Robin Diver, "Entry on: Pan and His Pipes: and Other Tales for Children by Katherine Dunlap Cather [Kittie] , Frances Elliott Clark", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1269. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Katherine Dunlap Cather [Kittie] , Frances Elliott Clark

Pan and His Pipes: and Other Tales for Children

United States of America (1916)

TAGS: Apollo Jupiter Maia Mercury Midas Pan





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Pan and His Pipes: and Other Tales for Children
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	English speaking countries
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1916
First Edition Details	Katherine Dunlap Cather (author) and Frances Elliott Clark (author, foreword), *Pan and His Pipes: and Other Tales for Children*. Camden, New Jersey: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1916, 84 pp.
Genre	Mythological fiction, Mythologies
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Robin Diver, University of Birmingham, robin.diver@hotmail.com
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Creators



Katherine Dunlap Cather [Kittie] , 1877? - 1926
(Author)

Katherine "Kittie" Dunlap Cather (b. 1877?, Navarre, Ohio) was an American children's author whose books have an educational focus. Her works include *Pan and His Pipes: and Other Tales for Children* (1916), *Boyhood Stories of Famous Men* (1920), *Girlhood Stories of Famous Women* (1924) and *Educating By Story-Telling – Showing the Value Of Story-Telling As an Educational Tool For the Use Of All Workers With Children* (1918). Her writing displays a consistent interest in music and musical composers.

The only biographical information about Cather that could be found was from Find a Grave.com. This estimates her birth date as 1877 and claims she was the daughter of Elizabeth Crossland and Felix Dunlap, the latter of whom died before she was three. Cather moved to San Jose, California, and eventually became a teacher and children's author. She married Oliver C. Cather, who died in 1903. Cather herself died in New York in 1926, aged approximately forty-nine.

Sources:

Find a Grave (accessed: December 1, 2020),

biblio.co.uk (accessed: December 1, 2020),

goodreads.com(accessed: December 1, 2020).

Bio prepared by Robin Diver, University of Birmingham, RSD253@student.bham.ac.uk

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Frances Elliott Clark , 1860 - 1958
(Author)

Frances Elliott Clark was an American teacher and music appreciation advocate. She taught in Iowa and Milwaukee. She pioneered teaching techniques of having children listen to recordings of music in class via the phonograph. She then moved to Camden, New Jersey, and established the Victor Talking Machine Company to create educational recordings of music for use in classrooms. This company also published books to aid in educating children about music, including *Pan and His Panpipes: and Other Tales for Children* (1916).

Clark had degrees from Tri-State College and the Thomas Training School in 1888 and received an Honorary Doctor of Music from Temple University in 1929.

Sources:

sandyn.com (accessed: December 1, 2020),

Wikipedia (accessed: December 1, 2020).

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Additional information

Summary

This is a collection of myths and legends about music from around the world, spanning in time from ancient Greece to medieval Europe. The Greek myths featured are the births of Pan and Mercury, story of Pan and Syrinx and the contest between Apollo and Pan. Each chapter ends with a list of music pieces relevant to the music discussed in the chapter. For example, the story about Mercury's invention of the lyre ends with a list of 25 selections on instruments descended from the lyre. There is a black and white image at the start of each chapter; these are either reproductions of relevant existing art (e.g. H.A. Bone's drawing of King Alfred and the Danes) or photographs of museum exhibits (e.g. a statue of Apollo, a Crusader model). The book starts with a foreword by music appreciation advocate Frances Elliott Clark in praise of the text.

Featured Stories:

- *Pan and His Pipes*,
- *The Tortoise that Gave the World Music* (birth of Hermes, King Midas),
- *The Holy Bird* (Fung Hoang the Chinese bird),
- *The Harp King Alfred Played* (history of harps, Alfred and the Vikings),
- *Stephen, the Child Crusader* (a medieval story),
- *When Knighthood was in Flower* (the Troubadours: de Coucy and Gabrielle, Blondel, Walther von der Vogelweide),
- *The Violin Makers of Cremona* (stories of violins),
- *A Star and a Song* (the Nativity),
- *The Holy Grail*,
- *The Songs of Hiawatha* (Native American story of the Naked Bear, Hiawatha and his marriage).

