

## **Story-Listening: An Experimental Lesson**

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## **Commentary**

### **Introduction**

I have long been interested in using stories in the classroom. However, up until now, I have only been using pre-existing materials (e.g. graded readers, picture books, movies, et cetera). Although my students have been enjoying the stories, I have been worried that I am stagnating as a teacher. I have been only a selector and curator of material, and have not been developing skills as a storyteller. So for this reason, I wanted to try Story-Listening (a particular technique of Storytelling) as my experimental lesson.

I believe that this lesson would benefit the current group of upper-elementary Thai learners. If I can grade my language successfully so that upper-elementary students can understand the story, then they can benefit from learning a lot of vocabulary from the story. It would also provide them with plenty of input in the past simple (a weak point for this group), since the past simple is traditionally used for narratives. Also Beniko Mason (the founder of Story-Listening) is very adamant that this technique is successful with all ages and all levels.

### **Theory and Practice**

Storytelling in English Language Teacher (ELT) has a long history, and is probably as old as the profession itself (Vyner, 2013). In my research, it appears that currently the two most popular types of Storytelling in ELT are TPR Storytelling, developed by Blaine Ray in the 1990s in America, and Story-Listening, developed by Beniko Mason in the 1980s in Japan. I have chosen to focus on Story-Listening for my experiment.

The technique of Story-Listening is as follows: the teacher pre-selects a story to tell the class. Beniko Mason favors using folk tales or fairy tales, because they are in the public domain and free for everyone. Part of the ethos of Story-Listening is that it is accessible for teachers and students in all situations and all economic levels. For the same reason, Story-Listening is materials light. There are no books or computers. The teacher uses only themselves and the chalkboard to tell the story to the students. Before the lesson, the teacher plans out which vocabulary they will need to explain to the students, and writes these words out as prompts on a piece of paper. The teacher uses these prompts as a script while they tell the story, explaining the words as they go. Mason advises that the teacher try to avoid putting multiple unknown words in the same sentence. If necessary, the teacher can break up one sentence into several shorter sentences, and explain each of the unknown words as they go. For example, instead of saying “There was an old wrinkled woman” the teacher can say, “There was a woman. She was old. She had wrinkles.” (2018). The teacher explains the words by drawing pictures on the chalkboard, using synonyms, or using direct translation to the L1. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asks the students to write up the lesson in their L1. The teacher uses this to tell how much of the story the students were able to comprehend, and thus evaluate the success of the lesson (Dubois, 2017).

Beniko Mason has posted several demonstrations of Story-Listening online (*The Wine Well*, 2017, *The Robber Bridegroom*, 2017). From these examples, it is clear that the ability to draw well is central to the Story-Listening technique. In this case, drawing “well” is meant in the sense of being able to draw quickly, and for the images to be immediately. Beniko Mason uses mostly stick figures and minimalist drawings, but there is a skill in how quickly and efficiently the drawings are produced. Mason advises that drawing on the chalkboard is a skill developed over time, but also advises that teachers should practice the drawings before class as part of their preparation (Stories First, 2018).

Both TPR Storytelling and Story Listening were inspired by the work of Krashen. The assumptions behind Story-Listening are the same assumptions behind Krashen’s input hypothesis, as Mason herself outlined in a 2017 workshop. Students acquire languages by comprehending the message. Students do not need to practice speaking to acquire the language, simply understanding the input is enough. Teachers do not need to target any specific vocabulary or grammar features—if the linguistic feature is high-frequency, then it will naturally be found in the input (Mason, 2017)

Interestingly enough, Krashen’s early works do not appear to put a lot of emphasis on stories or narratives—at least not the ones I have read: *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (1982) and *The Natural Approach* (1983). In these books, it seems that when Krashen is talking about comprehensible input, he is largely talking about classroom talk—for example the teacher having conversations with the class, or giving instructions in the target language.

It appears that the storytelling movements grew out of Krashen, even though Krashen did not call for them explicitly. However, nowadays Krashen has fully endorsed the storytelling techniques, and in recent years has actively been collaborating with proponents of both TPR Storytelling and Story Listening. Krashen has also modified his “comprehensible input” hypothesis to “compelling comprehensible input”. Input that is comprehensible, but boring, will not help the students. The students need to be interested in the input, and this can perhaps best be done by stories (Krashen, 2017).

