
Opening Extract from...

Grimm Tales for Young and Old

Written by Philip Pullman

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Grimm Tales

For Young and Old

In a new English version by
PHILIP PULLMAN

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INTRODUCTION

Fed
Up so long and variously by
Our age's fancy narrative concoctions,
I yearned for the kind of unseasoned telling found
In legends, fairy tales, a tone licked clean
Over the centuries by mild old tongues,
Grandam to cub, serene, anonymous.
. . . So my narrative
Wanted to be limpid, unfragmented;
My characters, conventional stock figures
Afflicted to a minimal degree
With personality and past experience –
A witch, a hermit, innocent young lovers,
The kinds of being we recall from Grimm,
Jung, Verdi, and the commedia dell'arte.

So writes the American poet James Merrill at the opening of 'The Book of Ephraim', the first part of his extraordinary long poem *The Changing Light at Sandover* (1982). Discussing the way in which he hopes to tell a story of his own, he singles out two of the most important characteristics of the fairy tale, as he sees it: the 'serene, anonymous' voice in which it's told, and the 'conventional, stock figures' who inhabit it.

When Merrill mentions 'Grimm', he needs to say no more: we all know what he means. For most Western readers and writers in the past two hundred years, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) of the Brothers Grimm has been the

fountain and origin of the Western fairy tale, the greatest collection, the most widely distributed in the largest number of languages, the home of all we feel to be unique in that kind of story.

But if the Grimm brothers hadn't collected all those tales, no doubt someone else would have done. Others were already doing something similar, in fact. The early nineteenth century was a time of great intellectual excitement in Germany, a time when scholars of law, of history, of language were examining and arguing about what it meant to be German in the first place, when there was no Germany as such but instead three hundred or so independent states – kingdoms, principalities, grand duchies, duchies, landgraviates, margraviates, electorates, bishoprics and so on, the fragmented detritus of the Holy Roman Empire.

The facts of the Grimm brothers' lives are not remarkable. Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) were the eldest surviving sons of Philipp Wilhelm Grimm, a prosperous lawyer of Hanau in the principality of Hesse, and his wife Dorothea. They received a classical education and were brought up in the Reformed Calvinist Church. Clever, diligent and serious-minded, they aimed to follow their father into the legal profession, in which they would no doubt have distinguished themselves; but his sudden death in 1796 meant that the family, which now included six children, had to depend on the support of their mother's relatives. Their aunt Henriette Zimmer, a lady-in-waiting at the prince's court in Kassel, helped Jacob and Wilhelm to find places at the *Lyzeum* or high school, where they each graduated at the head of their class. But there was little money, and when they attended the University of Marburg they had to live very frugally.

At Marburg they fell under the influence of Professor Friedrich Carl von Savigny, whose idea that law grew naturally out of the language and history of a people and should not be arbitrarily applied from above turned the Grimms to the study of philology.

Through von Savigny and his wife Kunigunde Brentano, they also made the acquaintance of the circle around her brother Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, who married Brentano's other sister, the writer Bettina. One of the preoccupations of this group was German folklore. Their enthusiasm for this subject resulted in von Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Youth's Magic Horn*), a collection of folk songs and folk poetry of all kinds, the first volume of which appeared in 1805 and immediately became popular.

The Grimm brothers were naturally interested in this, but not uncritically: Jacob wrote in a letter to Wilhelm in May 1809 of his disapproval of the way in which Brentano and von Arnim had treated their material, cutting and adding and modernizing and rewriting as they thought fit. Later, the Grimms (and Wilhelm in particular) would be criticized on much the same grounds for the way they treated their source material for the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.

At all events, the decision by the Grimm brothers to collect and publish fairy tales was not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a widespread preoccupation of the time.

The sources they depended on were both oral and literary. One thing they did not do was walk the countryside, seeking out peasants in their fields and cottages and taking down their stories word by word. Some of their tales were taken directly from literary sources; two of the finest, 'The Fisherman and His Wife' (p. 93) and 'The Juniper Tree' (p. 187), were sent to them in written form by the painter Philipp Otto Runge, and reproduced by the Grimms in the Low German dialect Runge wrote them in. Much of the rest came in oral form from people at various levels of the middle class, including family friends, one of whom, Dortchen Wild, the daughter of a pharmacist, Wilhelm Grimm eventually married. After two hundred years, it's impossible to say how exact their transcriptions were, but the same is true of any collection of

folk tales or songs before the age of tape recording. What matters is the vigour and zest of the versions they published.

