

## Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

<b>Class Title</b>	Family Literacy Parent Education Class
<b>Instructor</b>	Susan Mansuetti
<b>Week</b>	
<b>Lesson Topic</b>	Close Reading - Fairy Tales Pro
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly. Students will be able to draw inferences from the text. Students will be able to respond to questions and writing prompts using evidence from the text.
<b>Assessing Mastery of the Objective</b>	Students will cite evidence from the text when answering questions. Students will use author's words and ideas to determine his/her viewpoint.
<b>Length of Lesson</b>	One hour (first lesson of 3 part unit)

Foundation Skills Information				
Basic Workplace Skills	Basic Employability	Basic Workplace Knowledge		
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates Interpersonal relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Applies Health and Safety concepts		
<input type="checkbox"/> Observes Critically	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates Self-Management Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands Process and Product or Service		
<input type="checkbox"/> Listens with Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Works in Teams	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates Quality Consciousness		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaks Clearly and Concisely	<input type="checkbox"/> Solves Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands Finances		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writes Clearly and Concisely	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes Decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Works within Organizational Structure and Culture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reads with Understanding				
<input type="checkbox"/> Applies Mathematical Concepts and Operations				
<input type="checkbox"/> Locates and Uses Resources				
	Math	Reading	Writing	Language

## Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

<b>CCRS Anchor/ Standard/ Math Shifts</b>		CCR Reading Anchor 1, Level C Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	CCR Writing Anchor 4, Level C Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.	
		CCR Reading Anchor 10		

## Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

Depth of Knowledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOK 1 Recall/Recognition: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOK 2 Using a Skill or Concept: <input type="checkbox"/> DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: <input type="checkbox"/> DOK 4 Extended Thinking:
Math Instructional Practices	<input type="checkbox"/> MP.1: Make Sense of Problems and Persevere in Solving them: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.2: Reason Abstractly and Quantitatively: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.3: Construct Viable Arguments and Critique the Reasoning of Others: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.4: Model with Mathematics: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.5: Use Appropriate Tools Strategically: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.6: Attend to Precision: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.7: Look for and Make Use of Structure: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.8: Look for and Express Regularity in Repeated Reasoning:
ELA Instructional Shifts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 1.1 Text Complexity: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 1.2 Academic Vocabulary: <input type="checkbox"/> Dimension 2.1 Comprehension/Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Dimension 2.2 Argument/Inform. Wtg. : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 3.1 Content Rich Text: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 3.2 Bldg. Knowledge About a Topic/Research:

Vocabulary	<p>Tier 2</p> <p>sensibilities</p> <p>consistent</p> <p>condition</p> <p>polarized</p> <p>ensor</p> <p>Tier 3</p> <p>(none)</p>
Anticipatory Set/Requisite Pre-skills	Prior knowledge of Fairy Tales, Understanding of concept that reading to children helps them to become better reading.
Materials	Why are fairy tales important for children? By Joyce, Parent Support Coach, Retrieved 9/27/2016 <a href="#">_____</a>

# Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

<b>Instructional Procedure</b>	<p><u>Group Instruction</u></p> <p>Introduce topic of Fairy Tales and their effect on children, indicating topic is “why fairy tales are good for children.”</p> <p>Read Pro fairy tale article from internet</p> <p>Answer text dependent questions</p> <p>Review academic vocabulary</p> <p><u>Student assignment</u> (What student does on their own in addition to group work)</p> <p>Throughout this lesson ask students informal questions relating back to their role as parents. Sample questions may include: Why is it important to read fairy tales to your children? What are the benefits of reading them instead of watching the video version of them? What is your child’s favorite fairy tale? How might you censor a fairy tale and why?</p> <p>(Note: After teaching this lesson, I realized that there were a couple of errors in the text. However, since this is a parent education class, I decided to continue using it as it is a blog written by a parent for a parent information website. The next article in the unit is written by a journalist with the BBC and I helped the parents to see the differences in the two sites and encouraged them as parents to be aware that not all internet reading is equal. This could be an excellent segue into a lesson on evaluating online information.)</p>
<b>Guided Practice/ Assessment</b>	<p>Introduce topic of Fairy Tales and their effect on children, explaining previous class reading survey. Explain that while we are looking at topics that are useful for parents helping their children succeed, we will also be using reading strategies that will help them to pass the RLA part of the GED test. The skills that we are learning will also be helpful whether students go on to post-secondary or if they get a job. The ability to go back to a text and provide evidence for the point you are trying to make will help students succeed in their own lives.</p> <p>Read text silently. Give highlighters, post-it notes, pencils, etc. and encourage students to use these tools to annotate text.</p> <p>Ask questions when reading is complete. If students are not referring to the text or citing evidence, guide them by example.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who was the original audience for Fairy Tales?</li> <li>2. Both the first and the third paragraph contain the word consistent. What does this word mean?</li> <li>3. According to the author, who is the child most attracted to in the story?</li> <li>4. What does the author mean when she writes that the figures are polarized?</li> <li>5. How does the author suggest that parents censor the stories?</li> </ol>

## Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

	Review academic vocabulary not mentioned in questions. Ask if there are any additional words that students want to discuss.
Closure	<u>Student assignment</u> (What student does on their own in addition to group work) In your own words, explain why the author believes that fairy tales are good for children. Cite specific examples from the text. Make sure your answer is at least two paragraphs and uses proper writing conventions. (Correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.)
Technology Connection	Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop <input type="checkbox"/> iPad <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> TV/VCR/DVD <input type="checkbox"/> Chromebook <input type="checkbox"/> SmartBoard <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Other: _____
Evaluation/ Notes:	Informal evaluation of student responses to questions. Writing assignment will indicate if students can cite examples to explain author's view and not their own. It will also indicate if additional instruction is needed to write paragraphs.
Reflection:	

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<b>Instructor</b>	Susan Mansuetti
<b>Week</b>	
<b>Lesson Topic</b>	Close Reading - Fairy Tales Con
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Students will be able to refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly. Students will be able to draw inferences from the text. Students will be able to respond to questions and writing prompts using evidence from the text.
<b>Assessing Mastery of the Objective</b>	Students will cite evidence from the text when answering questions. Students will use author's words and ideas to determine his/her viewpoint.
<b>Length of Lesson</b>	One Hour (second lesson of a 3 part unit)

<b>Foundation Skills Information</b>		
<b>Basic Workplace Skills</b>	<b>Basic Employability</b>	<b>Basic Workplace Knowledge</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates Interpersonal relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Applies Health and Safety concepts
<input type="checkbox"/> Observes Critically	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates Self-Management Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands Process and Product or Service
<input type="checkbox"/> Listens with Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Works in Teams	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates Quality Consciousness
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaks Clearly and Concisely	<input type="checkbox"/> Solves Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Understands Finances
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writes Clearly and Concisely	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes Decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Works within Organizational Structure and Culture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reads with Understanding		
<input type="checkbox"/> Applies Mathematical Concepts and Operations		
<input type="checkbox"/> Locates and Uses Resources		

# Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

<b>CCRS Anchor/ Standard/ Math Shifts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Language</b>
		CCR Reading Anchor 1, Level C Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	CCR Writing Anchor 4, Level C Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.	
		CCR Reading Anchor 10		

## Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

Depth of Knowledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOK 1 Recall/Recognition: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOK 2 Using a Skill or Concept: <input type="checkbox"/> DOK 3 Strategic Thinking: <input type="checkbox"/> DOK 4 Extended Thinking:
Math Instructional Practices	<input type="checkbox"/> MP.1: Make Sense of Problems and Persevere in Solving them: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.2: Reason Abstractly and Quantitatively: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.3: Construct Viable Arguments and Critique the Reasoning of Others: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.4: Model with Mathematics: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.5: Use Appropriate Tools Strategically: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.6: Attend to Precision: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.7: Look for and Make Use of Structure: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.8: Look for and Express Regularity in Repeated Reasoning:
ELA Instructional Shifts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 1.1 Text Complexity: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 1.2 Academic Vocabulary: <input type="checkbox"/> Dimension 2.1 Comprehension/Evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 2.2 Argument/Inform. Wtg. : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 3.1 Content Rich Text: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimension 3.2 Bldg. Knowledge About a Topic/Research:

Vocabulary	<p>Tier 2</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Covers</p> <p>Eternal</p> <p>Execution</p> <p>Extracts</p> <p>Schlock</p> <p>Tier 3</p> <p>(none)</p>
Anticipatory Set/Requisite Pre-skills	<p>Prior knowledge of Fairy Tales, Understanding of concept that reading to children helps them to become better readers.</p> <p>Previous lesson that included learning to cite evidence to provide author's viewpoint.</p>
Materials	<p>Are Grimm's Fairy Tales too twisted for Children?</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130801-too-grimm-for-children">http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130801-too-grimm-for-children</a> retrieved 10/18/2016</p>

# Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver

## Lesson Plan

<b>Instructional Procedure</b>	<p><u>Group Instruction</u></p> <p>Remind students of text from last session indicating why fairy tales are good for children. Tell them that this time the topic will be the opposite view, "why fairy tales may not be good for children."</p> <p>Read Con fairy tale article from internet. (Note: Although this article lists many cons regarding reading fairy tales to children, by the end, the author supports fairy tales. This may elicit an interesting discussion among the students using the question below.)</p> <p>After reading article, ask parents to look at the difference between an article written by a parent on a blog and one by a journalist. Note especially incorrect use of the word censure and incomplete sentence in paragraph three.</p> <p>Answer text dependent questions</p> <p>Review academic vocabulary</p> <p><u>Student assignment</u> (What student does on their own in addition to group work)</p> <p>Throughout this lesson ask students informal questions relating back to their role as parents. Sample questions may include: What is your child's favorite fairy tale? How might you censor a fairy tale and why? Are there any fairy tales you would be hesitant to read to your child? Do you tend to read Disney versions or the original versions?</p> <p>Much of this lesson is very similar to the previous lesson. The intent is to enable students to become familiar with the skill of returning to the text to determine the author's viewpoint without interjecting their own thoughts and opinion.</p>
<b>Guided Practice/ Assessment</b>	<p>During the last class, we discussed some of the reasons that fairy tales are important to children. Can you remember some of the reasons the author thought they were important? Remind class that while we are looking at topics that are useful for parents helping their children succeed, we will also be using reading strategies that will help them to pass the RLA part of the GED test. The skills that we are learning will also be helpful whether students go on to post-secondary or if they get a job. The ability to go back to a text and provide evidence for the point you are trying to make will help students succeed in their own lives.</p> <p>Read text silently. Give highlighters, post-it notes, pencils, etc. and encourage students to use these tools to annotate text.</p> <p>Review academic vocabulary from the list. Ask if students can determine the meaning by reading the passage. Ask if there are any additional words that students want to discuss.</p> <p>Ask questions when reading is complete. If students are not referring to the text or citing evidence, guide them by example.</p>

## Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

	<p>What is meant by the statement "If they were a video game, there would be calls to ban them"?</p> <p>What has happened to some of the stories that seem to be eternal?</p> <p>What does the author mean when he says that the fairy tales are "far from saccharine"? Can you give some examples?</p> <p>Why does the authors say that some of the parents do not like the gory bits?</p> <p>Look again at the last paragraph. Despite all of the reasons the author gives that indicates that fairy tales are grim, do you think the author is actually a fan of fairy tales? Why or why not?</p>
Closure	<p><u>Student assignment</u> (What student does on their own in addition to group work)</p> <p>In your own words, explain why the author believes that fairy tales are good for children. Cite specific examples from the text. Make sure your answer is at least two paragraphs and uses proper writing conventions. (Correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.)</p>
Technology Connection	<p>Check all that apply:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Laptop ___ iPad ___ Calculator ___ PowerPoint ___ TV/VCR/DVD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">___ Chromebook ___ SmartBoard ___ Mobile Other: _____</p>
Evaluation/ Notes:	<p>Informal evaluation of student responses to questions. Writing assignment will indicate if students can cite examples to explain author's view and not their own. It will also indicate if additional instruction is needed to write paragraphs.</p>
Reflection:	



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CCRS Anchor/ Standard/ Math Shifts	Math	Reading	Writing	Language
		CCR Reading Anchor 1, Level C Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	CCR Writing Anchor 1, Level C a.b.c.d. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.	
		CCR Reading Anchor 10	CCR Writing Anchor 4, Level C Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.	

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Math Instructional Practices	<input type="checkbox"/> MP.1: Make Sense of Problems and Persevere in Solving them: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.2: Reason Abstractly and Quantitatively: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.3: Construct Viable Arguments and Critique the Reasoning of Others: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.4: Model with Mathematics: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.5: Use Appropriate Tools Strategically: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.6: Attend to Precision: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.7: Look for and Make Use of Structure: <input type="checkbox"/> MP.8: Look for and Express Regularity in Repeated Reasoning:
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Vocabulary	<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 2</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Sensibilities</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Age</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consistent</td> <td>Covers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Condition</td> <td>Eternal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polarized</td> <td>Execution</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Censor</td> <td>Extracts</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Schlock</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Tier 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(none)</p>	Sensibilities	Age	Consistent	Covers	Condition	Eternal	Polarized	Execution	Censor	Extracts		Schlock
Sensibilities	Age												
Consistent	Covers												
Condition	Eternal												
Polarized	Execution												
Censor	Extracts												
	Schlock												
Anticipatory Set/Requisite Pre-skills	Participation in previous lessons regarding the pro/cons of reading fairy tales to children. Able to use evidence from text to determine author's viewpoint.												
Materials	<p>Why are fairy tales important for children? By Joyce, Parent Support Coach, Retrieved 9/27/2016</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130801-too-grimm-for-children">Are Grimm's Fairy Tales too twisted for Children?</a>  <a href="http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130801-too-grimm-for-children">http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130801-too-grimm-for-children</a> retrieved 10/18/2016</p>												

# Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver

## Lesson Plan

<b>Instructional Procedure</b>	<p>Remind students of past two lessons and the purpose of learning about the pros/cons of fairy tales.</p> <p>Review both pro and con articles asking students to recall details.</p> <p>Review vocabulary, clarifying if needed.</p> <p>Allow bulk of class time to write final essay using information from text to support opinion.</p>
<b>Guided Practice/ Assessment</b>	<p>Remind parents that while we are looking at topics that are useful for parents helping their children succeed, we will also be using reading and writing strategies that will help them to pass the RLA part of the GED test. The skills that we are learning will also be helpful whether students go on to post-secondary or if they get a job. The ability to go back to a text and provide evidence for the point you are trying to make will help students succeed in their own lives. Ask for examples of situations when they may have to use evidence to support their opinions (in role of parent, employee, community member)</p> <p>Ask students to have the previous articles available to refer back to as they summarize the author's opinions about reading fairy tales to children. Ask questions about the vocabulary words from previous two sessions. Clarify definitions for those still struggling.</p> <p>Ask students to think about their own opinion on reading fairy tales to their children. Provide the writing assignment either written on the board, projected on a smart board or as a separate handout.</p> <p>Assignment: Write a four or five paragraph opinion piece using following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce topic clearly, stating opinion</li><li>• Provide logically ordered reasons for your opinion supported by evidence from the articles</li><li>• Use at least six of the vocabulary words in the correct context</li><li>• Provide a concluding section related to the opinion presented</li></ul> <p>Use proper writing conventions (paragraph structure, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.)</p> <p>If available, students will write this essay using computers to improve their word processing skills.</p>