Krashen has also modified his objection to targeting linguistic structures in light of the storytelling movement. Krashen now believes that there is a distinction between teaching targeted structures because they are part of an external curriculum (T1) and teaching targeted linguistic structures in order to aid comprehension of the story (T2) (Krashen, 2016). As Krashen states “T2 is good, T1 is bad” (2017). The theory is that T2 is used to help the students understand the story, which (according to the theory of comprehensible input) will eventually lead to the mastery of the language. T1, however, is reverting back to the idea of a structured linguistic syllabus, which Krashen has been opposed to.

Much of the empirical support for Story-Listening specifically comes from Beniko Mason herself, who has published multiple articles on the vocabulary gains and standardized test score gains of students who have learnt through her Story-Listening technique (Mason, 2005,

2007, 2010, 2011, 2013). Some of these articles have been co-authored with Krashen (Krashen and Mason, 2018). Mason is aware that some studies show that input alone is not enough for complete mastery of all linguistic structures, but she believes it is enough to get students to an upper-intermediate level, and this is sufficient for the needs of most of her students. Moreover, Mason believes most students cannot get to upper-intermediate level by the traditional classroom methods, so Story-Listening is providing an opportunity for proficiency gains which would not otherwise be met. Finally, Mason believes that Story-Listening is the most enjoyable way to learn English. She states, “The goal of Dr. Krashen and myself is to reduce suffering in the language classroom” (2018). Story-Listening is ideally supplemented by students doing extensive reading outside of the classroom, but Mason believes that students will not start doing extensive reading unless they are first guided on how to understand English stories through scaffolding techniques like Story-Listening. (Mason, 2018).

Although both TPR Storytelling and Story-Listening were both inspired by Krashen, practitioners of the two techniques have not interacted with each other until recently. Krashen first introduced Beniko Mason to the leading practitioners of TPR Storytelling in 2016, and since then the two groups have begun to collaborate and share techniques. However this has also resulted in criticisms of Story-Listening from some adherents of TPR Storytelling. Criticisms of Story-Listening are that it is a passive activity for the students, and that there are no comprehension checks built into the structure. However, defenders of Story-Listening argue that it is much less demanding for both the teachers and the students (and thus lowers the affective filter). Also it is thought to be more suitable for Asian classrooms, in which the students are used to a more passive role. And although there are no formal comprehension check stages built into a Story-Listening lesson, an experienced teacher should be able to tell whether or not the students are comprehending the story by a variety of non-linguistic cues that the students send out, such as facial expressions, or eye contact (Dubois, 2017).

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation of my lesson was conducted in four different ways:

- 1) Students were asked to retell the story in groups, and I monitored to assess how well the students had comprehended the story.
- 2) A small informal chat was held with the students, in which I asked their opinion on the effectiveness of the technique
- 3) Students filled out a questionnaire also recording their opinions of the lesson. (This is included in the appendices).
- 4) I video recorded the lesson, and then re-watched it to observe my own technique.

(Note: Questionnaires were also prepared for peer-observers, but unfortunately no one came to observe this class, so that data was never collected.)

Based on the retelling task, it was clear that the students had been able to understand the story. They had trouble recalling a few of the key vocabulary words (e.g. *invisible*, *dwarf*) but no one seemed to be confused about the plot or events of the story.

It was also evident from the reconstruction task that they had partially learned several vocabulary words related to the story, such as: *merchant*, *goods*, *chest*, *take off*, *take away*, et cetera. The words were sometimes pronounced incorrectly, and sometimes not used with the correct collocations, so should be counted as partially learned and not fully learned.

From the informal conversation with the students, and from the questionnaires, all of the students claimed to have enjoyed the lesson, and said it helped improve their vocabulary. However my own subjective impression, based on the students' facial expressions, was that during the story some of them were in danger of getting bored.

