

Funny Fairytales

AUTHOR

TIM HARRIS

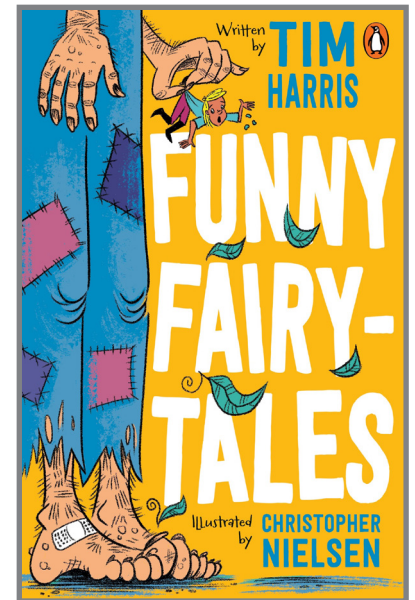
ILLUSTRATOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

FIVE classic fairytales. FIVE ridiculous twists. ONE very funny book. Jack's magical beans are REALLY not what he expected, Goldilocks is chasing influencer fame, Hansel and Gretel meet trouble head-on and Red Riding Hood's Big Bad Wolf is a pun-loving vegetarian.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Harris is the bestselling author of several laugh-out-loud series for kids, including *Toffle Towers*, *Mr Bambuckle's Remarkables* and *Exploding Endings*. With more than 15 years' experience as a primary school teacher, Tim knows what it takes to get children reading. Tim fills his stories with quirky scenarios, loveable characters and plenty of imagination. Tim's 'humour with heart' writing style has seen his books receive multiple awards, including five KOALA Honour Books (2017, 2019, two in 2020, and 2021) and a CBCA Notable (2018). His books have been published in Australia and the USA, and have been translated into numerous languages.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Christopher Nielsen is an Australian author/illustrator specialising in bringing joy and wonder to children through his art and storytelling. His illustrations are inspired by a deep passion for mid-century culture and design. His first picture book, *Once Upon an ABC*, saw him shortlisted for the CBCA Crichton Award for best new illustrator and *Just One Bee* received the CBCA Honour Award for Picture Book of the Year. When he's not busy with a book he can be found camping with his family in the great outdoors, taking walks with his dingo dog, Rusty, and annoying the neighbours with his rock band.

THEMES

- Fractured fairytales
- Humour
- Kindness and acceptance of others
- Family
- Friendships
- Short stories
- Imagination
- Creative thinking

- Magic

CURRICULUM LINKS

- Learning areas
 - English
- General capabilities
 - Literacy; Critical and creative thinking

STUDY NOTES

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Look at the front cover of the book. Which fairytale do you think is being illustrated?
- Read the blurb at the back of the book. What are you now expecting to see inside the book? What do you know about the fairytale characters the blurb mentions?
- Read the letter entitled 'Dear Reader' at the beginning of the book. What expectations do you have about the book now?
- What do you notice about the very first page of the first story? What does it tell you about the aim of this book?

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- As a class or in groups, discuss what you know about 'fractured fairytales.' Has anyone read examples of these before?
- After reading *Funny Fairytales*, discuss the following as a group:
 - What has changed in each of Tim Harris's fairytale retellings compared to the original stories that you might be familiar with? Start with the titles on the Contents page and how they differ from the original.
 - After reading the stories, discuss which story elements remain the same and which are different?
 - What advantages are there to modern fairytale retellings, particularly funny ones?
 - What are the disadvantages?
 - How do Tim's retellings of the story change the traditional fairytale stereotypes in the original stories? Do you think they are an improvement on the original?

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What is the main plot of each of the stories in Tim Harris's collection?
- Who are the main characters and how do they differ from traditional fairytale characters?
- Describe the characters in each story. What makes them funny? Who are your favourites?
- How does Chris Neilsen's illustration style add to the humour of this book and what you know about the characters?
- Describe the setting for the stories. How has Tim woven all of the stories together? Think of other fairytale retellings (in both film and books) that have done the same thing and list a few.
- Can you find references to the other fairytales in each of the stories?
- How does Tim Harris change the traditional stories of each fairytale? What are the main differences compared to the more familiar version? What message do Tim Harris's fairytales have compared to the original ones? How are they different?
- Rewrite a scene from 'Hansel and Gretel' but from the perspective of the witch. Or choose another secondary character in one of the stories and rewrite a scene from their point of view.
- Imagine you are a character in a new funny fairytale retelling - a different one to those in this collection. Write some diary entries that tell your story.
- Create a graphic novel version of a scene from one of the stories.
- Choose a story and describe how the characters' actions and decision contribute to the humour.
- Discuss, as a group, how Tim Harris uses language and dialogue to create humour.



Teachers' Resources

WORKSHEET: DIALOGUE

Tim Harris likes to have fun with character dialogue in his books, for example Jack and the Old Traveller in *Funny Fairytales*.



Now it's your turn. Choose two characters – these could be well-known figures from pop culture or literature, or someone you know, or you could make up your own characters or use characters from *Funny Fairytales*.

Write a conversation between these two characters. Try to keep the conversation flowing, and don't worry about adding dialogue tags yet – just write down the actual words these characters are saying to each other on the solid black lines on the next page.

Then, once you're done, go back through and add in dialogue tags on the dotted grey lines.

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