



Faery Tales

Carol Ann Duffy

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Disappear to faraway lands of wicked witches, evil monsters and brave heroines in Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy's stunning collection of fairy tales. Including her beautiful and haunting retellings of the Grimm classics Hansel and Gretel, Snow White and the Pied Piper, as well as other tales from around the world, and new stories of her own, this book will make you think again about once upon a time...

Faery Tales Details

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Kate says

Before reading this collection, I had only read Duffy's poetic works. What drew me to these tales was my love of faery tales, especially darker tales. This collection comprises just over 40 short tales: some are re-workings of familiar tales, but there are also a few which Duffy has penned as originals. All of them have the dark, sinister edge that I like, so despite their short length, they often have quite an impact.

They also echo the traditional tales of compliers such as the Grimm brothers. There is violence, questionable morals, punishment and reward. The language is simple but quite archaic. These tales suggest a world where things are black and white - people are either good or bad, there is no in-between or areas of grey. Good is pitted against evil, and although it may seem that evil can triumph, in the end it is goodness which is rewarded.

This particular collection also includes traditional-style illustrations. All of them are simple black and white line drawings, but they evoke the original feel of the tales very well. The detail within them is quite extraordinary.

Overall, I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys dark faery tales. Duffy has reminded us that, despite such tales being short and seemingly simplistic, there is something about them which keeps them engrained within our psyche ensuring that they remain as popular today as ever.

Chebionne says

I bought this book for two reasons. One for the stunning cover (some of the leaves are coated in a reflective silver) and two for my love for fairy tale retellings. Unfortunately the latter was not sated for me. My understanding of a retelling is an author's original take of a traditional, well known story. Whilst these stories were definitely traditional and true to well known versions such as The Brothers Grimm, I did not feel as though there was anything different about them that captivated me. This is the only material that I have read from Carol Ann Duffy and I have to say that I am not fond of her writing style here. Aside from the almost "copy and paste" feel from traditional fairy tales I found the tone of the author's own original additions to be bland and repetitive. I also found myself trying to plough through by half way as I forbid myself to DNF a book of short stories. However, having said all that, I did enjoy most of the stories even if I did feel as though I was reading Grimms faery tales all over again and to date this is the most beautiful book cover that I own and I am proud to have it on my shelves.

Zwart Raafje says

De prachtige cover van dit boek was de reden dat ik dit boek in de winkel uit het rek nam. Die mooie kleurencombinatie én het iets wat duistere dat het uitstraalde sprak me meteen aan. Zowel die cover als de zwart/wit illustraties van Tomislav Tomic en de geïllustreerde beginletters van elk nieuw verhaal zorgen er samen voor dat het boek echt de uitstraling van een sprookjesbundel heeft.

Zoals de flaptekst al aangeeft bevat het boek bekende sprookjes als Assepoester, de Bremer Stadsmuzikanten, De rattenvanger van Hamelen, ... maar evengoed nieuwe verhalen. Sommige van hen zijn het best te omschrijven als woordspelingen, anderen als raadsels en een enkel las als een grapje. Een van deze verhalen draagt de titel Nine Words, de bundel zelf bevat in totaal echter 43 sprookjes.

Enkele zijn wat gruwelijker dan de Disney-variant maar vrijwel elk van hen heeft een niet te negeren duidelijk moraliserende boodschap waarbij de onschuldigen en vriendelijke personages beloond worden en bedriegers een serieuze straf krijgen of worden gedood. Ok, de straf is duidelijk niet altijd evenredig aan de overtreding en eigenlijk zijn de overlevenden ook niet altijd even voorbeeldig maar dat maakt de verhalen waarschijnlijk net geloofwaardig vermits het echte leven ook niet altijd even rechtvaardig is

...

Mijn volledige recensie kan je hier terugvinden.

Hayleigh says

I enjoy Duffy's poetry, so I thought I would enjoy this. Sadly I didn't really enjoy the stories - some of which were rather repetitive - or the writing style. It seemed like the stories were somewhat twisted like original fairy tales were still rather childish, even with the gruesome elements and cursing. Very disappointing.

Ely says

Like pretty much every short story collection ever, there were some of these I really liked and others that I didn't. At times, some of them seemed a little too close to the originals—I wanted something different!

Stacia says

I've been obsessed with owning this book ever since I first saw the beautiful cover. The beautiful purples and blues, the silver glimmers, the faces peeking out, and the spelling of "Faery" all begged me to buy it. And so I did.

