

Story telling: Abarta's mischief (i)

Long ago there lived the Tuatha De Danann. They were descendants of the goddess Dana and were gods and goddesses too. They were skilled in many crafts and magic and knew many things. They had four talismans – magical objects which helped them survive. The first was a stone which screamed when a true king stood on it. The second was a sword that killed with every blow. The third was a spear that always brought victory in battle, and the fourth was a cauldron that was always full of hot nourishing food.

One of the gods was called Abarta and he was full of mischief. When the most powerful band of warriors in the land had a new leader Abarta decided to visit him. The leader was called Finn MacCool. When Abarta met him he offered to serve him and gave him a large grey horse as a present.

The horse was wild and Finn MacCool's warriors had to struggle long and hard before they could get a bridle on its head. Once the bridle was in place a warrior climbed on and kicked the horse's sides but it refused to move. Another warrior jumped on but still the horse did not move. More and more warriors climbed on until there were fourteen piled on the horse's powerful back but it only stood there snorting.

When Abarta climbed on everything changed. The horse broke into a gallop and carried its riders away. There was even a fifteenth warrior who was carried along. He was holding the horse's tail when it started to gallop and he dared not let go of it. The horse galloped off to a magic land full of gods and goddesses and the spirits of the dead who rested there before being born again.

The rest of Finn MacCool's warriors who were left behind climbed on board a magic ship and set off after the horse. Although the horse had long gone Finn MacCool's faithful servant, Foltor, steered a course that brought them to the magic land. They found that Abarta had taken the warriors prisoner but on Foltor's command he released them. All the warriors sailed home but Foltor ordered Abarta to run back home holding the horse's tail. Once this was done Finn MacCool felt that his honour had been satisfied and he made peace with Abarta.

Story telling: Abarta's mischief (ii)

1. Who were the Tuatha De Danann?

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2. What is a talisman?

□

3. What would happen if a man who was not a true king stood on the first talisman?

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4. What are the three other talismans?

□

5. Who was Abarta?

□

6. Who was Finn MacCool?

□

7. Describe Abarta's present.

□

8. How many travelled with the horse?

□

9. Who was Foltor and what did he do?

□

□

10. Why do you think Finn MacCool felt his honour had been satisfied?

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Story telling: Abarta's mischief

Objectives

- To learn about story telling.
- To try and tell part of a story from memory.
- To make up a story and tell it.

Cross-curricular links

History

- 2a** To learn about the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past.
- 4a** To find out about people from an appropriate range of information.

English

En1

- 1b** Gain and maintain interest and response of different audiences.
- 2a** Identify the gist of an account and evaluate what they hear.
- 4c** Use dramatic techniques to explore characters and issues.
- 8a** Reading aloud.
- 9a** Live readings.

En 2

- 2a** Use inference and deduction.
- 2c** Make connections between different parts of the text.
- 3a** Scan texts to find information.
- 3c** Obtain specific information through detailed reading.

En 3

- 9a** To imagine and explore ideas, focusing on creative uses of language and how to interest the reader.

Resources

Each child or group will need a copy of worksheets **18A** and **18B**. This is a story based on a real Celtic story which has been retold in a style which the children might find quite easy to memorise.

Starter

Tell the children that the Celts did not use writing. They believed that all the knowledge they had should be memorised and passed on by speech. The Celts enjoyed stories and listened to story tellers as they sat round the fire in their home. Tell the children that they are going to read a story that might have been told by a story teller.

Main activities

1. Issue worksheets **18A** and **18B** and read the story with the children.
2. Let the children do the comprehension exercise. The answers are:
 1. They were gods and goddesses who were the descendants of the goddess Dana.
 2. A magical object which helps people survive.
 3. It would not scream.
 4. A sword, a spear and a cauldron.
 5. A mischievous god who was a descendant of Dana.
 6. The leader of the most powerful band of warriors in the land.
 7. A large grey wild horse with a powerful back.
 8. Sixteen – fourteen warriors and Abarta on its back, one warrior holding the tail.
 9. He was Finn MacCool's faithful servant and he steered the magic ship to the magic land and commanded the release of the warriors and ordered Abarta to travel home holding the horse's tail.
 10. Finn MacCool had had fifteen of his warriors kidnapped and imprisoned by Abarta but he felt that making Abarta run home holding the horse's tail was a suitable punishment for his mischief.
3. Some children could work in a group and memorise parts of the story then retell it in the Plenary.
4. Some children could write their own story which has a hero like Finn MacCool, a mischief maker like Abarta, talismans like the stone, sword, spear and cauldron, a journey, and a suitable punishment for the mischief.

Plenary

The group of children could read the story they have memorised and the others could tell their stories. Everyone could sit in a circle as if they were sat round a fire in the Celtic home.

Outcomes

The children:

- Have learnt about story telling.
- Can tell part of a story from memory.
- Can make up a story and tell it.