

Jane Ray

Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2018

UK Illustrator Nomination



To enable a child to see themselves in a book, to see an aspect of their story being told, is a powerful and liberating gift. And to get those children writing and illustrating, becoming the authors and illustrators of tomorrow, is the way forward.

## Jane Ray Biography

Jane was born and brought up in London, in a home where her interest in art and music was encouraged. She studied art and design at Middlesex University. She specialised in ceramics for her degree course, but she had always wanted to be a book illustrator: "I started making little books when I was about five years old and completely fell in love with the simple process of folding sheets of paper in half into a simple book, and then being able to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end."

After graduation, she began her career by illustrating greeting cards and book jackets.

*A Balloon for Grandad*, written by Nigel Gray and published in 1989, was her first colour picture book. Since then she has illustrated over sixty books for children. At first, she was particularly attracted by folk tales, myths, legends and Bible stories. *The Story of Creation*, with words that were adapted from the Bible, won a Smarties Award in 1992. She has illustrated two books with adult texts for the prestigious Folio Society, *Myths and Legends of the Near East (2003)* and *Celtic Myths and Legends (2006)* and has illustrated original picture book texts from the award-winning novelist Jeanette Winterson, and the UK Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy. Beginning in 2002 with *Can You Catch a Mermaid*, she has written and illustrated several of her own stories as picture books.

From the time of her student visits to the British Museum, Jane has drawn inspiration from the art and architecture of other times and places. Her illustration of the traditional song *The Twelve Days of Christmas (2011)* was inspired by a visit to Bruges. And a notebook in which she recorded her visit to the Ospedale in Venice was the starting point for both the story and illustrations of *Heartsong (2015)*, written with Kevin Crossley Holland.

Jane was one of a number of leading illustrators who were asked to design exhibition spaces for

the 2005 opening of Seven Stories, The Centre for the Children's Book, in Newcastle. One of her illustrations is featured on the building sign over the entrance of the Centre and has been used in its publicity and merchandise. She is interested in contemporary issues around illustration for young people: about the future of the picture book, commercially and as an art form; and about how illustration reflects diversity in society. She believes passionately that illustration should not be confined to books for younger children.

Jane served on the children's writers and illustrators committee of the UK Society of Authors from 2004-2007. She worked with In the Picture, a project in partnership with SCOPE, a British disability charity, which promoted the inclusive representation of children with disability in children's picture books and fiction. The project produced an image bank to help illustrators be more inclusive in their work. She continues this interest, working with a new project, Inclusive Minds ([www.inclusiveminds.com](http://www.inclusiveminds.com)).

She enjoys working directly with children and adults, either in schools or at book festivals. Working with the author Joyce Dunbar, and with school children who were deaf or hard of hearing, she illustrated the fairy tale of a deaf prince who was taught to use his hands and eyes to communicate by a mysterious bird. This was published as *Moonbird* in 2007. It was adapted for the theatre in 2008, with Jane's illustrations providing the inspiration for the design and costumes. Her illustrations for *The Lost Happy Endings* were used in a theatre production of that book in 2010.

In 2011, Jane was artist in residence at The Tanglin Trust School, Singapore. In 2014, she worked with the national Pop-Up children's book festival ([www.pop-up.org.uk](http://www.pop-up.org.uk)), creating three big 'toy theatres' in three cities in partnership with staff from The Royal Opera House.

Jane has designed murals for a London children's library and is one of a number of prominent British illustrators and artists working with The Nightingale Project ([www.nightingaleproject.org](http://www.nightingaleproject.org)), a scheme that brightens up the environments in mental health services in London with art and music. From December 2016 – April 2017 an exhibition of Jane's work for the project was held at a London health centre, showcasing work that she created specifically for hospitals, including images that are to be reproduced on the walls in the women's Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit at St Charles Hospital.

Recently, Jane and writer Sita Brahmachari have run an art and writing workshop at a centre for refugees and migrants. "People come to the centre principally to learn English, from all sorts of backgrounds. They are often fleeing unimaginable circumstances and living very difficult lives here in the UK. In amongst all the chaos and stress of applying for asylum, finding safe places to live, accessing healthcare and learning the language, I try to create a little oasis of calm and colour."

Here is Jane's advice to aspiring authors and illustrators: "To enable a child to see themselves in a book, to see an aspect of their story being told, is a powerful and liberating gift. And to get those children writing and illustrating, becoming the authors and illustrators of tomorrow, is the way forward."

## Jane Ray An Appreciation

***“Seize diversity and embrace it for the rich gift it is...”*** Jane Ray

Jane Ray is a highly regarded illustrator both in the UK and internationally. Her earliest work crossed over between posters, prints, book jackets and painting, but the making of picture books has become the most important aspect of her work. Jane’s visual and emotional language borrows from the many hours spent in the British Museum perusing folk tales, fables and parables from around the world. She cites Paul Klee and Marc Chagall as particular influences on her style. Her luminous artwork has a broad and diverse audience, captivating both children and adults. The work is compassionate and sensitive, underpinned by her strong belief in inclusivity derived from her experience of diverse contemporary society: *“The children I meet are ethnically diverse, and I would be embarrassed if my audience wasn’t represented in my books”*.



Cinderella from *Fairy Tales*

In *Fairy Tales*, retold by Berlie Doherty, Jane challenges the flaxen-haired European stereotypes, having a black prince in Cinderella; a black Beauty in Beauty and the Beast; and an Asian princess in The Frog Prince. These characters are not dependent on conventional beauty for their virtues, steering away from the often sanitised retellings of Grimm, Perrault and Anderson. Her characters are layered and ‘other-worldly’, giving the stories an unfamiliar freshness. She says that *“...even as a young child I recognised how important it was to see myself in a picture book”*.

*Fairy Tales* shows her use of sumptuous colour, the intricacy and richness of her design, and her skill in the use and referencing of both traditional and folk forms of illustration – including a skilful use of the silhouette, where she freely credits the influence of fellow British artist, illustrator and picture book maker Jan Pienkowski.



Beauty and the Beast from *Fairy Tales*



The Frog Prince from *Fairy Tales*



*Ahmed and the Feather Girl*

In her own story *Ahmed and the Feather Girl*, she steps outside a Eurocentric setting with a mixture of European, Middle Eastern and South Asian faces and clothing styles, and, as in many traditional fairy tales, Jane's multi-layered story is full of humanity – a universal parable dealing with deep emotions.



*Heartsong*

Themes of cruelty, imprisonment and a yearning for love are present. These are tempered with desires and dreams of another life and the magnificence of flying to freedom. Enchanting illustrations, filled with exotic eastern detail and rich colour, bind this poignant tale of hope and transcendence to the imagination of the reader. *Heartsong*, a short novel by Kevin Crossley-Holland, based on Vivaldi's Four Seasons, is a tale of the healing power of music – and shows Jane's skill in extending the text with her handling of detail, colour, and character in a restricted design space, responding to the mood of Crossley-Holland's story and the development of its narrative. Jane tells of her extraordinary and moving background research in the Vivaldi Museum in Venice. Here she found a name in the list of foundling babies and began a notebook that became the inspiration for Crossley-Holland's story. Jane's diaphanous watercolours and small washed sepia vignettes match Crossley-Holland's unusual rhythmic text perfectly – bringing life to a small Venetian orphan who would not have had a voice. This small book reflects Jane's concern for the quality and integrity of an idea. There is both sensitivity and sophistication in her observation and draughtsmanship, the pictures telling a story of hunger and charity in a way that communicates with children in an engaging manner, without moralism, and with wit.

