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LONG LIVE US! – NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Edel Wignell ©

Edel Wignell, 2011, **Long Live Us!** ill. Peter Allert,
a fractured folk tale for children, 7-10 years
Interactive Publications (IP Kidz), Brisbane,
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Fractured folk tales are fun for everyone. Children who are familiar with folk tales can play with them in many ways, meanwhile learning in the curriculum areas of language and the creative arts. The following ideas are starting points, and children are likely to find their own tangents. Firstly, here are some definitions.

What are folk tales?

Folk tales are part of the *oral tradition* (myths, legends, folklore, folk tales, superstitions) handed down by word of mouth over the centuries. Traditionally, folk tales have been called *fairy tales*.

I am using the term folk tales because, for the last ten years, stories about fairies – tiny creatures with gauzy wings – have been popular, so the term fairy tales is confusing for children.

What are fractured folk tales?

A well-known folk tale is reshaped in any or all of the following ways:

- * by changing the point of view,
- * by introducing characters from several tales,
- * by playing with the title,
- * by changing the setting – time and place,
- * by speculating on what may have happened before or what may happen after the main episode.

1. Introducing folk tales

- * Before introducing **Long Live Us!**, discover what children know about folk tales. Some will suggest popular titles, such as 'The Three Bears', 'Little Red Riding Hood', 'Cinderella...'
- * Show several collections of folk tales and ask children to bring collections from home or the library, and discuss the fact that these stories are part of the *oral tradition*.
- * Find and share the folk tales that have been fractured in **Long Live Us!**: 'The Three Billy-goats Gruff', 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', 'The Three Little Pigs', 'The Frog Prince' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Familiarity with the original stories enables children to appreciate the 'fracturing' process when they read **Long Live Us!**

2. Read and discuss *Long Live Us!*

- * Firstly, discuss Peter Allert's cover illustration. Children can suggest the name of the character and imagine what he is doing. They may try to fathom the meaning of the title.
- * Share the story, giving time for children to appreciate the details within the illustrations, especially the humorous aspects. They are likely to speculate on the clothing worn by the various characters as they appear. Why are they dressed in this way? They will discover the reason late in the story - a surprise.
- * Discuss the story: spontaneous first impressions, then turn the pages and appreciate the illustrations once more, heightened by knowledge of the ending.
- * How did Edel Wignell fracture the original folk tales? Discuss the choice of a 'baddie' as the main character, the inclusion of 'baddies' and 'goodies' from other folk tales and the theme of the story, which leads to...
- * Discussion of the title and its meaning.
- * Drama: see a [script](#) of *Long Live Us!*
- * Suggestions for art and craft activities will flow from the children. They can be involved in creating sets, murals, dioramas, collage, costumes and identifiers of all kinds for characters and settings.

3. Fractured folk tales

- * More than 150 fractured folk tales have been published in recent years, so you will find some in the library and children may bring some from home.
- * Find, read and discuss several tales. Children can identify ways in which the original folk tales have been fractured. Here are four examples:
 - a) *Alternative viewpoint:*
Richard Tulloch, **Twisted Tales: six fairy tales turned inside out**, ill. Terry Denton, 2008, Random House, 978 1 74166 274 0 Pb
Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Briar Rose/Sleeping Beauty, Rumpelstiltskin, Hansel and Gretel and Jack and the Beanstalk are told from an alternative viewpoint.
 - b) *Change a word in a title:*
Lauren Child, **Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?**, 2002, Hodder Headline, 0 340 80554 4 Pb
As Herb lies down, he hits his head on a book of fairy tales, and falls asleep. Soon he meets Goldilocks, Cinderella and other characters.
 - c) *Change of setting to a different time and place:*
Anthony Browne, **Me and You**, 2010, Doubleday, 978 0 38561489 4 Hb
A modern, prosperous family of three bears goes for a walk before lunch. At the same time, a girl from a poor part of the city becomes lost, and enters their house.
 - d) *Expand the story:*
Anthony Browne, **Into the Forest**, 2004, Walker Books, 09 7445 9797 8 Pb
A boy is sent to deliver a cake to his Grandmother's house. He is told not to go through the forest, but he does. Soon he meets folk tale characters who want the cake...

4. Children create a fractured folk tale

Fractured folk tales are fun for children to attempt.

- * They may like to begin by writing a tale from the viewpoint of a 'baddie', such as a witch or a wolf.
- * They can select their favourite folk tale and think of ways to fracture it. They may discuss, sharing in pairs or with the class.
- * To assist, a list of the ways to fracture a folk tale may be pinned up, or written on the whiteboard (see definitions at the beginning of these Notes).

- * Children can write their tales. As they love joining in, saying, 'Little Pig, Little Pig, let me come in,' and other repeated phrases in folk tales, encourage them to create choruses, chants and songs to add to the pleasure of dramatic expression for both the storytellers and the audience.
- * Children may illustrate their tales.
- * The tales may be compiled into a collection. Discuss a title and design a cover.
- * Some fractured folk tales may be selected for drama, a group presenting their story as mime, shared reading, radio drama or acting.
- * Enrichment activities in art and craft may follow. The theme of Fractured Folk Tales would be suitable for a School Open Day when visitors can appreciate the children's creativity in various areas of the curriculum.