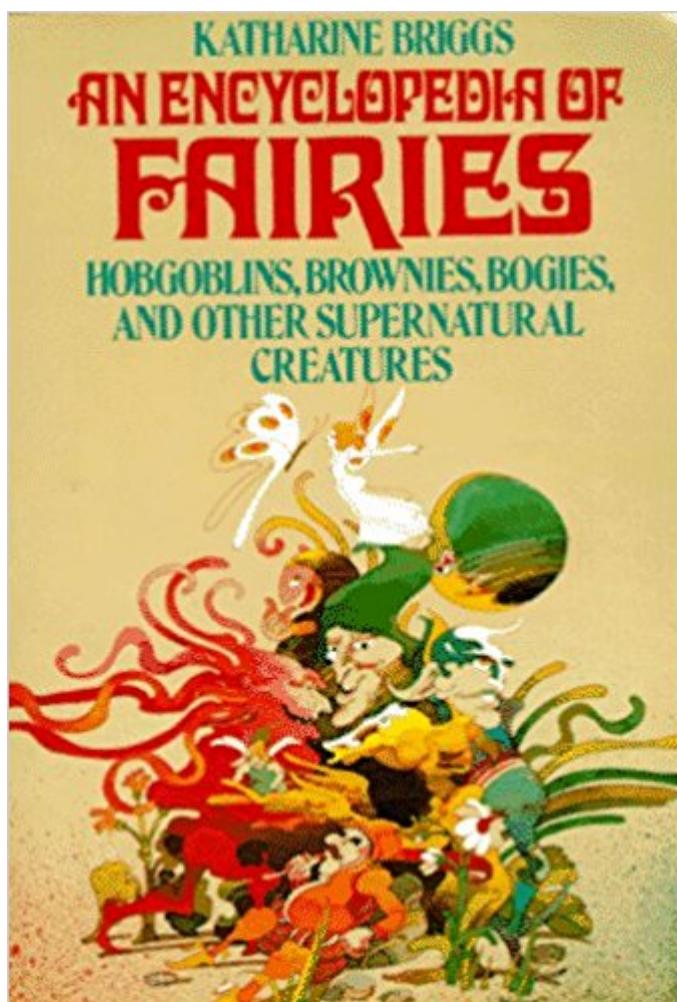


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An Encyclopedia Of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, & Other Supernatural Creatures



Synopsis

A complete guide to fairy lore from the Middle Ages to the present. Both an anthology of fairy tales and a reference work with essays about the fairy economy, food, sports, powers and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have lost count of the number of times I've sat down with the book since the day I found it. Rarely do I have a goal in mind; instead, I simply open the book to a random page and start reading.

Always, I find something interesting waiting for me on whatever page I select; often, I learn something new. Briggs' scholarship is amazing, her research is exhaustive. Even the most fanatical of folklore enthusiasts would be hard pressed to find a character from British folklore missing from this work. (Briggs wrote in her preface that she originally planned to compile an encyclopedia of global folklore, "but to treat the fairies of the whole of Europe alone, even cursorily, would have been to produce a book ten times the size of this and founded on years of further research." Certainly, Briggs treated British folklore with a thoroughness rarely seen in a milieu regarded by some as a children's fancy.

I was given The Encyclopedia of Faires as a gift at Yuletide in 1977 (that's how long I've been passionately pursuing all manner of writing and information on the Realm of Faery!) It's so long ago that being interested in this subject then was like being "in the closet" about the (real) faeries!! So it is high time I try to express the reverence in which I still hold this book. There are so many guides

coming out any more that your library could be filled in no time, yet what would it be filled with? Not anything as authentic as what is between the pages of Brigg's Encyclopedia. Hers is not rehashed information, secondhand lore. There is a sort of "closeness to the source" about her information that lends it an unparalleled authenticity. Of course, she was British, and she was 78 years old in 1977 when the book came out, so she was closer in both place and time to the original information. We who are fascinated with the Realm owe this good woman and most competent folklorist a great debt of gratitude for what she brought forth for us to have in this book.

I was reading The Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater (which uses elements of the Water-Horse legend, which can be found in this book) and in the author's note, she recommends this book. She's my personal hero, so I go to purchase this at the bookstore. Then on that bookstore's website. Then on a different one. NOPE. Apparently, this has been out of print since the 70s. That's why you should jump on this right now. It's the absolute best. I also bought all the other Katharine Briggs' works I could find on (Folktales of England, The Vanishing People, etc.), and those are great, but they really tell the tale itself, like a story (which is fun to read, and you should buy those, too). This gives you another angle: here, she recounts the lore, but she also includes entries about prominent figures in the study of folklore, as well as essays on things like "Captives in Fairyland" and "Time in Fairyland." Basically, she allows you to understand folklore as an organic entity, really, giving you all the background information to have it really develop into a world. It's just the best. I can't even explain it. Gah, I'm literally bouncing up and down with how excited I am to have this. Seriously, Katharine Briggs is the be all and end all of folklore, and this is like her magnum opus...you need this. You just do.

I bought this book somewhere years ago and didn't look at it too hard. Every once in a while I'd pick it up and read about "Fairies" or "Hobgoblins" or "Brownies." I looked up "Tam Lin" after I read Pamela Dean's "Tam Lin." But it was only when I read "The Scarlet Letter" in my English class that I took a good look at this book. Some of the descriptions of Pearl--her elfish behavior, her red dress--and some other details reminded me of my Encyclopedia. So I started reading. It was hard going: there is no index. However, it was while browsing through the book that I found the most intriguing little tidbits of fairy lore. When I informed my mother that I was using it as a major source for my English paper, she was skeptical--until she looked at the information at the front of the book. It's not a frivolous work. That is sometimes a problem--many quotations are in the original dialect or idiom, which can obscure the meaning. This book is both interesting and useful.

This is a truly fun read. Truly encyclopedic. From the dark corners of fairy lore, such as the teind and the Cirein Croin, to the friendly hobs and leprechauns, this book has it all. This is a book to read, re-read, and then have another go at some other time still. Buying this book is money well spent if one has an interest in folklore of the Isles or is interested in some of the more obscure corners of religion.

I lost my copy of this book several years ago, and I'm really glad to finally find a replacement. A terrific resource and a great read, this book is full of the kind of folk stories that don't make perfect sense-- when the storyteller truly believes in something, it doesn't have to make sense. It just is. A good guide to Fairies, and to the fact that traditional Fairies are not cute winged girls. They are dangerous and capricious and interesting and alien, and even the good ones are scary. If you like stories, then the lesson is worth learning. This is the only reference book I've ever read, cover to cover.

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