Traditional Tales

Stage 9

East of the Sun, West of the Moon

Written by Chris Powling and illustrated by Violeta Dabija
Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

Background to the story

- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.
- This journey story is a Norwegian fairy tale where someone is transformed into an animal. It is a story of love and goodness triumphing over evil magic.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Look at the cover and ask: Where might this story be set?
- Tell the children that the story comes from Norway. Ask: Do you know anything about Norway? Talk about Norway's fjord coastline.
- Tell the children that in Norwegian fairy tales there are often trolls. Ask: What do you know about trolls? Are they usually good or bad characters?
- Return to the cover and read the title together. Ask: What do you think might happen in the story? Read pages 2 to 3. Ask: What do you think will happen? Would you trust the bear?
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we've listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Check that the children understand the meaning of the word hag (page 15).
- Re-read pages 18 to 21. Find verbs and adverbs that describe how people spoke, e.g. hissed and asked eagerly (page 18), cackled (page 21). Talk about how these words tell us more about the characters.

Returning to the story

- Ask: Why do you think the bear asked to borrow Astrid?
- Notice the different spellings for the /air/ phoneme, for example: bear (page 3), there (page 6), share (page 8) and air (page 19).
- Look again at pages 12 and 13. Ask: Why was the Prince cross with Astrid? How do you think Astrid felt at this point in the story?
- Ask: How did Astrid show that true love can overcome evil? How do you think Long Nose felt when she realised Astrid had beaten her?
Storytelling

- Show the class the video of the storyteller performing the story on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales.
- Talk about how the storyteller uses rich and imaginative language to describe characters and events in the story.
- Ask the children to think about how the storyteller uses his voice to add expression by varying his tone and the rhythm of the story. Discuss how the storyteller uses facial expressions to show emotions.
- Ask the class to discuss what they particularly enjoyed about the storyteller version of the story.
- Have a look at the storytellers’ notes for more information about the storytelling techniques used in the video.

Drama

- Ask the children to work in groups of three and to retell the final chapter of the story ‘The test’ in role. Encourage them to take the characters of Astrid, Long Nose and the Prince.
- Tell the children to talk about how each character is feeling in this chapter, for example, Long Nose is angry and frustrated, Astrid is nervous and delighted, and the Prince is confident and triumphant. Encourage the children to think about the storyteller's performance and to use their facial expressions and voices to show the characters' emotions in their retelling.

Writing

- Recap the main events of the story and ask the children to consider it from the bear/Prince’s point of view. You may want to provide copies of the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales as a prompt. Work together to create a list of his feelings as the story progresses. In particular, consider how he felt about Astrid and how she helped him.
- Tell the children to imagine that the bear/Prince kept a diary. Model how he might have written in his diary, e.g. “I felt nervous when I asked the poor farmer if I could borrow his daughter today. If only I could explain.”
- Ask the children to write in role as the bear/Prince. Remind them to write in the first person. Encourage them to think about the rich and imaginative language the storyteller used in their version of the story, and to use interesting verbs and adverbs to describe the bear/Prince’s feelings in his diary entries.

Links to the wider curriculum

Mathematics/Science
- Investigate compass points – find the directions of North, South, East and West in your classroom.

Geography
- Find Norway in an atlas or look at it using an online aerial map. Notice how close it is to the Arctic Circle.

Art and design
- Refer to pages 18 and 19 to create painted or collaged images of the four winds.

Music
- Listen to Grieg’s ‘In the Hall of the Mountain King’, from the Peer Gynt suite.

PSHE and Citizenship
- Astrid received help to find the troll and win her prince because she was unselfish. Talk about how difficult it can be to put others before yourself.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.
The Children of Lir

Written by Maire Buonocore and illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault
Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

Background to the story
- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.
- This journey story is an Irish legend, one of many where people are changed into animals. It is a story of good versus evil.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story
- Ask: Do you know of any stories where magic changes people into animals? After reading the story, the children could read Roald Dahl's *The Magic Finger*, where people are turned into ducks.
- Ask: Do you know of any stories where a jealous character creates problems for others? (e.g. *Snow White*)
- This is a legend – tell the children that legends are based on real people or events, but that they often include magical or supernatural elements. Ask: What other legends do you know? (e.g. ‘Robin Hood’, ‘King Arthur’ and ‘Finn MacCool and the Giant’s Causeway’)
- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: How do you think the swans are linked to the title?
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

Reading the story
- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Check that the children understand the meaning of the words doomed (page 11) and form (page 13).
- Pause at page 19. Ask: What do you think is going to happen next? What will King Lir do?
- At page 23, ask the children to focus on the final sentence, Lightning flashed and thunder crashed, noticing the rhyming words that add emphasis.

