

Charles Perrault: Fairy Tales

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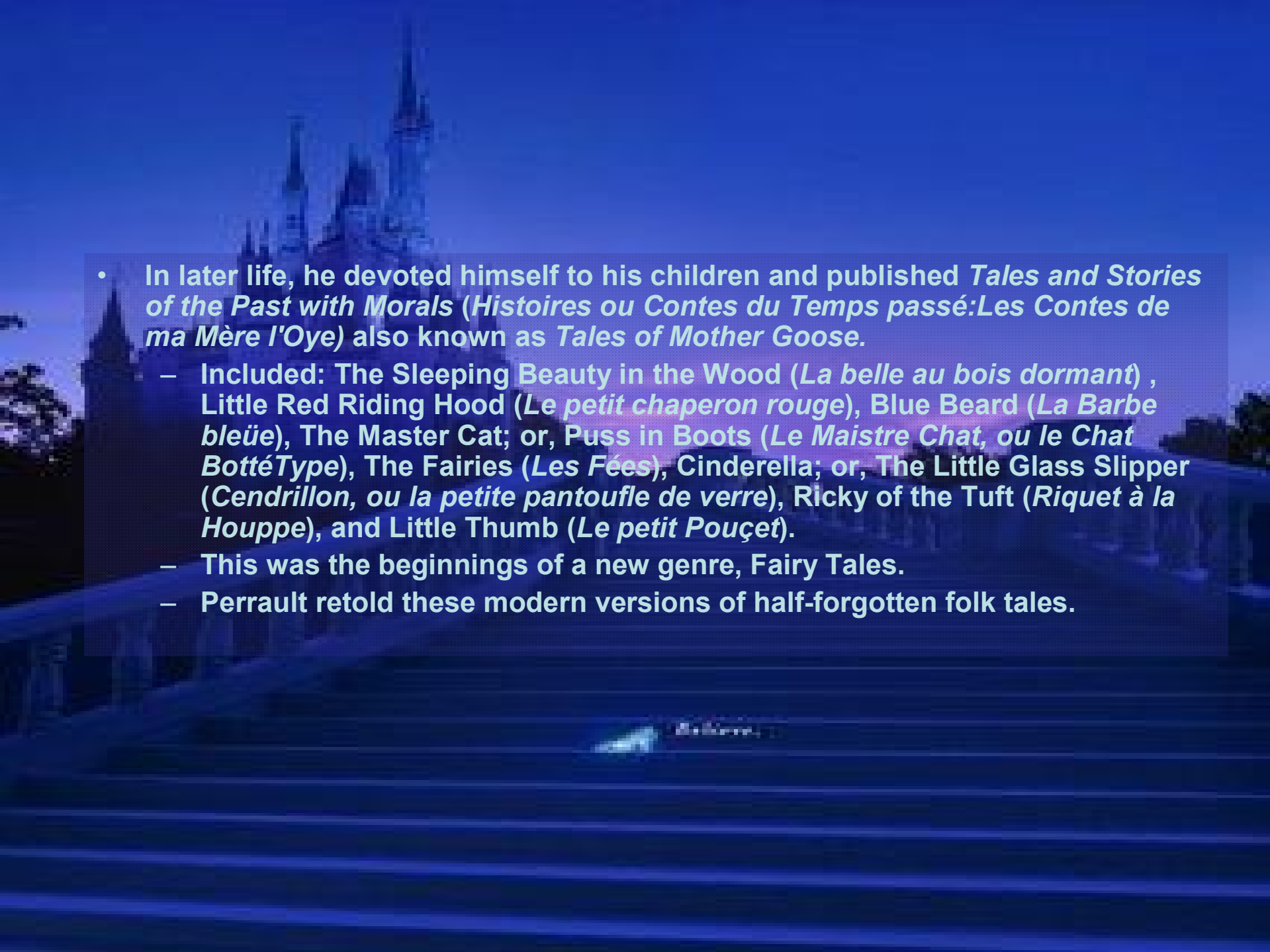
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Background

- Perrault was a French author, born in Paris on January 12, 1628.
- Pierre Perrault, his father, was a barrister and had four sons.
- One of Charles's brother, Claude, became the architect of the Louvre and translated Vitruvius.
- He was born in a wealthy family, and studied to become a lawyer.
- In 1663, When the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres was founded he was appointed as secretary and served Jean Baptiste Colbert, who was the finance minister to King Louis XIV.
- In 1672 he married Marie Guichon, she died in 1678 after giving birth to a daughter and three sons.
- Perrault was greatly involved with the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns).
 - Which was a debate between the Ancients who supported literature of the ancient times and the Moderns who supported literature from the century of Louis XIV.
- Perrault sided with the Moderns and wrote *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand* (The Century of Louis the Great) and *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (Parallel between Ancients and Moderns) in an effort to prove the superiority of the literature of his century.

