



# A Field Guide to the Little People

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## **A Field Guide to the Little People** Nancy Arrowsmith , George Moore

In high summer meadows, nestled in the moors, near old castles, or behind the kitchen stove--these are the places where the Little People may be found. Make the acquaintance of White Ladies and Red Caps, Church Grims and Hobgoblins, English Fairies, Leprechauns, Sirens, Hey-Hey Men, and all of their strange and mythical kin. Become wise in the ways of these magical creatures, some beautiful and benevolent, others cunning, menacing, or morose. For many years, this field guide has been as elusive as a Will-o'-the-Wisp. This is the first opportunity for fans to once again own an English-language edition of one of the most revered introductions to elf folk ever written. Featuring more than 80 new illustrations

"Rationalists, materialists, be forewarned: the ancient forces governing earthly incident and momentum lie neither in our heads nor our economics, but, rather, in the revelations from A Field Guide to the Little People." --The New York Times

## **A Field Guide to the Little People Details**

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Author : Nancy Arrowsmith , George Moore

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# From Reader Review A Field Guide to the Little People for online ebook

## P. says

As a pseudo-scientific guide to elves, this was, as expected, thoroughly entertaining and creepy in the style of the Bros. Grimm, especially with illustrations. And I learned the following (among other things):

1. don't trust short men wearing red caps
  2. don't trust women who wear their breasts over their shoulders.
  3. Welsh water women "can only be told from humans by their unearthly beauty and their inability to count beyond five."
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## Zarina Kizimov says

The book was interesting and somewhat entertaining but the lack of linguistic and historical back up is too obvious to omit. This is unfortunate since the author tries to show strong connections between folk tales, the names in them, ethnicities and geographic areas. Reading something like: Rusalky live in USSR would now sound like die Kobolden inhabit the European Union :)

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## Manybooks says

I really do not know exactly what to make of Nancy Arrowsmith's Field Guide to the Little People (or how to rate it). The information about the various types of so-called Little People is indeed informative and of interest to anyone who enjoys folklore and folk tales (with the detailed bibliography at the back being an added and appreciated bonus). However, the fact that the author, that Nancy Arrowsmith actually seems to believe in the existence of these creatures is, or at least can be, a trifle disconcerting. Now I am not going to categorically claim that mythical beings, that the Little People do not or cannot exist, but there were and are some parts of this "field guide" that I found and continue to find not only problematic, but actually, potentially dangerous. In some of the sections regarding supposed changelings, Arrowsmith claims that one way to rid oneself of these nuisance magical creatures is to relentlessly abuse and harass changelings until they either leave or are rescued by their own. When one now realises that often children (and adults) with mental and/or physical challenges were and sometimes even still are considered to be possessed by demons, changed or enchanted by the fairies etc., the author's advice (which certainly seems not to be ironic or tongue in cheek) could, in a worst case scenario, lead to abuse and torture of individuals who do not fit in, who have challenges, who are ill, especially if the illnesses or syndromes might also cause physical challenges and changes. And although I would not go as far as not recommending Field Guide to the Little People (as it does have much interesting, informative material), I would certainly say "reader beware" (and if you are looking for a book that is sweetness and light, this tome is definitely not for you, as quite a number of the elves, gnomes etc. are described as being at best mischievous, and often rather nasty, even potentially deadly).

Academically speaking, although I like the fact that the author has included a detailed bibliography at the back, I don't really understand why Nancy Arrowsmith has then not made use of the bibliography within the text proper. While she continuously presents and gives information and examples of stories, folktales and fairy tales that have clearly been gleaned from the books mentioned and presented in her bibliographical

lists, she actually does not, in fact, acknowledge her specific sources within the narrative itself (as there are generally no in-text sources, no footnotes or endnotes presented). Thus, if I am reading a story (an account) about German "Kobolde" it is not indicated within the narrative itself from which book(s) in the bibliography the author has gleaned her story, her information. This is not only frustrating and infuriating for academic research purposes, it is actually also somewhat academically dishonest and suspect, as the reader really has no way to verify the sources of the story, the information (unless he/she went through the bibliography and managed to find the exact source/sources, but that would be a guessing game at best). Two and a half stars, if half stars were possible (and I cannot bring myself to round up the rating to three stars, as the academic shortcomings of Field Guide for the Little People are simply too frustrating and too glaringly obvious, read annoying for me).

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### **Sara says**

The #1 thing I have to say about this book is that it would be a wonderful resource for writers, especially fantasy writers. It is a reference book with tons of types and subtypes of fairies and fairylike beings. Some of the beings described are well known, while others are particular kinds of spirits only known in certain regions. I didn't know about many of them, so it's fascinating to find out about unfamiliar fae personalities.

