



## **Multicultural Fairy Tales -- The Stuff of Magic**

Curriculum Unit 04.02.01  
by Christine Elmore

Fairy tales from all over the world hold great appeal for children of all ages and backgrounds. They are stories filled with magic, high adventure, humor, gripping suspense and lavish settings. They allow children to identify with the hero or heroine in the arduous battle against evil where the 'good guy' usually wins in the end.

Multicultural fairy tales share common themes and address such larger questions as these for young people to consider: What is truth and why should anyone fight for it? What role does unselfishness play in our relationships with others? Can courage take many different forms? Is it urgent that justice be served? Who among us wouldn't be captivated by such magical tales where the good and the just often go on to live happily ever after!

I plan to use a selection of fairy tales from around the world as the basis of my curriculum unit in order to help my third-graders develop valuable insights into different cultures and their values. I also hope to lead them to the realization that there are identifiable universal themes of honesty, courage, etc., that all people share. These tales will, no doubt, be less familiar to American children and, in that sense, new and fresh, and so, hopefully, they will cause my students to make connections with some of the more familiar fairy tales with which they grew up.

Fairy tales are natural springboards for reading and writing development as well as for the study of other cultures. They will be an ideal source for examining more closely the key elements of a story, contrasting them with other stories, making character-studies (i.e., listing traits and idiosyncrasies), as well as for looking at point of view and narrative styles of writing.

Our focus in third grade is on literacy, helping third-graders develop and strengthen reading comprehension skills as well as write detailed and coherent responses to texts they've read. Great emphasis is also placed on being able to write multi-paragraph narratives. This unit will be interdisciplinary in scope (incorporating reading, writing listening, speaking, drama, art and social studies skills), and will, I believe, provide stories of high interest that will motivate even the most reluctant reader and writer. A good fairy tale leaves us spellbound, as if by magic. That, I think, is its real value.

## Introduction

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The term 'fairy tale' is actually quite modern, originating in France and entering the language in the 18th century. Interestingly, these tales are rarely about fairies but characteristically they do, according to Iona and Peter Opie in their book entitled *The Classic Fairy Tales*, "contain an enchantment or other supernatural element that is clearly imaginary" (p. 16). It is this element of magic that causes the reader to wonder, to speculate how we would react if we were involved in those same circumstances. The Opies call this license to wonder essential for children. They maintain that "this is the merit of the tales, that by going beyond possibility they enlarge our daily horizon" (p. 16).

In addition to stirring the imagination with their magic and fantasy, fairy tales can also be used to teach children ethics and morals. Rose Dobbs, in her book, *More Once-Upon-A-Time Stories*, explains that from these tales children learn "to respect the humble; not to underestimate the hidden strength of the weak; never to judge the value of a person or a thing from outward appearance; the consequences of choosing mischievous companions; and that kindness was sure to be rewarded" (Introduction, pages unnumbered). Such tales, says Tara McCarthy in her book, *Multicultural Fables and Fairy Tales*, "help children to clarify their own values and concerns about appropriate behavior, and to develop concepts about the meanings of big ideas such as truth, courage and kindness" (p. 5).

For this curriculum unit I have chosen fairy tales that include the following elements: 1) stock characters that are either all bad or all good; 2) a problem or task to be done; 3) the setting; 4) a source or person of magic; 5) a solution or reward; 6) repetitive features (i.e., once upon a time, they lived happily ever after, the recurrence of the number 3, etc.). They are either tales of royal romance or magical transformation.

I became intrigued with the different portrayals of princesses in the multicultural fairy tales I read and have found some princess characters who are rather fragile and sweet, leaving the rescuing prince to fight his battles alone. Other princesses who are exceedingly cunning, proactive, fearless and resolved, bring about the results they are after and change the course of events unaided. Regarding the princes, I have found some needing quite a bit of nurturing, beholden to witches, starstruck by the radiant beauty of a princess; and, in contrast, others who are very clever, aggressive, relentless in battle, strongly desiring to be transformed and driven to successfully perform the tasks asked of them. Dragons are another common character in fairy tales and they too vary in their make-up. Some dragons are evil to the core, repulsive in appearance, greedy, fierce and unfeeling and are destroyed in the end while others are simply waiting for an understanding being who brings about their transformation into a gentle, friendly, law-abiding companion.

