

# READER'S THEATRE: FOLKTALES

## Unit Overview

The Folktales Unit contains an eclectic mix of some of the world's most beloved stories as well as several which are more obscure. Some tales, such as *Rumpelstiltskin*, are well-known around the world, and several others share common characteristics and themes.

Readers Theatre is a unique and fresh way of introducing students to a number of delightful plays that have been passed down from generation to generation for centuries. They can also serve as a useful tool for developing a student's oral reading and comprehension skills. Readers Theatre calls upon the students to utilize their voices, facial expressions, and hand gestures to interpret the characters in the scripts. The focus is on reading and interpreting the text, not "memory work".

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England	The Old Witch
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Denmark	I Know What I Know
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## Lessons Include

- ☞ Suggested Teaching Strategies / Themes / Answers
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## Lesson # 2 - The Old Man and the Bear - A Russian Folktale

### Suggested Teaching Strategies

When reading or performing, students should always face the audience. To provide variety, one or more students might be seated instead of having them all stand in a line. Simple props such as masks can be used to good effect. As well, percussion instruments, sound effects, and mime gestures can add to the overall results of a performance.

**Theme:** "The Old Man and the Bear" - By using one's creativity to adapt to changing circumstances, adversity can be turned to advantage.

#### Russian Folktales

Although there are no fairies in Russian folklore - there are tales filled with male and female heroes, with animals that talk and behave like humans, and with soldiers who are on their way home and meet up with both good and bad fortune. The villain in many Russian tales, the large grey wolf, is now found only in the wilds of Siberia and the remoter areas of European Russia. Its reputation of killing sheep and farm animals is only true when it is desperately hungry; attacks on humans are very rare.

### Answers

#### Comprehension Questions

- The old man promised part of his crop to the bear.
- Answers will vary. The crops were not then ripe.
- Turnips - tops - roots  
Rye - roots - tops  
Corn - tops/roots - middle
- Answers will vary. Gullible. Resourceful.

#### Fun With Words

- take
- taste
- the
- those
- to
- together
- tops
- trick
- tried
- turnip

**NARRATOR 2:** The turnips grew and when the old man came to harvest his crops in the fall, the bear emerged from the forest.

**BEAR:** All right old man, let's divide up the turnips. Give me my share.

**OLD MAN:** Very well, bear. As you agreed, you take the tops, I take the roots.

**NARRATOR 1:** So, the old man gave all the greens to the bear and loaded all the turnips into his cart, which he took to the city to sell.

**BEAR:** Where are you going, old man?

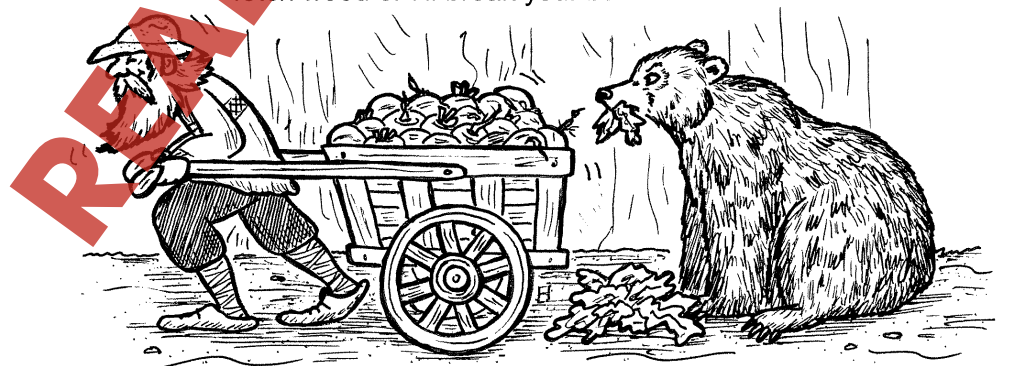
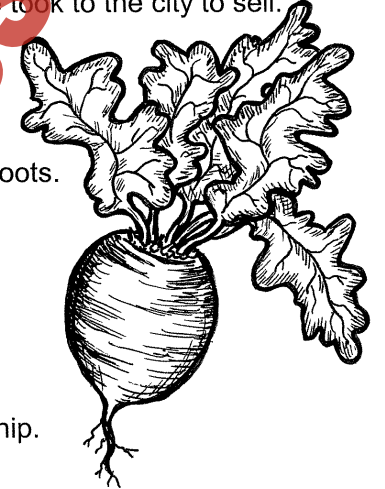
**OLD MAN:** I am going to the city to sell the roots.

