Student Name: _____

Class: _____ **Date**: _____

MINDSET FOR IELTS 2

UNIT 2: LEISURE & EDUCATION

Reading

Exercise 1.

Fairy-tales Much Older Than Previously Thought

Study of fairy story origins traces some back thousands of years, with one tale dating back as far as bronze age.

Fairy stories such as Beauty and the Beast and Rumpelstiltskin can be traced back thousands of years to prehistoric times, with one tale originating from the Bronze Age, academics have revealed. Using techniques normally employed by biologists, they studied common links between 275 Indo-European fairy tales from around the world and found some have roots that are far older than previously known, and "long before the emergence of the literary record".

While stories such as Beauty and the Beast and Rumplestiltskin were first written down in the 17th and 18th century, the researchers found they originated "significantly earlier". "Both tales can be securely traced back to the emergence of the major western Indo-European subfamilies as distinct lineages between 2,500 and 6,000 years ago," they write.
Illustration of Beauty and the Beast, one of the fairytales believed to date from thousands of years ago.

Durham University anthropologist Dr Jamie Tehrani, who worked with folklorist Sara Graça da Silva, from New University of Lisbon, believed the research – published in the Royal Society Open Science journal – has answered a question about our cultural heritage.
In the 19th century Wilhelm Grimm, of the Brothers Grimm, believed many of the fairy stories they popularized were rooted in a shared cultural history dating back to the birth of the Indo-European language family. But later thinkers challenged that view, saying

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some stories were much younger, and passed into oral tradition having first been written down by writers from the 16th and 17th centuries.

Da Silva says that the origin of folk tales was one of the "biggest mysteries" in folk tale studies, with its reconstruction "often frustrated not only by difficulties in defining the genre but also as a result of the rich interplay between oral and written traditions". The new method of mapping the stories through common languages and geographical proximity worked, "because in oral tradition, folk tales are transmitted through spoken language, so a correlation might be expected; and also because both languages and folk tales are transmitted from generation to generation."

Tehrani said their study agreed with Grimm's theory: "Some of these stories go back much further than the earliest literary record and indeed further back than classical mythology – some versions of these stories appear in Latin and Greek texts – but our findings suggest they are much older than that."

Analysis showed Jack and the Beanstalk was rooted in a group of stories classified as The Boy Who Stole Ogre's Treasure, and could be traced back to when eastern and western Indo-European languages split – more than 5,000 years ago. Beauty and the Beast and Rumpelstiltskin to be about 4,000 years old. A folk tale called The Smith and the Devil was estimated to date back 6,000 years to the Bronze Age. The story, which involves a blacksmith selling his soul in a pact with the devil in order to gain supernatural ability, then tricking the evil power, is not so well known today, but its theme of a Faustian pact is familiar to many.

The study employed phylogenetic analysis, which was developed to investigate evolutionary relationships between species, and used a tree of Indo-European languages to trace the descent of shared tales on it, to see how far they could be demonstrated to go back in time. Tehrani said: "We find it pretty remarkable these stories have survived without being written. They have been told since before even English, French and Italian existed. They were probably told in an extinct Indo-European language." Da Silva believes the stories endure thanks to "the power of storytelling and magic from time immemorial". "Besides, the motifs present in fairytales are timeless and fairly universal, comprising dichotomies such as good and evil; right and wrong, punishment and reward, moral and immoral, male and female," she added. "Ultimately, despite being often disregarded as fictitious, and even as a lesser form of narrative, folk tales are excellent case studies for cross-cultural comparisons and studies on human behavior, including cooperation, decision making, [and so on]."

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The author and academic Marina Warner, who has written a history of fairytales, called the paper "fascinating". "What's interesting to me is it shows how deeply this creative power of the imagination lies in the human being, how it's about making sense of your world by inventing narratives that resist its difficulties," she said. "In the case of The Smith and the Devil, it's a cunning tale – the trickster tricked, showing a very ancient version of that defiance of difficulty. That capricious chance will play tricks on you, but you, with cunning, will be able to resist that. It's a kind of joke the audience shares to feel a little better."

Beauty and the Beast, or The Animal Bride, shows a similar kind of imagining, she added. "It's making sense of our relationship with the natural world – eliminating the threat. A beast figure marries a woman, and then the stories take different turns; in one she kills him, in one she finds he turns into a man when she kisses him."

1. Choose which THREE of the following statements are true of Fairytales?

A: They began before writing

B: They are studied by biologists

C: They contain powerful stories

D: They are based on true stories

E: They developed in particular cultures

F: They contrast polar differences

G: They seldom help in understanding the way we conduct ourselves

H: They are only enjoyed by people from India and Europe

2. Choose which TWO of the following statements about The Smith and the Devil are true

A: Its origins lie in the period after the Bronze Age

B: The hero makes a deal with the Devil

C: Its theme still resonates in the modern world

D: The Devil wins

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E: The hero manages to resist the Devil

Exercise 2.

The Great War

The commonly held notion that it was started out of outrage over the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie at the hands of a Serbian nationalistic secret society known as the "Black Hand" isn't entirely correct. In fact, the Emperor Franz Josef himself expressed relief over the assassination because it rid him of an heir whom he deeply disliked. The Emperor commented that "God will not be mocked. A higher power had put back the order I couldn't maintain."

Indeed, it wasn't just the Emperor who was relieved; it was reported by an Austrian newspaper that the general consensus among the various political circles was that the assassination, though a tragedy, was for the best. As far as the Austrian people were concerned, it was noted "The event almost failed to make any impression whatever. On Sunday and Monday, the crowds in Vienna listened to music and drank wine as if nothing had happened." Indeed, it took the government itself a full three weeks to react.

In fact the "treaty alliance system" that was prevalent in Europe with numerous treaties interconnecting the various states was really at the heart of why what would have been a small conflict, not noteworthy in any way in history, escalated into one of the bloodiest wars in human history with over 15 million people dead. Somewhat ironically, the spark that set it all off was the assassination that nobody really cared about.

So why go to war over an assassination, if nobody cared? Because, while nobody seemed to much care about the assassination itself, Austria-Hungary had been looking for an excuse to wage a "preventative war" against Serbia as a state in order to weaken or destroy them so as to take back territory in the Balkans, which had been taken during the Balkan Wars. They had not taken it back up to this point because they lacked Germany's support; without that support, they feared Russia too much, because of the treaty Russia had with Serbia.

The list contains factors that contributed to the starting of World War One. Which THREE factors does the writer mention?

A. Agitation by newspapers

B. International pacts between nations

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C. A minor land dispute

D. The murder of an Austrian emperor

E. Germany's lack of support of Austria

F. Russia's support of Austria

G. Plotting by unpatriotic conspirators

H. The death of the successor to an empire

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