



Stage 8

Finn MacCool and the Giant's Causeway

Storyteller Notes

This tale challenged us to explain and clarify the trick as it takes place. Exposition can slow the pace of an otherwise energetic story; hence our decision once again to attach actions to the characters, as in *The Big Carrot*. The rhyming couplets and wide actions give your children something they are constantly waiting for, thereby helping them remain engaged throughout the details.

In *The Magic Paintbrush*, we developed the technique of 'story space' so that your children became objects themselves. This time, we take a real-life object and re-imagine it as something else. I aid the mind's eye by pretending that the chair is as heavy as you would expect a house to be.

When trying this technique yourself, remember never to refer to the object by its real name (i.e. avoid saying, "to show you, I'll use this chair..."). Keep the narrative flowing, and your children should accept the device and remain engaged – after all, they regularly use the same technique in the playground when turning sticks into swords or flowers into fairies. In the event a child exclaims, "That's not a house, it's a chair!" try not to shush them. Doing so breaks the flow of your telling. It is better to say, "Not right now it isn't," and keep on going.

Accents help to define characters, and some are actually quite easy to achieve. Our brains are genetically predisposed to assimilate the language of those with whom we wish to communicate. This is why, when in a foreign county, you often pick up the accent without realising. Today, no travel is required – just visit www.YouTube.com and listen to as many speakers of the accent as you can, repeating what they say.

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