**BEAR:** Let me taste those roots.

**OLD MAN:** Very well, my friend.

**NARRATOR 2:** The old man gave the bear a turnip.

**BEAR:** Aahrg! Old man, you have tricked me. These roots are sweet to the taste. You had better not go into my woods to fetch wood or I'll break your back!



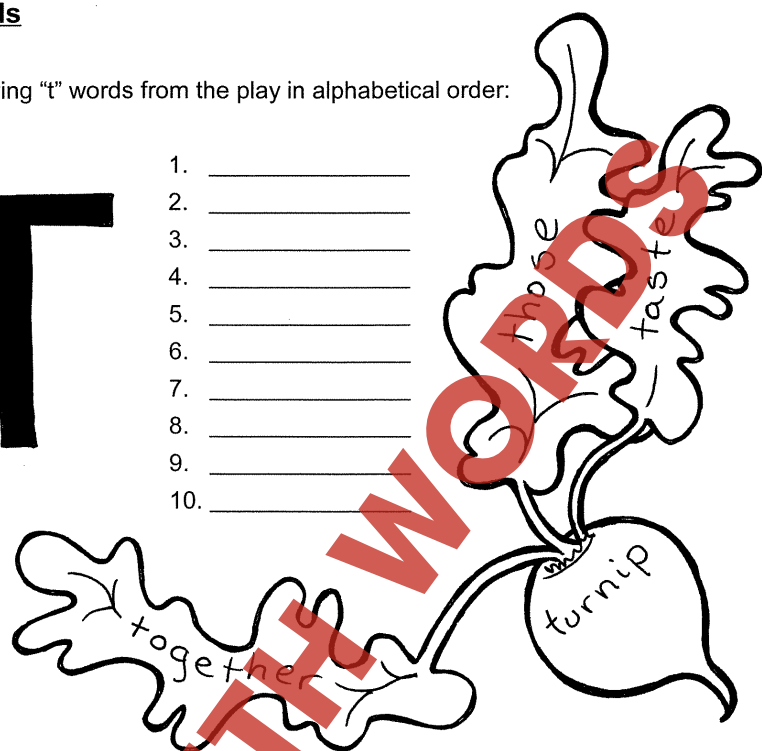
### Fun With Words

Arrange the following "t" words from the play in alphabetical order:

trick  
turnip  
tops  
taste  
those  
take  
tried  
to  
together  
the

**T**

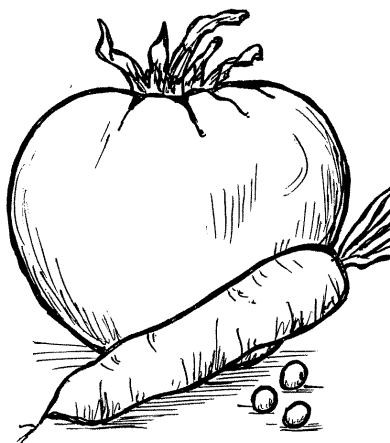
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### Investigation

As we have seen from this play, crops come in all sorts and sizes - some with the "good stuff" in the roots, some in the stems, and some right at the top of the plant. Consider the plants listed in the chart below, which the old man might have planted instead of turnips, rye and corn. Tell whether the edible portions are on the bottom, middle, or top. Come up with two additional examples of your own.

Crop	Top, Middle, or Bottom
tomatoes	
peas	
carrots	
wheat	



### Comprehension Questions

- Why do you think the Coachman was jealous of Ti-Jean?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Describe what kind of relationship the giant and his wife had. Prove your answer from the play.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you believe many readers think Ti-Jean was justified taking the seven league boots and the moon from the giant, even though it was stealing? What do you think about what he did? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- To steal the moon from the giant, Ti-Jean asked the king for a bag of salt to put in the soup. How do you think Ti-Jean knew the giant's family would be eating soup? Or did he?  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Investigation

**Ash Lad:** The Ash Lad (*Askeladden*) is a popular figure of Danish folk tales. It is said he got his name because he preferred staying by the fireplace with the older members of the family listening to their stories, instead of being outdoors with the other young people doing more "normal" activities. The Ash Lad is the youngest of three, the dreamer, despised by his parents and brothers. He is also handy and smart and overcomes awe-inspiring obstacles to routinely win the princess and half the kingdom. Some think that the Danish people saw themselves as The Ash Lad, cleverly comparing themselves with their more powerful Scandinavian neighbours, Sweden and Denmark.

