idea, and the next morning, the father would find a horse in his barn. The father should take the horse to town and sell it, but be certain to return with the halter. The father was dubious, but they all went to bed.

- The father woke up the next morning, went to the barn, and saw a horse with a halter. He took it to town and sold it for a great price, then came back with the halter and saw his son. The son revealed he'd been the horse, and that if the father had left him in the halter, he wouldn't have been able to turn back.

- The family ate for a time, but ran out of money again. This time, the boy turned into a cow with a rope in place of the halter. The father came back from selling the cow with money and the rope, the son running behind him.

- This went on until one day, the father started to get greedy. They began to sell the son even when they didn't need the money. One morning, the son transformed into a horse with a halter. The father led the horse by the halter down to the market.

- By this time, the magician in his tower had noticed the words in his book were moving around. He figured out that the boy had learned his spells. The magician went to the village, bought the horse from the boy's father, and took the father to a pub, where he

gave the father drinks and more money. The father returned home with lots of money but no halter.

- The magician took the horse to a blacksmith to talk about putting shoes on the horse's hooves and a nail in its mouth (so he couldn't say spells any longer). Two boys walked by, and the horse whispered, "Untie me!" The boys did, and as soon as the halter fell away, the horse shrank, became a rabbit, and hopped away.

- The magician saw what had happened and transformed the two boys into dogs. They chased the rabbit, and the magician chased all three until they reached a wide lake.

- The rabbit hopped into the water and transformed into a fish. The boy thought he'd gotten away. The magician turned the dogs back into boys—they went running off—and declared he'd trapped the first boy in the lake. The magician bought the lake and had it fished clean, save for one carp, which was the boy.

- As they were trying to catch that carp, the carp leapt out of the water, became a lark, and went flying off. The magician flung his cloak around him, became an eagle, and went hunting for the lark. The lark fled until he saw another castle; to escape the eagle, he became a tiny grain of wheat and fell down the bottom of the castle's chimney into a fireplace.

- He rolled under the bed of a sleeping, snoring princess. He asked her for help, but she became panicked and called for her parents because there was a voice in her room. All the parents found was a tiny grain of wheat, so they told her it was a dream and

left. This process repeated until the third time, when the wheat rolled out from under the bed and became the boy.

- He woke her, and at first the princess was startled, but the boy asked for help and told her his story. She agreed to help. By day, she'd wear the boy as a ring, and by night, he'd turn back into a boy, when they could dance and play.

- Weeks and weeks passed. By day, she wore him as a ring around her finger, and by night, he transformed back into a boy. They laughed, danced, and played.

- The magician eventually figured out what was going on. He cast a spell to make the king ill, and then went to the castle and told the king he was a doctor. He cured the king, and then asked for the ring around the princess's finger as payment.

- The boy found out. That night, he told the princess, "They will ask you for the ring tomorrow. You must give it to them. But as you are handing the ring over, let the ring fall from your hand, and you will see what happens—it will save us."

- She did so the next morning. As she began to hand the ring over, she let it fall, and the ring burst into a thousand grains of wheat that scattered and rolled across the floor. At that moment, the magician became a chicken and began to peck at the grains of wheat. Meanwhile, the grain rolled together into a fox, which ate the chicken. That was the end of the magician.

- The boy transformed back from a fox into a boy—and by this time, he had grown up, and transformed from a boy into a man. He asked the king for permission to marry his daughter; the king

said yes. Then he asked the princess if she'd marry him; she also said yes. And they lived happily ever after.

The Takeaway

- Stories about transformations give us an imaginative and entertaining way to see change as a moment full of new possibility. Transformations happen—and, like the boy in the story, we find that through the course of our life's adventures, we grow into the people we were meant to be.

- This story is an example of a "rise" story in folklore: The main character rises in power from a poor boy to become a prince. In the next set of stories in this course's transformation series, you'll learn how Cinderella rises in power.

Suggested Reading

Grimm and Grimm, *Ausgewahlte Marchen*.

———. *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*.

Yolen, *Favorite Folktales From Around the World*.

Questions for Discussion

1. If you could turn into any creature or object, what would it be? How long would you like to be that other creature?
2. How have you transformed over the past year? Over the past several years?

Lecture 5

"Cinderella" I: If the Shoe Fits

Cinderella stories are often rags-to-riches stories. In folklore, they're known as "rise" stories, where a character rises beyond their initial standing: the peasant girl who becomes queen; the peasant boy who becomes king. In this lecture, we'll look at two different versions of Cinderella—one from France and one from Italy. Each of them has to do with the shoe fitting just right. We'll begin with a summary of the most classic version of all: the French writer Charles Perrault's 1690s French rendition of "Cinderella." After that comes an Italian version, "The Cat Cinderella."

Summary of Perrault's "Cinderella"

- Once upon a time, there was a man who chose for his second wife one of the haughtiest, meanest women in the world. The woman had two daughters who were just as wretched as their mother.

- But the man had a daughter of his own, and his daughter was as kind and good as her dead mother had been. The stepmother and stepsisters treated the girl horribly: They took the nicest rooms in the house, while the girl was forced to sleep on a straw mattress at the top room of the house in a garret.

- When her work was done, she would sit exhausted among the ashes and cinders of the fireplace. Her stepsisters called her "Cindertail" and "Cinderella."

- One day, the king's son sent out an invitation to a ball. The stepsisters taunted Cinderella, because they would be going and she wouldn't. When they left the night of the ball, she began to cry.

- At that moment, Cinderella's godmother showed up and told her she could go to the ball if Cinderella fetched her a pumpkin. Cinderella did, and the godmother turned it into a gilded coach.

- Next, the godmother turned mice into horses to draw the coach, and a rat into a coachman to steer it. Six lizards became footmen who hung onto the back of the coach. Finally, the godmother transformed Cinderella's rags into beautiful clothes. The godmother warned her to be home before the stroke of midnight.

- At the ball, when the prince saw Cinderella, he gave her his hand and led her into the ballroom. The prince danced all night with her. As the clock struck a quarter to midnight, she excused herself and raced back home. Her sisters came home and exclaimed how there had been a beautiful princess at the ball.

- The next day, there was another ball, and the process repeated. But this time, Cinderella forgot to go home before midnight. As midnight struck, she ran away to go home and lost one of her glass slippers. The prince sent out a proclamation the next day: Whoever's foot fit the shoe, he would marry.

- The prince came to the stepsisters' house, and each sister tried on the shoe, but of course it did not fit. And at last, it was Cinderella's turn. Her stepsisters laughed at her—until her foot fit perfectly in the glass slipper, and she produced the matching slipper and put it on the other foot.

- At that very moment, the godmother arrived—and at the tap of her wand, Cinderella's clothes transformed into a gown more beautiful than the other two she'd worn to the balls.

- The stepsisters threw themselves at Cinderella's feet and begged her to forgive them for the way they had treated her. She did forgive them. And the day that she was married to her prince, Cinderella saw to it that each of her stepsisters married two great noblemen of the court.

The Takeaway

- This was the version most people consider the classic version of "Cinderella." But details of the story differ from culture to culture. For example, the glass slipper was an invention of Perrault's and likely reflected upper-class French societal values.

- The further back in time we go from this classic version, the messier Cinderella's shoes get. The next version is from Italy in the 1620s, in Giambatista Basile *The Tale of Tales*, a collection of stories.

Summary of Basile's "The Cat Cinderella"

- Once upon a time there was a prince and a princess, and they had a baby named Zezolla. Zezolla's mother loved Zezolla, but as soon as Zezolla was old enough to remember the sight of her mother's beautiful face, her mother died.

- Though they were both sad, the prince got her anything he could. He bought her dresses and brought in a tutor who was a seamstress. The seamstress's name was Carmosina, and she taught Zezolla how to sew.

- But Zezolla had a problem: Her father married another woman, a "fiery, witch of a woman." This woman would give Zezolla nasty looks. Carmosina began to stitch a wicked plan to get rid of the woman and become Zezolla's mama.

- Carmosina's plan worked. After a time, Carmosina married Zezolla's father. At the wedding, a bird perched beside Zezolla said that if she needed any help, "you have only to ask for the dove of the Queen of the Fairies of Sardinia, and she will bring you help." And it flew off.

- For six days, all was well: Carmosina gave Zezolla kisses. But on the seventh day, as the family was sitting down to eat their supper, they heard a knock at the door. Carmosina opened the door, and in walked Carmosina's six other daughters: Imperia, Calamita, Shiorella, Diamante, Columbina, and Pascarella.

- As the sixth youngest daughter, Pascarella, came in, she pushed Zezolla out of her own chair, sat down in Zezolla's seat, and began eating out of Zezolla's own plate. Zezolla was cast down into the

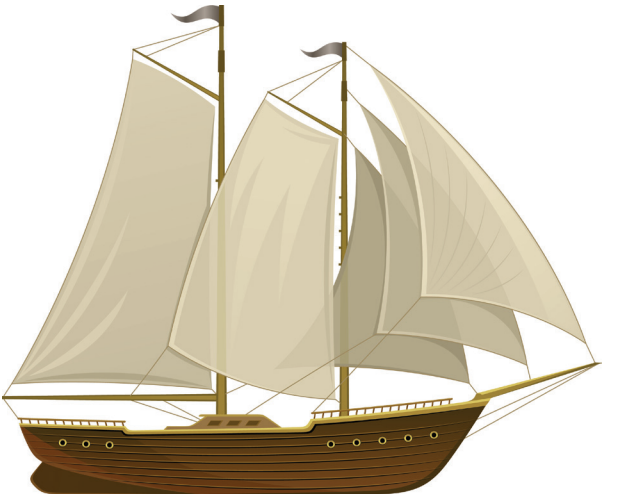
kitchens. She became known no longer as Zezolla, but as the Cat. She ate scraps.

- This went on for some time until one day, the prince found that he had business to do on the island of Sardinia. He asked his six stepdaughters what they would want for him to get for them while he was away; they asked for ribbons, rouge, and dresses. Finally, as an afterthought, he turned to his own daughter, the Cat, and asked her, "What do you want?"

- And she said, "Oh, only that you would send a message by the dove to the Queen of the Fairies of Sardinia, that whatever she wants to give me, I will take, but beware, do not forget. If you forget to ask, you will not be able to move forward or backward."

- The prince went off and found the rouge, dresses, and ribbons, but found he could not move forward or backward when he got on the ship to sail back home. The captain fell asleep, exhausted, and dreamed of the fairy queen of the isle of Sardinia. When he told the prince, the prince remembered his duty to his daughter.

- The prince went out into a grotto, and there he found the fairy queen. She was beautiful, and she was fierce. She gave him a



small date tree, a pail made of gold, a little hoe made of gold, and a silken cloth. When he came home, he gave all the other gifts to his other daughters, but threw the date tree over to Zezolla.

- Zezolla took that date tree. She watered it with the golden pail, and she weeded it with the little golden hoe, and every morning she cleaned the dew off of the leaves with the silken cloth. After four days, the date tree had grown to the size of a woman. And on the fourth day, a woman stepped out of the tree.

- It was as if Zezolla recognized the woman's smile, as someone who had loved her, long, long ago. Zezolla told the spirit she wanted to come and go out of the house without her sisters knowing.

- The spirit told her to leave, she could simply say:

  Little date tree, little date tree
  I have watered you with my golden pail
  I have weeded you with my golden hoe
  I have dried you with my silken cloth
  Now strip yourself and dress me.

- The date tree would provide a disguise, and she could leave. When she came back, all she had to say was:

  Little date tree, little date tree,
  I have watered you with my golden pail
  I have weeded you with my golden hoe
  I have dried you with my silken cloth
  Now strip me and dress yourself.

- Then, the date tree would take back its gifts and return the girl to how she was. The woman went back into the tree. The next day, there was an invitation from a king to come visit a neighboring kingdom.

- Zezolla said the magic words to the tree. At once, out of the tree came a beautiful dress and a horse. Zezolla got dressed, rode off,

and danced with the king. At the end of the evening, she snuck off. The king sent a page after her, but Zezolla threw coins behind her to distract him. She made it home and transformed back at the date tree.

- This cycle happened again the next week at another ball. And then, it happened a third time at a third ball. At the end of this night, as she ran away, she lost one of her cork overshoes—a chinello—which went over her nice ballgown shoes.

- The page brought the overshoe back to the king. The king went searching for the woman whose foot would fit that cork shoe. He came to Zezolla's house. As soon as that shoe got near Zezolla's foot, it flung itself to her foot and clung to her as iron does to a magnet.

- They were married, and Zezolla became queen. The six other sisters, and Carmosina, had to bow to her. The queen and her king lived happily to the end of their days.

The Takeaway

- In other versions of Cinderella, the shoe is made of glass or fur (as in the Russian story). Sometimes the shoe is not a shoe at all, but a ring or some other object that the girl must fit into.

- The point for the tale type is that there is some kind of proof of the girl's identity—a match or perfect fit—in which the girl wins the prize in the end. The girl gets her prince or king.

- That Zezolla's magical helper is a fairy spirit in a tree is significant to the time in which this story was recorded. The Romantic era was full of images of nature and the natural world, and of ghosts and phantoms. It's no coincidence that we find preserved in the printed version of this story, and in others, images of nature and woodsprites coming to the aid of the heroine.

- It's also from this romantic sensibility of an uncanny connection between nature and humans that we get the idea of Cinderella talking with mice and birds and rabbits.

Suggested Reading

Basile, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*.

Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die: The Hidden Meaning of Fairy Tales*.

Perrault, *The Complete Fairy Tales*.

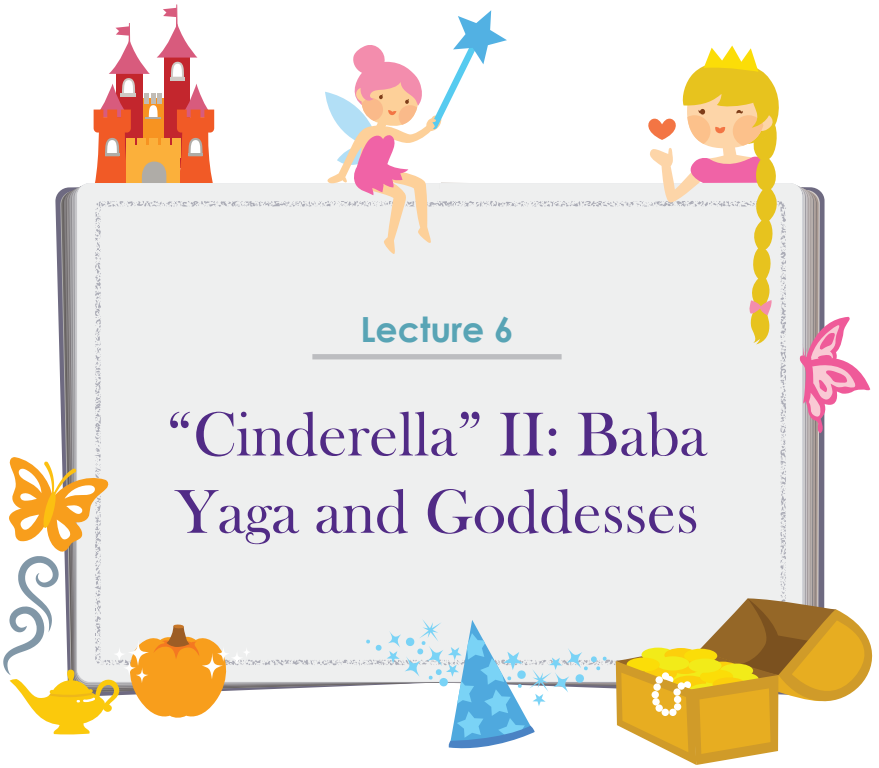
Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Warner, *Once Upon a Time*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever had someone take over your home or your things the way that Zezolla's stepsisters did? Perhaps you've had rude houseguests, or a friend who decided to play with your toys and not share them back with you. What were your strategies for dealing with these rude people? Did you have "magical helpers" who helped you?
2. Have you ever helped someone (like Zezolla's helping Carmosina), only to have them turn on you? Betrayal is one of the worst feelings, layering shame and regret in with sadness and loss. How did you seek restitution for your betrayal?



Lecture 6

"Cinderella" II: Baba Yaga and Goddesses

In this lecture, we're going to walk backwards in time, going back thousands of years with Cinderella. In Russian folklore, there is a story that's closely related to both "Cinderella" and "Hansel and Gretel." This story centers on Baba Yaga, a character who is neither all good nor all evil, but wickedly powerful.

Summary of "Baba Yaga"

- In this story, there was an old man. He had a daughter. He loved his daughter—but as much as he loved his daughter, he was very sad, because the man's wife had died many years previous and he was very lonely.

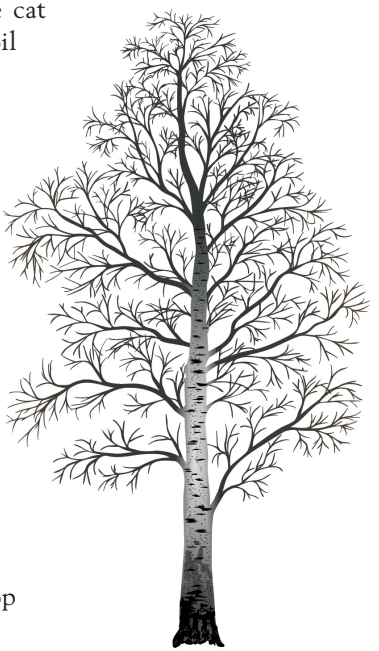
- Eventually, the time came when he fell in love with another woman. They were married, but the woman did not like his

daughter. She was nice to the daughter when the man was around, but when he was gone, she'd beat and talk down to her.

- One day, the man had to leave for several days on business. As soon as he'd left, the wife sent the girl to the girl's aunt's house—the house of the woman's sister—under the pretense that the girl needed a shirt.

- In those parts, people knew that this woman's sister was the Baba Yaga, the boney-legged woman who liked to devour children. So the girl pretended to walk toward the Baba Yaga's house, but as soon as her stepmother looked away, she turned and went in the opposite direction, toward her real aunt's house.

- There, the girl exclaimed, "Oh, Auntie—Auntie, my mother, she wants to send me to the Baba Yaga's house, she wants me to be eaten!" But her aunt taught her how to be safe: At the Baba Yaga's house, there would be an aggressive cat, mean dogs, a gate that bars the way, and a birch tree that would try to lash her with its branches. If the girl gave the cat ham, gave the dogs bread, gave the gate oil for its hinges, and tied a ribbon around the birch tree, she would be OK.



- With that, the girl left, and went to the hut of Baba Yaga, a bony creature. The girl said she was there to get supplies to make a shirt, and Baba Yaga invited her in. She began weaving; then Baba Yaga called her maid over. She instructed the maid to build a fire, heat water, and clean the girl—to soften her up so Baba Yaga could eat her. Then, Baba Yaga left.

- The girl watched as that maid started throwing more logs onto the fire. Eventually, she asked the maid to stop

heating water. She took off her own kerchief, and she gave it to the maid.

- The maid had never gotten anything in her life before: The Baba Yaga had never given her anything. She treated it like it was gold, put it on, and preened in the mirror.

- As the maid was distracted, the girl started looking for a way out of that hut. And right about that time, off in the corner of that hut, she heard something: the cat, which could talk. The cat came at her claws out, but the girl gave the cat ham, and the cat offered to help her. The cat gave her a comb, a piece of white cloth, and instructions on how to escape through a hole in the hut. Then, the cat said she'd take over the girl's weaving.

- The girl ran until she encountered the dogs. She placated them with the bread, and they told her to keep running as they ate it. Next, she came to the gate; she oiled its hinges, and it swung open for her.

- She ran until she came to the birch tree, which started to lash at her eyes with its limbs. She tied its ribbon around the trunk, and the tree's branches sprung into the air. The tree said, "Look how beautiful I am! Look at my waist! Go that way, dear." It pointed its branches in the direction of the way out of the forest, and so the girl went on running.

- Back in the hut, Baba Yaga came back to the door and realized the girl had escaped. She asked the cat why the cat didn't stop her. The cat said Baba Yaga had never given her anything, but the girl had given her a piece of ham.

- When Baba Yaga asked the maid why she hadn't stopped the girl, the maid said, "You've never so much as given me an old shirt. Oh, she gave me a lovely kerchief—don't I look pretty?"

- Baba Yaga had an enormous mortar and pestle she could use to grind her way through the forest. She hopped in and started chasing after the girl, sweeping her tracks away behind her with a broom. Eventually, she came to the dogs, and asked "Dogs! Why did you not stop her?" Their answer: Baba Yaga had never given them anything, but the girl gave them fresh bread.

- The same went for the gate and the tree, which got oil and a ribbon from the girl after nothing from Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga kept grinding along, and when the girl heard her coming, she dropped the piece of white cloth, which became a wide river when it hit the ground.

- Baba Yaga's mortar was too heavy to cross, so she went back and got her oxen, who drank the river dry so she could cross. She closed back in on the girl.

- And as she got close, the girl picked up the comb, and she threw it behind her. The comb's prongs stuck in the ground, and the comb sprung up and became a terrifying forest Baba Yaga couldn't see through. She began trying to bite her way through the forest.

