



Fancy Dresses Described: A Glossary of Victorian Costumes

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The Victorians adored fancy-dress parties: what better way to escape the rigidity of social conventions than to spend a festive evening disguised as Cleopatra, a Swiss milkmaid, or Alice in Wonderland? Well-to-do party-goers of the era consulted *Fancy Dress Described*, an elaborate guide to hundreds of glorious costumes. The book was so popular that it was updated several times; this is the sixth and final edition, originally published in 1896. Time has transformed it into an important historical document as well as an abundant cosplay resource.

Twenty color and 40 black-and-white illustrations enhance the alphabetical entries, which are mostly for women's costumes but include a section on children's dress. Costumes range from the peasant garb of Austria, Italy, and Ireland to the finery of the six wives of Henry VIII, Marie Antoinette, and other members of French and English royalty. Additional entries spotlight characters from Shakespeare and Dickens; traditional apparel of Egypt and ancient Greece and Rome; Cinderella, Maid Marion, and other folkloric figures; as well as outfits suggested by astronomy, the seasons, the animal kingdom, and other thematic subjects. Costume designers, reenactors, lovers of Victorian fashion, and Halloween enthusiasts will find this historic volume a tremendous source of inspiration.

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