The Grimm brothers went on to make great and lasting contributions to philology. Grimm's Law, formulated by Jacob, describes certain sound-changes in the history of Germanic languages; and the brothers together worked on the first great German dictionary. In 1837 came what was probably the most dramatic incident in their lives; together with five other university colleagues, they refused to take an oath of allegiance to the new king of Hanover, Ernst August, because he had illegally dissolved the constitution. As a result they were dismissed from their university posts, and had to take up appointments at the University of Berlin.

But it was the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* for which their names are mostly remembered. Their first edition was published in 1812, and the collection went through six further editions (Wilhelm, by this stage, doing most of the editorial work) till the seventh and final one of 1857, by which time it was immensely popular. It shares its eminence only with *The Arabian Nights*: the two of them are the most important and influential collections of folk tales ever published. Not only did the collection grow bigger, the tales themselves changed as the nineteenth century went past, becoming in Wilhelm's hands a little longer, in some cases more elaborate, occasionally more prudish, certainly more pious than they were to begin with.

Scholars of literature and folklore, of cultural and political history, theorists of a Freudian, Jungian, Christian, Marxist, structuralist, post-structuralist, feminist, postmodernist and every other kind of tendency have found immense riches for their study in these 210 tales. Some of the books and essays I've found most useful and interesting are listed in the Bibliography, and no doubt they and others have influenced my reading and retelling in ways I'm not conscious of.

But my main interest has always been in how the tales worked *as stories*. All I set out to do in this book was tell the best and most interesting of them, clearing out of the way anything that would prevent them from running freely. I didn't want to put them in modern settings, or produce personal interpretations or compose poetic variations on the originals; I just wanted to produce a version that was as clear as water. My guiding question has been: 'How would I tell this story myself, if I'd heard it told by someone else and wanted to pass it on?' Any changes I've made have been for the purpose of helping the story emerge more naturally in my voice. If, as happened occasionally, I thought an improvement was possible, I've either made a small change or two in the text itself or suggested a larger one in the note that follows the story. (An example of this happens with the story 'Thousandfurs', p. 247, which seems to me only half finished in the original.)

'Conventional stock figures'

There is no psychology in a fairy tale. The characters have little interior life; their motives are clear and obvious. If people are good, they are good, and if bad, they're bad. Even when the princess in 'The Three Snake Leaves' (p. 86) inexplicably and ungratefully turns against her husband, we know about it from the moment it happens. Nothing of that sort is concealed. The tremors and mysteries of human awareness, the whispers of memory, the promptings of half-understood regret or doubt or desire that are so much part of the subject matter of the modern novel are absent entirely. One might almost say that the characters in a fairy tale are not actually conscious.

They seldom have names of their own. More often than not they're known by their occupation or their social position, or by a quirk of their dress: the miller, the princess, the captain,

Bearskin, Little Red Riding Hood. When they do have a name it's usually Hans, just as Jack is the hero of every British fairy tale.

The most fitting pictorial representation of fairy-tale characters seems to me to be found not in any of the beautifully illustrated editions of Grimm that have been published over the years, but in the little cardboard cut-out figures that come with the toy theatre. They are flat, not round. Only one side of them is visible to the audience, but that is the only side we need: the other side is blank. They are depicted in poses of intense activity or passion, so that their part in the drama can be easily read from a distance.

Some of the characters in fairy tales come in sets of multiples. The twelve brothers in the story of that name, the twelve princesses in 'The Shoes that were Danced to Pieces' (p. 344), the seven dwarfs in the story of Snow White (p. 206) – there is little, if anything, to distinguish one from another. James Merrill's reference to the *commedia dell'arte* is apposite here: the *commedia* character Pulcinella was the subject of a famous set of drawings by Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727–1804), depicting him not as a single character but as a swarm of identical nitwits. In one drawing there may be a dozen or more Pulcinellas all trying to make soup at the same time, or gazing in astonishment at an ostrich. Realism cannot cope with the notion of multiples; the twelve princesses who all go out every night and dance their shoes to pieces, the seven dwarfs all asleep in their beds side by side, exist in another realm altogether, between the uncanny and the absurd.

