

# RESOURCES - BOOKS

These days its much easier than it was to get hold of the good stuff - almost every major world mythology is currently in print. Many major bookshops will have a 'mythology/folklore' section (If there happens to be one near you, Borders are particularly good, and Ottokars are also worth a look). It's also well worth a look in the children's section as well, but a beware anything that says 'retelling' anywhere on the cover. With a very few exceptions, (Alan Garner, Ted Hughes & Gwyn Jones), these are literary renditions of traditional material, and you will have to work a lot harder to get the it 'off the page', and back into an oral form.

It's also worth looking in the 'New Age/Alternative' section as well, but caution is also advisable here - the vast majority of recently published stuff, particularly anything to do with Native American or Shamanic traditions is, from the storyteller's point of view, absolute nonsense. As a general rule, check the publisher - if it's published by a University Press (Indiana, Princeton etc.) it's probably a reprint of something originally published as an anthropological/folklore study, and many of these are very good indeed, in the sense that they're very accurate.

If you're on a limited budget, try the library - if you request a particular book, they are obliged to either borrow it from another library or go out and buy a copy - a little patience can reap rich rewards here.

## PUBLISHER'S SERIES

### **The Pantheon Fairytale & Folklore Library** (You sometimes find these published by Routledge in the UK)

Absolutely excellent series, all edited by experts in their fields, the series includes some classic collections. There's something in this series from almost every corner of the world, and it's growing, year by year.

### **Dover**

An American publisher that is re-issuing a great deal of material from University collections etc....particularly strong on Native American stories.

### **Penguin**

Three books of folktales - Irish, English & Scottish. All are a bit patchy, but there's good stuff in all of them, and they're fairly readily available. Also publishes occasional 'stand alone' collections - The Italo Calvino Collection of Italian Folktales, and 'The Thorn in the King's Foot' by Duncan Williamson are both highly recommended.

### **Penguin Classics**

Along with the Everyman library, the best source of authoritative translations of many classic texts of antiquity (and many not so old). All the anglo-saxon & mediaval classics, most of the Arthurian material, pretty well all the Indian classic texts and much else can be found in this excellent series. Almost all bookshops will have at least some of them.

### **Cannongate (Edinburgh)/ Interlink (New York)**

Almost everything in this series (published in the UK by Cannongate, and Interlink in the US, but you can often find both versions, sometimes in the same shop !) is worthwhile. Cannongate also publish almost everything currently available in print by Duncan Williamson, master Scots storyteller, all of which are highly recommended (see below)

### **Oxford**

A series of collections by country or region - this is a patchy series, some are much better than others .The Armenian one is very good - has a great collection of odd proverbs, as well as some fine stories, some good Jamaican/West African stuff, the Turkish one is fair, but most of the western european volumes are dissappointing.

## CLASSIC COLLECTIONS

### **'Favourite Folktales of the World', Jane Yolen ed. (Pantheon Fairytale & Folklore Library)**

probably the best general collection currently available. If you're not sure where to start, this is the one to get.

### **'Celtic Fairy Tales'- Joseph Jacobs** (various editions around at the moment - often possible to pick it up in remaindered bookstores)

One of the classics from the Victorian age of collection everything in sight - Jacobs didn't collect himself, just re-combined material from existing sources - he was a little prone to editorialise, but this is still a rich source of many classic tales.

### **The Virago book of fairytales (Ed Angela Carter), The Second Virgo Book of Fairy Tales (ed Angela Carter/Shahrukh Husain) and The Virago Book of Witches (ed Shahrukh Husain)**

Three absolutely excellent collections - the introduction to the first volume, by Angela Carter, is almost worth the price of the book alone.

### **'Popular Tales of the West Highlands vols 1-4' , ed & collected by J.F. Campbell, Birlinn, Edinburgh.**

Absolutely superb collection, becoming more widely available - Campbell was the very best of the Victorian collectors, very careful about his sources - he also often gives variants of stories (and the gealic versions, if you can read them !), and also compendious notes for each story. This is the original source for many major celtic tales, and they crop up a lot in other anthologies, but it's well worth trying to get the original if you can.

### **Grimms Fairy Tales**

The primary source for many very familiar tales - and a great deal of unfamiliar stuff as well.

There are so many editions around it can be confusing - probably the best currently available is edited by Jack Zipes, and published by Bantam. This con-

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tains early, unedited versions of the stories, with all the nasty bits left in, and also some of the rarer stories that haven't been published for a very long time.

## 'Norwegian Folktales' ed Abjornsen & Moe, publ. Pantheon Fairytale & Folklore Library

Classic collection of fine folktales.

## 'African Folktales' ed Roger D. Abrahams, publ. Pantheon Fairytale & Folklore Library

Excellent collection, very wide-ranging, and the introductory essay is also very good indeed.

## The Greek Myths vol 1 & 2, transl. & Ed by Robert Graves, publ. Pelican

Still the best source for the Greek Myths, although some of the notes are a bit out of date, and Graves had a few very strange ideas of his own. Can't be bettered though, for clear concise versions of the stories.