I haven't read every page, but it is a good source for this kind of folklore (and doesn't shy away from the dark side of these tales). Each description of a supernatural being is followed by a story that illustrates the example, and there are pictures too.

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### **Inara says**

Title in English:

A Field Guide to the Little People

In this book Nancy Arrowsmith describes the world of the Little People and their tradition in fairytales, legends, myths and poetry throughout Europe. She classifies the fairies as light, dark and dusky elves and tells about their attributes, geographical extension and their different habits. To every spirit of nature there is a general introduction, a detailed description of their characteristics, their extension and a short story. On every page is a color drawing by Don-Oliver Matthies to demonstrate the look of the portrayed creature. And on a colored map of Europe we can find where the mentioned fairies dwell..

It's a wonderful reference book to everybody who is interested in fairies and wants to learn more about them and their myths und customs.

This review refers to the german edition of this book.

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### **Jorge Andrade says**

Esta obra, como su titulo reza, es una guia que describe una gran cantidad de criaturas élficas. Nos entrega detalles como personalidad, apariencia, habitat acompañados por diversos relatos en los que se manifiestan dichas características. Nos indica además como obtener o lograr de alguna forma la amistad con estos seres con tal de beneficiarnos, generalmente en forma de oro en abundancia o ayudando en los quehaceres del

hogar. También nos entrega la forma de aplacar su ira cuando no hemos sido "buenos vecinos".  
Cómo estudio es bastante amplio, la autora los clasificó en Elfos de la Luz, de la Oscuridad y de la Penumbra, este último es el que engloba la mayor cantidad de seres élficos.

Me pareció un libro bellissimo, la riqueza de relatos y de las descripciones de los elfos y hadas lo transforma en un libro no sólo interesante para el estudioso o aficionado a la mitología y folklore sino que muchos de ellos son una delicia para la imaginación infantil (y adulta también :D ).

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### **Pat MacEwen says**

The Little People get their due in this guide, and you'll hear about a good deal more than Leprechauns along the way. The author provides tons of information on who's related to whom, the different names for the same kinds, their sub-species (so to speak), their preferred habitats and habits, and along with all this a selection of folk tales from as far afield as Croatia, the Orkneys, and Italy, Switzerland, Hungary and Germany, and various Mediterranean islands. I was highly amused by the Hey Hey Men and had not heard of the Fountain Women or the Korrigans before. Useful, I should think, to anyone who'd like to get off the beaten Celtic track and try other directions. The illustrations are on the impressionistic side but quite expressive. Recommended.

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### **Kascha says**

This is just the cutest little book, full of amazing creatures and beings and their histories and anecdotes.

It is very thorough and catalogues fairy tales and legendary creatures from many different lands and folk legends the world over, many of course in Europe. I think my favorite part of the book has to be the artistic depictions of the creatures. There aren't pictures for every creature, but there are for many, and they are done in several different styles from full on penciled scenes and detailed artwork to barely scribbled pencil outlines and sketches. Many are adorable, while others are actually quite eerie and frightening, leading one to understand that faerie is definitely not synonymous with friendly, kind, harmless, or good hearted. Some of these beings are downright evil and some border on demonic.

I've actually had this book since I was about 7 or 8 years old. I think my mother intended it to be a sort of storybook, without actually having read it cover to cover and so she must have figured it was full of smiling leprechauns and such. Still I have treasured it always, and will pass it on to my daughter just as my mom gave it to me. It's truly timeless.

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### **Donna says**

A little about this book: it was originally released in the 70s and then went out of print. Thankfully for it, it developed a huge cult following which then led to its most recent reprinting. Apparently this book was highly sought after for years and those with copies held onto them for dear life (I have a few books like that). After reading it, it's painfully clear why.

There are many, many different types of Little People in this book and while the descriptions are not overly

wrought or extensive, they give you just enough information to tantalize you and make you want to dig deeper into some of these creatures.

The amount of research Arrowsmith put into this book is amazing. The stories and information she gathered are all "true" accounts she gathered from traveling all over Europe. They're not stories based on other stories from people but documented from texts she spent years scouring.

The introductions take a little bit to wade through. There are a few, both old from the original book and new to make light of a few things, including how it hasn't been updated (like many YA books are now especially). References to the USSR and Czechoslovakia are made throughout. It's not like people wouldn't know what they were when reading (I mean, it's not rocket science) but is it really worth changing? I think it just gives the book that much more life.

What's also pretty neat is that if you're big into reading about faeries (Stiefvater, Marr, etc.), you read about the ones they write about in this book and it gives you a better understanding of just what they are. They don't have dramatized stories around them. You just get bare-bones "facts" about what they are. You can color in the rest of the picture for yourself.