- About this time, the girl's father came home to his house and wondered where his daughter was. His wife said she didn't know, but shortly thereafter, the girl came in. No one was more surprised to see her than the stepmother, who'd sent her out to be eaten. The girl recounted the story to her father.

- At the end of the story, the girl said, "I think the Baba Yaga is still trying to eat her way through that forest now." She looked at the stepmother, and so did the father. It was as if he were seeing her hair, and her face, as they really were, for the very first time.

- The father and daughter killed her. While that may not have been the last the girl saw of the Baba Yaga, that was the last the father or the little girl ever saw of the evil stepmother.

The Takeway

- This is one of a number of tales about Baba Yaga in Russian folklore. She's not always a witchy cannibal. Sometimes she's benevolent in the stories; sometimes she saves the little girl from being mistreated back in her own home.

- In fact, the real villain in this story isn't Baba Yaga; after all, everyone knows what she does: She eats people. The real villain is the stepmother, who sends her out to be eaten.

- For more context on Baba Yaga, check out the second story in the audio/video lecture, which is the Russian version of "Cinderella." That's the tale "Vasilisa the Beautiful," and it follows most of the traditional storyline, but with several twists.

Suggested Reading

Atanasev, ed., *Russian Fairy Tales*.

Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*.

———, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you have a friend or relative (either living or in the past) who is powerful (like the Baba Yaga)? What kind of power does this person have? Has this person ever shared any of their power with you?
2. The Baba Yaga enacts justice and vengeance on the stepsisters and stepmother in the story of "Vasilisa the Beautiful". Have you ever had someone else make things right for you? Or perhaps you yourself have helped make things right for someone you love—what was that experience like?

Lecture 7

"Cinderella" III: The Mooing Godmother

This lecture steps further back in time, to what is perhaps one of the oldest versions of "Cinderella" known: "Mah Pishani," from Iran. In this version, the main point is about the connection between a child and parent, and how that parent can love, guide, and protect her child even when they are far apart. This story harkens back to the relationships in our other stories: between Cinderella and her godmother, or Zezolla and her date tree, or Vasilisa and her little doll. The helpers in these stories love the heroine unconditionally, with a selfless love that even reaches beyond the grave.

Summary of "Mah Pishani"

- Once upon a time in Iran, there was a man and a woman. They had a daughter that they loved more than anything. The father, as was the

custom in those days, took the daughter to the *akhund*, or teacher. Unfortunately, this *akhund* was an evil widow out for money.

- Upon learning the girl's father was rich, the *akhund* went to work turning her against her mother. She cast a spell and asked, "Your mother is mean, and I am nice; I am the nice one, yes?" She said this often enough until the girl believed it. Eventually, she convinced the girl she'd be a better mother, and convinced her to push her real mother into a vat of vinegar. (The family made vats of it.)

- The next morning, the father was shocked when he found the mother in the vinegar. She was dead. The father also found a new cow in the stable. He didn't know what to make of this, but eventually he married the *akhund*. The *akhund* had promised to let the girl stay up late and eat candy, but the *akhund* turned out to be mean.

- The *akhund* had a child with the father, and made the original girl take care of the cow. She also gave her a piece of bread and a wad of cotton, and instructed her to spin the cotton into thread.

- The girl took the cow out to a field to graze. The cow turned to the girl and saw that the girl was crying. Her cotton was falling apart, as she had no tools to spin it with. Eventually, the cow asked: "Why are you crying?" Though shocked at the talking cow, the girl explained her problem: The *akhund* wouldn't let her come home if she couldn't spin the cotton into thread.

- The cow asked for the bread and cotton, and ate them both. Out of the cow's bottom came beautiful thread, which the girl gathered and took home to the *akhund*. The *akhund* was shocked. The cycle repeated the next day, ending with the girl coming back with the cow and more thread.

- On the third day, she had the same task, but as she was feeding the bread and cotton to the cow, a gust of wind blew a piece of the cotton into the bottom of a well.

- The girl knew that the *akhund* was going to be expecting all of that cotton to be spun into thread. But the well was so far down that she couldn't even see the bottom. She stuck her foor on the ladder, but before she went, the cow spoke up. The cow told her that at the bottom, she'd find an old, wise woman—a Barzingi. The cow then told her to be kind to the Barzingi and to say "Salaam," and to tell the old woman there were no bugs in her hair when she asked.

- In the well, the girl met the wild-haired Barzingi and did as she was told, greeting with "Salaam" and telling her she had beautiful hair with no bugs. The Barzingi was happy to hear this, so told

the girl to go to the next room, where she'd find everything she wanted. There were treasures and jewels, but none of it belonged to the girl, so she simply retrieved her cotton. She also swept the room, which was dusty, and then left.

- And as she climbed up the ladder, the Barzingi shook it to see if the girl had concealed any jewels in her clothes. When none came shaking out, the Barzingi said, "Ah—you are a truthful girl. I will bless you." The blessing made a beautiful crescent moon appear on the girl's brow. She was then called Mah Pishani for "Moon Brow."

- The process repeated: The girl tried to leave again, and the Barzingi gave the ladder another shake. When still nothing shook out, the Barzingi blessed her again, this time making a star appear on her chin.

- As she finally climbed out, the cow saw that the girl had been so blessed. She said, "You must hide this from your stepmother." The girl put a veil across her forehead and a second across her chin. She walked home with the cow.

- The *akhund* noticed that the girl looked different, and that no ordinary person would be able to bring back such beautiful thread with nothing but a cow and no tools. That night, she crept into the sleeping girl's room, saw the moon and star, and was furious.

- The next morning, she sent her own daughter out with cotton, bread, and the cow, and told her to see what happens. They set out. The cow gave no help to the *akhund*'s daughter, just saying, "Moo." Eventually, wind blew the cotton down the same well, but this girl was greedy.

- The Barzingi told her where the cotton was, but when she asked the girl how her hair looked, the girl insulted it and told her she had bugs in her hair. Next, the girl went into the small room. The Barzingi said, "You clean up that room when you are in it—and take only what belongs to you."

- The girl took the cotton and many jewels but didn't clean. She tried to leave, but when the Barzingi shook the ladder, jewels came tumbling down. Furious, the Barzingi cursed her; a donkey's ear grew out of the girl's forehead. The girl tried to get away again, but another shake of the ladder revealed even more jewels. This time, the Barzingi cursed her with a snake growing from her chin.

- The cow was still no help, and only mooed at the girl. When she got home, the *akhund* was furious at the girl's appearance and tried to cut off the ear and snake, but both simply grew back. The *akhund* was angry.

- Next, the *akhund* pretended to be sick, and said the only cure would be to eat the cow. Mah Pishani went and warned the cow. The cow told her "If they do kill me, do not eat any of the meat, save the bones, hide them in a bag and bury them, and see what happens. I will always be with you."

- Mah Pishani begged and pleaded with her father, but they killed the cow and fed the meat to the stepmother, who "magically" got better. But the daughter saved the bones and buried them.

- That very afternoon, they received an invitation to a special wedding. The *akhund* took the snake-chinned, donkey-eared daughter and cut off the snake and the ear, then poured salt on the wounds to try to heal them. She planned to take this child to the wedding. Then, the *akhund* gave Mah Pishani two tasks: separate grains of millet mixed with grains of togo, and fill a large, empty basin with her salty tears. And with that, they left to go to the wedding.

- Mah Pishani began to cry, but her salty tears were nowhere near enough to fill the basin. But a chicken approached her and asked what was wrong. After Mah Pishani told her, the chicken then gave this advice: Fill the basin with water, then with salt, which would fool the *akhund*. The chicken also offered to have its chicks separate the millet from the togo.

- The girl did as she was told. Next, the chicken told the girl to go to the stable. There, the girl saw a horse, a dress, and some golden slippers. She got on the horse and rode off—but as she rode off, she remembered what the chicken had told her: "You'll lose one of your shoes in a pool; leave it behind."

- At the wedding, the girl impressed everyone with her beauty and danced with the prince. When she left, the *akhund* and the stepsister were suspicious, and they went riding after her. As she rode away, one of her golden shoes slipped off into a pool.

- When she got home, she hopped off the horse, which changed into the chicken that had helped her in the first place. She didn't take the time to be shocked; instead, she changed and went to bed. The *akhund* and stepsister came home to find the pool full of "salty tears" and all the millet grains separated from the togo grains.

- Years later, the prince found the golden slipper, and announced he must know whose foot would fit it. He visited everyone's house, including the *akhund*'s, but her daughter's foot wouldn't fit.

- The prince was about to leave without seeing Mah Pishani, because the *akhund* and the stepdaughter had trapped Mah Pishani away in the oven. But a little crow came along, cawed, and told him to look in the oven.

- The prince did. Mah Pishani came out. The slipper fit her, and she married the prince.

- And it was only then, after she'd married the prince, that she took off her veils, and it was only

then that the prince saw the beautiful moon on her forehead, and the beautiful star on her chin. The face of Mah Pishani, Moon Brow.

The Takeaway

- Folklorists translate this story as the mother—the girl's real mother—coming back to help her, again and again. Mah Pishani's gifts of the beautiful moon and star on her face—the star and crescent—are symbolic icons that go back to ancient cultures.

- Folklorists say long ago the story of a girl being blessed by the moon and star was part of a rite performed by women. A meal was brought to a mosque, and two women sat side by side there—a widow, who held a bowl of ash, and a young girl, who sat with an empty bowl.

- As the widow recites the story of Mah Pishani, she spoons the ash "soup" into the girl's empty bowl. With every spoonful of ash the girl receives, she says, "Yes," as a way of affirming and accepting the message of the story, which is to be obedient, honest, and good.

- This version of "Cinderella," and the cultural ritual that surrounds it, is about finding solidarity and connection with family and community—in particular among women in a family and community—and about love that stretches beyond the grave.

Suggested Reading

Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm*.

———, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. In "Mah Pishani," the cow is symbolic of the spirit of the girl's dead mother, returning to help her. As such, she offers much more than material assistance or good advice. Her presence is an absolution for the daughter—she's forgiven for her mistakes (for killing the mother). Though it's never directly stated in the story, the returning spirit gives the girl literally everything she needs to mature and succeed in life, including mental well-being. Are there past deeds you still wrestle with, and do you seek absolution from someone?
2. Has a magical helper ever swooped in out of nowhere to help you?

Lecture 8

"The Brave Little Tailor": Giants!

In folklore, giants sometimes seem impassable. They're usually scary. They're also usually not very smart—which means they have a weakness. You can get past them if you keep your head. In this next story, see if you can count how many foes the hero faces and overcomes: It's quite a lot. The giant is only the beginning, and some of the foes might just surprise you. This is the story of "The Brave Little Tailor."

Summary of "The Brave Little Tailor"

- There once was a little tailor. He worked at his table by a window overlooking a narrow little street in the village of Romandia, in Germany. One morning, his assistant was having trouble staying awake and couldn't finish a pair of trousers. The tailor bought

some jam from a woman, but put off eating because he knew he'd have to finish his assistant's work.

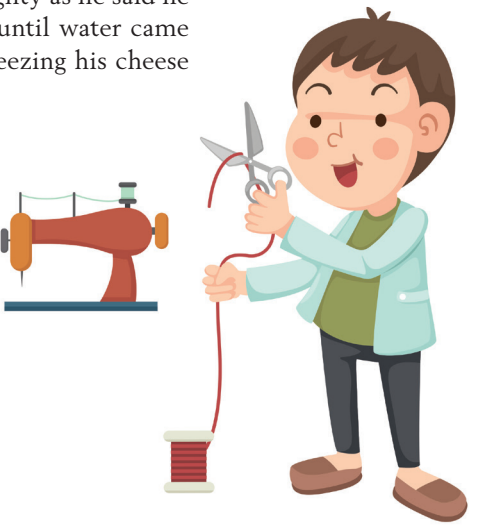
- However, a swarm of flies buzzed into his workroom. He eventually swatted them all in one go with a piece of cloth. They died and fell into the jam. When he counted, there were seven. He was so proud of himself he sewed a belt for himself with golden thread that said "Seven with one blow!"

- He assessed his shop, his snoring apprentice, and the flies, and decided it was time for him to go out in the world. He took a small piece of cheese and was off down the road. First, he came across a bird, which he put in his pocket.

- He kept following his nose, until the road arced up along a mountainside. At the very peak was a huge giant. The giant called him a "miserable creature," but the tailor opened his coat to show the giant his belt, and said, "You can read for yourself what kind of man stands before you."

- The giant read "Seven with one blow!" and thought the tailor had killed seven men, not seven flies. He decided he would test the man to see if he really was as mighty as he said he was. The giant squeezed a rock until water came out; the tailor responded by squeezing his cheese until liquid came out.

- The giant was confused, so he picked up another stone and threw it so far it was just a speck and barely made a sound as it landed. The giant challenged him to beat that, so the tailor pulled out his bird and threw it up in the air. When it never landed, the giant was astounded.



- The giant decided to follow the tailor. The tailor played another trick: When the giant asked him to help carry a cherry tree, the tailor only pretended to help, so the giant became exhausted and impressed at the tailor's stamina.

- The giant took the tailor to the home of the giants, putting him in a giant-sized bed. The tailor found it uncomfortable, so he got out and slept in a corner, only to awake to the giant walloping his would-be bed with a club.

- The tailor escaped and waited in the forest until daybreak. The giants saw him, assumed he had survived a vicious beating, and were astounded. They ran away and never returned to that part of the forest.

The Castle

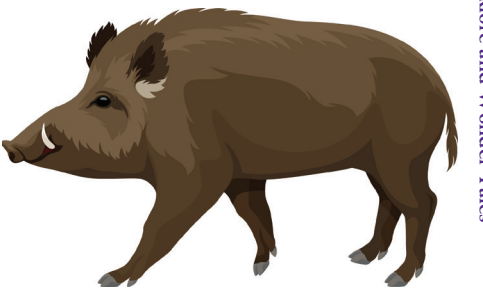
- The tailor left the woods and came to a castle; he took a nap in its courtyard. The servants and townspeople read his belt and decided he must be very strong. They told the king, who in turn woke the tailor and asked him to join the king's army. He agreed.

- The rest of the king's knights soon despised him: If he could kill seven with one blow, he could kill all the knights if they disagreed. They asked the king to get rid of him, but instead, the king sent the tailor to dispatch two giants who had been causing trouble. In return, the tailor would receive the king's daughter as his wife and half the kingdom as a dowry.

- Off went the little tailor, with 100 of the king's men to help. But when they reached the edge of the woods, the tailor told the king's men to wait. The tailor found the sleeping giants and tricked them into fighting each other by throwing rocks: The giants each thought the other was attacking him. They eventually beat each other to death with trees.

- On the tailor's return, the king was annoyed. He had no intention of giving up his daughter or half his kingdom, so he sent the tailor on another task, this time to capture a troublesome unicorn. This time, the tailor again told the 100 helpers to wait at the edge of the forest. He found the beast, tricked the unicorn into ramming a tree so that its horn became stuck, then roped the unicorn and led it to the king.

- The king's next task: Deal with a wild boar. The tailor went off and told the 100 huntsmen to wait at the edge of the forest. He found the boar, then lured it into a chapel, where he trapped the boar. Now, the king was left with no choice: He gave the princess and half his kingdom to the tailor, whom he thought was a powerful knight.



- The princess wasn't happy with this arrangement. One night after the wedding, she had an idea. She went to the king and told him she'd heard that the supposed knight was just a tailor, and the king could kill him whenever he wanted.

- The king hatched a plan: The next night, the princess would open the door to their room, and several of the king's servants would dispatch the tailor. But a weapons-bearer overheard this plan and warned the tailor.

- The night came. The tailor pretended to be asleep. The princess got up, opened the door, and crept back into bed. The tailor began to snore. The servants outside were ready to strike. And then out of a loud snore, he said, so loudly that it could be heard all the way down the hall:

Young man, wake up! Wake up and finish sewing that jacket and those trousers! I've slain seven with one stroke, outsmarted one giant, killed two more giants, captured a unicorn, and trapped a wild boar. Do you think I'm afraid of those fellows waiting outside my door?

- When the men heard the tailor's words, they fled, and nobody wanted to do anything to the tailor after this. Thus the tailor remained a king for the rest of his life.

Background on the Story

- This version of "The Brave Little Tailor" is adapted from the 1857 version by the Brothers Grimm—and they borrowed the story from a much older source from 1557 called *Der Wegkutzer* by Martinus Montanus.

- It's no surprise that tales like that of the little tailor came out of 16th-century Germany. This was the age of the Renaissance, when literature turned away from superstition and divine intervention to solve problems. Instead, problem solvers turned toward reason and the power of humans. The tailor outsmarts and outwits all his opponents: flies, giants, a king, unicorns, a boar, and even his murderous wife.

The Takeaway

- In the beginning of this story, we worry when the tailor goes up against his first giant. But the tailor believes in himself—after all, he killed seven flies with one blow. Often, small victories give us the courage we need to face bigger challenges.

- Was there a similar turning-point moment in your life—a time when you faced a challenge and defeated it? How has that story of your greatness traveled with you?

- Instead of wearing a sash commemorating like the tailor, you can carry that memory of your great accomplishment around inside. It can empower you, making you ready to face giants.

- The tailor teaches us some important lessons: When a giant blocks the way, outsmart him. When giants battle, stay out of it. When a Unicorn charges, dodge. When a wild boar chases you, trap him.

- But perhaps his most important lesson comes at the end of the story, when the servant warns him that the king and his own wife are plotting to kill him: When you get a warning, do something. Two examples: Don't put off homework and don't brush off chest pain as indigestion.

Suggested Reading

Bernheimer, ed., *Brothers & Beasts*.

Grimm and Grimm, *Ausgewahlte*.

Lacy and Wilhelm, eds., *The Romance of Arthur*.

Rushner, *Jack the Giant Killer*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Sometimes we have others rooting for us, and other times we have to make our own sash of encouragement. Has there ever been a time for you when you had to believe in yourself in order to accomplish a deed?
2. Giants take many forms in life—sometimes they seem big and stupid; other times they seem accomplished and have positions of power, like the king in the story. What is an example of a time in your life when you faced a giant that was a big physical challenge for you? What is an example from your life of a time when you faced a giant that was more economically, politically, or socially powerful than you? What did that battle look like, and what was the outcome?

Lecture 9

"Jack and the Beanstalk": Archetypes

Life prompts us into all kinds of new adventures: a vacation to a new place, a switch to a new school or job, or even a move to a new city or town. A new adventure is the focus of this lecture's first story, about one of the most infamous characters in all of English and North American folklore: Jack. In this tale, Jack is propelled into an entirely new place. In the lecture's second tale, "Yggdrasil the World Tree," we'll visit another magical land.

Summary of "Jack and the Beanstalk"

- There was, once upon a time, a poor widow. She had only a son named Jack and a cow named Milky-White. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning, which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning, Milky-White gave no milk.

- They decided to sell Milky-White to get money to start a shop. Jack went off to the market, where he met a strange-looking old man who somehow knew Jack's name. The man traded five beans to Jack in exchange for Milky-White. He promised the beans would grow to the sky if planted overnight, and offered Milky-White back if this didn't come true.

- When Jack came home, his mother was angry at the seemingly bad trade. She scolded Jack, threw the beans outside, and sent Jack to bed with no dinner. When he woke up the next day, the beans had sprung up into a big beanstalk, which went up until it reached the sky. The man had told the truth.

- Jack climbed the beanstalk into the sky, where he found a long, broad road. He walked along until he found an extremely tall woman; he asked her for breakfast. The woman told him to move along, as her husband was an ogre. Jack, however, begged some more, and the ogre's wife let him in to her kitchen and fed him.

- Soon, though, the ogre came home, and announced:

  Fee-fi-fo-fum,
  I smell the blood of an Englishman,
  Be he alive, or be he dead,
  I'll have his bones to grind my bread.

- But Jack hid in the oven and the ogre's wife told the ogre he was mistaken. The ogre went off. Jack was just going to jump out of the oven and run away when the woman told him not to: "Wait till he's asleep—he always has a doze after breakfast."

- After the ogre ate, he sat down and began counting bags of gold until he fell asleep. Jack crept out of his oven, took one of the bags of gold, and tossed it down to his mother's garden. He climbed down after it.

- Jack and his mother lived on the bag of gold for some time, but at last they came to the end of it, and Jack made up his mind to try

his luck once more at the top of the beanstalk. The cycle repeated, with Jack dining and hiding at the ogre's house, then escaping. This time, Jack made off with a hen that laid golden eggs.

- When, he got home he showed his mother the wonderful hen. It laid a golden egg every time Jack said "Lay" to it. But Jack still was not content, so up the beanstalk he went again. By now, the giants were on to him, so Jack carefully snuck in and hid in a copper pot.

This time, he tried to steal a golden harp from the ogre, one that could sing on command.

- Jack lifted up the copper lid very quietly. He crept on hands and knees until he came to the table, when up he crawled, caught hold of the golden harp, and dashed with it toward the door. But the harp called out, "Master! Master!" and the ogre woke up just in time to see Jack running off with his harp.

- The ogre chased Jack down the beanstalk. When Jack got near the bottom, he called for his mother to bring him an axe. Jack took it and began chopping at the beanstalk.

