

personal english



Book #23

Rumpelstiltskin

Jacob & Wilhelm Grimm

When I first saw the **Thuringian Forest** in Germany, with its hills covered in thick pinewoods as far as the eye can see, I couldn't help imagining **Little Red Riding Hood** flashing across the path or **Snow White** waiting in the dark of the woods for a chance to gather flowers unseen along the brook. Actually, the Thuringian Forest is not far away from **Hanau** (Hesse), the town where **Jacob (1785-1863)** and **Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859)** spent most of their lives and picked up the folk tales they would collect in their volumes. And, just like the Thuringian Forest, not only are the Grimm's tales fairy, but also dark. Even though the Brothers Grimm sanitized the violence and gloom of the original stories, traces of their **archetypal gore** still shine through the texts. The **psychoanalytical overtones** of these tales have been analyzed by a few scholars, including **Bruno Bettelheim**, **Károly Kerényi** and **Maria Tatar**. It doesn't take a literary critic, though, to catch a glimpse of the **narcissim** represented by the **evil queen's mirror** in *Snow White* or the **uterus-grave-oven** in *Hansel and Gretel*. If you read carefully the symbols offered in these tales, you'll find darker, deeper meanings as representations of the workings of the **unconscious**.



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