The drawings are stunning and I've even marked off a couple of the Little People for potential stories later on down the road. Some of them are just so enticing I can't help but write about them. But maybe that's their plan . . .

So if you're looking for a somewhat short and to the point research book about the Little People (not just faeries) or are just generally interested in Them, then be sure to pick up this book. It's one of the most comprehensive and unbiased compendiums of Little People information out there. You don't want to miss is.

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### **Eric T. Voigt says**

I learned about the many ways elves can hurt you, how to identify them, where they're most likely to be found, and got a huge kick out of the examples provided of humans interacting with these various supernatural beings. I'm going to buy this book for reference, to have at the ready. The illustrations I'd seen highlighted in that 'Masters of Psychedelic Art' work from last season did not prepare me for the pictures the full publication offered. Blown away by the matter-of-fact descriptions of sprite behavior and fairy rituals. Took me a long while to finish because I had so much to mull over with each species' entry and each drawing's details.

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### **Chris says**

A nice little guide and not sugar coated.

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### **mark monday says**

i began reading for pleasure in the 4th grade. at that point, it was less about reading a novel from beginning to end and more about discovering new worlds to live in. i rarely completed a book - i usually read just

enough to get the sense of a different place and time, and then used that as a template for my own imaginative travels... things to think on and wonder about as i roamed around the woods of south bend, indiana; as i rode my bike about with my pet toad perched atop my head; as i sat musing in the corner during various family gatherings, ignoring the adults engaged in their loud yet tedious socializing.

so a couple years passed and i still faithfully checked out books from the library and i still faithlessly left them unfinished. i also started combing garage sales. by the time of my 6th grade year, i had discovered three books that really stirred my imagination, that completely fascinated me and opened up the world and my mind to so many new and absorbingly strange things:

Mastering Witchcraft

Zodiac and Its Mysteries

A Field Guide to the Little People

now with these books, i read my eyes out. they were read from cover to cover, over and over again. i lingered over so many parts, wondering how they could apply to my life, the world around me, the people in that world. i thought about them all the time and made ambiguous little remarks to friends and adults that secretly referenced those books. i have them still. their margins and end pages are filled with scribbles and notes and lists and drawings. Zodiac and Its Mysteries is held together by duct tape. A Field Guide fell apart and separated into two books, both also held together by duct tape. Mastering Witchcraft appears to be completely unchanged from how it first appeared to me, hmm. all three are literary touchstones of my youth.

A Field Guide to Little People is divided handily into three parts: Light Elves, Dark Elves, and Dusky Elves. the "Little People" are not all little, some are human-sized or larger. they include such beings as the Sidhe, the Rusalka, the Koblode, the Lechy, the Mound Folk. each tribe is given a clear-eyed and entirely unsentimental overview of their lifestyle and temperament. that is followed by a section entitled "Identification" that describes their physical appearance and their various guises. and that is followed by a section entitled "Habitat" that describes their home country and where they could be found. finally, short tales (sometimes just a paragraph) detail an often terminal interaction between human and Little Person. these tales are simply told and often morbid, at times disgustingly violent. but they are also soulful fables full of melancholy, full of longing for lost things, full of sadness at the way that humans will often betray the world around them. A Field Guide does not talk down to its reader; it assumes a tacit sympathy with and respect for the subject matter - which i was utterly willing to give.

some things i learned:

a *Wood Woman*, or Wood Troll, can fall in love with a human man. and like a human woman, they can have their hearts broken, often shortly after the man discovers their animal tail and withdraws from their arms in disgust.

a *Vodyani* looks like the bloated corpse of a fat old man. he floats in rivers and beats children to death with a club wrapped in colorful ribbons.

a *Linchetto* likes to stalk young ladies. however, to rid yourself of this horny pest, simply eat a sandwich while sitting on a chamberpot. the Linchetto will flee your home forever, howling in disgust at your outrageous behavior.

a *Duende* looks like a 2-foot tall woman, dressed in dusky gray and brown garb. they will clean your house from top to bottom and amuse you and your family with odd games like tickling your feet in the middle of

the night with their cold fingers. when angry, they act like poltergeists. they cannot be exorcised and have no fear of holy water or holy men. awesome little bad-asses!

a *Shopiltee* lives in lakes, takes the form of an adorable grey foal with huge genitals, and subsists on the blood of those who have drowned.

a *Seligen Fraulein* is a kind of wood nymph, blonde and waifish, gentle and kind. if you come across her, she may ask you to promise never to hurt or hunt an animal in her forest. if you break your promise, she will find you and blind you. their lovers are the perpetually-aroused *Norggen*, who have blazing red eyes and hairy, strong bodies. Norggen are often sweet-natured and if you don't harass their elfin friends, they will control the weather for you.