# Adult Literacy Action Penn State Beaver Lesson Plan

<b>Closure</b>	Final Discussion:  Why is it important to learn about different sides of a topic before deciding upon your opinion? Can you tell me why this might be important in your role as a parent?
<b>Technology Connection</b>	Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> X Laptop <input type="checkbox"/> iPad <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> TV/VCR/DVD <input type="checkbox"/> Chromebook <input type="checkbox"/> SmartBoard <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Other: _____
<b>Evaluation/ Notes:</b>	Culminating assignment will indicate student's understanding of vocabulary words as well as how to use evidence to determine how to support an opinion.
<b>Reflection:</b>	

# Why are fairy tales important for children?

Posted Wednesday, August 13, 2014

Fairy tales have been told and re-told for hundreds of years. Cinderella alone has a 1000 year old history with 700 versions worldwide including ancient Egypt, Africa, Japan, and Asia. In the beginning, fairy tales were not intended for children. Travelers went from town to town and then to royal courts providing news and entertainment to uneducated folk as well as Lords and Ladies. Charles Perrault, a Frenchman, was the first to put tales to pen. In the 1600's "The Sleeping Beauty" and "Cinderella" were written down and revised to suit the Court's sensibilities. In 1812 the Brothers Grimm collected tales from a wide range of sources and published a book as a scholarly work not intended for children. It was not until 7 editions and 45 years later that the book was revised and transformed into the children's book we recognize today including stories like "Hansel and Gretel", "Sleeping Beauty", "Snow White" "Cinderella" and others. It is important to note that Perrault's Cinderella has striking differences from the Grimm version. The Grimm version is consistent with worldwide Cinderella tales while Perrault's Cinderella breaks rank.

Fairy tales offer new dimension to a child's imagination. His imaginings can influence his own daydreams. Tales speak to children in the language of symbols. They enter a wondrous world where normal logic and causation are suspended, there are no real places and people, and at the story's end, they are returned to reality in a reassuring manner. As in "Cinderella" and "Hansel and Gretel" the hero/ heroine return to the real world better able to master life.

Fairy tales provide a means for children to work through their inner struggles and find solutions. They echo a child's development, and children may want to hear them over and over as they move through the next stage of development. Fairy tales have many layers of meaning. Different meanings at different ages and when facing different difficulties. A consistent message from fairy tales that confronts children is that a struggle against difficulties is unavoidable, but if one steadfastly meets unexpected hardships and masters obstacles, then they will be victorious in the end.

Fairy tales deal with the basic human condition. At the start of many tales, a mother or father dies. In the Grimm version of "Cinderella" her mother's death is not a mere mention, but an integral part of the story in which Cinderella grieves and finds closure in a meaningful way. All situations are simplified so that the child can come to terms with the basic problem in the story. Evil is as omnipresent as virtue and given the form of a figure such as the Queen in "Snow White". Evil even succeeds for a time. However the bad person always loses out in the end. This is the most effective deterrent, more so than punishment. Justice reigns, and goodness and order are restored. The hero/heroine is most attractive to the child, she suffers with her and triumphs with her as in "Cinderella". Figures are polarized. Like the step sisters in "Cinderella". They are good or bad, nothing in between. Children's minds this age are polarized. The polarization permits the child to easily choose between the two. Who do they want to be like rather than do I want to be good. A child's later ability to understand that there are great differences between people is facilitated by this polarity. The term "And they lived happily ever after" does not fool

children that there is eternal life but reassures them that forming a truly satisfying bond will give them emotional security. This and similar terms can be reassuring for anxious or fearful children.

