

## Turkey embarks on cultural mission to preserve its fairy tales

**Level:** Elementary

### 1 Warmer

**fairy tale** (noun) – a traditional story in which magic things happen

Write the titles of as many fairy tales as you can. Look up the titles in English if you don't know them.

English title	Title in my language

### 2 Key words

a. Match the words in the box to the definitions below. Then find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

curse      demon      fairy      future generations      influence      sultan

- use magic powers to make bad things happen to someone \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
- a small imaginary person with wings and magic powers \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
- an evil spirit \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
- a leader, similar to a king, in some Muslim countries \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
- something that has a positive or negative effect on something else \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
- the people who are born after us \_\_\_\_\_ (para 4)

index      patient      reason      values      villain      wonder

- put information in a special order in a list \_\_\_\_\_ (para 6)
- the main bad character in a story, play, film, etc. \_\_\_\_\_ (para 9)
- feel surprised by how beautiful or unusual something is \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)
- the human ability to make sensible decisions \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)
- able to wait for a long time without becoming upset \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)
- our beliefs controlling how we act and behave \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)

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b. Use some of the key words from 2a to complete these sentences.

1. I always \_\_\_\_\_ at the first flowers growing through the snow.
2. Susan's very \_\_\_\_\_ with the children.
3. He's just like the \_\_\_\_\_ from a James Bond film.
4. We need to look carefully at our traditional \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The two girls believed that a pretty little \_\_\_\_\_ lived at the end of their garden.
6. I hope that one day \_\_\_\_\_ of my family will look at these photos.

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### 'Teaching us wonder': Turkey embarks on cultural mission to preserve its fairy tales

**Bethan McKernan**

**8 January, 2021**

- 1 Once upon a time, in the old, old days, the mouse was a hairdresser, the donkey helped him and the tortoise made bread. There was a great mountain called Kaf Dağı, where many of the fairy tales of the Middle East came from.
- 2 Today, people believe Kaf Dağı is somewhere in the Caucasus mountains, which separates the Black Sea from the Caspian Sea. In this magical place, witches curse princes, beautiful girls are born from oranges, and the fairies and demons that live in the Turkish fairyland control sultans, slaves and farmers.
- 3 The fairy tales of the Anatolian plateau mix storytelling and traditions. They have influences from the *Arabian Nights* and Brothers Grimm, and also Kurdish, Persian, Slavonic, Jewish and Romanian fairy tales.
- 4 Now a large academic project called Masal is aiming to collect around ten thousand stories to keep for future generations.
- 5 Anyone in Turkey can send a fairy tale to Masal online. The Atatürk Cultural Centre is paying for the project.
- 6 They index the stories according to where they are from and the type of stories: animal tales, magical or extraordinary tales, realistic tales and funny tales.
- 7 After they check and index the fairy tale, it goes into Masal's online database. So far, the database has more than three thousand three hundred tales from seventy-seven different areas.
- 8 The fairy tales have magic carpets, animals and birds that can talk, magic mirrors, apples and pomegranates and beautiful gardens. Heroes fight dragons and the giants of Kaf Dağı. The Simurgh bird always helps the hero.
- 9 The tales can be ugly, too. Black or Moorish servants, Jews and old witches are almost always the villain; men kill their innocent wives and wild horses pull apart enemies; a small bird comes to tell a young woman about her death.
- 10 "Fairy tales teach us to wonder, to use reason, to be patient, to dream, to be good people, to fight against evil, to tell the truth, to find lies, and to listen. These are universal human values: times change, people don't."

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First published in *The Guardian*, 08/01/2021

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### 3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Fairy tales usually contain some magic. T / F
2. Many Turkish fairy tales come from a magical mountain called Masal. T / F
3. An academic project is collecting thousands of Turkish fairy tales so that they do not get lost. T / F
4. The stories are put into the database according to where they come from and the type of fairy tale. T / F
5. There are five types of fairy tales in the database. T / F
6. They have already collected over thirty thousand stories. T / F
7. Fairy tales usually have a hero and a villain. T / F
8. Fairy tales can teach us how to live our lives well. T / F

### 4 Using key language

Find words in the article that you can write into the box below.

people	animals	magical creatures and other magical things	places

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### 5 Discussion

Look back at your answers to task 1. Ask and answer questions about how you know the fairy tales.

Which fairy tales did you read yourself?

I read Cinderella in a book of fairy tales. The book was a present from my aunt.

Did someone read some of the stories to you?

Yes. My grandmother read fairy tales to me when I stayed with her.

Did you see them at the theatre, in the cinema or on television?

I saw *The Little Mermaid* in the cinema with my brother and sister.

Who are your favourite fairy tale characters?

I really like the genie from *Aladdin* – he's very funny.

### 6 In your own words

Most fairy tales in English start with the words *Once upon a time*. If the story has a happy ending, it often ends with the words *and they all lived happily ever after*.

Work with a partner. Think of a fairy tale from your culture or country, or one you remember from your childhood, or one that you remember for another reason.

a. Make notes in the box to summarize the fairy tale.

Where does the story take place?

Who are the main characters?

What does the hero have to do?

Who helps him/her?

What happens in the end?

b. Use your notes to tell your fairy tale. Begin with the words *Once upon a time*.