

# ERASMUS

## THE PLACE OF FAIRY TALES IN FRANCE AND AROUND THE WORLD

A fairy tale is above all a story passed on orally. This oral culture is present in every country in the world and has gradually evolved into literary texts written by writers. These tales are often based on an identical pattern, in which the hero, the incarnation of good, must oppose the forces of evil in order to triumph and find the meaning of his life. This victory of good over evil makes these tales exemplary, and they have an educational value, giving advice for living and offering explanations about the world and certain natural phenomena.

In France, storytelling is taught to children from a very early age, but the moral conveyed by these apologies changes according to the age of the reader. France has a great heritage of moral stories, enriched by great authors of fables, such as the 17th-century writer Jean de La Fontaine, and of fairy tales, such as Charles Perrault, a writer of the 17th and early 18th centuries.

*"Life is like a tale; what matters is not its length, but its value."*

— S<sup>én</sup>èque

# CHARLES PERRAULT



**1628 - 1703**

**Charles Perrault was a French author and member of the Académie Française. He laid the foundations for a new literary genre, the fairy tale, with his works derived from earlier folk tales, published in his 1697 book.**

# GUSTAVE DORÉ



**1832 - 1883**

**Gustave Doré was a 19th-century French illustrator, caricaturist, painter and sculptor. His work is mainly characterised by the graphic adaptation of great stories written by the authors of his time. In particular, he produced engravings illustrating Dante's Divine Comedy and Charles Perrault's fairy tales.**

# LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD



**Gustave Doré's 1864 illustration of the Little Red Riding Hood tale.**

Charles Perrault's tale of Little Red Riding Hood tells the story of a well-bred young girl, the prettiest in the village, who runs to her doom by giving the wolf she meets in the forest the directions she needs to find her grandmother's house. The wolf eats the old lady while hiding from the woodcutters working in the nearby forest. He then sets a trap for Little Red Riding Hood and finally eats her. And so the story ends, with the wolf victorious.

This tale teaches children to be wary of strangers and not to trust too easily. However, this tale, like most, has a second moral for adults. Indeed, the color of the girl's hood refers to her menstruation and her entry into the world of women. The wolf symbolizes a man who is taking her chastity by force. This tale tells young women to be careful, and parents to take care of their children, as it's not normal for a young girl to be wandering alone in the woods.

# THE PUSS IN BOOTS



Gustave Doré's 1862 illustration of the Puss in Boots tale.

Le chat Botté is a Franco-Italian tale in prose written by Charles Perrault (France) in 1695 (handwritten) and 1697 (printed).

Upon his death, an old miller leaves all of his property to his three sons. The eldest inherits the mill, the youngest of the donkey, and the youngest of the cat. Without a penny in his pocket and not knowing what to do with such a gift, the latter is thinking of eating it but the Cat is gifted with speech. Against a bag and a pair of boots, and with a lot of cunning, the animal is now determined to make the fortune of its master.

For this purpose, the Cat captures a rabbit in the forest and offers it to the king as a gift from his master, the "Marquis de Carabas". He thus regularly brings game to the king, for several months.

It is not cunning, deception, lies and threats that the Booted Cat makes his master's fortune. The morale of the story is that starting from scratch, we can succeed.