

Date:

Author/Interview subject: Peter Chand (PC), Mara Menzies (MM), Lari Don (LD)

Interviewed by: Janice Forsyth (JF)

Other speakers: Audience, Boy in audience (Boy 1), Girls in audience (Girl 1), Girl (2), One = single voice in audience saying the opposite of the rest of audience

JF I am Janice Forsyth, a very warm welcome indeed to Authors Live which is organised by the Scottish Book Trust in partnership with BBC Scotland. Now have you noticed something unusual today, you might have done, we are broadcasting today from within the BBC's Commonwealth Class website. What's that you're saying? Oh, you're saying, what is that? Ahah! Well, as you might have heard – and I'm sure you have done – the Commonwealth Games are coming to Glasgow! Yippee! It's great news, isn't it? And the BBC Commonwealth Class website has been set up specially to mark the run-up to the Games, it's doing a fantastic job providing teaching resources, online debates and interactive activities for schools throughout the Commonwealth.

So by partnering up with them today Authors Live – wait for it – is being webcast for the very first time to schools...ALL OVER THE WORLD! Yes indeed! How exciting is that? I think it's extremely exciting!

Now another plus is that right now you can start sending us your questions, and also your opinions, about what storytelling means to you. These will be posted on the Commonwealth Class site and they'll become part of their online storytelling debate.

The debate runs on after our broadcast, you're all welcome to join it, it would be brilliant if you could. So the address to make a note of, to send your emails to, is commonwealthclass – that's all one word, commonwealthclass – at BBC dot co dot uk. That's commonwealthclass at BBC dot co uk.

So with all of that going on we are just delighted to bring our UK Authors Live schools audience, including Annanhill Primary – hello! – Newtonmore Primary [pause] and Dounby Primary, together with all of you watching in Commonwealth

Class today. And how could we forget, I couldn't possibly ignore our fabulous studio audio audience! Indeed! From Dalreoch Primary School in Dumbarton here in Scotland. You want to see them, they're lovely! Give each other a wave! Here they are!

Aud: Hello!

JF: You wave over there! Say hello! You over there!

Aud: Hello!

JF: Aren't they splendid!

Aud: Hello.

JF: You've all become friends via the Commonwealth Class. That's lovely. Er now as, again, you will know – because you know lots of stuff, I know that, don't you – you do, and so do you, er, the relay journey of the Queen's baton is well underway, it's already visited India, it's now in Australia, and it'll soon be on its way to Africa. And it's that journey that gave us our idea for our very own storytelling relay. Hooray!

So, do you want to get started?

Aud: [hesitantly] Yeeees.

JF: Do you want to get started? Brilliant. Let's do that. Are you ready to welcome our storytellers?

Aud: Yeeees.

JF: You are? Okay. Let's hear it for, them, they are Mara Menzies! A big cheer!
[applause]

Aud: Yoo-hoo! [applause]

JF: Lari Don! [applause]

Aud: Oooohh [applause] Oooooo-oooo.

JF: It's so exciting! And last but not least, Peter Chand!

Aud: Wooo-hoooo [applause]

JF: Oh! I feel so underdressed today, I [laughingly] totally do. Er, now Peter is going to tell the first story in our relay, which comes from India. Great title! The boy who wanted a drum. Thank you.

PC: Thank you, Janice. Right. Good morning everybody!

Aud: Good morning.

PC: Oh, that was a bit low! Good morning everybody!

Aud: [loudly] Good morning!

PC: Super. Do you like stories? Yes?

Aud: Yes.

PC: Good! Well, in you're in the right place this morning, because this story starts off [pause] with a little boy. And this little boy lived with his mum in India, and they only had a little bit of [pause] land, a little patch like this [pause]. Now if you had that little bit of land what would you grow in there that would feed you and your mum? Any ideas? Stick your hands up. Yes, please.

Girl: Turnips?