Jane responds to and matches the intensity of Carol Ann Duffy's *The Lost Happy Endings* with pictures of delicacy and ferocity. Accompanying a tale as dark and threatening as any by the Grimm Brothers, her full page tableaux mirror sixteen pages of embellished text, each of them combining the darkness of forest and nightmare



*The Lost Happy Endings*

with the contrasting richer colours of fire, fabric and moonlight. The book's wistfulness and brutality combine so that, in the best fairy-tale tradition – everything works out in the end. The design of this book presented Jane with different challenges, with a full page illustration dominating each spread. The emphasis on just two characters and the intensity of Carol Ann Duffy's story and Jane's vision provide, haiku-like, a lingering experience.

The *Little Mermaid and Other Fishy Tales*, features eleven stories and poems from around the globe, collected and interpreted with elegant simplicity. This book is one of three recent collections (the others are *The Emperor's Nightingale and Other Feathery Tales* and *The Lion and the Unicorn and Other Hairy Tales*) in which Jane uses a radically different technique, with edgy expressive drawings on scraperboard, in black and white or two colours. This gives the books a unique expressive mood while retaining attention to detail, and revealing, perhaps even



*The Seal Wife in The Little Mermaid and Other Fishy Tales*

more than her previous work, her sensitivity to different ways of looking at the world and depicting it in stories.

Throughout her career, Jane has sought to depict women and girls in active and positive roles and to challenge stereo-typical depictions of the roles of men and women. This has obviously presented challenges with traditional tales and when she decided to change the ending of Hans Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* in her collection of the same name, it excited some criticism.

In all her work, Jane speaks quietly and economically, sentimentality is absent, and her images of the world are thoughtful, universal and life-enhancing. Her work within schools, areas of special educational needs, and in particular, as Artist-in-Residence for a refugee group, has become an integral part of her illustration/writing practice, the two aspects feeding and inspiring one another.

**Carol Thompson, January 2017**

## Jane Ray Interviews

An interview with Chris Stephenson in *Carousel* 46  
October 2010, pp 8–9

I was describing to Jane Ray what I considered to be the most immediately striking features of her distinctive style. Colour. Decoration. The hints of collage. The delicate brushwork. And then the almond-shaped eyes, the Middle Eastern features, the formal postures.

She was uncertain about the last. Not formalised, I quickly added. I had in mind her most recently-published book, *Ahmed and the Feather Girl*, a multi-layered fable about freedom, opportunity and scope. The first spread shows all but one of the characters (the Feather Girl herself) decoratively assembled, ready for their story to begin and essaying their roles – juggler, acrobat, strongman, cruel old circus owner, the boy Ahmed meekly carrying firewood and water, etc. – reminiscent of figures in a frieze, or like characters in fairytales or certain sorts of plays who represent universal human types or activities.

So, I resumed, referring back to my list, where had it all come from? “I don’t know,” she replied, with a smile; then, after a moment’s reflection, suggested that the features and stances probably harked back to the days she worked with ceramics, an early interest (she took a degree course in the subject at Middlesex University, before starting on her career as an illustrator). “I evolved a way of drawing on clay,” spending days at a time in the Egyptian rooms in the British Museum. She said she “found Egyptian art aesthetically very beautiful,” and hinted that – “that, you know, Egyptian feet always turned sideways” – may perhaps have been part of what I meant about the “formal” aspect of her illustrations.

“Not just the British Museum,” she continued. “I spent lots of time in lots of museums. I still like visiting them. I went to the Museum of Childhood for *The Dolls’ House Fairy* (her touching story of Rosy, whose worries over her sick father are

diverted by the needs and antics of *Thistle*, the eponymous fairy visitor).

We were in Jane’s compact studio at the end of the garden of her house in Muswell Hill, where she lives with her husband David Temple, conductor of the Crouch End Festival Chorus and other choirs, and their children, Clara, Ellie and Joe. “I love living here,” she said, enthusiastic for the convenience of the situation as well as for the North London ambience. “I can catch a bus at the end of the road and be at Orchard Books [one of her publishers] in forty-five minutes.”

Inside, the studio, which came ready-built and was lowered into the garden by a giant crane (“Very exciting to watch”), holds everything necessary for secluded, concentrated work: a desk and a chair; mug and cups of brushes and paints, pens and pencils; a plan chest; bookshelves; books; an iconostasis of postcards on the walls; a stacked hi-fi. All of her painting is done here. The best place for writing, she says, is on her laptop in the front room, “overlooking the garden.”

Earlier, when we were having coffee in her kitchen before moving down to the garden studio, Jane had touched on the petty nitpicking and attempted cultural vandalism, however ‘well intentioned’, that even someone of her standing has to occasionally overcome. “I had trouble with Eve’s nipples in America,” she said. “They wanted a well-placed butterfly, I thought it would look obscene.” Her voice rose to an indignant chuckle. “And problems with black angels. In Holland, of all places. That really surprised me. It wasn’t really racial: they thought angels should be golden haired. I’ve also had problems with things like pillar boxes... But I like to see cultural differences. It’s all a part of learning about other people.”

Quietly, evenly spoken, and ever ready to see the funny side of things, she comes across as a complete professional who knows precisely what she wants to do; and as someone who, although

always instinctively and unfailingly polite, suffers no qualms about resisting dogma of any kind.

Eight years ago Jane started to establish her credentials as a writer as well as an illustrator. *The Dolls' House Fairy* and *Ahmed and the Feather Girl*, for example, are written, as well as illustrated, by her. "I feel that I'm trespassing," she said. "I'm an illustrator first. When I'm asked at parties, I say I'm an illustrator, I illustrate books." She nodded and smiled, pleased with the accuracy of the statement. However, "Writing was the obvious way for me to go. I had so many ideas for stories in my head." I entertained a fleeting vision of the inside of Jane's head humming with stories, like an industrious beehive on full time. "It gives me a feeling of freedom to be in command of the whole thing, writing and illustrating. And when it's time for me to do the illustrations, I can tweak the text if need be. Which, of course, I can't do if I'm illustrating someone else's work."

The stories are "assembled", her scrupulously chosen word, over months and years, "a little bit here, a little bit there. Then it's a matter of joining together. I might look back over my notes and think, Ah, I didn't realise it but this goes with that, and that with something else ... There's a story here."

One obvious imperative in the making of a picture book is that words and illustrations should combine and work together, interlock as flawlessly as they possibly can, without either one usurping the work of the other and condemning it to redundancy. For Jane, newer, though now no longer new, to writing texts than she is to painting pictures, the words demand a deal of wary attention, as they do for any writer. "I whittle away at the text, getting rid of any unnecessary words," she said, and, with the radiance of someone who recognises gold when she sees it, "It's liberating to know just how few words you need!"