Watching the video of the lesson, what struck me most was how long it took me to tell the story. I had planned for 20-30 minutes, but it actually took me around 45 minutes to complete the story. This is contrary to the recommendations of Beniko Mason herself, who advises, "For beginners, short stories (e.g. ten minutes) on familiar topics are best, then gradually tell longer and more complicated stories," (Stories First, 2018). This may have contributed to student fatigue.

Also watching the video: I was pleased with how loud and clear my pronunciation was. But an area to work on is needless repetition.

In the future, I would like to continue experimenting with this technique when I go back to my regular classroom. I think shorter stories would probably work better. Aesop's Fables are much shorter than the Grimm Brothers, so in the future Aesop's Fables might work better. I will also try to stop myself from needlessly repeating things when I tell the story.

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## Appendices

### Objectives:

- Attempt to tell the students a Grimm Brothers Fairy Tale without relying on any pre-existing material
- Grade the story myself based on the version in the public domain (i.e. do not rely on a pre-existing graded reader)
- Do not use any pictures or visuals from the Internet. Tell the story using only the whiteboard and markers and my own drawings for visuals
- Explain the vocabulary to students as I tell it. By the end of the lesson, students should have been exposed to about 45 new words related to the story, and partially learned some of these words
- Students will be able to understand the story clearly simply from my oral explanation and drawings on the whiteboard.

### Data Gathering Tools

- Video Record lesson
- Have the students retell the story to each other at the end to check comprehension
- Talk to students after the lesson about its effectiveness
- Have students fill out a questionnaire about the effectiveness of the lesson
- Have peer-observers fill out a questionnaire about the effectiveness of the lesson. (Note: this was prepared but not used because no peer observers came to this lesson).

### Student's Feedback

Do you like learning English from listening to stories?

Would you like to have another lesson with listening to stories?

Did today's lesson help you improve your English? Why or why not?

### Observer's Feedback:

How suitable was this particular story for use at this level?



How easy was it for the students to follow the explanations (including pictures) of the teacher as he told the story?

What (if anything) do you think the students got from today's lesson?

Of the Vocabulary highlighted in this story, which words were:

too easy	too advanced	low-frequency (not useful)	Useful

### Results of Data Gathering Tools

(Here are the answers from the 6 students who participated in the lesson.)

Do you like learning English from listening to stories?

- Yes I like I would like to have another lesson
- Yes, I do. I feel funny.
- Yes. I like very much.
- Yes, I do.
- Yes, I do.
- Yes, I do like listening to stories.

Would you like to have another lesson with listening to stories?

- Yes, I would like to have conversation is stories or travel stories
- Yes, I would like to listening. Example topic movie, cartoon, adventure
- Yes I would like to have another lesson example conversation in the café
- Yes, I like. Because not hard to understand.
- Yes, I like. I think it is listening to stories fun.
- Yes, I love to have another lesson with listening.

Did today's lesson help you improve your English? Why or why not?

- Yes, because I can listening understand 60-70%. Sometime it is new word for me.

- Yes, because I practice to listen and funny. I happy.
- Yes, I did because if I good listening I must speaking correct and know story better
- Yes, because I can apply sentences in the stories for use in real life
- Yes, can help improve my English
- Yes, today's lesson help me improve my English, Because make me learn new words.

### **Learner Profile**

This is a group of eight students studying on a general English training course. All of them are monolingual Thai speakers. It is considered an adult course, although the youngest student is 17. The students range in age from 17 years old to 57 years old. However most of the students (6 out of 8) are in their 20s and 30s. The group is composed of 6 females and 2 males. Attendance on the course is voluntary, but 7 out of the 8 students attend regularly. One student is habitually late due to his work schedule.

All of the students cited utilitarian reasons for studying English—either to help them advance in their job, for travelling, for communication with foreign partners, to help them with their school studies, or for immigration reasons.

The students range in ability, but they are all capable of understanding simple directions. They can produce short sentences and take part in simple conversations, although not always with grammatical accuracy. The students will be able to understand stories in English provided they receive enough scaffolding through the use of visuals and explanations.

The students have trouble using the past tense in free production, although they understand the rules declaratively. They

### **Lesson Aims:**

- \* By the end of the lesson, students will have understood a fairy tale in English.
- \* By the end of the lesson, students will have been exposed to the set of vocabulary related to this story, and the vocabulary will have been presented to students in a way that they can understand. Partially mastery of some of this vocabulary will have been gained.

