



Snowbear Whittington: An Appalachian Beauty and the Beast

William H. Hooks , Victoria Lisi (Illustrator)

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When Nell's father picks a forbidden Christmas rose for her, Nell is obliged to leave home, following the flower's owner - a great white bear - to his faraway castle. There Nell makes an amazing discovery: The bear is Snowbear Whittington, a handsome young man bound by a spell.

Snowbear Whittington: An Appalachian Beauty and the Beast Details

Date : Published 1994 by Macmillan

ISBN : 9780027443554

Author : William H. Hooks , Victoria Lisi (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 56 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Beauty and The Beast, Fiction

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From Reader Review Snowbear Whittington: An Appalachian Beauty and the Beast for online ebook

KatieS says

This version was much nicer than the better known Disney version of this tale. A daughter wittingly goes to the beast because that was the deal made between her father and the beast. The beast is kind to the girl, cares for her, and they end up falling in love. When the daughter is allowed to leave the best to check on her father, she breaks a promise and the beast begins his death. Eventually, the two are reunited and the girl's love saves the beast and transforms him back to his human form.

The pictures in this book were beautiful. Though there weren't as many as I'm used to in picture books, they were some of the best I've seen in picture books. They were detailed and realistic.

Cheryl says

My library's edition of this retelling of two similar tales has the copyright page, presumably the location of the author's note, cut out. Too bad.

This seems to be missing some of the archetypical power of the original stories: In B&B, the girl does not know that the beast is a man, and in East... her quest is truly arduous, with iron shoes and trolls.

Cry-Of-The-Elves says

A cute and different version of BaTB. A quick read :)

Peggy says

Lovely Appalachian version of Beauty and the Beast, with exquisite illustrations.

Lisa Vegan says

Much to my surprise I loved this folk tale, a version of Beauty and the Beast, supposedly from Appalachia, though I saw little Appalachian in it. I wonder whether the tale is really told in that region as it is here.

The illustrations, both color and black & white, were wonderful, not in a style I'd normally consider a favorite, but they really worked for me here. The paintings and drawings of nature, the bear, people's facial expressions and general expressiveness, are very realistic, yet fairy tale like too, and they're beautiful.

The story (as many folk tales do) broke my heart at times, but this is a wonderful telling; it is now a favorite version of the beauty and the beast tale. I love how nobody is a villain (except the off the page witch who

cast the spell) and I appreciate the love shown all around. I thought the progression of the story worked really well, including the girl, Nell, knowing very early on the true identity of the bear/man. Nell is a wonderful character, as are they all, even some of the peripheral characters.

This is a lovely book, both the story and illustrations.

Other than reference to the Smoky Mountains and its depiction in the illustrations and some vague things in the story, I'm left wondering about the origins of the version of this tale. I'd have appreciated an author's note in the front or back of the book explaining how it came to be written and whether or not it has a history.

This is one of the 7 books chosen for this month's Picture Books Club at the Children's Books group, where this month's theme is North American folk tales.

ETA: There is an author's note at the beginning of the book that a friend pointed out to me, and it does give a little information about how this tale traveled originally from Europe to Appalachia.

Katy says

As a teacher, I often read stories that are suppose to reflect my culture. This is a take on the traditional Beauty and the Beast story, but I am not sure it reflects my culture---historically or contemporarily. But it is a good story, just like Beauty and the Beast is, just a bit different from what I would consider an "Appalachian" story to be. Of course, most of our stories from long ago are in oral tradition.

The things I like about about the story and would feature---characterization that show human qualities, the GORGEOUS artwork, and the flow of language.
Yes, i will use it in the classroom.

Karol says

Good story, wonderful illustrations. Somehow, the telling of this folk story didn't capture my imagination at all. But then, fairy tales where a young lady's love transformed a frog into a prince, or a beast into a handsome man, never did anything for me either.

Mary Catelli says

A variant of *East of the Sun, West of the Moon* to be more precise, but then, that wouldn't be recognized.

Very good illustrations. Some motifs I haven't seen before in this tale type.

Jayla Johnson says

A really cool retelling of Beauty and the Beast, and I loved the setting.

Ronyell says

"Snowbear Whittington" is an Appalachian folktale that is based off of "Beauty and the Beast." In this tale, a young and beautiful girl named Nell must live with an intimidating white bear after her father takes a Christmas rose from the bear's flower patch. Afterwards however, Nell soon discovers that the bear is a cursed man named Snowbear Whittington and she soon falls in love with him. However, one day, Nell wanted to go back home, but she must promise the bear that she should not reveal the bear's true name to anyone. Will Nell keep her promise and will Snowbear Whittington ever change back into a man? Read the book to find out!