- The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver, so he stopped to see what was wrong. Finally, Jack chopped the beanstalk in two, and it began to topple over. Then the ogre fell and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

- Then Jack showed his mother his golden harp. With that and selling the golden eggs, Jack and his mother became very rich. He married a great princess, and they lived happy ever after.

The Takeaway

- Adventures in folk and fairy tales often follow a pattern: The hero or heroine starts out in the place he or she has known and been used to all their lives—and suddenly,

something happens that separates them from the world they'd always known.

- They go to a new place, where most everything is foreign, and often is dangerous. The hero or heroine changes somehow. Then, with the wave of a wand or the fit of a shoe, they return to the ordinary world—but not as the same person as when they left. Jack leaves his familiar world poor, but eventually returns with unlimited wealth.

- You've probably been through a similar adventure in your own life, called a rite of passage. Think about going to a new school, or having a growth spurt, or starting a new job.

- Many scholars believe that the beanstalk in "Jack and the Beanstalk" is a reference to the Tree of Life, which is an archetypal image. An archetype is a symbol that is found in many places all over the world and has the same meaning from one culture to another. The next story is the Norse version of the Tree of Life.

Summary of "Yggdrasil the World Tree"

- In Norse mythology, this world of humanity is one of nine different worlds. There are the worlds of the giants, of the gods, of frost, and many others. Joining all of these worlds is a massive tree—the world tree, Yggdrasil, which is the Norse Tree of Life.

- Yggdrasil grew up out of the center of Midgarth, the world of men. Its trunk reaches up out of the earth that was formed from the flesh of a giant, Ymir.

- When the god Odin and his brothers fought with Ymir, they killed him, and Ymir's body bled out. This became the seas. Odin stretched Ymir's skin out across the expanse. This became the ground, and out of that ground grew Yggdrasil.

- Around the great tree Yggdrasil, the bones of Ymir became mountains. Ymir's teeth and jawbone were stones and rocks on the ground, and Ymir's skull became the dome of the sky. Odin set a little man at each end of that dome of the sky.

- Yggdrasil was thirsty and sent out three roots, which found three different worlds. The first root reached the holy well of Urdr. There, sitting together, were three women: Urdr, who spun the threads of the past together; Verdanthi, who took those threads and determined the present; and Skuld, a crone who cut the threads of life. These three were the fates; they wove the destinies of people.

- Yggdrasil drank that water from that well, but was still thirsty, and so sent out a second root. It found another well: Mimisbrunnr, or Mimir's well. This was the well of knowledge and of wisdom. The root drank from this and gained wisdom, but the tree was still thirsty.

- Yggdrasil sent down a last, third root. It searched until it felt a cold mist covering over a third world, Niflheim. The root spied the third well, called Hvergelmir. Its water was cold; this world of ice was also the world of the dead, and the oldest of all the worlds. As Yggdrasil drank from this well, Nidhoggr the dragon, along with serpents, began to gnaw at the root.

- As Yggdrasil felt a sting in its root, it also began to writhe from above, because creatures from the world of man took up residence in the leaves and branches and limbs of Yggdrasil.

- A stag and three of his brothers walked among the branches, and they began to tear at Yggdrasil's tender leaves and strip its bark. The three fates—the women from the first well—came with water and white clay mud, and with that, they were able to heal Yggdrasil for a day. But at night, the stags kept eating.

- A great eagle, perched at the very top of Yggdrasil, pitied the tree and it hated its pain. Ratatoskr the squirrel heard the eagle crying. It carried those words down the trunk until it reached the dragon Nidhoggr in the world of the dead.

- In between snapping at the roots, Nidhoggr snapped at the squirrel. The squirrel whispered to Nidhoggr what the eagle had said, and Nidhoggr snapped and he griped. Ratatoskr went back up to the eagle to tell him what the dragon said.

- All day long, Yggdrasil felt the squirrel running up and down. Yggdrasil heard the eagle's lament, and felt the dragon's bite and the stag's tearing. The tree felt the cool healing of the fates' gift as they, day after day, poured their mud over the aching branches.

- The mud was holy: Anything that touched the water turned as white as the film inside an eggshell. So, the world tree looked like it was flocked with tender snow—it glowed white. The tree grew tall and wide, and bound all the worlds together.

The Takeaway

- The presence of a magical tree image throughout folklore (from Yggdrasil to Jack's beanstalk to the Tree of Life in Judeo-Christian

mythology) has led many scholars to believe that such archetypes are universal and common to the human experience.

- Other scholars, including Joseph Campbell, believed that presence of these archetypes is part of what makes classic, traditional stories touch us so deeply—when we tap into these images, we are telling a story that already resides deep within us.

- When we think of trees, we think of the canopy of leaves and branches stretching out above us. But there are also the hidden, larger systems of roots plunging down beneath our very feet. When we multiply this image, the Tree of Life reminds us of a dark forest made up of lots of trees. This may contribute to the how we view the woods: mysterious, promising, and ominous all at once.

Suggested Reading

Bernheimer, ed., *Brothers & Beasts*.

Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die*.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is one rite of passage that you've gone through? How did the experience feel? Were parts of the experience a relief? What was awkward about the experience? How do you feel being on the other end of the rite of passage?
2. Classic oral folktales "talk" with one another across time and cultures by incorporating portions of other stories (such as Jack and Jill) or powerful archetypes (such as the Tree of Life image). The stories we tell in daily life also absorb older tales and images. Are there stories you tell that also include details from stories your own parents told you? Do you ever find yourself saying the same phrases that your parents used? These repetitions are part of how traditions work—and the oral tradition of classic folklore is full of references to earlier or other stories.

Lecture 10

"Hansel and Gretel": Ogres

The woods are an ambiguous place in folklore. They're full of great possibility; for example, in this lecture's stories, the children find all the food they want, and they also find treasure. But the woods are also full of danger: Sometimes, there's a witch or an ogre living in there. This section of stories is all about besting evil powers. These are stories of triumph, starting with the classic German version of "Hansel and Gretel," and then the Scottish tale "Molly Whuppie."

Summary of "Hansel and Gretel"

- At the edge of a forest, there once lived a woodcutter, his wife, and his two children. There was never much to eat in the house, for there was a famine in their land. One day, the stepmother told the father what had to be done: They must take the children,

Hansel and Gretel, out to the deepest part of the forest and leave them there.

- The children overheard this. Hansel gathered stones in his jacket that night, and the next day, he dropped them as the woodcutter and his wife led them out into the woods. The children fell asleep, but when they awoke, the shining pebbles led them back home.

- Not long after, severe famine struck again. The parents gave each child a slice of bread and led them into the woods. Hansel tried to repeat his trick—this time with bread crumbs instead of stones—but birds nibbled the crumbs away. They wandered deeper into the woods, becoming weak and exhausted.

- On the third day, they followed a beautiful bird until it came to a gingerbread house, with a roof made of cake and windows made of sugar. Hansel and Gretel began eating parts of the house.

- Suddenly, the door opened, and a woman as old as the hills, leaning on a crutch, hobbled out. She invited them and fed them, and the children fell asleep. But the old woman grabbed Hansel and closed him up in a shed, and then told Gretel to cook for Hansel to fatten him up. The old woman wanted to eat him.

- Whenever the old woman checked Hansel's "finger" to see if he was fat enough to eat yet, Hansel would trick her by sticking out a small bone instead of a finger. This went on for a time until the old woman got tired of waiting. She fired up her oven and told Gretel to get in to see if it was hot enough for bread yet.

- But Gretel saw what was on her mind, and said, "I don't know how to get in there. How do you do it?"

- The witch replied: "Oh, silly goose—it's easy, even I can get in there." When she stuck her head in the oven, Gretel pushed her in, shut the door, and bolted it. They stole treasures and jewels from the witch's house, then fled.

- They walked until they came to a wide lake. A white duck took them across the lake—ferrying them on its back—and when they were on the other side, the woods looked familiar. They found their cottage.

- Their father had been in despair since he left the children in the woods, and the stepmother had died. Gretel and Hansel emptied their pockets. and the treasure rolled over the floor, and they lived together in perfect happiness.

The Takeaway

- Folklorists believe that stories like Hansel and Gretel may have begun during the Great Famine in Europe, which occured about 700 years ago during the late medieval age. Famine prompts the children's adventure in the woods.

- The story contrains delicious and creepy images of food: the sticky sugar windows and plumping up the brother. The woods bring an excess of food and of danger.

- Next up is a Scottish version of "Hansel and Gretel" called "Molly Whuppie." In this tale, there's something else living in a house deep in the woods.

Summary of "Molly Whuppie"

- Once upon a time in Scotland, there was a family. The family had so many children they couldn't afford to feed all of them. They sent the three youngest children, all girls, out into the forest. The youngest, Molly Whuppie, was brave and clever.

- She led her sisters through the forst until they came to a giantess, whom they begged for food. The giantess warned them her husband, a fellow giant, would eat them if he came back and saw them. But the girls talked her into feeding them, and the giantess let them in for milk, bread, and cookies.

- As they were finishing their meal, the giantess's husband came home. He announced, "Fee, fie, fo, fum! I smell the blood of an earthly one!" The door opened, and in came the largest man that Molly Whuppie and her sisters had ever seen. But the giantess told her husband not to hurt them.

- The giant ate his bread and cookies and drank his milk. He turned to the three girls and said, "You'll stay the night." Then, he began getting ready for bed. The girls went to bed too; the giantess put them in the same bed with her three giantess daughters.

- As her sisters started to fall asleep, Molly Whuppie saw the giant put three golden chains around the necks of his daughters. He did the same with Molly Whuppie and her sisters, but with three chains made of straw. All fell asleep, their snores shaking the rafters, except Molly Whuppie. She decided to have some fun with the giant.

- She swapped her and her sisters' straw necklaces with the golden ones from the giant family's daughters. Then, the giant woke up,

and he got his club. He felt the gold necklaces and straw necklaces. Then, he mistakenly beat his own daughters with his club, since Molly Whuppie had switched the necklaces. The giant went back to bed after that, and Molly Whuppie knew this was no place to stay.

- She woke her sisters and they left. They walked for three days, until they came to the house of the king. The king was impressed with their story of escaping the giants. But the king gave Molly a new task: If she could retrieve the giant's sword that hung over his bed, Molly's oldest sister could marry the king's oldest son. That meant she'd be queen someday, so Molly agreed to try.

- Molly returned, snuck back into the giant's house at night, stole the sword, and fled. The giant woke up and gave chase, but Molly made a bridge across a ravine with a strand of her hair; the giant was too big to follow. The king was pleased, and so the marriage between his oldest son and Molly's oldest sister happened.

- The king then had a new task for Molly: Steal the giant's purse of gold coins from under his pillow, and Molly's second oldest sister could marry the king's second oldest son, making her a princess. Molly agreed.

- She stole the coins in the same way she stole the purse: Molly snuck in at night, grabbed the coins, and ran when the giant woke up. Again, she made a bridge across the ravine with a strand of hair, and the giant was too big to follow. The king kept his word about this marriage, too, but had one final task: Steal the ring from the giant's finger.

- Molly went back and grabbed the ring as the giant slept, but the giant woke up and caught her. The giant asked Molly what she would do in his position: Molly had made

him beat his daughters; she'd stolen his sword; she'd stolen his coins; and she was trying to steal his ring.

- Molly convinced him to put her, a dog, and a cat in a bag, then beat them with a stick from the woods. The giant agreed and put Molly, a dog, and a cat in a bag, then hung them on the wall while he went off to find a stick.

- Molly heard the giantess bustling around in the kitchen, and called to her, "Oh, if you could only see what's inside this sack, it's a sight to behold!" The giantess agreed; she wanted to see what was in the sack. Molly had a pair of scissors and used it to cut a hole in the sack. The giantess hopped in and Molly sewed the hole back.

- Molly hid behind the door; the giantess woman kept saying, "Oh, well, I don't see a thing in here! I can feel a dog, and I can feel a cat, and they feel none too happy to be together." Right about then, the giant returned, carrying an enormous tree branch. He commenced to beating the sack with the branch.

- Molly took off running, but the giant caught a glimpse of her. He gave chase, but again, at the ravine, Molly made a bridge with one of her hairs that the giant couldn't cross. "Woe to you, Molly Whuppie!" he said.

- She ran back to the king and gave him the ring. The king said, "Molly, you've done well. Here is my youngest son." Molly became a princess herself. And Molly, for the rest of her life, always did enjoy giant cookies, but she was never again bothered by the giant.

The Takeaway

- This version of "Molly Whuppie" has details from two different versions from two different regions of Scotland. The most significant difference is that in one version, Molly and her two sisters are cast out by the parents. In the other, Molly takes her sisters out to seek

their fortune. Molly is a strong female protagonist, with or without her instigating her own means of escape.

- Molly is a brave, smart, and clever girl. With that in mind, some questions to ask yourself are: Have you ever had to use your wits to get out of a tough situation? When was the last time you were brave? Smart? Clever?

- In both of these stories, children left to their own devices do very well on their own by mastering their fears and using their wits. These stories resonate with everyone because people never really lose the fear of being left entirely on their own. We welcome a story about a vulnerable character who survives and thrives in the face of overwhelming threats.

Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die*.

Grimm and Grimm, *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, *Happily Ever After*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever felt "lost in the woods" (metaphorically or literally speaking)? How did you find your way out again?
2. Getting lost and finding oneself again is a journey that parallels a rite of passage, travelling from the known into the unknown and back again (but changed somehow). What transformation happened to you "in the woods," and when you came out again, how were you changed?

Lecture 11

"Rumplestiltzkin": Naming Our Fears

Our names matter deeply to us, and there are deep connections with the power of naming stretching far back into our folkloric and mythological history. To understand this idea better, this lecture will focus on a classic story from Germany, collected by the Grimm brothers in 1857, about the power of naming.

Summary of "Rumplestiltzkin"

- Once upon a time, there was a miller. This miller was very poor, but he had a beautiful daughter whom he was very proud of. One day, the miller spoke to the king.

- As he talked to the king, he felt unimportant compared with the king—and so to make himself feel more important, he started to

boast about things that were not true. He said, "My daughter is so wonderful, she can spin straw into gold!"

- The king became greedy, ordered the girl into the room, and said, "You will spin all of this straw into gold as your father said you could, or I will kill you!" The king slammed the door and locked it, and the girl lamented she was about to die.

- At that moment, up popped a little tiny man. The little man said to her, "What would you give me if I could spin all of this straw into gold?" The girl gave her pearl necklace to him, and the little man spun the straw into gold all night, and then disappeared.

- The next morning, the king saw the room full of gold. But next, he brought the girl to a second rom with twice as much straw and repeated the threat: Turn it all into gold or die. Again, once the king left, the little man popped up and made the same offer. This time, the girl traded her golden ring, and the man turned the straw into gold.

- This still wasn't enough for the king. The next morning, he saw the gold, and took the girl to a new room twice as large as the one before. But this time, the offer was different: If she could turn all the straw in the room into gold, she could be the king's wife. The girl didn't want this.

- After the king left, the little man popped back up. By this time the girl was desperate. She knew if she didn't spin all of that straw into gold, she would be killed, but if she *did* spin the straw into gold, she would have to marry the king.

- The little man said, "I have a bargain for you. I will spin all of this straw, heaped up to the ceiling, into gold—if—when you marry the

king, you will give me your first born child." This was horrible, but the girl was desperate. If she didn't do something, she would die, and then she would never even have a child. So she agreed, and the little man set to work.

- After a time, he'd turned the straw to gold, and announced, "I'll be back for the child." With that, he was gone. Next, the king came in and saw the piles of golden thread.

- They were married, and shortly afterward, the girl had a baby. When she was alone with the baby, the little man popped up and announced, "I've come for the child." The girl offered everything in the kingdom in exchange for keeping the child; the man countered with a contest: "If, in three day's time, you can guess my name, you can keep your child. Three days." And he went away.

- The first two nights passed; she couldn't think of a name that would suit the man on either night. But on the third day, her husband—the king—came home from a hunting trip. He put his bag down and said he'd seen a strange man hopping up and down in the forest. The man talked in German, but what'd he'd said in English was:

  Today I will bake, tomorrow I will brew
  The next day I will come for the queen's own child
  It's such a good thing, they don't know what I know
  For Rumplestiltzkin is my name!

- The girl now knew the little man's name. The king went away, and the night came, and the little man popped up. She toyed with him, at first guessing Quilla and Camden as his name, before she asked, "Is your name Rumplestiltzkin?"

- The man exclaimed, "Oh—oh, the devil told you that name!" He started to hop up and down, and he stomped with one foot so hard that it went into the ground, all the way up to his leg. He was so angry that he took his other leg and his hands, and he ripped himself into shreds. That was the end of Rumplestiltzkin.

Naming

- There are even older stories about the power of naming. Some of our oldest stories are about knowing a "secret name" or naming others as a way of gaining power or authority over them. For example, here's a version of the Egyptian creation myth:

  In ancient Egypt, all living creatures were created by the god Ra, who had the head of a hawk. And Ra created each thing by speaking its "secret name"—its true name, the name that was believed to be connected with the essence of that thing. He spoke that secret name and it came into being. He spoke "Shu," and Shu was born, the god of the wind; Ra spoke the name "Tefnut" and Tefnut was created, the goddess of the rain.

- In other stories, naming something is also a sign of your power or authority over that thing. Take this rendition of the Judeo-Christian creation myth:

  God created everything—all the fish, plants, cows, lions, tigers, and bears. He made a man, and named him Adam. God loved Adam, and gave Adam every single thing that he had created, and he let Adam name every single thing he had made. And the Bible tells us, "It was good."

- Naming something has always been a special task. Even knowing someone else's name, and calling them by their name, was a powerful thing in ancient times. It was believed that knowing someone's name gave you power over them. For example, in ancient Egyptian beliefs, the goddess Isis gained power over the sun god Ra by learning his name.

- Calling Rumplestiltzkin by his name is a "speech act," a spoken word that has material effects in the world—like a magic spell. When the girl discovers Rumplestiltzkin's name, it renders him powerless.

- Another version of "Rumplestiltzkin" comes from the Orkney Islands off the northern coast of Scotland, where the cultural heritage is connected with both Norse and Scottish folklore. For a rendition of that tale, refer to the video lecture.

- The takeaway for this lecture is that language is important for handling emotions. Learning new words for our emotions and being able to name how we feel (whether we're angry, or frustrated, or sad) makes a difference in being able to work through those emotions. When you talk with a loved one about your problems, or you write in a journal about them, it helps you gain control over the situation.

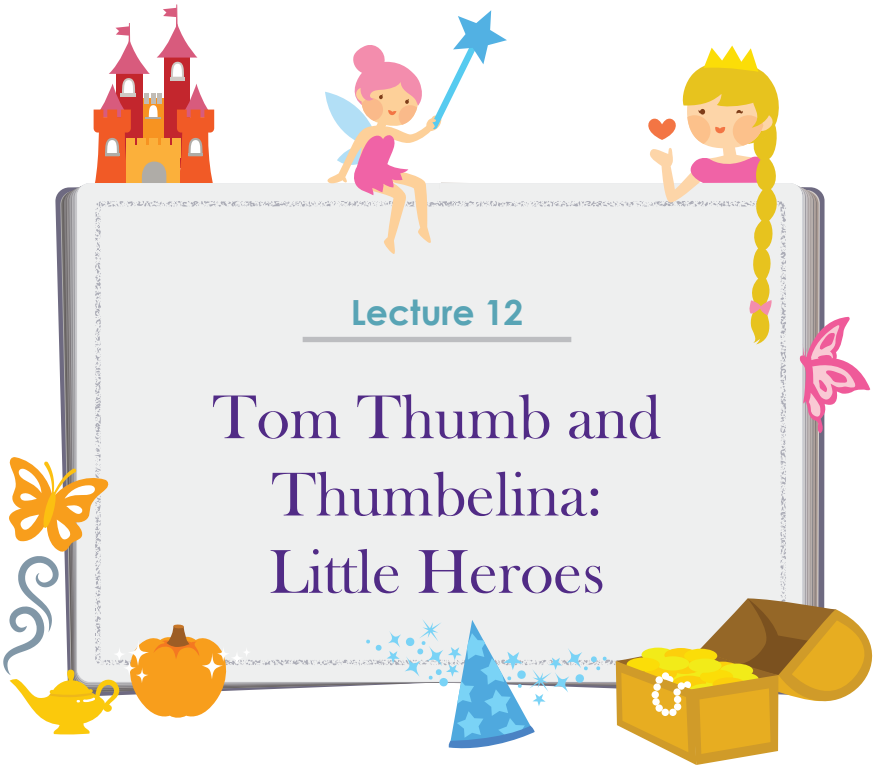
Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Does your name have a special meaning? What is that meaning? To what degree do you feel like you connect with this meaning for your name?
2. Have you ever had a problem that you felt like you just couldn't talk about with anyone? If you ever did talk about it, how did it feel when you shared the problem with someone? What difference does it make to put our problems, fears, and desires into words?