Returning to the story
- Ask: Why did the Queen turn the children into swans?
- Ask the children to find alternative spellings for the long /oo/ in the book, for example: grew (page 3), room (page 4), through (page 9), moved (page 14) and flute (page 27).
- Return to the Queen’s spell, cast to turn the children into swans (pages 11 to 12). Ask the children to explain the spell’s conditions. Ask: Where did the swans have to go? How could the spell be broken?
- Ask: What thoughts might the children of Lir have had at the end of the story?
Storytelling and Drama

• Split the class into five small groups. Assign one chapter to each group. Ask them to rehearse an oral retelling of their chapter. Provide copies of the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales for the children to refer to.

• Encourage each group to find their own way of retelling their part of the story. They might choose to have one narrator, whilst others in the group mime the action as the story is told. They might tell the story from a particular character’s point of view. Or, they may decide to act out their chapter in role, with a speaking part each.

• Allow sufficient time for the children to plan and rehearse their retelling. Then tell the whole story as a class with each group performing their chapter. After the performance, talk about the different techniques used in the retelling and what they thought was particularly effective.

Writing

• Re-read pages 20 to 23, where the Queen is banished from the kingdom and the King destroys the wand. Ask: What might have happened if the King had made the Queen reverse the magic spell at this point?

• Talk about how this would change the story and which events from the original story would not have happened. Ask the children to think what might happen in this new version of the story. Encourage them to think about the characters actions, for example, how King Lir could have ensured the Queen carried out his wishes and how she would have reversed the spell. Ask: How would the children have felt? What might the King decide to do about the Queen afterwards?

• As a class activity, gather ideas, noting key points on the board. Encourage the children to discuss their ideas and to elaborate and build on suggestions from other children in the class.

• Ask the children to write new versions for the story ending. They can use the outline of the story created during the class discussion as a basis for their individual writing. Alternatively, they may want to write their own alternative ending. Encourage them to include details of characters’ thoughts and feelings as well as events and actions.

Links to the wider curriculum

Science
• Find out about swans: their habitats, life cycle, characteristics, etc.

Geography
• Look at a map of Ireland and find the lakes and rivers where swans might live.

Art and design
• Make paper feathers and use these to create a large class collage of a swan in flight.

Music
• Listen to some of Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake.
• Use minor chords to compose some music to suggest the singing of the swans.

PSHE and Citizenship
• The Queen’s behaviour was driven by jealousy. Talk about what makes us feel jealous and the effects this can have on ourselves and others.

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Background to the story

- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.
- There have been many versions of this ancient Chinese story, originally told as a poem. It is a journey story of personal discovery. Onomatopoeia, repetition and alliteration are used throughout to emphasise Mulan's courage, cleverness, and self-belief.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Ask: Do you already know the story of Mulan? Do you know in which country it is set?
- After reading the story, the children could find out about the famous Chinese archaeological discovery of the Emperor's Terracotta Army.
- Talk about any other stories the children may know where a character must assume a disguise in order to prove himself/herself.
- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: What do you think is going to happen in the story?
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Ask the children to read page 8 and find words that have been deliberately repeated. Help them to identify *much, much too young* and *much, much too old*. Talk about using repetition for emphasis.
- Pause at pages 22 and 23. Talk about the descriptions of Mulan's time as a soldier and how far she travelled. Talk about the cumulative effect of listing the number of years and the number of miles to emphasise the length of time and the distance.

Returning to the story

- Look at pages 10 and 11 and ask: What was each character thinking at this point in the story? Why do you think Mulan's parents were so worried about her decision?
- Notice the different spellings for the /igh/ phoneme. Encourage the children to look for examples, such as: *why* (page 4), *fight* (page 5), *ride* (page 9) and *tied* (page 14).
- Turn to page 29. Ask: How did the soldiers react to Mulan's revelation? What do you think the soldiers think about Mulan now?
- Ask: How do you think being a soldier might have changed Mulan?
Storytelling and Drama

• Re-read the final two pages of the story (pages 30 to 31). Using the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales as a prompt, talk about the type of things the soldiers would tell others about Mulan. What key events do the children think the soldiers would focus on? Record the children’s ideas on the board.

• Ask the children to work in pairs and, taking turns, to retell the story in role as soldiers who served under Mulan and then spread her story far and wide. They should imagine they are telling the story to someone who did not know about Mulan and had never heard of her story.

• Encourage the children to be as imaginative as possible in their retellings; they should focus on the character of Mulan, her courage and cleverness. They may want to elaborate on details of Mulan in battle and how she became a warrior and a leader.

Writing

• Re-read pages 17 and 18 when Mulan enters the army camp for the first time. Ask the children to think about how Mulan would have felt at this point in the story and write down key words on the board.