PC: Turnips! Oh, fantastic! Great answer! Turnips. Brilliant! What else?

Girl 2: Carrots?

PC: Carrots. Yeah, you can't go wrong with carrots. Nice one. Anybody else? What about you, young man?

Boy: Tatties? [pause] erm [pause] corn?

PC: Corn? Corn! Well, that's a, like, a great answer! One more, very...

Boy 2: Apples?

PC: Apples! Oh, you can't go wrong with apples, these are all...brilliant answer, I love your answers. Shall I tell you what they actually grew? They grew *chilli plantsss*. Because on one chilli plant, as you may or may not know, you get hundreds and hundreds of chillies. So on that little patch of land they had *thousands* of chillies; when those chillies were ripe they would get the chunni, their mother's headscarf, laid out in the sun, pick those chillies and let them dry, dry, dry, dry, dry, dry, dry.

When they were completely dry do you know what they'd do? Get a pestle and mortar and kk-kk-kk-kk-kk-kk grind it down to make chilli powder. And then their mother would go to the market and she would sell that chilli powder, and they would buy atta, which is a flour that they use to make the roti, the bread, and they'd buy a bit of curry powder, maybe a few vegetables – a little bit of sugar – and that's how they lived.

Now one day [cough in audience] on one day the mother is off to market, and without even *thinking about it* she said, mutdah, mutdah, is there anything that you want? And straightaway, you know what the boy said? He said, *mother, I'd love to have a drum!*

And then she went, hiya ram, *why did I say that?* We can't afford a drum! But there's an old Punjabi expression that goes a bit like this, once the words leave your lips they become somebody else's property so be careful what words you use because once they've gone they've gone!

So the mother went to the market, she sold the chilli powder and she bought some atta, she bought a few ingredients, a bit of sugar. What happened to the money in her pocket, do you think?

Aud: Gone.

PC: Gone! So she's walking back with heavy bags but an even heavier heart because if you promise your children something you don't want to let 'em down, do you? And as she was going through the forest, like, a few nights ago there'd been some really heavy winds, and some branches had come down on the ground, and there was this sort of branch with a twig on it that was twisted and gnarled and it looked really, really interesting. And the mother thought, if I can't take him a drum then at least I'll take him something. And you know what she did? She took that stick and kutchoo, she snapped it off, and she went home.

And when the boy heard the latch he jumped out of his chair, he said, Ma, Mamma, have you got me a present? Have you got me a present? She says, I certainly have, she goes, it's behind my back. He said, I'm so excited. She says, good. He said, I'm going to practise every day. She said, good, it's good to practise.

I'm going to practise every afternoon, every time I get five minutes off. She says, good! Close your eyes and put your hand over them. *I'm so excited, I'm so excited!* She says, here you go. He says, oh, thanks! And, oh, a dirty stick!

Aud: [laughter]

PC: [laugh] Well, you know what it's like, if your mum, who's somebody who loves you, gives you something it doesn't matter if it's not work anything, it's the thought behind it, isn't it? But the boy found something else, he found that when he had that stick it made different sounds on different surfaces; like, be a chair, sort of tck-tck-tck-tck-tck-tck; you get a table, dig-tigga-dig-digga-dig-digga-dig-digga-dig. And do you know what the best sound in the whole wide world is?

Can anybody guess? What's the best sound in the whole wide world? You know those railings outside the park [cough from audience] and he'd have his stick and he'd go digga-digga-digga-digga-digga-dig, dugga-dugga-dugga-dugga-dugga-dugga-dugga, digga-digga-digga-digga-digga-dig, wherever he went he had his favourite thing with him,

Now one day he's coming home from school and he's walking towards his village when he hears a shout. And this shout nearly burst his eardrums because there's a woman, and she's saying this, [clears throat] hydrabad munrusi dakirzo ardwitwassu kium, kium, kium, which translated means, oh, my Lord, why did you give me such a husband, why, why, why.