How old should children be for fairy tales and which tales should I tell? Are fairy tales too scary?

“Fairy tales enrich a child’s life and give it an enchanted quality just because he does not quite know how the stories have worked their wonder on him.”(Bruno Bettelheim). Children of all ages can enjoy fairy tales, hence Disney’s foray into fairy tales especially Cinderella. It is however, very different from Grimm’s Cinderella tale which has a rather gruesome ending with the stepsisters lopping of toes and heels to fit their large feet in to the golden slipper – not a tale for toddlers. Children over the age of 5 will understand what is real and what is fantasy and will comprehend many layers of meaning in fairy tales. Tales come in many age-appropriate versions, so seek out what suits your family best, or censure the originals leaving out the bits you don’t like. These are loaded with symbols and meaning. Follow your child’s lead. Does he ask for the same story over and over? Enjoy the tale with him, and allow your child to share their thoughts and feelings with you. Curb the temptation to voice your own interpretation, and let the tale work its magic on them.

Stay tuned for my next blog post titled “Cinderella: Disney or the Real Deal?”

*Material for this blog came from “[The Uses of Enchantment-The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales](#)” by Bruno Bettelheim 1977, Random House, New York*

**Recommended Reading** (All of these books are available at the [London Public Library](#)):

[The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm, Translated by Matthew Price, Taschen](#) – Beautiful vivid illustrations by different artists in different media for each story. Makes the tales come alive. A lovely purple cloth covered and gold embossed volume. A recent translation of the Brother’s Grimm true to the originals.

[The Princess and the Pea, retold and illustrated by Rachel Isadora](#) – Rachel has chosen an African setting for the retelling of this Hans Christian Andersen tale. It is exquisitely illustrated with vivid colours and textures. A story for all ages.

[Tom Thumb Grimm’s Tale, retold and illustrated by Eric Carle](#) – Includes Tom Thumb, The fisherman and his Wife, Hans in Luck, and the Seven Swabians. Eric’s classic collage illustrations. Tom Thumb’s mischievous adventures allow children to dream about what they would do if they were tiny like him. The other stories are about wishes left unfulfilled, an eventful journey home, and the perils of blindly following those around you. Suitable for preschoolers.

Written by Joyce, Parent Support Coach

Are Grimm's Fairy Tales too twisted for Children?

- By Stephen Evans

21 October 2014

On the covers are the most innocent of titles: Grimm's Fairy Tales in their English version or Children's and Household Tales in the original German editions published two hundred years ago. Nice tales for nice children.

But behind the safe titles lie dark stories of sex and violence – tales of murder, mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide and incest, as one academic puts it. They are far from anything we might imagine as acceptable today. If they were a video game, there would be calls to ban them.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were writing in a different world. They lived in the town of Kassel in Germany and studied law and language as well as writing more than 150 stories which they published in two volumes between 1812 and 1814.

Some stories have fallen out of favour but some – Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Snow White – seem eternal. They have morphed into countless adaptations; Disney disneyfied them and new filmmakers and novelists continue to rework them. Comics from Japanese Manga to the erotic and 'adult' depict the characters of the Grimm brothers' tales.

But even in their original, they are far from saccharine, according to Maria Tatar, professor of Germanic folklore and mythology at Harvard University: "These tales are not politically correct. They are full of sex and violence. In Snow White, the stepmother asks for the lungs and liver of the little girl. She's just seven years old and she's been taken into the woods by the huntsman. That's pretty scary.

"And then the evil stepmother is made to dance to death in red-hot iron shoes. In Cinderella, you've got the stepsisters whose heels and toes are cut off."

### **Adult themes**

These tales of gore and sexuality – John Updike called them the pornography of an earlier age – are still going strong. "I can't even keep track of the number of new versions of Snow White," says Professor Tatar. "And these aren't just Disney productions – you have film-makers making very adult versions of the fairy tales, drawing out the perverse sexuality of some of these tales."

