Fairy Tales
from the Middle Ages

(Blood pouring from Cinderella's slipper...
These ain't your little sister's Disney movies...)
You might think that Fairy Tales are "just for little kids" or "just for girls."

However...
Fascination with Fairy Tales
These versions were all made (or are currently being made) for adults in the last 12 months.

Groups: Can you name them all?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6.
So why are we talking about them?

Did you know that most fairy tales have their ORIGIN in the Middle Ages?

It makes sense when you think about all the princesses, knights, and castles that feature in so many of these stories.

We still know these stories because they were passed down through the generations, told over and over and over again.
Are ALL fairy tales from the Middle Ages?

Well, no. Many, for example, were written in the mid-1800's by Hans Christian Anderson. He wrote "The Little Mermaid," "The Princess and the Pea," "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Steadfast Tin Soldier."

So while those are considered fairy tales, they are not medieval.
But many fairy tales, especially the ones we're going to study, ORIGINated in the Middle Ages...

Why were these stories repeated so much?

- lack of literacy
- lack of schools or formal teaching
- even the Church services were in Latin (mysterious and difficult to understand)

So, these stories were used to teach morals to young children... And to teach the next generation and the next and the next...
So who eventually wrote them all down?

The most famous source for the written tales is

The Brothers Grimm
Background on the Brothers

Jakob Grimm
  Born: January 4, 1785  Hanau, Germany
  Died: September 20, 1863

Wilhelm Grimm
  Born: February 24, 1786  Hanau, Germany
  Died: December 16, 1859

EARLY LIFE:

- Two eldest brothers in a family of eight boys, one girl

- Started as middle class. Their father died, and they sank into poverty

- Still went to university; studied law

- Became fascinated by language. Wanted to learn more of Germany's past and the origins of the language
Background on the Brothers

Jakob & Wilhelm Grimm

ACADEMIC CAREERS:

- After university, began to study how German developed from the past to the present, and how the language varied from location to location (dialects)

- Realized one of the best ways to study language from long ago was to study stories passed down, from generation to generation.

- Studied the ideas of the stories, but mostly interested in the words and dialects used in the telling

- Academic careers continued, and the two brothers are viewed as important figures in early Linguistic Studies
Background on the Brothers

Jakob & Wilhelm Grimm

WRITING CAREERS:

- Of course, the most famous result of these academic studies are the stories they gathered and published.

- Over 200 stories for children were eventually published

- Some of these stories had been published before, but many had not.

- Historians are grateful to have this peek into Medieval European literature and are grateful they were preserved...

...Walt Disney was grateful, too!
So, the versions of the tales that we are going to focus on were written by the Grimm Brothers in the early 1800's.

They were translated from German to English in 1914.

First up is.......
Someone tell us a SUMMARY of the Disney version of Cinderella...
"Cinderella," like most fairy tales, went through several different versions throughout time.

You'll find that this version by the Grimm Brothers is very different from the Disney cartoon.

As you read along, highlight or note differences on your copy...
After Reading "Cinderella"

At your table, discuss differences you heard in the story.

Topics for Discussion:

What surprised you?

Was there anything you liked better?

Were there things you did not like as well as the story you are familiar with?
Day 2

Fairy Tales

- Patterns
- Themes
- Activity Directions
Brainstorm Patterns of Fairy Tales
Patterns of Fairy Tales - Possible Answers

Special beginning and/or ending words
~ Once upon a time...and they lived happily ever after.
   Sometimes, there’s a surprise ending…

Royalty

Poverty
~ Do you see a poor working girl, a poor family, a poor shepherd? Do you see poor people trying to eke out a living to have enough to eat?

Magic and Enchantments
~ Do you see magical things happening? Do you see talking animals/objects? You might see fairies, trolls, elves, goblins, etc.

Reoccurring Patterns / Numbers
~ Do you see any patterns? Often, you’ll see things, phrases, tasks appear in "threes," "sixes," and/or "sevens"

http://www.surfturk.com/mythology/fairytaleelements.html
Themes of Fairy Tales:

ORIGIN: Below, you will see lists of opinions and philosophies that were held by most people during the Middle Ages. They were derived from the following sources:

**Knight’s Code of Chivalry:**
- *Promises:* Promises must be kept, especially the oath of loyalty to a lord
- *Protecting Women:* Women are the “weaker sex” and must be protected
- *Protecting Weak:* Protection of the anyone (or anything) weaker
- *Courage:* at all times and in all situations. Better to die as a hero, than live as a coward.
- *Fairness:* Must fight fairly (ex: don’t attack from behind; never kick a man when he’s down; never attack an unarmed opponent)
- *Quests:* Travel to perform risky tasks (ex: fighting in the Crusades)
- “*Courtly Love*”: romantic vision of chaste love from afar for the finest ladies of the court
Feudalism

- **Social order**: A person was born into a certain class because it was the will of God.
  - People did not typically change levels (ex: a serf could not become a noble).
  - People would not typically marry outside of their class (ex: a king would not marry a servant girl).
Themes of Fairy Tales -

Christianity

• *Will of God:* All things in life can be attributed to the will of God. (In other words, everything that happens – good or bad – is because that is the way God wants it.)

• *Life is fragile.* Death is common and expected.

• *Evil* should and will be punished in this life (ex: criminal punishment) and the next (in hell).

• *Good* should and will be rewarded. Life is for suffering. Those who suffer on earth will be rewarded in heaven.

• *Turn the other cheek.* If someone wrongs you (like slaps your face), you should not fight back; you should turn your face and allow them to slap the other cheek as well. By being nonviolent and “good,” you will be rewarded in heaven.
Task:

Divide into groups of 3.

Each group choose between Red Riding Hood or Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Person 1: Language of the Discipline
Person 2: Summary with Moral
Person 3: "Big Ideas" of Medieval Belief Systems

Goal:
1. Analyze your story
2. Share with others using Parallels and Paradoxes
Fairy Tale Trivia

Why all the Evil Stepmothers?  The original tales were all about evil mothers. The Grimm Brothers thought that would be too scary for small children and believed changing the women to STEPmothers would be better...

Big Families who must work together.  Many of the Grimm Brothers Tales feature big families (such as "The Seven Ravens" – 7 boys, 1 girl) who must work together in order to survive (ex: "Hansel and Gretel")... just like the Grimms themselves after their father died.

What Red Riding Hood is REALLY about  ... a female character, leaving the path to frolic in the flowers with the male? The story is really saying girls must protect their virginity or they and their families will suffer.

Pregnancies: Many of the original tales had pregnancies before marriage, but the Grimms took those out (ex: Sleeping Beauty and Rapunzel)