

# Let's Talk About ...

## NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY



“Books written for children are intrinsically humanizing to any reader and are no less affecting than books written exclusively for adults. Adults also enjoy reading again books they loved as children.” – Elizabeth R. Baer, for the American Library Association, 1984

### Featured book:

*The Classic Fairy Tales* (1974), edited by Iona and Peter Opie, is a retelling of classics such as “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” and “Sleeping Beauty.” The stories are filled with power and violence. Although more than 700 tales of a Cinderella-like girl have been collected, including a Chinese version from the 9th century, Iona and Peter Opie’s collection, with its reproductions of classic illustrations and its succinct introductions to each tale, gives the reader a good sense of these variations.



Editors **Iona and Peter Opie**, a wife-and-husband team who recorded the folklore of childhood, together researched and collected children’s books, toys and games from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The book collection resides in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England. Peter Opie died in 1982.

### Discussion Questions: [compiled from Let’s Talk About It program scholars]

- The ‘fairy tales’ were originally written for adults. Do you think the versions presented in this collection are appropriate for children? Why or why not?
- Identify and discuss themes that you find running through the stories.
- Child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim argued that vicarious confrontations with evil are appealing and helpful to children. Do you agree?
- Compare the stories in Classic Fairy Tales with Disney cartoons based on fairy tales.
- What relevance do centuries-old fairy tales have to modern life?



Let’s Talk About It is a partnership between the Idaho Commission for Libraries and the Idaho Humanities Council with generous support from U.S. Bank.