They are tales of right and wrong. There are clear morals to be drawn – deception and dishonesty are punished; honest hard work is rewarded; promises must be honoured; beware of strangers – and especially the forest.

But that can't be the enduring appeal. Moralistic lectures never entertained anyone – but gory tales of suspense are a different thing. They do have an eternal following. As Professor Tatar puts it: "They give us these 'what if' scenarios – what if the most terrible thing that I can imagine

happened? – but they give us these scenarios in the safe space of ‘once upon a time’. I’m going to tell you the story and I’m going to show you how this hero or this heroine manages to come out of it alive.” And not just alive, but also ‘happily ever after’.

It’s clear that many children love the gory bits. And it’s clear that many parents don’t. A [survey last year](#) found that many reported that their children had been left in tears by the gruesome fate of Little Red Riding Hood. Some parents wouldn’t read Rumpelstiltskin to their children because it was about kidnapping and execution. And many parents felt that Cinderella was a bad role model for daughters because she did housework all day.

Some pop culture versions of the tales have sugar-coated their more unpalatable aspects. It’s true that the Cinderella made by Disney in 1950 is a work of schlock – the titles of the songs (A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes”, Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo and Sing Sweet Nightingale) give the flavour. But Disney’s older animated versions of Grimm Fairy Tales are much darker.

“In Snow White which was made in 1937,” says Professor Tatar, “the Wicked Queen goes down into the basement where she’s got a chemistry set which she’s going to use to turn the apple into a poisoned apple. There are ravens down there and skulls and mysterious dusty tomes.

“And then she transforms herself into an old hag. She goes from the fairest of all to the ugliest of all.

“I think that’s really an adult moment which enacts our anxieties about aging. First, her voice changes and then her hands begin to change and there she is a decrepit old woman.

“I think Disney picked up on the scariness of fairy tales as something which appeals to both children and adults”.

### **Evil thoughts**

You get a flavour of these debates and nuances in the town of Kassel in Germany at the moment. It’s where the two brothers grew up and lived (in the same house, Wilhelm married to Henriette; Jacob single until his death).

There have been productions of some of the tales in the Botanical Gardens and a [thought-provoking exhibition](#) in the city’s documenta-Halle. It displays the original publications of the tales and the dictionaries and other works produced by the brothers.

But the most interesting exhibits are the ones designed to make people think. There are videos of glossy perfume adverts featuring a radiant Little Red Riding Hood taming the wolf with her fragrance. There is a section marked “No Access for Minors?” where, behind a thick curtain, you can read the most violent extracts from the tales through slits in the wall.

One of the curators, Louisa Dench, said these extracts show that good triumphs over evil and that the bad get punished. There are clear choices. “There is good and there is bad and you know

what's good and what's bad and there's no question about it. And that's very understandable for children. It's very clear, and good always wins. That's important".

She thinks the secret of the enduring appeal is that much is left to the imagination. "You have only limited characterisation so there's a lot you can imagine yourself," she says. "If someone reads them to you, your mind can build up its own picture. That's part of the magic".

It is a magic based on fantasy and that may be what protects the tales from the unmitigated wrath of parents. Children – some children – do seem to like the darkness of horror but, perhaps, not if it becomes too realistic. Some parents feel uneasy about tales for children where a child's hands are cut off (The Girl without Hands) or where a man is pushed down stairs (The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was) – but children know it is fantasy.

Their fantastical darkness may have protected today's video games from the wrath of tougher laws. Two years ago, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down a lower court's ruling that video games should be banned. [Justice Scalia ruled](#) that depictions of violence had never been regulated. "Grimm's Fairy Tales, for example, are grim indeed," he wrote, referring to the gory plots of Snow White, Cinderella and Hansel and Gretel.

Grim, indeed. And exciting, too, to generations of children and adults for two hundred years – and perhaps for another two hundred.

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