

Jacob Grimm, the elder of the Brothers Grimm of Fairytale fame, Was born in the town of Hanau in what was Hesse-Kassel in what is now Germany on the 4th of January, 1785. His younger brother Wilhelm, Co-author and editor of their works, was born Late February the next year. Their Mother Dorothea and Father Philipp Wilhelm had a total of 9 children, though only 6 made it through their infancy. Philipp was a jurist Dorothea was the daughter of a city councilman. Using social position to their advantage, Philipp secured a job as the district magistrate of Steinau and the family moved in 1791. They enjoyed a few happy years in the countryside before Philipp contracted pneumonia in late 1795. He died January 10, 1795. Jacob Grimm was eleven years old and forced to assume the legal responsibilities of an adult. Without a source of steady income, the family was thrown into poverty. At the age of 14, Jacob and his brother Wilhelm moved to Kassel to stay with their aunt and attend secondary school. Four years later Jacob begins his study of law at the University of Marburg.

The Grimm brothers certainly weren't working in a vacuum when it came to collecting folklore. Collections of French, English, Spanish, and German folklore had been circulating since the early 1700s. During their years in secondary school and at university they came in contact with a number of folk collections and new romantic ideas. It is the works of Clemens Brentano and Ludwig Achim von Arnim that piqued their interest. These early German Romantics sought to unify the 200 German principalities into a greater state through united philosophy and literature. Many thought that Volkspoesie (natural poetry) was a higher form of art than Kunstpoesie (artistic poetry) because it could be appreciated and understood by a majority as opposed to the few highly educated. It was with these ideas in mind that Jacob and Wilhelm began collecting the first stories that they would add to *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (More often called *Grimm's Fairy Tales*).

It was the death of his mother in late May 1808 that made Jacob seek out the position of librarian in Kassel as with her gone, he was the sole support for his five other siblings, two of who needed money for education. It was in 1812 when the brothers published the first edition of their collection. It was an unpretentious, well organized book holding 86 tales. What set this collection apart from the others that existed is that unlike the Romantics who would edit their folklore to fit their artistic tastes or rhyme scheme, Jacob and Wilhelm only edited colloquialisms and unclear points to give the collection a more unified feel. It was their hope to preserve the pure style of the people, to retrieve the oral traditions from the folktale without losing the traits of the spoken word. They wanted only to crystallize the inherent "German-ness" contained within these tales: The lessons, the characters, the struggles, the law, the culture, and the imagination that were all so inherently similar because each story contains a grain of ancient mythology or belief. From 1816 to 1818 they published the two volume *Deutsche Sagen* which totaled 585 individual legends.

In 1819, Both Jacob and Wilhelm earned honorary doctorates from the University of Marburg for their scholarly works on linguistics, folklore, and medieval studies. For Jacob in particular, it was the strict, scientific methodology of his research and the foundation of an etymology for the German language using attested records of Old German and languages spoken by the Getae and Scythians to find similarities between them and tell the history hidden within the German Language. He coined what is known as Grimm's law during this time, connecting common German to Proto-Indo-European language through historic roots and Germanic "sound shift". In 1829, Jacob left his position at the Library in Kassel to pursue a professor and librarian position at the University of Gottingen and served in this position, his younger brother Wilhelm holding a position just below him, for eight years. It

was in 1837 that Jacob joined six other professors (Including Wilhelm) in a formal protest against the King of Hannover's constitutional violation and left their positions at the University of Gottingen. It would take Four years of innovative spending and a little starvation, but the brothers eventually found jobs as librarians and professors at the University of Berlin. During this turbulent time of his life Jacob began work on his Dictionary though he would not publish it until 1854. He also continued to support his younger siblings through his life. His appointment at the University of Berlin lasted until 1848 when he resigned to pursue personal research (most likely to finish his dictionary.) The brothers continued to put out new editions of their collection of fairy tales until 1857. By then their collection of folklore was over 650 individual stories contained in four books. Jacob continued these studies in linguistics and folklore until his death in 1863 at the age of 78.

While many of these achievements may seem miniscule, Jacob Grimm created a firm foothold for the progression of the German language. It may seem small, but his use of and refining of the entomology of the German language helped to usher out Latin as the language of law and science and advocate for general literacy. Through the works of Jacob Grimm and others like him, the common people of the German Principalities were able to come together under a united culture and demand the end of feudal rule. Jacob Grimm's days as a librarian and professor gave him the opportunity to spread his humanistic view of literacy to thousands of young scholars who would help to bring the tool of common literacy to all. After all, what's the use of literature if everyone can't enjoy it?

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