

# Reviews Roundup: Fairy Tales Retold

A staple of fairy tales has been their memorable female characters, even though today we may look back at some of the earlier characterizations of women with dismay. Yet the potency of these creations remains undeniable: queens transformed to witches frightening enough to haunt our dreams, princesses with generous hearts and a preternatural patience for the toil and slog of everyday existence. And let's not overlook all the terrific fashion, which Disney films immortalized with the wave of its magic wand (and a fleet of beyond talented animators). The continued resonance of classic fairy tales is evidenced in the public's seemingly undying interest in them, with the subversive retelling of a traditional model now a popular genre in its own right. As we celebrate Women's History Month, SLC spotlights precisely those titles that reimagine well-known fairy tales with a modern appreciation for women's changing roles. These titles showcase heroines whose interests extend beyond mere princely preoccupations and represent the rich complexity of contemporary women's experience. Spanning a wide range of age groups, these books would be great to have for Women's History Month in addition to making terrific permanent additions to any collection. Finally, don't miss our [fairy-tale themed lesson plan](#) that provides a window into other cultures by prompting students to learn how the Cinderella story is told around the world!



Hilary McKay

## **Straw into Gold: Fairy Tales Re-Spun**

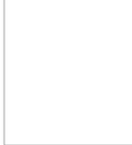
*Illustrated by Sarah Gibb. 2019. Margaret K. McElderry Books (Simon & Schuster). Grades 6-8*

Taking some of the more well-known fairy tales, as well as some that have been seemingly forgotten, McKay has reworked the classic stories into more modernized renditions. Sometimes she even manages to twist a tale into something more fabulous and ornate than it was originally. Case in point, did you ever wonder what Gretel would have told her teacher if she had been assigned to write an essay about what she did over her holiday break?

—Reviewed by Beth Green

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Restless Girls



Jessie Burton

## **The Restless Girls**

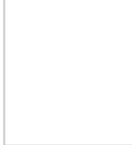
*Illustrated by Angela Barrett. 2018. Bloomsbury Publishing. Grades 3-5*

Using Grimm's *Twelve Dancing Princesses* as inspiration, Burton gives life and personality to each of the princesses, with each of them possessing unique talents that their mother actively fosters.... Burton puts a modern twist on a classic fairy tale, making it less "grim" and adding a touch more agency for the princess characters in the process.

—Reviewed by Lisa Wright

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Cinderstella



Valeria Docampo

## **Cinderstella: A Tale of Planets Not Princes**

*2016. Magination Press. Grades K-2*

Cinderstella has hopes and dreams that don't involve princes and glass slippers. Instead, she dreams of stars, planets, and other heavenly objects. In this modern retelling of the cherished classic tale, Cinderstella does the bidding of her stepsisters by day, but by night she retreats to her tree house to explore the solar system and beyond.

—Reviewed by Steven Hadge

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Vita Murrow

**Power to the Princess: 15 Favorite Fairytales Retold with Girl Power**

*Illustrated by Julia Bereciartu. 2018. Grades 3-5*

Set during a fictional fairy tale gathering, the author "interviews" 15 princesses of traditional tales to discover the true story behind the legends. This collection of stories defies what readers think they know about these young women from various cultures. Elements of the traditional tale are present, but each story has a modern twist reflecting a powerful woman who rises to the challenge presented.

—Reviewed by Kimberly Laskey

[Click here to read the full version of the review](#)

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