Lecture 12

Tom Thumb and Thumbelina: Little Heroes

The world around us is mostly tailored for adults—big people. But the stories in this course have been about small people among big things: Hansel and Gretel in the big forest, Jack climbing up a giant beanstalk, the little boy who faced the all-powerful magician, and so on. This lecture's stories cover two tiny heroes. The first story, "Tom Thumb," is grounded in oral folklore and wasn't written down until the 1600s. The second, "Thumbelina," is by the author Hans Christian Andersen.

Summary of "Tom Thumb"

- This summary of "Tom Thumb" is based on Richard Johnson's 1621 *The History of Tom Thumbe*. Tom Thumbe was a knight who

lived in King Arthur's court; he was mighty despite being only an inch tall.

- Here's how Tom Thumb came to be: A couple with a successful farm was having trouble producing a baby. One day, they went to see Merlin the magician, and the man asked Merlin for a son to be his heir—even if the child was no bigger than his thumb.

- Merlin obliged, and Tom Thumb was born—a son the size of his father's thumb. The queen of the fairies came and blessed the child, giving him an oaken-leaf hat and a spider-web shirt.

- Eventually, Christmastime came, and Tom Thumb's mother decided to make a pudding from a pig. But Tom Thumb fell into the batter as he was trying to get a look at it. His mom didn't notice, though, and prepared Tom Thumb in the pudding kettle.

- Tom Thumb started thrashing about and rocking the kettle, which made his mom think a demon had possessed it. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. The woman answered; it was a man who asked her to spare some food.

- She gave him the pudding, and off he went, telling jokes as he went. Tom Thumb heard the jokes and laughed, and the man in turn heard the kettle laughing, which scared him. He threw the pudding behind a hedge and fled.

- When the pudding landed, Tom was finally freed from it. He tried to go home, but kept getting lost, eaten whole, and coming back out the other end. Eventually, though, he made it back.

- Later, when his father had taken him out to help plow the fields, a crow swooped down and grabbed Tom. The crow carried him to a large castle, opened its beak, and dropped him into the lap of the giant who owned the castle. The giant tried to eat Tom, but Tom fought back with his fists and feet until the giant spat him back out.

- After the giant spit him, Tom landed in a lake, where a fish swallowed him. Luckily for Tom, the royal chef had ordered the royal fishermen to catch a tasty fish for the king's supper that night. They caught the fish that had swallowed Tom; the chef cooked it and delivered it to the king.

- When King Arthur cut the fish open, out hopped Tom. The king gave him his signet ring—the king's seal of honor—which Tom wore as a mighty belt. So armored, Tom went with the king on his travels from then on.

- He lived out many more adventures: riding a butterly, dueling a giant, and escaping a cat's claws. In the end, he was trapped by a spider's web, but his legend lived on.

The Takeaway

- Tom Thumb may have been tiny, but he influenced King Arthur, a big person of great importance in folklore. Tom integrated fully into court life with the Knights of the Round Table—he found a home in the world of big people.

- This story has elements of the literary tradition in it: While some stories welled up from the folk as songs, in this case an author used poetry and meter to help tell the story as he put it to paper. This is a folktale translated through literary devices.

- Other stories that we think of as folktales actually have no connection with oral traditional folklore. For example, the next tale sounds like a folktale, but it's actually the product of one author's imagination: Hans Christian Andersen, a children's author who lived in Denmark.

Summary of "Thumbelina"

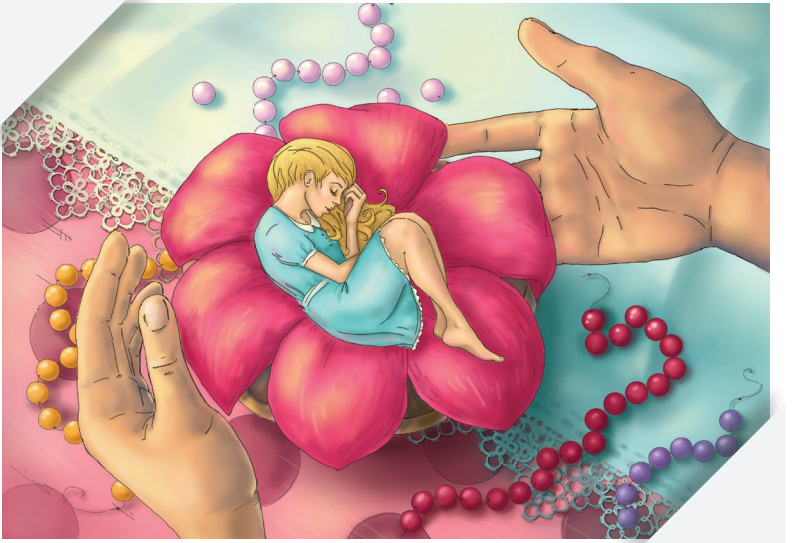
- There was once a woman who wished very much to have a little child. At last she went to a fairy. The fairy gave her a barleycorn to put in a flower pot; eventually the barleycorn grew into a small daughter: Thumbelina (or Tiny), who was scarely half as long as a thumb and had a wonderful singing voice.

- First, a toad came and stole her at night, hoping to give her to his son as a daughter. The toad placed her on a lily leaf; fish gnawed through its stem and she went floating far downstream. After that, a bug plucked her off the leaf and put her in the forest, far away from home. She wandered, into winter, until she came to the home of a fieldmouse.

- The mouse welcomed her in. But the mouse had a neighbor: a mole coming for a visit. Tiny was obliged to sing to him, and the mole fell in love with her. The mole had dug a long passage under the earth, which led from the dwelling of the field-mouse to his own. One day, tiny and the mouse went there. But in one room in the passage lay a dead swallow, lit by sun from a hole in the ceiling.

- The mole pushed it aside, but during the night, Thumbelina came back to the bird and put a carpet of hay over it. She thanked the bird for his beautiful songs. But a thumping began in the bird's chest: Apparently he had not died, but was only benumbed from the cold. Warmth had restored him to life.

- The swallow was much larger than Thumbelina and frightened her at first, but he thanked her. Thumbelina nursed him throughout



the winter, and when spring came and warmed the earth, the swallow said, "Farewell, then, pretty little maiden," and flew out into the sunshine.

- Tiny looked after him, and the tears rose in her eyes. She was very fond of the poor swallow. But next, the fieldmouse announced she was to be married to the neighbor mole.

- Tiny wept, and said she would not marry the disagreeable mole. The fieldmouse threatened to bite her if she didn't agree, and so the wedding day was fixed. On that day, the mole was to fetch Tiny away to live with him deep under the earth, never again to see the warm sun.

- "Farewell bright sun," Tiny cried, stretching out her arm toward it. But then, the swallow arrived and offered to fly her away. She gladly took him up on the offer. They flew over the forest and sea, and high above the mountains. At last they came to a blue lake, and by the side of it, shaded by trees of the deepest green, stood a palace of dazzling white marble, built in the olden times.

- The swallow flew down with Tiny, and placed her on one of the broad leaves of the lovely flowers there. In the middle of the flower was a tiny little man, as white and transparent as if he had been made of crystal.

- He had a gold crown on his head, and delicate wings at his shoulders, and was not much larger than Tiny herself. He was the angel of the flower, for a tiny man and a tiny woman dwell in every flower. This was the king of them all. He was frightened of the swallow at first, but when he saw Tiny, he was delighted.

- He took the gold crown from his head and placed it on hers. He asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and queen over all the flowers. She said yes.

- All the flowers opened, and out of each came a little lady or a tiny lord. Each of them brought Tiny a present, but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings, which had belonged to a large white fly. They fastened them to Tiny's shoulders so that she might fly from flower to flower.

- "You must not be called Tiny any more," said the spirit of the flowers to her. "It is an ugly name, and you are so very pretty. We will call you Maia."

- The swallow said farewell and flew back to Denmark. There, he had a nest over the window of a house in which dwelt the writer of fairy tales. The swallow sang, "Tweet, tweet," and from his song came the whole story.

The Takeaway

- As the ending of the story says, this story was written by "a writer of fairy tales," which means that the little swallow told the story to Hans Christian Andersen, who wrote this and many other classic tales.

- There's an important distinguishing factor that separates Andersen's stories from any of the other stories this course has covered so far. Andersen was a writer who took the motifs of common fairy tales and created his own new tales. They are not folktales, because they originated from the mind of one writer, rather than from the oral/folk tradition.

- Regarding the story itself: Unlike Tom Thumb, Thumbelina is always depicted as fragile. But as fragile and dainty as Thumbelina has been throughout the story, she is reanamed Maia, which is the Roman earth goddess of spring.

- Goddesses are powerful. So, perhaps Thumbelina becomes more powerful, with her wings and her prince, *after* the "happily ever after."

- Each of the little heroes finds the royal place where they fit—but they are different places. Tom Thumb winds up feeling at home with the big people. By contrast, Thumbelina eventually finds her happiness with someone her own size—a prince who is just the right size for her.

- At many points in our lives, we all feel like we don't fit the world around us. For the heroes in these stories, and in our own lives, it can sometimes feel like we're stuck in a world made for someone of a different size, either literally or metaphorically.

- Sometimes problems can seem huge—like the giant we have to battle. Sometimes we can feel so small. And when we do, it's good to remember stories that remind us that little heroes can do mighty things in a big world—or when they can't, that the world offers helpers who can look out for them.

Suggested Reading

Andersen, *Hans Christian Andersen's Complete Fairy Tales*.

Halliwell, *The Metrical History of Tom Thumb the Little*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever felt bigger than your size because of some added strength that you received? What gave you that strength, and what could you accomplish with it?
2. Have you ever felt smaller than your size because of something someone said to you? How did that impact how you behaved around others or in doing daily tasks?

Lecture 13

"Emperor's New Clothes": Looks Can Deceive

This lecture discusses two literary stories about people who are not who they appear to be. Before you dive in, consider this: Have you ever had an occasion where you dressed up—maybe for a fancy dinner party, or even when you were playing dressup? These stories are about dressing to impress. One story is about a king who tried to get lots of fancy clothes and was humiliated in the process; the other about a prince who willingly gave up his fine clothes to the poor and was happy.

Summary of "The Emperor's New Clothes" (by Hans Christian Andersen)

- Many, many years ago lived an emperor, who thought so much of new clothes that he spent all his money in order to obtain them.

He had a coat for every hour of the day, and would go about the city showing off his clothes.

- One day, two swindlers came to his city. They made people believe that they were weavers, and declared they could manufacture the finest cloth to be imagined, exceptionally beautiful. They claimed clothes made of their material would be invisible to any man not fit for his job or who was ignorant. The king was highly interested in their supposedly great clothes and ordered a suit.

- They set up two looms, and pretended to be very hard at work, but they did nothing whatsoever on the looms. They asked for the finest silk and the most precious gold-cloth; all they got they did away with, and worked at the empty looms until late at night.

- The emperor sent a minister to check on their progress; he saw nothing, but claimed he saw beautiful cloth, because to say otherwise would mean he was unfit for office. The swindlers requested more supplies.

- Next, the emperor sent a different courtier. He had the same experience: Nothing was there, but he claimed otherwise to seem fit for his job.

- Finally, the emperor went to see for himself. Nothing was on the looms, and yet the emperor gave the "cloth" his most gracious approval to save face. His attendants did the same.

- On the day the emperor was to begin wearing his new clothes, he came to a hall with all of his barons. The swindlers pretended to hold different articles of clothing up. The king undressed, and the swindlers dressed him in the "clothes" they had made, claiming they were so light the emperor would feel nothing.

- His courtiers praised his clothes and the emperor went out on a procession so his people could see him. His chamberlains carried his train along, pretending to be holding it. All who saw him

praised his clothes—except for one little child, who said, "But he has nothing on at all."

- "Good heavens! Listen to the voice of an innocent child," said the father, and one whispered to the other what the child had said.

- At last, the people cried out that the emperor had nothing on. That made a deep impression upon the emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right. But he thought to himself, "Now I must bear up to the end." And the chamberlains walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried the train which did not exist.

The Takeaway

- Andersen's literary fairytales teach us that things aren't always as they seem, and encourage us not to be fooled by appearances. In this case, the emperor was fooled into thinking that the men were really fine tailors.

- The story also teaches us that manipulation can be a powerful tool, and to be wary of people who try to make us do something we know isn't right. The emperor's vanity, and his fear of appearing to be ignorant or unfit for office, made him susceptible to being manipulated by others.

- Next up is another literary tale, this one by the Irish playwright Oscar Wilde.

Summary of "The Happy Prince"

- The Happy Prince was a gilded statue who stood on a column high above the city. One night, a Swallow came to the city. The Swallow was in love with a Reed, but had left her behind to go to Egypt where his friends were, because she was attached to her home. That brought the Swallow to the city.

- The Swallow found the Happy Prince and planned to bed down for the night nearby, but was surprised to find the statue crying.

- His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity. The Swallow asked why he was crying. The statue explained that in life he'd had a human heart and was happy, but now, he was stuck in a position where he could view all the ugliness and misery of the city.

- Instead of departing for Egypt, the Happy Prince asked the Swallow to stay and help the city for a night. The Swallow agreed. First, the swallow picked a ruby from the Happy Prince's sword and flew it down to the house of a sick boy and his mother. He fanned the sick boy to cool him down, left them the ruby, and returned to the Happy Prince, where the Swallow revealed he felt good about his actions.

- The next day, the Happy Prince asked the Swallow to stay and help one more night. This time, the Swallow, under the Happy Prince's direction, plucked one of the Happy Prince's sapphire eyes out, and flew to a struggling playwright who couldn't afford firewood and was too cold to write.

- The Swallow dropped the sapphire off without being noticed and left. When he saw the gift, the playwright exclaimed, "I am beginning to be appreciated," he cried; "this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play," and he looked quite happy.

- After that, the Happy Prince asked the Swallow to stay one night longer. This time, the Swallow flew the Happy Prince's other eye

to a struggling match-girl, who was in danger of being beaten by her father if she didn't bring money home. "What a lovely bit of glass," cried the little girl, and she ran home, laughing.

- Then the Swallow came back to the Happy Prince. "You are blind now," he said, "so I will stay with you always." The next day, the Happy Prince tasked the Swallow with flying over the city. He saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates.

- Under the archway of a bridge, two little boys were lying in one another's arms to try and keep themselves warm. But a watchman chased them off, and they wandered out into the rain. The Swallow reported this to the Happy Prince.

- The Happy Prince revealed he was covered in fine gold and asked the Swallow to take this off leaf by leaf, then deliver it to the poor. The Swallow did; the Happy Prince became dull and gray, but the children of the city grew happier and could eat.

- Next, winter came, with snow and frost. The Swallow grew colder and colder, but would not leave the Happy Prince, who he'd grown to love. At last, the Swallow wished the Happy Prince goodbye, kissed him, and died at his feet. The statue's leaden heart snapped in two at this.

- The next morning, the mayor and town councilors were walking in the square below. They noticed the now-shabby statue and the dead bird at his feet, so they pulled down the Happy Prince and

melted him down at a foundry. They argued over what was to be done with the metal; each wanted a statue of himself made, and so they quarreled on and on.

- Meanwhile, at the foundry, the overseer found the broken lead heart would not melt. The workers threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

- Then, came this: "Bring me the two most precious things in the city," said God to an angel. The angel brought God the leaden heart and the dead bird.

- "You have rightly chosen," said God, "for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me."

The Takeaway

- Appearances can be deceiving. In that story, the Swallow thinks he's found true happiness with the beautiful Reed—but he finds a deeper love with the shabby Happy Prince.

- Sometimes we are so trained to pay attention to things that appear important that we miss seeing the things that are truly important. The main characters in "The Happy Prince" are things that often we don't notice—a small, chirping bird, or a statue that looks old and worn. But these easily overlooked, small beings are powerful magical helpers to the humans.

- The humans hardly even realize or appreciate where their turns of good fortune came from—the playwright thinks the sapphire came from an admirer. Nor do they appreciate that these gifts cost the Happy Prince his sight and the Swallow his life.

- Oscar Wilde's story doesn't gloss over the loss in these sacrifices—when you give something away, you risk looking shabbier than

you did before. But you certainly look less foolish than the vain emperor—and you might wind up happy, like the prince.

Suggested Reading

Andersen, *Hans Christian Andersen's Complete Fairy Tales*.

Ashliman, *Folk and Fairy Tales*.

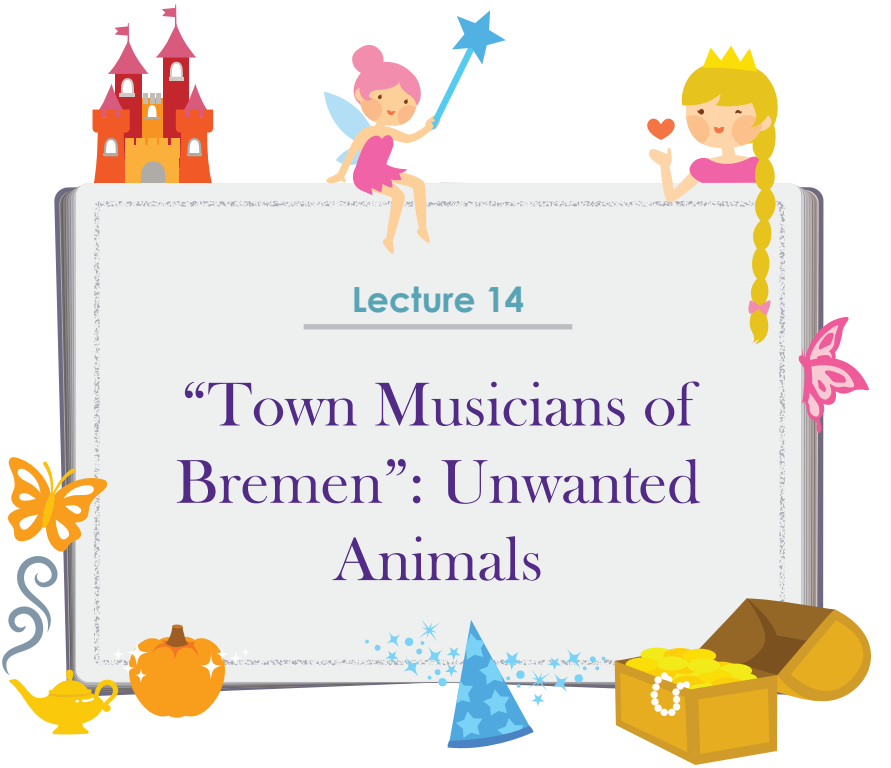
———, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Question for Discussion

1. The swindlers in the first story were actually very skilled con artists and manipulators—they knew how to play on the weaknesses of others in order to get what they wanted. Have you ever fallen into the trap of being manipulated by someone else? How did that make you feel? When you realized what was going on, how did you stop it?



Lecture 14

"Town Musicians of Bremen": Unwanted Animals

In the world of oral folklore, animals often stand in for people. They talk, laugh, cry, and get into all kinds of mischief—just like us. The stories in the next section of the course are animal folktales—and more specifically, stories about unwanted animals. This lecture focuses on a tale called "Town Musicians of Bremen."

Summary of "Town Musicians of Bremen"

- Once upon a time, there was a donkey who was quite loyal to his master. He carried grain for the master throughout his life, until he became too old to continue this task. The donkey overheard the master talking about getting rid of him—killing him, even—and then had the idea of going to Bremen to escape.

- Bremen was a town where there was much music. The donkey decided he would play the guitar and join the town musicians.

- On the way to Bremen, the donkey came across a hound dog, Mr. Towzer. He had a similar problem to the donkey: He was too old to help his master hunt, and his master was about to kill him. The donkey said the dog could join him and play the drums, and the dog agreed and came along.

- Next, the duo met a cat, Mr. Whiskers. This cat was now too old to chase mice in the fields, and the cat's mistress had said she was going to drown the cat in the river. The donkey made an offer: The cat could join them on their journey to Bremen, becoming their singer. The cat accepted.

- The next addition to their crew was a rooster whose mistress wanted to cut his throat for crowing too much. He joined, and would sing along with the cat.

- They continued on their journey, but knew they wouldn't reach Bremen in one day, so began to look for a place to rest. The rooster flew up into a tree and spotted a light off in the forest. The crew investigated and found a small house.

- Inside were two robbers with a table of food. To get the food, the animals made a huge commotion, with all of them creating noise while the donkey crashed through the window. The robbers ran off; all the animals entered the house and had a feast.

- The animals bedded down for the night: the dog behind the door, the donkey by a

dung heap, the cat by the fireplace, and the rooster on the roof. Later on, the robbers returned.

- The robbers came in, thinking they'd dreamed the earlier events. One took out his book of matches. He saw, over in the fireplace, two gleaming things shining by the fireplace that he thought were coals—but were actually the cat's eyes. He struck his match at the "coals," but the cat clawed at the robber. He burned his hands on the match and ran for the door.

- The dog was behind the door, and bit the robber as he fled. The robber kept going until he reached the dung heap, where the donkey kicked him. The rooster crowed from the roof. Finally, he ran off to his friend.

- The robber told the other robber that he'd been clawed by a witch in the fireplace, stabbed by a man behind the door, and clubbed by an ogre. Worst of all, the judge was on the roof, crying out "Bring me all the thieves!"

