



The Wonder Clock

Howard Pyle

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Here Howard Pyle has compiled twenty-four marvelous tales. One for every hour of the day!

The Wonder Clock Details

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Author : Howard Pyle

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From Reader Review The Wonder Clock for online ebook

Lobna says

it was amazing reading those stories 24 for 24 hours also I enjoyed the illustrations and the poems
it was different and simple, i cant believe that book is a classic even if it was children's book

Cherie says

Honestly, I didn't like most of the stories. Some were okay though. My favorite was story #3. How One Turned His Trouble to Some Account.

"Trouble" was an actual human character in this story.

Many were written along the theme, that if you were humble, or poor and helped an old woman or man across a river or gave them your last two pence, you would get a wish granted, or some means of requesting help from them, because they were a magical being, and in the end you would marry a beautiful princess or handsome, rich king and all would be happy ever after. Several stories were about a smart red fox and a dumb bear, or other animal. The fox lost out in the end, in one - loosing his tail. No problem beating princesses or wives to make them behave or humble them.

The twenty four stories in the book were touted as "a story for each hour of the day."

What I really liked was the artwork and the poem or verse on the *hour* page before the beginning of each story. The author was an artist as well as an author and illustrated his own stories with pen and ink drawings and wood block prints.

Here is the poem or verse from the Six O'clock page.

"The *Door* is open,
The *Dew* is bright;
Forgotten now
Is the lonesome *Night*
And the *Starling* whistles,
""*All is right.*""

The *House-wife* moves
With her briskest tread
The *Chairs* are set,
And the *Table* spread
With *Honey* and *Eggs*
And *Cream* and *Bread.*"

The stories in this book are very old and all based on the author's interpretation of a collection of similar stories. He gave them his own "spin" and even add his own "voice" at the end of many of them claiming to have been at this feast or that wedding or having heard about things from Tommy Pfouce, who I had to believe was a friend. Most of the stories ended in a kind of moral, or wrap up, but some did not make much sense to me.

Here is the ending of two of the stories as an example of what I indicated above about "the voice".

From The Swan Maiden.

"After that the prince and the Swan Maiden were married, and a grand wedding they had of it, with music of fiddles and kettle-drums, and plenty to eat and to drink. I, too, was there; but all of the good red wine ran down over my tucker, so that not a drop of it passed, my lips and I had to come away empty. And that is all."

From The Simpleton and His Little Black Hen.

"Wit and Luck are not always hatched in the same nest, says Tommy Pfouce, and maybe he is right about it, for Caspar (the Simpleton of the story) married his sweetheart, and if she did not keep his money for him, and himself out of trouble, she would not have been worth speaking of, and I, for one, would never have told this story." My take on it was that Caspar didn't have much sense, but he was smart enough.

Nicole says

Read aloud with the 9 year old

Alyssa Bohon says

Loved this book immensely - from the library, need to own! My favorite thing was the brief poem preceding each chapter, describing the hour of the day. Many of the stories seemed to have similar plots or themes, but Pyle's witty way of saying things kept the tales fresh.

Juniper Shore says

Howard Pyle was a watershed in publishing; he's one of a handful of illustrators who transformed the profession from a hack-work, low-paid job into a serious professional art. His pictures are gorgeous. His writing isn't bad, although *The Wonder Clock* isn't his best. (I think that prize goes to *Otto of the Silver Hand*.) Still, the short stories in this collection include some wonderful examples of late-Victorian children's literature, and they aren't as didactic as some of the other books of the time (Pyle's own *Pepper and Salt*, for example, or practically anything by George MacDonald).

As the title indicates, there are 24 stories in this collection, interspersed with poems by the author's sister. The real draw is the illustrations: clean linework, dramatic scenes, and the sort of unashamedly earnest expressions only the Victorians could carry off. Modern fairytales have an undercurrent of cynicism throughout, as if the authors just can't help rolling their eyes at their own stories. There's none of that here. The stories are completely serious, just as the original Grimm's fairytales are, but these ones are a lot less bloody and more romantic.

One criticism: be careful what edition you read. The one with the purple cover has a perfect binding, and after a few rereadings the pages will start falling out.

Angela says

Read-Aloud. Wonderful fairy tales.

Patrick Murtha says

Completely charming, both the stories and the illustrations. In some ways this is an early example of a "mash-up," because Pyle borrows and re-combines story elements from many sources. Bright young readers and adults should enjoy the book equally. The stories are good for reading aloud, too; the droll repetitive patterns (many groups of three!) are very effective orally.

Bish Denham says

whenever I read children's stories that were written 100 years or more ago (these were first published in the 1880s) I have to remember how attitudes and the ideals that one shrived for were different. I can't judge from the modern perspective, that would be unfair. So what that all females were either fair and lovely maidens who need rescuing or ugly evil hags. Oh there were a few who fair and lovely AND evil... So what if all the males were usually the disenfranchised youngest of three sons, or some dim idiot who turns out to be brilliant. Oh there were a few who were handsome and smart AND kings...

Over all this is a delightful group of fairy tales. Reading them as an adult Pyle's writing formula soon became apparent and repetitious, which is why these would be good read-aloud stories to boys or girls.

Rebecca Ann says

I really didn't care for this collection. Most of the tales were similar in major ways, none of them had satisfying messages or conclusions, and they seemed oddly long and complex. The few exceptions for me were How Boots Befooled the King, The Swan Maiden, the Step Mother, and the Princess with the Golden Hair and the Great black Raven. Even with these, I think I could find better versions. I did like the way the collection was set up as a wonder-clock with a story for each hour, and the illustrations were detailed and interesting in a way (although the women and men are virtually identical as per classical styles).

