**The Old Woman Who Tricked the Fairies**

A sensory story version of the well-known traditional Scottish tale, by storyteller Ailie Finlay. This version includes lots of intriguing noises and is suitable for children with additional needs, particularly those with a visual impairment. It is also a popular story for nurseries or younger primary years.

This story is easy to learn for telling as it includes a lot of repetition. You can encourage the children to join in with the noises, either using their voice or props or by using switch recording devices. When all the noises happen together it should feel quite boisterous and loud. Then you can use the ending to calm everyone down!

Encourage everyone to join in with the old woman’s sighing as well. (This should get more exaggerated as the story continues).

It is easy to vary the length of this story to suit the needs of the children you are working with, simply reduce the demands of the old woman!

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

Props:

For the **cakes** I often use a variety of smells. Good smells to use include lemons, oranges and spices. (Make sure that the children cannot get the spices on their hands as they will sting if they get rubbed into an eye. I use ‘chunky’ unground spices such as star anise and cinnamon and put these in little cotton bags.) It is a good idea to have several copies of each ‘smelly’ prop as allowing everyone to ‘have a sniff’ can be quite time consuming.

You can also use toy cakes; there are usually a nice variety of knitted or crocheted cakes on Etsy (Etsy.com)

For the **bowl and spoon** I use an old-fashioned ceramic mixing bowl and a wooden spoon; this makes a satisfying ‘thunk, thunk’ when you ‘mix.’

A bird noise whistle works well for the **budgie**. (<https://www.knockonwood.co.uk/bird-slide-whistle>)

For the **mouse** I use a ‘squeak’ from a squeaky toy which I have cut out and put into a little bag.

For the **cow** I use a cow noise maker toy of the type that moos when you tip it over. (These are widely available online). For the herd of cows, you could either use lots of these, or encourage the children to ‘moo’ or use switch recording devices.

These are only suggestions; you can adapt the props to suit the needs of the children you are working with. You could, for example, make it into a more tactile story. You could replace the cow with a sheep and use a little bit of sheep’s fleece as your prop. Perhaps the old woman needs to wear her favourite shawl when she is baking, or maybe she needs someone to fan her when the oven is hot!

*Directions for props and actions are in italics*

**This is a story of an old woman who was very good at baking.**

**She made the best cakes in the whole of Scotland.**

**Spice cakes, lemon cake, orange cakes…** *(Use smells here)*

**Now fairies love cake.**

**One day the fairies carried the old woman away to the fairy hill.**

**‘Make us cake!’ they said.**

**‘I will make you cake,’ said the old woman, ‘but I can’t bake without my favourite bowl and spoon.’**

**So the fairies flew away and fetched the old woman’s favourite bowl and spoon.** *(‘Mix’ with the spoon in the bowl.)*

**‘It’s not really working,’ said the old woman with a sigh. ‘At home I always listen to my budgie singing while I am baking. I need my budgie.’**

**So the fairies flew away and fetched her budgie.**

**The budgie sang.** *(Blow the bird whistle)*

**And Mrs Mactavish mixed.** *(‘Mix’ the spoon in the bowl.)*

**‘Oh dear!’ said the fairies, ‘it is so noisy!’**

**‘It’s not really working,’ said Mrs Mactavish with another sigh. ‘At home the mouse in the corner always squeaks while I am baking. I need that wee mouse.’**

**So the fairies flew away and fetched the wee mouse from the corner of her kitchen.**

**The mouse squeaked.** *(Squeeze the mouse squeaker)*

**The budgie sang.** *(Blow the bird whistle)*

**And Mrs Mactavish mixed.** *(‘Mix’ the spoon in the bowl)*

**‘Oh dear!’ said the fairies, ‘it is so noisy!’**

 **‘It’s not really working,’ said the old woman with another sigh. ‘At home I always listen to my favourite cow mooing outside the window while I am baking. I need my favourite cow.’**

**So the fairies flew away and fetched her favourite cow.**

**The cow mooed.** *(Turn cow noise-maker over)*

**The mouse squeaked.** *(Squeeze the mouse squeaker)*

**The budgie sang.** *(Blow the bird whistle)*

**And the old woman mixed.** *(‘Mix’ the spoon in the bowl)*

**‘Oh dear!’ said the fairies, ‘it is so noisy!’**

**‘It’s not really working,’ said Mrs Mactavish with another sigh. ‘I think I need all my cows!’**

**So the fairies flew away and fetched her whole herd of cows.**

**The cows mooed.** *(Turn cow noise-maker over and encourage everyone to ‘moo’!)*

**The mouse squeaked.** *(Squeeze the mouse squeaker.)*

**The budgie sang.** *(Blow bird whistle)*

**And the old woman mixed.** *(‘Mix’ the spoon in the bowl)*

**The cows mooed.** *(Turn cow noise-maker over and encourage everyone to ‘moo’!)*

**The mouse squeaked.** *(Squeeze the mouse squeaker.)*

**The budgie sang.** *(Blow bird whistle)*

**And the old woman mixed and mixed and mixed.** *(‘Mix’ the spoon in the bowl)*

**‘Oh dear,’ said the fairies. ‘Oh dear, oh dear! It is so noisy! It is too noisy! We’re taking you home!’**

**And they did. They took the old woman and her cows and her mouse and her budgie and her bowl and spoon** **home.**

**Now the fairy hill is quiet again.**

**But every now and then the old woman bakes some cakes and leaves them on the hill for the fairies.**

**And she lived happily ever after with her budgie and her mouse and her cows.**

Ailie Finlay

For more sensory story downloads see my website: www.flotsamandjetsam.co.uk