## ALSO RECOMMENDED

These are all books that I use regularly. All of them (with only one exception, as noted) have been purchased in the last few years and are all, as far as I am aware, still in print.

### NATIVE AMERICAN

Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians Morris Edward Opler (Bison Books)  
Navaho Indian Myths Aileen O'Bryan (Dover)  
The Grandfathers Speak Hitakonanu'laxk (Interlink New York)  
The Sons of the Wind D.M. Dooling (Parabola)  
The Telling of the World W.S. Penn (Stewart, Tabori & Chang)

### AFRICAN

African Folktales Paul Radin Schocken, New York  
The Pineapple Child & other tales Peggy Appiah (Andre Deutsch)  
West African Folktales Steven H. Gale West Africa NTC Publishing Group

### ABORIGINAL

Aboriginal Myths Legends & Fables A.W. Reed (Reed)  
(Highly recommended, if you can track it down - a friend brought back a copy from Australia for me, I'm afraid I don't know whether it has been published in the UK)

### SOUTH AMERICAN

Popul Vuh trans. Dennis Tedlock (Touchstone/Simon & Schuster)  
Mayan Folktales James D. Sexton (Anchor/Doubleday)

### SCOTTISH

The Broonies Silkie & Fairies Duncan Williamson (Canongate, Edinburgh)  
May the Devil Walk Behind You Duncan Williamson (Canongate, Edinburgh)  
Don't Look Back Jack Duncan Williamson (Canongate, Edinburgh)

### EUROPEAN

Northern Lights Ed : Kevin Crossley-Holland (Faber and Faber)  
The Sun Maiden & the Crescent Moon James Riordan (Canongate, Edinburgh/Interlink, New York)

### JAPAN/CHINA

The Wind Children Samira Kirolos (Andre Duetsch)  
Imagining Women - Fujian Folktales Karen Gernant (Canongate, Edinburgh/Interlink, New York)

### INDIA

The Demon Slayers & other Stories S. Dasgupta & S. Das Dasgupta (Canongate, Edinburgh/Interlink, New York)

## GENERAL BACKGROUND READING

As you get a little more into it, you might find some of the following helpful for some more general background on stories, storytelling and other associated subjects.....

### The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell, (Fontana Press)

On every list (or should be), a celebrated analysis of a whole genre of traditional material and with much of general interest as well. Some have said that his ideas are showing their age, but you will still have to go a long way to find anything better than this.

### The King and the Corpse, Heinrich Zimmer (trans J. Campbell) (Princeton University Press)

Widely regarded and highly influential analysis not just of a series of specific stories, but of many issues underlying all stories.

### The Myth of the Goddess, Ann Baring & Jules Cashford (Penguin Arkana)

Compendious (and very well illustrated) and fascinating tracing of the history of an image (and associated ideas) from the Paleolithic to the present. Unfortunately only covers Europe, but particularly good on the Greeks and Romans, and also on the Sumerian/Babylonian antecedents of much of Biblical Mythology.

### What the Bee Knows, P. L. Travers (Penguin Arkana)

Thought-provoking and diverse collection of essays by an extraordinary author (better known as the creator of Mary Poppins). Bite sized chunks to chew over.

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**'The Trickster', Paul Radin** (Schoken, New York)

Another classic - apart from being the primary source for one of the world's great cycles of Trickster stories, it's worth getting just for Radin's notes and the illuminating essays by Jung and Karl Kerényi.

**'Trickster Makes this Word', Lewis Hyde, North Point Press** (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux/New York)

Complicated, but very readable book that combines a detailed investigation into what Hyde calls the 'trickster mind' with an extended meditation on the Homeric 'Hymn to Hermes' - and also has some interesting things to say about the connection between the trickster mind and a (surprisingly) diverse collection of artists.

**'Winter Pollen : Occasional Prose', Ted Hughes (Ed W. Sammell)** (Faber & Faber)

Apart from being one of the UK's finest poets, Hughes was also deeply fascinated by myths and folktales, and this great collection of prose writings contains several outstanding pieces that, taken together, offer one of the clearest articulations of the fundamental importance of myth ever written.

*And finally, a couple of books by/about Peter Brook - for many years an internationally acclaimed, and highly influential, theatre director, Brook was also the first person to seriously explore the connections between theatre and storytelling, and many of the roots of his work come from a deep exploration into traditional forms and material. Although ostensibly about the theatre, there is something of direct relevance to storytelling on almost every page of both of these books.*

**'The Shifting Point : Forty Years of theatrical exploration, 1946 - 1987', Peter Brook** (Methuen Drama)

Apart from his many other accomplishments, Brook is also an excellent writer - and this collection spans the bulk of his extraordinary career. A delight to read, there's something illuminating or thought provoking on almost every page.

**'The Conference of the Birds : The story of Peter Brook in Africa', John Heilpern** (Methuen)

In 1972, Peter Brook and a multinational team of actors went on an extraordinary 8,500 mile trek through Africa. This is the rivetting account of that journey - the best book ever written about Brook, and also the best book about the practical and philosophical requirements of being a storyteller that I've ever read.