



Trying Our Luck – Preparing for a Career and Navigating Through Life with Folk Tales

Guide for the use of the folk tale cards

Puss in Boots

German folktale

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The tale – Puss in Boots

Once there lived an old miller who had three sons. When the old man died, he only left them three things: his mill, his donkey, and his cat, whose name was Puss. The eldest son took the mill and the second son took the donkey. All that remained for the youngest son was the cat, and the boy was more than a little disappointed. “If my brothers team up, they’ll be able to make a good living with the mill and the donkey,” he grumbled. “But as soon as I’ve eaten Puss and made a scarf out of his fur, I’ll surely die of hunger.”

The cat had been sleeping peacefully in front of the fire, but when he heard this, he looked up and spoke very seriously. “Don’t you worry, Master! Just give me a bag and have a pair of boots made for me so that I can walk in the forest. Then you’ll see that you didn’t get such a bad deal after all.”

Well, Puss had often shown that he was capable of cunning tricks. When he was hunting rats and mice, for example, he would pretend to be dead and then take his victims by surprise. So although he didn’t really believe what the cat had said, for the first time, the boy began to hope that his luck might just change for the better.

When his master brought him the boots he had asked for, Puss pulled them on happily. Then he hung the bag round his neck and hurried off to a forest where many rabbits lived. When he got there, he put some lettuce leaves in the bag and then stretched out on the grass. As he lay there, the cat was so still and quiet, it was like he was dead.

Puss had only just closed his eyes, when his plan began to work. Smelling the lettuce, a silly young rabbit jumped into the bag and as quick as a flash, the cat pulled the neck of the bag shut. Very pleased with his work, Puss went straight to the royal palace. He was shown inside, and when he met the King, he bowed respectfully.

“Your Majesty,” he said, “I have brought you a gift from the Duke of Carabas – a fine young rabbit!”



“Please thank your master,” smiled the King. Although he had never heard of the Duke of Carabas, he didn’t for one moment imagine that the cat’s master was really just a poor boy.

A few days later, Puss hid in a field of wheat keeping the mouth of his bag wide open. Very soon, two fat pheasants flew into it, and the cat caught them in an instant. Off he went to the palace again to give them to the King. The King was delighted, and this time he gave Puss a present for himself.

For two or three months, Puss continued to catch all the animals he could. Every week, he took a new surprise to the King, always saying that it was a gift from his master, the Duke of Carabas.

One day when he was at the palace, he heard that the King was going to take his daughter, who was the most beautiful princess in the world, for a trip along the river bank. When he got back home, Puss went straight to his master. “Do as I tell you, and you’ll be set up for life. All you have to do is go for a swim in the river. Leave the rest to me!”

The boy had no idea what was going on, but he followed the cat to the river and jumped in. As soon as he was in the water, Puss grabbed his clothes, which were lying on the grass, and threw them into a bush. The boy was furious, but just then, the royal carriage appeared, and Puss immediately began to cry out at the top of his voice. “Help! Help! The Duke of Carabas is drowning!”

When he heard these shouts, the King stuck his head out of the window of the carriage. And when he recognised the cat who had brought him all those gifts, he sent his knights to rescue the Duke as quickly as possible.

While they were pulling the boy out of the river, Puss went over to the carriage and explained to the King that while his master was swimming, some robbers had come and stolen his clothes. As soon as he heard this, the King ordered a servant to fetch some of his own clothes for the poor Duke.



When he was dressed in his fine new clothes, the boy walked up to the carriage to thank the King. They were soon talking like old friends, and, sitting by her father's side, the Princess thought that the stranger was the most handsome man she had ever seen. While he was chatting with the King, from time to time the boy glanced at the beautiful girl, and before long she was head over heels in love with him. The King was also impressed by the Duke, and he invited the boy to climb up into the carriage and ride with them.

Delighted to see that his plan was going so well, Puss ran on ahead of the carriage. Before long, he came to a field where some men were making hay. "Listen here," he said to them, "the King is coming. You must tell him that this field belongs to the Duke of Carabas. If you don't, you will all be chopped up into little pieces." Just then, the royal carriage appeared and the King asked the men whose field they were working on.