"I find the writing very difficult. But" – she went on – "but I'm beginning to identify my 'voice'. At first I didn't understand what that meant. Now I do. For the first book I wrote, *Can You Catch a Mermaid?* I listened to the editor too much, and

made every suggested alteration – because, I said, you know about this. But there was something about the rhythm that was wrong." She frowned. "It never quite felt mine," she added, with no trace of rancour, as though grateful for having had the chance to gain experience from something that was, anyhow, now water under the bridge.

As with her assembling of story-parts, accumulation, the snapping-up of unconsidered items, also plays its part in Jane's long-term preparation for illustrating. "I start gathering fragments. All sorts. I can't explain them; they just take my fancy." She showed me one of her notebooks. It was small, square and leather-bound, a bulging scrapbook of fragments: cut-outs of paintings and picture postcards and advertisements and swatches of patterned cloth and paper – anything that catches her eye and might come in useful for sparking-off ideas, all combined with meticulous pen-and-ink sketches and handwritten notes. A cabinet of curiosities. An invaluable resource.

She reached onto a shelf beside her and handed me a small transparent packet of the kind that collectable stamps are sold in. The label on the outside said "£1"; inside was an assortment of unused cigar bands, individually decorated with pictures of flowers; beautiful when closely examined. She found them tucked away in a shop and decided to add them to her collection, and knows they will come in handy some day.

In a pile on her desk was the almost-completed artwork from the book she was currently working on, her version of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. She explained that a trip she took with her husband to Bruges inspired the distinctive vernacular style of the buildings in the pictures she had drawn and painted. And the canals too, she added, for shipping the true love's gifts. I saw her dummy copy of the complete book, a miniature version in precise black-and-white ink drawings. How difficult was it to plan where the page-turns come, I wondered. "Once I've decided what have to be the spreads ... they establish the rest of the pages ... then the page-turns tend to solve themselves."

As we had mentioned spreads, we looked at one from *Ahmed and the Feather Girl*, which showed Aurelia the Feather Girl's escape from her incarceration; a pivotal moment captured with breathtaking simplicity. Against the background of a warm blue night sky splattered with emblematic, golden stars, two diagonals cross in opposition; one, a downward-swooping line of bunting, reminding us of Ahmed's earthbound condition; the other, a string of light bulbs soaring upwards, joyfully echoing and illuminating the Feather Girl's freedom. The ingenuity displayed chimed in with something Jane had said earlier, about how the simplest devices on stage can produce outstanding theatrical effects.

It comes as no surprise that "doing the artwork is the best part of the job." Although, "best of all is when the book is still a vision in the head, before any of the artwork has been done." But the promise of that vision is never fulfilled. "Which is probably how it should be," she acknowledged. "I use watercolour, gouache, watercolour pencil, ink, collage – you name it." And she likes to work on other books simultaneously – through choice as well, sometimes, as necessity, when deadlines are looming. "There's a practical side too: if I get stuck on one thing, I can move on to another." Though for the time being, it was back to *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. "It has to be delivered by next Wednesday. Oh, it's all right – it will be," she said. And I knew that it would.

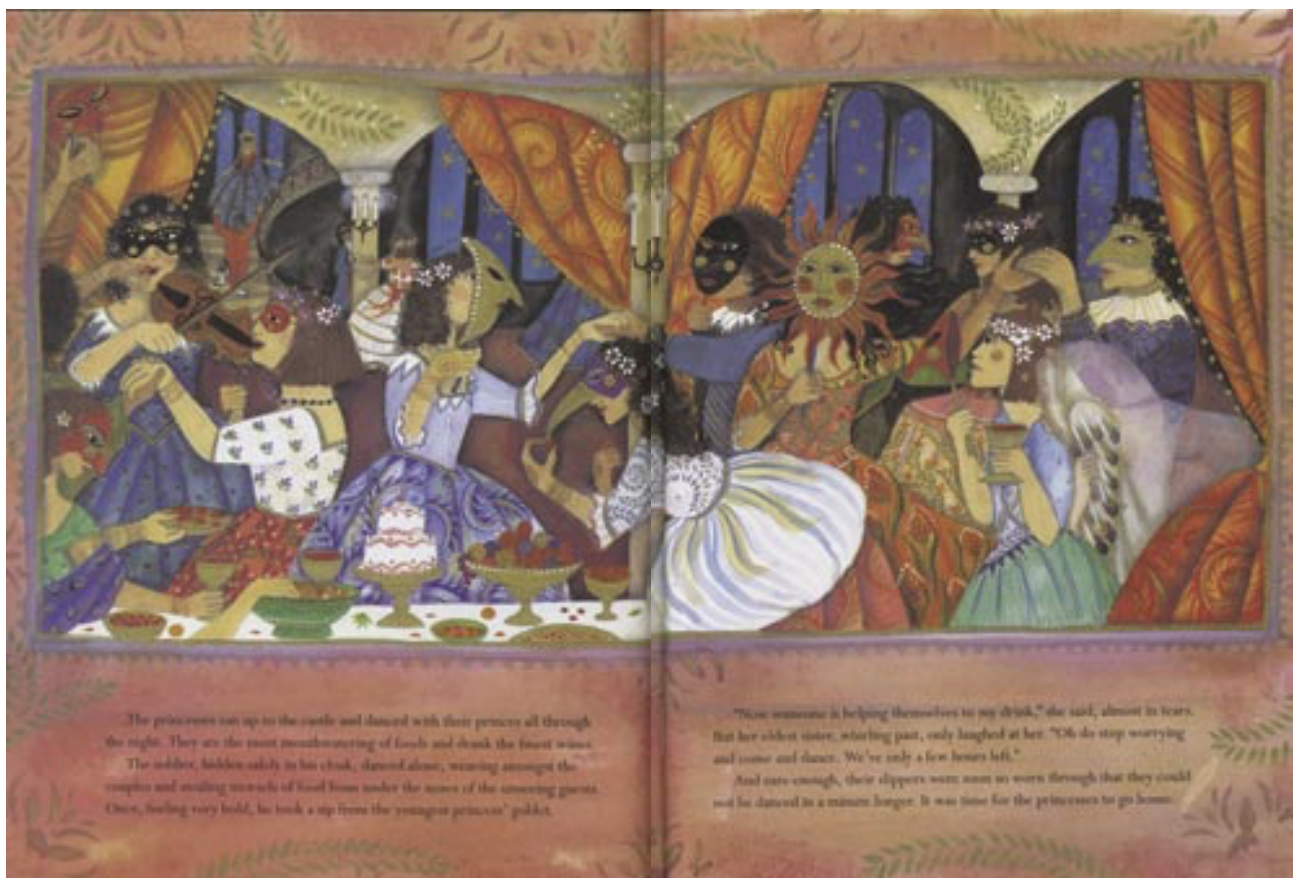
# Arabian LIGHTS

Jane Ray's images evoke the colours, light and warmth of Middle Eastern souks and are often intensely decorated with ornate borders and gold. Caroline Stockwell asks her where she finds inspiration in the cooler atmosphere of north London

ot many people enjoy Monday mornings, but Jane Ray does – which is just as well given that, when I meet her, she has five different projects

under way. A glance round any children's bookshop provides ample evidence of her extensive output and enduring popularity. The workload, she insists, is "no hardship. I love what I do." So do many other people. "Faultless", "magical", "luminous" and "vibrant" are among the adjectives that critics have used to describe her work.