- The robbers ran away into the night. The musicians started to bray and bark and meow and crow. They'd been headed for Bremen, but they were having so much fun in that house that they decided to stay. While the musicians in this story never reached the town of Bremen, they did reach a very happy ending.

The Takeaway

- We are meant to sympathize with the unwanted animals—they conjure for us those parts of ourselves that we fear will make us be rejected by others. Age may have brought the animals danger, but it also brought them cunning and creative ideas.

- The animals are tricksters—they use cunning and trickery to survive—which is a motif used in countless folktales, from Brer Rabbit in the United States to Anansi the spider in Ghana and other African cultures.

- Many of the stories in this course have their roots in stories that were told in mixed-age company: They had to appeal to, make sense to, and entertain both adults and children. You create that appeal by making the conflict in the story one that's meaningful to and shared by both children and adults.

- "Town Musicians of Bremen" is one in a long line of folktales that addresses how we have dealt with growing older throughout the centuries. When we're young, sometimes we get frustrated by how little we're allowed to do. As we age, the frustration becomes how little our own bodies allow us to do: the cat who couldn't chase mice anymore, the dog who couldn't hunt.

- The animals don't even try to find a place for themselves in their own farming community; instead, they imagine there is a better life for them in the city. However, they never quite make it to Bremen.

- Bremen takes on a magical quality—if only the animals can get to Bremen, all their problems will be over. They'll become useful again; they'll be musicians! They'll eat and not be eaten! But if the musicians had actually made it to Bremen, they most likely would have been killed off there, too.

- The sense of belonging and security that they so wanted didn't lie in the wretched past they'd left behind, or the idealized future they longed for where everything was perfect. They found their place somewhere in between these two worlds—they made their home in the woods.

- Ask yourself: Is there a place you're longing to go to, where you think everything will be better? Did you ever get included in a group, only to discover that it wasn't all you thought it would be?

Led by the donkey, the animals have to figure their tricky way out of danger. But the donkey was wise, and he knew he still had worth.

- Here's something concrete you can do: Find someone older or younger than you, and spend a little time with them—maybe a little more than you usually do, if it's someone you know. Growing older can be pretty tricky, and it's good to have people to help you through it, whatever your age.

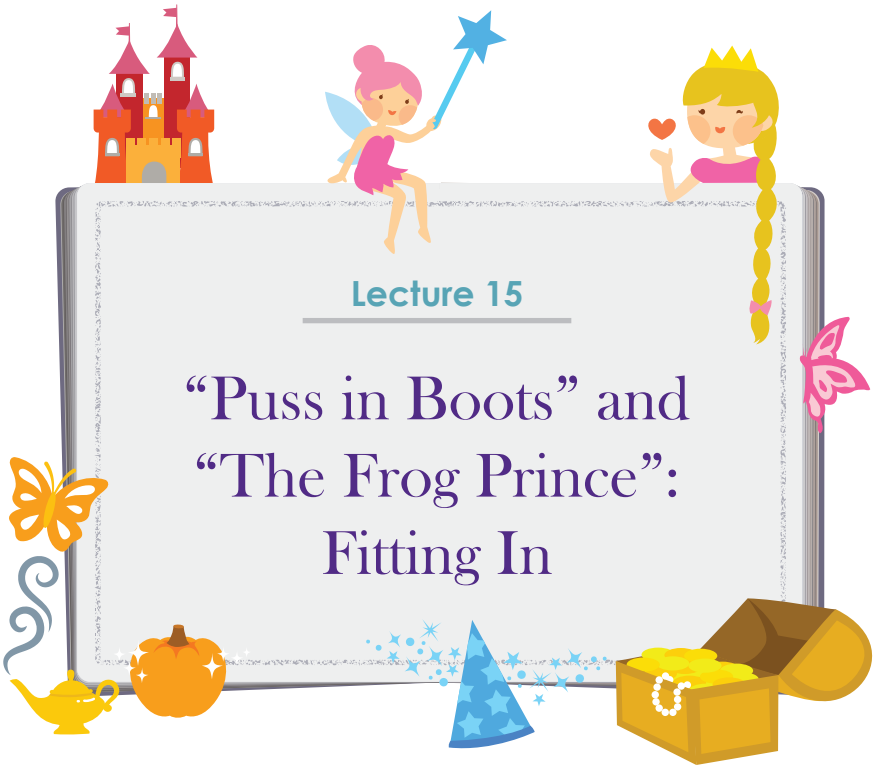
Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Dorson, *Folktales Told Around the World*.

Questions for Discussion

1. The servant-master dialectic in stories such as "The Town Musicians of Bremen" reflects a power dynamic that is deeply embedded in folklore tropes. By embedding these themes in stories that involve fantasy, oral folklore offers a way for us to talk about and challenge unequal power structures in our own society. Part of the subversive power of these stories is that they are metaphors for reality. How do the "servants" in this story outwit the "masters"? What subversive power might stories like this one have offered servant-class folk audiences throughout the ages? What subversive power does it offer us today?
2. The musicians of Bremen engage in a kind of second career or retirement plan in the woods—they are musicians now. What career would you like? Do you feel stuck in a job when all you want to do is take up that second career—e.g., run off to the woods and become a musician?



Lecture 15

"Puss in Boots" and "The Frog Prince": Fitting In

This lecture continues the theme of unwanted animals with two other animal tales: one of a cat who has to prove his worth so he's not eaten, and the other of a frog who is so unwanted by a princess that she splats him against the wall. In both stories, the magical talking animals don't fit with the humans—because they seem to be of no value compared to the humans' sense of self-worth—but by the end they are out of place with the unworthy humans.

Summary of "Puss in Boots"

- Once upon a time, there lived a miller who was very poor. All he owned was a mill, a donkey, and a clever cat who knew many tricks. He also had three sons.

- Time passed; the miller grew very old and eventually died. The oldest son inherited the mill. The middle son inherited the donkey, which could grind flour, and so the oldest two sons could make a living together.

- But the third son inherited the cat. He was disappointed, and at first considered eating the cat. But the cat could talk and made him an offer: Bring the cat a drawstring bag and pair of boots to protect his feet from brambles, and the cat would help him.

- The man brought the cat what he'd requested; he put the drawstring bag around the cat's neck and put the boots on his feet. With that, the cat went out into the world.

- As soon as he left, he spied a wheat field with a warren of rabbits in it. The cat had some wheat with him in his bag, so he put it out as bait and played dead. A rabbit hopped up to investigate, and when he got near, the cat sprang up and caught the rabbit in his bag.

- The cat took the rabbit to the castle of the king, where he presented the rabbit as a gift to the ruler. The cat said the gift was from the Marquis of Calabas, the name he used to refer to the miller's third son. The king said to thank the Marquis of Calabas.

- The next day, the cat went out again. This time, he tricked two partridge birds into think his paws were nests and captured them. Again, he presented the birds to the king in the name of Marquis of Calabas. And again, the king was grateful.

- This went on for months, until one day the cat heard that the king was going on a carriage ride by the river with his daughter, the princess. And the princess was the most beautiful girl in the land.

- The cat went to his master and said, "You must go down to the river, strip off your clothes, take a bath in the river, and I will take care of the rest—and you will have your fortune." The boy had trusted the cat up until this point, so down to the river he went.

He stripped off his clothes and hopped into the river to take a bath.

- As the royal carriage neared, the cat flagged it down and claimed the naked man was the Marquis of Calabas, and that he'd been robbed. The king ordered he be pulled from the river, and he gave the boy some of his own royal clothes. When the princess looked at him in his princely clothing, and he looked at the princess, they started to fall in love with each other.

- The boy wasn't really a prince—but the cat wasn't done. The king asked the boy to ride along in the carriage. Meanwhile, the cat ran ahead. In the wheat field where he'd caught the rabbit, he said to workers cutting wheat, "You must listen to me! The King is riding up—when he asks you who owns this wheat field, you must say the Marquis of Calabas. If you do not, you will be cut up as fine as sausagemeat!"

- The cat did the same thing in the corn field where he'd caught the birds. As the king's procession passed, the workers in each field told the king the Marquis of Calabs owned the fields.

- The cat ran until he came to a castle. In it was an ogre who could transform into any animal he wished. The cat challenged him to transform into something tiny. The ogre took the bait and transformed into a mouse, which the cat ate. When the king's procession reached the castle, the cat announced, "Welcome to the castle of the Marquis of Calabas."

- In they walked. The king was so impressed with the wheat field and the cornfield and the castle that he told the boy that he could marry his daughter, the princess. Both were happy—they had fallen in love with each other—and so the boy became a prince. The cat in the boots became a grand figure in the king's court.

The Takeaway

- The version of "Puss in Boots" in this course is a French tale from 1697. But cats being supernatural helpers is a very old idea. In ancient Egypt, cats were worshiped for their supernatural powers—most familiarly as the cat-goddess Isis.

- The American folklorist Dan Ben-Amos tells us that the worship of Isis eventually made its way to Europe. By the time that cat worship reached France, Germany, and England, the religious associations dissolved, but cats kept their mystical and supernatural connotations.

- In this one story, we have a classic French version, which borrowed from an earlier Italian version, in which we can trace elements back to ancient India and Egypt.

- Next up is another story about an animal who just didn't seem to fit in. This time, it's a folktale from the Grimm brothers.

Summary of "The Frog Prince"

- In olden times, when wishing helped, there lived a little princess. She was very selfish, but loved one object more than anything else: her golden ball, or *goldene Kugel* in German. She loved to throw this ball in the air and cacth it over and over again.

- One hot day, she was walking deep in the forest. She was throwing her ball, but on one attempt, it slipped through her fingers and into a well. She reached down, but couldn't reach it, and began to cry. She exclaimed that she'd "give anything" to get the ball back.

- All of a sudden, out of the surface of that murky water came the two big, bulging eyes of a frog. The frog eyes looked up at her, and she looked down at the frog eyes. Out of the water came the slimy smile and webbed feet of a frog. It smiled up at her and said, "Bleth-em."

- The princess said, "Oh, you go away, you nasty frog—you cannot help me!" But the frog made an offer in reply: "I can help you get your ball back." But in return, the princess would have to cuddle with him, take him home to her castle, let him eat there, and snuggle in her bed.

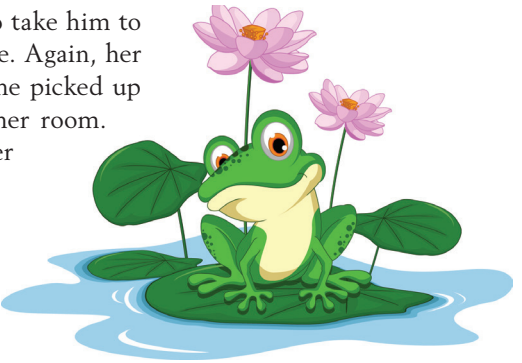
- The princess decided she would betray the frog: She'd let him get the ball, then just run away rather than taking him home. Still, she said: "I will take you home."

- Down the frong went, and he returned with the ball. The princess took the ball and ran off without the frog. She ran back to her castle and spent the entire next day so happy she forgot about the frog.

- By the time evening came, she sat down at the dinner table with her father the king, her mother the queen, and the rest of her sisters. She was eating off of a golden plate when, from the other side of that door, they heard a noise: "Bleth-em." She went to investigate and opened the door; the frog was there, and she slammed the door in its face.

- The king asked her what happened, and she told the story of the frog and her broken promise. The king then turned to her, and said, "You are a princess. You keep your promise; you go and get him." The princess argued, but eventually went.

- She opened the door and let the frog in. It came hopping over to the chair right where she had been sitting; she followed the frog over to her chair. The frog asked her to put him in his hand and push the plate closer so he could eat. Whenever she balked, her father said, "Go," until she did each task.



- Next, the frog asked her to take him to her bed so he could snuggle. Again, her father said, "Go," and so she picked up the frog and went up to her room. She put the frog on her bed, looked at him, and then picked him up and slammed him against the wall.

- She thought that was the end of the frog, but the frog started to transform into a man. This was a prince who had been changed into a frog by a magic spell. The princess looked at him and said, "Well, you're not really nasty at all, are you?"

- She thought about how she had treated the frog, and she thought about how that prince would treat her now that she knew he wasn't really nasty at all.

- He reached out his arms to her, and she reached out her arms to him. As she walked over to him, with her arms outstretched, she let the little golden ball fall. It rolled away, and she didn't care.

- The next day, a golden carriage pulled up in front of the castle. The prince's faithful servant, Henry, was on board. He was there to retrieve the pair to go off to be married. The king gave his permission to his daughter: "Go," with a loving smile.

- The princess climbed into the carriage and they started to ride away. Inside the carriage, the prince heard a cracking sound. The noise came from Henry.

- When the prince had been turned into a frog, it broke Henry's heart to see his friend so transformed. He ordered that three iron bands be wrapped around his heart to hold it together. But when he saw the prince and princess so transformed, and so full of joy, his heart burst with joy, and those three iron bands cracked and fell away.

The Takeaway

- In "The Frog Prince," we get to see two transformations: the frog back into the prince, and the princess into a more mature, less selfish version of herself.

- In both of the stories in this lecture, we've seen characters who are not what they seem to be: a cat who turns out to be cleverer than any human; the lowly frog who is really a prince; and the selfish princess who comes into her own as a more generous, wiser person.

- Things are not always what they seem, and things don't necessarily stay the way they are. Growth and maturity are possible: People can change, and they can get stronger and smarter about the way they live.

Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Basile, *The Tale of Tales*.

Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die*.

Grimm and Grimm, *Ausgewahlte Marchen*.

———, *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm, The Complete First Edition*.

Perrault, *The Complete Fairy Tales*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Warner, *Once Upon a Time*.

Yolen, *Favorite Folktales From Around the World*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. If you were the frog in "The Frog Prince," would you have forgiven the princess who treated you so badly? Why do you think the frog in the story forgave her after he turned back into a prince?
2. Just like Cinderella, the frog prince was seen as nasty and unwanted until his outer nature revealed his inner nature. Have you ever felt unwanted in a situation because of how you looked? Have you ever struggled to fit in somewhere? What did your attempts to fit in look like, and was it worth it? Why or why not?
3. The cat in boots is the gift that none of the sons wanted to inherit—and the cat turned out to be the biggest gift any of the sons could ever ask for. Have you ever gotten a gift that you didn't think was valuable and later found out it was very useful or valuable? Have you ever come to value something or someone more as time goes by?

Lecture 16

"Three Little Pigs": Third Time's a Charm

In many classic stories, you may have noticed something: Jack goes three times up the beanstalk; the Little Tailor is tested three times by the king. Patterns of three emerge throughout these stories. Certain numbers—such as three and seven, the number of flies the tailor killed in one blow—are considered magical in folklore. But why are certain numbers magical, and not others? This lecture examines the number three, with the Italian version of "The Three Little Pigs"—or, in this case, "The Three Little Goslings."

Summary of "The Three Little Goslings"

- Once upon a time there were three goslings, or baby geese. One was large, one was medium-sized, and one was small. They were afraid, because out in the woods lived a big bad wolf.

- One day, they decided to build a house together out of hay. But once it was finished, the biggest gosling decided she wanted it for herself and kicked the other two out. Those two decided to build a house for themselves, this one out of sticks.

- Once that house was done, the medium-sized gosling kicked the small one out to keep it for herself. That left the small gosling to build her own home, but she was too small to lift any materials for a house.

- Along came a nice man who was selling iron and brick. The tiniest gosling was kind, so she asked the man very politely, "Please, please could you help me build a house?" The man did help her, building her a house of brick and iron. The gosling waddled in, shut the iron door, and was safely in her new home.

- After those three houses were built, along came the wolf. First, he blew down the house of hay and ate the first gosling in one bite. Then he did the same thing at the second house and ate the second gosling.

- He came to the third house, but couldn't harm it at all. He tried to lure the third gosling out, offering to make macaroni and cheese with her, but the gosling was too smart for his trick. She said, "Oh, yes, I will help you make the macaroni and then we can eat it together." The wolf said he'd come back tomorrow with butter and cheese, and that the gosling should bring the flour.

- The next day, the wolf came back and said: "Open the door so I can make the macaroni with you." The gosling replied: "Come over to the hole in the door and I

will pour the macaroni into your mouth." The wolf thought he was big and strong enough to eat the macaroni and then eat the gosling, so he came up to the door.

- He opened up his mouth where the hole was. But instead of macaroni, the gosling poured a pot of boiling water down the wolf's mouth. It killed the wolf. The gosling opened her door and cut the wolf open, letting the other two goslings out, safe and sound.

- With the wolf dead, the two other goslings were sorry for the way they had treated the third gosling. They all came inside the little house made of brick and of iron, and they all ate the real macaroni and cheese together. The end.

The Takeaway

- It's better to work together as sisters than bicker—or is it? If the goslings had all gotten along from the beginning, they would have all stayed in the house of straw and probably gotten eaten up by the wolf at his first appearance on the scene.

- Like the German version, this story values a certain amount of independent ingenuity—the pigs in the German version each work industriously on their best house, each with different results.

- Another angle: In folklore, three is a magical number. In oral folklore we understand story narratives in three parts: beginning, middle, and end.

- A well-balanced story has its three main components all working together to create a satisfying journey. When our story is missing one of these components, we have a sense that our story is incomplete.

- The number seven is also important. Psychologists have found that our brains remember information in chunks of seven (give or take two). Think of telephone numbers: Not counting the area code, most in the US are seven digits.

- Folk culture has come to rely on the notion of seven as the measure of many things: seven days in a week, seven deadly sins, seven wonders of the ancient world, seven seas, seven colors in the rainbow. In the lore of Harry Potter, seven is the most powerfully magical number.

- Another story that deals with magical numbers, recorded by the Grimm brothers, is called "The Devil with Three Golden Hairs." For a full telling, refer to the video.

- That story, starring woodcutter, the devil, and the devil's wife, involves several numerical patterns: There are three hairs, three riddles, three answers, and three gifts. On the woodcutter's journey there are three cities and four times the devil's wife wakes up the devil; four plus three is seven.

- That story has what is quite possibly the best ending line in all of written folklore: Whoever is not afraid of the devil can tear out his hair and win the world. That's the point of many folklore stories: the "stability" of three and the "luck" of seven may help you along, but in the end it's the bravery and courage of the hero, unlikely or not, that makes the hero win.

- Moreover, it's the lack of fear that helps the hero. If we can press onward through our fears, then we can see ourselves through to the end of the journey.

Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Grimm and Grimm, *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do things ever tend to happen in patterns of three for you, as the old superstition goes? How, if at all, does the number three tend to crop up in your family stories?
2. Do you believe in lucky numbers? What are your lucky numbers, and why?

Lecture 17

"The Little Red Hen": Formula Tales

Formula tales are a very ancient form of folktale. They involve some kind of repetition and pattern of development, often developing a rhythm. We know what to expect in formula tales—we may hear the same phrase repeated, or the same chain of words or sequences repeated. Formulas help you know what to expect—they're predictable, and there's a certain amount of comfort and even enjoyment in their dependability. The video lecture contains several stories, but for concision, this guidebook chapter will focus on "Three Billy Goats Gruff" and "The Little Red Hen."

Summary of "Three Billy Goats Gruff"

- Once upon a time in Norway, there were three billy goats named Gruff. They were three different sizes—small, medium, and big—but all three were hungry and in agreement that they

weren't fat enough. Billy goats are very disagreeable, and so say "Naaaah!" constantly.

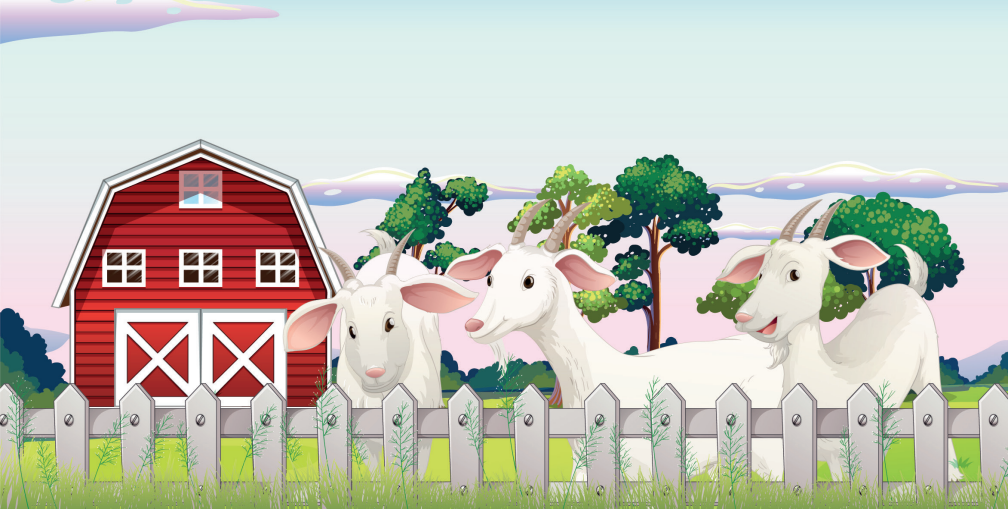
- They all decided to go up a mountain to get fat together. The smallest led, followed by the medium and big billy goats. They walked up the mountain until they came to a gorge with a bridge over it.

