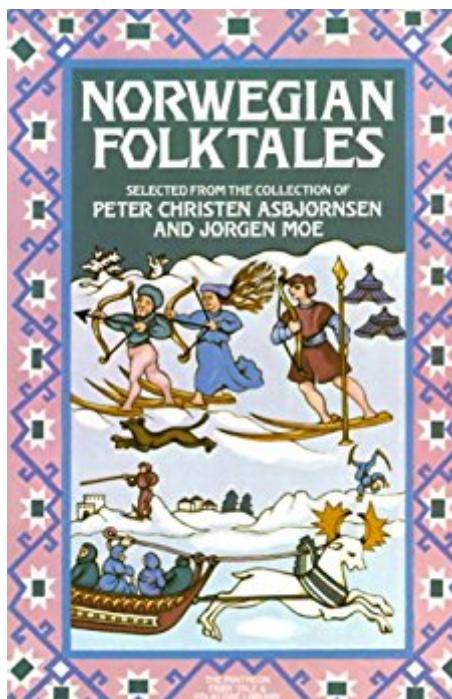


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Norwegian Folktales (The Pantheon Fairy Tale And Folklore Library)



Synopsis

Long a treasure in Norway, the folktales collected by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe have been acclaimed for their richness of humor, fullness of life, and depth of understanding since they first appeared in translation more than a hundred years ago. The Norwegian folktales, said Jacob Grimm, "surpass nearly all others." Within these captivating tales we meet witches, trolls, and ogres; sly foxes and great, mysterious bears; beautiful princesses and country-lads-turned-heroes. Collected here in a sparkling contemporary translation by Pat Shaw Iversen and Carl Norman, these tales brim with the matchless vitality and power of their original telling. Included also are the wonderfully evocative original illustrations of Erik Werenskiold and Theodor Kittelsen. With black-and-white drawings throughoutPart of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

...alongside the fjords, is its literary tradition, beginning with the Viking romances and sagas, at full flood in the works of Ibsen, but flowing like an underground river through its grotesque folk tales - eventyr - as collected by Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and the Mæfåles father and son.

Asbjørnsen began collecting tales in 1834, in isolated rural areas of Norway, a country whose geography has guaranteed isolation through most of history. The publication of the Grimm Brothers' collection of folk tales sparked further enthusiasm amongst Norwegians, but the 'eventyr' are different in many ways from the traditions rescued by the Grimms, and radically different from the literary fairy tales that soon infiltrated Europe and consigned folk tales in general to the realm of children's literature. Readers familiar with the Icelandic sagas will find many similarities in these hard-minded and hard-handed stories of peasant kings, eerie maidens, and of course trolls, with their peculiar shrewd stupidity. The pleasure of hearing/reading most of the eventyr is in the sardonic humor, the joy of seeing the come-uppance of the rich and powerful. It's interesting to note that stories collected from men are chiefly rough and humorous, and naturalistic, while those collected from women, as translator Pat Shaw reports, "kept to deep, mystic, or eerie themes." The original illustrations by Erik Werenskiold and Theodor Kittelsen are reproduced in this collection. Black-and-white pen sketches and etchings, they match the eventyr in wry humor and spooky trollishness. I remember them well from my own childhood, when my grandmothers held me on their laps and read to me in Swedish.

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