

# Chelm Fairy Tales and Nursery Rhymes

by Philip Fishl Kutner

Farvos nisht? Why shouldn't Chelm have its own famous writer of fairy tales and nursery rhymes? We know there were fairy tales which include: the Grimm brothers of Germany; Carlo Collodi, the Italian writer of Pinocchio; the Frenchman, Charles Perrault, who wrote about Cinderella; Hans Christian Anderson of Denmark and of course Aesop's fables (numbering over 600).

Khane Feygl Taybele was her name. No one knows exactly when she was born, but it was several hundred years ago. We now know that she could not let anyone know that a woman actually wrote these fairy tales and nursery rhymes, so she used the pen name Chaim (Khayem) Fishl Taub.

There have been many hair-splitting dialectical debates on whether the previously mentioned fairy tale and nursery rhyme writers adapted Khayem's stories, or whether Khayem's fairy tales were adaptations of these aforementioned writers.

Legend has it that Khayem was indentured at a young age to a wealthy merchant who wanted a companion for his favorite daughter. Perhaps Khayem had access to many books from foreign lands. *She* may have learned about the fairy tales and nursery rhymes from these books.

Other accounts speak about her traveling all over Europe with the wealthy merchant's favorite daughter. They speak of Khayem's storytelling at the courts of Barons and Baronesses in Bavaria.

What we undeniably do know is that these fairy tales and nursery rhymes were read and loved by all the little children of Chelm, and that the bobes and zeydes of Chelm told them every night when the children were put to bed.

The children grew up and memorized the fairy tales and nursery rhymes, and when they had their own families, told them to their children and grandchildren for many generations.

In the very last months of the last century The Prestigious Chelm Literary Society published a collection of them entitled, *Khayem's bobe mayses un mayselekh far kleyne kinder*.

The book was leather-bound and had gold leaf lettering. A red silk marker was glued in the binding to be used as a page marker. A quick glance at the book's table of contents shows many familiar tales and rhymes.

## Partial List of The Fairy Tales & Nursery Rhymes

Der mekhashef (wizard) fun oy  
Di malpe un der keml  
Di Tsherepakhe un der hoz  
Dos miese katshekele  
Dos nashnveydl (Cinderalla)  
Eyns, tsvey, dray, fir  
London brik falt arunter  
Malke hot gehat a kleyne lemele  
Mame ganz kinder lidlekh  
Piter, piter kirbes freser  
Pop geyt dos vizele  
Regn, regn gey avek  
Royte rayndik hoyb  
Ruvn hoyb  
Shlofendike sheynkeyt  
Shloyme der matros (sailor)  
Shmuel un di fertsik ganovim  
Shtern likht, shtern glantsik  
Yankl un dos bebl shtengl  
Yankl un dzhil  
Yankl zay shmoydik (nimble)

You can purchase copies of *Khayem's bobe mayses un mayselekh far kleyne kinder* for 47 kopeks (cash or money orders also accepted) from the publishers:

The Prestigious Chelm Literary Society  
Gmina Wyz. Zydowska  
ul. Chunchaya 13  
Chelm, Poland

Website: [www.ChelmLiterarySociety.org.pl](http://www.ChelmLiterarySociety.org.pl)

E-mail: [Bobemayses@ChelmLiterarySociety.org.pl](mailto:Bobemayses@ChelmLiterarySociety.org.pl)

Ph: dial 011+ 48 (country code) + 81 (Lublin nearest region code) + 627-574-5298 (spells narishkayt)

By special arrangements with The Prestigious Chelm Literary Society, the publishers of *Khayem's bobe mayses un mayselekh far kleyne kinder*, *Der Bay* has been appointed the sole distributor in North America. As a not for profit publication, *Der Bay* adds only a slight charge to cover pony express and handling. So please send a check or money order made out to *Der Bay* for only \$17.89 made out to "*Der Bay* Fund for Chelm Widows and Orphans."

For readers living east of the Ohio River allow an extra 2 weeks for delivery, others will receive it in 6 weeks. Orders for the book coming from Canada will not have to wait the extra time for the mail does not have to ford the Mighty Mississippi River.