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- In later life, he devoted himself to his children and published *Tales and Stories of the Past with Morals* (*Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé: Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*) also known as *Tales of Mother Goose*.
 - Included: The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood (*La belle au bois dormant*) , Little Red Riding Hood (*Le petit chaperon rouge*), Blue Beard (*La Barbe bleüe*), The Master Cat; or, Puss in Boots (*Le Maistre Chat, ou le Chat Botté*), The Fairies (*Les Fées*), Cinderella; or, The Little Glass Slipper (*Cendrillon, ou la petite pantoufle de verre*), Ricky of the Tuft (*Riquet à la Houppe*), and Little Thumb (*Le petit Poucet*).
 - This was the beginnings of a new genre, Fairy Tales.
 - Perrault retold these modern versions of half-forgotten folk tales.

Cinderella (*Cendrillon*)

Story:

There is a beautiful kind hearted girl originally named Ella who is mistreated by her Step mother and step sisters. The older sister calls her Cinderwench because Ella would sit in cinder after working, the younger sister being less rude calls her Cinderella. One day the prince invites all the maidens to a ball and the while Cinderella helps her step-sister's dress they say would never be able to come. Cinderella is left alone and cries but then her Fairy Godmother appears. She turns a pumpkin into a coach, mice into horses, a rat in to a coachman, and lizards into footmen. And then turned Cinderella's rags into a beautiful gown, with glass slippers. She tells Cinderella the spells will be broken at midnight. The prince falls for her but she has to leave at the midnight, she leaves her glass shoe and the prince makes all the women try to shoe to find his love. After Cinderella's shoe fits her sisters ask her for forgiveness and Ella obliges. Cinderella marries and even finds lords for her sisters to marry.

❧ Moral: Beauty in a woman is a rare treasure that will always be admired. Graciousness, however, is priceless and of even greater value. This is what Cinderella's godmother gave to her when she taught her to behave like a queen. Young women, in the winning of a heart, graciousness is more important than a beautiful hairdo. It is a true gift of the fairies. Without it nothing is possible; with it, one can do anything.

❧ Another moral: Without doubt it is a great advantage to have intelligence, courage, good breeding, and common sense. These, and similar talents come only from heaven, and it is good to have them. However, even these may fail to bring you success, without the blessing of a godfather or a godmother.

(Source: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault06.html>)

- The Disney version credit's Perrault's version of Cinderella.
- The glass slipper was first introduced by Perrault. Other versions of Cinderella used different types of slippers like gold or substitute to rings.
 - The glass slippers provided by Perrault have also been the source of great debate among folklore scholars. For years, the predominant theory was that the original tale included "fur" (French: vair) and not "glass" (French: verre), but that misprints and mistranslations from French sources have given us the famous glass slippers. Now most scholars believe Perrault intended the shoes to be made of glass to add to their magical quality (Tatar 2002).

Cinderella (Aschenputtel)

In the Grimm's version : Aschenputtel

- ❖ *"The woman had brought two daughters into the house with her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. Now began a bad time for the poor step-child."*
 - **The stepsisters were also beautiful, but their hearts were wicked.**
- ❖ *"As no one was now at home, Cinderella went to her mother's grave beneath the hazel-tree, and cried, 'Shiver and quiver, little tree, Silver and gold throw down over me.' Then the bird threw a gold and silver dress down to her, and slippers embroidered with silk and silver. She put on the dress with all speed, and went to the festival."*
 - **Instead of a Fairy Godmother used in Perrault's version, this version uses a Tree and birds to grant Cinderella's wishes.**
- ❖ *"No one shall be my wife but she whose foot this golden slipper fits." Then were the two sisters glad, for they had pretty feet. The eldest went with the shoe into her room and wanted to try it on, and her mother stood by. But she could not get her big toe into it, and the shoe was too small for her. Then her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut the toe off; when thou art Queen thou wilt have no more need to go on foot." The maiden cut the toe off, forced the foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's son."*
 - **In this version the sister's go to extreme lengths and lie to the prince. In Perrault's version, they simply try on the shoe, there's no cutting of body parts.**
- ❖ *"When the wedding with the King's son had to be celebrated, the two false sisters came and wanted to get into favour with Cinderella and share her good fortune. When the betrothed couple went to church, the elder was at the right side and the younger at the left, and the pigeons pecked out one eye of each of them. Afterwards as they came back, the elder was at the left, and the younger at the right, and then the pigeons pecked out the other eye of each. And thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived."*
 - **The stepsisters are not forgiven and they are punished severely. In Perrault's version, Cinderella forgives the sisters and even finds them good husbands.**

Little Red Riding Hood (Le Petit Chaperon Rouge)

Perrault's version of Little Red Riding Hood:

Little Red Riding hood who is asked by her mother to deliver cakes and a pot of butter to her grandmother. In the woods LRRH meets a wolf, who wanted to eat her right away, but did not because of the woodcutters nearby. So he tricked her and got to the grandmother's house before LRRH and ate her up. The wolf hides himself in the grandmother's bedclothes and when LRRH arrives the well-known dialogue ensues:

"Grandmother, what big arms you have!"