"It belongs to the Duke of Carabas!" shouted the men.

"The land you own is very nice, Duke," commented the King.

"Thank you, Your Majesty," replied the boy. "This field produces the finest hay you've ever seen."

Puss ran on ahead a second time, and soon he saw some men harvesting wheat. "Listen here!" he said to them. "If you don't tell the King that this field belongs to the Duke of Carabas, I'll chop you all up into little pieces." Just like before, when the men heard the cat's words, they were very afraid.

A moment later, the royal carriage appeared, and once again the King asked who the owner of the land was.

"It is the Duke of Carabas," cried the harvesters. Hearing this, the King liked the Duke even better than ever.

The carriage travelled on with Puss always running ahead of it and making the same threat to everyone he met. And the more times they stopped, the more amazed the King was at the Duke's great wealth.



Finally Puss reached a magnificent castle, which belonged to an ogre. He was the richest ogre in the land, and all the fields the King had seen really belonged to him. Well, Puss already knew all about the ogre and so when he knocked on the castle gates, he felt more than a little afraid.

The ogre – who wasn't actually that unfriendly – invited the cat in and told him to sit down. "I have heard how mighty you are," began Puss. "They say that you can change yourself into any kind of scary animal. A lion, for example, or even an elephant."

"That's perfectly true," said the ogre. "To prove it, I will turn into a lion."

And with that, the cat found himself face to face with a huge, hungry-looking lion. Puss was so terrified that he ran up onto the roof – which was rather dangerous, because his boots were not made for walking on tiles.

After a while, however, the lion changed back into an ogre again and Puss climbed down, admitting that he had felt very frightened.

"That was amazing," he told the ogre. "But I've also heard that you have the power to change yourself into animals that are smaller than you too. Even a rat or a mouse. Now, you changing into big, ugly animals, I can believe. But an ogre like you becoming a harmless little creature? That's impossible!"

"Impossible?" roared the ogre. "Just let me show you!" And the next moment, he changed himself into a mouse, which began to run over the floor. As soon as Puss saw this, he leapt on the tiny mouse, caught it between his paws, and ate it up.

Not long after that, the royal carriage arrived in front of the castle. Hearing the sound of its wheels, Puss ran to the gates and called out. "Your Majesty! Welcome to the castle of the Duke of Carabas!"

"What?" cried the King. "Do you really live in such a magnificent castle, Duke? Can we go in and have a look around?"



The boy gave his hand to the princess, and they followed the King as Puss led them inside. When they entered the grand hall, they saw that the table was laid for a huge feast. Just by chance, the ogre had been planning to throw a big party for his friends, but when the guests had seen the royal carriage outside the castle, they all went home again.

The King now liked the Duke of Carabas almost as much as his daughter did. Seeing how rich the boy was, and having drunk several glasses of wine, he turned to his host, saying, "Listen, my friend, how would you like to be my son-in-law?"

The boy bowed deeply. "I'd like that very much indeed, Your Majesty!" And that same day, he and the beautiful young princess were married.

As for Puss, he became the chief adviser to the royal court, and he never hunted mice again – except for fun!



Guide to the tale

The hero of our tale is the youngest son of a miller, who inherits nothing from his father except for a cat. How can we start from being penniless yet still achieve the status of a king, that is, a high quality of life in material, psychological, and emotional terms alike? The tale 'Puss in Boots' is one possible way of doing this.

At the beginning, the miller's sons share out their paternal inheritance. While the two elder brothers receive a mill and a donkey respectively, the youngest son gets only a cat. For many of us, this situation may be familiar: even if we are intelligent, talented, and have great potential, without the right circumstances, financial support, a good network of contacts, and a marketable profession, it is very easy to sink into despair, as our chances of getting ahead well seem to be low. On the other hand, if we want to break out of this situation, the risk is very high: we have to leap into the unknown with a parachute that isn't guaranteed to open.

