

East of the Sun, West of the Moon

A folktale from Norway

Recommended Key Stage: KS1/2

Synopsis

A woman offers to go and live with a bear in exchange for riches for her poor family. She lives with the bear quite happily but is disturbed by a strange visitor she receives each night, who she never sees in the darkness and is gone by morning. Her mother suggests she light a candle to see who it is, but when she does, she sees that the bear is not a bear at all, but a prince who has been cursed. By revealing this, she unwittingly sends the prince to marry an evil troll, but he tells her to come and look for him in a castle east of the sun, west of the moon. She makes the journey and manages to trick the troll and her mother, breaking the curse and freeing the prince.

Part 1: Share the Story

Share the audio of **East of the Sun, West of the Moon**, told by **Lucy Walters or Jackie Singer** on The Story Museum website or tell the story yourself.

Top storytelling tips:

- Learn the story beforehand so that you can be expressive and maintain eye contact with the students.
- Use actions and sound effects and encourage the students to join in.

Find one or two moments in the story to stop and ask the students to predict what is going to happen next, or how they would feel if they were the characters.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

KS1	KS2
• What did you think of the story? What did you like? What didn't you like? • Did the story remind you of any others? • How do you think the woman feels at the beginning of the story? How does her family feel? • Would you like to go on a long journey like her's? • What would it be like to live with a bear? • Is this a happy ending? Why?	• What did you think of the story? What did you like? What didn't you like? • How would you describe the woman's character? What adjectives would you use? • What would you do if you were the woman? • Would you rather be rich but away from your family or poor but always with your family? • How could the prince's problem be solved? • Are the troll and the stepmother evil? How do you know? What could their motive be for cursing the prince?

Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
Whoosh! Retell the story as a whoosh with the whole class. Sit in a circle with the children and start telling the story. As you get to a character or part of the setting, point to a child in the circle and ask them to come to the middle to act as that part. Support the children as they get 'into character' making faces, using body language, etc. After you have told a part of the story, call 'whoosh!' and ask those children to sit down, as you continue the story, point to more children to take their place. This way, everyone gets a chance to be in the story.	Character presentations - Imagine you are the woman from the story. Imagine you are writing in a diary or writing a letter to a family member or friend. - On the 1st night, describe what happened, what it felt like to leave home, what it was like in the cave and what you saw at night. - A few nights later, describe what it was like going home and getting advice from your mother. - Explain the bear's true identity and what happened to him. - What will you do now? Put a focus on the thoughts and feelings of the character, instead of just explaining the events.
If the mirror could talk - Choose five children for this game and four chairs set out in a square – four of the children sit in the square with the other child walking into the middle in character. - Imagine they are the woman in the story. When she walks into the square, each child sitting in a chair becomes a mirror. When she looks into one of the 'mirrors', their reflection can give them some advice. - Choose a moment in the story – e.g. when the woman decides to go with the bear. What might her reflection tell her? They might tell her everything will be okay; they might tell her to be careful around the bear; they might even tell her she made the wrong choice! Each mirror might give different advice. Try the activity again with a new character in the middle – e.g. the bear/prince. What might the mirrors say to him before he goes to ask the family for the woman? Or when he is locked in the castle?	Conscience Alley Divide the class into 2 groups. One group represents the woman saying yes to the bear, the other represents her saying no. Groups discuss and prepare reasons to support their side of the argument. The two groups form two lines, facing each other, forming an 'alley.' One student plays the part of the woman. They walk slowly down the alley. As they pass, each student speaks, trying to convince the woman. For example: - Say 'yes' team: 'Your family will never be hungry again, think how happy they will be.' - Say 'no' team: 'You have to look after yourself too, it might not be safe living with a bear.' When the volunteer reaches the end of the alley, they can say which argument was more persuasive.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities
Map Making This is a journey story, with not much information about the places that are featured. Help the woman find her way through the story, to the castle east of the sun, west of the moon. Design a map to show the woman's journey. This could include: • The house, where her family lives – what would this house look like before the bear arrives? • The bear's cave • The castle • The houses of the old women Use your map to tell the woman's journey in more detail. Where is the bear's cave? In a forest? Up a mountain? What happened when she left the cave, before she made it to the castle? Did she come across obstacles on his journey that slowed her down?
Innovate the story What If...? Make a change to the story and present your new story in groups, pairs or independently. Think carefully about which part you'd like to change; here are some ideas to get you started: • What if it wasn't a bear, but a different creature? • What if the prince was secretly evil? • What if the woman had not found the castle? • What if the troll had challenged the woman and the prince? • What if the woman was the one who was cursed? Present your new story as a written piece, or a performance with a narrator and actors.

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Stories with a curse or a quest

The Crescent Moon Bear

The Greatest Gift

Baba Yaga's Black Geese

Ivan and the Frog Princess

Wider Curriculum Links

KS1

PSHE

- to recognise risk in simple everyday situations and what action to take to minimise harm
- roles and responsibilities in their community
- helping others

KS2

PSHE

- how to predict, assess and manage risk in different situations
- valuing contributions within a community
- helping others