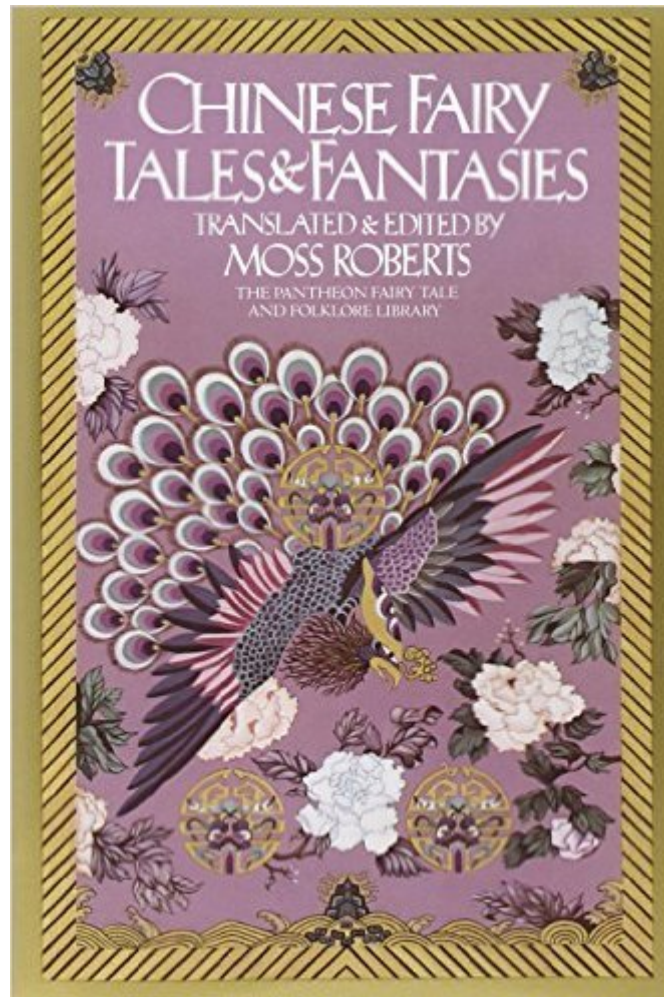


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Chinese Fairy Tales And Fantasies (The Pantheon Fairy Tale And Folklore Library)



Synopsis

This fresh and elegant translation of one hundred tales from twenty-five centuries of Chinese literature opens up a magical world far from our customary haunts. Illustrated with woodcuts. With black-and-white drawings throughout. Part of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (22 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful collection of simple wonder stories and fables from China, most of very ancient origin. There are even some from the Taoist master Chuang Tzu. They are all very brief, in typical Chinese fashion, very direct to the point, and therefore very leisurely reading. Very reminiscent of the Grimm Brothers, Charles Perault and even Aesop, they also give us a rare and fascinating look at Taoist folklore, for most of these stories come from Taoist tellers speaking out against the Confucian way of thinking. Filled with magic crickets, dragons, and a few ghosts, these make for exotic bedtime stories suitable for all ages.

I just had to come in here and pen this to counterbalance the so-and-so who assigned this opus but a single star. The stories are often short, but that should not detract from them, nor should the simplicity of some. They are, after all, CHINESE. The culture is different; the values are different; the symbology is different. I found the collection delightfully refreshing, and I particularly found some of the pieces extremely funny. This book is a definite keeper that the reader will remember for some

time--both for its difference from the common European traditions and for its similarities thereto.

I just got this book and I'm writing on my experience last night, when I began reading a story to my daughter. In the course of three pages, a woman was cut up "inch by inch starting at the feet"; a man's head was cut off; in hell he was tortured with "molten bronze, the iron rod, pounding, grinding, the fire pit, the boiling cauldron, the hill of knives, the forest of swords"; as further punishment he was reborn as female; as a child, she fell into a fire and could get "no relief from the pain"; later her husband smashes her baby's head against a rock. Browsing more today I haven't found anything approaching that level of violence, just my bad luck perhaps. The stories are fascinating, and the introduction is a wonderful explanation for Taoism and the tension with Confucianism that is reflected in this anthology.

This book is a part of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library. I've collected four others, but this one is definitely not as good as the others. It's shorter than the other volumes and there are a lot of stories that are more like proverbs. These wouldn't be as bad if the majority of them weren't so short. If you're a lover of the Chinese culture or want a complete collection of the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library, then get this. If not, then you may want to skip this one.

Don't let the title's 'Fairy Tales' give you the wrong expectation. A few stories here (such as "Girl in Green") do resemble Western fairy tales, with supernatural beings, animal transformations, and unknowing mortals enchanted by these beings or enmeshed in their mysterious affairs. Other stories (including "The Tiger Behind the Fox") would be at home among Aesop's fables - stories acted out by anthropomorphized animals, showing some moral or insight into human nature. Yet others (like Chuang Tzu's familiar "Butterfly Dreams") extract pithy parables from the classic books of wisdom. Most of these stories are very short - some contain only one paragraph, few extend beyond their second page. This isn't a children's book, even if kids might like a few of the stories. It is a fascinating and varied glimpse at many of the ages and traditions that make up Chinese culture. It also shows how myths can grow up in very different ways than they did in the West; that sense of the familiar-but-not makes up a big part of this book's quirky charm.-- wiredweird

I chose this book to teach with a high school class devoted to studying China. The stories reflect both Confucian and Taoist philosophies. They open the door to great discussion. One student wants to buy his copy from the school when we finish.

When I first bought this book I had high expectations for it based on the quality of the other books in the Pantheon Folk Tale/Fairy Tale library, and to tell the truth It met those expectations. This book does a fine job of providing several different aspects of Chinese folk tradition through short yet involved tales which challenged the prior thoughts and beliefs of confucianism and promoted the contrary ideas developed by Lao Tse in Taoism. overall these stories, although short are seemingly deliberate are really much more, the stories that these books tell are truly philosophical and cultural and work to inspire a more fluid vision of the ancient chinese literary and folk beliefs. Thses fables then are short in length but long in meaning and should be enjoyed as such. I highly reccomend this book to anyone seeking a short read that pleases and that has a interest of folklore in any culture.

I actually thought this book was pretty good. Though, the illustrations are very simple. The stories are short and simple, but they are fun to read. I liked it.

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