



Stage 5

The Magic Paintbrush

Storyteller Notes

Many tales from the Orient are great for teaching morals through magical storylines. However, their plots are less refrain based than stories like *The Little Red Hen*, and can quickly appear long and rambling for younger years. Hence our decision to tie actions to key words, keeping your children on their toes and listening throughout. This is similar to our technique in *The Big Carrot*, except here the children are taught the actions first so that (as in *The King and His Wish*) they don't interrupt the flow of the narrative – especially important since there is no repetitive structure to suggest where the actions occur.

We have already seen how 'story space' can aid the memorisation of stories and avoid restlessness. Here we get to enjoy another benefit of the technique: making the impossible possible! Notice how I use my fingers and eyes to shape and place the paintings as they become real. A good example is the feast, which I really get my teeth stuck into! Story space can also turn into participation, such as when your children become waves.

Combine story space and participation yourself, and you should find it even easier to keep your children engaged in a long telling. For instance, you could decide that Ho is going to paint animals (as in the original traditional tale). After producing your imaginary painting (or a real one if you're good enough!), ask a child to come to the front and make the shape and noise of that animal. Poof! Ho's painting will have become real. An added tip is to pick your most excitable children first, as this often draws them so far into the story world that they will fidget less, and be more ready to join in group actions such as the creation of the waves.

Written by Chip Colquhoun

Chip is a professional storyteller and a reviewer of children's literature. Chip visits schools and theatres all over the UK with his storytelling colleague, Amy Robinson. Find out more at www.snailtales.org