Write a paragraph about one of the following famous people from Norway. Be sure to include their contribution to Norway and the world, and something of their life.

- Lief Ericson
- Knute Rockne
- Roald Amundsen
- Kurt Nilsen (*World Idol Winner - 2004*)
- Thor Heyerdahl
- Liv Ullmann
- Henrik Ibsen

## Creative Writing

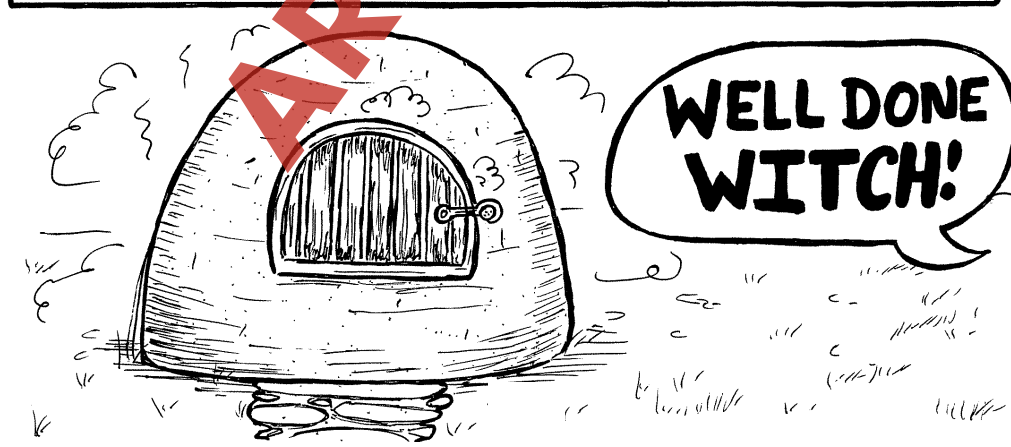
Describe the part of this play that you enjoyed the most. Be sure to include the little details that made you like it. Explain why you liked this particular scene.

## Art

Create a cover page for this script. This cover page should include a coloured picture of your favourite (or the most interesting) scene, as well as the title in bold letters.

## Art

Create a **comic strip** with at least six frames outlining the adventures of the Little Girl in "The Old Witch". Be sure to colour your finished product. You may wish to include dialogue in balloons above the characters.



## Investigation

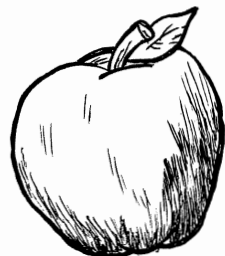
Witches have long been a popular feature in all types of literature throughout the world. Compare the witch in this play with a witch in another story (i.e. *The Wizard of Oz*; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; *Snow White*). You should select at least four pieces of criteria to compare the two characters (this may include appearance, personality, actions, etc.).

Criteria	Witch from "The Old Witch"	Witch from "
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

## Creative Writing

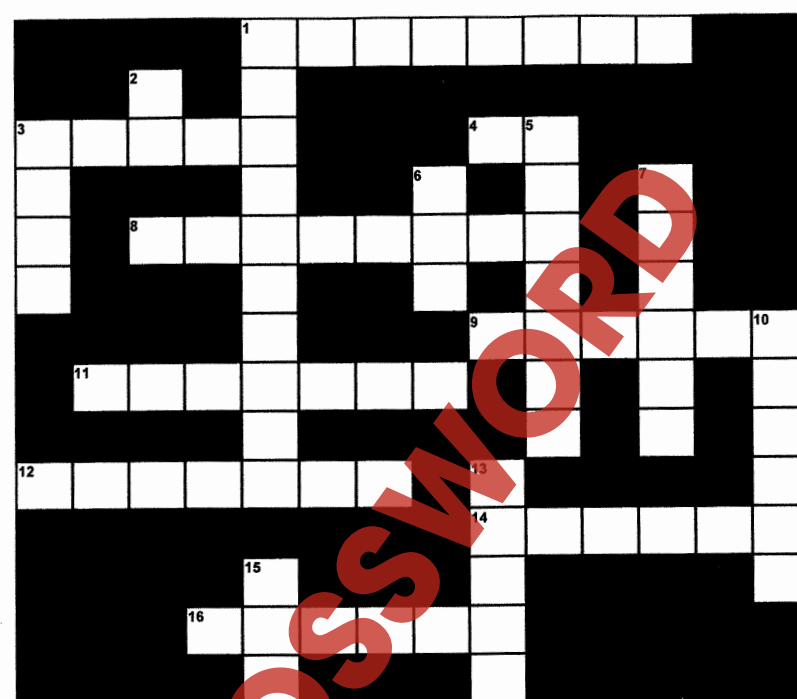
The Little Girl and the Witch enjoy speaking in poetry form. An interesting form of poetry is the *cinquain* poem. It is a simple, five-line verse-form of poetry whose structure follows specific rules:

