Traditional Tales

The Big Carrot

Storyteller Notes

This is the simplest form of cumulative tale – no plot, just a job that needs doing and a progressive series of characters lending a hand. A story such as this can very easily become a memory game, and indeed a major appeal for audiences of cumulative tales is watching the storyteller grappling with an ever-expanding tongue-twister. When telling this yourself, try pretending to forget (if you need to pretend...) so that your class help you remember the order. Why not try adding more characters with the help of your class, too?

Sometimes, the simplest techniques are the best. Just by adding a big action and three-note tune, we inject some excitement and anticipation. Notice how I slow down just before each "Big CarROT!" This indicates to the children that they can join in. It works best with repeated phrases like this; on the other hand, with the drinking of the soup – which only occurs once right at the end – I ask the children to be "Ready?"

A variant of this technique is attaching a sound and action to each character (see *Finn MacCool and the Giant's Causeway* for another example), which allows you to choose between two equally entertaining approaches: either proceeding slowly to encourage participation (best with younger groups), or a skilful race to the end, like I do (ideal for assemblies and older groups – or performing to a video camera!).

One final tip for your own telling – try using 'story space' to your advantage. This entails creating an imaginary queue of characters across the front of you, and indicating each one in turn as they appear in the story. Doing so should help you and your class to remember the entire cast – especially if any of you are visual learners. See *The King and His Wish* for more benefits of story space.

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