And the boy thinks, what's going on here? So he followed his ears and he came to the village and there was a woman and she was crouched down by a julla. Now a julla is like a stove that you use outdoors, yeah? And she's blowing, broof-broof-broof. But do you think any fire is coming out? No, but there's *thick smoke* that's making her eyes run and her nose run like this. And he says, Auntie, Auntie, why are you shouting? What's the matter?

She says, why am I shouting? Why am I shouting? My husband was suppose to get some dried firewood so I can make some roti for the children. Has he done so? I don't know where he's gone!

And he says, Auntie, that's not a problem, you can use my stick to light your fire. She says, I can't use your stick, that's your favourite thing, whenever you can be seen you're there driving us nuts with your dig-digga-dig-digga-dig.

And he says, you've got to feed the baby. So she took that stick and she put it in the julla. Now because that stick was so dry, soon chrooo it started flaming. She threw some wet wood in and even that was roaring. And she took the babba – and do you know what a babba is, guys? – it's like, imagine a frying pan without any edges, like this, like a griddle pan, and she put that on the julla, and she took a bowl...ball of dough – can you help make that a ball of dough, yeah? – brilliant! Can you roll it out as flat as a pancake in the rolling pan? Sooperb! Can you knock off that excess flour? [repeated patting sound] And one, two, three, let's put it on the...julla, one, two, three! Fantastic! Now the first roti rolls up, and the other side, she put that on and that rolls up when it was cooked, she took some butter and she smeared it across that roti, and she folded it once, folded it twice and said, thank you for helping me.

And the boy put it in his pocket and it was all warm and gooey. Now he hadn't walked very far and he was walking along when he hears another sound. If you

thought that lady was loud that was nothing compared to this baby, because this baby was like eeaaaaaah-yeeeeaaaaahhhh-eeeeaaaaaah. The boy goes, oh, Auntie, what's the matter? And the mother says, oh, don't cry, don't cry. He said, why is your baby crying? She says, my husband was supposed to get some flour to make some roti, has he done so?

Aud: No.

PC: No! And the baby is hungry. And the boy said, that's not a problem. He took out the roti, he says, give this to your baby. Unfolded it, and the steam was rising off it, the butter was glimmering on the surface. She said, but that's your lunch. He says, my mother will make you and...make me another one, your baby is hungry, give it to your baby. She says, are you sure? Course. So she took that roti, and it was glistening and hot. And the baby was aaaaaaaaaa, and she pulled off a piece, aaaaaaaaaa, and she put it in his mouth, aaaaaaaaa-oooooh...

Aud: [laughter]

PC: [laughingly] Now he only had one tooth so it took a while, but he'd finished that roti his belly went phrrrrmmm. And she said, I'm not a rich woman, I haven't got a lot of things, but thanks so much for being kind. And have you ever seen those clay pots that women carry water on their heads? Have you ever seen those, yeah? Well, she had one of those and it was all battered and dirty, but it was her way of saying thank you. So the boy had that pot and he put it under his arm.

Now because they're so hard they make a great sound like a [pause] donk-dong-donk. So he's walking with his drum, er, his, er, pot, donk-ah-donk-donk, donk-ah-donk-donk. And he comes to where the river bends, when he gets to where that river bends he sees a guy.

Now let me describe this guy to you, because his hair was all messed up, his clothes were torn, he had scratches on his face. And he said, banni, banni, give me water. And the boy went, whoa, wait there a second. And he took his pot and he went to the river, he dipped it in that water, placed it by the guy's feet and stepped away pretty sharpish I can tell you.

Now the first handful, sluuurrrrp, aaaaaaaaah. [breathlessly] He drank. And then he washed himself and combed his hair through, and a few moments later he looked completely altered. And when he'd gathered his breath he said to the boy, thank you, thanks for showing kindness to me, all day people have been saying to me, fulmeshadnialdi, you got no shame, a grown man begging, he says, but I'm not a beggar, I'm a trader, I sell cloth. And this morning I was here in these parts on my horse and three men robbed me, they stole all my money,

all my samples and my horse ran away in the commotion, but thanks for showing kindness to me.