Ray's earliest work, as a freelance card designer for Roger La Borde cards, began just as the fashion for cards and posters based on the work of Edwardian artists, such as Arthur Rackham and Charles Robinson, that had enjoyed a revival in the 1970s, began to wane. After a surfeit of elves and goblins (as well as the ubiquitous puppies-in-a-basket



1 and 2

The Twelve Dancing Princesses  
(Orchard Books, 1996)

designs that appeared everywhere in the 1970s), Ray's card designs stood out. Her style seemed instead to follow a trend established by Gallery Five, where artists such as Jan Piñkowski were moving away from these ethereal and sentimental themes.

Ray's style was, and is, unmistakable. Her use of shapes and vibrant hues, described by the *Times Educational Supplement* recently as an "exuberant patterning and celebration of colour", is influenced by the Mediterranean and Middle East. It was her borders, in particular, that made her card designs so special: intricate, but not busy; decorative, but enhancing, rather than detracting from, the main image. Many of her designs in the early 1980s focused on urban scenes, but ones that were decidedly more exotic than those to be found in London. They showed cities in India and views of Venice – a plethora of softly shaded minarets, domed roofs and towers rising from hillside towns. The skies behind them were as sultry as an

Andalucian sunset. There were gold-tinged palaces and palm-lined walkways with perspectives that drew on her student years studying ceramics at Middlesex University.

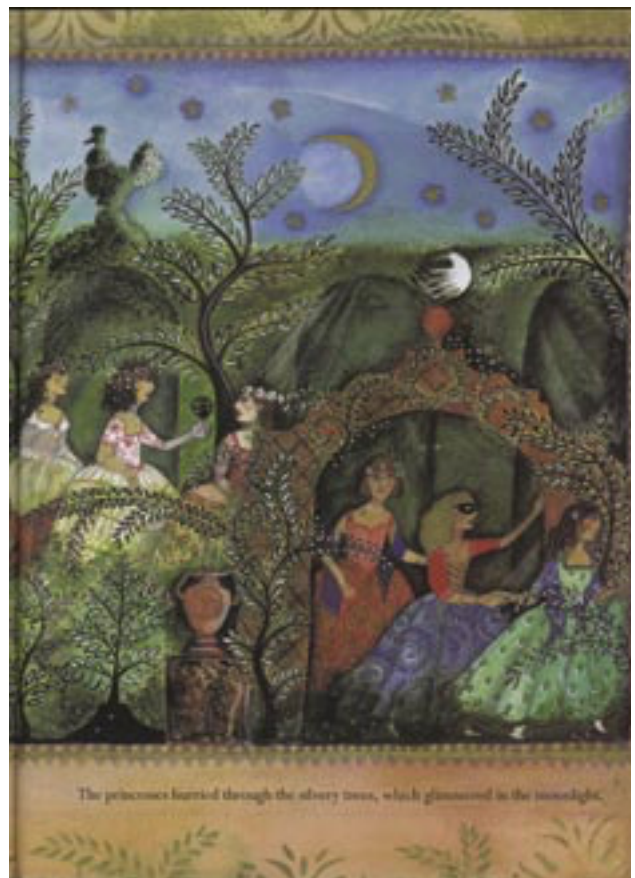
I bought card after card at a time when I yearned to travel. The first night I looked out on Jaffa, its orange trees bathed in moonlight, it looked to me like one of Ray's cards, mysterious and magical.

The exotic images led me to assume that Ray travelled widely for her inspiration. Her illustrations include Venetian-style masks, usually on the faces of her villains. "The unknown is always more scary than the known, and masks are frightening things anyway," she says. In Oscar Wilde's fairy tale *The Happy Prince* (Orchard Books, 1994), Ray shows the prince visiting sarcophagi and ancient hieroglyphics in Egypt, and she continues to draw on Middle Eastern traditions in tales from the

*Bible* and books such as the Folio Society's *Myths of the Near East* and *The Arabian Nights*.

In fact, one of Ray's most important sources of inspiration is the British Museum, a short journey from where she lives in north London. She also cites trips on buses, watching people in cafés and her comprehensive library of picture and photographic books, as well as input from her three children. Her eldest daughter considerably suggested putting sticking plasters on the feet of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*

**3**  
One of Ray's  
greetings cards  
published by  
Roger La Borde





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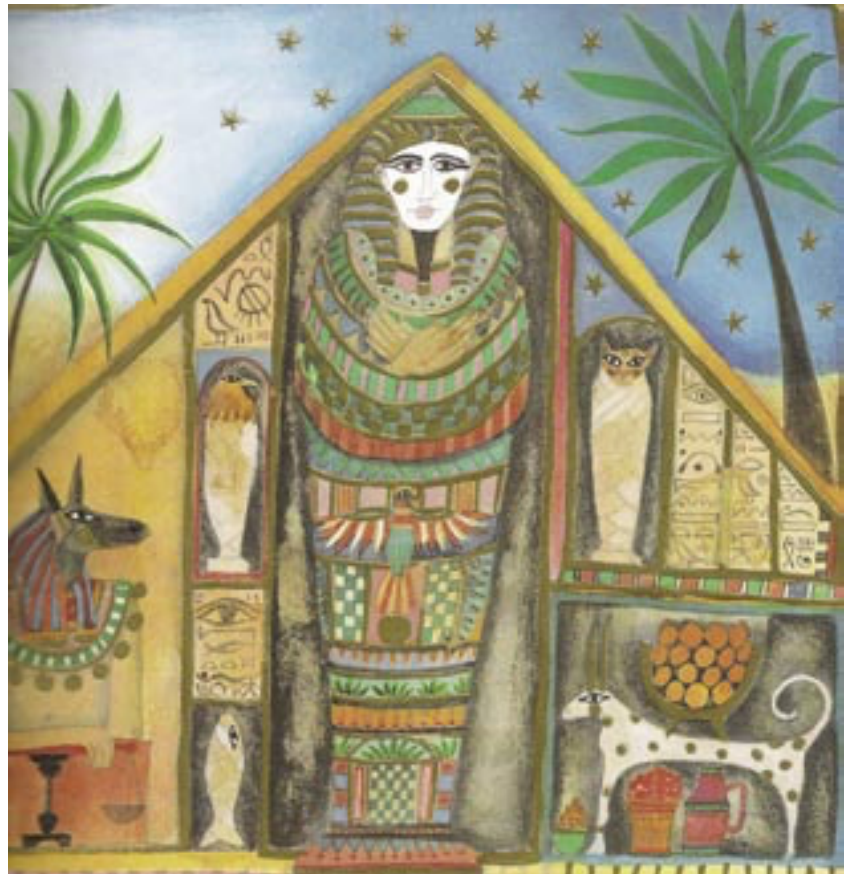
and, in the formative days of *Can You Catch a Mermaid?* (Orchard Books, 2003), the first book that Ray wrote as well as illustrated, all three daughters helped her to create sand mermaids on the beach and posed for her sketches. This book is, she says, “a compost heap of ideas” stitched together by her love of Scottish folk stories and folk art. “It excites me, the things people make for their own pleasure,” she explains.