- The smallest started to walk across until he heard: "Naaaah—who is that on my bridge?" A big troll was asking. The goat replied, "Naaah—nobody!" Out came the troll; he threatened, "I'm going to eat you up!"

- The goat replied: "Naaaah! I'm too small. You want my big brother, he's coming just after me." The troll said, "Well, OK—go on!" and the goat did. Next, the medium billy goat came along, his hooves making a trip-trap sound.

- The troll asked the medium goat, "Who's that tripping over my bridge?" The medium goat's reply was: "Naaah—nobody!" But the troll threatened to eat him.

- The medium goat said, "Naaaah—you don't want me. You want my big brother; he's coming up just behind me." The troll said,



"OK," and let the medium goat pass. Finally, the biggest billy goat came along.

- When the biggest goat reached the middle of the, the troll asked, "Naaaah! Who's that trip trapping over my bridge?"
  - The goat replied: "Naaaah—nobody!"
  - The troll threatened: "I'm gonna eat you up!"
  - The goat countered: "Naaaah! Come along—I've got two great spears." (He meant his horns.) The goat threatened to crush the troll, and then he charged.

- The goat trip-trapped over, then beat the troll to bits and pushed him off the bridge down into the cascading water, never to be heard from again. And the goat looked over the edge and said, "Naaah—that's the last we'll bother with him."

- The goat went on to meet his brothers and they went up a hill. To this day, they are at the top of that hill getting fatter and fatter. If you ever ask them, "Did the troll ever bother you again?" their reply would be: "Naaaah!"

The Takeaway

- Repetitions in this story include the sound of the goats' hooves, the giant telling the first two goats to move on, and of course, "Naaaah!"

- Repetition invites us into stories in a very expressive way; they make us want to say the story together. Repetition also helps us to remember stories; the more the repeated phrases are said, the more likely we are to remember the story.

- For these two reasons—quick learning and retention—formula tales are one of our oldest forms of folktales. They are very "traditional" in the sense that the stability of the story (its

tradition) is easy to pass on from one generation to the next: It's easy to learn and easy to remember.

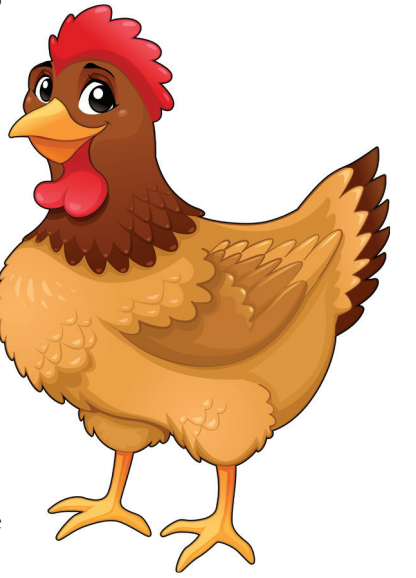
Summary of "The Little Red Hen"

- Once upon a time, there was a little red hen. One day, the hen was scratching with her feet near the barn, when she scratched up a little grain of wheat. She said, "Bwaaak—look at that! Hey everyone, who will plant this wheat?" She was calling to the rest of the animals in the barnyard.

  "Not I," said the rat.
  "Not I," said the cat
  "Not I," said the dog.
  "Not I," said the duck.
  "Not I," said the pig.

- The little red hen said, "I will, then." She planted the grain of wheat. It sprouted up as extremely pretty grain—plump and nice. She reaped the wheat. The little red hen called out again to the other animals in the barnyard: "Who will take this wheat to the mill to be ground into flour?"

  "Not I," said the rat.
  "Not I," said the cat
  "Not I," said the dog.
  "Not I," said the duck.
  "Not I," said the pig.



- The little red hen said, "I will, then." She took the wheat to the mill, where they ground it into flour. She carried the heavy sack of flour back home, mixed it up, and kneaded it into a warm, puffy dough. Once again, she called out to the animals in the

barnyard: "Who will bake this bread?"

"Not I," said the rat.
"Not I," said the cat
"Not I," said the dog.
"Not I," said the duck.
"Not I," said the pig.

- The little red hen said, "I will, then." She put the dough into the oven. And when the bread was baked and its smell filled the air, the little red hen called out to the barnyard animals, "Who will help me eat this bread?"

"I will," said the rat.
"I will," said the cat
"I will," said the dog.
"I will," said the duck.
"I will," said the pig.

- But the little red hen said, "Oh no you won't!" And she picked up the bread and ran off with it.

The Takeaway

- The lesson of this poem is that wishes get you nowhere, but work will help you make progress. None of the animals except the hen worked—and she was who got the reward.

- The rhythms of formula tales—as exemplified by the talking animals—are fun to join in with. That's part of the charm and staying power of this ancient genre of tale.

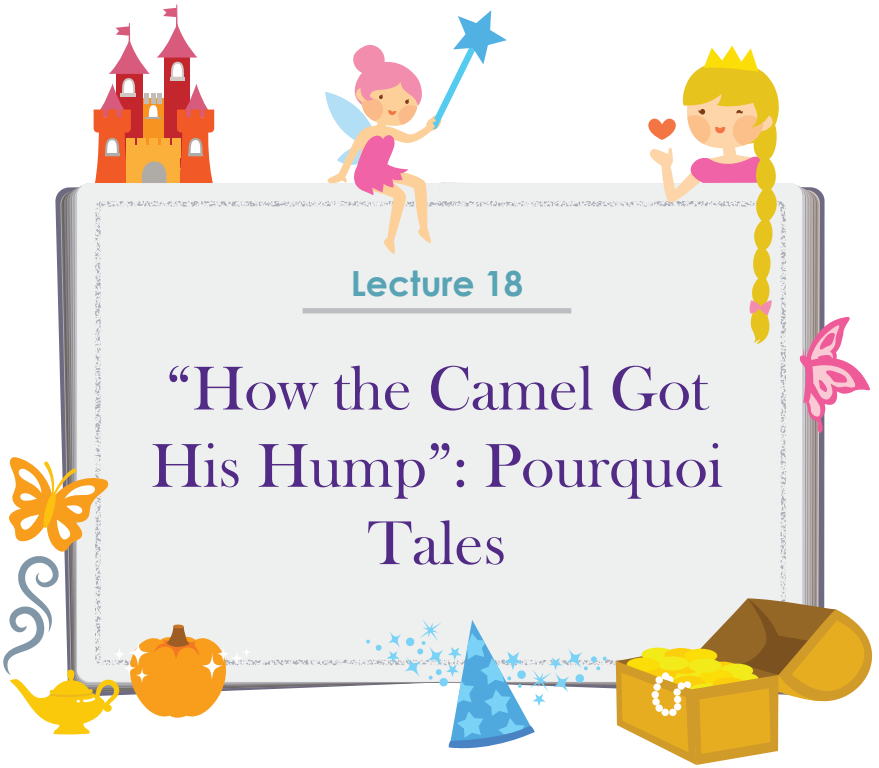
Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

Brunvand, *The Study of American Folklore*.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the rhythms of your daily life? Are there ways that you "sing" through your day's daily tasks? Do you have a formula for getting through your day? How might you use repetition to tell a story about your daily formula for living?
2. Have you ever learned the hard way about a lesson similar to one in the formula tales from this lecture? How could you use rhyme or repetition—or even the distancing device of animal characters—to retell this story of your own personal experience so that others might learn from your experience in an accessible way?



Lecture 18

"How the Camel Got His Hump": Pourquoi Tales

A big part of the function of folklore is to help us understand the world and make sense of it, so that we can find our place within it and survive. Folklore is very utilitarian in that sense—it teaches us something fundamental about the world and the way the world works, so that we can know the world and ourselves better. Pourquoi tales are often about the natural world and explain how and why things are the way they are. Those are the focus of this lecture. The video lecture contains several stories, but this guidebook chapter will focus on the central one: an adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's "How the Camel Got His Hump."

Summary of "How the Camel Got His Hump"

- In the beginning, when the world was new-and-all and the animals were just beginning to work for humankind, there was a camel who lived in the middle of a howling desert. He lived there because he did not want to work.

- He ate sticks and thorns and milkweed and prickles, and when anybody spoke to him he said, "Humph!" That was all: "Humph!" and no more. On Monday morning, a horse came to him with a saddle on his back and said, "Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us." What did the Camel say? "Humph."

- Later that day, a dog came to him with a stick in his mouth: "Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us." The reply: "Humph."

- In the afternoon, an ox came to him, with a yoke on his neck and said "Camel, come plough like the rest of us." The reply: "Humph."

- All three animals—the horse, the dog, and the ox—went and told the man in charge. The man said, "I'm very sorry for you, the world being so new-and-all, but that Humph-thing in the desert can't work, or he would have been here by now, and there is so much to be done. You must work double-time to make up for him."

- This made the three very angry, so they began to talk among themselves about what was to be done. The camel walked by, chewing milkweed, and just laughed at them. Just then, a djinn came by; this was the djinn in charge of all deserts.

The horse asked the djinn: "Is it right for anyone to be so idle, with the world so new-and-all?"

The djinn replied: "Certainly not."

The horse: "Well, there's a thing in the middle of the desert with a long neck and long legs, and he hasn't done a stroke of work yet. He won't trot."

The djinn: "That's my camel for all the gold in Arabia! What does he say about it?"

The dog: "He says, 'Humph!' And he won't fetch and carry."

The djinn: "Does he say anything else?"

The ox: "Only 'Humph,' and he won't plough."

- The djinn went to the camel in the desert and asked, "My long-necked friend, what's this I hear of your doing no work, with the world so new-and-all?"

"Humph!" said the camel.

"Very well," said the Djinn. "As you say,"

- The camel said "Humph!" once again, but when he looked back, he saw his back puffing up into a great big lolloping humph.

- The djinn explained: "That's your very own humph that you've brought upon your very own self by not working. It's already Thursday and you've done no work since Monday, when the work began. Now you are going to work."

"How can I," said the camel, "with this humph on my back?"

"That's made a-purpose," said the Djinn. "All because you missed those three days of work. You will be able to work now for three

days without eating, because you can live on your humph. Now come out of the desert and go help the other three, and behave."

- The camel humphed away to help the other three. From that day to this, the camel has always worn a humph (though we call it a hump now, to spare his feelings). But he has never yet caught up with the three days that he missed at the beginning of the world, and he has never learned how to behave.

The Takeway

- The Djinn in this story is a trickster figure—he takes it upon himself to teach the camel a lesson. There are lots of different kinds of djinn in Arabic folklore and mythology; some of them are friendly, and some of them are mean. (These were the kind that got put into bottles and lamps.)

- The Quran says that the djinn were created by God from the "fire of a scorching wind," which is why they ride in on a cloud of hot swirling air. In contemporary Anglicized folklore, we think of genies as friendly, helpful spirits. This comes from the Romans, who changed the Arabic word *djinn* to *genie*, which is connected with the word *genius*.

- The Romans believed genies were the spirits who guarded over very smart and talented people. But the Roman word *genie* didn't account for the mean, powerful genies—or even the trickster spirits—that were the real djinn of Arabic folklore.

- In folklore, pourquoi stories aren't true, but they reveal something

true about the world around us, and how we should behave. For example, it's important to contribute to the work of the world (or you might wind up with a humph on your back).

- Human beings have been coming up with answers to "how" and "why" questions for as long as we can remember. Today, we tend to rely on modern science for the answers to these questions; for example, camels and other animals look the way they do because animals evolved and adapted over millions of years into the appearances and behaviors they have today.

- Folklore and folk stories have different answers. The stories we adopt that answer "how?" and "why?" tend to reinforce the worldview and values that we have. In contemporary societies, many people believe the scientific stories; they are proven based on scientific fact or tested theories. That we believe these stories reflects the value that we place on scientific principles and reasoning.

- But even in modern society, simple folk stories that are fictions are very useful. Pourquoi stories are generally understood not to be true, but they reveal the nature behind the world that surrounds us. It's not that science is at odds with folklore; they just reveal different things.

- We go to science when we want to understand how and why physical processes function—and those are fascinating stories. We can go to folklore when we want to understand how we function as a culture and why certain characteristics (such as perseverance, trustworthiness, humility, and bravery) are helpful in life—and those are fascinating stories, too.

Suggested Reading

Browne, Withers, and Tate, *The Child's World Second Reader*.

Kipling, *Just So Stories*.

Kitumba, "Storytelling."

McClure, "Pleiades Star Cluster."

Olcott, *Star Lore*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Does your family have one particular physical feature in common, or a common family trait? Do you have your own family pourquoi stories—tales that explain how everyone came to look or behave the way that they do in your family? Do these stories pull your family identity closer together, or push some family members away—or both?
2. In pourquoi tales, there's often some kind of attitudinal choice that leads to a character being either blessed or cursed to look the way that they do. Do you ever find yourself attributing human characteristics (stubbornness, laziness, pride) to animals? Has your attitude (good or bad) ever impacted the way you look (your countenance, or the way you hold yourself)? How could a change in attitude affect the way you look?
3. The night sky tells us stories each evening. What constellations can you see in the sky tonight? Do you know their stories?

Lecture 19

Lions and Tigers and Bears: Fables

Many of us form close bonds with animal companions: pets, or the animals we rely on to help cultivate or provide our food. They don't speak as we do, but we all have, on occasion, spoken our own language to our animals and interpreted a response. This guidebook chapter focuses on fables, which are short little tales, usually about animals who can talk and take on human characteristics (called anthropomorphized characters). These stories always teach some sort of lesson. This chapter will focus on two: Aesop's "Belling the Cat" and the Kenyan tale "How the Hamster Got His Tail."

Summary of "Belling the Cat"

- There was once an old farmhouse. In the pantry were many good things to eat. There were cheeses and cakes and nice fat bacon. Mice love all these things, so the old farmhouse was the home of

many mice. There were grandfather mice, grandmother mice, and sisters and cousins and aunts.

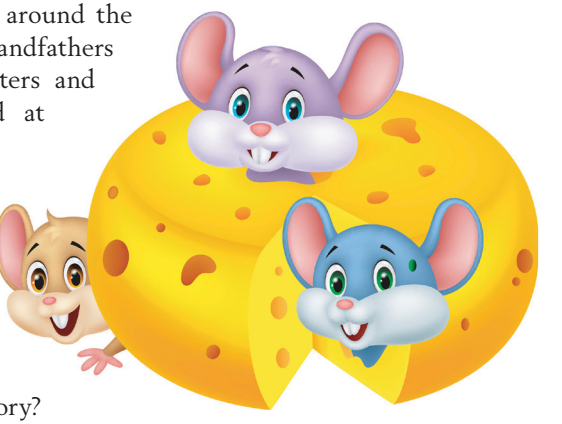
- The mice had happy times until one sad day somebody else came to live at the old house. This somebody was not a man or a woman or a mouse. Grandfather Mouse saw him first. He hurried to his wife. "The big gray cat is here," he whispered. "Tell the others."

- Grandmother Mouse crept from hole to hole, telling the news. "All our fun is over," said the mice. "Wherever we go, the big gray cat will go too." Grandfather Mouse called a meeting to be held in the kitchen at midnight.

- The mice came and sat around in a circle. They sat as still as only mice can sit. They talked and talked, but no one could think of how to get rid of the big gray cat. At last the smallest mouse said, "Let us tie a bell around his neck. Then we shall always know where he is."

- "Good! Good!" said all the mice. They took hold of each other's paws and danced round and round in a ring. They were happy because they had found a way.

- Suddenly, a middle-sized mouse asked, "But who will tie the bell around the big gray cat's neck?" The grandfathers and grandmothers and sisters and cousins and aunts looked at each other a long, long time. Then they all crept back to their holes.



The Takeaway

- What lesson or moral would you put on that story? Sometimes we want the right thing to

happen—but we just don't want to go to the effort or risk to do it. Have you ever wanted something, but you were daunted by the effort it would take to make that thing happen?

- Having great ideas is one thing; following through with those ideas is something very different. And we all experience these tensions in life.

- This lecture's next fable concerns a familiar animal to many of us—a hamster. This one is from Kenya.

Summary of "How the Hamster Got His Tail"

- Once upon a time in Kenya, all of the animals got along. They had plenty of food—it was a time of abundance. Even the little flies were all happy.

- The land was called The Land of Sun Goes Down Early, and everything was going well—until one day. There was a great famine. And the animals had a name for the famine: The Time When the Animals Lost Their Minds.

- Some of the animals began to behave in very peculiar ways, and it struck the flies first. There was no food for the flies, and so the flies started to nibble on the other animals.

- This made the other animals angry, and so they had a council. They met together to answer: "What are we going to do about all of the flies? How will we keep them off of us?"

- At that time, the animals had no tails. So, a tiny grandmother hamster said, "I have a solution! I have made tails for all of you. Come tomorrow morning and you will get your tail."

- All of the animals were happy—but the grandmother hamster's grandson came waddling up. He asked, "Grandmother! When can I get my special tail?"

- The grandmother's reply was: "Grandson, you come tomorrow morning with all of the other animals; you will get your tail." The next morning, all of the other animals came bright and early, at daybreak.

- The lion came, and the grandmother hamster handed him his long, powerful tail. He swished it, and the flies didn't bother him any longer.

- The goats got their bushy, furry tails. They wiggled their tails and smacked the flies away. Next, the cheetahs got their long, sleek, spotty tails, which they used to wave the flies away.

- As for the tiny hamster: Hamsters are nocturnal—they stay awake at night. By the morning, the tiny hamster had decided, "Aaah, I do not have to go in with all the other animals! I am special. It is my grandmother who has all of the tails. I will just go whenever I want to. I am not like those other animals."

- When morning came, he didn't go get his tail with the other animals. Instead, he slept through the day and didn't wake up until the sun was going down. At that time, he went over and said, "Grandmother, where is my tail?"

- The grandmother reached into her bag and pulled out what she had and said, "Oh, I only have a tiny little piece of a tail." She gave that little tiny piece of a tail to the hamster, and he

put it on. He wiggled it, but it couldn't swat away many flies, and he waddled away.

- From that day to this, the grandmother was never able to find a full tail for the hamster, and that is why the hamster to this day has a tiny little tail. The lesson: Do not expect to get special treatment just because of your relations.

Suggested Reading

Ash and Ash, *Aesop's Fables*.

Browne, Withers, and Tate, *The Child's World Second Reader*.

Kipling, *Just So Stories*.

Kitumba, "Storytelling."

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever found yourself guilty of some of the habits of the characters in these stories? Have you ever passed the stone in the road and expected others to move it? Have you ever let a flatterer take advantage of you? How did you feel when the consequences of your bad choice came to pass?
2. The storyteller Aesop was at one point a slave. How do you think Aesop's enslavement influenced the moral lessons he wanted to teach others through the stories he chose to retell? What moral lessons would you like to teach others (and yourself), and what are some of the stories that you tell that carry these lessons?

Lecture 20

"Snow White": Beauty and Handsomeness

In many of this course's folktales and fairy tales, the heroes and heroines either are, or aspire to be, handsome or beautiful. But what made the beautiful people in the story beautiful? What made the handsome prince handsome? Is it all about how they looked? Or is there more to being beautiful? Those are questions this lecture looks at, through the lens of Grimms' version of "Snow White," in which the queen uses different kinds of beauty to gain power.

Summary of "Snow White"

- Once upon a time in winter, there was a beautiful, kind queen sewing in her castle. She looked out the window at the snowflakes falling onto the grounds below. She pricked her finger and three drops of blood dropped onto the snow on the window ledge.

Seeing this, the queen made a wish: "If only I had a little girl who was as black as ebony, as red as blood, and as white as snow."

- Soon after, she had a baby girl with hair as black as ebony, snow-white skin, and lips that were red as blood. But the queen died shortly after, and the king's eyes turned to another woman. The new woman enchanted the king and she became queen herself.

- The new queen, beautiful and proud—and secretly scared of losing her power and her beauty—would go to a magic mirror every day. She'd stand in front of that mirror and ask, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?"

- The mirror spoke back: "You, Queen, are the fairest." But in time, the daughter grew up. By the time she was seven years old, she was indeed beautiful.

- One day, when the queen approached the mirror and asked her question, the mirror replied, "You, Queen, are beautiful; it is true. But, Snow White is a thousand times fairer than you." The queen reacted badly and ordered her huntsman to take Snow White into the woods, cut out her lungs and liver, and bring those organs back for her to eat.

- Out in the woods, the huntsman couldn't do the deed. He let Snow White escape, and she ran until she came to a house in a clearing. The house was warm, and inside

were seven plates of food and seven goblets, filled with food and drink.

- Snow White was starving, so she ate and drank tiny morsels from each—not wanting to deplete all of one. After that, she was exhausted. The house had seven beds; she tested all the beds, then picked the softest and went to sleep on it.

- Just as she fell asleep, seven dwarves came home to the house from working in the mines. As they came in, they saw things were in disarray. One by one, they asked:

  "Who's been sitting in my chair?"
  "Who's been eating off of my plate?"
  "Who's been eating my bread?"
  "Who's been picking up my fork?"
  "Who's been picking up my knife?"
  "Who's been eating my vegetables?"
  "Who's been drinking out of my cup?"

