The Ravenous Gown – Bonus Lesson Plan

Lesson Objective:
Learn to create new stories using the plots of old folktales.

A few of the stories in The Ravenous Gown were created by using the structure of an old folktale to create a new story.

Read the story The Ravenous Gown then read this folktale the story was inspired by:

The Hodja was invited to a banquet. Not wanting to be pretentious, he wore his everyday clothes, only to discover that everyone ignored him, including the host. So he went back home and put on his fanciest coat, and then returned to the banquet. Now he was greeted cordially by everyone and invited to sit down and eat and drink.

When the soup was served to him he dunked the sleeve of his coat into the bowl and said, "Eat, my coat, eat!"

The startled host asked the Hodja to explain his strange behavior.

"When I arrived here wearing my other clothes," explained the Hodja, "no one offered me anything to eat or drink. But when I returned wearing this fine coat, I was immediately offered the best of everything, so I can only assume that it was the coat and not myself who was invited to your banquet."

You may be wondering who Hodja is. Hodja Nasreddin was a real person who lived in Turkey. He told humorous stories that often contained great wisdom. Hodja, himself, is often the main character in the stories he told. These stories were told and beloved often and eventually they were adopted, changed and told in many different cultures.

As an interesting side note, in Turkey, the International Nasreddin Hodja festival, is celebrated yearly between 4th and 10th of July. Writers, musicians and performing artists from different countries keep the stories alive by creating music, drama, stories, cartoons, comic strips, and paintings to celebrate Hodja’s stories, humor and wisdom.
Author, Steffani Raff, imagines each story she writes completely in her mind before she ever writes anything down. You can experience her method of story writing by trying this activity.

1. Pick a main character to work with. This character can be anything you would like. A princess, a knight, a butterfly, a kangaroo, a rabbit, a squirrel – it can even be you! Take some time to think about what this character likes and doesn’t like. How your character walks and talks. What makes your character feel angry, happy, sad or hopeful?
2. Choose an antagonist. Perhaps it is a dragon, a monster, or an evil witch/wizard.
3. Now pick a setting. Where will your story take place? Think about what you can see, touch, smell, taste, and hear in this place.
4. Experience a Guided Story Journey. Steffani Raff has taken old folktales and boiled them down to just the plot, she then made this “plot” into an imaginative journey your character can take. Here’s how: Close your eyes and imagine your character in your setting. Listen to the Guided Story Journey provided and let your mind create the images for a new story with your character in your setting using this story plot. You’ll probably see black when you close your eyes. That’s normal. Relax. Imagining is more about getting a sense of what is going on in your mind. Pay attention to that sense and try to describe it in your mind as you sense it.
5. When you are done re-imagining this folktale try writing it or telling it.
6. How is this writing experience different than what you have tried before? How is it similar?
7. You can repeat this process by using different characters and settings.