Jack Zipes, in his book, *When Dreams Come True*, highlights the myriad of possible facets of the fairy tale including the cunning simpleton, the beautiful but maltreated daughter, the evil witch, the compassionate elves, the man-eating ogre, the fierce dragon, the kind, talking animals, the jealous stepmother, the greedy and unjust king, the magical forests, glass mountains, enchanted castles, the capes that make one invisible and the boots that allow one to move with great speed, and the swords that bring one victory----to name a few (p. 4-5). The purpose of all these facets selectively employed in fairy tales, says Zipes, is to "induce wonder" (p. 5). It is this wonder that distinguishes a fairy tale from other tales and short stories. The great appeal and, indeed, the cathartic quality comes from the ability of these fairy tales "to awaken our regard for the miraculous condition of life and to evoke in a religious sense profound feelings of awe and respect for life as a miraculous process, which can be altered and changed to compensate for the lack of power, wealth, and pleasure that most people experience" (p. 5).

My research on fairy tales has led me to many sources: picture books, anthologies, plays, and fairy tales on the internet. I found that read-aloud books, of course, were in abundance but books at the students' reading level took more effort to find. There is an easy way to determine the readability level of a particular story. It is called the Adapted Fry method. My literacy mentor at school recently taught this method to me and I suggest teachers use it when selecting fairy tales for guided reading or independent reading purposes. Very simply, you count the number of syllables in the first ten sentences of a passage and divide the sum by ten. This gives you the approximate grade level equivalent for the passage. A story is at third grade level if the syllables per sentence are within the range of 11.9 to 14.5. By using this method a teacher will be able to use fairy tales that the children can read on their own without a lot of difficulty.

### **Unit Objectives**

To become familiar with the major characteristics of fairy tales.

To compare and contrast different fairy tales.

To identify basic themes common in many fairy tales.

To explore roles of male and female characters.

To examine the varied portrayals of dragons and the use of kind animals in fairy tales.

To use fairy tales to reinforce the writing of narratives.

To strengthen reading comprehension skills through the use of fairy tales.

To write traditional and fractured fairy tales.

To study aspects of the culture from which each fairy tale derives.

### **Strategies**

To chart the basic elements of each fairy tale presented and regularly use it as a reference.

To locate the country from which each fairy tale originates on a world map and note its basic features (i. e., terrain, climate, surrounding bodies of water).

To study a story's illustrations and to use other research aids (i. e., encyclopedias) to learn how the people of that country dressed and lived in that time period.

To use a venn diagram to compare and contrast the various traits of the princesses, princes, and dragons featured in these fairy tales.

To use the various story frames in Nancy Boyles, *Teaching Written Response to Text* , to help students reflect on and formulate quality written responses to open-ended questions about the fairy tales.

To use fractured fairy tale plays as springboards for writing one's own version of a fairy tale in narrative or play form.

## **Meeting New Haven’s Literacy Standards**

The New Haven school district’s emphasis on literacy is targeted in all aspects of this unit. As students listen to or read each fairy tale, they will be asked to demonstrate strategic reading skills before, during and after reading (Reading/ Literature content standard 1.0). They will be asked to make predictions, reread, sequence, make inferences about and summarize each tale presented.

The students will also be asked to demonstrate successful writing behavior by formulating brief written responses to questions about each tale (Writing content standard 2.0). They will further participate in a wide variety of writing experiences, including the writing of traditional and fractured fairy tales. By participating in Readers Theatre they will also meet the requirements of the Speaking content standard 3.0.

I teach third-grade in a self-contained classroom at Vincent Mauro School in New Haven. My students are primarily of Hispanic and African-American descent, a heterogeneous group with varying abilities in the seven-to ten age range. Although I have designed this unit with them in mind, I am confident that it could easily be used by teachers of K-5, if not older.

