

Fairy Tales in Comics

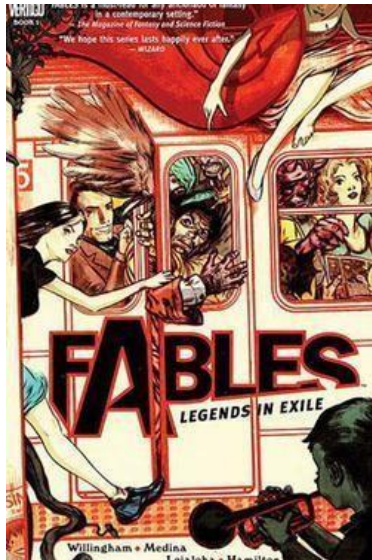
by Joelle Lafargue

Comics as a medium are a wonderful way to explore fairy tales: the fantastical nature of these stories can be expressively shown through pictures and drawings. Finding a good fairy tale comic may be a bit difficult, but there are some distinct ones available for reading. Here is a short list of some both well-known and obscure comics based in fairy tales from both east and west.

Fables

Published by: Vertigo Comics

Released: 2002-Onward



One of the most well-known Western adaptation of fairy tales, Fables is a Vertigo comic series about 'Fables', beings from stories, folklore and fairy tales, who are driven from their native land by a being known as the 'Advisory'. Forced to move to the normal human world, these Fables try to eke out an existence without drawing too much attention to themselves. The comics vary from murder mysteries, conspiracy thrillers to caper cases, with a colourful cast of characters all mixed together. So far there has been

over 126 issues of Fables since 2002, and it is recommended by YALSA as a comic for Young Adults, and with many different story arcs, it's sure to have something for everyone.

Princeless

Author: Jeremy Whitley

Released: 2011

Princess Adrienne is sick of waiting for a prince to come save her from the tower her parents locked her in. Deciding to take matters into her own hands, Adrienne escapes with the help of her Dragon, Sparky, and starts off on her own adventure to rescue her other sisters from their own prisons. Princeless is a wonderful story that turns fairy tale and fantasy tropes on their heads, has a person of colour as the main character (who points out a racial faux pas to a rescuing prince in the first few pages), and is reminiscent of the Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch for older. The series is entertaining, and definitely worth a read by anyone, especially girls who are maybe sick of always being the ones rescued.

Pichi Pichi Pitch: Mermaid Melody

Author: Michiko Yokote

Released: 2004

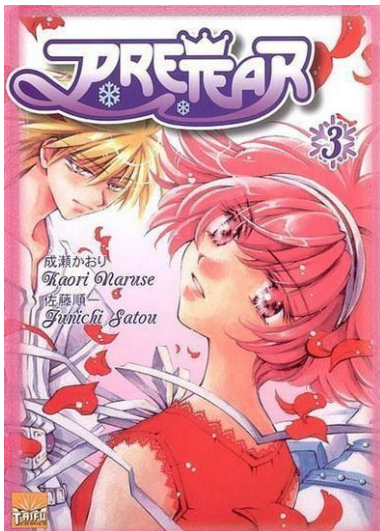
Mermaid Melody is about mermaid princesses who turn into humans, who turn back into mermaids to turn into human magical girl idol singers to combat the forces of darkness with the power of cheery J-pop songs. Have I lost you yet? Mermaid Melody follows the story of the young mermaid princess Lucia, who is the princess of the North Pacific Ocean, who is on a quest to find a young boy she saved from a ship wreck seven years prior. She entrusted her pink pearl to this young boy. The pink pearl is a powerful tool for

protecting her kingdom, and without it she is tone deaf. Upon finding the young boy, Kaito, Lucia ends up falling in love with him, but cannot tell him her identity as a mermaid, otherwise according to legend, she will turn into seafoam. At the same time, the oceans are under attack from deep sea demons who seek to conquer the world for themselves; she joins forces with other princess mermaids, Hina and Hanon to combat the darkness while winning her true love. Obviously, *Mermaid Melody* is strongly influenced by *The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Anderson, with a mix of J-pop and *Sailor Moon* mixed in. Anyone who enjoys shoujo (for girls) manga, is a fan of *Sailor Moon* or enjoys cheesy but harmless manga will enjoy this story, and it's safe for all ages, barring a few scenes in the later chapters.

Prétear

Author: Junichi Sato

Released: 2001



Like *Mermaid Melody*, *Prétear* is a magical girl take on a European fairy tale, this time focusing on *Snow White* and the *Seven Dwarfs*.

When Himeno's widowed father, a romance novel writer, remarries a wealthy widow, she is forced to adjust to having a new family who doesn't quite accept her. While on her way to school, Himeno ends up meeting Hayate, the Knight of Wind and finds herself becoming the new 'Prétear', a female warrior who joins with one of the seven knights of Leafe to fight the princess of disaster, who desires to destroy the world. Here there is no real 'prince charming' and the dwarfs are replaced with the Knights, who each represent a particular element or property that Himeno can take into her body as the Prétear. *Prétear* is a short manga series and it has some issues compared to later translated works: the Japanese text was left on a number of the pages, and since it's an older series, it's not in print anymore and will have to be bought used. Regardless, *Prétear* is a fun romp for everyone with attractive characters, and a nice twist on *Snow White*.

No Rest for the Wicked

Author: Andrea L. Peterson

Released: 2003-Onward

No Rest for the Wicked is a webcomic with a dark edge: taking on the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson and Charles Perrault, the comic follows the adventure of November, a young princess who has been cursed with insomnia since the disappearance of the moon in the sky. Leaving her castle to try and find the reason for the disappearance, she joins forces with Red, an unstable version of *Little Red Riding Hood* who is a vicious warrior and hunter of wolves, and Perrault, the cat from *Puss in Boots* capable of taking on a human form. Together, they travel the world to try and

discover the reason for the Moon's disappearance. *No Rest for the Wicked* is gorgeously drawn, and doesn't shy away from the twisted nature of the original Grimm's fairy tales. At the same time, it has a real sense of humor, what with November being cursed to have a frog or toad drop from her mouth whenever she says the word 'Altruistic', to a prince who is obscenely picky about the princess he will marry. Suitable for 15 year olds and above, this comic uses both well-known and obscure fairy tales, leading to an interesting and intense reading experience.

Conclusion

From lighthearted and fun to dark and edgy, fairy tale comics will have your young readers enthralled. Being willing to explore different mediums is important, and being able to recommend these sorts of books to reluctant readers or those who want a different take on 26 stories is important. There's always room for more, so be sure to keep your eye out as artists continue to reinvent these age old tales of princes, witches, and wonder.