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# East O' The Sun And West O' The Moon



## Synopsis

"This wondrous tale is brilliantly matched by Lynch's elegant yet accessible watercolors. . . .The best edition now available. Bravo!" —KIRKUS REVIEWS (pointered review)A beloved Norwegian folktale, *EAST O' THE SUN AND WEST O' THE MOON* is the romantic story of a bewitched prince and the determined lassie who loves him. It has everything a classic epic tale should have: rags and riches, hags and heroism, magic and mystery, a curse and a quest, wicked trolls, a shape-shifting bear, and finally, a happy ending. Kate Greenaway Medalist P.J. Lynch has created a luminous backdrop worthy of this grand adventure, transporting readers to a world of fantasy and imagination.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

My name is Elizabeth, and i think that this book is the BEST book I ever read. This book is about a young maden who is so beautiful. One day ever father becomes ill and she needs to fetch him a cup of spring water from the fountain far away. When the maden gets there she drops the cup into the spring. Then a frog gets the cup. he said that in order to do this she must let him have one wish. Then the madens fther becomes better. The maden lives a happy life once again. The frog comes to her house and asks her to kiss him. The maden refuses. Find out what happens to the maden..... she searches far and wide for the one she loves.... I recomend this book because it was so good I remember when my grandfather read it to me and i absolutl loved it! This IS my favoite book!

East o'the Sun, West o'the Moon is probably my most favorite fairy-tale book ever. It includes twenty-two stories, including both more traditional fairy tales ('The Princess on the Glass Hill' and 'East o'the Sun and West o'the Moon') and some that are more along the line of folk-tales, ('Why the Bear is Stumpy-Tailed' and 'Why the Sea is Salt'). The stories are all well-told and accessible for people of all ages. My only complaints are that it lacks an interactive table of contents (although it's not long enough to matter very much), and that it seems to lack some of the stories I remember from my childhood version (which really isn't likely to bother many people.) You might also be able to find that one of the cheap versions has illustrations, which are usually worth a dollar or two. If what you're looking for is a book of simple and lovable fairy tales, East o' the Sun is definitely one that I would recommend. Stories included are: East o'the Sun and West o'the Moon, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, Taper Tom (The Golden Goose), Why the Bear is Stumpy-tailed, Reynard and the Cock, Bruin and Reynard are Partners, Boots and His Brothers, The Lad Who Went to the North Wind, The Giant Who Had No Heart In His Body, The Sheep and the Pig Who Set Up Housekeeping, The Parson and the Clerk, Father Bruin, The Pancake, Why the Sea is Salt, The Squire's Bride, Peik, The Princess Who Could Not Be Silenced, The Twelve Wild Ducks, Gudbrand-on-the-Hillside, The Princess on the Glass Hill, The Husband Who Was to Mind the House, Little Freddy with his Fiddle.

This was my absolute favorite book when I was little. The illustrations are absolutely gorgeous, the writing (translation is by Sir George Webbe Dasent) is quirky and reads well. I find it hard to believe that this version is out of print. If you ever see it, get it, for yourself or for a young friend. Both of you would enjoy it.

I bought this book for my granddaughters and immediately began looking for other books illustrated by Lynch, because it is so beautiful. The story is well-told and nicely paced---altogether pleasing.

I said it all in the title of this review. I wish the book were longer. For similar reading, see a good translation of the works of Hans Christian Anderson (for happy stories, largely) and the Brothers Grimm (for Grimm stories). I like both types, and I liked this collection for the same reason. By the way, I literally HATE Disney renditions of these stories. They completely ruin the Christian morality story inherent in the tales.

Thanks to the work of the Brothers Grimm, it's easy enough to (erroneously) assume that most of our most famous fairytales derive from Germany. But there is one relatively popular story that is

wholly Norwegian in setting, character and atmosphere: "East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon", a bit of a mouthful that is often retitled "The Polar Bear King". The image of a young girl upon a giant white bear still resonates today, perhaps most recently in Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass*, in which his young female protagonist befriends and rides a talking polar bear, and the story itself is full of all the familiar tropes of fairytales: rules that are broken, threefold quests to be endured, tests that only a single person can accomplish. Originally collected in text form by Peter Christian Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe, who were inspired by the work of the Grimm brothers, the story was part of their anthology "Norske Folkeeventyr", first published in 1844. This is a translation of that text, made in 1859 by George Webb Dasent, and according to the foreword: "only minor changes have been made to the original translation." As such, this is a rather lengthy tale, full of grand palaces and dark castles, mysterious husbands and hideous trolls, helpful crones with golden gifts and a resourceful young heroine who rides the back of the North Wind to find and rescue her love. With strains of "Beauty and the Beast" and "Cupid and Psyche", the story tells of a White Bear who approaches a poor husbandman, asking for his daughter's hand in marriage. Promising riches and security, the lassie is eventually coaxed into accepting, only to find that life as a bear's wife isn't so bad - every night her husband reverts back into human form. But being forbidden from ever seeing his face, her curiosity eventually gets the better of her (after a little prodding from her mother) and she looks over him with a lit candle while he sleeps. Accidentally dripping wax onto his sleeping form, he awakens and tells her the terrible truth: that because of her transgression, he has to marry the daughter of his stepmother who first laid the curse over him: a terrible troll-bride. The lassie is desperate to win him back and so begins a dangerous quest to the castle that lies east o' the sun and west o' the moon, where she must exert all her cunning and wits to free her husband from the trolls. It's a beautiful tale and P.J. Lynch's accompanying illustrations are glorious, capturing the beauty of the red-headed lassie, the scope of the Scandinavian landscapes, the towering size of the four winds, and the comical horror of the trolls. Lynch has always been one of my favourite illustrators, managing to bring warmth and humanity into strange fantasy scenes, and this is perhaps his best work. The love and desire between the lassie and her husband is palpable, as is the wickedness of the troll-bride and the sadness of her prisoners. One tiny quibble though: the lassie's hair seems to change length at random, sometimes falling to her shoulders, at other points looking much longer. But in scope and perspective, expression and emotion, P.J. Lynch can't be beaten. This is quite possibly the definitive take on this particular story, though I'd also recommend the modest but faithful film *Polar Bear King* and Edith Pattou's *East*, a fleshing-out of the story in chapter-book form. It's a beautiful tale with an insightful introduction by Naomi Lewis and page

upon page of beautiful illustrations: what more could you want?

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