Celerity

Swiftness is a great virtue in the fairy tale. A good tale moves with a dreamlike speed from event to event, pausing only to say as much as is needed and no more. The best tales are perfect

examples of what you do need and what you don't: in Rudyard Kipling's image, fires that blaze brightly because all the ashes have been raked out.

The opening of a tale, for example. All we need is the word 'Once . . .' and we're off:

> Once there was a poor man who couldn't support his only son any more. When the son realized this, he said, 'Father, it's no use my staying here. I'm just a burden to you. I'm going to leave home and see if I can earn a living.'
>
> ('The Three Snake Leaves', p. 86)

A few paragraphs later, he's already married a king's daughter. Or this:

> Once there was a farmer who had all the money and land he wanted, but despite his wealth there was one thing missing from his life. He and his wife had never had any children. When he met other farmers in town or at the market, they would often make fun of him and ask why he and his wife had never managed to do what their cattle did regularly. Didn't they know how to do it? In the end he lost his temper, and when he got back home, he swore and said, 'I will have a child, even if it's a hedgehog.'
>
> ('Hans-my-Hedgehog', p. 311)

The speed is exhilarating. You can only go that fast, however, if you're travelling light; so none of the information you'd look for in a modern work of fiction – names, appearances, background, social context, etc. – is present. And that, of course, is part of the explanation for the flatness of the characters. The tale is far more interested in what happens to them, or in what they make happen, than in their individuality.

When composing a tale of this sort, it's not always easy to be sure about which events are necessary and which are superfluous. Anyone who wants to know how to tell a tale could do much

worse than study 'The Musicians of Bremen' (p. 143), both a nonsensical little yarn and a masterpiece, in which the narrative carries not one unnecessary ounce. Every paragraph advances the story.

Imagery and description

There is no imagery in fairy tales apart from the most obvious. As white as snow, as red as blood: that's about it. Nor is there any close description of the natural world or of individuals. A forest is deep, the princess is beautiful, her hair is golden; there's no need to say more. When what you want to know is what happens next, beautiful descriptive wordplay can only irritate.

In one story, however, there is a passage that successfully combines beautiful description with the relation of events in such a way that one would not work without the other. The story is 'The Juniper Tree', and the passage I mean comes after the wife has made her wish for a child as red as blood and as white as snow (p. 187). It links her pregnancy with the passing seasons:

> One month went by, and the snow vanished.
>
> Two months went by, and the world turned green.
>
> Three months went by, and flowers bloomed out of the earth.
>
> Four months went by, and all the twigs on all the trees in the forest grew stronger and pressed themselves together, and the birds sang so loud that the woods resounded, and the blossom fell from the trees.
>
> Five months went by, and the woman stood under the juniper tree. It smelled so sweet that her heart leaped in her breast, and she fell to her knees with joy.
>
> Six months went by, and the fruit grew firm and heavy, and the woman fell still.

> When seven months had gone by, she plucked the juniper berries and ate so many that she felt sick and sorrowful.
>
> After the eighth month had gone, she called her husband and said to him, weeping, 'If I die, bury me under the juniper tree.'

This is wonderful, but (as I suggest in my note to the story, p. 198) it's wonderful in a curious way: there's little any teller of this tale can do to improve it. It has to be rendered exactly as it is here, or at least the different months have to be given equally different characteristics, and carefully linked in equally meaningful ways with the growth of the child in his mother's womb, and that growth with the juniper tree that will be instrumental in his later resurrection.

However, that is a great and rare exception. In most of these tales, just as the characters are flat, description is absent. In the later editions, it is true, Wilhelm's telling became a little more florid and inventive, but the real interest of the tale continues to be in what happened, and what happened next. The formulas are so common, the lack of interest in the particularity of things so widespread, that it comes as a real shock to read a sentence like this in 'Jorinda and Joringel' (p. 256):

> It was a lovely evening; the sun shone warmly on the tree trunks against the dark green of the deep woods, and turtledoves cooed mournfully in the old beech trees.