a *Pavaro* protects bean fields. he has fiery eyes, a dog's head, teeth and nails made of iron, and he can stretch his arms to the length of acres, just to get you.

the elfin prince *Tam Lin* has no problem lying to maidens and pretending that he is a handsome mortal man. but he is a good sort and mainly wants to escape his captor, *Elfland's Queen*. if you are a lovely maiden who he has seduced, you can free him by simply holding him tight as he shifts from man to salamander to snake to bear to lion to red-hot iron to burning coal, and finally back into his true form, your now-naked lover. say hello to your new boyfriend! but realize that you have thus earned the undying enmity of the Elfland's Queen.

*The Wild Hunt* will hunt both man and Little Person alike. they chop them both up and nail bloody pieces of them on village doors. beware The Wild Hunt.

... and that's barely a fraction of this field guide. there is so much more!

as a child, i did not really read comics and i did not like a lot of tv either (besides Three's Company of course). i thought tv and comics were, for the most part, pretty silly and eye-rolling, "unrealistic". to me, A Field Guide to the Little People was the opposite of silly and unrealistic. it portrayed - and so realistically, so unsentimentally - a life that i felt utterly confident existed just beyond reach. i dreamed myself into this book day after day, year after year, it became a foundation for how i look at the world today.

thank you, Nancy Arrowsmith and George Moorse!

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## Csenge says

I appreciated this little volume over a lot of other "fairy encyclopedias" mostly because it contains both information and actual stories. As a storyteller, I like this setup. On the other hand, it would have been great to be able to connect the extensive list of sources in the end to the chapters in the book. With all that said, it is a great collection, and talks about a lot less well known fairy creatures. The categories they are filed under are a little random, but they don't really affect the overall quality. It is a very nicely done, enjoyable book on the Little People.

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## **Adam says**

In the bookstore, this looked to be a fun read, but not unlike the Little People themselves, its initial appearance was deceiving. Arrowsmith appears to be a fine scholar — the bibliography shows that she mined numerous sources for the entries in this book — but she's not much of a writer.

The primary problems with the book are organizational. The Little People are grouped into the (seemingly rather arbitrary) categories of Light, Dark and Dusky elves, but beyond that there is no discernible rhyme or reason in how the entries are grouped. They are not alphabetical, not grouped by region, and not grouped by any other type (e.g., water-dwellers are not grouped with other water-dwellers). In some cases, two "species" that are related to each other are separated by several completely unrelated entries.

All entries contain an "identification" section. But there so much repetition in the descriptions that reading this book cover to cover soon becomes tedious. If you decide to try, here's a game: Count how many times Arrowsmith describes a type of elf as wearing read, or of the females as having "long breasts that they toss over their shoulders." (I'll give you a hint, both are in damn near every entry in this book; this is the equivalent of writing a field guide to mammals and describing them all as "furry." )

The "identification" section is followed by a "habitat" section. In some cases, this section describes the countries where the "species" is known to reside. In other cases, it simply describes the sort of places where it makes a home. Sometimes it discusses both.

Many entries are followed by short anecdotes about the elves, culled from sources of literature and folklore that are cited only at the end of the book rather than within the text. This means that as you read, you don't know anything about the source of the story unless you constantly flip to the back to try to find the accompanying end note. You may also find that the story you're reading is nearly the same as one for a different entry 50 pages earlier; Arrowsmith makes no note of such similarities, which would have made any folklore study far more helpful and interesting.

The book also has illustrations by Heinz Edelmann, who was art director for the animated Beatles film "Yellow Submarine." Many of these illustrations accompany the entries, but 20 of them are bunched together in the back of the book, before the endnotes. Why aren't they also placed with the matching article? It's as though the publisher was ready to go to print and Edelmann rushed in saying, "Hang on! I have 20 more illustrations!"

Basically, this book would have been far, far better had it been edited and organized by someone with a basic knowledge of how human beings read.

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## **Rowan Ilsley says**

I came across this reading material after looking in the bibliography of one of my favourite reads: "Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around You." I found it enchanting yet informative. The debate about the existance of these "Little People" is a fascinating subject to me and although I feel that, in this novel, the disappearances of these magical beasts is all too convenient, the illustrations are unique and the structure is in a very positive format for me; as it makes me feel as though I've read a lot throughout. I also enjoyed the added insight into different countries and their cultures so all in all I enjoyed this book, and

its wealth of information on the subject matter, but my favourite parts were the extracts of stories that were told in each section.

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