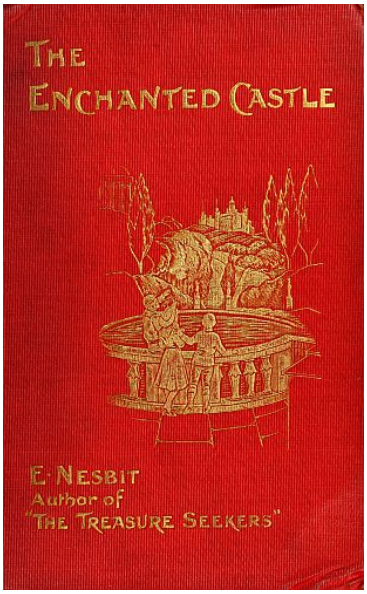
Beverley Beddoes-Mills, "Entry on: The Enchanted Castle by Harold Robert Millar, Edith Nesbit", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1398. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Harold Robert Millar , Edith Nesbit

The Enchanted Castle

United Kingdom (1907)

TAGS: Aphrodite Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Eros Ganymede Hebe Hera Hermes Ouranos / Uranus Phoebus Psyche Zeus



Retrieved from The Project Gutenberg (accessed: January 13, 2022).

General information	
Title of the work	The Enchanted Castle
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1907
First Edition Details	Edith Nesbit, *The Enchanted Castle*. London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1907, 352 pp.
ISBN	Not applicable for editio princeps
Available Onllne	The Enchanted Castle, The Project Gutenberg (accessed: January 13, 2022).
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Children's novel*, Fantasy fiction
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Beverley Beddoes-Mills, University of New England, beverleym@bigpond.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Harold Robert Millar , 1869 - 1942
(Illustrator)

H. R. Millar (1869–1942) was a celebrated and prolific Scottish graphic artist and illustrator in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is celebrated for his illustrations of children's books and fantasy literature.

Millar was a resident of Dumfriesshire and began his career in civil engineering but then decided to become an artist. He studies at the Wolverhampton Art School and the Birmingham School of Art establishing himself as a magazine illustrator with periodicals such as *Punch, Good Words* as well as illustrating anthologies of fables for the Strand Magazine. Millar also illustrated anthologies of tales such as *The Golden Fairy Book*, *The Silver Fairy Book*, *The Diamond Fairy Book*, and *The Ruby Fairy Book*.

Millar illustrated books for various authors including Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Rudyard Kipling. He also had a strong working relationship with E. Nesbit and is considered the most talented of her illustrators. Millar did not limit himself to children's books and fantasy but illustrated the books of Kate Lawson's *Highways and Homes of Japan* (1910) as well as Artur Radcliff Dugmore's *African Jungle Life* (1928). Miller was a collector of Eastern Art and exotic and ancient weapons and this interest influenced his artwork.

Sources:

Marcus Crouch, *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers Children's Book in Britain, 1900–1960*, London: The Library Association, 1962, 15;

Wikipedia (accessed: January 13, 2022).

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Bio prepared by Beverley Beddoes-Mills, independent researcher, beverleym@bigpond.com



Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons (accessed: January 13, 2022). Public domain.

Edith Nesbit , 1858 - 1924
(Author)

Edith Nesbit was an English poet and novelist and was widely known for her children's books. She was born in Kennington, Surrey the daughter of an agricultural chemist, John Collis Nesbit who died in 1862 before her fourth birthday. Nesbit spent most of her childhood in France due to the ill-health of her sister Mary. She returned to England after her sister's death and lived with her mother at Halstead Hall in Kent. The family moved back to Lewisham in South East London when Nesbit was seventeen.

Nesbit married journalist, Hubert Bland in 1880. Their marriage was turbulent as Bland was a philander and their three children shared the home with his illegitimate children as well as one of his mistresses. Nesbit was associated with many writers such as the Rossettis, Swinburne, and William Morris, poet, and social activist and became his follower. Nesbit and her husband became founders of the Fabian Society in 1884 and they jointly edited the Society's journal *Today*. In the 1880's Nesbit, not only lectured but became a prolific writer on socialism. Under the name "Fabian Bland" she collaborated in this writing with her husband but due to the success of her children's book, this activity was discontinued.

Initially, Nesbit wanted to be a poet and in 1907–1908 she published in the *New Age* her Pre-Raphaelite influenced verse as well as a volume, *Ballads, and Lyrics of Socialism*. Her greater success was with her children's fiction which includes, the three novels about the Bastable family: *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1898), *The Wouldbegoods* (1901), and *The New Treasure Seekers* (1904). As well as *Five Children and It* (1902), *The Phoenix and the Carpet* (1904), *The Railway Children* (1905), and the *Enchanted Castle* (1907). Nesbit not only published forty children's novels and story collections in her own right but achieved just as many in her collaboration with others.