Suddenly that story stops sounding like a fairy tale and begins to sound like something composed in a literary way by a Romantic writer such as Novalis or Jean Paul. The serene, anonymous relation of events has given way, for the space of a sentence, to an individual sensibility: a *single mind* has felt this impression of nature, has seen these details in the mind's eye and written them down. A writer's command of imagery and gift for description is one of the things that make him or her unique, but fairy tales

don't come whole and unaltered from the minds of individual writers, after all; uniqueness and originality are of no interest to them.

This is not a text

William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, or James Joyce's *Ulysses*, or any other literary work, exists as a text first of all. The words on the page are what it is. It's the job of an editor or a literary critic to pay attention to what exactly those words are, and to clarify places where there are divergent readings in different editions, to make sure that the reader can encounter exactly the text that the work consists of.

But a fairy tale is not a text of that sort. It's a transcription made on one or more occasions of the words spoken by one of many people who have told this tale. And all sorts of things, of course, affect the words that are finally written down. A storyteller might tell the tale more richly, more extravagantly, one day than the next, when he's tired or not in the mood. A transcriber might find her own equipment failing: a cold in the head might make hearing more difficult, or cause the writing-down to be interrupted by sneezes or coughs. Another accident might affect it too: a good tale might find itself in the mouth of a less than adequate teller.

That matters a great deal, because tellers vary in their talents, their techniques, their attitudes to the process. The Grimms were highly impressed by the ability of one of their sources, Dorothea Viehmann, to tell a tale a second time in the same words as she'd used before, making it easy to transcribe; and the tales that come from her are typically structured with marvellous care and precision. I was equally impressed when working on her tales for this book.

Similarly, this teller might have a talent for comedy, that one

for suspense and drama, another for pathos and sentiment. Naturally they will each choose tales that make the most of their talents. When X the great comedian tells a tale, he will invent ridiculous details or funny episodes that will be remembered and passed on, so the tale will be altered a little by his telling; and when Y the mistress of suspense tells a tale of terror, she will invent in like manner, and her inventions and changes will become part of the tradition of telling that tale, until they're forgotten, or embellished, or improved on in their turn.

The fairy tale is in a perpetual state of becoming and alteration. To keep to one version or one translation alone is to put a robin redbreast in a cage.* If you, the reader, want to tell any of the tales in this book, I hope you will feel free to be no more faithful than you want to be. You are at perfect liberty to invent other details than the ones I've passed on, or invented, here. In fact you're not only at liberty to do so: you have a positive duty to make the story your own.† A fairy tale is not a text.

'A tone licked clean'

Can the writer of any version of a fairy tale ever come near to James Merrill's ideal tone, 'serene, anonymous'? Of course, the writer might not wish to. There have been many, and there will be many more, versions of these tales that are brimful of their author's own dark obsessions, or brilliant personality, or political passions. The tales can stand it. But even if we want to be serene and anonymous, I think it's probably impossible to achieve it

* Which 'puts all Heaven in a Rage' (William Blake, 'Auguries of Innocence', 1803).

† 'The tale is not beautiful if nothing is added to it' – Tuscan proverb quoted by Italo Calvino in his introduction to *Italian Folktales* (London: Penguin Books, 1982).

completely, and that our personal stylistic fingerprints lie impressed on every paragraph without our knowing it.

The only thing to do, it seems to me, is to try for clarity, and stop worrying about it. Telling these stories is a delight it would be a pity to spoil by anxiety. An enormous relief and pleasure, like the mild air that refreshes the young count when he lies down to rest in 'The Goose Girl at the Spring' (p. 389), comes over the writer who realizes that it's not necessary to *invent*: the substance of the tale is there already, just as the sequence of chords in a song is there ready for the jazz musician, and our task is to step from chord to chord, from event to event, with all the lightness and swing we can. Like jazz, storytelling is an art of performance, and writing is performance too.

Finally, I'd say to anyone who wants to tell these tales, don't be afraid to be superstitious. If you have a lucky pen, use it. If you speak with more force and wit when wearing one red sock and one blue one, dress like that. When I'm at work I'm highly superstitious. My own superstition has to do with the voice in which the story comes out. I believe that every story is attended by its own sprite, whose voice we embody when we tell the tale, and that we tell it more successfully if we approach the sprite with a certain degree of respect and courtesy. These sprites are both old and young, male and female, sentimental and cynical, sceptical and credulous, and so on, and what's more, they're completely amoral: like the air-spirits who helped Strong Hans escape from the cave (p. 379), the story-sprites are willing to serve whoever has the ring, whoever is telling the tale. To the accusation that this is nonsense, that all you need to tell a story is a human imagination, I reply, 'Of course, and this is the way my imagination works.'

