

"Script"- The Story Spirits

In order of appearance:

Narrator

Boy

Servant

Friends

Spirits

Uncle

Wealthy Bride

Narrator: LONG AGO IN THE LAND OF KOREA, there was a young boy, the only child born to a rich mother and father. Above all things, the little boy loved to hear stories. Whenever he was introduced to a new person, he would beg,

Boy: Tell me a story—one I haven't heard before!

Narrator: In his household, there was an old servant who knew a great many stories, and he soon became a favorite of the young boy. At bed- time each night, the old man would tell him stories of fox spirits, dragons, clever princesses, and wicked tigers. The boy kept those stories in a leather bag that hung from a nail on his wall. Each new story the boy heard went into that bag, which was tied shut with a string so they could not escape. (drum circle)

Boy: (Sometimes the boy would boast to his friends about the wonderful stories the old servant told him each night.)

Friends: (would plead for a story.)

Boy: No! They are my stories. Go find your own.

Narrator: The years went by and each new story the boy heard was jammed and crammed into that old leather bag. The bag grew quite crowded and close and uncomfortable, for never was a story allowed to go free. The story-loving boy grew into a young man and still he hoarded his stories.

Spirits: (At first the story spirits were merely discontent, but as year after year went by, the story spirits grew more and more angry.)

Narrator: The young man's parents died, but the faithful old storyteller stayed by his side and cared for him. When the young man came of age to be married, his uncle was able to arrange a marriage with a wealthy bride from a good family. On the day before the wedding, the old Servant was shuffling past the young man's room when he heard faint whispers from within.

Servant: That's odd. I thought my master was out today.

Spirits/Servant: (There was something about the bitter tone of the voices that worried the old man. He stopped at the doorway and listened.)

Spirits:

1. So he's going to be married
2. while we must remain prisoners in the dark.

(It was with shock and horror that the servant realized that the voices were coming from the story bag! The old storyteller knew at once the voices belonged to story spirits. He listened on)

Spirits:

3. It is time we had our revenge
4. Yes, yes
5. But how?
6. It is a long ride to the bride's home where the wedding will take place. He will surely grow thirsty. I shall turn into a well filled with cool spring water. He will never suspect that I am poisoned.
7. If for some reason he does not drink from the well. I will change myself into a patch of bright red strawberries. But when he plucks a berry and eats it, he will die.
8. And if that does not work, I will take over. When they place the bag of chaff beneath his horse so that he may dismount, I will be a

- red-hot poker hidden inside the bag. When he steps on me, I will burn his feet so badly that they will have to call off the wedding.
9. And if your plan fails. I shall wait for the bride and groom in their bedchamber. When everyone is asleep, I Shall turn into a poisonous snake and bite them.

Servant: (The servant tiptoed away, wringing his hands) What shall I do? If I tell the boy's uncle, he will call me an old fool and forbid me to speak to my master. And even if I were to warn my master, he would not believe me.

Narrator: The old servant stayed up half the night working out a plan. (Orff arrangement) In the morning, as the household prepared for the journey to the bride's home,

Servant: (the old servant begged to be allowed to lead his master's horse.)

Uncle: You are too old for such a long journey

Servant: (But the old man insisted)

Narrator: The sun rose high as the wedding procession made its way. When they passed a well at the side of the road,

Boy: (the young man told his servant) Stop here and I shall drink.

Narrator: To the surprise of the bridegroom and the outrage of his uncle, the servant walked right past the well.

Servant: You shall have a cool drink of water when we arrive at your bride's house.

Narrator: Then they passed a fragrant field of bright red strawberries.

Boy: One of those berries will quench my thirst, Stop the horse and pick me one.

Narrator: But the old man cracked his whip and urged the horse on even faster, pretending not to hear.

Uncle: Such insolence in a servant is unheard of. He must be properly disciplined.

Boy: I don't understand. He has never acted this way before. Perhaps he is overly eager to see me wed. Could we not wait until after the wedding to punish him?

Uncle: Very well, But as soon as we return home, he will be dealt with harshly.

Narrator: When at last they arrived at the bride's home, crowds of well-wishers greeted them. A bag of chaff was brought over for the groom to step down onto when he dismounted from his horse. (But the old servant pretended to stumble, and he pushed his master to one side. The bridegroom fell to the ground, much to the embarrassment of everyone present.)

Uncle: (Again the uncle fumed)

Servant: (too concerned for the safety of his charge to heed his angry look.)

Narrator: All through the wedding and the feast that followed, the faithful servant kept a watchful eye over his master in case the story spirits should seek revenge in some unexpected manner. (Group Dance)

Narrator: At last, the guests went home, and the newlywed couple retired to their bedchamber.

FX (No sooner had the light been extinguished then there was a loud pounding on their door.)

Servant: (In burst the servant brandishing a sword.)

Boy: (His master was now convinced that the old man had truly lost his mind.)

Servant: Get out, master!

Boy: What is the meaning of this?

Servant: There is not time to answer questions! Do as I tell you at once!

(No sooner had the groom and bride leapt from their room then the old man saw the snake. Coiled beneath it was a huge poisonous snake, ready to strike.)

Servant: (The servant fell upon the snake with his sword and killed it.)

(The bride's parents and the young man's uncle heard the commotion and came crowding into the room.)

Servant: (Only then did the old servant dare to explain his peculiar behavior. They then understood that he had saved the young couple's lives. The uncle begged his forgiveness, and the servant was rewarded generously for his loyalty and courage.)

Boy: I see that I am to blame for all this. Never again shall I refuse a story to anyone who asks.

Narrator: And he was true to his word. No longer did he hoard the stories in his story bag. He began by telling them to his bride, and after they were blessed with children, he regaled his sons and daughters with his stories. In time, he came to be known as one of the finest storytellers in all of Korea. As for the story spirits, they were thus appeased and never again threatened the young man. Told and re-told, many people enjoyed his stories, including this one.

(Group Dance- reprise)