

The Story Spirits: Storytelling tips and Learning tools

Before narration:

Introduce the story as being based on a folktale from Vietnam.

Author's note: I've read a Korean version of the tale which is very similar to the Vietnamese version.

Storytelling:

- Use simple gestures and show facial expressions for the:
 - Scheming ghosts
 - Grandfather listening to spirits (with ear pressed against door)
 - Angry prince stomping away
- Try using different character voices
- Ask the children to guess how the grandfather thwarts each of the spirits' plots before revealing it to them. You may ask, "And do you know what the grandfather said (or did)?"

After narration:

- Ask the children to:
 - Describe the characteristics of the prince, grandfather, and spirits
 - Talk about any tales they heard from their grandparents

Extended activity:

- Perform the story in class with students
- Ask the children to write their own version of the tale swapping the spirits' plots with their own
- Ask the children to notice the outfits of the characters in the illustrations. How are they different from those of their country?
- Stepping off a palanquin onto a sack of rice on reaching the bride's house is a wedding custom. Ask the children to research other wedding customs and present in class

Reading Comprehension:

Ask the children:

- 1) Why were the spirits upset with the prince?
- 2) Describe other ways the grandfather could have saved the prince from each danger
- 3) What is the synonym of the word "plotted" in the story?
- 4) Imagine what the wedding scene would look like and describe it in a few sentences
- 5) "Not seeing the thousand, tiny, hidden spears, the angry prince stomped off without saying a word."
 - a) What do "spears" refer to in the sentence above?
 - b) What is this usage called?

Answer Key

- 1) The prince refused to narrate the stories to others and help the spirits move on. Instead he selfishly trapped them in a room.
- 2) Left up to the students' imagination
- 3) Schemed
- 4) Left up to the students' imagination. Multicultural descriptions of wedding scenes can be beautiful to read and share between students in class
- 5) (a) The prickly thorns (b) Metaphorical