When it comes to other illustrators, Ray cites Piñkowski as one of her earliest sources of inspiration, along with Beatrix Potter and Brian Wildsmith’s version of *Mother Goose*. “I’m still looking at those pictures,” she says. Piñkowski’s influence can be seen in some of the filigree-fine silhouettes that recall the illustrations he created for Joan Aiken’s *The Kingdom Under the Sea* (Jonathan Cape, 1971). Posters of its front cover jostled for space with the Alphonse Mucha prints in many girls’ bedrooms when Ray was a teenager.

The intricate line work in Potter’s watercolours is reflected in Ray’s meticulous attention to detail: the intricate pattern on a princess’s skirt; the drape of a brocade curtain; flora and fauna in a forest. She cites

Wildsmith’s wonderful use of colour and new printing techniques” as having been a big influence on her work. Like him, she has produced a range of illustrated *Bible* stories, with *In the Beginning*, *Noah’s Ark*, *The Story of Christmas*, *The Story of Creation* (all Orchard Books) and, more recently, *Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden*, produced for the Eden Project (Transworld, 2004). Ray’s images bring these stories to new readers embellished with rich lilacs and blues, as colourful as stained-glass windows. Like Wildsmith, she also uses gold extravagantly in her work, which adds to the ecclesiastical look of the Biblical stories. Her version of *The Story of Christmas* (1994) does more than create a new version of the same age-old images – it even includes a picture of a breastfeeding Madonna.

The themes of Ray’s work are eclectic. Alongside the *Bible* stories are fairy tales, interpretations of poetry and opera plots. Much of this work was created in a sunny room upstairs in her home, but recently a summer-house, “lifted in by crane” and planted in the garden, has become her studio. There are similarities with the gingerbread house in *Hansel and Gretel*, a story that Ray has illus-



8



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4  
The story of Bamsi Beyrek, from *Myths of the Near East*, Folio Society, 2003

5  
The Jewish legend of Lilith, from *Myths of the Near East*, Folio Society, 2003

6  
An Egyptian mummy in a pyramid appears as part of the travels of The Happy Prince (Orchard Books, 1994)



7

Greetings card

8

The Anzu bird in Lugalbanda: *The Boy Who Got Caught up in a War* (Walker Books, 2006)

9

The Kadi and the Ass's Foal from *The Arabian Nights* (Vol 5), The Folio Society, 2003



8



9



Ray's use of shapes and vibrant hues are an 'exuberant patterning and celebration of colour' influenced by the Mediterranean and Middle East



trated twice – once in her own version and once for a selection of 10 Grimms' fairy tales, retold by Berlie Doherty (both Walker Books). The former owes more than a nod to old Russian editions of fairy tales, its pages filled with shawl-enveloped women, greatcoated, bearded men and an austere northern forest.

In her studio, Ray pins postcards to the wall beside her worktable "that reflect what I am working on". They provide inspiration and help her to focus. There is a picture of *The Little Prince*, some "ancient

Sumerian stuff", a child's picture and several images of the moon. The bookshelves contain manuals, photographic books, a copy of *Longman's Animal Encyclopaedia* ("a present for my 20th birthday from my mother") and books by other artists present and past. The table, well lit by a window above, is arranged with baskets of coloured pencils, pens and watercolours that flank a piece of ongoing work. In a glass-fronted case, neat boxes of Winsor & Newton inks stand ready for use. Ray appears to agree with William Morris that things should be both beautiful and useful. It is, she says, "natural to decorate things".

Being used to seeing Ray's work published in A4 format, the sight of a piece of A3 Waterford paper showing three kings bearing gifts is startling. In the midst of a royal head of cobweb-fine hair a nesting "moonbird" sings. There are many touches of gold and soft colour washes.

Ray does not waste time. Her day, which begins with a twomile walk, starts early and finishes late. It needs to – not only does she work on several commissions simultaneously, but she also supports local community projects such as at the Shapla School,

where her encouragement to "paint me a poem" resulted in the collection *Dive Into Poems*, (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 1996) accompanied by the pupils' Ray-inspired illustrations. There has also been a Noah's Ark workshop, involving "painting, gluing and sticking" with 40 children under seven and, more recently, she has produced designs for the exhibition rooms at Seven Stories, The Centre for the Children's Book, in Newcastle upon Tyne, along with other illustrators.

Given that much of her work requires solitude, she says it is "important to get out and talk to others doing the same thing". Her design for the exhibition, "Time", is influenced by two of her favourite children's stories: *Tom's Midnight Garden* and *The Children of Green Knowe*. She also mentions *Alice in Wonderland* as a great love: "I was unable to put it down."

With accolades and award nominations continuing to stack up, Ray's style will surely stand the test of time and be enjoyed by generations to come.

**Caroline Stockwell** is a writer and teaches English and drama. For books by Jane Ray, visit [www.janeray.com](http://www.janeray.com)

## Jane Ray Awards and Adaptations

1989	<i>A Balloon For Grandad</i>	Shortlisted for the Mother Goose Award
1991	<i>Noah's Ark</i>	Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award
1992	<i>The Story of the Creation</i>	Smarties Award (6–8 years)
1992	<i>The Story of Christmas</i>	Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award
1995	<i>The Song of the Earth</i>	Shortlisted for the Kurt Maschler Award
1995	<i>The Happy Prince</i>	Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award
2000	<i>Fairy Tales</i>	Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award
2005	<i>Jinnie Ghost</i>	Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award
2008	<i>The Lost Happy Endings</i>	Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award

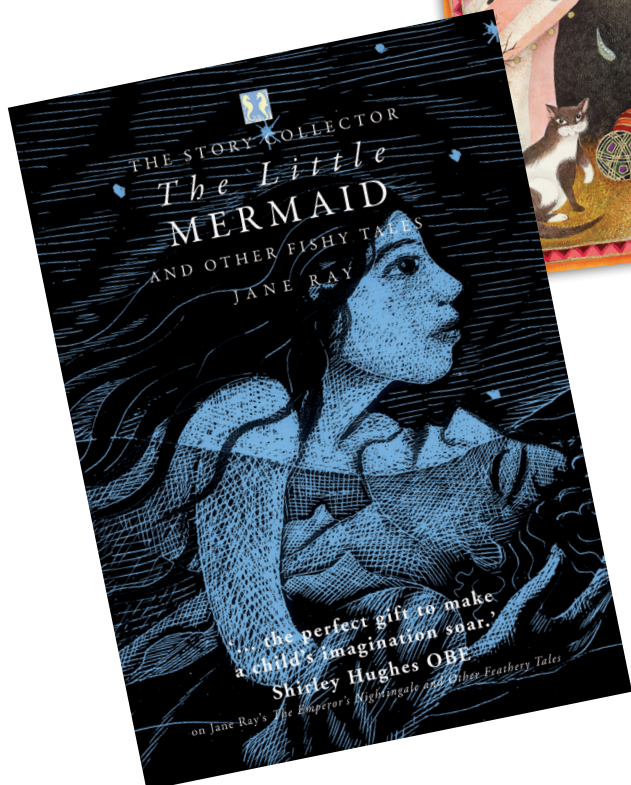
### Adaptations of Jane's Work for the Stage