And as he and the old, er, and the old merchant were talking, ever so nervously there from the trees who do you think reappeared to find its master, but the...

Aud: [hesitantly] horse

PC: Horse! He went up with his big head, put it next to the trader and went phlppppppppp, and as he stroked his head he took the reins of that horse, and he said to the boy, for helping me you can have my horse! The boy said, hang on, he says, I can't have your horse, he says, you use that for your business. I'm getting out of this, it's way too dangerous.

Now the boy sat on the horse – have any of you...can you put your hands up if you've ever sat on a horse before? Quite a few, that's brilliant! Quite a few of you! Well, the boy had never sat on a horse before and it was an adult horse so the saddle was here. So can you imagine when he sat in it his head felt like it was in the clouds!

Now can I ask you another question? If you had a horse like that would you show your mates? Would you?

Aud: [hesitantly] Yes.

PC: Course you would! And that's exactly what he did, because his mates were there playing marbles and he went past them going, oh beesoblam mellacollaaahhh! He felt proud, as you would. But now he had transport he could travel further afield, so he went to a village about ten miles away. Now I don't know if you guys know this, but he head across the forest there was a wedding party. In India and a lot of parts of that world – that part of the world – when there's a wedding the girl's father has got to pay for everything. Do you know? And the boy's side all go to the girl's side, and you go all dressed up and you go with a band, and the band are the happiest people in the wedding. Why? Because they make everybody dance.

But this band was like this, phooo, so down. And the boy said, Uncle, what's the matter? And the band leader said, what's the matter? Look at the bridegroom. And the bridegroom was there with all his nice clothes on, but he looked really, really sad. He said, why? Why is everybody upset? You're the band, you're supposed to be happy, you make everybody dance. And he said, why? He said, the guy is suppose to come on the horse to take him to the girl's side, he's not

turned up, we can't walk there, they're going to say, you, marry our daughter and you've come on foot? We don't think so.

And the boy said, is that all? And he blew out a whistle, and you can guess who appeared from the...between the trees?

Aud: The horse.

PC: The horse! Of course! And the bridegroom jumped up like this, and he sat on the horse, he had his big red turban, he had a sellar, which is like a foil, and that back in the days, in the old days, when you used to get married you never used to see each other till you got to gudwallah, the temple, and the guy would lift up the sellar like this, danggg, and the girl would either go, oh, he's beautiful, or she'd go, oh, dear, [laughingly] put it back down again [laughter] – but that's another story for another time – and he sat there with his brocade suit and his ceremonial sword and all the way to the girl's house he felt like a king! And they danced all the way to the girl's house, and for three days, oh, my goodness me, *what a party they had*, they had so much food, they danced, having a great time.

But after the wedding the poor girl's father had to pay everybody, he had a big bundle of money that got smaller and smaller, because first he paid the people who brought the tents, can I give you that? That was for the tents, those tents were bru-, beautifully decorated. That's for the people who brought the food, those somortzen, those porcoliba [sound like smacking lips] wow-wow-wow-wha-wha. And there you go, that's for the musicians. And the bandleader paid all his musicians.

And finally he came to the young boy and he said, boy, he said, without your horse our reputation would have been mud [cough in audience] without your horse our reputation would have been nothing, and if a man doesn't have his reputation he doesn't have anything. Here's your share. And the boy looked at him and he said, well, it's like, Uncle, he says, I don't really want the money. And he looked at him and he says, you don't want the money? What kind of a Punjabi boy are you?

He said, no, but for three days I had my eyes on something, can I ask for that please? And the bandleader said, of course you can. And what do you reckon he asked for, guys?

Aud: A drum.