### **Anticipated Problems and Solutions**

Problems	Solutions
Story-Listening makes use of the L1. The L1 is used occasionally to explain vocabulary, and at the end when the students write up a summary of the story in their L1 for the teacher to check their comprehension. However, I don't speak the L1 of the students.	Unfortunately the L1 aspect of the Story-Listening technique is going to have to be dropped. I will explain all the vocabulary with English and drawings only. I will have the students tell the story in English at the end, and not in their L1. I will attempt to judge from their English rendition of the story how well they understood it.

### Lesson Plan Procedures

Time	Stage and Stage Aims	procedure	interaction	materials
20-30 minutes	Listening: * students listen to the story for enjoyment	The teacher tells the story. Using the whiteboard, the teacher explains the vocabulary as he goes, through a combination of pictures and synonyms. Students listen for comprehension, and check their predictions	T--Ss	Whiteboard, markers, Script (for teacher's use),
10-20 minutes	Production: * For students to practice the new vocabulary that they've learned * For teacher to check how successful the lesson was	Using the picture cards, the students try to retell the story in their pairs.	Pairwork	
10-20	Writing * For the teacher to check how successful the lesson was	The students each individually write a summary of the lesson. The teacher collects these, and uses these to judge how successfully the students understood the story	Individual work	Blank sheet for writing.

### Materials:

1. Script. Self-created by the teacher, using a public domain version of "The King of the Golden Mountain" by the Brothers Grimm. Public domain version can be accessed here: [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Grimm%27s\\_Household\\_Tales\\_\(Edwardes\)/The\\_King\\_of\\_the\\_Golden\\_Mountain](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Grimm%27s_Household_Tales_(Edwardes)/The_King_of_the_Golden_Mountain)

2. Story Script	Vocabulary Prompts
The King of the Golden Mountain Once upon a time, there was a merchant. A merchant is someone who buys	Merchant Rich

and sells things. He was very rich. (He had a lot of money.) One day, he put all his goods (goods are things that you buy and sell) he put all his goods onto a boat (a boat is something that goes on water), because he wanted to sell them and make a lot of money.	Goods Boat
But, the boat sank in the water. (Sank means to go under the water. Sink-sank). And the merchant lost everything. He went from being very rich, to being very poor. (Poor means having no money).	Sank Poor
One day, as the poor man was walking outside, he met a dwarf. (A dwarf is like a small man. They are magical.) The dwarf asked him why he was sad. The merchant told the dwarf that he had lost all of his money.	Dwarf
“I will give you lots of gold,” said the dwarf. (Gold is something that is very worth a lot of money). “But, in 12 years, you must bring me the first thing that touches your leg when you go home.”	Gold
The merchant thought that the first thing that would touch his leg would be a cat or a dog. So he said yes. But, when he came home, his little son grabbed him by the leg. Then, the merchant was very sad.	
But, when the merchant went upstairs to check his chest (a chest is where you keep money), the chest was still empty. So the merchant thought that maybe it was all a joke--not real.	Chest Joke
But, one month later, when the merchant was looking for something upstairs, he found the chest again, and this time the chest was full of money. The merchant was very happy, and he forgot all about his promise to the dwarf, and he used the money to go back into business.	Promise
In 12 years, the merchant’s son grew up. And one day, the merchant remembered the promise he had made to the dwarf. And he felt very sad. The boy asked his father why he was so sad. And the father told him	Grew up

