



The Wilful Eye

Isobelle Carmody, Nan McNab (Editor), Rosie Borella, Martine Murray, Richard Harland, Margo Lanagan, Margaret Mahy

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A dozen of the most exciting and unique writers for young people have chosen fairytales as starting points for their own original stories, in this surprising and spellbinding two-volume collection

Margo Lanagan (*Tender Morsels*), Rosie Borella, Isobelle Carmody, Richard Harland (*Worldshaker*), Margaret Mahy (*The Seven Chinese Brothers*), and Martine Murray (*Henrietta There's No One Better*) have taken inspiration from stories that have shaped us all, tales like "Beauty and the Beast," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," and "The Snow Queen." This collection carries universal themes of envy and desire, deception and abandonment, courage and sacrifice. Characters are enchanted, they transgress, they yearn, they hunger, they hate, and, sometimes, they kill. Some of the stories inhabit a traditional fairytale world, while others are set in the distant future. Some are set in the present and some in an alternative present. The stories offer no prescription for living or moral advice and none belong in a nursery. Open the covers and submit to their enchantment.

The Wilful Eye Details

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Author : Isobelle Carmody , Nan McNab (Editor) , Rosie Borella , Martine Murray , Richard Harland , Margo Lanagan , Margaret Mahy

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From Reader Review The Wilful Eye for online ebook

scarlettraces says

Cleverly reworked fairytales from Australian (and one NZ) writers. Highlighted a theme I've been noticing in fairytale reworking circles recently, which is the inclusion of Hans Christian Andersen. I think of him as a writer of original stories, rather than a gatherer and reteller of the collective unconscious in the form of fairytales. So for me it feels a bit weird that the Tinder Box, the Snow Queen, and the Brave Tin Soldier keep company with Rumpelstiltskin, Beauty and the Beast, and the Babes in the Wood. I will note that the retellings of the Tinder Box and the Brave Tin Soldier were the best, for what that's worth. I liked the Babes in the Wood one the least, which makes me sad (late period Mahy can be a bit hit and miss), although it's a nice portrait of Christchurch just pre-earthquake.

Nomes says

The quality of the stories was variable.

I loved Isobelle Carmody's retelling of Rumplestiltskin, but felt that Margaret Mahy's version of Babes in the Wood was a little forced as was Rosie Borella's Snow Queen. Margo Lanagan's retelling of the Tinderbox was just disturbing. I really enjoyed Richard Harland's version of Beauty and the Beast up to a point, where the underlying themes and so forth became forced, rather than implied, it would have been better to have left it with the Beast's story and the implications of that, than to have Belle's rather ham-fisted psychoanalysis of the situation, but otherwise it was well done. Martine Murray's Steadfast Tin Soldier was sweet and generally well done also.

I liked that the women in these stories were stronger than they traditionally are in faerie tales.

Eva Burkhardt says

Some of the stories were interesting and some of them weren't. oh whale.

Audrey Terry says

Only really liked the retelling of Beauty and the Beast....

Twig says

Wow!!! I enjoyed this book so much. I liked all the stories and I'm really excited to read the second book of this amazing short story collection. I think every Neil Gaiman Fan will love this new and dark tales :)

Sarah Mayor Cox says

Mmm, I love a good retelling of fairytales - especially with a more adult bent - and who could resist a collection with such a delicious cover!!! I was not disappointed with this collection. The writers chosen are of a very high calibre and the tales they've chosen aren't just the really well known ones. What I loved most about this collection was that because I didn't know all the stories really well, the retellings helped make the whole fairytale genre strange and new again for me. My favourite was the retelling of Rumplestiltskin - the dark King was so evil and cold - shame Alan Rickman is probably too old to play this part now - he would have been perfect. The authors' notes at the end of each tale is great too, as it helps the reader get inside the authors' heads. Looking forward to reading the next collection. And if you're looking for short stories to use in class - this collection would be great.

St Stephen's C C says

Six writers - Margo Lanagan, Rosie Borella, Isobelle Carmody, Richard Harland, Margaret Mahy and Martine Murray - have taken inspiration from stories that have shaped us all, like 'Beauty and the Beast,' 'The Steadfast Tin Soldier' and 'The Snow Queen'. This collection carries universal themes of envy and jealousy, deception and abandonment, control and power, courage and sacrifice, violence and deception. Characters are enchanted, they transgress, they yearn, they hunger, they hate and sometimes, they kill. Some of the stories inhabit a traditional fairytale world, while others are set in the distant future. Some are set in the present and some in an alternative present. The stories offer no prescription for living or moral advice and none belong in a nursery. Open the covers and submit to their enchantment.

Al says

Six of the world's most exciting and best - loved writers have chosen fairytales as inspiration for this spellbinding and subversive short - story collection. Six writers - Margo Lanagan, Rosie Borella, Isobelle Carmody, Richard Harland, Margaret Mahy and Martine Murray - have taken inspiration from stories that have shaped us all, tales like 'Beauty and the Beast,' 'The Steadfast Tin Soldier' and 'The Snow Queen'. This collection carries universal themes of envy and desire, deception and abandonment, courage and sacrifice. Characters are enchanted, they transgress, they yearn, they hunger, they hate and, sometimes, they kill. Some of the stories inhabit a traditional fairytale world, while others are set in the distant future. Some are set in the present and some in an alternative present. The stories offer no prescription for living or moral advice and none belong in a nursery. Open the covers and submit to their enchantment.