"All the better to hug you with, my dear."

"Grandmother, what big legs you have!"

"All the better to run with, my child."

"Grandmother, what big ears you have!"

"All the better to hear with, my child."

"Grandmother, what big eyes you have!"

"All the better to see with, my child."

"Grandmother, what big teeth you have got!"

"All the better to eat you up with."

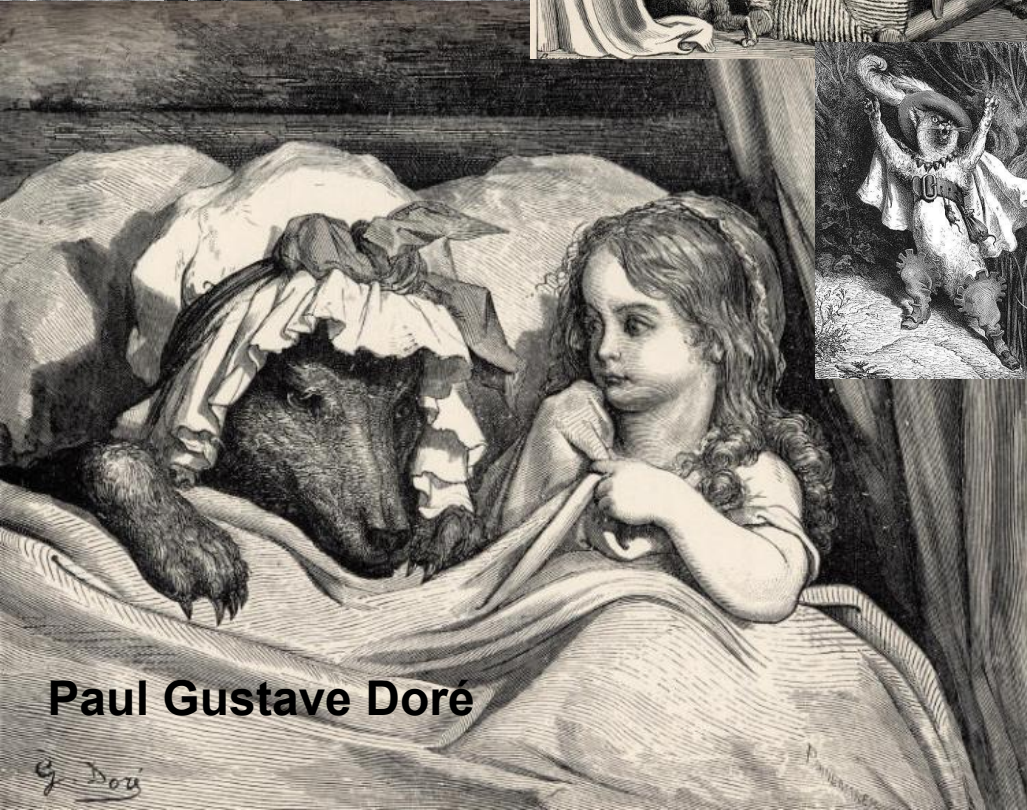
And, saying these words, this wicked wolf fell upon Little Red Riding Hood, and ate her all up.

(Source: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault62.html>)

Moral: Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all

The brothers Grimm version:

- There are two separate versions retold by both brothers. The first tale is much like Perrault's but ending is different. In the Grimm's versions the grandmother and girl are saved by a huntsman.
- The second story was used as a sequel to the first. In this story the grandmother and girl trap and kill another wolf, using their past experience as a guide.



Paul Gustave Doré

G. Doré



Paul Gustave Doré

Doré was a French painter and book illustrator, he did many illustrations for Perrault's Mother Goose Tales. He was born in Strasburg on January 6, 1832. He started his career in art at a very young age. At 14 he published his first album, at 15 he started working for a publishing company, and at 16 he was the highest paid illustraoter in France. In his lifetime, he illustrated around 200 books, 400 oil paintings, and several 100 watercolor landscapes.



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Images of Charles Perrault as background.