- Then, they turned around. They all asked, "Who's been sleeping in my bed?" and when they came to the seventh bed, they wondered what to do with the sleeping girl. They decided not to wake her. The dwarf whose bed she'd taken shared the other dwarves' beds one at a time, spending an hour in each bed before getting kicked out and moving to the next.

- The next morning, when she woke up, Snow White introduced herself to the dwarves and told them her story and complimented their home. The dwarves took pity on her and offered to let her stay if she did chores for them: cooking, cleaning, knitting, washing dishes, and making beds. She agreed and vowed to keep the house as neat as they had kept it themselves.

- Every morning the dwarves went off to the mines and left her at the house. But before they left each morning, they warned her: "Beware of the queen. Don't let her in."

- Meanwhile, back in the queen's tower, the mirror told her Snow White was still alive—living beyond the mountains—and still a thousand times fairer than her. The queen disguised herself as a peasant woman with mud on her face, a cloak, and a hunched walk. She took a basket with a corset in it and set off to Snow White's house.

- When she got there, the queen asked to be let in, claiming she was selling corsets. She held up a beautiful corset for Snow White to see, and Snow White was fooled by the queen's disguise. She opened the door, bartered with the woman, and started to put the corset on.

- The woman said, "I will help you tie that corset. Tighter!" She cinched Snow White's corset tighter and tigher until Snow White couldn't breathe and passed out, falling asleep on the floor.

- The queen said, "Hah! I have gotten rid of you," and hobbled back through the forest. That evening, the seven dwarves came home

and cut the corset off, waking Snow White up. They told her the woman had been the queen in disguise.

- The next day, the cycle repeated: The queen found out from the mirror that Snow White was still alive. This time, she modified her disguise, dipped a comb in poision, and went to Snow White as a comb peddler. Snow White was fooled, as she looked different from the corset peddler.

- Snow White opened the door for the queen, who asked to comb Snow White's hair. As soon as the poison comb touched Snow White, she passed out on the floor. The queen said, "Hah! Now, you will stay asleep!" and hobbled off.

- Again, the dwarves came home, and again, they revived her, this time by taking the comb out of her hair. They warned her once more: "Beware of the queen! Don't open the door!" The next morning, off they went to the mines. Meanwhile, the queen learned from her mirror Snow White had survived another assassination attempt.

- This time, the queen poisoned an apple. The red side of the apple was poisoned and the white side was not; it looked so delicious that anyone would have wanted to eat it. She put it into her basket, disguised herself once more, and went to Snow White's house. She knocked and said, "I am selling apples. Don't you want one?"

- Snow White was skeptical of the apple seller: "The dwarves have made me promise not to open the door to anyone." But she saw how tasty the apple looked. The queen took a bit out of the light side to help convince her.

- The girl saw this, opened the door a crack, and stuck her hand out for the apple. She took a bite and went down on the floor, not breathing.

- The queen went back to her mirror and asked, "Who is the fairest one of all?" The mirror said, "You, oh Queen," and she knew she'd defeated the girl.

- Back in the forest, the dwarves came home. They saw Snow White but couldn't find any magical object that might be harming her. They laid her out on a bier, and they cried. This went on for three days. But they noticed that as long as they laid her out, her face always stayed rosy in the cheeks.

- They couldn't put her down in the cold ground even though she appeared to be dead. Instead, they got a little casket made of glass, and they set her inside it. There she remained for many years. As she stayed there, she grew, but didn't become any less fair or wake up.

- This went on until the king's son came riding up one day. It was getting late, so he asked if he could stay for the night. He walked inside, and there in the parlor was the casket made of glass with the girl lying inside, with the words "Snow White" written on the casket.

- He fell in love with her. The dwarves took pity on him and let him take her back to his castle with him. The servants had to carry the girl around in the casket. At home in the castle, he would sit by her casket. If he ever had to leave her side, he was miserable.

- The servants started to grow bored with this—they didn't like sitting and watching this girl, who did nothing. One day, when

the son of the king was away, they opened the casket for fun. They sat the girl up, and they started slapping her on the back.

- The girl coughed up the piece of poisoned apple and woke up. She looked around and said, "Well, where am I?" She got up and went and saw the prince when he returned. They had a feast, and the very next day was the wedding.

- The queen was invited to the wedding. She was angry—she asked her mirror, "Who is the fairest?" The mirror said, "Ah, the new young queen is the fairest one of all."

- Though she was angry, she had to see who this new queen was—she put her crown on, and she went to the wedding and its feast. She saw it was Snow White—the very girl she had tried to kill. The queen was very frightened, but she was so angry.

- When Snow White and the prince's servants saw the old queen who had tried to kill Snow White, they got a pair of iron shoes and put them in a fire. Next, they took them out, and made the queen wear them.

- They said, "Now you will dance!" and she started to dance. They forced her to keep dancing until the evil queen danced herself to death in the hot iron shoes. That was the end of her, and Snow White and her prince lived happily until the end of their days.

The Takeaway

- The world is full of all kinds of beauty—and all kinds of ugliness. Often in traditional fairy tales, it's handy for the prince to be handsome but essential that the girl be beautiful. Why is this?

- To answer this question, we have to make an important distinction: Beauty isn't the same thing as power in these stories; rather, beauty is a woman's tool to access power.

- Throughout most of human history, women haven't merely lacked power, but also access to positions of power within political structures of the time. The stepmother can't be king; her access to the king is through the tool of her beauty.

- Just as the king would wield his sword on the battlefield as a way of gaining power over other countries, the stepmother wields her beauty like a weapon to subjugate the king's attention. When she loses her status as most beautiful, it's as if she's been disarmed on the battlefield. The difference: When a king loses his sword and laments it, it's considered tragedy; when a woman loses her beauty and laments it, it's considered vanity.

- The handsome prince is also a consistent image in fairy tales, but his power doesn't lie in his appearance. Rather, it lies in his position of power: He is a prince.

- "Snow White" points out something very important about the distinction between beauty for women and handsomeness for men. Handsomeness for the prince doesn't gain him access to political power. He attracts women to him, and it's usually with the effect of raising the woman's social and political status.

- Interestingly, this version of "Snow White" doesn't have the prince kissing the princess awake; she awakens by accident. It was later, as mostly male writers (or male publishers) continually refined and rewrote the older oral traditional versions, that the prince became the key to the girls' awakening.

Suggested Reading

Eco, *History of Beauty*.

———, *On Ugliness*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Has your appearance ever changed, even temporarily? Did you ever get a cast, or begin to notice wrinkles where none had been there before? What was your response or reaction to this change? How did culture play a role in how you interpreted these changes as good or bad?
2. One of the most disturbing, yet potentially satisfying, parts of this story is when the queen is made to dance herself to death in red-hot iron shoes. Do you ever feel sorry for the queen in this story? What would the story look like were it told from the queen's perspective?

Lecture 21

"Rapunzel": Maiden/ Mother/Crone

This lecture's story starts with cravings for love, for a family, and for a certain food. It's the story of Rapunzel; this lecture's version combine aspects of the German and Italian versions, with large influences from the Grimm brothers' and the author Giambattista Basile's work.

"Rapunzel" Background

- In the days of knights, castles, and peasants, they didn't have access to modern medicine and relied more on folk wisdom to help women take care of themselves and the babies in their bellies. It was believed that whatever a woman thought about while she was pregnant would influence and "mark" the unborn baby in her belly. That applied to food cravings. In this lecture's story, the craved food is parsley.

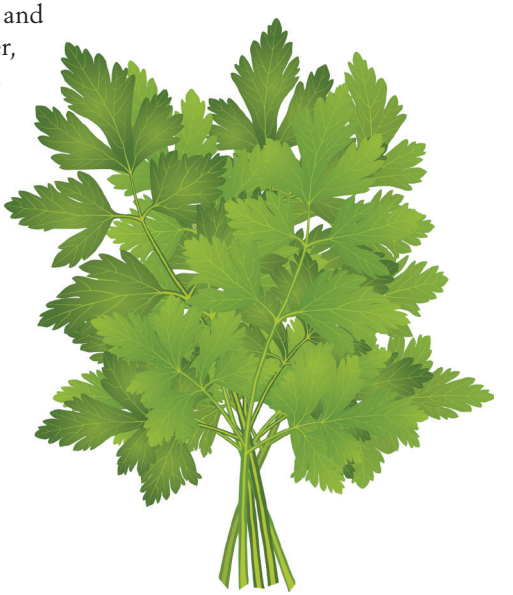
- The character name of Parsley, along with the little parsley birthmark on the girl's chest, comes from Basile's Italian version. In Italian, parsley is *prezzemolina*, and that is the root of the name of the tale in Italy: Petrosinella. But the Grimms changed the kind of green leafy herb that the mother craved from parsley to rampion, or evening primrose, which in German is *rapunzel*.

Summary of "Rapunzel"

- There once was a man and a woman. They wanted one thing more than anything else: a baby. Eventually, the woman discovered she was pregnant. She'd sing to her baby: "My baby, my baby, what do you want my dear?"

- The baby in her belly wanted green, leafy foods above all else. In turn, the mother craved and ate green nourishment: kale, lettuce, spinach, and so on.

- One day, the woman looked out the highest window in her home and saw a fairy's garden. In the garden was green parsley, which she and the baby wanted, but it was way out across the garden wall and she couldn't reach it. Moreover, the fairy who owned it was powerful—some said she was a sorceress.



- The woman wanted the parsley so badly she eventually fell ill, and her husband decided to do something about it. He knew it was a bad idea, but one night, he snuck out, climbed over the garden wall, and grabbed three handfuls of parsley.

- Just as he was about to climb over that garden wall, he heard: "My man, my man, what have you got right there?" It was the evil sorceress. The man saw her, apologized, and asked for forgiveness. He explained he was afraid his wife would die without the parsley.

- The sorceress said, "Very well. Take the parsley. But you have stolen from me. There is a price—you must give me the baby!" He didn't want to, but the sorceress would kill him if he disagreed, so he gave in to her terms, grabbed a handful of parsley, and left.

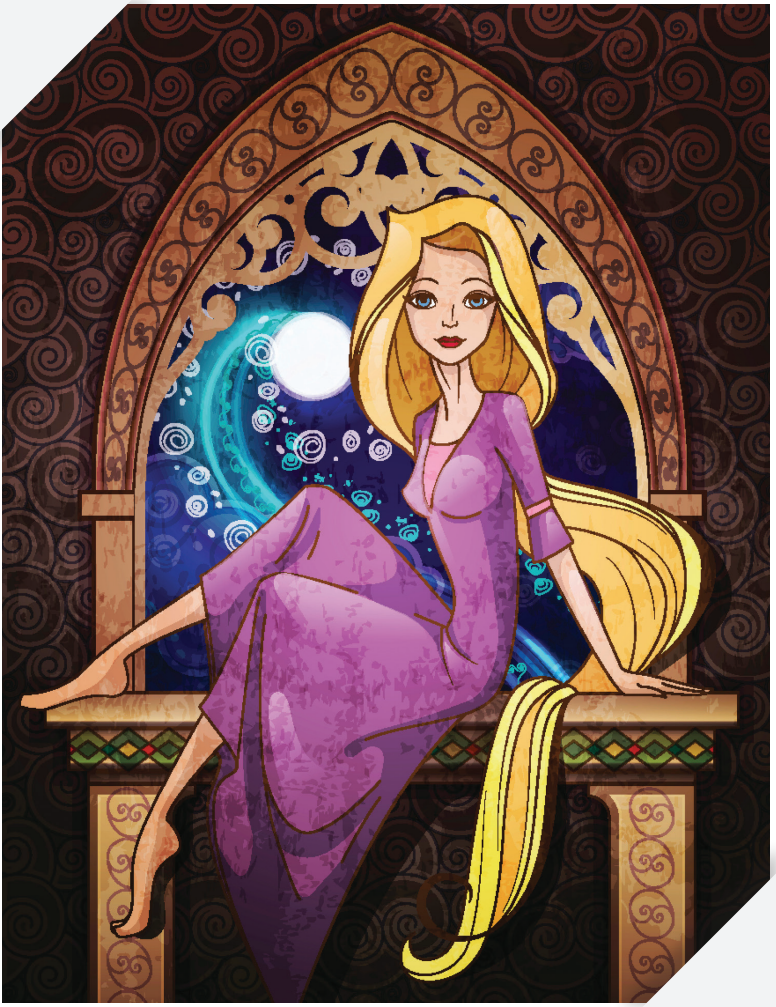
- In time, the baby was born—it was a girl, and her mother named her Parsley. However, the sorceress had made the image of a sprig of parsley on the baby's chest. The mother saw the mark and knew a promise had been made. The sorceress swooped in, took the baby, and raised her herself.

- When the girl was 12 years old, the sorceress swirled her hand, and a tall tower began to rise out of the ground, rising up into the air. The tower had no door and no opening except for one tiny window way up at the top.

- The sorceress surrounded that tower with bramble bushes that had long sharp thorns. She flew herself up with the girl and put her in the tower. Every day, the girl would sing a song in the same tune as the way her mother used to sing to her, even though she had no memory of her.

- Parsley, in time, had hair that was 20 yards long. Every day the fairy would come by and shout for Parsley to throw her hair down. Parlsey would tie the hair around a hook and throw it down, then the fairy would climb it.

- One day, Parsley was singing by the window when a prince wandering by heard it. The prince was enthralled, and every day he came back to listen to her sing. Eventually, he heard the sorceress calling, "Parsley, Parsley! Throw down your hair!" He hid behind a tree to see what happened next. He saw Parsley throw her hair down and the sorceress climb up.



- He waited until the sorceress left, then went over and called for Parsley to throw her hair down. She did; he climbed up and visited her. Parsley was surprised at first, but they started to talk, and then they started to laugh. Parsley discovered that this man was a lot more fun to talk with than that fairy was. And she found he was much nicer than that fairy was.

- This went on, day after day, until they decided that they liked each other so much they would be married. However, they were married in secret because the fairy had enchanted her and would never let her out of that tower.

- Eventually, Parsley started singing: "My baby, my baby, what do you want my dear?" The fairy was puzzled, but then looked at the girl's belly, which had grown quite large. The fairy realized Parsley had been singing to the two babies in her belly. This tipped her off to the secret marriage.

- The fairy was angry; she cut the girl's hair off and abandoned her in the forest. That night, the prince came back—thinking everything was fine with his wife and children up there in the tower—well he called out, "Parsley, Parsley! Throw down your hair!"

- The fairy threw down the hair. The prince climbed up, expecting Parsley but instead meeting the fairy. She said, "You, I have taken Parsley, I have cast her out in to the forest and I will get you, too!"

- She picked the prince up and threw him out of the window. He landed in briars below; as he climbed out, he found that his eyes had been scratched out by the thorns. He couldn't see. He went wandering around, groping in the forest, blind—and he was so hungry that he began to pick and eat the grass.

- One day, he heard a sound: "My babies, my babies, what do you want my dears?" He knew that it was the sound of her voice, and exclaimed, "It's my princess! It's my Parsley! Oh, where are you?"

- He followed the sound of her voice, but as he got closer he heard the sound of two babies crying. Parsley cried for her husband who was lost, and she cried for her babies who were about to die of hunger.

- Suddenly, she saw him wandering toward the sound of her voice. He collapsed at her feet, and her tears fell onto his face. As one

of her tears fell into his blinded eye, the eye was healed. Another tear fell into the other eye, and that one was healed, too.

- He could see and could lead them back to the castle, where they lived and thrived as a family together.

The Takeaway

- In another version of this story, the heroine has a much more active role. Refer to the video for a full telling of that. The important thing to note from that version is that Parsley defeats an ogress.

- In many of the "classic" versions of traditional tales, heroines are more passive. For example, in some versions of Snow White, the

prince kisses the princess to awaken her. But this isn't always the case: Think of Mollie Whuppie, who braves an ogre's house again and again to help her sisters and herself.

- There are many strong women folk heroes in traditional folktales and fairytales; sometimes you just have to get beyond the "classic" popular version to find the heroine you want to follow.

- The heroine is one of a triad of archetypal women figures in this story. In stories from the time of King Arthur, there were three male archetypal roles: warrior, father, and sage. In the story of Rapunzel, as with the story of Snow White, we see a triad of women figures represented by different characters: the maiden, the mother, and the crone.

- Each of these has a positive manifestation of the role and a negative manifestation of the role. For example, Parlsey is the maiden character. The bright side: She's a young girl, unmarried, innocent, and thrown into an adventure. Her shadow side: She's a siren-type character who drew the prince to potential danger.

- Another woman in the story is Rapunzel's mother. The mother archetype is often presented as nurturing, caring, and life-giving. But there's a shadow side to this figure as well: In the ogress version of the story, the mother abandons her daughter to the ogress.

- As for the ogress (or fairy/sorceress), she's the shadow or negative side of the older woman figure: the witch. The positive side of this figure is the crone: She is older, wise, and sometimes even magical—someone with the power to bless or curse you.

Suggested Reading

Ashliman, "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts."

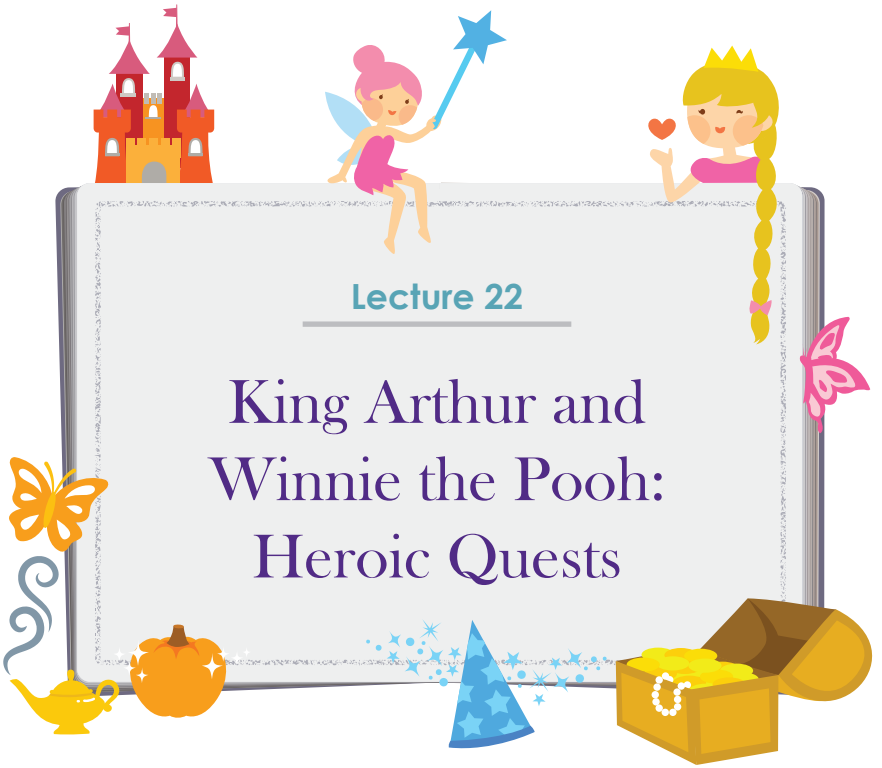
Grimm and Grimm, *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*.

Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales*.

Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*.

Questions for Discussion

1. Who in your life is a mother figure? A maiden? A crone?
2. Fairy tales and folktales are often criticized for the feminine characters being made to be passive. But in many classic folk narratives, the women are very powerful and not at all passive. To what degree do popular films and comic book representations of women fairy tale heroines picture the heroine as passive or active? Why do you think animators and writers chose to print and focus on the kinds of characters they did?



Lecture 22

King Arthur and Winnie the Pooh: Heroic Quests

Heroes don't always start out as heroes. Often, adventures make the hero. This lecture discusses some classic heroes, ranging from King Arthur to Winnie the Pooh. It examines the characteristics of heroic knights and parallels some of the key characters in King Arthur's tales with the characters of Winnie the Pooh's stories. These characters are archetypal figures in knight-quest stories: the heroic questing warrior, the father or king, and the wise old sage.

Summary of "Merlin, Arthur, and the Two Swords"

- There once was a ruler named King Vortigen. He'd killed the rightful king and stolen the crown. One day, one of King Vortigen's advisors came and warned him the Saxons—Germanic tribes who battled the English over land—were coming.

- Vortigen ordered his men to build a castle for him to hide in. But they ran into problems while building the wall: Every night, all the stones the men had set up during the day came tumbling down. Vortigen sent for magicians to fix the problem, but they couldn't fix it, either.

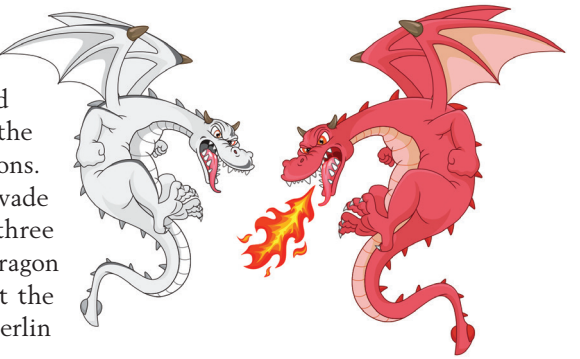
- Finally, the sorcerers gave Vortigen some advice: "You will only be able to build this high castle on this plain if you take the blood of a boy who has no mortal father."