The lessons in this unit will be introduced two to three times a week for a period of 45-60 minutes over a four month period. My curriculum unit is divided into five sections:

Section I The Genre of Fairy Tales

Section II Fairy Tales Featuring Princes, Princesses and Magical Transformations

Section III Fairy Tales Featuring Dragons

Section IV Fairy Tales Featuring Kind Talking Animals

Section V Writing a Fairy Tale

## **Section I The Genre of Fairy Tales**

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In this section the genre of Fairy Tales will be introduced. Discussion of story elements and fairy tale components will ensue. A large chart organizer (suggested by McCarthy in her aforementioned book) will allow us to chart information gained from each tale (i. e., good people, bad people, magic, tasks, rewards, etc.). As each fairy tale is read, we will fill in the data and then compare and contrast aspects of the various tales. A bulletin board display with a multi-windowed castle will be used as a second reference where main characters will be drawn and placed in the castle’s windows. A large world map will also be on display and, using yarn, we will locate the country in which each fairy tale originates.

Nancy Boyles in her aforementioned book divides books to use in eliciting quality written reflections from students into two categories. Read-alouds are the first category to be used for whole-group instruction. Such books, according to Boyles, are “wonderful sources for literature response because they eliminate whatever challenges children may encounter during the reading process and allow everyone to focus on the thinking process associated with the response itself” (p. 6). I designate this type of story with a capital R in this unit.

The second category are Teach books (designated by a capital T) and are also of high interest and at the students' reading level. They will be used in small group settings where the teacher directs the students' study of the story, using discussion, modeling comprehension strategies and guiding and monitoring closely student attempts at strategic thinking.

There are a suggested series of open-ended questions and story frames in Boyles' book that will help students to think about basic narrative story elements and aid them in retelling, synthesizing and understanding the story. They include:

1. What is the problem in this text? Give specific details.
2. How does [character] solve his or her problem in this story?
3. Summarize briefly what happens in this story.
4. Choose one word best describing [character] and give evidence from the story.
5. What was your first reaction to this story? Use details.
6. How can you tell that [character] cared about \_\_\_\_\_?

It is essential that the teacher model written responses to these questions in order for the students to see what a quality response consists of.

In addition to questions, a teacher can also use answer frames that provide more structure to the response. Students can later be weaned off these frames when they are ready to write responses more independently, using a paragraph format. Below is a sample of such an answer frame structured after Nancy Boyles' example on p. 67.

This fairy tale is about a main character named \_\_\_\_\_ and it takes place in \_\_\_\_\_. The problem in this tale is \_\_\_\_\_. One important event that happens as the characters try to solve this problem is \_\_\_\_\_. A second important event is \_\_\_\_\_. A third important event is \_\_\_\_\_. Finally the problem in this fairy tale is solved when \_\_\_\_\_. At the end of the fairy tale \_\_\_\_\_.

I plan to begin this unit by reading aloud several multicultural fairy tales. Besides the fact that children love to be read to, it is also a way to capture their hearts and nurture a love of this genre. Fairy tales in the past were transmitted orally, by personal recitation, from generation to generation. By reproducing this direct manner of transmission, I will be reinforcing the personal atmosphere of fairy tales so congenial to their nature.

What follows is a selection of fairy tales that I plan to use in my unit. In addition to charting story elements, eliciting written responses to specific questions using the strategies mentioned above for each tale, I have provided another reading or writing activity that suits the tale being presented.

## Section II Fairy Tales with Princes, Princesses and Magical Transformations

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### *How Janet Fought Against the Queen of Elves -- A Fairy Tale from Scotland (R)*

This fairy tale is found in an anthology entitled *Celtic Tales* retold by Elena Chmelová. It features Janet, a sweet, young, inexperienced maiden who meets Tam, a human being who has been reduced to an elf by an evil troll's spell. Janet is emboldened to rescue him from the clutches of the elf-queen and her entourage of elves. Janet demonstrates courageous resolve when holding onto Tam while he transforms from an elf to a lizard to a snake to a glowing coal and finally to a handsome young man. She effectively breaks the spell of the elf-queen, falls in love with Tam and they go on to live in happiness and contentment.