From 1899 to 1920 Nesbit lived in Well Hall, Eltham, in southeast

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

London. She also had a second home on the Sussex Downs, in the hamlet of Crowlink, Friston, East Sussex. Three years after her husband Hubert Bland died in 1913 Nesbit married Thomas “the Skipper” Tucker who was the captain of the Woolwich Ferry. She moved to “Crowlink” in Friston and then to “The Long Boat” at Jesson, St Mary Bay, New Romney, East Kent where she died in 1924. Nesbit is buried in the churchyard of St Mary in the Marsh.

Sources:

Faye Hammill, Esme Miskimmin, Ashlie Sponenberg, *Encyclopedia of British Women's Writing 1900–1950*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 174–177;

wikipedia.org (accessed: July 11, 2021).

Bio prepared by Beverley Beddoes-Mills, beverleym@bigpond.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Adaptations	*The Enchanted Castle* was adapted into a TV-miniseries by the BBC in 1979. It has not been released on DVD or VHS in the UK. A DVD was released in Australia in 2013 featuring the actor, Candida Beveridge.
Translation	Swedish: *Det förtrollade slottet*, trans. Jadwiga P. Westrup, Stockholm: Svensk läraretidnings förlag, 1963. Polish: *Zaczarowany zamek*, trans. Irena Tuwim, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy “Nasza Księgarnia”, 1971; Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zielona Sowa, 2002. Portuguese: *O castelo encantado*, trans. Maria do Céu Pedreño, Lisboa: Editorial Publica, 1990. Chinese: □□ [Mo bao], trans. Zhu Zengwen, Taibei Shi: Gui ji shao nian cun, 1997. Chinese: □□□□ [Mo fa cheng bao], trans. Xue Xiaoman, Zhengzhou Shi: Zhongzhou gu ji chu ban she, 2005. Russian: *Заколдованный замок : сказочная повесть* [Zakoldovannyĭ zamok : skazochnai□a□ povestʹ], trans. E. Pudovkina, Moskva: AST Astrel’, 2007. Vietnamese: *Lâu đài bị phù phép*, trans. Thị Huệ Đặng, Hà Nội : Nhà xuất bản Văn hóa - thông tin, 2008. Hebrew: □□□□□□ □□□□□ [ha-Ṭirah ha-ḳesumah], trans. Hagar Yanay, Kibuts Bet Nir: Okyanus; Moshav Ben-Shemen: Modan, 2010. Chinese: □□□□□ [Zhong mo de cheng bao], trans. Zhao Jing, Yang Shenghua, Beijing: Zhongguo guo ji guang bo chu ban she, 2013. Polish: *Zaczarowany zamek*, trans. Irena Tuwim and Julian Stawiński, Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1971; trans. Magdalena Sobolewska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Muchomor, 2020.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw.

Summary

The Enchanted Castle is the story of three children, Gerald, Jimmy, and Kathleen who while exploring in their school holidays discover a hidden entrance to the gardens of Yalding Manor. These elaborate gardens include a statue of Diana and Hermes and a Temple of Phoebus, which convince the children that the grounds are enchanted. They find a fairy-tale sleeping princess, who is the housekeeper's niece, in the middle of the maze in the rose garden. The princess joins them in their game of pretend and tells the children that the castle is full of magic. She takes them to a secret treasure room of the castle and shows them a magic ring that she says has the power to make the wearer invisible. Her claim becomes true when she slips the ring on her finger and discovers she is invisible. In a state of panic, she admits to the children she was play-acting as a fairy princess but is in reality Mabel, the housekeeper's niece.

The children discover that there are benefits and disadvantages to invisibility. Until the magic wears off there was the need to explain the physical absence of Mabel and later Gerald who also become invisible after wearing the ring. However, the benefits are shown, particularly with Gerald who uses the invisibility to raise some money after joining a conjuring show. He later was able to help the police capture some burglars. Gerald also discovers that the statues in the garden come to life at twilight. The children soon discover that the ring has the magical power to grant the wearer's wishes which brings alarming results. This occurs when they are performing a play before an audience of fake people they have made from bits and pieces of household objects. Terrifying results occur when Mable wishes the audience would come alive and the dummy audience turns into the horrifying Ugly-Wuglies.

