



A Tale Dark & Grimm

by Adam Gidwitz

Interesting Facts:

- The title of the book is a play on the word 'grim' meaning depressing or worrying and 'Grimm' as a reference to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, otherwise known as The Brothers Grimm. Jacob and Wilhelm were among the first and best-known collectors of German (and European) oral folk tales, which they then wrote and published as *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, originally known as the *Children's and Household Tales* in the early 1800s.
- Many of the chapters in the book are based on, or have elements of, Grimm Brother tales including *Hansel and Gretel*, *Faithful Johannes*, and the *Seven Ravens*.
- Author Adam Gidwitz was a second grade teacher in Brooklyn, New York who began telling his students the true versions of tales by the Brothers Grimm. He was inspired by their reactions to the authentic versions of the stories to write *A Tale Dark & Grimm*.
- If you liked *A Tale Dark & Grimm*, you'll be excited to learn that this is the first book in a trilogy. The next two books, *In A Glass Grimmly* and *A Grimm Conclusion* follow different fairy tale characters through more Grimm and other fairy tales including *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of the narrator of the story? How might the story be different without the narrator?
- The narrator suggests that some of the bad things could be avoided if Johannes had lied to the Prince about the one room he wasn't supposed to see. Do you agree?
- Gretel tells a true story as a dream, and people believe her for: "Once upon a time, you see, dreams were thought to possess hidden truth." Do you believe dreams possess hidden truths? Why or why not? What are the most important dreams you've had, and why are they important to you?
- Our current world is very different from the world that fairy tales exist in, yet people still love to read tales. Why do you think people still like to read tales? Why do you think fairy tales are still important in our lives?
- Repeatedly, we are told we are at "The End" of the story only for it to continue. Why do you think "The End" keeps appearing? How did it impact how you read the story?
- There is a balance of dark elements and violence with humor (especially from the narrator). Why do you think the author made some of these choices? What part of the story did you find the funniest?
- Hansel and Gretel are reluctant (and even afraid) to go back home. Why? How would you describe the parents in this book? Why do you think the author made the parents do such terrible things?
- What do you think Faithful Johannes means by his desire to understand Hansel and Gretel's family? Do you have anyone in your life that you believe understands you?

Other Resources:

- [Adam Gidwitz](#) – Author Adam Gidwitz's official website. If you liked *A Tale Dark & Grimm*, make sure to check out some of Gidwitz's other books, including *The Unicorn Rescue Society* series, and his Newbery Honor winner, *The Inquisitor's Tale*.

- [Audio Book](#) – Fairy tales are meant to be read aloud, and if you'd like to listen to Gidwitz read *A Tale Dark & Grimm*, you can do so for free!
- [Grimm, Grimmer, and Grimmest](#) Podcast – Hosted and created by Gidwitz, this podcast is retellings of other Grimm fairy tales, similar to those that appear in *A Tale Dark & Grimm*. Each podcast contains a tale told to a group of students who interact with Gidwitz.
- [Coming Soon!](#) If you loved the book, you'll be excited to learn that Netflix recently announced that it will be turning *A Tale Dark & Grimm* into an animated series! While a release date has not been officially announced, it is expected to be released in Fall 2021.
- Want to learn more about Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and read versions of their tales? The University of Pittsburgh has created an extensive collection of [online resources](#) including links to the tales that first appeared in *Children's and Household Tales*.
 - Fun Fact: The Grimms revised and expanded the tales with each subsequent edition of *Children's and Household Tales*, adding new details meant to 'teach' young reader lessons. When exploring the online resources, take a closer look at some of the different versions, such as [these two versions of The Frog King](#).

Additional Activities:

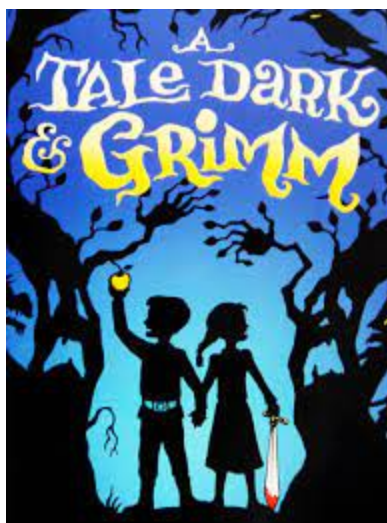
Write your own Fractured Fairy Tale: A fractured fairy tale takes a classic fairy tale or children's story and adds a twist, changes characters, or makes it more modern. Start with one (or more!) of your favorite fairy tales and fracture it! What might you want to change and why? What might happen if you combine tales?

Draw it!: Pick your favorite scene from the book and recreate it as a comic strip or a single illustration. You might also consider drawing your favorite character.

Compare and Contrast: Gidwitz uses the characters from the Grimms *Hansel and Gretel* as the protagonists of *A Tale Dark & Grimm*. Read the [1857 version of the Grimm tale](#).

What is the same about the characters in the two different stories? What is different?
Why do you think Gidwitz chose these two characters for *A Tale Dark & Grimm*?

Draw the Cover: *A Tale Dark & Grimm* has a cover that incorporates a number of characters that appear in the story:



If you were asked to design the cover, what might it look like? What would you include and why? Create your own unique cover for *A Tale Dark & Grimm*.