

Fantasy of Enchanting Forests Illustrated In Children's Book

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Area of the Study –

Children (Age group): 3 to 8 years

Period: Modern Times

Experimental Area: Zonal division (Urban and Rural)

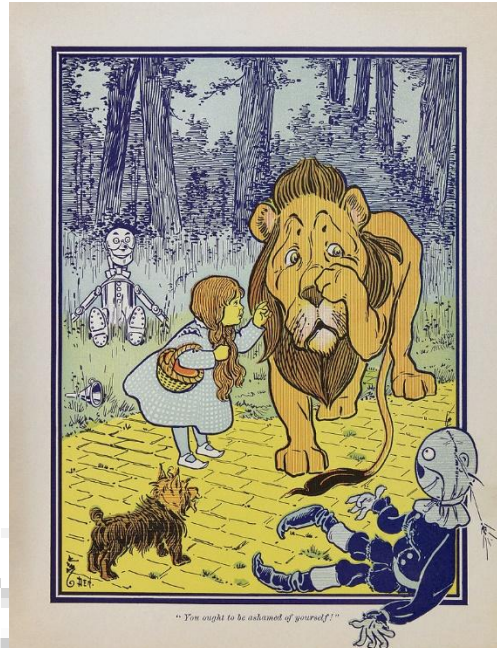
“The universe is full of Magical things, waiting for our wits to grow sharper”
- Eden Phillpotts

INTRODUCTION

As illustrated books become one of the dominant media of public consumption especially targeting younger children. The production of the picture storybook in which interdependent text and illustration were given equal emphasis came up with greater qualities. The improvements in printing technology freed illustrators to experiment with colour and new rendering techniques. This led ‘The Golden Age of children's book illustration’ to reached its peak. The origins of the Golden Age of children's book illustration can be traced all the way back to the work of **George Cruikshank** (1792 - 1878), who is recognised as the first Artist to set the standard in children's book illustration. Cruikshank's genius directly inspired **Richard Doyle** and **John Tenniel** creating remarkable drawings for ‘*Lewis carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*’ (1865), while the pioneering work of the Victorian engravers **William James Linton** and the Dalziel Brothers and of the colour printer **Edmund Evans** contributed greatly to the enduring success of **Walter Crane**, **Randolph Caldecott** and **Kate Greenaway**. Their expertise skills enhanced the textual counterpart through their delicate harmonious linear composition and warm colour.

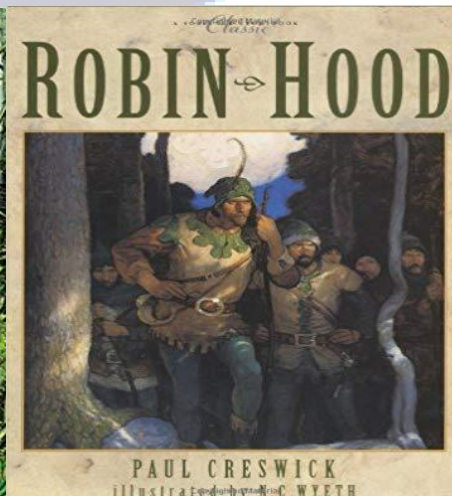
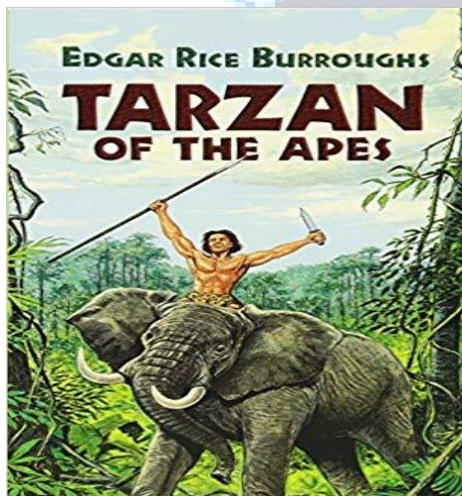
In the decade from 1905 to 1914 saw the rise of this century's greatest and most popular illustrators, including **Arthur Rackham**, **Edmund Dulac**, **Willy Pogany**, **Kay Nielsen**, **W. Heath Robinson** and **Jessie Willcox Smith**. This incredible wealth of talent of book illustration, fine drawings, and paintings combining fantasy, humour and beauty, and the most stunning pictorial cover designs richly adorned, that had never been equalled or recovered after the First World War. Yet, Arthur Rackham and many of his younger contemporaries helped to sustain the Golden Age, not only with classic stylization but diverse of concepts and subjects to let branched out.

