



# An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales

Books Reviewed:

[An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales](#) [1]

Issue:

[197](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[George Hunt](#) [3]

[New to Choice:](#)

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

The word treasury evokes is apt for this collection. Scottish author and librarian Theresa Breslin, whose realistic fiction draws upon the history and culture of Scotland, here turns to its mythology and folklore in eleven elegantly retold tales.

They include the whimsical Wee Bannock, a Scots version of the gingerbread man, in which the runaway sweetmeat actually wants to be eaten, but not by just anyone; a Sanday-based tale of the doomed love between a selkie and a fisherman; an account of the taming by trickery of a monstrous kelpie-horse by a poor ploughboy; and a wonderfully lurid story of how a princess and a feckless young storyteller conquer the voracious Dragon Stoorworm by getting him to swallow them before setting his liver on fire. This story ends with the agonised dragon writhing himself apart, thus creating from his scattered members the geography of Scotland and its neighbouring lands.

Scottish illustrator Kate Leiper's paintings provide a suitably dramatic accompaniment to all of this magic and mystery. Her depictions of the monsters, shape-shifters and 'wee folk' from the spirit world are vivid and intriguing - the hulking water-kelpie which stamps across pages 23 and 24 against a loch-side night-sky is spectacularly threatening - while the people, domestic animals and plants which inhabit the bucolic landscapes are drawn with tender attention to intricate detail.

This book is a beautiful object to hold and handle. Many of the pages are pastel shaded, and the end papers and story leads are scripted with fragments of the stories to come. A treasury indeed.

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Jan '20):** <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/197/childrens-books/reviews/an-illustrated-treasury-of-scottish-folk-and-fairy-tales>

**Links:**

[1] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/an-illustrated-treasury-of-scottish-folk-and-fairy-tales>

[2] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/197>

[3] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/george-hunt>