

The Happy Prince and Other Storytelling Tales

By Evan Guilford-Blake

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Dedication

*For Melody Robb, without whom there would have been
no stories to tell.*

ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

There's nothing like real, live storytellers to catch the eye, the attention and the imagination of youngsters. With these six tales, each told by a pair of storytellers, students can go on an enchanted voyage, whether they're in a classroom, library, auditorium, cafeteria or theatre. Let your young audiences connect, learn, and be entertained through these inventive scripts in one of the oldest forms of entertainment -- storytelling!

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ANANSI AND HIS CHILDREN - The classic African folk tale of a man, his unusually named children, a fish—and how the moon came to be. *(Grades K-5) - 8 minutes.*

BONES - A spooky, comic tale about a girl, a skeleton and a fabulous treasure. *(Grades K-4) - 7 minutes.*

THE DOLL'S GHOST - An English story about a mysterious doll and how it rescues the daughter of the doll maker who cared for it. *(Grades 2-5) - 14 minutes.*

THE HAPPY PRINCE - The Oscar Wilde classic about the true meaning of friendship. *(Grades 3-9) - 12 minutes.*

THE SPIRIT IN THE BOTTLE - A Brothers Grimm tale of an ingenious girl and the genie she discovers. *(Grades 2-6) - 12 minutes.*

SWEET PORRIDGE - Suggested by the Brothers Grimm tale, this is the story of a young boy, his carpenter mother, a witch and a wonderful pot. *(Grades 2-5) - 12 minutes.*

NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

I suggest the performers look for as many different ways to present the material as they can: Multiple voices, accents, postures and hand movements are all useful. The stories don't have to be memorized, but being familiar with them, as an actor would be with any script, is very helpful -- the tellers will be able to concentrate on making contact with the characters and the audience if they don't have to "read" the text.

The technique involves switching from character to narrator to another character, sometimes in a single line. The characters often have "conversations," although, because it's storytelling rather than a play, they are often punctuated with "he said" / "she said."

They are designed to be presented without sets or costumes; the theatricality stems from the storytellers' use of their voices to depict the characters as well as the setting, through the words themselves and through gestures.

Lighting and sound can help, but it's suggested no props, except perhaps a large storybook, be used, and that the audience, if relatively small, be literally at the storytellers' feet, or that, in the case of a larger audience, the storytellers be able to move among them. The text suggests several places where the storytellers interact with the audience, but it's appropriate for them to interact at others as well, particularly to ask them questions at various points in the story.

The scripts as written indicate a "cast" of one woman and one man, but the pieces may be told by any two persons. The gender of the characters should not be an impediment.

ANANSI AND HIS CHILDREN

WOMAN: Hi, I'm (NAME).

MAN: And I'm (NAME).

WOMAN: And we've got a story for you

MAN: About a man

WOMAN: And his six children — all of whom had very unusual names

MAN: That takes place in Africa.

WOMAN: Are you all ready? All right then ... One day, a long time ago, a man named Anansi came rushing out of his tent to announce ...

MAN: I have a child! I have a child!

WOMAN: Now, the people of his village weren't at all surprised,

MAN: For Anansi and his wife, Aso, already had five children.

WOMAN: But what did surprise them, always, were the names the children had.

MAN: We *haven't* named them; they brought their own names with them!

WOMAN: Indeed. I was at the birth of the first. She came out and—do you think she cried? -- No! She announced: My name is See Trouble.

MAN: And the second: Road Builder,

WOMAN: Then River Drinker, and Stone Thrower

MAN: And - Cushion.

WOMAN: Cushion! Of all things!

MAN: Perhaps their names *are* odd, but they seem to have special talents that no one else possesses. See Trouble can look anywhere there is trouble and see it. Stone Thrower can hurl a rock a hundred yards and drive a nail into a board with it.

WOMAN: And Cushion? Does she serve as a pillow for your feet when they are tired?

MAN: To which Anansi replied: She is young; her talent hasn't yet been revealed.

WOMAN: And, just then, Aso came out of the tent, carrying a baby. Anansi, she said, here is our new son.

MAN: Ah, Aso: And has he announced *his* name ...?

WOMAN: (*With a sigh.*) He has: Game Skinner.

MAN: The villagers were shocked!

BOTH: Game Skinner!

MAN: They cried.

WOMAN: I will never understand children being named things like Cushion and Road Builder

MAN: Or See Trouble

WOMAN: Or River Drinker.

MAN: And what about Stone Thrower?!

WOMAN: But, as time went on, Anansi and Aso raised their six children; and they grew and grew. And then, one day...

MAN: It is time, See Trouble, that I travel to the next village to help with their harvest.

WOMAN: Travel safely, Father.

MAN: I shall. You are the oldest. Take care of your brothers and sisters. And your mother.

WOMAN: I will, Father.

MAN: Farewell, then, See Trouble.

WOMAN: And so Anansi set forth along the road, on a clear day; and then, as he neared a large river, he came upon ...

MAN: What is this? A silver ball that gleams so. Magnificent! As bright and magnificent as this river in the sunlight.

WOMAN: He tucked it into his sack and sat down to rest. And as he did, he heard strange music.

MAN: What is this sound? he said – and suddenly, a huge fish broke the surface of the river and spoke to him!

WOMAN: It is our music.

MAN: *Fish* music?

WOMAN: Why not? Humans make music, why shouldn't fish?

MAN: Why not? But how?

WOMAN: We make it in a secret, special way. Come closer, I will whisper it to you.

MAN: Anansi leaned forward and the fish swam closer to the shore, and said softly

WOMAN: It is the music of the rumbling of our empty bellies.

MAN: And so saying, the fish opened her mouth

WOMAN: And swallowed Anansi in one gulp!

MAN: Ohhhhhhhh.....!

WOMAN: He cried, but the fish dived to the bottom of the river with him in its belly.

MAN: Ohhhhhh! Helllpppppp meeeeeeeeeee...

WOMAN: And there he stayed, for no one could hear his cries. And at last he said:

MAN: Alas. But someone will rescue me. And whoever does, I will give this silver ball.

WOMAN: Now, many days passed

MAN: And Aso became worried.

WOMAN: Children, she said, your father has been gone far too long. I am afraid some trouble has befallen him.

MAN: And she turned to See Trouble.

WOMAN: I will look for him,

MAN: See Trouble said, and she looked toward the road Anansi had taken, and saw ...

WOMAN: He has been swallowed by a fish!

MAN: A fish? said Stone Thrower. But where is it?

WOMAN: At the bottom of a great river!

MAN: Then we must rescue him. Come, my brothers and sisters. Father needs us! We must go through the forest; it's the shortest route.

WOMAN: And so all six children set off. But the forest was dense and hilly, and it was filled with boulders and brush...

MAN: We can't get through this. It's too thick.

WOMAN: Here, Stone Thrower. Let me clear it.

MAN: And Road Builder took her machete and tree after tree fell,

WOMAN: And with her hands she pulled the roots from the ground

MAN: And, slowly, a road formed through the forest and they continued on.

WOMAN: There! she said.

MAN: We're through! shouted Game Skinner, the youngest. And look—there is the river.

WOMAN: And they hurried to it, only to find it was wide, long—and deep.

End of Freeview

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