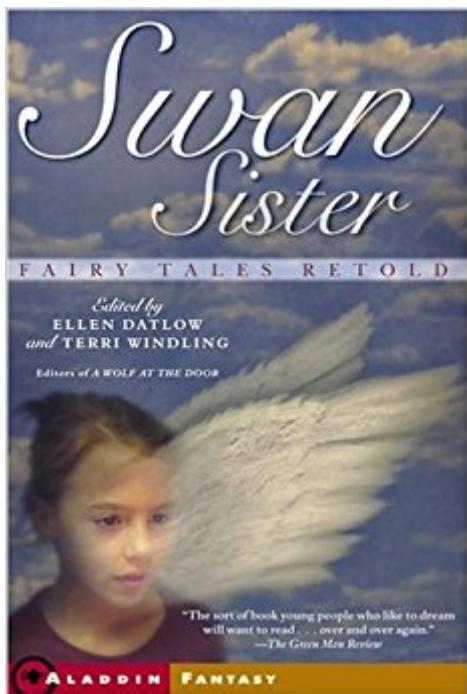


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# Swan Sister: Fairy Tales Retold



## **Synopsis**

Just as fairy-tale magic can transform a loved one into a swan, the contributors to this book have transformed traditional fairy tales and legends into stories that are completely original, yet still tantalizingly familiar. In this book you will find: a Rapunzel whose most confining prison is her loneliness; a contemporary rendering of the Green Man myth; two different versions of Red Riding Hood; a tale that grew out of a Celtic folk song; Sleeping Beauty's experience of her enchantment; two works inspired by the Arabian Nights; and more. In the follow-up to *A Wolf at the Door*, thirteen renowned authors come together with a selection of new and surprising adaptations of the fairy tales we think we know so well. These fresh takes on classic tales will show you sides of each story you never dreamed of. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 4-8-In this anthology, noted children's and adult fantasy writers play with the bones of traditional stories, songs, and characters to create 13 vibrant, imaginative short stories. Bruce Coville, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Neil Gaiman, Tanith Lee, and Jane Yolen are among the contributors. In the tales, the fisherman and his wife are viewed from across the water by a lonely motherless girl; fairies give Sleeping Beauty a century of time to explore the world before she wakes up and settles down; Lupe, in her mother's red cape, faces down the wolf. Some stories are set in the folkloric

past, others weave in contemporary details such as harried urban life, computers, and cell phones with pleasing results. The final moving story, Katherine Vaz's "My Swan Sister," based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Wild Swans," presents a family introducing their new baby, who is attached to an oxygen tank, to all of the pleasures of their New York neighborhood before she dies in the unfinished jacket her sister has knitted. The author says, "Rachel was a real little girl who did not live long, but-pretty as a swan, light as a feather-she managed to remind my family that even when time runs short, even when we cannot speak, we can still work wonders." There's something for everyone in this anthology, which proves once again the immense flexibility of traditional tales in the hands of gifted storytellers. Susan Hepler, Burgundy Farm Country Day School, Alexandria, VA  
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Gr. 5-10. Not as exciting as Datlow and Windling's previous anthology, *A Wolf at the Door* (2000), these fairy-tale retellings are driven more by ideas and message than by story. In fact, the general introduction--fairy tales were originally told to adults before they were sweetened and simplified--and the commentary on the stories are sometimes more interesting than the tales themselves. But the ideas are fun, and the lively, contemporary play with the old tales will entertain many teens. Neil Gaiman makes us think about Scheharazade. Will Shetterly questions where that "handy woodsman" really comes from to save Little Red Riding Hood. Far from passive, Rapunzel frees herself, and Sleeping Beauty actually wakes up regularly and secretly gets things done. Great for writing classes and discussion. Hazel Rochman  
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Love the stories in this book. Great Read!

I love this book. It really took me away completely. I became absorbed in the stories. I've always been a fairy tale afficando. This is stellar, spectacular, and truly a joy to read. Highly Recommend!