<p>about his promise, and that he must give him to the dwarf.</p> <p>But, the boy told his father not to worry. The boy had a friend who was a fairy. (A fairy is a small magical creature.) At night, the fairy came to talk to the boy, and told him everything he should do. The fairy told the boy to draw a circle, and the dwarf will not be able to come in.</p> <p>So, the next day, the boy and his father went to meet the dwarf. And the son drew a circle, and he and his father sat in the middle of it. The dwarf came, but the dwarf could not enter the circle.</p> <p>The dwarf was very angry. “A promise is a promise,” said the dwarf. “You must give the boy to me.”</p> <p>“I will not come out,” said the boy.</p> <p>They talked and talked for a long time, and at last, they decided. The father would not give his son to the dwarf, but the father would have to put his son into a boat, and push the boat out onto the sea.</p> <p>So, the son got into the boat, and his father pushed him out onto the sea. But, before the boy got far, a wave turned over the boat. The father thought his son had drowned. (Drowned means to die in the water.) The dwarf thought he had gotten his revenge. Both the dwarf and the father went away.</p> <p>But, the boy had not drowned. The good fairy was watching the boy, and the fairy brought the boy up again. The boy held onto the boat, and was safe. He travelled in the sea for a long time, until he came to land in an unknown place.</p> <p>In this place, there was a mountain made of gold. And on the golden mountain, there was a palace. (A palace is a big castle where the king lives.) The boy went into the palace, but it was empty. There was no one there.</p> <p>At last, in one of the rooms, the boy found a white snake. The white snake said to</p>	<p>Fairy</p> <p>enter</p> <p>Sea</p> <p>Wave Drown</p> <p>Mountain Gold Palace</p>
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<p>him, “I am really a princess. I was changed into a snake by magic. You can help me. Tonight, 12 men will come here. They will beat you. (Beat means to punch and kick). You must not say anything or try to fight them. Let them beat you. If you do this for 3 nights, then I will turn back into a princess.”</p> <p>That night, 12 men came, and they beat the boy. But he didn’t fight them, and he didn’t say anything.</p> <p>After 3 nights, the white snake changed back into a princess. The boy was almost dead, but the princess used her powers to heal him. And they fell in love, and got married. And the boy became king of the mountain, and the princess became the queen. And the queen had a son.</p> <p>8 years later, the king of the golden mountain wanted to see his father again. He told the queen about his plan to visit his father. But the queen said, “Don’t go. If you go, bad things will happen to us.” But the king really wanted to see his father. So at last, the queen said, “Okay, you can go. Take this ring. Wherever you wish to go, the ring will bring you. But, you must promise never to use the ring to bring me to your father’s house.”</p> <p>“I promise,” said the king.</p> <p>The king took the ring, and wished himself to the town where his father lived. And the ring brought him there. But, when the king tried to go into the town, the guards would not let him in because his clothes were so strange. So the king had to change clothes with a farmer, and then the guards let him into the town.</p> <p>The king went to his father’s house, and he said, “Father, I am your son.”</p> <p>But his father said, “You are not my son. My son died eight years ago.”</p> <p>“No, it is me,” said the son. “I am still alive.” But his father would not believe him. Finally, the king showed his father his arm. As a boy, he had always had a red mark</p>	<p>Snake</p> <p>Beat</p> <p>Heal King Queen</p> <p>Ring</p> <p>Wish</p> <p>Guards Farmer</p>
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<p>on his arm. When the father saw the red mark, he knew it was his son.</p> <p>Next, the king told him that he had married a princess, and had had a son, and was king of a golden mountain. “This cannot be true,” said his father. “Look at your clothes. It’s not a king’s clothes, but a farmers clothes.”</p> <p>At this, the king became angry, and he forgot his promise to his wife. And he wished for his wife and son to be brought to his father’s house. The queen was very angry, because he had broken his promise.</p> <p>Later that day, while they were walking, the king felt very tired. He and the queen and his son laid down under a tree to rest. But while he was sleeping, the queen took his ring off of his finger. And then the queen wished herself and her son back to the palace, leaving the king all alone.</p> <p>The king woke up, and realized he was all alone. He didn’t know what to do, but he decided to start walking until he got back to the golden mountain.</p> <p>While he was walking, the king came across 3 giants. (A giant is someone who is very big.) The 3 giants were arguing about their inheritance. (An inheritance is something you get when your father dies.)</p> <p>There were 3 things: magic boots that could take you where you wanted, a magic cloak that could make you invisible, and a magic sword. If you say “heads off”, this sword can cut off the heads of your enemies.</p> <p>The giants couldn’t decide who should get which things. They were arguing and arguing. So, the giants asked the king to help them decide. “I will help you,” said the king, but first I need to hold the things, so that I can better decide who should get them.” So, the giants gave him the magic boots, and the magic cloak, and the magic sword.</p> <p>The king put on the cloak, and the boots, and the sword, and as soon as he had</p>	<p>Mark</p> <p>Broken his promise</p> <p>Laid down Took off</p> <p>Woke up</p> <p>Giants Inheritance</p> <p>Boots Cloak Invisible Sword</p> <p>Argue</p>
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<p>all three, he used the magic boots to wish himself back to his palace.</p> <p>When the king got back to his palace, he saw that there were many people there, and there was a big party. He asked what was happening, and the people there told him that the queen was going to marry another husband.</p> <p>The king put on the invisibility cloak, so that no one could see him. And he went into the palace.</p> <p>In the palace, everyone was eating and drinking to celebrate the wedding. But the king stood next to the queen. Whenever the queen tried to eat something, he would move the food away. And whenever the queen tried to drink something, he would move the wine away. So the queen couldn't eat or drink anything.</p> <p>The queen became afraid, and she stood up, and left the table, and went back into her room to cry. "What is happening to me?" she asked.</p> <p>The king followed her to her room, and took off his invisibility cloak. "I am your true husband," he said, "and I have come back."</p> <p>Then, the king went out to the party. "Everyone get out," he said. "This party is over." But they people would not leave. And they tried to fight the king. So the king took his magic sword. "Heads Off" the king said, and the sword cut everyone's heads off.</p> <p>And so the king was king of the golden mountain once more.</p>	<p>marry</p> <p>husband</p> <p>cry</p>
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### The King of the Golden Mountain

