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Folktales Of Norway (Folktales Of The World)



Synopsis

Often lacking the clear episodic structure of folktales about talking animals and magic objects, legends grow from retellings of personal experiences. Christiansen isolated some seventy-seven legend types, and many of these are represented here in absorbing stories of St. Olaf, hidden treasures, witches, and spirits of the air, water, and earth. The ugly, massively strong, but slow-witted trolls are familiar to English-speaking readers. Less well-known, but the subject of an enormous number of legends, are the more manlike yet sinister "huldre-folk" who live in houses and try to woo human girls. These tales reflect the wildness of Norway, its mountains, forests, lakes, and sea, and the stalwart character of its sparse population."The translation is excellent, retaining the traditional Norwegian style . . . the tales themselves will also appeal to the interested layman."âLibrary Journal

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've owned a copy of this 1964 publication for quite a while; my paperback copy is of the 1973 third printing. It is a personal favorite among a shelf-full of folklore volumes. I no longer remember whether it was an impulse purchase, or I needed it for one or another undergraduate or graduate class, and if so whether it was in Scandinavian Literature, or Germanic Mythology, or Folklore Studies. And that should give you a clue that I have used guesswork in rating it as suitable for 4 to 8 year olds. (Yes, I've reported / complained about it; maybe, against precedent, this will change soon.) Not that there aren't stories in here quite suitable for reading to young children; there are

some. But the book is heavily weighted with historical and theoretical introductions, and elaborate notes to the stories, many of which are either aimed at adults, or chosen to illustrate traditional beliefs as much as to entertain. The volume was an early entry in the University of Chicago Press "Folktales of the World" series, well-produced volumes which featured forewords by the distinguished American folklorist Richard Dorson, and were generally edited by specialists from the nations covered. (It was officially number 5; but number 1, Kurt Ranke's "Folktales of Germany," did not actually appear until 1966!) Unfortunately, most other volumes in the series seem to be out of print; "Folktales of Ireland" (Sean O'Sullivan) may be the only other exception. The editor of this volume, Reidar Christiansen, an important Norwegian folklorist, drew on both earlier published collections and archival sources to illustrate a wide variety of genres of oral narrative in Norwegian tradition.

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