But we may do our best by these tales, and find that it's still not enough. I suspect that the finest of them have the quality that the

great pianist Artur Schnabel attributed to the sonatas of Mozart: they are too easy for children and too difficult for adults.

And these fifty tales are, I think, the cream of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. I have done my best for the sprites who attend each one, as did Dorothea Viehmann, Philipp Otto Runge, Dortchen Wild, and all the other tellers whose work was preserved by the great Brothers Grimm. And I hope we all, tellers and listeners alike, live happily ever after.

Philip Pullman, 2012

GRIMM TALES

For Young and Old

ONE

THE FROG KING, OR IRON HEINRICH

In the olden days, when wishing still worked, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful; but the youngest daughter was so lovely that even the sun, who has seen many things, was struck with wonder every time he shone on her face. Not far away from the king's palace there was a deep dark forest, and under a lime tree in the forest there was a well. In the heat of the day the princess used to go into the forest and sit by the edge of the well, from which a marvellous coolness seemed to flow.

To pass the time she had a golden ball, which she used to throw up in the air and catch. It was her favourite game. Now one day it happened that she threw it a little carelessly, and she couldn't catch it. Instead the ball rolled away from her and towards the well, and then it ran right over the edge and disappeared.

The princess ran after it, and looked down into the water; but it was so deep that she couldn't see the ball. She couldn't even see the bottom of the well.

She began to cry, and she cried louder and louder, inconsolably. But as she wept and sobbed, someone spoke to her. 'What's the matter, princess? You're crying so bitterly, you'd move a stone to pity.'

She looked round to see where the voice was coming from, and saw a frog who'd stuck his big ugly head out of the water.

'Oh, it's you, you old splasher,' she said. 'I'm crying because my golden ball's fallen into the water and it's so deep and I can't see it.'

'Well, you can stop crying now,' said the frog. 'I can help you, but what will you give me if I fetch your ball for you?'

'Whatever you want, frog! Anything! My clothes, my pearls, my jewels, even the golden crown I'm wearing.'

'I don't want your clothes, and your jewels and your golden crown are no good to me, but if you love me and take me as your companion and your playmate, if you let me sit next to you at the table and eat from your dish and drink from your cup and sleep in your bed, then I'll dive down and bring up your golden ball.'

The princess thought, 'What is this stupid frog saying? Whatever he thinks, he'll have to stay in the water where he belongs. Perhaps he can get my ball.' But of course she didn't say that. Instead she said, 'Yes, yes, I'll promise you all of that if you just bring me my ball.'

As soon as the frog heard her say 'Yes', he put his head under the water and dived to the bottom. A moment later he came swimming back up with the ball in his mouth, and he threw it on to the grass.

The princess was so happy to see it that she snatched it up and ran off at once.

'Wait, wait!' called the frog. 'Take me with you! I can't hop as fast as you can run!'

But she took no notice. She hurried home and forgot all about the poor frog, who had to go back down into his well.

Next day the princess was sitting at table with her father the king and all the people of the court, and eating off her golden plate, when something came hopping up the marble steps: *plip plop, plip plop*. When it reached the top, it knocked at the door and called: 'Princess! Youngest princess! Open the door for me!'

She ran to see who it was, and opened the door, and there was the frog.

Frightened, she slammed the door shut at once and ran back to the table.

The king saw that her heart was pounding, and said, 'What are you afraid of, my child? Is there a giant there at the door?'

'Oh, no,' she said, 'it's not a giant, it's a horrible frog.'

'What does the frog want with you?'

'Oh, papa, yesterday when I was playing in the forest near the well, my golden ball fell in the water. And I started to cry and because I was crying so much, the frog got it for me, and because he insisted, I had to promise that he could be my companion. But I didn't think he'd ever leave the water, not really. But there he is outside the door and he wants to come in!'

And then there came a second knock at the door, and a voice called:

'Princess, princess, youngest daughter,
Open up and let me in!
Or else your promise by the water
Isn't worth a rusty pin.
Keep your promise, royal daughter,
Open up and let me in!'