An important turning point in the tale occurs at the very beginning. Putting aside his disappointment, the youngest son, looks to the future and entrusts his fate to his cat. With the last of his money, he buys the boots and the bag Puss has asked for – and by doing so, he gains a helper, who will continue to guide him as a 'manager' or an 'adviser'.

The cat has a clear plan and a clear picture of the status the boy can achieve and the path he must take to get there. But what are these steps that our protagonist will eventually take to earn a suitable place in society? At first glance, the goal may seem unrealistic and unattainable – especially if we make the mistake of trying to tackle all the tasks and obstacles that lie before us immediately. Puss knows that in the given life situation, it makes more sense to take only small steps at first, but then to gradually meet ever greater challenges.

The first step is to catch a rabbit in the forest, which is an easy task. All the same, it's a big enough prize to present to the king. What are the simplest steps that we can take – steps for which we have the resources and that will bring us closer to our goal? Once we have taken



these steps, how can we best capitalize on the results achieved? Do we roast the rabbit we have caught and eat it for dinner, or do we take it to the palace and offer it to the King? Are we able – with our long-term goals in mind – not to ‘splurge’ what we have acquired, but to invest it wisely? Puss is certainly able to make that choice.

The next time he visits the palace, it is with a much more valuable gift – a pair of pheasants. And he doesn’t stop there. In the months to come, he brings the King more and more presents. Why is this necessary? Why aren’t a rabbit and two pheasants enough? After all, it can’t be the most pleasurable activity to keep on catching more and more prey – in other words, to achieve results – and then let someone else enjoy the benefits. With this strategy, however, Puss is securing the attention and trust that will be necessary to ensure that the King does not question the identity and intentions of the Duke of Carabas during later events.

As soon as the right moment arrives – when the King takes his daughter for a carriage ride – the cat immediately ‘moves on to the next phase’, taking his plan to the next level. He has already proved himself to both the King and the boy, and this is how the latter, trusting his ‘adviser’ implicitly, puts his fate in the hands of his cat: he strips naked and jumps into the river without knowing why he should do so or what will happen next. This is a particularly symbolic moment, because it represents both total helplessness and the fact that sometimes we have to leave everything behind – even our only clothes – in order to achieve a higher quality of life. If the King saw the boy fully dressed, he would immediately realize that the Duke of Carabas was actually just the impoverished son of a miller. Like this, however, in the same spirit of generosity the so-called Duke has shown him, he also offers a gift, giving him some of his own clothes and inviting him to ride with him in his carriage. Perhaps more importantly, this is the moment when the boy himself begins to believe that he really is the Duke of Carabas. In the rest of the tale, we witness a beautiful transformation. We see how the miller’s son finally does become the Duke of Carabas, and how he harnesses his talents, resources, and potential to become the master of his own destiny.



Running on ahead of the carriage, Puss continues to pave the way for the boy's success. Having been intimidated by the cat, all the peasants the King meets declare that the land of beauty and wealth he is travelling through belongs to the Duke. The peasants are frightened: they already know how it feels to be threatened, for the ogre who owns the land is evil and does not treat his workers kindly.

Once inside the castle, Puss must face his most daunting task: to defeat the ogre himself. Fortunately, he is aware of the ogre's weakness, which is his vanity. Even so, the situation is perilous: at one point he almost falls prey to the lion the ogre has transformed himself into. But eventually, exploiting his adversary's vanity, he tricks the ogre into taking on a form even a cat can easily handle.

The ogre is a symbol of deep insecurity and self-doubt. He can transform himself into a lion and a mouse alike; this is how he conceals his true essence, but also how he becomes expendable. His disappearance opens the way for the Duke of Carabas to achieve the status of a king, and the last step the boy must take is simply to accept the opportunity offered to him and to marry the beautiful princess. This may seem quite easy, but we know that sometimes we have to take a deep breath in order to summon up the courage to grab the opportunity we most desire. After all, there may be a question lurking within us: Are we worthy of it? Let us set that question aside and believe that it really is possible.



