



ERIC A. KIMMEL

Eric A. Kimmel was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1946. A former college professor, he taught classes in children's literature and elementary language arts methods at Portland State University in Oregon until 1993, when he became a full-time writer. Dr. Kimmel attributes his success as an author to his experience as a storyteller, saying, "If a story tells well, it will read well."

Eric travels widely with his wife, Doris, to tell stories, speak about his writing, and explore local wildlife. They have visited Norway, Italy, Singapore, and Borneo, and have seen polar bears in the Arctic, orangutans in the jungle, and whales in Alaska. When not writing, Eric can usually be found watching birds by the Pacific Ocean, baking bread, knitting sweaters for his friends, riding horses, or playing his banjo.

"I grew up with stories, which is why I love them so much. My earliest memories are of my grandmother telling me about the foolish people of Chelm, clever Hershel of Ostropol, or any of several wildly imaginative tales from her native Ukraine, where the hero had to kill a dragon with seven, nine, or twelve heads. Just walking down my block, I could hear five different languages. All of my friends had grandparents living with them who would gladly tell us a story—all we had to do was ask and listen.

"My Uncle Abe gave me a wonderful present when I was seven years old: my own copy of Grimm's Fairy Tales. I read the book until it fell apart! I tried to put the pages back together, but I didn't always get them in the right order. Some of the stories got mixed up, which led me to new, even more interesting combinations. That's when I realized that stories aren't set in stone. They can be switched, changed, expanded, taken apart, and put back together again in a thousand different ways.

"Years of experience as a storyteller have taught me that stories never stay the same. They're alive; they grow and change. You can never tell the same story twice because you're different, the audience is different, and often you discover a new way of telling the story that makes it different. Whenever I set out to write or tell a tale, I never really know how it's going to turn out. That's what makes it so exciting. There's always a new story waiting to be discovered."

For more on Eric A. Kimmel, visit his website: www.ericakimmel.com.



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