Among the most stunning volumes which retained all the glory of the pre-war years were Harry Clarke's *The Fairy Tales of Perrault* (1922). This was a beautiful book, in which the tales are illustrated mostly in black and white by the Irish illustrator and stained glass Artist, **Harry Clarke**. Yet, the visual description of enchanting Forests is among the most favourite concept in much folklore, as well as occurs quite repetitively, throughout many classic fairy tales and adventure stories. And for this probably, the reason could be because; it is a located beyond where, the people normally don't travel regularly. Hence, to our mind the image of this dense forest represent situations, places or characters unknown to us. They feature with conscious image of a wild land or a place of threatening danger, or where one could get lost or isolated.



But thanks to the interesting version of many folklore which transforms our forest image with welcoming and enchanting contents and encounters, which seems to be being beyond normal human experiences. The fairy tale has an unusual tendency to take place in the forest. Thus we may say it is the wonder- gift of these tales and of course the visual interpretation which described forest as a place of magic and an opportunity to enjoy thrilling adventures. In 'The *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*' by 'L.Frank Baum', depicted the wild and dangerous p illustrations of Oz as being forested, and indeed, with animated trees with human. Seldom enchanting forest is manifested place where strange things might occur, and strange people might live, the home of Monsters, witches and even fairies. Indeed, in Fairy Tales, forests are usually an ideal place of magical refuge, yet the marvels they meet are beneficial.

Hence, in fairy tales, '*Hansel and Gretel*' found a chocolate house and cannibalistic witch in the forest, '*Snow White*' found refuge with Dwarfs from her stepmother further there in the forest, the hero of a fairy tale came to rescue her, Even in the story '*Brother and sister*,' they hid in the forest after their stepmother turned the brother into a deer. Whereas the heroines, and their wicked stepsisters, of '*The three Little Men in the Woods*' and similarly in the story '*The Enchanted Wreath*', met their magical tests all in the deep forest. And to mark more even story, '*Beauty and the beast*', Belle's father is lost in the forest when he finds the Beast's castle. Also it is in the forest that the dwarf of '*Rumpelstiltskin*' and the fairy of '*Wuppity Stories*' reveal their true names and therefore the heroines of those tales have a way to free themselves.



Many a times, in the forest, the hero of a fairy tale is being shown to meet and enjoy the mercy of 'talking animals' that protect and aid them out of their miseries and loneliness. That includes like in 'Mowgli' in the stories of 'Jungle book' or tales of 'Tarzan the ape'. The creatures of the forest need not be magical every time to have much the same effect; 'Robin Hood', living in the greenwood, has affinities to the enchanted forest. The danger of the folkloric forest seems to be an opportunity for the heroes of legend. Among the oldest of all recorded tales, the 'Sumerian Gilgamesh' recounts how the heroes 'Gilgamesh' and Enkidu' travelled to the Cedar forest, to fight the monsters there and be the first to cut down its trees.