This was the first Appalachian folktale that I have ever read and William H. Hooks has done a great job at making this story extremely exciting and dramatic at the same time. What I loved the most about this book are the characters and Nell's character is the one that stood out the most as she is shown as a caring and devoted girl as she is strongly devoted to finding the cure to Snowbear Whittington's curse and I loved the devotion that Nell gives to Snowbear Whittington, despite his current condition. Another character that I was fond of was Snowbear Whittington as he was shown as an intimidating bear at first but when Nell got to know more about the human version of him, she realizes that the bear truly does have a good heart. I really admired Victoria Lisi's illustrations as they are both beautiful and detailed, especially when the book is set up as two pages have mainly writing on it with a few images and then the next two pages are full of images that details the events that happens in the story, which is similiar to the book set up of The Invention of Hugo Cabret and Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs. The illustrations that stood out the most was the image of Nell being carried off by a dozen blackbirds over a raging river and Victoria Lisi did a great job at making the sky look foggy and the river look very fluid and beautiful.

I really enjoyed "Snowbear Whittington" since it is dramatic and exciting, have beautiful illustrations by Victoria Lisi and is a different retelling of East of the Sun, West of the Moon which I believe that most children will definitely enjoy. I would recommend this book to children ages five and up due to the length of the book which might bored smaller children.

Meg McGregor says

Beauty and the Beast is my absolutely favorite fairy tale. I have read many versions of the story and always enjoy new ones!

This one is top notch! The story is new and vibrant with just enough differences to enhance the reader's enjoyment. I love the idea that the rose is the Christmas Rose, as that is my favorite flower!

My only problem was that it was too short! I just wanted it to go on and on. I also thought that Nell's adventures to get to the Bear/Prince could have been more rigorous an undertaking!

Manybooks says

This simply wonderful Appalachian adaptation of the globally popular and celebrated *Beauty and the Beast* folktale type actually also contains many many elements of the Norwegian East of the Sun and West of the

Moon, and it reminds me at least somewhat of the Russian folktale of Finist the Falcon Prince as well (which, in turn, reminded me very strongly of that same East of the Sun and West of the Moon the first time I read it in a collection of Russian folktales that had been translated into German). Snowbear Whittington is thus a typical "questing beauty" type of fairy or folk tale, where Nell, the bride of the animal bridegroom (a huge white bear) must actively search and fight for his deliverance, and it is Nell's love and her never wavering loyalty which finally win through and save Snowbear Whittington from his enchantment. I have a feeling that this here review must sound rather trite and lacklustre, but in all honesty, I have found this absolute gem of a picture book folktale offering, I have found William H. Hook's Snowbear Whittington so wonderfully and evocatively penned, recounted and so gorgeously and gracefully illustrated by Victoria Lisi that I am having a hard time finding the correct review words to even remotely do it justice. And the informative author's note is an appreciated and added bonus (absolutely cementing my five star rating), showing that Appalachian culture and lore, while of course unique, is also often if not generally a combination of many different Western European based original tales and motifs which of course travelled with the immigrants and settlers to what is now known as Appalachia. Highly recommended for anyone interested in folk and fairy tales, and not only for children!

Kathryn says

This Appalachian* retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" came so highly recommended to me by several GoodReads friends and was the subject of a delightful discussion over in the Children's Books Picture Book Club so I was afraid the story would not live up to the "hype" when my copy finally (finally!) arrived. Thankfully, I was wrong.

This is a beautiful, touching folktale--a fairytale in every sense of the word, from the engaging, slightly over-dramatic storytelling to the luscious, dreamy (but still deeply human) illustrations. The words and illustrations work together to create the overall effect of the story, which is what a really great picture book does, IMO. The illustrations are an enchanting mix of small black and white sketches and full-color, two-page spreads.

As for the story itself, it's a charming variation on "Beauty and the Beast" You won't find singing teapots or a full-time beast here, but you will find a kind-hearted young man cursed to spend half of each day as a beast (a giant white bear), and one that is not always so easy to be around. And you'll find a girl with a heart of gold and tears so pure they have the power to change lives. I enjoyed how the romance developed and also the care the girl showed to her family. I was a bit disappointed in how the resolution played out (I couldn't help but feel a bit sorry for one minor character, who came into the story at the end and was a bit ill-used, even if unintentionally so) but otherwise it was a charming story about overcoming mistakes, looking beyond the obvious, and the redemptive power of love.

*I must say there is really not much "Appalachian" about the telling, except that it takes place in the Smokey Mountains and perhaps some of the attire and furnishings could be from that region. But, there is an author's note that explains how the story traveled to the Appalachians from Europe.

Abby-Rose Margarida Sparrow says

This is a beautiful book, with lovely pictures every little girl should have a chance to look at growing up.

I'm very sad this is pretty much out of print now!

Sgivens says

A retelling of beauty and the beast with some changes. I really like the illustrations and that the author made the bear able to turn into a human at night. It made everything a lot less scary for the poor girl.