PC: Of course he did! He asked for the drum. So he says, yes, that's a small price to pay, and he gave the drum to the boy. And the boy put it over his shoulders. Now

remember [pause] he'd never played a drum in his life, what he'd played with was his stick, so he was just usually dug-dugga-dug-dugga-dug-dugga-dug. But now he had a long journey home so he had time to practise like he said...he'd told his mother he would. So first he tried to get used to the skins [14:19–14:42 beating drum with various rhythms]. And when he got home he said, Mama, Mama, Mama, look, look, look, look, look what I got, he said, because that dirty old stick you gave me, he said, I got the thing I always wanted.

And he told her the story that I've just told you guys. And at the end of the story she said, Nah, nah, nah, but that it wasn't because of the dirty old stick, it was because of the kindness you showed to people along the way. And as long as you keep on doing that, son, I promise your life will be good. And that's exactly what the boy did. And for the rest of his days he and his mother, they lived happily...ever...

Aud & PC: After.

PC: Thank you! [beats drum]
[applause]

JF: Oh, wow! Wasn't that fantastic?

Aud: Yeah.

JF: That was really amazing, and you can see all of the characters that you were just saying there, it's wonderful. I could see that horse, couldn't you?

PC: [laugh]

JF: Ah, and that lovely boy and the stick in the railings. Em, a great story, Peter, thank you very much. When did you first hear that story?

PC: I think it was about ten, 11 years ago, I read it in a book, a brilliant book called, er, Folk Tales of India, by A K Ramanujan, who is sadly not with us any more, but he collected this...brilliant Indian stories from all different parts of India, so...

JF: And given that there are so many stories that you know, why did you then think that this was a good one to share with everyone today?

PC: Ahah, because I think it's a good one about, erm, it's a good journey story, I think, and because of the Commonwealth and the passing of the baton, it's passing it from one person to another and it's, it's how we act with people that we meet along the way, which is...which makes all the difference really, I think.

JF: Oh, good.

PC: And plus that I, I just enjoy telling it as well, so...[laugh]

JF: Yeah, and we get a bit of drumming as well.

PC: [laughingly] A bit of drumming as well. [laugh]

JF: Thank you, Peter. I think you should sit down and have a rest now.

PC: You're very welcome. Thank you.

JF: That's it from Peter. Thank you very much indeed. [applause]

PC: Thank you.

JF: Oh! Are you all going to be picking up sticks now on the way home? Yeah, we're all going to be doing that against the railings, aren't we? Er, now our next relay story is from Africa, are you ready to welcome our next storyteller?

Aud: Yeeeeaaaahhh.

JF: Great! Loud and proud, please, let's here it for Mara Menzies from Kenya [applause] to tell us the story of the lion's whisker!

MM: Ho-ah-jay-cooma, simbagorey. Wha-hulu-jay-comma, simbagorey, simbalabalah, oh, simbalambalaaah, simbagorey!

There was once a young boy, who lived in a little village with his family. And he adored his parents, *he loved* his mother and his father. And *they* loved him too! But when the boy was still quite young – maybe the same age as some of you here – his mother became very, very ill, and they tried *everything*, but it didn't matter what they tried. After a few short months his mother died. And the little boy was very hurt! And he was confused and *terribly* angry!

But after some time has passed his father decided that it was time for him to get another wife, for him to remarry and try to build life together again! And so he searched all over the village, and he found a special woman, her name was Zahara. What was her name?

Aud: Zahara.

MM: Sorry, I never heard you. What was her name?

Aud: [louder] Zahara.

MM: Zahara! And Zahara was a young lady, *full* of life, *excited* about everything that she did! She was interested in everything, and she was so happy to be getting married. She thought it was going to be a most *beautiful* adventure. She loved the boy's father. And they got married.

