



Mythologies

W.B. Yeats

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Banshees and faeries, demons and curses, village ghosts and mystic poets work their Gaelic magic in this enthralling collection of supernatural tales from the pen of William Butler Yeats. Based on Irish country beliefs, traditions, and folk tales, the stories were first published at the height of Yeats' romantic period in three collections entitled *The Celtic Twilight*, *The Secret Rose*, and *Stories of Red Hanrahan*.

Mythologies Details

Date : Published May 26th 1998 by Touchstone Simon & Schuster (first published 1959)

ISBN : 9780684826219

Author : W.B. Yeats

Format : Paperback 368 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Mythology, Poetry, European Literature, Irish Literature, Cultural, Ireland, Short Stories, Classics, Fiction, Folklore

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From Reader Review Mythologies for online ebook

Phinehas says

Worth reading for the essays that make up the last quarter of the book alone, but the whole thing is great.

Tanner says

4.4 -- Really enjoyed.

Monica says

This looks very so interesting. Shame on me for not having read one tale. I'm sure I'll enjoy it more than the airheads I'm reading about in Beattie's "Love Always". y t

Erik Graff says

Going through such records as exist of books I've read has impressed upon me the influence Michael Miley has had. No one, with the possible exception of grandmother Lajla, has directed me to more books, some as gifts, some as loans, some simply by talking them up. In addition to strongly encouraging a nascent interest in comparative and Asian religions as early as the summer after high school graduation, Michael has also led me to study parapsychology, occultism, Latin American histories, philosophy and literature.

Although I'd been exposed to Yeats in high school and to his reading of some of his own poems on WFMT radio here in Chicago, it was Michael, himself an accomplished imitator of the great writer, who got me to pursue the author beyond school assignments, particularly his prose works--poetry being more something to read aloud and in company.

This collection of traditional Irish folktales, charmingly and sometimes chillingly retold by Yeats, is an excellent introduction to his prose work.

Josh says

I was on an esoterica kick when I started on Mythologies and so was primed for some of the more bizarre portions in the second half of the collection. I was further assisted by the book's sections being arranged in order by increasing opaqueness. Starts off with a fine retelling of various traditional Irish folk stories in The Celtic Twilight (which shares its name with the revival movement of Irish literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries). The Secret Rose stories read as parables and are my favorite of the bunch; each is worth returning to to absorb something new. The Stories of Red Hanrahan are melancholic, at times apocalyptic, and generally seem to mourn the passing of an age in Ireland. Rosa Alchemica, The Tables of the Law, and The Adoration of the Magi, are all narrative, fictional, and conflicting musings on the esoteric traditions of Yeats' time. Interesting if you're into that sort of thing; I imagine tiring if you are not. I'll admit to giving up

by the time I reached *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, which is stream of consciousness philosophy and metaphysics--not for the faint of heart.

Alex says

As a collection of three of Yeats' pamphlet-esque collections of Irish folklore - *Celtic Twilight*, *Secret Rose* and *Stories of Red Hanrahan* - this seems like it should be great. But a weird thing happened on the way to its collection: Yeats grew up. As happens to many of us, as he matured Yeats grew more conservative; he quit the *Golden Dawn*, the occult society, and sidled towards more conventional religion. By the time he put this collection together, he was embarrassed by some of its more flowery ideas, and the end result is that he edited all the fun out of it. See my review of *Celtic Twilight*, and then consider this: neither of the quotes in that review made it into this book.

It's not worthless; Yeats collecting Irish folklore will never be worthless. But the original is exhilarating, bursting with ideas; this is more stodgy. It's just not as cool.

Amanda says

Quick, fun collection if you're interested in the tie in between myth and literature; illuminating too if you like Yeats' earlier work as this shows where he gathered a lot of his foundation.

Angie says

I dunno. I did not derive a single moment's pleasure from reading this.

Luke says

In *Mythologies*, Yeats gives a report of many stories that he had collected over the years--especially stories concerning Irish mythology. I found over and over a theme of anxiety in these stories--anxiety from a Christianized Ireland because of the power that the traditional mythology still had over the people in the stories. Furthermore, Yeats lays out a portion of his own beliefs on the role of the artist or the poet as well as a metaphysics. Although I found his views of the role of the artist profound, I found, for the most part, his metaphysics jumbled and incoherent.

Catherine says

Having skirted the chasm of Dark Lord/Cat!Harry fanfic, I wandered off after a cup of tea. Still considering

the cheap and troubled waters of fandom, it occurred to me I hadn't had a leather-bound book in my hands in quite some time and was currently shoving furniture around in an room filled with Persian poetry, ancient warfare, and the autobiographies of men and woman of fame.

So I sat down with William Butler Yeats, whose 'Mythologies' was approximately the right size and weight. I will not lie, it was a feast after far too long with a bag of chips. Gorgeous writing, of course. His delving stays away from sense and yet skewers sensibility. Humanity examined. Scenery detailed, while the presented characters are often little more than wax figures with a ragged bit of witchery around their bony shoulders. Culture laid bare and all that. Seriously, was there any child in the history of Ireland that was not molested? 'Off with the fairies' indeed. Over and over, you read the symptoms of shock, sexual abuse and PTSD; that isn't the touch of the Little People, people.

This is a compilation of three previous books, and the second part, The Secret Rose, is far and away best. It presents as less chopped and piecemeal than the first section, Celtic Twilight, which was edited so savagely the original book would be a better choice, while yet giving a full accounting of what it is to be Irish; the third section, Stories of Red Hanrahan, depends upon a less-than-attractive character, and as such falls flat.

You can always find some interesting tidbits in the liner notes, in old books. He's a total bastard towards the Lady who put her time in editing, writing, copying out and duenna-ing him about the Irish skyline. Lady Who? Yes, precisely. She gets a note page with her name on it, and the occasional offhand 'oh, my friend mentioned to me' now and then. Just stripped her out -- was it him, or the publisher who made that decision? Bastard. Goes on to makes a very snide case for reading his edition of what it appears were well-covered folktales, bashing the more recent versions in print like a scorned lover.

Highly recommended!

Richard says

Not really finished. Will continue to go back to this again and again. Chilling, lovely, strange, and fun.

Phoenix says

These are great little poems and short stories. Yeats completely believed in the existence of faeries! I love that.
