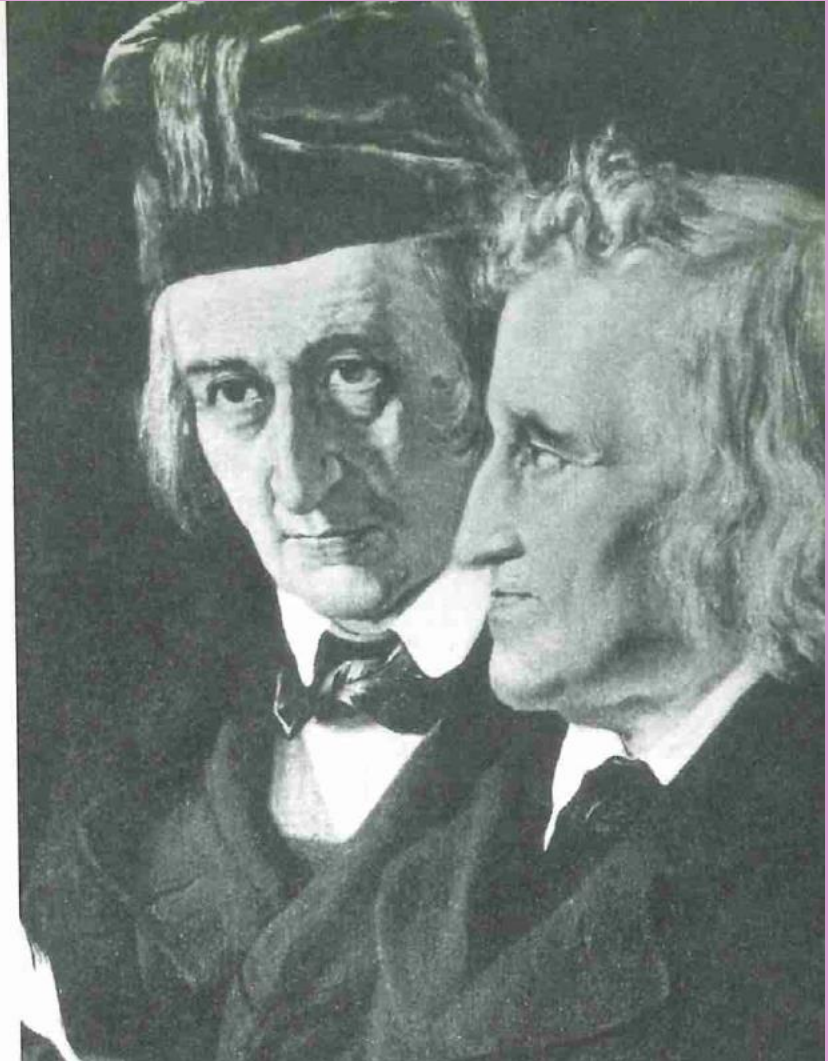


# The Brothers Grimm

- 1 Long before J.K. Rowling,<sup>1</sup> there were Jacob and  
Wilhelm Grimm—two young men from Germany  
who loved a good story. The Grimm brothers never  
expected to be storytellers for children. But today,  
5 their fairy tales are read and loved in over  
160 languages.

<sup>1</sup> J.K. Rowling wrote the *Harry Potter* books.



## Once Upon a Time

Jacob and Wilhelm were introduced to folktales—traditional stories people **memorized** and told again and again—as university students. The brothers loved these stories of adventure and magic. Soon they began to **collect** traditional folktales from storytellers in Germany. Many of these tales were similar to stories told in France, Italy, Japan, and other countries. Between 1812 and 1814, the Grimm brothers published two books. These included stories like *Hansel and Gretel* and *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Grimms' tales **reflected** traditional life and beliefs in Germany. For example, forests are common in Germany, and this image appears often in the Grimms' stories. For medieval<sup>2</sup> Germans, the forest was a dangerous place. In Grimms' fairy tales, witches, talking animals, and other **magical** beings live in the forest. People's lives change forever when they visit this place.



<sup>2</sup> The **medieval** period is a time in European history from A.D. 476 to about A.D. 1500.

## Children's Stories?

**Although** Grimms' fairy tales are now considered children's stories, the brothers first wrote them **primarily** for adults. Many of the early tales were dark and a little **scary**.

Later, the brothers changed the **text** of some of the original stories. They "**softened**" many of the tales and also added drawings. This made them more **appropriate** for children. Like the early tales, though, each of today's stories still has a moral: work hard, be good, and listen to your parents.