



## Teaching Fairy Stories with Dr. Junius Johnson

### Lesson 6: Fairy Book Resources

#### Outline:

##### Book List

- The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien
  - The Hobbit is suitable for children of all ages, especially for fifth grade and up.
  - Themes:
    - Adventure versus comfort
    - Should you always go adventuring? What is the nature of the comfort that is being criticized here?
    - Courage
    - Bilbo's idea of home and the dwarves' idea of home
    - Loyalty, friendship, greed (Bilbo also), and song
  - Other works from Tolkien
    - Farmer Giles of ham
    - Smith of Wootton Major
    - Leaf by Niggle linked with Plato's Forms
  - Pairings with The Hobbit
    - Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics
    - The Odyssey
    - Beowulf
- The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis
  - The Chronicles of Narnia is suitable for all ages. There is a great argument to be made for bringing them back around in high school (slavery in Voyage of the Dawn Treader).
  - Themes:
    - Betrayal
    - Forgiveness (Edmund and Eustace)
    - Responsibility
    - Courage
    - Transcendence (powers and realities greater than you, and the encounter with Aslan)
  - Other works from Lewis
    - Till We Have Faces, high school curriculum
    - The Cosmic Trilogy, high school curriculum
    - The Pilgrim's Regress, a poem that Lewis wrote about his conversion, good for a capstone course
  - Pairings with Narnia
    - The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe and Plato's Republic



- Prince Caspian, Ivanhoe by Walter Scott or any Robin Hood story or Arthurian tales, The Once and Future King
- The Dawn Treader with The Odyssey
- The Silver Chair with Inferno, A Midsummer Night's Dream
- The Horse and His Boy with 1001 Arabian Nights (which brings in a lot of fantastical elements)
- The Magician's Nephew with Doctor Faustus, Marlowe's version, Goethe's Faust, Macbeth, Pygmalion (Ovid or George Bernard Shaw), or Frankenstein
- The Last Battle with Paradise Lost or Oresteia
- The Neverending Story by Michael Ende
  - This is suitable for middle and high school.
  - Themes
    - The nature and power of imagination
    - Finitude and infinitude
    - Possibility and impossibility
    - Perils of self-making
    - The need for self-denial
    - The nature and power of reading
  - Other works from Michael Ende
    - Momo
  - Pairings
    - The Odyssey, Homer
    - English romantic poetry
    - Dante's Inferno, canto four
    - Arthurian cycle
- The Light Princess by George MacDonald
  - This is suitable for all ages and is good for high school.
  - Themes
    - Seriousness and laughter
    - Relationship between joy and sorrow
    - Self-sacrificial love
    - Self-destructive nature of unforgiveness
  - Other works from George MacDonald
    - Almost anything
    - The Golden Key
    - The Princess and the Goblin
    - The Princess and Curdie
    - Sir Gibbie pairs well with Oliver Twist, Dickens
    - At the Back of the North Wind
  - Pairings
    - The Tempest, Shakespeare
    - Anne of Green Gables, a heroin outside of the norm
- Phantastes by George MacDonald
  - This is only suitable for high school.



- It is quite accessible on the level of the story (the plot)
- The protagonist's romantic desire is front and center. This is felicitous for high school students.
- Use discernment in deciding whether it is the right fit for your community.
- Themes
  - Selfish versus selfless love
  - The cost of transgression
  - The nature and difficulty of penance
  - Truth versus appearance
  - The value of good advice and humility
- Pairings
  - Doctor Faustus
  - Shakespeare plays: Hamlet, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, and Henry IV Part One.
  - English romantic poets, especially Byron's Don Juan
  - Dante's Inferno and Purgatorio
  - Nietzsche's novel, Thus Spake Zarathustra
- Have Sword Will Travel by Garth Nix and Sean Williams
  - This is suitable for middle and high school.
  - Themes:
    - Honor, duty, friendship
    - Justice
  - Pairings
    - The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
    - The Aeneid
    - Treasure Island
- The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making by Catherine Valente
  - This is suitable for middle school and high school.
  - Themes
    - The cost of adventure, courage, heartbreak, loyalty, accepting boundaries and letting go, compassion (for your enemies especially)
  - Pairings
    - Alice in Wonderland
    - Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics
    - English romantic poetry
    - Oresteia
- The Dragon of Lonely Island by Rebecca Rupp
  - This is suitable for all ages and is especially useful for middle school and even late elementary school.
  - Themes
    - Keep your promises.
    - Don't take what doesn't belong to you.



- Look out for those less fortunate than yourself.
- Pairings
  - Oliver Twist or Great Expectations
  - Treasure Island
  - Robinson Crusoe
- The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper (second book in a five-book series)
  - Themes
    - Good versus evil
    - Destiny
    - The importance of individual and community when it comes to defeating the darkness.
  - Parings
    - Irish or English folklore
    - Arthurian cycle materials
    - Beowulf