I have always been fascinated by the beauty of fairy tales. Dark, mysterious and entertaining, fairy tales take us all on unforgettable journeys of self-discovery and joy. This collection of retold fairy tales is filled with wonderful stories that are as varied as they are entertaining. My favorite stories in the collection are as follows: 1. "Golden Fur": An adventure story told in a poetic style about a young man embarking upon a perilous quest. He receives assistance from a golden-furred little creature

who is more than she seems.2. "Chambers of the Heart": A retelling of the tale of "Bluebeard," this dark yet poignant tale illustrates how, even when innocence is lost, survival is imperative. Delve into the dark recesses of the heart, and you will face your greatest test. The story is beautifully rendered and told from the perspective of one of Bluebeard's wives.3. "The Harp that Sang": Haunting and chilling, this is the story based upon a folk ballad about murder, guilt, and retribution. Justice must prevail.4. "The Girl in the Attic": A refreshing retelling of "Rapunzel," in which our greatest enemies may be our own fears and insecurities. Set in modern times, the story relates how a young girl must come to terms with her loneliness and break down the barriers of silence that imprison her.5. "My Swan Sister": Beautiful and moving, this story explores the themes of life's fragility and a person's love. A young girl knits a jacket for her baby sister who is a premature infant. This story moved me to tears. These tales are only a sampling of the delights that await you in this marvelous collection. Please give it a chance. Happy reading, and God bless you all.

This collection of tales includes: Greenkid by Jane Yolen When the main character meets his beautiful female next door neighbor he wants her to like him. He thinks his chances at school will be slim so he tries to see her as much as he can during the summer. When a Greenkid stumbles upon them the girl flees but the boy ignores her warnings much to his later chagrin. Golden Fur by Midori Snyder A fascinating tale I have never heard before about a young hero seeking his fortune. He stumbles upon a castle with an oasis in the back and meets a little hamster like creature (modeled off of a hamster or two the author had). Although the hero has little food he shares it with the hamster and in turn the hamster helps him surmount the obstacles the guardians of the castle have placed in order to marry the beautiful princess. Chambers of the Heart by Nina Kiriki Hoffman An eerie retelling of Bluebeard told by his next door neighbor and later his wife. Little Red and the Big Bad by Will Shetterly A hilarious retelling of Little Red Riding Hood retold with modern language. It includes phrases such as "So Red puts on her hoodie, leaves a note for the Moms, and BMXes away." Pg. 49 The Fish's Story by Pat York A delightful retelling of that story where the fisherman catches the magic fish and his wife makes him get bigger and bigger houses for her. In this story a little girl also catches the same fish although, as she later finds out, the fish is already familiar to her. The Children of Tilford Fortune by Christopher Rowe I have never heard this tale before. Three children must go out to sell their only belongings to make it in the world: a rooster, a scythe, and a cat. It's a very, very good story, especially for the world today. The Girl in the Attic by Lois Metzger After her father dies, Ava refuses to talk to her stepmother and speaks little in class. One night she wishes for someone to talk to and finds this person soon after. The Harp that Sang by Gregory Frost

There really isn't any other way to retell this story except a creepy way. The story is creepy to begin with. Jealous of her sister, Karla pushes her into the river where the sister drowns. Later a man stumbles upon the sister's bones and hair making them into a harp. When he happens to play at the wedding of Karla she is overwrought with guilt. *A Life in Miniature* by Bruce Coville An interesting retelling of Tom Thumb that takes place in the future. Tom lives inside a laboratory for a while under the suspicious care of Dr. Lyon. *Lupe* by Kathe Koja An interesting twist on the Red Riding Hood tale, Lupe is actually a name of a girl in the retelling. She goes into the woods to find a "witch" for her mother because her mother is grief stricken by the loss of her baby. *Awake* by Tanith Lee This retelling of Sleeping Beauty answers the question, "What exactly did Sleeping Beauty do those hundred years besides sleep? Did she dream?" The story supposes that Sleeping Beauty actually awoke during the night and had magical companions that showed her the world. *Inventing Aladdin* by Neil Gaiman A poem about how poor Scheharazade has to make up stories every night to save her life. *My Swan Sister* by Katherine Vaz A great story that takes place in the modern world, My Swan Sister is especially good for those mourning the loss of a tiny baby. Baby Rachel doesn't have long to live but while she is living she causes miraculous changes in the people she comes into contact with.

This book is a gorgeous collection of stories, each at once familiar and strange. From the slick prose and grungy setting of Shetterly's "Little Red and the Big Bad" to the opulence of Snyder's "Golden Fur," to Hoffman's haunting "Chambers of the Heart," these reinvented fairytales are crafted to whisper on even after you've closed the book.

... and the flesh take each author brought to familiar tales. Definite appeal for the right age group--perhaps eleven and up--and probably more for girls than boys, though boys would enjoy it if they would give it a chance! (Hate to be stereotypical, but my experience is that it is the rare male child who will pick up fairy tales, more's the pity.)

Several months after reading this collection, the final story, "My Swan Sister," continues to pop up in my mind in strange ways. "Greenkid" as well. I enjoyed the entire collection and would recommend it to fairytale-loving kids and adults.

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