In an effort to focus on the inner transformation of Janet rather than the outward transformation of Tam, I will ask my students to consider the following questions: What is Janet's challenge? How is she different at the story's ending from what she was at the beginning? Which character traits affected the manner in which she solved her problem? Making a diamond fold as demonstrated on page 10 of Dea Paoletta Auray and Barbara Mariconda's book, *Easy Art Activities that Spark Super Writing*, students will draw a "before" and "after" version of Janet, focusing on her expression, manner and tasks. They will have to use their imaginations, as there are few illustrations included in this story.

### *Starlight Princess -- A Fairy Tale from India (R)*

This fairy tale is found in an anthology of princess stories entitled *The Starlight Princess and Other Princess Stories* retold by Annie Dalton. It is a beautifully told royal romance whose main characters each have a special gift. Magically emanating from the princess are silvery rays (thus her name, Starlight Princess) which she uses to light up her father's kingdom at night. Although her parents tried to shelter her, she very firmly makes it clear that her light is meant to be shared with everyone.

The Rajah's son possesses the gift of understanding the language of every wild creature on the earth. These two young people fall immediately in love upon meeting. Of course, the princess's father resists their request to marry and demands that the Rajah's son accomplish three difficult tasks. With the help of some wild creatures that he has helped, the Rajah's son completes the tasks and wins the hand of the very willing princess.

The princess actually assists the Rajah's son with his third feat using a strand of her silky hair to help split a tree. Like Janet, this princess is very proactive, confident and knows what she wants. Then again, so does the prince. In this tale the prince takes a magic carpet ride when he first goes to meet the princess. I plan to use this element of the story as a model for the writing of a main event in a narrative. Well-written main events balance action, description and dialogue. Auray and Mariconda, in their aforementioned book, offer some strategies for planning the writing of one's adventure on a magic carpet (p. 72-75). Lesson Plan I will provide the necessary details.

### *The Egg Prince -- A Fairy Tale from Africa (R)*

In this fairy tale taken from the aforementioned anthology, it is clearly Lebou, the princess, who is the strong, well-developed character in the story. Lebou is as strong and cunning as she is pretty and she uses these traits to gain for herself a husband both handsome and loyal to her. She is the one who has to spend endless

hours nurturing him from egg to man using magic ointment and herbs to help him grow healthy and strong. Highly resourceful, Lebou even provides him with his royal garb so that he is rendered presentable to the people of his village. She does not consider herself trapped in any marriage agreement that her father has made on her behalf and threatens more than once to run away if Prince Egg doesn't turn out to suit her. In fact, the story's ending has Lebou saving the eggshells that could land the prince right back in the egg, just in case the marriage doesn't work out. Lebou is another example of a very capable princess undeterred by obstacles and resolved to bend events to her advantage.

This tale lends itself to a retelling through Readers Theatre. After listening to the tale, students will be asked to write a play that tells the story of the egg prince. They will be shown other simple scripts used in Readers Theatre that they can pattern their play after. One good resource for this is Suzanne I. Barchers's *Multicultural Folktales: Readers Theatre for Elementary Students*. The students will be given ample time to rehearse before presenting the play to the whole class. It is through the readers' expressive readings that meaning will be conveyed rather than through actions, costumes or props. The primary aim of Readers Theatre after all is to promote reading.

I also plan to use a venn diagram to compare and contrast the princesses in these selected fairy tales with ones found in traditional tales such as Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel and Snow White. Written descriptions of these princesses would serve two purposes: 1) students would gain practice in describing a story character in specific ways that differentiate one from another; and 2) it will give students ideas about what kind of princess they will use in their written fairy tales.

#### *Neem the Half Boy -- A Fairy Tale from Persia (R)*

This fairy tale is in picture book format and is written by Idries Shah. The illustrations are filled with Islamic architecture and ancient Persian dress. Even the fairies are dressed in such attire! It is a wiseman, Arif, who aids the young prince, Neem, in his quest to become a whole boy. He is only a half-boy now because his mother, the queen, did not heed Arif's words to eat the whole magic apple given to her. Neem sets out courageously to confront Taneen, a fire-breathing dragon and get the special medicine found in his cave that will cause him to become whole. At first, Taneen seems an insurmountable challenge but as they converse (in a very civilized manner) Neem discovers that all the dragon wants is a stove on which to cook his food. He would then be more than willing to give up his fire-breathing ways and live quietly in his cave. Neem's magical transformation to a whole boy not only brings him great satisfaction, but it also influences the well-being of the whole kingdom. This tale, by the way, could just as easily fit in the next section about dragons.