Working with the tale on our own

Working through a story on our own is an exciting experience, but it is not at all straightforward. In folk tales, order is restored by the end; the heroes go on a journey, and through that they develop.

This is our task too – to interpret the turns and ‘codes’ of the folk tale for our own lives, to find the steps that will help us to become better masters and mistresses of our own lives.

When we begin to work through ‘Puss in Boots’, we should first listen to or read the story and then sit back and let the mood of the tale wash over us. Even with our eyes closed, we can find a taste, a smell, or an image from the story. What would we take from the story if we could? Where in the story are we, and what role are we playing?

Then we should take a pencil and write down our answers to the questions (on the cards or in the text here). We should focus on the questions that speak to us the most. Not all questions may be relevant to us, but those that are, are worth thinking about at length, or even talking about with others – parents, friends, peers, or even helpers.

In what way does this happen? Probably some character, place, or object captures our imagination. The elements in a folk tale do not necessarily mean the same thing to everyone, and in fact, when we work on the story on our own, we interpret the situations, characters, etc. that appear in it completely for ourselves.

The characters in the story.

Each character has their own strengths, their own role, and their own message. The characters’ cards carry these messages.

❖ Throughout the tale, it is Puss who guides the miller’s son on his journey. He is the one who, through his ingenuity, gives the boy the opportunity to change his life. Does anyone help



us to achieve our goals? Who can we ask for help to manage our life increasingly well? What skills does Puss have that we ourselves could use? How can we acquire them?

❖ The King is the embodiment of what the miller's son can become if he makes the right choices. He represents values, attitudes, and qualities that – as yet – the boy only possesses in embryonic form. What quality of life do we want for ourselves? (We can interpret this question in material, psychological, emotional, or even spiritual terms.) When do we feel in control of our life?

❖ The peasants work in the ogre's fields, but he is neither a caring nor a fair master. He keeps his workers in fear, so it's no wonder that they are intimidated by the cat's threats too. Indeed, we all face situations in our lives that hit us in a sensitive spot. It is worth reflecting upon what kind of situations we feel intimidated in. Have we ever been afraid to talk about our thoughts, opinions, and feelings? What happened in that situation? What do such situations have in common? Have we ever done what others told us to do rather than what we really wanted to? Why did this happen?

❖ The ogre is evil and powerful, but not very clever, and his skill lies in his ability to transform himself into whatever animal he chooses. Of course, this in itself would be sufficient to destroy both the cat and the boy, but fortunately Puss knows the ogre's weak point: vanity. What do we think about this vanity? Does the ogre have any qualities that we ourselves would like to possess?

[The locations in the story](#)

We can also study the various locations in the tale. In which setting can we find ourselves? Each scene presents its own tasks, which we have to perform in order to arrive at the next way station.



❖ At the beginning of the tale, the three brothers share out their inheritance. All the youngest brother gets is a cat. What kind of 'inheritance' (not necessarily in a purely material sense) have we received from our parents? If we have siblings, what is their inheritance like? How is it different from what our own? How does this affect our relationship with them?

❖ Puss's first trip – after he has been given his boots and his bag – is to the forest. He catches a rabbit for the King. An animal like that is relatively simple to catch, which means that the cat's first step is to accomplish an easy, short-term goal. What are the easiest small steps that bring us closer to achieving our goals? Where are the easiest places for us to get resources? What else do we acquire (for example, knowledge) besides material resources? What do we do with these things? Do we use them for a specific purpose?

❖ Puss takes the rabbit to the royal palace and – on behalf of his master – he presents the animal as a gift in order to gain the King's attention. What do we do when we need someone's support? How do we get ourselves noticed? If we have a good idea, do we dare to show it to people who are in some way above us?

❖ With all the creatures he catches, Puss both wins the King's trust and convinces his master that he is worth listening to. Then comes one of the most significant moments in the tale: when the miller's son becomes the Duke of Carabas for good. For this to happen, he must first experience a situation in which he is completely vulnerable, for when Puss calls for the King's help, the boy is swimming naked in the river.