But as they say, you really can't judge a book by its cover and that's very true in this case. The problem may be more that my expectations were incorrect. When it was advertised as "retellings" of classic tales, I expected drastic differences. Instead, many of the stories seemed almost line-by-line the same as the versions I've heard a hundred times before. There were plenty of new stories, but I never felt the magic I expected when I first glanced upon it's cover.

Steph De Mel says

Laced with Duffy's trademark acerbity, these fairytale re-tellings (and selected original tales) make for a light, amusing read. I expected more of the beautiful use of language and arresting metaphors that characterise Duffy's poetry but, alas, these were not often in evidence here. In fact, these re-tellings often were so close to the original source material that their purpose remains slightly unclear to me. I suspect I would have enjoyed this more if it had been poetry rather than prose. Therefore, I continue eagerly to await the paperback release of her new poetry collection, "Sincerity".

Nova says

I really liked this book. The stories were fun and the drawings were nice. A few of the faery tales were not finished, which was a bit frustrating, and some seemed strange and probably very local (as in you need to be English to understand them), but in general the book was just very well written.

Ashleigh says

I loved this collection. It was a mixed bag, some were retellings and others were originals written specifically for this collection. Ultimately though, this was fabulous and I can't think of any stories that I didn't like - there were a few that were 3/5 but most were 4/5. This is a really great collection and I'd recommend it to anyone who likes fairy tales, or just something easy to read!

Rikke says

This was beautiful, but not in the way that I had expected.

I guess it all depends on how you define the word 'retelling'. For me a 'retelling' of a fairy tale is a new tale, using the structure of the old tale to lead to the same meaning or purpose. For me a 'retelling' isn't the exact same tale that I've known since I was a child with a few modernized words. Sadly, Duffy's 'retellings' falls into the latter category. In fact, her version of 'The Beauty and the Beast' was so similar to the Grimm's version, that I almost suspect it to be a reprinting.

However, I did adore Duffy's own original tales, written carefully in a language that made it blend effortlessly with the 'retellings'. They were intricate and rich; following the invisible rules of a classic fairy tale structure.

Elli (The Bibliophile) says

I enjoyed this collection of fairy tales, which I read every night before bed in January. Some of these stories were new to me, which was fun!

Phil Lewis says

A nice collection of stories, maybe I can read them to my grandson one day.

Marit (Mary) de Vries says

The cover is absolutely georgous!

But it is kind of a shame, because the inside is dull and boring. These are NOT dark retellings, these are just the same I heard when I was younger, some were new for me, but these weren't dark either.

I really don't like this.. I was so excited about the dark retellings that I did enjoyed it less than I wanted. I finished it and I will keep it, because of its stunning cover. But I probably won't pick it up again.

Don't sell it as a "dark" book if it is not dark and I could read it to my kids (whom I don't have yet). At least I can still look at the pictures inside of it and not get "angry" because they are pretty.

Three stars, because I did enjoy it till up a certain point, but I had expected it so much more.

Nikki says

This collection is pretty much what you'd expect from Carol Ann Duffy, especially if you've read her collection, *The World's Wife*. It's various twists on fairy tales, or folk tales, or stories that use those tropes and images and structures. The tone is generally wry and funny, and also fairly modern and casual; if you like your fairy tales serious, strictly adhering to the 'original' (or rather, most well known) lines, or in archaic language, then this might not be for you.

In a way, it wasn't a great thing to read straight through. I do like fairy tales, but a lot of these stuck fairly close to what I know well already, with relatively plain language. Easy to read, but not literary. Which is fine, but not something I can just read straight through; I'd have been better dipping in and out. Still, I love Carol Ann Duffy's voice no matter what, so I did enjoy this — and bonus, it has a gorgeous cover.

Cherie says

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Ok so I have an awful lot of books to read. So what do I do? I borrow one from a friend! ?

Last year I read some of Carol Ann's poetry (the world's wife collection) & enjoyed them. These actually had a very similar feel.

I don't often read short stories or faery tales so this was a departure for me. But I did enjoy them. They were a mixture of retellings of classic tales & originals. To be honest the originals were so well written I suspect it would be hard to pick them apart from the classics if you didn't have any prior knowledge of them. The only slight disappointment for me was that some of the retellings were just too faithful to the originals, I would have liked something a bit different. But it was a minor, personal qualm. I probably should have savoured them a bit more rather than reading them in huge chunks of eight to ten at a time, but that's just the way I read. Overall I found them all very readable and entertaining & beautifully illustrated by Tomislav Tomic.