But the little boy was still hurt and still confused, and still very angry, and he wasn't happy about this at all. But Zahara *desperately* wanted the marriage to work, and she *desperately* wanted this little boy to love her. So she tried *everything*. She would make the most delicious meals, and she would give it to the little boy, *and wait*...[intake of breath] but the little boy, he'd dip his finger into it and [sucking sound] hmm [sucking sound] hrrmmmm! I don't like it! he would say. What did he say?

Aud: I don't like it.

MM: Can you be a bit angrier?

Aud: [louder] I don't like it!

MM: Yeah. And Zahara, well, she wouldn't feel good at all. But then one day Zahara found out that the little boy had his eye on lovely shirt down in the market place, and so she saved up all her money, and she went to buy it for him. And, oh, she gave it to the little boy, and she was delighted because he took it, he put it straight on, and then he went out to play with his friends! Oh, finally he's accepted me, she said to herself.

But when the boy came back in the evening, the shirt was covered in mud, it was torn, ripped, he could never wear it again! And he said to Zahara, I *hate* you! What did he say?

Aud: [loudly] I hate you!

MM: And Zahara, she didn't know how to feel, she had never felt so terrible before. And she decided that she needed help, she *had* to make this little boy love her. But she couldn't do it alone. So she decided to go to visit the old woman who lived at the other side of the village, she was *very* wise, and she knew the hearts and minds of men.

So over she went! And she told the old lady *everything* that had happened. I've tried to be nice to him! I make him delicious foods, I buy him nice things, and he throws it back in my face!

The old lady thought about it for a while. And then she slowly stood up and went to her shelves, and on her shelves were bottles and calabashes full of all sorts of

strange herbs and spices, and liquids. Chi-toombi-toombi-chillipo-pochi-toombi-toombi-chichilipopo, toombi-toombi-chilipopo-chi-toombi-toombi-chilipopo. Oh! I can help you! I can make a *love* potion for *you*. And I have all the ingredients! Except for one, and I'm afraid it's a very important ingredient, but I am too old to go and get it.

Well, what is it? What do you need, asked Zahara. Oooohh! Oh, it's far too dangerous, I don't think I'll be able to help you after all.

No! Tell me! Tell me! I can go and get it, said Zahara.

Well, said the old lady, I need a lion's whisker. [intake of breath] A lion's whisker? Well, where on earth am I going to get a lion's whisker? And then Zahara remembered that up on the mountains behind the village she knew that there were mountain lions up there. So she decided to go.

She went home, and she got herself a great big bag, and into that bag she put great chunks of meat, she *flung* the heavy bag over her shoulder and she started to climb the mountain. She was halfway up the mountain when she saw paw prints on the ground in front of her, and she followed the paw prints, always looking around, being ever so careful. And she saw that the paw prints led up to an enormous cave. And as she got closer she could hear something large and hairy snoring inside that cave. It was a lion!

Now can I hear a lion snore? What do you think it sounds like?

Aud: Craoooww-schreeeeoooww.

MM: Oh, yes, that's very good! Perfect! That's exactly the sound she heard. And she was a little bit scared. But then she saw a...a stone right outside the mouth of the cave, and she opened up her bag, she took out a chunk of meat, and she went and laid that meat right on that slab of stone. And then she saw a nearby bush, so she ran behind the bush and she hid! And she waited!

And after some time she heard a great big yawn. Can I hear a lion yawn?

Aud: Mmmrrroooooaaaahhhgggrrrr.

MM: And the lion stretched himself. And then smfff-smfff-smfff, he sniffed the air. Can I see a sniff?

Aud: Ssssssssmff-hfff-hfff-hfff.

MM: He smelt something good. And he walked out to the mouth of the cave, and he saw the piece of meat just waiting for him! Hrrmmm! Who has put this here, he thought to himself. And he looked around. But could he see Zahara?

Aud: No.

MM: No! He felt safe. So he ate up that piece of meat, and then he went for a little walk, and feeling tired he came back to his cave. And it wasn't long before Zahara heard...