This fairy tale provides a springboard for further exploration of the traditions, dress and architecture of this ancient culture. I envision students pairing up to do simple research in the library on different aspects of Persian culture.

#### *The Princess on the Glass Hill - A Fairy Tale from Norway (T)*

This story is one of seven tales found in Virginia Haviland's *Favorite Fairy Tales told in Norway*. This tale's hero is Cinderlad, the youngest of three sons, who, through both courage and cunning, is able to tame and befriend 3 different magical horses. These horses later help him climb the glass hill and win the hand of the fair princess. The villains are his two older brothers, who, jealous of his success, try at every turn to hinder him.

One activity very appropriate for this tale involves having the students compare and contrast Cinderlad with Cinderella. Both, for example, slept in the ashes and were continuously ridiculed by their older siblings. Such a



comparison would also reveal differences such as the fact that Cinderella won the prince through the aid of a fairy godmother whereas Cinderlad had to rely on his own wits. As part of this post-reading activity I would have my students sketch pictures of both characters and then encircle the pictures with specific character traits that each possessed. Using a graphic organizer, the individual traits would be listed in separate boxes on one side of the sheet and quotes from the tales that depict each trait would be written in boxes directly across from them. Having gotten a sense for the characters' personalities, the students would then be asked to take on the point of view of Cinderella and Cinderlad and write a journal entry that they imagine could be written by each.

*Frog Princess -- A Fairy Tale from Italy (T)..*

This fairy tale is found in a collection of Italian tales retold by Michael J. Caduto entitled *the Crimson Elf: Italian Tales of Wisdom*. In this story a very level-headed princess, turned into a frog by an evil curse, aids Pietro, the youngest of three sons, in the successful completion of two tasks asked of him and his brothers by their father, the king. Pietro, with success at hand, asks her to be his wife and instantly the frog transforms into the radiant Queen Isabella and together they reign over his father's kingdom.

This story lends itself well to the teaching of skills in writing a vivid description of an object. In this tale each prospective princess is asked by the king to produce finely woven cloth and to care for a puppy put in their charge. One of the fabrics is described as "smooth as the fur of a newborn fawn" (p. 31). I would demonstrate through such examples how similes can help vividly describe something. Students would be asked to choose between one of these objects from the story to further describe, initially in list form and later in prose form, using lots of sensory details. I would pattern my lesson after the ones given on pages 40-48 of Auray's and Mariconda's aforementioned book. See Lesson Plan II for more details.

### **Section III -- Fairy Tales with Dragons**

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*Mei-Ling and the Dragon -- A Fairy Tale from China (T))*

This fairy tale is found in Tara McCarthy's book, *Multicultural Fables and Fairy Tales*. Insistent that the fierce dragon, who lived at the top of the mountain, come to her birthday party, the kind-hearted Mei-Ling attempts three times to go to his home and invite him. Two times she is scared off by the dragon's fire-breathing antics and harsh words. But the third time she stands her ground and repeats her invitation. The dragon is charmed by her courage and kindness and agrees to go. A gift of their friendship takes the form of a river formed by the dragon's tears that provides water to the fields of the village, ending famine that has long plagued it. From then on, the dragon becomes a welcomed visitor and also a symbol of good luck, As for Mei-Ling, she is honored by her people and goes on to live happily.

As McCarthy suggests, this story lends itself well to a study of the homes and clothing of ancient China as well as of the dragon as an important symbol in the culture of China.

*Constantes and the Dragon -- A Fairy Tale from Greece (T))*

This fairy tale is taken from an anthology entitled *Favorite Fairy Tales Told Around the World* retold by Virginia Haviland. In this tale the youngest brother, Constantes, saves himself and his brothers from a horrible death



through his resourcefulness and cunning. He tricks the dragon and his wife and facilitates their escape but not before stealing the dragoness's ring. As often happens, the eldest brother later becomes jealous of Constantes because he has the ring. He persuades the king to demand that Constantes steal the dragon's diamond coverlet for him. An old woman assists him in the successful accomplishment of his mission. The envious brother then persuades the greedy and not very bright king that he must have the dragon's horse and bell and later the dragon himself. Constantes outwits the dragon and accomplishes his feats. It is the jealous brother in the end who gets what he deserves when he opens the dragon's coffin.