Similarly even Particularly in Indian mythology the forest becomes the focus a deep, spiritual enchant. Especially in the great epic 'The Mahabharata' (300 B.C.-200 AD), we find the verses discusses about the flora and fauna, the Geography and forestry regions involved in the stories. The importance of forests in Indian epics can be understood from the fact that each epic devotes one book to the forests. In Mahabharata, it is the 'Aranyakaparva' where 'Aranya' means Forest, and Parva means The book, here, in it mentions about the period of twelve years spent by Pandavas in exile in the forest. Again in the divisions of another great Indian mythologicalepics 'The Ramayana' are divided into Kandas (Books), and that also includes one exclusive Kanda known as 'Aranya Kanda' – Book of the Forest. More elaborately, in epic 'Ramayana' 'Kishkindha Kanda' – also discusses wonders and the details of the forestry of this region. Here, most of all the major stories and episodes seemed to be occurred or revolved around the forest, as when 'Rama' was compelled to go into exile in the forest for fourteen long years. Or the story of 'BharataMilap', 'Surpnakha- vad', 'Sitaharan' or later, when Lakshmana was severely wounded during the battle against Ravana, Hanuman was sent to fetch the 'Sanjivini- booti', a powerful life-restoring herb, from Dronagiri mountain in the 'Himalayas', to revive him.

Similarly in the enchanting forest of 'Mount Kailash' (Devanagari) the peak in the 'Gangdisê Mountains' of Himalayas, is considered to be the abode of Lord Shiva. There are many stories on special magical wild medicinal plants and trees growing in jungles. Just to mention a few, the stories associates with 'Naimisharanya' (in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh state), 'Chitrakoot' ('Hill of many wonders' situated in the northern Vindhaya Range of mountains spread over the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh), 'Dandakaranya' (situated in the Baster Distric of Chhattisgarh), 'Panchavati' (the place in the forest of Dankaranya in Nasik), and similarly, 'Brindavana' (groves of 'Brinda'- the Holy Basil or 'Tulasi' with vana meaning a grove or a forest), The town is about 10 km away Mathura - the city of Lord Krishna's birthplace, near the Agra- Delhi highway. Hence, enfolding these short stories we may also introduce our little ones the wonders of the Ayurveda (special faculty, dealing with utilization of medical plants for restoring health and physical fitness).



Illustrated by Maurice Sendak - 'Where the Wild Things Are'(1964)

Coming to the use of enchanted forests branches out to the modern fantasy with no distinct breaking point, stemming from the very earliest fantasies. The more inviting but no less enchanted forest in 'The Golden Key' illustrated by Maurice Sendak, borders fairylands and interestingly narrates the adventurous wanderings of a boy and girl to find the keyhole which fits the rainbow's golden key. Or in his another book 'Where the Wild Things Are' (1964) that features, a little boy named 'Max' who travels to a land of monsters and confidently becomes king of them all.

'Where the Wild Things Are' illustrated by Maurice Sendak (1964)

In the fictional high Fantasy-world of 'J.R. Tolkien' who made use of ancient giant forests representing 'Silvan- Wood Elves' (lively creature considered to have magical powers), these characters are being created strongly associated with forests, specially Mirkwood and Lothlórien living near the Misty Mountains of Middle-earth. He also made use of folklore

about trees, such as the willow, believed to uproot themselves and stalk travellers, in 'Old Man Willow', 'Fagorn forest', and the Old Forest, for weaving the fictional military conflict, for his story 'The War of the Rings'. It features in other fantasies as well. For instance, in the contemporary fantasy stories, 'Harry Potter' books, the forest near 'Hogwart' was magical nature. The home of unicorns, centaurs, and giant spiders, it continues the tradition of the forest as a place of wild things. The forest is often filled with magical animals, plants, maybe even magical rocks and creeks.

Although there may be a need to cut down trees especially for short term economic benefits to some extent, yet we must all join hands to prevent deforestation (Clearance, or the removal of a forest, Felling of trees or destruction of forests causing in the loss of varieties of flora and fauna), each in our little way. These stories inculcates us to protect our forests and woodlands, the animals that live in them, the soil, the waters, the very air that we all breathe, and to cater to our various needs. **Loss of enchanting Forest is not only a threat to wildlife survival, but also to mankind is unimaginable.** There are a number of verses in these stories depicting the generosity of vegetable kingdom. These stories also make us realised that there is no conduct of life where the plant Kingdom does not make its contribution like food, fuel, shelter, fibre, folder and medicine. Forest serve as sanctuaries for wildlife and the wildlife kingdom evokes another most loved and favourite subjects among majority of little children. And thus we find that there has been ample use of illustrative 'animal – characters' in children's literature or play materials.

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