



LISTEN TO THE STORYTELLER

A TRIO OF MUSICAL TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

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VIKING

INTRODUCTION



Everyone loves to hear a good story. Storytellers take us into worlds wondrous and unknown. They tell us how life is, was, and perhaps will be. Whether a story is ancient or new, scary, sad, or funny, it's even better when spoken out loud—yes, much better. Because when someone tells the tale out loud, we can feel the storyteller's love for the story. And for us, too. And that's wonderful.

Music makers have their own ways of telling a story. They use melody, rhythm, and the sounds made by different instruments to bring out parts of a story that are sometimes hidden in the telling. Music helps us feel, understand, and remember what the storyteller is saying. It's like ketchup on some french fries: they're still french fries, but that ketchup makes us feel a different way about them.

But whether a story is told with words, with music, or with both, all we need to do is use our ears and our imagination. So let's prepare to enter a magical world filled with witches and castles, escapes and adventures, transformations and tests of courage. Gather round now, and listen to the storyteller. . . .



THE FIDDLER AND THE DANCIN' WITCH



USH

now children and listen to the tale I'm goin' to tell.

There once was an old man, and that old man, he had himself a son named Simeon. Together they lived in a little village on an island in a deep green sea.

Now, Simeon was a good boy, but he had a mind of his own. Couldn't tell him a thing, that boy.

"You got ears to hear with," his father told him. "So you better listen good when your elders are talkin' to you!"

But Simeon was a hard-headed boy. So he said, "Ears are good for lots of things 'sides listenin' to grownups!"

"Such as?" his father asked.

"Ears are good for listenin' to music!" answered Simeon. "Like that music you sometimes play on your fiddle late at night when you think I'm sleepin'."

"What are you doin' listenin' to me play the fiddle?" asked his father.

"I just want to learn how to play the way you do," answered Simeon. "Won't you teach me, please?"

But the old man wouldn't hear of it. "That is no ordinary kind of fiddle," he said. "It's a *magic* kind of fiddle, and no one but me can play it, or there'll be trouble, trouble, and more trouble."

But did that hard-headed boy care about trouble? No indeed! He begged and pleaded with his father every day from dawn to dusk till the old man got so tired of his naggin' he gave in and let the boy pick up the fiddle.

Thing was, that fiddle had a mind of its own, too. So the first thing that came out when Simeon started playin' was that same enchantin' music he'd heard his father play so many times.

Now, Simeon loved that pretty music, but he couldn't help wonderin', where was the trouble, trouble, and more trouble his daddy had talked about? And sure enough, just as soon as he started thinkin' those thoughts, that fiddle started makin' some mighty strange, bewitchin' music.

When his father heard it, he snatched that fiddle away.

"Listen to what I'm tellin' you," said the old man. "That's the kind of music that will call out a witch just as sure as I'm standin' here. Now don't you

