Expanding a Traditional Ballad: Tam Lin in the Picture Book Fantasies of Jane Yolen and Susan Cooper

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Abstract

Tam Lin is one of the better known of the traditional Scottish fairy ballads. This highly romantic story of a young woman who rescues her lover from the Fairy Queen was noted in written sources as early as the sixteenth century. Although the ballad itself, set in the wild border lands of Scotland, appears to be unique to the Scottish people, folklorists have connected the story with Greek popular traditions older than Homer (Child 336) The story has also been linked to other traditional ballads and tales, including Thomas the Rhymer, The Faerie Oak of Corriewater, Alice Brand, The King's Daughter Jane, and Beauty and the Beast, and it has been described as the canonical ballad ("Legends"). In more recent times, the story has continued to inspire artists, writers, and musicians. Tam Lin has even entered the electronic age with an extensive web site devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the ballad.
Tor Books is proud to present the latest offering in the Fairy Tale Series—a growing library of beautifully-designed original novels by acclaimed writers of fantasy and horror, each retelling a classic tale such as Snow White and Rose Red, Briar Rose, Tam Lin, and Katie Crackernuts in interesting—often startling—new ways. SISTER DARK WHITE JENNA EDITED BY JANE YOLEN: xANADu (forthcoming).

Andrew Lang's Tam Lin, printed in I colored Fairy Books series, tells the story of little Janet whose playmate is stolen away by the fairy folk—ignoring the darker tale of seduction and human sacrifice to the Lord of Hell, the heroine, pregnant with Tam Lin's child, battles the Fairy Queen for her lover's life. Give books away. Get books you want. Pamela Dean. Everything in the universe is within you. Ask all from yourself. — Rumi. Inspired by a traditional ballad, Juniper, Gentian, and Rosemary is the tale of a mysterious young man and three ordinary young girls, of ancient magic and the modern world. Three sisters live comfortably with their parents: Juniper, 16, who likes cooking. Firebirds Rising: An Anthology of Original Science Fiction and Fantasy. In the ancient Scottish ballad Tam Lin, headstrong Janet defies Tam Lin to walk in her own land of Carterhaugh . . . and then must battle the Queen of Faery for possession of her lover's body and soul. In this version of Tam Lin Janet is a college student. The Dubious Hills. by Pamela Dean. 1994.