

The Brave Tailor

This multi-sensory story is suitable for all ages. It is based on the traditional Scottish tale *The Sprightly Tailor* and was originally developed to tell to children and young people with additional needs at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh by storyteller **Ailie Finlay**.

This noisy version of the traditional tale is great for telling together in a group. Here are my suggestions for props, but any interesting noise-makers will work well so feel free to improvise with what you have available.

Props

A **waistcoat**. (Vintage clothes shops usually have a good supply.)

A wooden 'football rattle' for the **bones**.

A guiro for the **teeth**.

A jingle stick for the **knees**

A drum for the **two muckle feet**.

These are all easy to find online. (These websites are good for finding a variety of percussion instruments: www.normans.co.uk and www.knockonwood.co.uk.)

You could also add:

A wee jingly **pouch of money** for the 'golden coins'

A **shiny cloak and crown** for the king.

A **measuring tape** for the tailor.

If you are working with children who are non-verbal the 'scary tower' noises could be put on switch recording devices before you start the story.

Once there was a tailor.

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A travelling tailor.

One day he went to the king's castle. *(Knock on furniture or a piece of wood)*

'Come in. Come in,' said the king. 'Make me a waistcoat. Make me a waistcoat and I will give you five golden coins. But only if you make it in the dark tower.'

Now the dark tower was very dark.

And the dark tower was very windy *(make wind noise)*

And the dark tower was full of spiders *(make spidery noise by rubbing hands together)*

And the dark tower was full of ghosts *(make ghost noise)*

But the tailor didn't care. He didn't care one little bit.

He went pit-pat-pit-pat-pit-pat up the stairs to the top of the tower. *(Make pit-pat noises with your hands on your knees to indicate footsteps)*

And it was dark.

And windy *(make wind noise)*

And full of spiders *(make spidery noise)*

And ghosts *(make ghost noise)*

But the tailor just sat down and began to sew.

Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button. *(Make actions or clap out the rhythm.)*

(Rattle noise)

'What was that? What was that noise?' said the tailor

'It's my bones. Do you hear that tailor? Do you hear that?' *(Monster voice)*

'I do' said the tailor. **'I do. I hear that very well. I hear that, but I stitch this.'**

Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button.

(Teeth rattle noise)

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'What was that? What was that noise?' said the tailor

**'It's my teeth. It's my rattling teeth. Do you hear that tailor? Do you hear that?'
(Monster voice)**

'I do' said the tailor. 'I do. I hear that very well. I hear that, but I stitch this.'

Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button.

(Jingling noise)

'What was that? What was that noise?' said the tailor

'It's my knees. It's my jingling, jingling knees. Do you hear that tailor? Do you hear that?' (Monster voice)

'I do' said the tailor. 'I do. I hear that very well. I hear that, but I stitch this.'

Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button.

(Drum)

'What was that? What was that noise?' said the tailor

'It's my feet. It's my two muckle feet. And I'm coming to get you. Do you hear that tailor? Do you hear that?' (monster voice)

It's my bones (rattle)

And my teeth (teeth rattle)

And my knees (jingle)

And my two muckle feet. (drum)

And I'm coming to get you tailor. Do you hear that?'

'I do' said the tailor. 'I hear that very well. I hear that, but I stitch this.'

Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button. Stitch, stitch, twist, button. (Getting faster and faster)

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The tailor finished the waistcoat, he ran down stairs. Pit-pat-pit-pat-pit-pat.

(Drum hands on knees, very fast)

He ran to the king:

'Here's your waistcoat king. Here it is!' *(shake out waistcoat and fling it down)*

The king gave him his five golden coins.

And the tailor set off down the road. And he never saw or heard the monster again. And lived happily ever after.

Notes on telling

This is a great story for joining in! Encourage everyone to help with the noises in the tower and the 'stitch, stitch, twist, button' refrain. Linger on the quiet 'stitch, stitch' parts of the story to mark the contrast with the loud scary monster.

If you are telling the story to people with complex additional needs and/or a visual impairment the 'stitch, stitch...' refrain can be tapped out gently on the back of the listener's hand, if appropriate. One finger taps gently for each 'stitch', the 'twist' is a wee circle 'drawn' with the finger and the 'button' another tap: *tap, tap, circle tap; tap, tap, circle, tap*. This will help people to feel included in the rhythm of the story.

Feel free to simplify or shorten the story as well if this would work better for your audience. For example, you could miss out the description of the dark tower or skip some of the body parts!

The 'stitch, stitch...' refrain should get fast and frantic as the monster approaches and the running down stairs should be very fast and in a panic!

For more general storytelling tips see my introduction to sensory storytelling on the TRACS storytelling resources page.

Follow-on activities

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After you have told the story you can 'make the monster one more time' all together. Pass out the musical instruments, maybe adding in some more to make sure everyone gets a turn. Then bring the monster to life adding one instrument at a time, and then all together at the end to make as much noise as possible!

Make the dark tower even scarier...ask your audience for more ideas of other noises they might hear in the dark tower, then improvise these noises to make a really scary tower... Ideas might include mice, rats, earwigs, bats, vampires, owls, thunder and lightning, witches. (Keep an eye out in the shops at Halloween time for good props!