

# Traditional Tales

Aylesworth, Jim. *The Gingerbread Man* (illus. Barbara McClintock). New York: Scholastic Press, 1998. ISBN 0590972197.

This is one enticing little gingerbread man who stars in an all-time favourite tale of young children. The excitement of the traditional tale is kept, while allowing the gingerbread man to recite a new verse in this particular version. On the back cover is a recipe which children will want to try. The illustrations are done partially in sepia ink on cream-coloured pages, adding to the allure of gingerbread. This book will be asked for again and again.

👉 Related Reading: *Gingerbread Baby*, *Clay Boy*, *The Gingerbread Man* (Kimmel) (variants)

Beneduce, Ann Keay. *Jack and the Beanstalk* (illus. Gennady Spirin). New York: Philomel Books, 1999. ISBN 0399231188.

The intricately-detailed watercolours add a magical dimension to this book. The language is as richly descriptive, thereby enticing readers of many ages. Not all versions of Jack and the Beanstalk include the fairy who explains what happened to Jack's father. This explanation shows why it is acceptable for Jack to steal from the giant. At the end of the story, the history behind this tale is included. This particular version is more sophisticated than some, without losing the excitement of Jack outwitting the giant.

👉 Related Reading: *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Howe); *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Wells); *Jim and the Beanstalk* (Briggs); *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Kellogg) (variants)

Brett, Jan. *The Mitten*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1989. ISBN 039921920X.

Nicki drops his white mitten in the snow just as his grandma had said he would. Upon finding the mitten, Mole decides that it will make a cozy shelter. As this Ukrainian folktale progresses, many other woodland animals crawl in. Surely there is enough room for one small mouse. An unexpected happening destroys their comfortable spot and creates an amusing ending. The story is extended into the border illustrations. Exquisite detail and vivid colours are trademarks of Jan Brett's books and this one is no exception.

👉 Related Reading: *The Hat* (same author); *The Mitten* (Tresselt) (another retelling); *The Elf's Hat* (same concept); *The Little Snowgirl* (Ukrainian folktale)

Cauley, Lorinda Bryan. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1981. ISBN 0399207953.

Descriptively told, this tale of the three bears will enthrall young children. Goldilocks looks as mischievous as she is depicted in the text. In this version, Goldilocks is shown to have a home and family to which she returns at the end, answering those inquisitive children who want to know more about her. Sticking to the traditional version, this book is an asset to a collection of fairy tales.

☞ Related Reading: *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (Brett); *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (Marshall); *The Three Bears*, *Somebody and the Three Blairs* (variants)

Ehrlich, Amy. *Cinderella* (illus. Susan Jeffers). Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1985. ISBN 0803702051.

With its brilliant illustrations and fine text, this is a beautiful recreation of the original tale by Charles Perrault. Cinderella is forced to work from early morning until late at night doing household chores for her haughty stepmother and stepsisters. However, the story unfolds with wonder and magic as Cinderella's fairy godmother creates a carriage and fine horsemen to take her to the royal ball. When she leaves a tiny glass slipper behind at the stroke of midnight, the reader is happy to find that the prince will indeed find his lovely princess and marry her.

☞ Related Reading: *The Rough-Face Girl*, *Princess Furball*, *Little Burnt Face*, *Cinder-elly*, *Cinderella* (Karlin); *Sootface - An Ojibwa Cinderella Story*, *Cinderella* (Galdone); *Cendrillon - A Caribbean Cinderella*, *The Egyptian Cinderella*, *The Korean Cinderella* (variants)

Galdone, Paul. *The Three Little Pigs*. Toronto: Scholastic, Inc., 1970. ISBN 0590092723.

This traditional tale features three delightful pigs who meet the wolf. Often a favourite story of children, it contains the demise of the first two unfortunate pigs and the cunning of the third pig. The illustrations are at times humorous and meld with the text. Written in familiar, simple prose, it will be a tale that children will learn to read independently once they have heard it in read-aloud.

☞ Related Reading: *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, *The Fourth Little Pig*, *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, *The Story of the Three Little Pigs* (variants)

Hyman, Trina Schart. *Little Red Riding Hood*. New York: Holiday House, 1983. ISBN 0823404706.

The appeal of this retelling of the familiar Brothers Grimm tale lies in the exquisitely-detailed illustrations and the expressively-written text. Full-page paintings capture the intensity of the story, but equally important to the development of the story are the amazing borders surrounding the text. Hyman's mastery of words and pictures makes this book worthy of the Caldecott Honor distinction.

☞ Related Reading: *Little Red Cap*; *Lon Po Po*; *Red Riding Hood*; *Little Red Riding Hood* (Galdone) (variants)

Lester, Julius. *John Henry* (illus. Jerry Pinkney). New York: Dial Books, 1994. ISBN 0803716079.

This Caldecott Honor book retells the life of the legendary African American hero, John Henry. There are stories about his great strength but none compares to his race against a steam drill to cut through a mountain. Pinkney's watercolor paintings are vivid and colorful as they depict this strength and energy of John Henry.

☞ Related Reading: *Swamp Angel*, *Stone Girl*, *Bone Girl* (tall tales)

McDermott, Gerald. *Musicians of the Sun*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1997. ISBN 0689807066.

A joyless Earth has no colour or music. The Lord of the Night sends Wind to battle Sun and free the imprisoned musicians, Red, Blue, Yellow and Green. So starts this exotic Aztec tale. Full of adventure and valour, this story will hold appeal for many. The ending will make all happy for colour, music and laughter. The vivid colours and strong images add to the strength of the book.