The dragon in this tale is more like a warlord, owning land, fine clothes and other valuable possessions. He is more human-like than beast-like, more intelligent than the other two dragons we have encountered thus far in our readings.

This story is rich in events and action and would serve well as a model to summarize using Nancy Boyles' answer frame.

#### *Liam Donn -- A Fairy Tale from Ireland (R)*

This fairy tale is taken from the anthology, *Celtic Tales*, and centers around a youngest son, Liam, who must go out in the world and find Una the White Handed, youngest daughter of the King of Greece. He must successfully accomplish this feat as the continuing good fortune of his father, the King of Ireland, depends on it. Unhesitatingly, he sets out, his mother's magical loaves of bread in hand. Liam has to combat three uncles transformed by spells into hideous giants. With great strength, perseverance and a healthy dose of outrage prompting him, Liam wins each battle with the help of his mother's bread. In a very dramatic scene, he finds Una chained to some rocks, put there by a vile three-headed dragon. A fierce and long battle ensues and Liam wins.

Reminiscent of Cinderella, Liam leaves a shoe behind as the cheering crowd whisks him away after his victory. It is the princess's turn to seek him out. The king's soldiers go door to door, having men of all walks of life trying on the shoe. Finally, they come to Liam's cottage. Once he is identified he is taken to the royal palace where he happily marries Una.

This colorful tale includes an excellent example of a main event and would be another good model for the students to pattern their writings after. The topic would be describing their adventure as they go on their quest to rescue a fair maiden or prince from a fierce dragon.

## **Section IV -- Fairy Tales with Kind, Talking Animals**

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#### *The Tongue-cut Sparrow -- A Fairy Tale from Japan (T)*

This tale is taken from McCarthy's book and is one where there are characters that are all good and all bad. The villain is an old woman neighbor who cut out the tongue of an old couple's pet sparrow because she hates his song. With the aid of a talking crow, field mouse and bat the old couple, highly distressed about the disappearance of their beloved pet, find the bird and there is a happy reunion. After a pleasant visit, they prepare to leave and are given a choice between a small and a large basket to take home. The woman, ever thoughtful and unselfish, chooses the small one which she finds later is full of gold. The neighbor, eager to

also procure such riches, finds out how to get to the sparrow's home. Greedy as she is, she takes the large basket home which ends up being full of horrible creatures who fly away with her.

The lesson is quite clear and the tale lends itself well to a discussion about greed and unselfishness. The tale could be compared with other tales of greed, like *Rumpelstiltskin* and *The King with the Golden Touch* .

The Dolphin -- A Fairy Tale from Mallorca (R))

This fairy tale consists of three chapters, but I will be using only the first chapter, which is a complete story in itself. It is found in a book entitled *A Book of Magic Animals* by Ruth Manning Sanders. In this story a friendly dolphin helps a fisherman and his wife catch a special fish that brings about the birth of twins, Peter and Anna. His only stipulation is that he be made godfather of the children. Near this village lives a king staying at his summer palace. He has a beautiful daughter named Nina. The king seeks to foil her suitors' attempts to win her hand. Peter is among her suitors even though he is only a lowly fisherman. The dolphin helps Peter fulfill the tasks that the unfair king gives him to do. In the end, the dolphin frees Peter from imprisonment and helps him reunite with Nina. Peter's loyal twin, Anna, agrees to become the dolphin's wife if he frees Peter from the king's prison and the story ends with Anna riding on the back of the dolphin.

What does Anna see under the sea as she rides on the back of the dolphin? Indeed, what does it feel like to ride on a dolphin's back? What kind of dangers might they face and they journey through the water? I will ask my students to consider these questions and put themselves on the dolphin's back. They will be asked to write a detailed description of such an underwater setting using their five senses. This is another important component of narrative writing that my students need practice in.