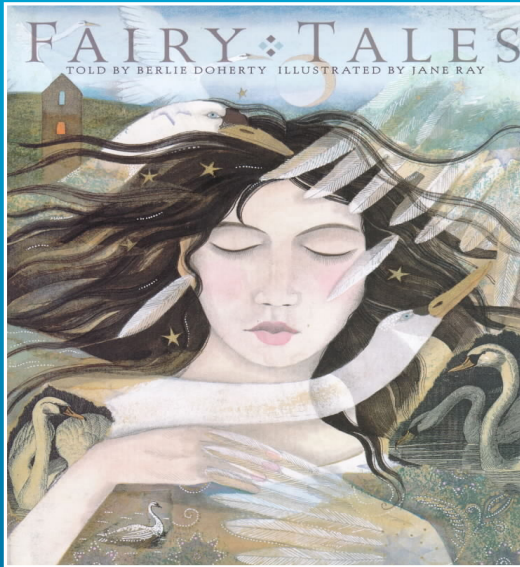
2007	<i>Can You Catch a Mermaid?</i>	Adapted by Martin Murphy for Pavilion Theatre, Dún Laoghaire.
2016	<i>Ahmed and the Feather Girl</i>	Adapted by The Young Windmill Theatre

### Stage Productions from Books Illustrated by Jane

2008	<i>Moonbird</i>	Adapted by Alliance Française Theatre, with productions in UK, Singapore, France and Italy.
2010	<i>The Lost Happy Endings</i>	Adapted by Red Earth Theatre, Birmingham, UK.

## Books for consideration by the Jury





## Awards

Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award  
2000

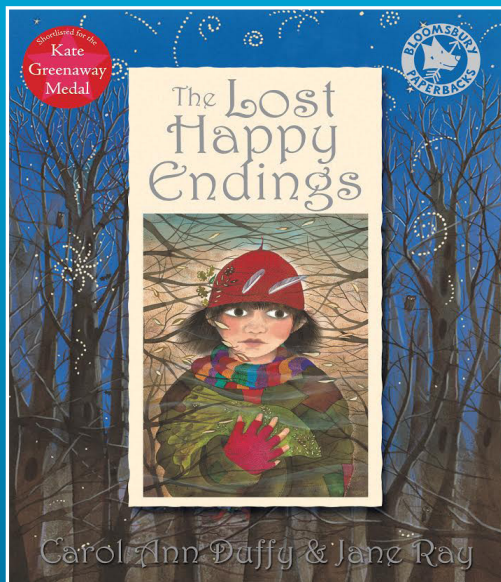
## Fairy Tales

Two accomplished artists here join forces to create a fairy tale anthology. The happy-ever-after result is this elegant volume, which blends Doherty's (*Dear Nobody*) superb retellings of 12 favorite stories and Ray's (*Hansel and Gretel*) sumptuous mixed-media illustrations. The author takes great care to preserve the authenticity of these oft-told stories, modeling her work on the earliest available sources (the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen among them). To these stalwart blueprints, Doherty adds her distinct storytelling style, which brims with vivid detail, producing fresh versions sure to captivate readers anew. In Cinderella for example, she injects into the many traditional elements an enchanted hazel tree instead of a fairy godmother. To distinguish one tale from the next, Ray frames her artwork with generous borders containing images from the corresponding story. Her signature gold paint and folk art motifs prevail, but she also adds a number of striking silhouette-collage compositions to the repertoire. A multi-ethnic cast of characters and distinct landscapes place the action from Asia to India to Europe and beyond.

Review in *Publishers Weekly* 1 August 2000

In *Fairy Tales* Berlie Doherty in collaboration with illustrator Jane Ray has chosen twelve well known stories. It's a beautifully produced, well-proportioned book with rich mulberry endpapers and a fine, firm rose-tinted binding. Text and illustrations are set, gilt-edged, against a background of what must surely be swatches of fairy fabrics and enchanted wallpapers. Ray is famed for her highly decorative work... exotic doe-eyed princesses, usually seen in profile, in leafy bowers under star spangled skies... But here she extends her range magnificently: throughout the book, and especially in Snow White, spirited silhouettes in the style of Rackham weave intricate threads of narrative detail into the rich textures of Doherty's fine retelling. And in Rumpelstiltskin, the picture of the miller's daughter contemplating the mountain of straw, with just a plain inky blue border, is both beautiful and eloquent in its simplicity.

Review by Joanna Carey in *Books for Keeps*  
November 2000



## Awards

Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Award  
2008

## The Lost Happy Endings

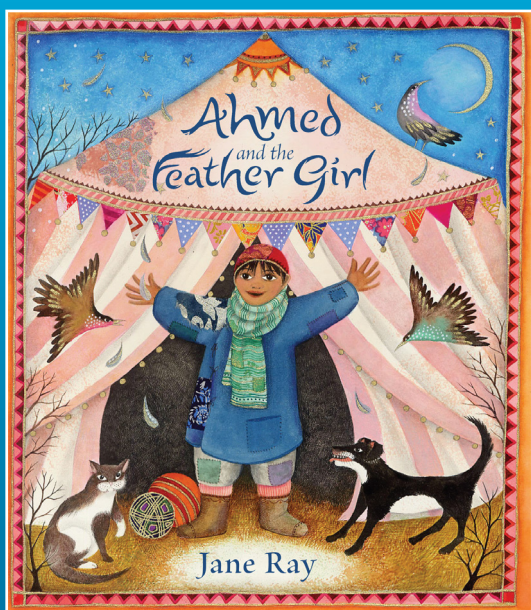
Every night a 12-fingered child called Jub empties a sack full of happy endings from her perch in a tree top, freeing them for the wind to distribute amongst all of the stories being told throughout the world. One night she is mugged by a bark-faced, green-gobbling witch who steals the happy endings, and soon the world is a-wail with the sobs of children distressed by stories whose terrors and sorrows are now incurable. Jub struggles to sleep against a backdrop of weeping, and dreams of a golden pen with which she can write on the sky a story that will change the one that she's locked within.

The intensity of vision and conciseness of language that characterises Carol Ann Duffy's poetry ensure that this short tale provides, haiku-like, a lingering

experience. Its combination of wistfulness and horrible brutality recalls the grimmest of the Grimm tales, yet the artfully abrupt ending is subtle and intriguing. Jane Ray's pictures similarly combine delicacy and ferocity. Full page tableaux confront 16 pages of embellished text, each of them combining the darkness of forest and nightmare with the richer colours of fire, fabrics and starlight. The witch is treated very luridly in words, deeds and pictures, but Jub is a sprite both warm and fey, and the image of her balancing amongst twigs as she inscribes the sky is spectacular.

