The magic of finger and thumb: early movable books for children


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Abstract

A faun carrying an umbrella; a hobbit who lives in a hole; a mysterious name - Lyra; an ill-treated schoolboy with a scar and a secret. Children's fantasy books often begin with resonant images. However, they also begin in an author's reading practices. How do children's authors incorporate myths and legends into their work? And how do myths and legends change as a result? In this richly illustrated collection of essays a team of academic experts trace the magical tales from Norse myth, Arthurian legend and medieval literature which have inspired the finest writers for children, including C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and Alan Garner. Drawing on collections of manuscripts and rare books in the Bodleian Library, additional chapters put the spotlight on spell books, grimoires and books that do magic, as well as exploring stunning examples of pop-up books, harlequinades and concertina panoramas from the Opie Collection of Children's Literature. Other writers under discussion include children's authors of the Victorian era, such as George MacDonald, Rudyard Kipling and E. Nesbit, and twentieth-century writers Susan Cooper, Diana Wynne Jones and Philip Pullman. Through wide-ranging analysis these essays show how literature and tales from the Middle Ages and earlier still have been reinterpreted for each generation and continue to have a profound impact on writers of fantasy books for children today.

Keywords: Children's literature, toy and movable books, nineteenth-century literature, illustration

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Imagine that you had a magic finger. What adventures might you have? Without reading the story, look at the illustrations of the characters at the front of the book. Predict
what might happen to them in the book. The story is written in the first person. Carry out a role play activity to decide what the girl should do after she has used the magic finger on the Gregg family. Should she help them? Make a list of words to describe how the Gregg family might have felt when they were turned into birds and another list to describe their feelings when they became human again. Write a new chapter for the end of the book that describes what happens to the Cooper family. Can you write a set of instructions to teach someone how to do a magic trick of their own? Science. THE BFG: PLAYS FOR CHILDREN (Adapted by David Wood). CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY: A PLAY (Adapted by Richard George). DANNY THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD: PLAYS FOR CHILDREN (Adapted by David Wood). FANTASTIC MR FOX: A PLAY (Adapted by Sally Reid). JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH: A PLAY (Adapted by Richard George). THE TWITS: PLAYS FOR CHILDREN (Adapted by David Wood). THE WITCHES: PLAYS FOR CHILDREN (Adapted by David Wood). Teenage fiction. For months I had been telling myself that I would never put the Magic Finger upon anyone again - not after what happened to my teacher, old Mrs Winter. Poor old Mrs Winter. One day we were in class, and she was teaching us spelling. Many wonderful free children's books are available to read at Children's Storybooks Online. Stories span age ranges from preschool, young children, teens, through young adult. Books for Young Children: The Little Gingerbread Man - by Carol Moore - A surprising new version of the classic Gingerbread Man fairy tale. The Journey of the Noble Gnarble - by Daniel Errico - Illustrated by Christian Colabelli - Deep below the ocean waves a gnarble fish dreams of seeing the sun and sky. Also available at Amazon in hardcover and Kindle editions. Invisible Alligators - by Hayes Roberts - Little Sari discovers invisible alligators quietly sneaking around creating trouble for her and everyone else. The Brave Monkey Pirate - by Hayes Roberts - The Pirate Modi uses his father's...