• Tell the children that they are going to imagine that they are Mulan writing a letter home to her family to tell them that she has arrived at the army camp. They should describe the events in detail, including when Mulan was challenged at the entrance and her first impressions of army life, the army camp and her fellow soldiers. They should talk about how Mulan felt – remind the children that this was the first test of Mulan’s disguise as a boy. Encourage the children to use exciting descriptive words in their writing.

• Model writing in the first person, e.g. “When I first tied up my hair and put on my armour I felt very strange, but also excited at what lay ahead.”

• When the children have completed their letters, if appropriate, ask some children to read them to the rest of the class. Encourage children reading their letters to read with expression. Invite other members of the class to comment on any descriptions or parts of the letter that they found particularly effective.

Links to the wider curriculum

Mathematics/History
• Create a timeline of key events in Chinese history and calculate the number of years between each event and the present day.

Geography
• Locate China on a map. Look at the terrain and find the mountainous regions. Compare its size with the UK.

Art and design
• Make Chinese fans, decorated with dragons.
• Try using brushes and black paint to copy traditional Chinese calligraphy.

Music
• Listen to traditional Chinese music; find images of Chinese musical instruments.

PE
• Create a dance sequence to represent the movements of soldiers training and fighting.

PSHE and Citizenship
• Mulan had to pretend to be a boy to join the army. Ask: Should we have to pretend to be something different from ourselves in order to succeed?

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**Background to the story**

- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.
- Many versions of this story have been told all over the world, with different types of beast. It teaches the reader not to judge by appearances. It is a journey of kindness overcoming adversity.

**Group/Guided reading**

**Introducing the story**

- Ask the children if they have heard of the story, ‘Beauty and the Beast’. They may have read it previously or seen a film version. After reading the story, help the children to compare it with different versions.
- Talk about stories where people are transformed into animals. How and why does this happen? If the children talk about magic spells, discuss how these spells can be broken.
- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: Do you think this is a happy or a sad story? Why?
- Look at pages 2 to 6 where the old woman casts her spell on the Prince. Ask: Why did the old woman want to teach the Prince a lesson?
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

**Reading the story**

- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Pause at page 8. Ask the children to read out the first two sentences, each beginning, Too late … Talk about how the repetition of this powerful sentence starter reinforces the Prince’s despair.
- On page 9, check that the children understand what a merchant is.
- At page 27, ask the children to explain how Bella gets back to the beast’s palace so quickly. If necessary refer back to the beast’s instructions on page 23.

**Returning to the story**

- Turn to pages 16 and 17. Ask: How do you think Bella’s father felt when his daughter went to live with the beast?
- Find the words enormous (page 2), poor (page 3), towards (page 4), claws (page 6), your (page 7), daughters (page 9), bought (page 11), roar (page 14), talk (page 20) and water (page 28). Notice how the /or/ sound is spelled differently in these words.
- Ask: Do you think the Prince deserved to be turned into a beast? What do you think he learned from the experience? Remind the children that Bella says they have both learned a lesson (page 31), ask: What did Bella learn?
Storytelling and Drama

- In groups of four, ask the children to plan and perform an oral retelling of the story. Provide copies of the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales to help remind the children of the key events in the story.
- In each group one child should act as narrator, to give the narrative and link each section of the story together. The other members of the group take on the roles of Bella, the Prince/beast and Bella’s father.
- For each event in the story, the characters say a line and what they are thinking, for example, as Bella arrives at the palace, she might say, “Such a beautiful palace!” and think, “I am frightened, but I must keep Father’s promise.” If you are using the story map as a prompt, you may want to tell the children to give the characters dialogue and voice their thoughts when each image is reached.
- Encourage them to use their voices and facial expressions to add characterisation to their performance.

Writing

- Together, list some words to describe how the Prince’s feelings changed throughout the story. (e.g. grumpy, happy, shock, despair, sorrow.)
- Model how to tell one section of the story from the Prince’s point of view, e.g. “I was a contented fellow to begin with, although for some reason people often called me grumpy.”
- Ask the children to continue the story, writing from the Prince/beast’s point of view. Encourage them to choose vocabulary that describes his feelings, with examples that show them, e.g. “I felt as though the bottom had dropped out of my world.”
- As a class, encourage the children to share examples of the Prince/beast’s thoughts and feelings from different points of the story.

Links to the wider curriculum

Mathematics
- Use mirrors to investigate symmetry.

Science
- Investigate plants, how they grow and what they need to survive.

History
- Use books or the internet to find out about merchants.

Art and design
- Draw the face of the Prince in close-up. Photocopy several copies for the children to work on, to show the Prince’s gradual change into a beast. You could also use an ICT program.

Music
- Compose some music to suggest the Prince changing into a beast, growing bigger and more terrifying.

PSHE and Citizenship
- Bella was frightened by the beast’s appearance, but this did not stop her from being kind to him. Discuss what qualities people have that make them good friends.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.