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The Tale Of The Firebird



Synopsis

In all the world there is said to be nothing more beautiful than the Firebird. When Ivan-Tsarevitch, youngest son of the Tsar, goes on a quest for the amazing bird, he finds himself flying over mountains and woods on a talking wolf, confronting a wicked Baba Yaga, and rescuing an enchanted princess from Koshchei the Immortal. But when he returns from his magical journey, he brings home the most precious treasure of all. Gennady Spirin brings this original version of the Firebird tale from his native Russia and has illustrated it in his trademark rich, luminous style. This retelling of a classic is sure to become the new standard.

Book Information

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Philomel Books (September 30, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399235841

ISBN-13: 978-0399235849

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.4 x 11.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 39 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #231,653 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #176 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe #257 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural #478 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Dragons

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

As elegant as any imperial treasure, this sumptuously illustrated book showcases Spirin's (The Sea King's Daughter; Philipok) near-magical artistry. Here he adapts three Russian fairy tales to coin his own version of the story of the tsar's son and his quest for the dazzling firebird. This prince receives aid from a big gray wolf, who helps him through a number of trials, even though the prince doesn't always follow his instructions. Their adventures take them to far-off kingdoms, to Baba Yaga's chicken-footed cottage and to the battlefield of Koshchei the Immortal. Ultimately, Ivan-Tsarevitch not only finds the firebird but also rescues and wins the hand of princess Yelena the Beautiful. The cadences are stately ("In a moment, the wolf had transformed himself into a warrior's horse so great

and strong that it cannot be described, either with words or with a brush"), and the artwork is some of Spirin's most exquisite. Some of his watercolors are shaped like triptychs or altarpieces, others stretch across both pages like tapestries. The central compositions twinkle and glow as if dusted with gold leaf; twining about the text, the borders are intricately detailed but wrought in an airier, more open style that recalls the folk origins of the story. Ages 4-8. (Sept.) Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 2-5-Someone is stealing the Tsar's golden apples. When Ivan-Tsarevitch, the ruler's youngest son, is sent to watch, he discovers that the culprit is the magnificent firebird. Able to snatch only a single feather, he embarks on a quest to find the bird, accompanied by a faithful wolf with magical powers. In the course of the quest, he is also required to search for a horse with a golden mane, and battle Koshchei the Immortal to rescue Yelena the Beautiful. Spirin has blended versions of three different traditional Russian tales to create what the author's note refers to as an "original composition." While the writing generally flows smoothly, it sometimes veers away from the spirit of the core material, as when the evil witch Baba Yaga is interjected into the story and is inexplicably helpful to the hero, contrary to her usual persona. Spirin's illustrations are superior to the story he tells. Done in watercolor, the painterly pictures are elaborately detailed and exquisitely executed, capturing all of the magic and mystery of the long ago and far away. Of particular note are the elegant borders, which enhance the text they frame and invite readers into this magical realm. Larger libraries will probably want to purchase the book, but smaller collections already holding Demi's *The Firebird* (Holt, 1994; o.p.), Ruth Sanderson's *The Golden Mare, the Firebird, and the Magic Ring* (Little, Brown, 2001), or Jane Yolen's *The Firebird* (HarperCollins, 2002) may consider this an additional acquisition. Grace Oliff, Ann Blanche Smith School, Hillsdale, NJ Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"Why is he naked?" Emme asked. Because in one of the many exquisite paintings by the magnificent artist & story-teller Gennady Spirin the witch Baba Yaga would help the honest, kind, brave but perhaps a bit too attracted to gold Prince Ivan Tsarevitch only if he would leap into a huge cauldron steaming over a fire in the wildest forest. All of the pages in this marvelous book are graced with brilliantly conceived, meticulously drawn margin illustrations and paintings that move the story of this young prince along as swiftly as the sky-touching leaps of his friend, The Great Wolf. It all begins, as Spirin tells the story, with the snatching of the Tsar's golden fruit by the incandescent firebird. On seeing the one gorgeous tail feather gathered by Prince Ivan Tsarevitch, the Tsar sends

his three sons out to bring him the firebird. The story tells only about the youngest prince, who charms kings and sultans but in the first two of his adventures, gets himself into deep trouble by failing to listen to the Great Wolf, and by the glitter of gold. There IS a reward for courage, steadfastness, and truthfulness, however, so the lovely story told in beautiful language, enchants and teaches. This is a legacy book, a treasure as light-bringing as the Firebird. I will be following up by showing my grandchildren the ballet and playing the music that one can almost hear, reading Gennady's Spirin's marvelous telling of old Russian stories. Any Alerts? None at all. Thank you, Gennady Spirin

I listened to Russian folk tales in Russian and read them as a child. In September this year, I bought this book for my 7 year old son. The illustrations are exquisite and beautifully drawn. The story was originally in Russian and I have read and re-read the story to my son and every time he has enjoyed it and he loves the illustrations, each time there seems to be some new detail in a page. To me the story in English didn't seem to have the same interest level as it may have been in its original version, nevertheless; it is a book not just a child would enjoy but an adult too, this is definitely a book to keep for years to come.

This book is a stunningly illustrated loosely based tale of the Firebird. I'm a music teacher and use it to incorporate Stravinsky's telling with the younger students. Kindergarten and first graders seem particularly enthralled with the story and the images. Any page stands out as it's own marvelous work of art.

Lovely telling of a Russian tale and illustrations by Spirin. A lovely tale of Ivan-Tsarevitch and his hunt for the firebird his father wants and his finding true love with Yelena the Beautiful. So many details in the illustrations that you find something new every time.

Nicely done book -- attractive art work, well-written story.

Absolutely beautiful illustrations in this book, like renaissance art. Recommend for ages 2-16 because of the artwork. Reading level is about 3-4 th grade. I absolutely love the books by Spirin, beautiful art in them. Also recommend Cupid and Psyche, and the 12 dancing princesses.

Arrived on time and as expected.

I'm so happy with this purchase - I was looking for something traditional but not too heavy for my kids to appreciate their Russian heritage - this book is a simple story with gorgeous illustrations

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