This is a very powerful story about the power of story.

**Review by George Hunt in *Books for Keeps*  
March 2007**



## Ahmed and the Feather Girl

When an unloved orphan boy from the circus finds a golden egg, it hatches into a beautiful feathered child whom the wicked circus owner imprisons for money. Despite his fears, the orphan boy recognises the bird-child's need to fly, and sacrifices his own happiness to set her free. But each night, in his dreams, the bird-child returns to give a feather, until joined together, the feathers become the boy's cloak of freedom.

Sometimes the best person to write a story is the illustrator and this is a case in point, for Jane Ray has allowed herself free rein to decorate and embellish magical pictures in her own whimsical way. Each complete in itself, the images tell the story in a gentle unfolding fashion. There's a haunting pathos in the pictures and the words, a sadness which is steeped in the folk tale tradition, and the story touches us on a deeply emotional level. Like many folk tales there's cruelty, imprisonment and a yearning for love. But there's also hope, dreams and the splendour of flying to freedom.

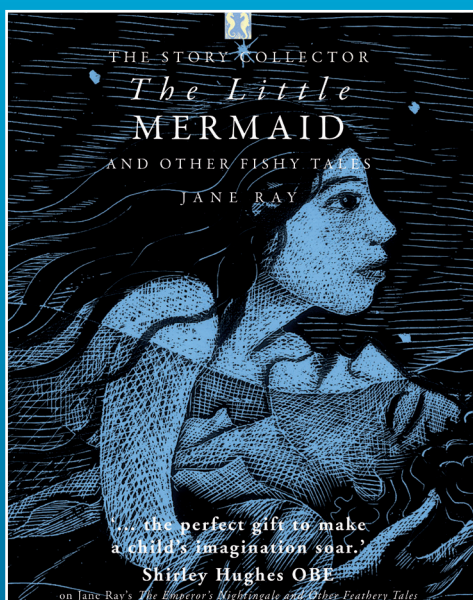
**Review by Jana Novotny Hunter in *Books for Keeps* January 2011**

Jane Ray's beautiful illustrations in watercolour and collage are filled with rich details. The vibrancy of the circus sits alongside landscapes filled with woodland creatures and birds. The freedom of the wild birds flying emphasises Aurelia's captivity.

There is a timelessness to the story emphasised, ironically, by the focus of the narrative on its own timeline. We learn nothing about Ahmed's back-story and how he became an orphan. Nor do we learn what becomes of him after his flight to freedom, not even a 'happily ever after': it is enough, for now, that Ahmed finds freedom. That does not mean that children listening to or reading the story won't want to know, but they will have to translate the hope at the end into a more solid realisation of happiness for themselves. In this way, *Ahmed and the Feather Girl* steps away from being a stock story and becomes a wish for our times. For as our daily news is filled with horror stories of child exploitation and cruelty, children need empowering stories filled with hope to help them set about changing the world as they grow up.

**From a review by Marjorie Coughlan on her website: *Mirrors, Windows, Doors, Celebrating Diversity in Children's Books* May 2015.**

<https://mirrorswindowsdoors.org/wp/review-ahmed-and-the-feather-girl/>



## The Little Mermaid

Accomplished storyteller Jane Ray has assembled a handsome anthology of eleven piscine-related tales and poems, some from the original but mostly Ray's own versions. Some pieces are well-known, such as *The Seal Wife*, and Lewis Carroll's *The Lobster Quadrille*. Among other accounts to lure readers are an Inuit myth, an African folktale, a Greek myth, a fairytale from Japan, and John Masefield's *A Ballad of John Silver*. The title story will be the bait to hook some readers, however this is Ray's own retelling. Art on most pages adds to an attractive book; Ray used a scratchboard-like technique for her monochromatic or two-color images. In a valuable endnote, Ray briefly explains a little about each piece, and references the sources she used.

**Review by Brenda Dales, Department of Teacher Education, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio in *Library Media Connection Reviews* January/February 2015**

Ray retells seven stories in her trademark flowing style ("the truly wonderful thing about a story is that you can change it and make it yours") in this attractive volume. Most of the selections are familiar, originally coming from Japan, Denmark, Germany, East Africa, ancient Greece, and the Orkney Islands, as well as from the Inuit people.

All the tales involve some magic: a poor fisherman carried by a turtle to an undersea kingdom to marry the Dragon King's daughter; a young court musician rescued from drowning by a dolphin that is enchanted by his singing; and Raven the Creator, paddling his kayak into the belly of a whale to find the beautiful dancing girl who is the fish's "heart and spirit," among others. A somewhat shortened adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* has a rewritten ending that significantly weakens its moral, providing the only flaw in this beautifully designed and well-written volume. Several poems by classic writers and an award-winning alliterative poem by a young London poet complete the collection. There is exceptional technical quality and detail in Ray's various-sized graphic scratchboard illustrations and artistic sensibility in their placement throughout the volume. Her choice of colors—bright red, orange, golden yellow, turquoise, and muted shades of green, aquamarine, taupe, and even gray and black—result in a visually stunning book. A listing of the sources for each story and poem is included. A gorgeous collection.

**Review by Susan Scheps in *SLJ Reviews* 2014 September**



## Heartsong

As a baby, Laura is given to the nuns in the Ospedale della Pietà orphanage in Venice. Laura is mute, but her gift for music is soon discovered by the music master Father Antonio – none other than the composer Antonio Vivaldi. Inspired by Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, the novella is told through the simple structure of spring, summer, autumn and winter. Kevin Crossley-Holland unwinds Laura's story with a very real sense of place and mood, well capturing the poignant realities of the orphanage, the entrancing city beyond its walls, and the magic which music brings into Laura's challenging life. Jane Ray's artwork is a delightful combination of the real, the ethereal and the symbolic. Her intricate full-colour spreads and the iconic symbols of wings, masks, peacocks and pigeons interspersed throughout the text, evoke both a strong sense of detailed reality and an indefinable quality of spirit and mystery. *Heartsong* tugs the heart strings, leaving us with a fulfilling and uplifting ending.

**From a review by Grace Wells in *Children's Books Ireland* January 12 2015**

<http://childrensbooksireland.ie/review/heartsong>

A few scribbled notes in my sketchbook recalled an afternoon in the Vivaldi Museum where I had found a great leather-bound book, listing all the babies left at the Ospedale della Pietà. I filled a sketchbook

with drawings – shadows and reflections, the soft greeny grey of the water, terracotta in the sun, the face of an abandoned little girl. Elements of a story crept in – a beautiful city filled with sound: lapping water; bells and birds; street cries; and of course music, always music. At the heart of these ideas was a song flowing through the story like the dark canal waters. And the child, Laura, silent, alone, motherless. I tried to pull the threads and fragments of the story together, but somehow it eluded me. Tentatively, I showed my notes to Kevin. He knew immediately who Laura was, what the shape and tone of the story should be. His knowledge of Venice added substance and atmosphere, and his power as a storyteller created the perfect home for Laura. Working in this somewhat unorthodox way has been, for me certainly, a real joy. It has required both Kevin and me to abandon any sort of egotistical ownership of the story. I don't feel that it belongs to us – it was a story that was waiting to be discovered, in the shadows, in that great leather bound book, in the music of Antonio Vivaldi and in the deep canal waters of Venice. It has been a privilege to tell it.

