



Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard

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Children's book from the English journalist, broadcaster and author of stories and poems.

Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard Details

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Author : Eleanor Farjeon

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From Reader Review Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard for online ebook

Susan says

A wandering minstrel tells six fairy tales about love to the milk-maids set to keep a farmer's daughter from running away with her lover. Songs, games, apples, aphorisms, lovely prose and many pleasing twists and turns.

Joy Everafter says

This book was published in 1921 and has that "cute" style of presenting tales to children with a confiding aura.

Get past the first few pages and you are in a tale inside a tale: Martin Pippin tries to help six milkmaids by telling them a story each evening. The stories are passionate original love tales with each milkmaid as the heroine of her story, definitely not for tweens.

After the stories are over, Martin has a tale of his own to complete.

Beautiful images created by someone who loved England, full of grace notes and symbols and gentle humour. The theme is unashamed romantic love.

Melanie says

This is a lovely story, written by poet, librettist and author Eleanor Farjeon. I've read and loved some of her other work, but this is acknowledged as one of her best. It is also very hard to get hold of.

It is the story of Martin Pippin, a wandering minstrel who comes across a young man, Robin Rue, crying for the loss of his sweetheart Gillian. She has been locked up in the wellhouse in the apple orchard by her father, guarded by "six young milkmaids, sworn virgins and man-haters all", Joscelyn, Joan, Jessica, Jane, Jennifer, and Joyce. Martin takes on the task of restoring Gillian to Robin, and to do so he must inveigle his way into the orchard and try to get the six keys to the padlock on the wellhouse from the six girls. He does this by telling stories. Farjeon's writing style is very dream-like and suits these fairy tales perfectly. Both the entire book taken as one piece and each of the tales included are fairy tales, love stories with obstacles to be overcome, elements of magic, and the unreal quality of a dream. [Full review here](#)

Desertisland says

"a depth which is adult in sentiment, and indeed they were written not for a child, but for a young soldier Victor Haslam, who had like Farjeon, been a close friend of Edward Thomas" (A war poet killed in 1917 France). Quotation from Wikipedia entry for Eleanor Farjeon, which includes link to free online edition of the book.

I seem to recall reading somewhere (perhaps on jacket flap of old edition or book dedication?) that Farjeon had sent installments of the book in letters to her soldier friend (who if he was in the trenches in France during first World War, would have welcomed the escape to a peaceful, perhaps familiar beloved world).

It's been awhile since I read either, but I might prefer sequel

"Martin Pippin in a Daisy Field" which may be more cheerful--and its ending twist may be more sweet (lovable? cosy?) than that of Apple Orchard. Any how, I always think of it when I pass a business that sells gravel for landscaping, possibly named after the candy in jump rope rhyme "Andy Spandy, sugardy candy, French Almond ROCK--Bread and butter for your supper's all your mother's GOT".

Kay says

I was given this as a gift by my aunt when i was a child and loved it! The format of short stories strung together with short interludes enthralled me, each one written so beautifully and perfectly. Highly recommendable for anyone who still longs for a bit of childhood back.

Kay says

This is a book I remember from childhood but read again every couple of years for sheer pleasure. Set in a Sussex countryside that has all but disappeared, it tells of Martin, who must win the loyalty of six milkmaids who guard their love-sick mistress. He tells stories that win the milkmaids to his side, so that he can then woo the girl they've been hiding from him. Farjeon's language is lyrical and witty, and the stories are six little gems of the fairytale genre. For a child who loves reading, this book is a must. For an adult who's still fond of fairy tales, it's equally good.

K.V. Johansen says

I don't know how many times I signed this book out of the library when I was a kid. I loved both layers of it, the framing narrative, written as a playscript, and the tales within told by Martin Pippin. Farjeon was a master of the literary fairy tale, and some of the ones told by Martin to the milkmaids have really stayed with me, particularly "The King's Barn" and "Young Gerard". Martin is the Pippin that my late dog Pippin, who inspired the Pippin and Mabel books, was named after.

Sylvester says

At first I was just giving it a chance - the story was okay if a little hokey. I kept listening, though, and by the time Martin was telling the six milkmaids his second story I was strangely hooked. This is one of those stories inside a story - tricky to pull off - but Farjeon's writing has a mesmeric quality that I found myself wishing to prolong. I could stay in that orchard a good while, I think. The story about the Mill was a flop, but I loved the others. I've read a few books, but "Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard" has a dreamlike/lyrical quality that is completely unique to itself.

Patricia says

When I first saw this title as a Kindle ebook, I thought it must be a history of a variety of apple, and that Martin Pippin was some sort of grafter in an orchard.

However, this is an old-fashioned, delightful fairy tale book for children, and Martin Pippin goes to rescue an imprisoned maid, surrounded by young lady guards, to whom he tells stories.