The children with the help of Yalding Manor's new bailiff succeed in imprisoning the Ugly-Wuglies in a cave so that when the magic wears off these creatures will be returned to harmless household bits and pieces. However, the bailiff is injured by the Ugly-Wuglies when he opens the door to the cave before the magic had worn off. The respectable Ugly-Wuglie who has become human, informs them that the others have gone into the woods. However, the magic has worn off and the children discover only heaps of clothing and masks, broomsticks, and hockey sticks. Further adventures occur involving Jimmy and the respectable Ugly-Wuglie involving the London Stock Exchange which reveals how important it is to make appropriate wishes.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

The problem for the children continues revealing what occurs when a wish is made without thought. Mabel becomes four yards high and Kathy turns into a statue. As a statue, however, Kathy is recognised by the god Phoebus and invited to swim in the lake and attend the feast given by the ladies of Olympus. He also includes Mabel in this adventure by making her into a statue. Phoebus shows Mabel how ignorance of the ring leads to problems but shows her how to wish exactly and to bring about the right results. Phoebus shows Kathy how to use the ring to bring the boys to join them by turning them into statues and Hermes is sent to bring them to the feast.

The children return to Yalding Manor and discover that the bailiff is Lord Yalding, the owner of the Manor who has put it up for sale. The children tell of the ring's powerful magic and thinking to humour them he makes a wish that his friend would be with him. When the children's French governess arrives, it is discovered that she is the woman that Lord Yalding has always loved. The prospective buyer of the manor is scared off by the ring's magic and the estate is saved when the hidden jewels are revealed. The final wish that all the magic in the ring is rendered powerless is achieved as the ring becomes a harmless wedding band.

Source:

The Enchanted Castle (accessed: September 4, 2021).

Analysis

In *The Enchanted Castle* Nesbit presents a modern view of childhood in her children's adventure story which contrasts with the moralistic conservatism of Victorian fairy tales. Nesbit reveals the ability of children to face unusual and sometimes terrifying situations with intelligence and courage. The foundation of these abilities is shown to be based on wide and sustained reading as well as an understanding of the classical traditions. The story involves the four children, Gerald, Kathleen, and Jimmy, and their friend Mabel, the housekeeper's niece. Mabel discovers the enchanted wishing ring and shows it to the children and in so doing introduces the main theme which identifies the dangers of inappropriately wishing.

Nesbit's childhood memories and fears underpin many of the situations that occur throughout the story and are imaginatively brought to the surface in the children's adventures. In the Castle

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

gardens, the children discover large stone dinosaurs like those from the Crystal Place. Nesbit's love of the classical gods was first seen at the Greek Court of the Great Exhibition, in the British Museum. These statues as well as the temples form the classical foundation for much of the adventures for the children and provide enchantment and a fairy tale atmosphere for the framework of the story. The Castle grounds, which include the temples of Flora and Dionysus and the gods Phoebus, Psyche, Hebe, Demeter, and others bring to life the ancient world of classical mythology. Nesbit, reveals in *The Enchanted Castle*, the way the children, in their affinity to the natural world, and their understanding of the roles of the gods of mythology can overcome the terrors of fantasy and enchantment.

The source of the magic in *The Enchanted Castle* is the ring which not only leads the children into frightening situations but also enables them to attend the delights of the feast of the gods. Mabel and Kathleen, after being turned into statues, by the ring, are invited to a picnic by the god Phoebus to be held at the lake. Their recognition of the different gods and goddesses at the feast enables them to overcome their fears and enjoy the wonderful food. It is here at the feast that the god Phoebus tells the children the secret magic of the ring and the importance of wishing correctly.

Nesbit, use of powerful classical myths reveals how the magic of the imagination penetrates the ordinary world and uncovers the implications of hidden wishes. She also reveals the power of books and reading as a crucial influence on children's play. The children use play as a way of learning and discovering and books are identified as necessary to inspire the imagination. In this way, enchantment is shown to be a gift of the imagination that children are naturally responsive to and which separates them from the adult world.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Aphrodite Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Eros Ganymede Hebe Hera Hermes Ouranos / Uranus Phoebus Psyche Zeus

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant

Character traits Fairy tale references

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

for Children and Youth Culture

Further Reading

Briggs, Julia, *A Woman of Passion: The Life of E. Nesbit 1858–1921*, Chapter 10, Hutchinson, London, 1987.

Hale, Elizabeth, "Classic Children's Literature and the Character and Childhood, from Tom Brown's Schooldays to The Enchanted Castle" in Lisa Maurice, ed., *The Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome in Children's Literature: Heroes and Eagles*, Leiden: Brill Meta forms, 2015, 17–29.

Nelson Claudia, *Canonical and Popular Literature in E. Nesbit's "The Enchanted Castle"*, Conference Paper delivered at The Child and the Book, 2019.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.