Once upon a time, there was a merchant. A merchant is someone who buys and sells things. He was very rich. (He had a lot of money.) One day, he put all his goods (goods are things that you buy and sell) he put all his goods onto a boat (a boat is something that goes on water), because he wanted to sell them and make a lot of money.



But, the boat sank in the water. (Sank means to go under the water. Sink-sank). And the merchant lost everything. He went from being very rich, to being very poor. (Poor means having no money).

One day, as the poor man was walking outside, he met a dwarf. (A dwarf is like a small man. They are magical.) The dwarf asked him why he was sad. The merchant told the dwarf that he had lost all of his money.

“I will give you lots of gold,” said the dwarf. (Gold is something that is very worth a lot of money). “But, in 12 years, you must bring me the first thing that touches your leg when you go home.”

The merchant thought that the first thing that would touch his leg would be a cat or a dog. So he said yes. But, when he came home, his little son grabbed him by the leg. Then, the merchant was very sad.

But, when the merchant went upstairs to check his chest (a chest is where you keep money), the chest was still empty. So the merchant thought that maybe it was all a joke--not real.

But, one month later, when the merchant was looking for something upstairs, he found the chest again, and this time the chest was full of money. The merchant was very happy, and he forgot all about his promise to the dwarf, and he used the money to go back into business.

In 12 years, the merchant’s son grew up. And one day, the merchant remembered the promise he had made to the dwarf. And he felt very sad. The boy asked his father why he was so sad. And the father told him about his promise, and that he must give him to the dwarf.

But, the boy told his father not to worry. The boy had a friend who was a fairy. (A fairy is a small magical creature.) At night, the fairy came to talk to the boy, and told him everything he should do. The fairy told the boy to draw a circle, and the dwarf will not be able to come in.

So, the next day, the boy and his father went to meet the dwarf. And the son drew a circle, and he and his father sat in the middle of it. The dwarf came, but the dwarf could not enter the circle.

The dwarf was very angry. “A promise is a promise,” said the dwarf. “You must give the boy to me.”

“I will not come out,” said the boy.

They talked and talked for a long time, and at last, they decided. The father would not give his son to the dwarf, but the father would have to put his son into a boat, and push the boat out onto the sea.

So, the son got into the boat, and his father pushed him out onto the sea. But, before the boy got far, a wave turned over the boat. The father thought his son had drowned. (Drowned means to die in the water.) The dwarf thought he had gotten his revenge. Both the dwarf and the father went away.