Aud: Mmmm

MM: ...a snore. Can I hear that snore again?

Aud: Craoooww-heeeeahh-craoooww-heeeeahh.

MM: And again she crept out from behind her hiding place. She walked up to the stone. She took out another chunk of meat and placed it there. And this time she didn't go behind the bush, she just stood right in front of it; but she didn't move a muscle.

And after a little while the *lion*, *yawned*, oooooohhh, and he stretched himself, he sniffed the air. Can I see the sniff?

Aud: Snfff-hfff-hfff.

MM: He smelt something good [cough in audience] he walked over to the mouth of the cave, and *again* he saw this *delicious* looking piece of meat [intake of breath] but *this* time he saw Zahara. Hrrmmm, hrrmmm, hrrmmm. But Zahara didn't move, she hardly dared breathe. And so the lion felt safe. And he went back to the piece of meat and aaarrggghhh-hemmm, he gobbled it up.

He went for a little walk and then he went back into his cave to sleep. And what did ha...Zahara hear after a while?

Aud: Sssssnnnnrrraaawww-heeerrrr-snnrrrawww-heeerrrr.

MM: And she crept forward, she opened up her bag, and took out another chunk of meat and placed it at the mouth of the cave. And this time she just took a few steps back, and again stood stock still. And she waited. And the lion, he yawned oooooerrraaaggghhhh, he stretched himself, and he sniffed the air, snfff-hfff-hfff-hfff, and he walked out, and there was the chunk of meat, and there was Zahara. She didn't move. And the lion watched her. But because she wasn't responding in any way he felt safe!

So he gobbled up the meat, went for a walk, and came back to the cave. And this happened quite a few times, and each time Zahara would take out a piece of meat, and just take a few steps back. And she got closer and closer, and closer, and *closer*, until soon she was so close that she reached up [pause] and very gently – [squeakily] ping – she pulled out *a lion's whisker*. She lowered her arm very, very slowly, and she waited until the lion had gone back into his cave.

And then she slowly retreated, and when she felt safe she *ran back down the mountain*, straight to the old woman's house, clutching that lion's whisker in her fingers. *I've got it! I've got it*, she said to the old woman. Oh! Now I can make that love potion and that little boy will love me!! Oh!!

But the old woman said, ooh, I'm sorry, Zahara, there's no such thing as a love potion.

What? But you told me! You told me that all I needed was the lion's whisker! You *promised*. And the old woman said, tell me, how did you get that whisker? And Zahara told her the story, how she went up the mountain and with the pieces of meat, and she waited. And I, I was very patient, and I was very careful and gentle.

And you were *brave*, said the old woman. *You don't need a love potion to make that little boy love you, everything you need you already have! It's in here!*

And so Zahara went home. And this time she was nice to the boy, but she didn't *force* him to eat her food, no! She didn't *force* him to love her, no! She took her time, she made the food and placed it in front of him, no fuss at all. And after some time the little boy, she noticed, slrrrp-tpp-tpp-tpp-tpp-tpp, slrrrp-tpp-tpp-tpp-tppp, would eat all her food down. And sometimes he would even say thank you.

And after a few months had passed Zahara noticed that the little boy would ask her to help him with certain things, and she always did so without making a fuss, she was always patient, and careful, and gentle. And after a whole year had gone by [cough in audience] the little boy asked Zahara to put him to bed.

And she went into his room, she told him a little story, she pulled the blankets up over his head, and she kissed him [kissing sound] goodnight. And as she was leaving her rook she heard the sweetest words she had ever heard, I love you, Zahara. And she smiled. Thank you.

[applause]

JF: That was fantastic! Thank you very much indeed. How good was that?

Aud: Very good.

JF: Great! Did you enjoy that? Were you listening? Wasn't that wonderful?

Aud: Yeees.

JF: So scary, with the lion. Would you have done that?

Aud: No.

