



# Spirits, Fairies, Gnomes and Goblins: An Encyclopedia of the Little People

By Carol Rose

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Drawing from ancient and modern folklore, myth, and religion, this reference work delves into the social and anthropological significance of supernatural beings such as angels, demons, dwarfs, encantados, fairies, keremets, nats and nymphs.

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up. A comprehensive one-volume encyclopedia devoted to the group of supernatural beings who live unseen among humans and who "are not powerful like supreme deities." As described in a clearly written, succinct introduction, the subjects are the "Little People," spirits with restricted powers who "are 'little' in the sense of limitation rather than size." They include fairies, angels, dwarfs, *encantados* (from Afro-Brazilian cults), djinns (from Islamic cultures), trolls, tricksters, and many more otherworldly creatures who "tend to interfere with the lives of humans." Each entry provides a brief description of the being and identifies its place of origin as well as its most common features. Footnotes refer to a numbered bibliography that includes over 100 titles, some well known and some obscure and long out of print. Black-and-white illustrations, taken from a variety of sources, are sprinkled throughout. Appendixes list spirits by type, place of origin, and things with which they are most often associated, such as diseases, travelers, weather, etc. While large collections will undoubtedly welcome this scholarly addition, libraries serving young readers will find the *Larousse Dictionary of World Folklore* (1995) a more useful tool.?Alicia Eames, Brooklyn Public Library

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From Library Journal

A ubiquitous topic of speculation and study, spirits are found in countless traditional tales. British scholar Rose uses the following criteria for inclusion here: a spirit must exert active, willful, and supernatural influence on humans or domestic creatures; it cannot be divine (i.e., a saint or of other heavenly origin); and it is neither a hero nor a ghost involved in the actual human condition. Universal in scope and designed for quick reference, the more than 2500 entries?collected from learned journals, monographs, and rare and out-of-print sources?identify spirits spanning all times and places. The entry head represents a spirit's most common name; spirit names from other cultures and languages, including ancient ones, are transcribed into a modern English equivalent. Rose provides physical description and identifies the religions, countries, and regions with which a spirit is associated. Comparable works include Katherine Briggs's *An Encyclopedia of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies and Other Supernatural Creatures* (1976), which is a notable study but confined to the traditions of Great Britain, and *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures: A Sourcebook and Resource Guide* (Greenwood, 1987), an important recent work introducing essays on creatures largely known to Western civilization only. Certain to become a standard in the field, this top-notch work is the most comprehensive single-volume reference to nondivine supernaturals available. Essential for scholars and students and of interest to all readers.?Richard K. Burns, Hatboro, Pa.

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From [Booklist](#)

The author of this title has compiled more than 2,000 entries of "Little People," or spirits. Inclusion in this volume is based on the spirit's active, willful, and supernatural influence on humans or their domestic creatures. Rose covers a wide variety of these "Little People," taking a multicultural approach that includes aboriginal, Native American, and African as well as European myths. Typical entries are *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Hesperides*, *Goblin*, *Trickster*, *Tooth Fairy*, and *Old Man of the Sea*. Arranged alphabetically, entries generally range from one sentence to approximately 500 words in length. The longest entry, *Fairies*, extends for several pages and discusses fairies in different countries.

Information includes the spirit's popular name, physical description, character, powers, and activities. Most

of the entries direct the reader to a bibliography of 137 titles, referenced by number. Many of the titles in the bibliography are familiar, such as *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* and volumes from the Enchanted World series published by Time-Life. Readers are also directed to the appendixes, where the spirits are classified by type (for example, "Devils," "Spirits Associated with Water") and by place of origin. The appendixes include additional names not mentioned in the text entries and would be strengthened if names that do not have entries were differentiated from those that do. The reader who wants to research folklore of the U.S. must look up each of more than 100 names to see which ones appear in the main text. A way to distinguish among the legends of different U.S. cultures would also have been useful.

More than 100 black-and-white illustrations enhance this work. Cross-references aid the researcher in dealing with name variants and also in tracing the similarities and differences between the legends of different cultures.

*Spirits, Fairies, Gnomes, and Goblins* deserves a place in public libraries and school libraries. Academic libraries needing a one-volume compilation to supplement more scholarly sources might also find it useful.

## Users Review

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