- Vortigen sent his men into the streets to find such a boy. They hunted until they heard a man yelling at a boy to leave, saying he had no mortal father. The king's men grabbed the boy and took him off to the castle's site. This boy was special: He was Merlin.

- When he met the king, the boy told him the way to stop his castle from falling was to drain an underground lake beneath the castle. There, the king's forces would "find two dragons—one red, and one white. The dragons wake each night and fight each other, and their rumbling under the earth is what causes your castle to fall each night."

- Vortigen had the site dug and drained, and sure enough, two dragons were there, who woke and fought at nightfall. One was red and one was white, and both breathed fire. They clashed three times, clawing and smashing each other. But the red dragon eventually won and killed the white dragon, who disappeared.

- Merlin told the king this was a prophecy: The red dragon represented the English and the white dragon the Saxons. The Saxons would invade Vortigen's country three times, but the red dragon would win in the end. At the end of the revelation, Merlin



told Vortigen, "You will not live to see this victory, for the son of the rightful king, who you killed, is coming to get you."

- Sure enough, one of the rightful king's sons came riding in. He killed Vortigen with fire and took over. Soon after, the Saxons came riding in and killed many of the English with daggers, then rode off.

- The new king asked Merlin how to honor these people. Merlin answered, "In Ireland, there are tall tall stones set there by giants who brought the stones from countries in Africa. You should bring those stones from Ireland to Salisbury Plain in England."

- Merlin built a huge machine that moved those stones from Ireland all the way to England. If you go to the Salisbury Plain in England today, you can see these stones. They're called the Giants' Dance or Stonehenge.

- A second time, the Saxons came riding in. They killed the replacement king; this time, the king's brother, Uther, took charge.

- Uther saw a comet sweeping across the sky. Merlin told him the comet's tail resembled a dragon's tail and represented Uther's yet-to-be-born son. Uther called himself Uther Pendragon thereafter. He married a woman and had a son with her.

- Merlin warned Uther the boy would be safer in hiding. Uther trusted him, so Merlin took the king's son, Arthur, to live with another family.

- In came the Saxons a third time. Uther defeated them in battle with a sword, but they'd poisoned him and he knew he was going to die. He called his nobles and Merlin and declared the kingdom and the sword would go to Arthur.

- There was much squabbling—the nobles didn't know who this boy was and wanted the crown for themselves—but Merlin came up with a challenge. He called the nobles to a church on Christmas Eve.

- As the priest prayed, down came a stone, and in the stone was a sword. On that sword was written, "Whosoever pulleth out this sword from this stone will be the rightful king." Everyone tried to pull it out, but no one could.

- A few days later, on New Year's Eve, there was a great jousting tournament. The family who had helped raise Arthur into the boy he was then attended. But Sir Kay forgot his sword for the tournament. He turned to Arthur: "You, go get me my sword!"

- Arthur didn't know where to get a sword, and he wandered around the town until he found a sword, plunged into a stone. He pulled it right out and brought it to Sir Kay.

- Everyone read the inscription, but none of the grownups believed that this little boy could have pulled the sword out of the stone. They put the sword back in the stone, and they had everyone else try again, and none of the grownups could pull it out. Arthur went and pulled it out again. This went on until finally most of the nobles cried, "Hail Arthur! Long live the king!"

- But there was one group of nobles who still didn't want Arthur for king. They brought out their swords and started to battle him.

Arthur went to Merlin for help. Merlin advised him: "You can win, but you need a different sword. Come—you must ride out to a lake."

- Arthur rode out to the lake. He saw a stone and a woman's hand coming out from the water. In that woman's hand was another sword. This was Excalibur, the sword of swords. Arthur took a boat out to the sword, retrieved it, and thanked the lady of the lake.

- With Excalibur, Arthur defeated the evil nobles who opposed him. And he defeated the Saxons whenever they came to invade. The red dragon (who was Arthur) finally defeated the white dragon.

- Arthur won the heart of Lady Guenivere, who became the queen with him. Arthur, Guenivere, and Merlin brought peace to Camelot. For a time—but that's another story.

The Takeaway

- In that story, King Arthur, his father Uther Pendragon, and Merlin are all archetypes: the warrior, the father, and the sage.

King Arthur is an archetypal warrior figure—he goes into battle to defend his country, himself, and his honor.

- Uther Pendragon is King Arthur's father and father figure, protecting his son by putting him into hiding and providing for him by passing his kingdom on to him.

- Arthur himself changes from a warrior to a father figure when he becomes king and later establishes the knights of the Round Table.

- Merlin is an archetypal sage figure: He gives wise advice to the kings, and the kings take it. Merlin is a trusted advisor who helps his friends thrive and survive.

- These figures aren't associated with any particular stage of life or age. They represent possible roles that people encounter in life at any age, depending on the challenges they, their families, or their communities may face.

- It's also important to note that archetypal characters represent figures in our lives—not necessarily people. For example, a father figure is important in our growth and development—but that role doesn't necessarily have to be filled by a biological father in a person's life. For example, a grandparent, uncle, or close family friend can serve as a father figure.

- Another important point: You don't have to be a boy to be a warrior (just like you don't have to be a girl to be nurturing or helpful). History is full of women warriors, from Joan of Arc (who led French troops into battle) to Queen Elizabeth I (who led her country through several battles).

- The heroes of the medieval ages reflect a different kind of society—one that saw battles as a kind of leisurely pursuit. Quests could involve slaying a dragon or battling a giant.

Winnie the Pooh

- The character Winnie the Pooh has some parallels with the heroes of King Arthur's legends. For example, in one story, Pooh and Christopher Robin gather a group of explorers and discover the North Pole. In another, Winnie the Pooh goes on a quest to find honey in a tall tree.

- With King Arthur's knights, as with the modern-day adventuring hero Winnie the Pooh, one character type is the knight-errant. The knights of the Round Table were knights-errant.

- These knights went on quests, which is a kind of adventure that you seek out rather than being thrust into. Hansel and Gretel or Mollie Whuppie were thrust into their adventures and had to defend themselves against witches and ogres until they found their way to a better life. But a quest is something you seek out.

- In medieval culture, a quest was considered noble. You weren't just going out to steal something; you were going to right a wrong or fulfill some kind of personal pledge of honor or duty. A knight-errant sought out adventure in a quest for something noble.

- The nobility of it depends very much on the point of view of the hero's culture. Many of the quests that the real knights-errant went on are now perceived as fairly awful. An example is all the people who died during the quest for the Holy Grail during the Crusades.

- For Winnie the Pooh, his search for honey is a noble quest. But from the bees' perspective, he is just coming to steal their honey.

Suggested Reading

Knowles, *King Arthur and His Knights*.

Lurie, *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups*.

Lacy and Wilhelm, eds., *The Romance of Arthur*.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do you think Merlin and King Arthur's more humble beginnings shaped them later on and shaped them as legendary folk heroes?
2. Who is a warrior figure in your life? A father figure? A sage?

Lecture 23

American Tall Tales and Folk Songs

The stories in this lecture—tall tales and folk songs—are larger than life. Tall tales often reinforce the dominant ideals of the culture out of which they spring. In the case of 20th-century American tall tales, the stories often carry themes of expansion, colonization, progress, and taming the wilderness. Folk songs often served as a way for working-class folks to speak back to the speed, force, and onward rush of industrialization and progress. Tall tales and folk songs give us a way to speak about our history, and to speak back to that history. This lecture starts with a whopper of a tall tale, about Pecos Bill.

Summary of "Pecos Bill"

- Pecos Bill's family was traveling across the plains, headed out west to settle new land and build a new life for themselves. But as the

wagon bumped along, Bill fell out and landed in the dirt, while the wagon and the rest of his family rode away.

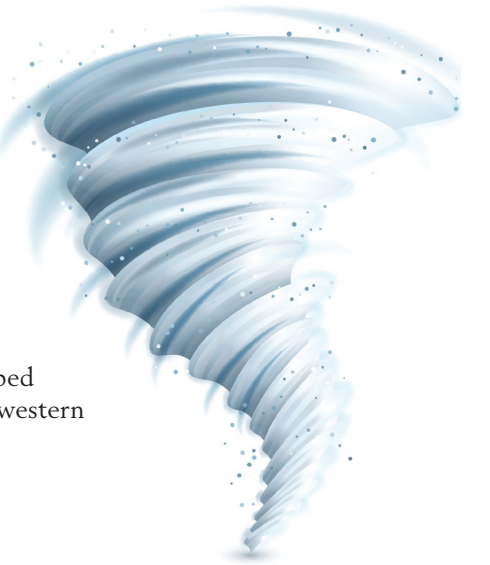
- A coyote came along, picked him up, and raised him in her den as a fellow coyote. He scratched at fleas, chased food, and howled at the moon. Bill wore clothes given to him by a cowboy, used a rattlesnake as a whip, and rode a cougar like a normal cowboy would ride a horse.

- Eventually, Bill roamed across the plains of Kansas, meeting up with other cowboys and driving cattle across the plains. One day, a tornado struck, picking up cows and destroying trees. Bill wasn't worried, though: He took out his snake rope and lassoed the tornado.

- He squeezed harder and harder on the rope until the tornado started to cry. Big, salty tears dropped down, and they became the Great Salt Lake. Pecos Bill kept riding and started to steer the twister up into the clouds, up and up. That's the last anybody ever saw of Pecos Bill in those parts.

The Takeaway

- Tall tales take joy in excess. If life in a classroom or a boardroom seems to contain us, tall tales let us expand, let loose, and be free. Pecos Bill's superhuman strength and abilities are larger than life, which is fitting with the experiences that settlers had, suddenly moving from cramped city quarters into the wide western landscapes.



- Like all folktales, tall tales sprung up out of culture from a certain context. Pecos Bill was a tall tale hero of the Wild West. He stood for the values of survival—and he also is a symbol for conquering the American West, and the native Americans who lived there. Tall tale heritage can be complicated.

- Women also appeared in tall tales. An example is Katy Goodgrit, who was fantastically fierce. In one story, she fights off an enormous pack of wolves.

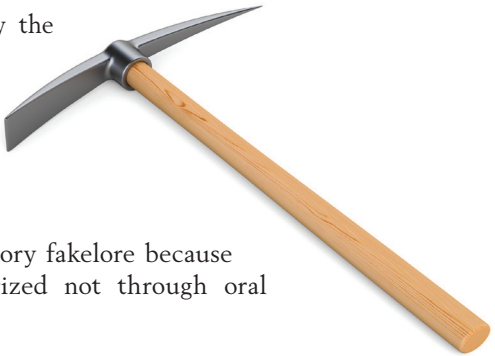
- Frontierswomen like Katy Goodgrit were as formidable as Pecos Bill. These were the tall tale versions of real women like Annie Oakley, who was a skilled sharpshooter. During World War I, Annie Oakley offered to train up a troop of women sharpshooters—but President Woodrow Wilson wouldn't let her.

Paul Bunyan

- Paul Bunyan is arguably the most famous character in American folklore. He and his companion, Babe the blue ox, are gentle giants. Legend has it that Bunyan worked 24 hours a day and invented all the tools lumberjacks use.

- He also had a hand in geography: The Great Lakes were an invention of his, meant to give Babe enough to drink. Bunyayn created the Grand Canyon by dragging his pickaxe behind him after a hard day's work.

- The duo promoted not only the logging industry, but also the dominant values of that time period in American culture: progress, expansion, development.



- Many folklorists call this story fakelore because the story became popularized not through oral

traditional circles but through the advertising of the Red River Lumber Company.

- In 1916, the company hired a writer named William Laughead to develop stories that would promote the logging industry. The legend of Paul Bunyan hit the presses in 1916, and was later revamped in 1922 as *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*.

Folk Songs

- Some folklorists say that the most famous American folk song is about John Henry, in all its variants. John Henry was a legendary African American folk hero who worked on the railroads when the United States was beginning to connect itself with tunnels and rail lines. He is imagined, like Paul Bunyan, as a heroic giant of a man.

- The John Henry ballad is the story of a strong, hammer-wielding man who blasted tunnels through mountains faster than steam-powered machines; it illustrates a time when our nation was coming into the age of steel, and seeing the growth of the railroad industry.

- The legend is about a contest between John Henry, who drove steel spikes by hand, against a steam-powered hammer. Henry won, but the victory was a sad one, because he had exhausted himself to the point of death—his heart gave out from the effort of trying to beat the machine, and he died with the hammer in his hand.

- The era of mechanization in American history was an era of change. Stories like John Henry were inspired by people who had labored by hand and were afraid that machines would put them out of work.

- In some cases, the machines just made the work more efficient, so more laborers could be hired to do more work. But in many cases, the machines could work harder and faster than a person, and many people were put out of work at the advent of new technology.

- John Henry's death is a symbolic one—in one sense, it represents the death of jobs in the face of mechanization.

- But one unusual folk song in American oral traditions celebrates the advent of mechanization. The song "Peg and Awl," about the mechanization of shoemaking, is a counterpoint to other industrialization folk songs, where the speed of industry can literally kill you.

- Railroads feature prominently in American folklore songs, including another traditional ballad about a legendary engineer who pushed his engine to the limit, flying down the track at top speed.

- Casey Jones was an actual person. Jones's friend, Wallace Saunders, composed a ballad in memory of Jones. "The Ballad of Casey Jones" tell the story story of him pushing his train too hard and meeting his death.

The Takeway

- Tall tales and legends inflate characters and situations. And many legendary characters and ballads focus on the shifting points between old and new cultures, as with the shift in mechanization and the railways, or the early settlers' push to move out west. In terms of mechanization, the story of evolving technology is a very old one that rings true in contemporary society—every year we see new devices.

- Tall tales give legendary heroes the added strength and heft a culture needs in order to survive the winds of change. They give us a fictional platform on which we can stand and laugh with or at the impossible circumstances that surround us. When the winds of change blow, who wouldn't want to lasso change around the middle and ride it off into the sunset?

Suggested Reading

Burton, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*.

Cohn, ed., *From Sea to Shining Sea*.

Dundes, "Nationalistic Inferiority Complexes."

Saunders, "The Ballad of Casey Jones."

Questions for Discussion

1. Folklorist Alan Dundes believes that, while folklore is tied to nationalism, *fake*lore (such as the story of Paul Bunyan) is "rooted in feelings of national or cultural inferiority." Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
2. Tall tales are larger-than-life stories, but they are most enjoyable when we sink into the stories and imagine that they really are true. Try telling a story from your life and play with exaggeration and excess—how big can you make things? How fantastic? How does "once upon a time" make stories like these fun and enjoyable, rather than "lying"? What do audience and teller have to acknowledge to make these stories fun, as opposed to trickery or lying?

Lecture 24

Happily Ever After: How Our Stories End

This course ends with two final stories. This first story, from Denmark, ties together several motifs and themes we've encountered throughout the course. The second touches on a very old tale type in world folklore, one that asks: How do we really wrestle with the end of our own human story?

Summary of "The Wonderful Pot"

- Once upon a time there lived a little boy and his mother. They were very poor because a rich man had stolen all of their money. They lived in a tiny hut, and all that they had in the world was a cow. Eventually, they ran out of food, and the mom told the son to go sell their cow.

- He tied a rope to the cow and started off to sell her. On the way, he met a stranger. The stranger took from under his cloak a black iron pot with three legs.

  The stranger asked: "Will you give me your cow for this iron pot?"

  The boy said: "Oh, no! Not I."

  And the iron pot, which could talk, said: "Take me; do take me."

- The mother was angry, but the pot soon proved its worth. The pot could skip, and first it skipped off to a rich man's house and stole pudding his wife was making, then brought it back for the mother and son to eat.

- The next day, it stole wheat from the rich man's barn and again fed the mother and son. The day after that, it skipped off to the rich man's counting house and stole his gold.

- Now the poor little boy and his mother had all the gold that the rich man had stolen from them.

  The next day, the wonderful pot said: "I skip, I skip."

  The mother asked: "Why do you skip, little pot? We need nothing more. We have pudding, bread, and gold."

  The pot answered: "I go to get the rich man."

- The rich man saw the little pot skipping along the road. "Ah! You wicked little pot," he cried, "you took my pudding, and my

wheat, and my gold. I will break you to bits." He caught the little pot by the handle, and his hand stuck.

- He could not pull it away, and all the time he was growing smaller and smaller. At last, he found himself inside the pot. "I skip, I skip," said the wonderful pot for the last time. The pot skipped off with the rich man inside. They never came back.

The Takeway

- That tale of revenge brings up some of the motifs and themes from different stories across cultures. For example, many of the themes in folk and fairy tales center on childbearing and childrearing. Tom Thumb's father goes to a fairy; even "Rumplestiltzkin" is a story that involves a creature who wants a child of his very own.

- Another theme: Again and again we see the heroes of these stories being determined and daring. Jack climbs back up the beanstalk; Mollie Whuppie goes back into the forest to get treasures from the ogre.

- The motivations are sometimes the same. They all dive into their adventures because it's the only way to ensure their family will be able to eat and be safe. And sometimes the motivations are different: In the end, the girl from "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" is motivated by love to find her bear-prince.

- The creatures in these stories know they have to be resourceful if they want to survive: the animals in "The Town Musicians of Bremen" work together to outwit their masters and the robbers in the woods.

- Places reappear as well across stories: for example, the enchanted forest serves as a place of transformation in stories like "Hansel and Gretel." The forest is a place full of powerful possibilities—this is, after all, where the Baba Yaga lives. You could die here. Or you could have your fortunes changed for the better.

- The forest as an agent of change relates to the structure of the rite of passage—the idea that in an adventure or turning point in our lives, we are separated from our known world and thrust into a wholly different world.

- The stories featured in this course are full of traditional characters, such as ogres. The rich man in "The Wondeful Pot" acts like an ogre: He's just a big bully who can be outsmarted even by a character who is very small.

- There are small or unassuming heroes in many of these stories, such as Tom Thumb and Thumbelina. Other examples are underdog characters who have very little power, but find they have great strength when magical helpers (such as the pot) come to their aid.

- We also learned about archetypal figures in stories. Some heroes, villains, and helpers are archetypal characters. While archetypal roles are often gendered, such characters not being limited to being male or female. Examples include the maiden, mother, crone, warrior, father, and sage.

- Culture is an interconnected web. When we hear a folktale or wondertale, it tugs on a thread of oral cultural history, and that thread touches many other threads in the web of culture, including animated movie versions of stories and adaptations of the stories into contemporary contexts.

- The world of folklore is large, and this course barely scratches the surface of oral folklore tales and practices. Urban legends, jokes, family stories, and other genres of stories and tale types are all integral parts of oral folklife.

- In most folk stories, the characters don't live "happily ever after," but "happily for a long time" or "until the end of their days." There's no sentimentality about living forever in most folktales. Oral traditional folktales often give us the kind of ending that we can expect out of life.

- In "The Frog Prince," the princess didn't think the frog fit in the palace. Much of life is about trying to find our place, or make our place, in the world. And we do the same things with stories, even classic stories.

- When we connect with a story, it's because the story satisfies what storytelling scholars call narrative fit. It's when we figure out how to tell our story in a way that fits with who we think we are and who we want to be.

- This course's final story, from Scotland, involves mortality. It asks: How do we deal with our own ending?

Summary of "Death in a Nut"

- Jack's mother is dying, and Jack meets Death walking down the beach. Death is coming to get his mother. Jack takes Death's scythe, breaks it in half, and beats Death with the wooden handle until Death shrinks to the size of a pea. Jack crams him in a hollowed hazelnut shell, corks it, and sends it floating off into the ocean.

- Jack's mother recovers, but a series of humorous events ensues: They can't get anything to eat because the eggs won't crack, a chicken's severed head hops back on the chicken and it lives, the butcher can't kill any of his hogs for bacon, and none of the crops will pull out of their furrows. Jack realizes it's all his fault. His mother tells him, "There is no life without death."

- Jack searches for three days and finally finds Death (very seasick by now). He uncorks the shell and Death returns to his normal size. Jack returns his scythe, and in thanks for his freedom, Death promises not to visit Jack's mother for many years.

- When she is visited again by Death in old age, she greets Death as a friend. And Jack is content, because as he learned, there is no life without death.

The Takeaway

- Stories give us a way to wrestle with things that are very difficult for us to understand in our daily lives. In this case, Jack literally wrestles with the end of life. He talks to Death, traps him, and eventually comes to understand him in his own way. This story asks: What if I could stop people from dying?

- The other stories in this course have asked similar what-if questions: What if I could change my fortune? What if I could make my circumstances better? What if I could help someone else make a better life for themselves? Stories let us dwell in the magic of possibility. They give us the courage to ask "what if?" in our daily lives.

Suggested Reading

Browne, Withers, and Tate, *The Child's World Second Reader*.

Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language*.

Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*.

National Storytelling Network website, www.storynet.org.

Williamson and Williamson, *A Thorn in the King's Foot*.

Questions for Discussion

1. The enchanted forest is a place full of potential. What changes have you undergone in a "wilderness" point in your life?
2. Having heard the tale types and motifs in this collection of classic oral folklore stories, are there any stories you would re-tell in a different way? What would your version of "Cinderella" sound like? How would you tell "Jack and the Beanstalk" or "The Brave Little Tailor?"

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