The Three Feathers -- A Fairy Tale from Germany (T))

This fairy tale is found in McCarthy's book and involves a king who sends his three sons on three separate missions to get a carpet, a ring and a woman for him. The two lazy brothers put no effort into their undertakings, thinking that anything will do for their father while Noodle, the youngest son, takes his mission very seriously and with the aid of a kind but somewhat intimidating toad succeeds in his quest to bring his father the finest carpet, the most beautiful ring and the loveliest woman. It is the toad itself that magically turns into a beautiful princess because Noodle, with his courage and bravery, has broken the spell of an evil witch. Noodle and the princess fall in love, marry with his father's blessings, and go on to rule the kingdom.

This story can quite easily be retold in play form and through Readers Theatre students can retell this story.

## Section V -- Writing a Fairy Tale

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My students will be ready to try their hand at writing their own fairy tales after being immersed in this genre for many weeks. The chart depicting the elements of each fairy tale read will be a valuable resource as they begin to plan their stories. I will remind them that they are to follow narrative format and write a story with a beginning, middle and end.

A very simple process for writing a traditional tale will be to begin with a graphic organizer with space to write the names of two characters, a setting and a problem. They will then go on to 'add meat to the bones' and tell

their story using elaborative detail to describe the characters, the setting and the events that lead up to the problem as well as the solution. I will remind them to include a touch of magic in their tales.

A second type of writing lesson would be to have students write fractured fairy tales. Two good resources for this are Justin McCory Martin's *12 Fabulous Funny Fairy Tale Plays* and J. M. Wolf's *Cinderella Outgrows the Glass Slipper and Other Zany Fractured Fairy Tale Plays*. Wolf suggests that fractured fairy tales help young people view fairy tales from a different perspective, keeping the question of 'what if' in mind (p. 4). Students could work in pairs, taking notes on the elements of traditional fairy tales and then mixing the elements of these stories together. What if, for example Snow White meets the Big Bad Wolf? Through experimentation students could come up with some highly original tales to share with the class.

Again, since our emphasis in third grade is on writing narrative stories, the students will be asked to write their fractured fairy tales in narrative format, following the Empowering Writers diamond which includes: a dazzling beginning, a description of setting, creating suspense, a main event and an extended ending. Lesson Plan III will provide a more detailed description of this type of lesson.

## Lesson Plan I

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Objectives: To create a fully elaborated main event for a narrative.

Materials: Chart paper, larger markers, writing paper and pencils, *Neem The Half-Boy* by Idries Shah.

Procedure: 1. After reading aloud Shah's book, revisit the pages again focusing more intently on the architecture of the buildings, the dress of the people, the view Neem had from the magic carpet. Elicit 'I wonder' responses to the idea of what it would be like to ride on a magic carpet like Neem did.

2. Tell the class they will be writing about an adventure they had while taking a magic carpet ride. Divide a piece of chart paper in to 4 sections labeled: exclamation, observations, slow motion actions and thoughts/feelings. As a whole group have students offer their ideas as you chart them.

3. Tell the students you will be modeling the writing of a main event with their help. The paragraph might begin with an exclamation like: "I couldn't believe I was actually up in the sky riding on a magic carpet!"

4. With the students' assistance, write the main event on chart paper using a balance of action, description and dialogue. Keep this writing on display.

5. As students prepare to write their own versions, provide them with a chart of the following questions:

How did you feel as you were lifted into the sky?

What did you hold on to?

How did the carpet move?

Where was it heading?

Were you up very high?

What did you see above and below?

Did you exclaim anything as you rode along?

Did anyone notice you?

What were some of the interesting sights and sounds?

6. As students write, circulate among them and offer them the opportunity to share portions of their story with the class. Also, have them read their first drafts to a partner who can offer their response and suggestions.

(Adapted from a lesson in *Easy Art Activities that Spark Super Writing* by Dea Paoletta Auray and Barbara Mariconda).

## Lesson Plan II

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Objective: To introduce elaborative detail as a way to describe an object.

Materials: Chart paper, large markers, writing paper and pencils, drawing paper, crayons, “Frog Princess” in *The Crimson Elf: Italian Tales of Wisdom* by Michael J. Caduto.