How does the issue of trust manifest itself in our life? And to turn the question around: Who trusts us? How do we act, and how does it affect us, when we witness someone is in a vulnerable situation? Have we ever had to trust someone without knowing the outcome out of the given situation?

❖ After the successful rescue, the King invites the Duke of Carabas to ride in his carriage with him. This is the first time they do not interact through the cat; the first time the boy can



show himself to the King. Have we ever been in a situation where we had to prove our competence and knowledge? What would we say about ourselves when meeting someone for the first time? What would we be reluctant to talk about?

❖ During the carriage ride, the Duke of Carabas speaks about the ogre's land as if it was his own. These fields generate a lot of wealth, so they are of great worth. The miller's son believes that such valuable characteristics are his due and that the land should truly belong to him, and he understands the importance of letting others know about this. Let's try to think of at least five of our own valuable characteristics! How can we show our worth and potential to others?

❖ The ogre's castle is the scene of many different events. First of all, it is something that the Duke of Carabas would like to have for himself. He has come a long way from being a miller's son to achieving this goal. If we detach ourselves from our current life situation and opportunities and let our imagination run wild, what are the things (material or otherwise) that we long for in life?

The castle is also the place where the ogre is defeated when Puss exploits his vanity. Having first transformed himself into a lion, he then changes into a mouse, in which form the cat can easily destroy him. As a lion, the ogre is dangerous, and there is a moment when it is far from sure that Puss will eventually triumph. Have we ever been in a dangerous situation? How do we react in a crisis? Is there anyone we fear in our life? What do we do when we cannot avoid being near them?

The lion may symbolize a personal quality which we overrate, while the mouse may be symbolic of a quality we undervalue. Do we have insecurities or a lack of confidence? How do we handle these feelings?

After Puss has successfully defeated the ogre, the Duke of Carabas, the King and the princess arrive at the castle, where a feast is awaiting them. Are we able to celebrate when we have achieved something? At one point during the feast, the King offers his daughter's



hand in marriage to the Duke. It is here that it will finally transpire whether or not the former miller's son will at last believe that he can truly achieve the status of a king, and whether he will take the opportunity offered to him. In what situations do we accept opportunities? When do we reject them? What are the non-rational reasons or fears that might make us turn an opportunity down? When we are presented with a great opportunity, we often don't trust ourselves. Do we really believe that we deserve it? We should ask the opinion of someone who knows us well: Do they think we have the knowledge and skills to take advantage of such an opportunity?

When we work by ourselves with the tale, we can start from several directions, and there is no single, linear approach. Although the locations and the tasks that appear in the story are presented in a deliberate order, we can work on the other themes in roughly any sequence. It is likely that we won't reach the conclusion of the tale very quickly.



Working with the tale as a coach

When we want to work with the story as a coach, the first step is to work with the story ourselves – that is, to think through the steps detailed in the previous section.

Before we start working with the story as a coach, it is necessary to have a subjective interpretation of the tale, an interpretation of the story as it applies to our own personal life, because it is very important to avoid imposing our own interpretation on our clients. To do this, we need to know what our own interpretation is. On the other hand, it is also important to interpret the folk tale in relation to our own lives, so that we do not run into questions and topics that trigger an emotional reaction in us while working with the client.

At the same time, however, we also need to interpret the story objectively, and to think through the possible interpretations from the client's point of view.

Ildikó Boldizsár calls these two approaches the 'objective and subjective story matrix'. In the objective matrix, we interpret the story itself, while in the subjective matrix we examine ourselves in the light of the story.