But, the boy had not drowned. The good fairy was watching the boy, and the fairy brought the boy up again. The boy held onto the boat, and was safe. He travelled in the sea for a long time, until he came to land in an unknown place.

In this place, there was a mountain made of gold. And on the golden mountain, there was a palace. (A palace is a big castle where the king lives.) The boy went into the palace, but it was empty. There was no one there.

At last, in one of the rooms, the boy found a white snake. The white snake said to him, “I am really a princess. I was changed into a snake by magic. You can help me. Tonight, 12 men will come here. They will beat you. (Beat means to punch and kick). You must not say anything or try to fight them. Let them beat you. If you do this for 3 nights, then I will turn back into a princess.”

That night, 12 men came, and they beat the boy. But he didn’t fight them, and he didn’t say anything.

After 3 nights, the white snake changed back into a princess. The boy was almost dead, but the princess used her powers to heal him. And they fell in love, and got married. And the boy became king of the mountain, and the princess became the queen. And the queen had a son.

8 years later, the king of the golden mountain wanted to see his father again. He told the queen about his plan to visit his father. But the queen said, “Don’t go. If you go, bad things will happen to us.” But the king really wanted to see his father. So at last, the queen said, “Okay, you can go. Take this ring. Wherever you wish to go, the ring will bring you. But, you must promise never to use the ring to bring me to your father’s house.”

“I promise,” said the king.

The king took the ring, and wished himself to the town where his father lived. And the ring brought him there. But, when the king tried to go into the town, the guards would not let him in because his clothes were so strange. So the king had to change clothes with a farmer, and then the guards let him into the town.

The king went to his father’s house, and he said, “Father, I am your son.”

But his father said, “You are not my son. My son died eight years ago.”

“No, it is me,” said the son. “I am still alive.” But his father would not believe him. Finally, the king showed his father his arm. As a boy, he had always had a red mark on his arm. When the father saw the red mark, he knew it was his son.

Next, the king told him that he had married a princess, and had had a son, and was king of a golden mountain. “This cannot be true,” said his father. “Look at your clothes. It’s not a king’s clothes, but a farmer’s clothes.”

At this, the king became angry, and he forgot his promise to his wife. And he wished for his wife and son to be brought to his father’s house. The queen was very angry, because he had broken his promise.

Later that day, while they were walking, the king felt very tired. He and the queen and his son laid down under a tree to rest. But while he was sleeping, the queen took his ring off of

his finger. And then the queen wished herself and her son back to the palace, leaving the king all alone.

The king woke up, and realized he was all alone. He didn't know what to do, but he decided to start walking until he got back to the golden mountain.

While he was walking, the king came across 3 giants. (A giant is someone who is very big.) The 3 giants were arguing about their inheritance. (An inheritance is something you get when your father dies.)

There were 3 things: magic boots that could take you where you wanted, a magic cloak that could make you invisible, and a magic sword. If you say "heads off", this sword can cut off the heads of your enemies.

The giants couldn't decide who should get which things. They were arguing and arguing. So, the giants asked the king to help them decide. "I will help you," said the king, but first I need to hold the things, so that I can better decide who should get them." So, the giants gave him the magic boots, and the magic cloak, and the magic sword.

The king put on the cloak, and the boots, and the sword, and as soon as he had all three, he used the magic boots to wish himself back to his palace.

When the king got back to his palace, he saw that there were many people there, and there was a big party. He asked what was happening, and the people there told him that the queen was going to marry another husband.

The king put on the invisibility cloak, so that no one could see him. And he went into the palace.

In the palace, everyone was eating and drinking to celebrate the wedding. But the king stood next to the queen. Whenever the queen tried to eat something, he would move the food away. And whenever the queen tried to drink something, he would move the wine away. So the queen couldn't eat or drink anything.

The queen became afraid, and she stood up, and left the table, and went back into her room to cry. "What is happening to me?" she asked.

The king followed her to her room, and took off his invisibility cloak. "I am your true husband," he said, "and I have come back."

Then, the king went out to the party. "Everyone get out," he said. "This party is over." But they people would not leave. And they tried to fight the king. So the king took his magic sword. "Heads Off" the king said, and the sword cut everyone's heads off.

And so the king was king of the golden mountain once more.