



Teaching Fairy Stories with Dr. Junius Johnson

Lesson 1: What is a Fairy Story?

Outline:

What is a fairy story?

- A fairy tale is a folk story often involving magical happenings.
- Almost nothing from the modern genre of fantasy is a fairy tale.
- What is meant by the word “fairy”? This is an abstract noun that references an atmosphere.
- Fey:
 - Doomed to die, or at the point of death
 - Bent on a path that seems certain to lead to death
 - Omens that presage one’s death
 - To have a disordered mind
 - Displays or possesses magical or unearthly qualities
 - Fey people are magic people
 - Unites magical, mystical, and strange
- The making or glimpsing of other worlds was the heart of the desire of fairy (Tolkien).
- Stories that are fantastical in nature (setting, plot, or characters) are fairy stories.
- Fairyland is a metaphorical setting.
- The fairy is grounded on fantastical or magical creatures.
 - Are science and the fantastical at odds with one another?
 - They are not at odds, but are distinct.
 - The air of fairy comes from the fantastic, not the scientific elements.
 - The scientification of pixie dust makes the fairies of Pixie Hollow less fey.
- The scope of fairy stories is much broader than that of fairy tales.
- The fairy is not something that has to be added to your book list, it is something that is already there.