The objective matrix of the tale 'Puss in Boots' is as follows:

a) Who is the hero of the tale? – The hero is the one who develops, in this case the miller's youngest son.

b) What is the life situation? – Starting out in poverty, but managing to make our way in the world.

c) What is the challenge of the tale? – Can the miller's son, with the help of his cat, achieve a quality of life that matches his abilities and potential?

d) Who/what are the helpers? – Puss, the resourceful 'adviser', who knows his master well and recognizes the opportunities that suit him.



e) Who is the adversary? – The ogre and all the traits that hinder the achievement of a higher quality of life.

f) What is the solution? –

The subjective matrix of the tale 'Puss in Boots' is as follows:

a) Who am I in the story? – I may identify most with the miller's son. In this case, it is especially important to work with the story, as I may face similar challenges to those of a given client. But it may also be that the role of the King or, as a helper, that of Puss, is the one that is closest to my current life situation.

b) Where am I in the story? – I may already be fulfilled and living as a king, or I may be naked in the river. One thing is for sure, I can't be in a place where the character I identify with hasn't been. (For example, if I am the ogre, I can't be in the forest where Puss catches the rabbit, since the ogre has never been there.)

c) What is my role here?

d) What is my own internal adversary that I must overcome to move forward?

e) What is my inner help, my own resources for change?

f) What object would I take from the story for myself?

g) What is the very specific thing I need to do to move forward in this situation?

After a thorough reflection on the tale, we can begin to work on it with our clients. If we are working with a client in an individual process, the main question is really where to start, considering in what place and at what stage of development our client is. We might have already ascertained this during prior conversations, but we may give them the story, or they may listen to it and determine this for themselves.

Then, based on the client's interpretation and the interpretations made in previous sessions, we should go through the questions formulated in the previous sessions and on the cards during the facilitation process, which may sometimes take several sessions. Not all



questions need to be worked with, some are relevant, others less so. It is possible that new questions will arise from the questions on the cards, and we will move on from there. The cards mainly feature questions, however sometimes there is a specific problem to solve.

Sometimes we may come across a topic that is no longer in the scope of this story. We can then continue with another story and return to this one later.

The aim of the process is for the client to develop and apply effective coping strategies, to find the root cause of their anxiety, and – finally – to let it go.

In the following are suggestions on how to engage with the story with young people in groups as well.



A possible scenario for a group activity

The purpose of the folktale work group: To explore and mobilize inner resources; to prepare clients to take control of their lives; to galvanize their creative powers.

Target age group: Young people aged 18-23 (possibly older), still only partially independent from their parents.

Duration: 60 minutes.

Number of participants: No more than 20.

Preparation of the venue:

The setting for the story group should be prepared according to the atmosphere of the tale. It is important that the participants can sit in a circle – perhaps not on chairs, but on cushions. There should be a clear point of entry, which could be the door of the room, but if this is not possible, or if the room is too large, then a ‘gateway’ should be set up.

There should be sufficient but not too much lighting. If there are tables, we should place them by the wall; they can be useful for individual work later. If there are no tables, we need to bring drawing boards or folders for the participants to write or draw on.

Next to the ‘gateway’, already inside the space, we place symbol cards that the participants can choose from when they enter, before they sit down. These can be OH cards, Dixit cards, or even a personal collection of pictures or postcards – the main thing is that they depict different situations and feelings, and that there should be at least one and a half to two times more cards than participants so that everyone can choose freely.

In the centre of the circle, it is worth putting a colourful shawl, or perhaps a flower or a symbol related to the story. In the case of ‘Puss in Boots’, this could be a pair of boots, a bag, a mouse, or a castle – perhaps all of them together, or, if we are focusing on one particular theme or object, only the one in question.



Outside the circle, close to the group leader, we place any other desired props, including the folk tale cards, and the printed handouts for colouring and writing on.

If storytelling is done using video, the computer, projector, screen/wall surface, and speakers should also be prepared and tested so as not to hinder the process.

If the group is already in the room before we start, we should ask everyone to leave, and only lay out the symbol cards, shawl, symbols, etc. when the group is waiting outside.

Tools needed:

A shawl or piece of material for the centre of the circle, decorative items, symbol cards, drawing boards if needed, pens, coloured pencils, drawing equipment, the folk tale cards, and enough copies of the handouts for each participant.

Possibly: a computer, projector, screen/wall space, speakers.