Procedure: 1. After reading *Frog Princess* go back to reread the sections of the story describing the fabric woven by the princesses. Pass around samples of fabric of different sorts to help students appreciate the wide variety than can be found.

2. Using large chart paper, create a web with outreaching lines that divide the paper into many sections. Write questions above each section such as:

What is the texture of the cloth?

What colors are in it?

What is it decorated with?

How heavy is it?

What is the fabric made of?

What could be made out of it?

Is it similar to any fabric you have seen before?

Is it delicate for durable?

3. Have students work in small groups, each using a different kind of fabric. Have them turn their ideas into

complete sentences using such sentence starters as:

The fabulous fabric had...

It was the color of...

I stared at...

It was decorated with...

I loved the...

Around the edges were...

It seemed to be made of...

4. Tell the students that they will now imagine that they have been asked to weave the most incredible fabric for the king. They will be painting a picture with words and are to use the charts on display to help them write a description with lots of elaboration. Students write their descriptions and then draw a picture that matches their written description.

5. Display the students' work in the classroom.

(Adapted from a lesson in *Easy Art Activities that Spark Super Writing* by Dea Paoletta Auray and Barbara Mariconda).

## Lesson Plan III

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Objective: To mix the elements of traditional fairy tales to create fractured fairy tale versions following the narrative format.

Materials: Chart paper, large markers, writing paper, pencils, an assortment of traditional fairy tales, Justin McCory Martin's *12 Fabulously Funny Fairy Tale Plays*.

Procedure: 1. Ask the class to tell you what their favorite fairy tale is and list them on chart paper.

2. For each tale, chart its main elements on large chart paper one after another.

3. Offer the students some models by having them read a number of plays found in Martin's book, such as *Spiderella*, *Little Late Riding Hood*, and *Rafunzel*. The emphasis will be on writing narrative stories so the plays will simply serve to give students ideas of how they can mix up events, character traits, settings, etc. when writing their tales.

3. Provide each student with a graphic organizer that lists the following fairy tale elements: characters (heroes and villains), setting, magic, tasks to perform and rewards. Students are to use this to organize their fractured fairy tale. Tell them that with a partner they are to mix the elements of two tales or change the circumstances

of the tale to create a unique tale of their own. Because these are fairy tales they need to employ some of this genre's distinct features such as the traditional ways to begin and end (i.e., once upon a time, they lived happily ever after), the use of the number three, the use of magic, the necessity of performing certain feats before succeeding, etc.

4. Circulate among the students as they write, offering encouragement and suggestions.

5. Follow the writers workshop format, holding conferences to help students move from their first drafts to their final drafts.

6. Author's chair will offer students the opportunity to share their fractured fairy tales with the class.

## Teacher Bibliography

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Auray, Dea Paoletta and Barbara Mariconda. *Easy Art Activities That Spark Super*

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eye-opener! The illustrations depict the horror quite vividly.

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McCarthy, Tara. *Multicultural Fables and Fairy Tales*. New York: Scholastic Inc.,

1992. The multicultural stories are presented in simplified format ideal to be used as 'teach' books. Along with each story is an objective, a summary, ways to present the story and extension activities to use with your students.

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This book presents a very interesting introduction as well as an array of classic fairy tales which can be used for read-aloud purposes.

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York: Routledge, 1999. In this book the author provides us with a sociohistorical framework (from the 16th to the 20th century) by which we can study the classical tradition of literary fairy tales in Western society. He explains the pivotal role fairy tales have played in imparting values and norms to both young and old readers.

--: (ed.). *The Outspoken Princess and the Gentle Knight: A Treasury of Modern Fairy Tales*. New York: Bantam Books, 1994. This book offers a collection of fairy tales that present a modern vision of the world with such characters as rebellious princesses and pacifistic knights. These tales challenge old-fashioned ideas while still possessing age-old themes.

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Duder, Tessa. *Dragons*. Crystal lake, Illinois: Rigby, 1996. This 'teach' book offers a brief history of the mythical dragon beginning with one from Babylonia. We see how dragons are portrayed in other cultures as well as their depiction by modern writers and film makers.

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