The king said, 'If you make a promise, you have to keep it. Go and let him in.'

She opened the door and the frog hopped in. He hopped all the way to her chair.

'Lift me up,' he said. 'I want to sit next to you.'

She didn't want to, but the king said, 'Go on. Do as he says.'

So she lifted the frog up. Once he was on the chair, he wanted to be on the table, so she had to lift him up there as well, and then he said, 'Push your golden plate a bit closer so I can eat with you.'

She did, but everyone could see that she wasn't enjoying it. The frog was, though; he ate her food with great pleasure, while every mouthful seemed to stick in the princess's throat.

Finally the frog said, 'Well, I've had enough now, thank you, I'd like to go to bed. Carry me up to your room and get your silken bed ready so we can sleep in it.'

The princess began to cry, because the frog's cold skin frightened her. She trembled at the thought of him in her sweet clean bed. But the king frowned and said, 'You shouldn't despise someone who helped you when you were in trouble!'

She picked the frog up between finger and thumb and set him down outside her bedroom door and shut it firmly.

But he kept on knocking and called, 'Let me in! Let me in!'

So she opened the door and said, 'All right! You can come in, but you must sleep on the floor.'

She made him lie down at the foot of her bed. But still he said, 'Let me up! Let me up! I'm just as tired as you.'

'Oh, for goodness' sake!' she said, and picked him up and put him at the far end of her pillow.

'Closer! Closer!' he said.

But that was too much. In a flash of anger she scooped up the frog and threw him against the wall. But when he fell back into the bed, what a surprise! He wasn't a frog any more. In fact he'd become a young man – a prince – with beautiful smiling eyes.

And she loved him and accepted him as her companion, just as the king would have wished. The prince told her that an evil witch had put a spell on him, and that only she, the princess, could have rescued him from the well. What's more, on the following day a carriage would come to take them to the prince's kingdom. Then they fell asleep side by side.

And next morning no sooner had the sun awoken them than a carriage drew up outside the palace, just as the prince had said. It was pulled by eight horses with ostrich plumes nodding on

their heads and golden chains shining among their harness. At the back of the coach was Faithful Heinrich. He was the prince's servant, and when he'd learned that his master had been changed into a frog, he was so dismayed that he went straight to the blacksmith and ordered three iron bands to put around his heart to stop it bursting with grief.

Faithful Heinrich helped them into the carriage and took his place at the back. He was overjoyed to see the prince again.

When they'd gone a little way, the prince heard a loud crack from behind. He turned around and called out: 'Heinrich, the coach is breaking!'

'No, no, my lord, it's just my heart. When you were living in the well, when you were a frog, I suffered such great pain that I bound my heart with iron bands to stop it breaking, for iron is stronger than grief. But love is stronger than iron, and now you're human again the iron bands are falling off.'

And twice more they heard the same cracking noise, and each time they thought it was the carriage, but each time they were wrong: it was an iron band breaking away from Faithful Heinrich's heart, because his master was safe again.

* * *

Tale type: ATU 440, 'The Frog King'
Source: a story told to the Grimm brothers by the Wild family
Similar stories: Katharine M. Briggs: 'The Frog', 'The Frog Prince', 'The Frog Sweetheart', 'The Paddo' (*Folk Tales of Britain*)

One of the best-known tales of all. The central notion of the repulsive frog changing into a prince is so appealing and so full of moral implication that it's become a metaphor for a

central human experience. The common memory is that the frog becomes a prince when the princess kisses him. Grimm's storyteller knows otherwise, and so do the tellers of the versions in Briggs, where the frog has to be beheaded by the maiden before changing his form. The kiss has a lot to be said for it, however. It is, after all, by now another piece of folklore itself, and what else is the implication of his wishing to share the princess's bed?

There's no doubt that the frog becomes a prince (*ein Königssohn*) although the title of the story calls him a king ('Der Froschkönig'). Perhaps, having once been a frog, he retained the frog association when he inherited his kingdom. It's not the sort of thing that anyone would forget.

The figure of Iron Heinrich appears at the end of the tale out of nowhere, and has so little connection with the rest of it that he is nearly always forgotten, although he must have been thought important enough to share the title. His iron bands are so striking an image that they almost deserve a story to themselves.