

How Different Regions Influence Fairytales

Fairy tales are popular and highly adaptable ways to convey life lessons in a way that is easy for one to consume. Different cultures throughout the ages have produced their own unique versions of the same story. Our poster will explore three interpretations of Cinderella as told in Germany, Ireland, and Russia. These stories are Aschenputtel, Billy Beg and the Bull, and Vasilisa the Beautiful, respectively.

Aschenputtel

The German version of Cinderella is the most similar to the Disney story that most people know. The main reason behind the similarity is because the Disney version is based off the original Aschenputtel tale collected by the Grimm brothers. In this story Aschenputtel is helped by pigeons that provide her with jewelry and dressed in order to attend the ball. Later, it takes a more graphic turn as in order to identify the owner of the slipper Aschenputtel's step sisters lop off their toes in order to fit the shoe. The pigeons take the stage again as they sing about how the situation is wrong as the prince takes them home causing him to check the foot in the slipper.



A Heroic Approach

In comparison, to the story of Cinderella, the stories wouldn't be linked at all until its end, when the princess happens to grab the prince's shoe. The story leading up to that point, however, is one of a person's growth after losing his place and actions that make him a hero. In Cinderella, she remains subservient to her stepmother and stepsisters even after her encounter with the prince, at the ball, until he finally comes for her.

Billy Beg and the Bull

The Irish tale of Cinderella does not appear to be a Cinderella story at first glance. The protagonist of the story is actually a prince by the name of Billy Beg and the creature that aids him in attaining his happily ever after is a bull. In a, much more action packed, way the prince escapes with his bull which the queen in the story states will cure her with a mouthful of its blood. In the world, outside the castle, the bull sacrifices itself to protect Billy and give him power, which then takes him on an adventure. He defeats a giant and then slays a dragon which eventually leads to his happily ever after with the princess because of the shoe she obtained as he left.



Vasilisa the Beautiful

The Russian story of Cinderella rings closer to the tale of Aschenputtel. Vasilisa loses her mother and the father remarries to a wicked stepmother and along come her evil stepsisters like in the original. Unlike the other Cinderella stories, she received a magical doll from her mother that would take care of her as long as she fed it. Eventually, she gets sent to the witch Baba Yaga in order to obtain a light which leads to mystical experiences with horsemen and Baba Yaga herself. When she returns from nearly being eaten by Baba Yaga, she brings a skull from the house's fence as a light which incinerates her stepfamily and then goes to live with someone else until by chance catches the eye of the Tsarevich which is the Russian equivalent of a prince and her happy ending.

