

FOREWORD BY ALIDA GERSIE

# DRAMATHERAPY *with* MYTH *and* FAIRYTALE

THE GOLDEN STORIES OF SESAME



JENNY PEARSON, MARY SMAIL  
AND PAT WATTS

DRAMATHERAPY *with*  
MYTH *and* FAIRYTALE

THE GOLDEN STORIES OF SESAME

JENNY PEARSON, MARY SMAIL  
AND PAT WATTS

FOREWORD BY ALIDA GERSIE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAMILLA JESSEL PANUFNIK



Jessica Kingsley *Publishers*  
London and Philadelphia

# Contents

Foreword	15
<i>Alida Gersie</i>	
Introduction	23
<i>Jenny Pearson</i>	
<b>Part I Working with Myth and Fairytale</b>	
Chapter 1 Getting into a Myth Session	34
<i>Pat Watts</i>	
Chapter 2 Entering the World of Stories	41
<i>Jenny Pearson</i>	
Chapter 3 Entering and Leaving the Place of Myth	55
<i>Mary Smail</i>	
Chapter 4 Making Space for Soul Talk: Recent Research	73
<i>Mary Smail</i>	
<b>Part II The Stories</b>	
Abu Kasem's Slippers	84
<i>Iraq</i>	
Akinidi and the Coming of Happiness	86
<i>Siberia</i>	
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves	89
<i>Medieval Arabic, Arabian Nights</i>	
Amaterasu the Sun Goddess	90
<i>Japan</i>	
Ash	92
<i>Native American</i>	
The Bad People	94
<i>Sesame Original</i>	
Beauty and the Beast	96
<i>French Fairytale, Perrault</i>	
The Boy who Lived with Bears	98
<i>Native American</i>	

Cap-o'-Rushes <i>English Fairytale</i>	101
Chiron the Wounded Healer <i>Greek Myth</i>	102
Coyote and the Land of the Dead <i>Native American</i>	104
Creation Myth of the Mayans <i>Guatemala</i>	106
Demeter and Persephone <i>Ancient Greek Myth</i>	107
Elidore <i>Wales</i>	111
Eurynome and the Egg of the Cosmos <i>Greek Creation Myth</i>	114
The Flowering Tree <i>Native American</i>	115
Forever-Mountain <i>Japan</i>	119
The Great White Bird <i>Bushmen, South Africa</i>	122
The Handless Maiden <i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	123
The Healing Herb <i>Sesame Original</i>	127
The Holy Grail <i>British Legend</i>	129
The Hymn of the Pearl <i>Gnostic Story, Middle East</i>	132
In the Beginning <i>Native Australian</i>	134
Inanna in the Underworld <i>Ancient Sumer</i>	136
Iron Hans <i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	140
Jumping Mouse <i>Native American</i>	144
Kaang <i>Bushmen, South Africa</i>	146

King Laurin	147
<i>Austria</i>	
Korozuka	150
<i>Japan</i>	
The Lion, the Young Man and the Black Storm Tree	151
<i>Bushmen, South Africa</i>	
The Little Earth Cow	153
<i>Fairytale from Alsace</i>	
Loki and Baldur	156
<i>Norse Myth</i>	
The Magic Drum	158
<i>Canada, Inuit</i>	
Mella	160
<i>African Story</i>	
The Mysteries of Orpheus	162
<i>Greek Myth</i>	
The Myth of Er	164
<i>Greece, Plato</i>	
Prince Ring	166
<i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	
Psyche and Eros	168
<i>Greek Myth</i>	
The Queen Bee	170
<i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	
Rapunzel	172
<i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	
The Sacred Gift of Song, Dance and Festivity	175
<i>Inuit Legend</i>	
The Seal Woman	176
<i>Scotland</i>	
The Snow Queen	178
<i>Denmark, Hans Christian Anderson</i>	
The Star Woman	180
<i>Bushmen, South Africa</i>	
Stone Soup	181
<i>European Folk Tale</i>	
The Story Bag	183
<i>Korean Folk Tale</i>	

The Tengu	185
<i>Japan</i>	
A Thorn in the King's Foot	186
<i>Scotland, the Travelling People</i>	
Thousandfurs	190
<i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	
The Three Feathers	193
<i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	
The Three Little Pigs	195
<i>English Fairytale</i>	
Tiddalik the Frog	197
<i>Native Australian</i>	
The Twin Warrior Heroes	199
<i>Native American</i>	
Water Jar Boy, Childhood of the Human Hero	200
<i>Pueblo Indian</i>	
Whisky Jack	202
<i>Native Canadian</i>	
The White Snake	204
<i>German Fairytale, Grimm</i>	
APPENDIX: STORY NOTES	205
REFERENCES	229
INDEX	232

# Getting into a Myth Session

*Pat Watts*

I have worked for many years with children and adults using fairytales and myths. As well as teaching on the Sesame course for the use of movement and drama in therapy, I have taken many workshops in the community.