Natalie (CuriousReader) says

The Wilful Eye consists of 6 stories, and I'd say I loved two of them, really liked two more, and felt

lukewarm towards the remaining two. Of course the risk of reading a short story collection with different authors is that you're bound to like some authors' writing style, and not others - especially since the stories in this collection are fairytale retellings the way the authors interpreted the stories varied and so did my enjoyment of them. My favourites were Moth's Tale by Isobelle Carmody and Heart of the Beast by Richard Harland, by far. I haven't read either original fairytale although I know the gist of them, but now I'm definitely wanting to read the source material. Even for the stories that I didn't absolutely love I still really enjoyed experiencing the fairytales in new ways, so this genre of books is definitely something I want to explore further. I look forward to picking up the second part of "Tales from the Tower".

Lauren says

Catastrophic Disruption of the Head by Margo Lanagan...

To be honest I didn't really enjoy this story very much. It was very dark and the main character is very disturbed and unlikable/unrelatable. The descriptions of rape and violence made me quite uncomfortable and the disjointed way the story was written while clever, I found slightly boring. Once read though, and after reading Margo's explanation of what she was doing with old fairy tale, I gained a greater appreciation for the message behind the story, though I don't know if it comes across on its own without explanation. I'm not against the idea of offering insight into the mind of an antagonist, but more often than not I think it makes for a not very pleasant read.

Two Stars

Dami (Damiellar) says

I've always enjoyed a **good** re-imagining (and I've read many a bad one in my search) of a fairytale and on the whole this collection contains a good variety.

Not that they are all fantastic, edge of the seat stuff but there are definitely a few of them that I truly enjoy reading. The underlying themes are definitely not for the younger set

My top one from my read today:

Eternity - Rosie Borella:

this is a re-telling of the Snow Queen linking it to drug use which works really well to realise a mirror which makes the ugly look beautiful. There is still a bit of magic in the pages, just enough to retain the fantastic element.

I don't particularly know why this is the one that speaks to me but there's just something about the phrasing (maybe it's just due to exposure to Frozen and wanting a less sanitized version)

Maureen says

Gathering twelve Australian authors together to rewrite classic fairy and folk stories is an instant draw for me. I really love the places authors can go with fairy story revisionism. However, it doesn't always work.

The Wilful Eye does largely due to strong emotional undercurrents throughout the collection; undercurrents that are largely missing from its companion collection, The Wild Wood.

The Wilful Eye is a far superior effort to The Wild Wood. This is mainly because Margo Lanagan's opening short story, Catastrophic Disruption of the Head, is legions above most other short stories alone. Eternity, by relative newcomer Rosie Borella, was also a nice Sydney spin on The Ice Queen tale. One Window by Martine Murray was a beautiful take on The Steadfast Tin Soldier. Meanwhile, Isobelle Carmody's Moth's Tale (Rumpelstiltskin) and Richard Harland's Heart of the Beast (Beauty and the Beast) used the familiar fantasy and traditional styles to retell old tales. The only miss I found in this collection was Wolf Night by Margaret Mahy- it's tone fitted more with the second collection and it felt out of place with the other more emotional and more layered stories.

Still- I enjoyed this collection quite a lot, and definitely more than its companion.

The Wilful Eye: 4/5 stars

Claudia Piña says

Seis cuentos de hadas reimaginados. En el pasado, en el futuro, algo oscuros y viscerales. Se ha hecho antes, pero me gustó mucho como encajan todos juntos y las perspectivas interesantes que tomaron los autores. También me gustó que solo sean seis historias, lo que permite extenderlas y darles mas profundidad que en otras antologías.

Algunas de las historias originales no me son tan familiares (Babes in the Woods o The Tinderbox), pero en el fondo todas las historias lograron mantener una atmósfera de cuento, independientemente de cómo desarrollaban el tema.

Me quedaron muchas ganas de leer The Wicked Wood, la segunda parte.

Alexis Lee says

Here are the real fairytales, in all their macabre beauty. No HEAs and prince charminigs, not without your suffering, first, anyway. The stories are gritty, unflinching, beautifully sensual. My especial favorites:

'The Distribution Of The Head', (an adaptation of The Tinderbox) - this one really stood out to me because of the gruesomeness and the character building. You'll understand when you read it.

'Eternity' (an adaptation of The Snow Queen) - the premise behind this one was particularly interesting, and the author's afterword reveals many of the subtle meanings behind her story.

'Heart Of The Beast' (of course, Beauty And The Beast) - Again, the author's note reveals many of the intricacies that made this story special. The ending is particularly good.

I've always loved adaptations of fairytales, be it ones that have their romantic elements preserved, or ones

that have been twisted to become more like the original Grim's fairytales. The Willful Eye and its sequel don't disappoint.

ChrisDQ says

This was quite a disappointment for me. The Willful Eye has been spending time on by bookshelves for some years now, which unfortunately might have heightened the expectations I had for it...

I expected (based on the synopsis and the beautiful yet creepy cover) six creepy short stories, showing the more dark sides of fairy tales. I got six stories, of which I only kind of liked two, which felt pretty superficial and young to me. It was a struggle to get through...