- line 1: one word of two syllables (may be the title)
- line 2: four syllables (describing the subject of the title)
- line 3: six syllables (showing action)
- line 4: eight syllables (feelings about the subject)
- line 5: two syllables (describing, or another name for, the title)



Write a *cinquain* poem, following the above rules, describing the adventures of the Little Girl in this play.

## THE PRINCESS WHO ALWAYS HAD TO HAVE THE LAST WORD - CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

1. Female child or offspring.
3. Covering for the foot.
4. Painful exclamation.
8. Male siblings.
9. Type of deciduous tree.
11. Bravery.
12. Made up one's mind.
14. Far away.
16. Type of bird.

### DOWN

1. Found out.
2. The Princess lived in Sweden.
3. The only one.
5. Using carelessly.
6. The Princess annoyed the King.
7. Open expanses of land.
10. Stayed.
13. Pleaded.
15. A male sheep.

## RUMPELSTILTSKIN - WORDSEARCH

Find the following twenty words connected with the script you have just read. The words are all in a straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally - they can be forward or even backward!

E P S Z K N M A D X I P P V J  
 D E R A E P P A H B T J C M D  
 I Z B I P D O V E R J O Y E D  
 S R E G N E S S E M J I E A V  
 Y K A N D C S M U T S W S S H  
 R N U D E R E D N O P W E U X  
 T W T X L N I L Q P L A I R R  
 N B I B D I R E I S B U N E B  
 U A F O N A I E W N Y F B C M  
 O T U B I T U C G R G V N A Z  
 C S L Y P N Q G E N X R D L F  
 D K K H S I N S H N I J A K S  
 J Z N K E A I M X T R F B C R  
 P S T O R M E D L N E P Z E E  
 P E R C T M K P W J K R U N S

## RUMPELSTILTSKIN - WORDSEARCH (Answer)

Find the following twenty words connected with the script you have just read. The words are all in a straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally - they can be forward or even backward!

E P S Z K N M A D X I P P V J  
 D E R A E P P A H B T J C M D  
 I Z B I P D O V E R J O Y E D  
 S R E G N E S S E M J I E A V  
 Y K A N D C S M U T S W S S H  
 R N U D E R E D N O P W E U X  
 T W T X L N I L Q P L A I R R  
 N B I B D I R E I S B U N E B  
 U A F O N A I E W N Y F B C M  
 O T U B I T U C G R G V N A Z  
 C S L Y P N Q G E N X R D L F  
 D K K H S I N S H N I J A K S  
 J Z N K E A I M X T R F B C R  
 P S T O R M E D L N E P Z E E  
 P E R C T M K P W J K R U N S

**ANSWER KEY**

APPEARED  
 BEAUTIFUL  
 COUNTRYSIDE  
 DAUGHTER  
 FABULOUS

FINGER  
 GRACE  
 INQUIRIES  
 MAINTAIN  
 MEASURE

MESSENGERS  
 MISERY  
 NECKLACE  
 OVERJOYED  
 PONDERED

PRINCEING  
 SPINDLE  
 STORMED  
 TREMENDOUS  
 WEIRD

RED  
 FULL  
 RYSIDE  
 TER  
 DUS

FINGER  
 GRACE  
 INQUIRIES  
 MAINTAIN  
 MEASURE

MESSENGERS  
 MISERY  
 NECKLACE  
 OVERJOYED  
 PONDERED

PRINCEING  
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