Julianna says

What I liked:

-I always feel a little guilty reading Grimm's Fairy Tales to my 1 year old - they are disturbing and frequently gruesome. This book felt like it settled nicely between Grimm's and Disney. There was some violence and strangeness characteristic of old fairy tales, but on the whole it was peaceful without the power-washed feeling of Disney stories.

-The book is FULL of fantastic expressions - idiomatic and otherwise. It was fun to read ones that are similar to expressions that we say today, as well as ones that no one would ever use now because life has changed so

much.

-The narrator had a sort of chummy/conversational tone and made comments about the stories as they were being told.

What I didn't like:

-Nearly every female character in this book was a princess, a witch, or a bothersome/inconsequential wife.

-It took a LONG time to read this book to my child - partially because of her age (now that she is mobile and independent, I can't read to her against her will - darn). An older child might enjoy it more. It had few things that she is currently interested in.

Some expressions:

"He was as poor as charity soup"

"...knew no more of that than my grandfather's little dog"

"as good a wife as ever churned butter"

"in our town we do not make pudding without plums"

"as dead as stocks"

"as much alike as peas in the same dish"

"That is the small kernel to this great nut"

"Lost time was not to be gathered again like fallen apples"

"Many a one spills the milk-mug to save the water-jug"

"eyes as big as your mother's teacups"

"grinning as though cold weather were blowing snow in his teeth"

"If one never goes out for fear of rain one never catches fish"

Dawn says

A collection of 24 different fairy tales, each illustrated by Howard Pyle, each introduced with an illustrated poem by his wife, Katherine Pyle. Everything about this book is charming to me (a person who has struggled through Anderson's and Lang's fairy tales in the last year). The actual book, a library book chosen randomly off the shelf at my local library, seems to contain many details which might appeal to a child who has conquered post-modern disdain for anything not presented in moving picture form on a screen, also a child who doesn't let a lot of text discourage them, and who can look at black and white illustrations and enjoy them. So, yes, that is a lot to ask of today's child. But here are the benefits if such can be found. The stories move fast and the illustrations are five per tale. The subjects are varied. The narrator of the tales uses sly humor sparingly. I felt as though the events in these fairy tales made more sense, especially in their outcomes, than in others I had recently read. Although the stories have nothing of the modern in them (electricity, cars, obtaining hot food through drive-up windows, etc.), they touch on concepts which transcend time (love, loyalty, honesty, and attempting a quest which seems impossible simply because the opportunity has presented itself.)

Heather says

To be honest, I haven't read this outloud to the kids yet. I bought it and read it and really liked it. I do plan on using it but I think we'll do that when they're a bit older. Right now we're focusing on the more common fairy tales like Cinderella and Rapunzel and such.

I'm thinking this is best for 10 and up. It does have a bit of unpleasantness like using puppies for a potion or something like that. But all the original fairy tales have stuff like that. Eating of small children, chopping off of heads, you know, fun stuff.

Julia says

This book has been in my family for four generations, the 1912 edition having been given to my father by his grandmother in 1948.

The premise of the story is given in the introduction; the narrator happens upon a marvelous clock in Father Time's attic, which strikes the hour with songs and puppet dances. Twenty-four stories follow, one for each hour of the day. Each story begins with a verse that corresponds to the hour of the day: lighting the fire, preparing breakfast, sending the children to school, making the noonday meal, milking, tea, bedtime. The verses alone are fascinating, as they bring to life the household routines of a very different era.

The stories are illustrated with Howard Pyle's remarkable drawings. Each tale has a frontispiece for the title, and the beginning of the text and each picture caption is heralded with a large ornamental letter like those in illuminated manuscripts. The illustrations are gorgeous. Pyle was fond of capturing scenes of nobility and royal splendour, pastoral life, and witchcraft. Some are stylized portraits of princesses in exquisite gowns and classic poses, while others demonstrate Pyle's gift for caricature and expression.

The stories themselves are wonderful, full of heroes and heroines, bravery, beauty, wits and trickery. Although there are allusions to mystic and Christian themes, and to folklore and fables, most of the stories will be unfamiliar and fresh to modern readers. The language is rich with metaphor, droll imagery, and dialogue that is made to be read aloud. As with Aesop's fables, the stories are meant to instruct, but the morals take a back seat to the storytelling, at least until the conclusion of each tale, and a great deal is left up to the reader to interpret.

This was my favorite book as a child, and I still love reading it. But our beloved family heirloom is growing very delicate, so I am very glad that the book is still in print so that I can share it with my own daughters.

Comment

Ben says

I enjoyed the singular style of this late 18th-Century work, and the author's personal twist in the creation of these 24 short-story folk tales. There was definitely some repetitiveness in the themes, but it fit the bill of taking me back in time and each story was enjoyable enough. The princess-turned-queen that could not admit

the truth to wise woman Hildegard even at the price of her own children being abducted was one of the more striking ones.

Hazel says

Another book picked up at the Delaware Art Museum, inspired by the illustrator's artwork. There is a story for each hour of the day; each is a fairy/folk style tale with line illustrations. The stories often seem to be variations on standard tales with echoes of Cinderella, Snow White, the giant with the goose that lays golden eggs, etc. Impossible tasks are achieved often with magical help; there are princesses to be rescued; princesses offered as rewards; wicked stepmothers and stepsisters; talking animals who have knowledge of magical and hidden things; giants, trolls, witches; people who have been enchanted into animal form; and a fair share of morals. There is often a very clever outsmarting of brutish giants and greedy people. This is an old fashioned narrative. You can almost imagine Pyle sitting before a fire and making up stories using bits and pieces of others. Often he will write "this and that" or "thus and so" rather than actually describe actions or words said. One intriguing exclamation is "Hui" and there are frequent references to Tommy Pfouce with no explanation of who that is.