People come to the session for a variety of reasons. Maybe they want to have the experience of working with a story, or perhaps they are looking for something they hope will be therapeutic. Whatever the reason, something is needed by way of an introduction to assist the group in working together on the story.

Myths are ancient stories which contain all human experience. The language of myth is image and symbol. In connecting with them, we can be surprised by the depth of feeling that is evoked. We can find joy and sorrow, embrace loss, find our ability to survive and create something we did not know was there for the making.

In coming together with others to enact myth, we are creating a special space. We cannot know what will happen. One person needs to be on the outside of the enactment to contain and assist the process of creativity. I will call this person the leader.

Although essentially working with improvisation, the leader needs to have chosen the myth with care, considering possible implications of the story and the effect it might have on the particular group. It is important that the leader does not take on a role but remains outside the action, though vigilant. Occasionally, it is necessary for the leader to step into the enactment (as briefly as possible to move the story on). This can sometimes be necessary when a group member becomes too identified with his or her role.

Before beginning work on the myth, the leader needs to place attention away from everyday preoccupations, worries or anxieties in order to give attention in a focused way. There is quite a skill in placing the attention in this way and sustaining it.

Depending on the nature of the group, members may know each other or be complete strangers to each other. Before beginning work on the enactment, it is important for the group to feel relaxed and ready for exploration.

It has been my experience that, although working with story, people can become more deeply involved if they do not use words. Instead, use voice sounds or basic instruments such as drum, cymbal or pipe. In fact, eventually a small group within the bigger one may choose to accompany the actions with sounds.

The first aim of the leader is to help the group become a creative entity, by becoming more aware of themselves in a positive way, open to each other and willing to take risks. To this end, I will offer a selection of possible introductory activities used to facilitate the group towards enacting the story.

1. Move around in the space, keeping as far as possible from others.
2. Move around in the space, keeping as near as possible to each other.
3. On a signal move quickly into a circle. Hold hands. Look at people standing on either side. Look at the group. Relinquish hands.
4. One at a time, move into the centre of the circle saying your name on a chosen rhythm. Everyone copy this. Go round the group in this way.
5. Select the name of one other. Repeat in the way it is introduced. Repeat your own name and movement.
6. Mirror partner, without using words.
7. Move into twos, A and B. A leads B with eyes closed on a journey in the space. Change over to B leading A with eyes closed. Talk about the experience to each other.
8. Without holding but using a hum or voice sound, A leads B on a journey. Change over to B leading A. Share this experience.
9. Work with a different partner. A to take a folded-up position, hold it. Eyes closed. B to open up A. A to allow this. Change over A to open up B. Discuss.



10. In a circle, leader to begin improvising on a sound and rhythm. Others join in. Suggest words – upset, relaxed, triumphant, sad and so on. Instruments can be used also.

At some point in the warm-up exercise I introduce movements or moods which are soon to be encountered in the myth enactment – for example, a dangerous journey, homecoming.

We come into the circle to hear the story, which to my mind is more living if it is told rather than read. The myth needs to be spoken clearly, simply with good energy. This is a time to be sure everyone is clear about the storyline and to select roles. Sometimes more than one person can improvise a character, in which case they must be sensitive to each other and work together. Some of the group may choose to work with the instruments and sit to one side of the main action.

Before enacting the myth, it is important everyone is clear about the story. Give time for the group to go over the sequence of events. Individuals choose their own roles.

The story needs to be enacted more than once. Each time, the group is offered time to share their experience and discuss.

The leader needs to be sensitively watchful. Sometimes when people are deeply affected they cannot talk about this at once but may be ready at the end of the session to share their feelings with the leader or one other. Always offer a space for this. Sometimes people find it impossible to put words to their experience at the time but quite some time later it may be possible for them to formulate their experience.