



# Fairy Tales Framed: Early Forewords, Afterwords, and Critical Words

*Ruth B. Bottigheimer*

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*Translations of the forewords and afterwords by original fairy tale authors and commentaries by their contemporaries, material that has not been widely published in English.*

Most early fairy tale authors had a lot to say about what they wrote. Charles Perrault explained his sources and recounted friends' reactions. His niece Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier and her friend Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy used dedications and commentaries to situate their tales socially and culturally, while the raffish Henriette Julie de Murat accused them all of taking their plots from the Italian writer Giovan Francesco Straparola and admitted to borrowing from the Italians herself. These reflections shed a bright light on both the tales and on their composition, but in every case, they were removed soon after their first publication. Remaining largely unknown, their absence created empty space that later readers filled with their own views about the conditions of production and reception of the tales.

What their authors had to say about "Puss in Boots," "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Rapunzel," among many other fairy tales, is collected here for the first time, newly translated and accompanied by rich annotations. Also included are revealing commentaries from the authors' literary contemporaries.

As a whole, these forewords, afterwords, and critical words directly address issues that inform the contemporary study of European fairy tales, including traditional folkloristic concerns about fairy tale origins and performance, as well as questions of literary aesthetics and historical context.

"...more than a little provocative ... adds much to the field of fairy tale studies." — *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*

"This combination of introductory information and primary sources makes the book indispensable for serious students of fairy tale literature. Taken as a whole, the essays create a lively picture of the enterprise of fairy tale creation ... Highly recommended." — *CHOICE*

"There are many multifaceted gems in this collection and they will prove rewarding reading for those working with European fairy tales." — Maria Tatar, editor of *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*

Ruth B. Bottigheimer teaches European fairy tales and British children's literature at Stony Brook University, State University of New York. She is the author of several books, including *Fairy Tales: A New History*, also published by SUNY Press, and *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition*.

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