Reviewers suggest giving this a second read, and I agree that it is better the second time. I also agree that I would have loved to hear the author read these tales aloud.

Kirsten says

I want to sit at Eleanor Farjeon feet and learn the art of fairy tale. She's a queen of the craft, and every bit of story (and story inside story) in Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard is an artfully cut gem.

You will like Martin Pippin. There's no help for it. He's the sort who must be liked. (One would rather need to be as a wandering minstrel.) If you read this for his sake you'll be glad you did, as wandering minstrels are scarce these days and one should take them in as they come.

You can read this book really excellent free recorded version on Librivox. It's a sadness that it's not easier to get ahold of a good print copy, and that the sequel, which they say takes place in a daisy field, is harder still to find, but I'm quite sure the pair will one day make their ways to my bookshelf to someday become an old friend.

Chris Trickett says

I acquired this book randomly for Kindle it being a free download, and in truth wasn't expecting much from it. The name itself is hardly that which may endear it to many, not least those of my usual tastes. But then I read it, quite forgetting anything about my own actual life in the process. I lost myself like never before in this amazing story which may not have deep social significance nor the power to change the world, but who cares? It is absolutely the BEST book I've ever read, a magical tale of a travelling singer in a bygone age who by means of six equally magical fairy tales convinces six girls to rethink their commitment to their maidenhead and men-free existence. This is a lost world, but one which comes back to life in the pages of this book. As a writer myself I have started reading more widely to gain ideas and inspiration, recently having experienced the imagination of Neil Gaiman, the coherent prose of JD Salinger and the originality of Iain Banks. But exceeding every single one of them in every department is Eleanor Farjeon who with this book has created a masterpiece of literature. It doesn't say enough to be regarded as a classic, but in its own delicate way is very much that. When I write my own adventure and am asked what inspired me, I will not neglect to mention this book.

ah says

3.5 stars

Jenny says

Martin Pippin wasn't easy to get in to, and it certainly wasn't a fast read. But I found myself more and more captivated as I went on. It's not so much a romance as a story about the nature of love, and not so much a fantasy as a fairy tale about the natures of men and women.

It begins with the description of a child's game--of the Emperor's daughter in a tower, the damsels who guarded her, and the minstrel who loved her and set her free. But, the author relates, the children have it wrong. And then she tells it right. It was Gillian, a farmer's daughter who was locked away from her beloved and it was Martin Pippin the minstrel who came to rescue her, though he was not acting for himself, but for another. The book is largely composed of the stories he tells the young milkmaids who guard Gillian, sweet and moving stories about love.

Highly recommended for those who are in love, have been in love, or hope to someday be in love. It's an older book (1922), and in an odd sort of style that took a little while to get used to... but really, it's utterly brilliant.

Mike says

An amazing book - original tales within tales. So splendidly written, heart-wrenchingly beautiful, and very tantalizing despite its chaste innocence. Guaranteed to make an imaginative young girl (or boy) swoon.

Anne Seebach says

A very pretty frame tale, charmingly reminiscent of the stories collected by the Brothers Grimm. Ms Farjeon manages to present a series a of tales within a tale which are sweetly witty on the surface, but delightfully and intelligently crafted. A very pleasant and worthwhile break from weightier tomes.

Janet says

Eleanor Farjeon sure could write. This series of 6 romantic fairy tales, framed by yet another romantic story, was really impressive. Each story focused on romantic love, as told by a minstrel to an audience of milkmaids. But I found myself confused - this is usually called a children's book, and it definitely isn't. Its intended audience is clearly young adult and adult. Perhaps the confusion is because in 1922 there was no "young adult" category. Or maybe it was caused by her publishers hunting for an audience, and the only modern audience for fairy tales is children. The book really deserves 4 or 5 stars, but I have never much liked romances. I get impatient with everyone's foolish behavior.

Lucy says

I couldn't make up my mind between magical and twee. I found the format in the end a bit too predictable although then again the repetition is what makes a good fairy tale. The stories within the book are excellent - on balance I think I would have preferred them as stand-alones. Glad I read it, though, and will read next her 'Perkin the Pedlar' which has been recommended to me.

Kathy says

Read it for Martins' stories. Just read them and you will believe in true love.

Margot Ayer says

I love this book more every time I read it and it has influenced much of my writing. Even though it is a collection of fairy tales wrapped in the romantic tale of a charming rural troubador, the stories have a hint of darkness and danger to them.

Hall's Bookshop says

I wanted to be fascinated by this; set on the Sussex Downs, not a million miles away from where I grew up, it's a nostalgic story of music and laughter, written in a style that is a sort of cross between A.E. Housman and Enid Blyton, with a ton of folklore thrown in. However, I actually found it very hard to read, even being generous with its intentions. A forgotten children's book that is, perhaps now only of interest to scholars - certainly not for children.