Analysis

The foreword by Frances Elliott Clark introduces these stories as fairy tales about music, following the trend of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century myth anthologies calling their Greek myths fairy tales. Clark also asserts the supposed universal appeal of these stories to children, claiming that "All children love' fairy tales such as these" (p. 5).

Cather begins by retelling the *Homeric Hymn to Pan*, with Mercury

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carrying his baby son Pan to Olympus where the infant Pan delights the other gods. She tells readers Pan was the ugliest thing ever seen, but it did not matter because "He was a very happy little fellow' and so he was loved" (p. 7).

Pan grows up and is able to make nymphs happy with his presence because he is the god of springtime. Cather emphasises at length how joyful and wonderful his character is. As is common in children's myth books, she also makes Pan a childlike character so as to be more identifiable - he sees the world as his "playground", for example (p. 8).

The Syrinx myth is presented as a sad cautionary story about the folly of wanting too much. Pan, it is explained, should have been happy with the love of the shepherds and dryads but he, "like mortal boys and girls, sometimes desired what was not good for [him]" (p. 8). He sees Syrinx and calls to her, but she runs away because "she did not know that one may be hideous to look upon, yet very beautiful within, and she saw not his joyous heart and sunny nature" (p. 9). Therefore Syrinx is shown to be shallow and to run from Pan because of his looks. The fact that Pan pursues her in Ovid in order to rape her, and how sinister this is, is not examined, although Pan's pursuit is replicated from Ovid unaltered.

Cather ends her Pan chapter by linking him to Christianity. She tells the reader that when they go to church and look at the great organ there, they will see the evolution of Pan's pipes.

The Tortoise that Gave the World Music, meanwhile, begins with a retelling of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* and again presents an idyllic view of the mythological world. When baby Mercury first explores the world, he thinks "it was a wonderful world filled with wonderful things" (p. 13). Instead of killing the tortoise, as in other versions, Mercury finds it already dead, and when he moves his hands across it "The ugly dead creature seemed to live and sing" (p. 13). Cather then retells the story of Pan and Apollo's music contest and how Apollo punishes Midas by giving him asses' ears.

Cather returns to her theme of music at the end of this story by claiming "the Greeks loved music as few people have loved it" (p. 16) and asserting that much of their public work and building was done as they sang and that is why their public works were so good.

In the present day, this text is relatively hard to find. It is not

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frequently reprinted as other out of copyright children's anthologies published at a similar time are, and it is more difficult to discover information about than some of Cather's other children's books. This may be in part due to its now unfashionable love for the Crusaders and of children potentially sacrificing their lives to go to war.

In the story of *Stephen, the Child Crusader*, Cather continues the theme of the protagonist's sweetness and lovability from the Pan story. The child Stephen hears about the Crusaders who are "going to rescue the Holy Sepulcher from the violating hand of the Turk" (p. 35). He is then told by the spirit of a Saint to persuade other children to go to war "to redeem the holy places from the Moslem" (p. 36). Stephen leads an army of fifty thousand children on the Crusades, who all disappear never to be seen again. Cather asserts, however, that this is not an unhappy ending, because it persuaded adult men to follow "their pure and holy example" and join the Crusades themselves (p. 37).

She implies the Crusaders finding and bringing back objects was also responsible for most of the learning and culture Europe derived from other countries around this time, including the introduction of new musical instruments. She is seemingly unaware of more complex processes of cultural exchange. The Crusader stories thus continue the theme of the development of music from the Pan and Mercury retellings, although the continuation is perhaps somewhat curious since Pan, Mercury and their musical innovation are presented as fictional not historical.

Cather also ignores the reality of sexual violence in war in favour of a monogamous chivalric ideal, claiming music evolved at this time because the chaste Crusader knights could not stop pining for their wives and ‘the loneliness and ache’ were so great they would spontaneously burst into songs of "love and heroism" (p. 38). This echoes the Pan story, where his pursuit of Syrinx is presented as unproblematic, what he intends to do when he catches her is not stated and the ending is presented as happy because it leads to the development of music. The story "When Knighthood was in Flower" also idealises the love between heroic and noble Crusaders and their female love interests back home, and valorises the English Crusader king Richard the Lionheart as a noble hero fighting for right.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Appearances Child, children Christianity Learning Tricksters

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