☞ Related Reading: *Music for the Tsar of the Sea*, *How Music Came to the World*, *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (music)

Pinkney, Jerry. *The Little Match Girl*. New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books, 1999. ISBN 0803723148.

Powerful illustrations bring to life this time-honoured classic. Hans Christian Andersen's heart-wrenching tale of a poor little girl who, on a frigid New Year's Eve, must sell matches on a New York street corner to support her family, is a poignant reminder of the poverty and misery that exists even today. As she lights one match after another to warm herself, the little girl sees beautiful visions of a warm fire, a splendid feast and a glittering Christmas tree. In her final vision, she is transported in her beloved grandmother's arms, to a place of peace and comfort.

☞ Related Reading: *Little Match Girl* (Andersen); *The Happy Prince*, *The Christmas Candle*, *Christmas Carol*, *Fly Away Home* (poverty/homeless people)

Poole, Josephine. *Snow White* (illus. Angela Barrett). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. ISBN 0679826564.

It does not matter how often one has read Snow White, this version will stir the emotions as if one is reading it for the first time. The beauty of the language and the illustrations are insurmountable. It is an experience of the heart. Every child should have the opportunity to enjoy this book.

☞ Related Reading: *Snow White* (Heins); *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (variant); *Joan of Arc* (author)

Ray, Jane. *Hansel and Gretel*. Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1997. ISBN 0763603589.

The beauty of the illustrations matches the beauty of the text in this traditional tale. Jane Ray has not stayed away from the darkness of this story, but the brightness and richness of the pictures show the glory of the tale. This version will appeal to children of all ages. The language is inviting, putting in many of the details that are lost in lesser-quality versions of Hansel and Gretel.

☞ Related Reading: *Hansel and Gretel* (Wallace); *Hansel and Gretel* (Lesser); *The Dancing Pig*; *The Brothers Grimm: Hansel and Gretel* (variants)

Stevens, Janet. *Tops & Bottoms*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995. ISBN 0152928510.

Having once been outwitted by a clever tortoise, Hare, now trying to turn his bad luck around, sets off down the road to make a deal with lazy, but wealthy, landowner Bear. Hare convinces Bear that he only needs to donate the land and through Hare's hard work, they will share the crops raised. Bear decides which half of the crops he wants - tops or bottoms. He sleeps through the growing seasons only to find repeatedly that he is a victim of Hare's trickery. Hilarious illustrations invite the reader to return again and again.

☞ Related Reading: *Winter White*; *Zomo the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale From West Africa*; *Raven* (trickster tales)

Tolstoy, Aleksei. *The Gigantic Turnip* (illus. Niamh Sharkey). New York: Barefoot Books, 1998. ISBN 1902283120.

This is a wonderfully imaginative rendition of an old Russian folktale. The font is large, making it appealing to children, and the illustrations are big and bright as well. The pictures appear deceptively simple, with almost child-like drawings. The repetition will have children chiming in and anticipating what will happen next. This book is pure joy from beginning to end.

☞ Related Reading: *The Enormous Carrot*; *Jamie O'Rourke and the Big Potato*; *The Tale of the Turnip*

Toye, William. *The Loon's Necklace* (illus. Elizabeth Cleaver). Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977. ISBN 0195406753.

This is a Tsimshian legend with its setting in British Columbia. When an old man's sight is restored by Loon, he gives the bird his precious shell necklace as a reward. This explains why the loon has a white collar and speckles on his back. Cleaver's illustrations are collages assembled with torn-paper cut-outs and linocuts.

☞ Related Reading: *How Summer Came To Canada*; *The Fire Stealer*; *The Enchanted Caribou* (legends)

Yolen, Jane. *A Sip of Aesop* (illus. Karen Barbour). New York: The Blue Sky Press, 1995. ISBN 0590478958.

Thirteen popular fables from Aesop are retold in verse. The poetry is fun to read and the illustrations are colorful and lively. This is a great book to use when introducing fables to young children.

☞ Related Reading: *Fables, The Night Has Ears, Crow and Fox and Other Animal Legends* (lessons to be learned)

Zelinsky, Paul O. *Rapunzel*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1997. ISBN 0525456074.

Paul Zelinsky, a gift to the literary world, has created a magnificent collection of pictures, described as Italian Renaissance art, that must be included in any study of art concepts. Pictures of rare beauty unfold the moving story of a young girl, Rapunzel, who at birth, was taken from her parents by a sorceress as the price paid for her father's wrongful act. Desiring not to harm Rapunzel, but to protect her from the eventualities of growing older, the sorceress confines her to an elegant tower. Enraged that Rapunzel has secretly married a prince who penetrated the tower, the sorceress sends her into a wilderness exile where, after a long time, she is reunited with her husband. This version is a wonderful addition to the classic tales.

☞ Related Reading: *Rapunzel* (Rogasky); *Rapunzel* (Watts)

Zelinsky, Paul O. *Rumpelstiltskin*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 1986. ISBN 0140558640.

This is a well-known version of Rumpelstiltskin, based on Grimm's edition in 1819. A strange little man helps the miller's daughter spin straw into gold for the king and this young lady promises to give up her first-born son when she becomes queen. However, she is saved from this ordeal when her servant learns the young man's name - Rumpelstiltskin. The illustrations capture the late medieval setting, the beauty of the miller's daughter and the little man himself.

☞ Related Reading: *Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter, Rumpelstiltskin* (Galdone)