Script:

(timings are approximate, being dependent on the size of the group)

1. Entrance

Duration: 5 minutes

We allow the group members to enter, preferably one at a time, and give each of them the following task:

“What inheritance and resources for a successful life have you received from your parents? Choose a picture that expresses this!”

When everyone has made their choice and is seated, we can join in.



2. Getting in the mood

Duration: 10-15 minutes

We discuss the cards chosen by the participants. We shouldn't go round in a circle and not everyone necessarily has to share their card. When everyone who wishes to do so has spoken, we can discuss what 'learning' and 'development' actually mean.

During the conversation, we can ask the following questions:

- ❖ What do our parents give us? What resources? What obstacles?
- ❖ If you have siblings did/will they start out in life from a similar background to you? In what ways are your siblings similar to you? How are they different?

3. Storytelling

Duration: about 10 minutes

When the warm-up questions have been asked, we should provide the following introduction to the tale:

"Once there was a boy who was in a similar situation in his life. He thought that his inheritance from his parents' wasn't enough – but as it turned out, it was perfect for his needs. Would you like to hear his story?"

The storytelling should preferably be done by ourselves, in our own words, because in this way we can maintain contact with the participants. If we cannot tell the story personally, we can read it aloud or listen to a recording/watch a video of the tale.

If we are telling the story ourselves, before it begins, we might ask the participants to close their eyes and concentrate on their breathing. When everyone is focused, we can start.

We can also use a musical instrument (e.g. koshi chimes, a kalimba, or a sansula) to put the participants in the mood for the storytelling experience.



At the end of the story, we again ask the participants to close their eyes and, allowing enough time for their own internal imagery to be activated, we give them the following tasks:

- ❖ Pick a colour from the story!
- ❖ Pick a smell from the story!
- ❖ Pick an object from the story!
- ❖ Look around you, where are you in the story? What surrounds you, who is near you?

4. Processing

Duration: 35-40 minutes

After everyone has returned from the tale, we discuss who has taken what from the story, what landscape they found themselves in. Answering is not obligatory; the participants can volunteer to speak if they wish to. Regarding the locations, we can ask the participants what the task in that particular place is.

We can also talk about Puss. How do they see the cat? What do they like about him? What do they dislike about him? How do they judge his actions? What skills does he have that will help the miller's son succeed in his life? The boots are a symbol of mobility; the bag symbolizes resources.

Following this, we distribute the drawing equipment and boards, and then the handouts, giving a little time for individual work.

The first outline for colouring we give out depicts Puss himself.

The task is for the clients to write down what resources they have in their own 'bags', what 'Puss-in-Boots' skills they possess and can build on, and what abilities they still need to acquire.



After a short period of individual work (or while it is still in progress), we invite those participants who wish to, to share what they have written.

The second topic is the ogre who has to be defeated. We distribute this outline and talk while the clients are colouring and writing.

Here we can discuss the following topics:

- ❖ What are the ogre's character traits? How has he come to have such a magnificent castle and so much land?
- ❖ What causes his downfall? Why can Puss defeat him?
- ❖ What similar qualities do we have that can help or hinder our success? What makes us self-confident or even arrogant?
- ❖ Is the ogre really self-confident? What does it mean to be overconfident?

After another short period of individual work (or while it is still in progress), we again invite those participants who wish to, to share what they have written.

The final topic is the castle. We distribute this outline too.

The castle represents the place we want to reach, the place we want to acquire for ourselves. What is their own 'castle' like? What kind of home or job are they looking for? What steps must be taken to obtain them?

After a third short period of individual work (or while it is still in progress), we invite those participants who wish to, to share what they have written for the last time. At this point – towards the end of the group work – it is no longer worth working in pairs or small groups, and the topic is such that it is better if we also play a part in the direction the conversation takes.

5. Closure / Exit



When our time is up, some people will still be working. We conclude the session by asking everyone to leave the story space within a few minutes. We walk through the 'gateway' and meet whoever is ready to leave, one by one.

There, we ask the given person if they would like to show us their castle, and we ask about the first step they will take in order to have a 'castle' of their own.