**From Jane Ray's account of her collaboration with Kevin Crossley-Holland in *Books for Keeps* September 2015**

## Jane Ray List of Titles (with translations)

### As illustrator

Angela Huth, *Casting a Spell and Other Poems: An Anthology of New Poems*,  
London: Orchard Books, 1991.

Morag Styles and Susanna Steele (eds.), *Mother Gave a Shout: Poems by Women and Girls*,  
London: Lion Pubs., 1992.

Nigel Gray, *A Balloon for Grandad*,  
London: Orchard Books, 1994.

Vikram Seth, *Arion and The Dolphin*,  
London: Orion, 1994.

Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince*,  
London: Orchard Books, 1994. (trans. Japanese)

Mary Hoffman, *Song of the Earth*,  
London: Orion, 1995.

Also published in the USA by Dutton in 1996  
under the title *Earth, Fire, Water, Air*. (trans.  
Japanese, French, Catalan, Italian, Spanish)

Margaret Mayo, *The Orchard Book of Creation Stories*, London: Orchard Books, 1995

Penny Worms, *The Story of the Creation*,  
London: Orchard, 1995. (trans. Korean, Welsh)

Margaret Mayo, *Orchard Book of Mythical Birds and Beasts*,  
London: Orchard Books, 1996. (trans. French)

Grimm Bros., *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*,  
London: Orchard Books, 1996. (trans. French)

Grimm Bros., *Hansel and Gretel*,  
London: Walker Books, 1997. (trans. German,  
French, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Korean).

Mary Hoffman, *Sun, Moon and Stars*,  
London: Orion, 1998.

Elena Bergin et.al., *Dare to be Different – A Celebration of Freedom*  
in association with Amnesty International,  
London: Bloomsbury, 1999.

Julie Gold, *From a Distance*,  
New York: Dutton, 1999.

Angela Huth, *Island of the Children*,  
London: Orchard Books, 1999.

Berlie Doherty, *Fairy Tales*,  
London: Walker Books, 2000.  
(trans: German, Swedish, French, Korean, Dutch,  
Castilian and Catalan, Japanese, Chinese)

Malachy Doyle, *The Bold Boy*,  
London: Walker Books, 2001.  
(trans. German, Swedish, French, Danish Scottish  
Gaelic, French, Japanese)

Margaret Mayo, *The Orchard Book of the Unicorn and Other Magical Animals*,  
London: Orchard Books, 2001. (trans. Italian)

John Agard and Grace Nichols (eds.),  
*Under the Moon and Over the Sea*,  
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Geraldine Mccaughrean, *The Orchard Book of Love and Friendship Stories*,  
London: Orchard Books, 2002.

Margaret Mayo, *The Orchard Book of Magical Tales*, London: Orchard Books, 2002.

Berlie Doherty, *Beauty and the Beast*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *Cinderella*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *The Frog Prince*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *Rapunzel*, London:  
Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *Rumplestiltskin*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *The Sleeping Beauty in the Forest*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *Snow White*,  
London: Walker Books, 2003.

Berlie Doherty, *The Wild Swans*,  
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Carol Ann Duffy, *The Stolen Childhood and Other Dark Fairy Tales*, London: Penguin, 2003.

Mary Hoffman & Rhiannon Lassiter, *Lines in the Sand: New Writing About War and Peace*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2003.

Rachel Storm, *Myths and Legends of the Near East*, London: The Folio Society, 2003.

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Michael Rosen, *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, London: Walker Books, 2004.  
(trans. French and Dutch)

Jeanette Winterson, *The King of Capri*, London: Bloomsbury, 2004.

Berlie Doherty, *Jinnie Ghost*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2005. (trans. Spanish)

Rose Impey et. al., *Magical Princess Stories*, London: Orchard Books, 2005.

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Caitlin and John Matthews, *Celtic Myths and Legends*, London: The Folio Society, 2006.

Kathy Henderson, *Lugalbanda: The Boy Who Got Caught Up in a War*, London: Walker Books, 2007

Rose Impey et. al., *Princes and Princesses: Seven Tales of Enchantment*, London: Orchard Books, 2007.

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Anthony Browne and others, *Play the Shape Game*, London: Walker Books, 2010.

Kenneth Steven, *Stories for a Fragile Planet: Traditional Tales About Caring for the Earth*, London: Lion Hudson, 2010.

Kathy Henderson, *Little Prince: An Epic Tale from Ancient Iraq*, London: Walker Books, 2013.  
(trans. Arabic, Korean, Dutch, French, Japanese)

Mary Joslin, *The Lion Classic Christmas Stories*, London: Lion Children's Books, 2013.

Sally Pomme Clayton, *Greek Myths*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2014. (trans. Romanian)

Dianne Hofmeyr, *Zeraffa Giraffa*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2014. (trans. Spanish)

Kevin Crossley-Holland, *Heartsong*, London: Orchard Books, 2015. (trans. Japanese, Brazil – Portuguese, Spain – Castilian)

Dianne Hofmeyr, *The Glassmaker's Daughter*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2017.

## As Adaptor and Illustrator

*The Story of the Creation*, London: Orchard Books, 1992.

*The Story of Christmas*, London: Orchard Books, 1994.

*Noah's Ark*, London: Orchard Books, 1995.

*In the Beginning*, London: Orchard Books, 1997.

*Let There be Light*, New York: Dutton, 1997.

*The Nativity*, London: Orchard Books, 2002.  
(trans. Spanish)

*The Orchard Book of Bible Stories*, London: Orchard Books, 2004.

*Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden*, Eden Project, 2004.

*Snow White*, London: Walker Books, 2009.

*Cinderella*, London: Walker Books, 2012.

*The Twelve Days of Christmas*, London: Orchard Books, 2011.

*The Emperor's Nightingale and Other Feathery Tales*, London: Boxer Books, 2013.

*The Little Mermaid and Other Fishy Tales*, London: Boxer Books, 2014.

*The Lion and the Unicorn and Other Hairy Tales*, London: Boxer Books, 2015.

*The Nutcracker*, London: Orchard Books, 2015.  
(trans. French)

## As Author and Illustrator

*Can You Catch a Mermaid?* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002.

*The Apple-Pip Princess*, London: Orchard Books, 2007. (trans. Korean)

*The Dolls' House Fairy*, London: Orchard Books, 2009.

*Ahmed and the Feather Girl*, London: Frances Lincoln, 2010. (trans. Korean)



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The dossier was designed by Andy Thomsen:  
[www.thomsendesign.uk](http://www.thomsendesign.uk)