JF: No. No. Not at all. Such a gorgeous story. And, now you live in Scotland now, do you get back to Kenya much? It must be *slightly* warmer there, I imagine, than it is here?

MM: Just a little bit. [laugh] Yes. No, I grew up there so I've got strong connections, so I try to go back at least every year.

JF: Do you pick up stories there as well then?

MM: Och, all the time, yeah.

JF: I'll bet you do, yeah.

MM: Yeah. [laugh]

JF: I'll bet you do. Thank you very much indeed.

MM: Thank you.

JF: A wonderful story. Thank you so much. Now, er, the last leg of the Queen's baton relay will see the baton travelling throughout the UK, er, before it arriving here in Glasgow. So are you ready for the *Scottish* leg of our storytelling tour? You are! Good.

Aud: Yeees.

JF: Loud and clear there. Thank you. Please give it up for our Scottish storyteller, Lari Don, who'll be telling us the story of Tam Lynn [sp?] [applause]

LD: Thank you very much, Janice. I'm going to tell you my favourite Scottish fairytale. Now this is a story about a girl called Janet. But it doesn't start with Janet, the story starts *years* before Janet was born, with a wee boy called Tam Lynn. Now Tam Lynn was the grandson of the Earl of Roxburghe, and the Earl of Roxburghe owned lots of land in the Scottish borders, the bit of Scotland between Scotland and England. And one year Tam Lynn said to his grandfather, please, please, could I come hunting with you and your men in the forest?

And the Earl looked at Tam Lynn, looked at how much he'd grown, and he said, yes, I think you're *nearly* big enough to come hunting with us, so, yes, get your pony and you can join us hunting in the forest, *but*, said the Earl, I'll have to ask you to promise two things; I'll have to ask you to promise not to fall behind, and I'll have to ask you to promise not to fall off.

Now Tam Lynn knew why he was being asked to promise this, it wasn't because of any fierce wild animals living in the forest, it was because of the fairies who lived in the forest. Now do you think of fairies as little fluttery glittery pink creatures? Is that what you think fairies are?

Aud: Mm.

LD: Do you think of fairies with little magic wands scattering glitter and collecting teeth, and granting wishes, is that what you think of fairies as?

Aud: Mm.

One: No.

LD: Well, not hundreds of years ago, not in Scotland. The fairies that lived in Scotland hundreds of years ago, they were taller than I am, they didn't have wings, they didn't wear pink, they wore green; they didn't have magic wands. What they had were spears, or bows and arrows, or swords! And these fairies, they did have magic, but they didn't use it to grant wishes, they used it to play tricks on people, to be mischievous, sometimes they used their magic to be cruel! And sometimes the fairies used their magic to – steal – our – children.

So that's why Tam Lynn had to promise not to fall behind and not to fall off. And he did, he promised his er, his er, grandfather, that he wouldn't fall behind, and he wouldn't fall off. *But* Tam Lynn's pony had much shorter legs than the horses the men were riding, and after a while in the forest Tam Lynn and his pony *did* fall behind.

And Tam Lynn and his pony weren't used to the rough ground of the forest, so deep into the forest his pony stumbled, and Tam Lynn *did* fall off. Now I think he'd have been okay if he'd fallen on the twigs and the leaves under the trees, but he didn't, he fell onto a bright green grassy mound, and those bright green grassy mounds in the forest, they're the entrance to the fairies' world.

So when Tam Lynn fell and his back hit the grass of the bright green round...mound, hands – appeared – and they dragged him – down – under – the earth; and they hauled him along dark tunnels. And they threw him at the feet of the fairy queen.

Now the fairy queen – was beautiful. Tam Lynn looked up at her, and he saw – that she had a cold, icy, hard, terrifying beauty. So Tam Lynn tried to stand up, he got to his feet, and he tried to stand straight in front of this terrifying woman. He tried not to tremble. He tried not to cry. He did manage not to cry, and he looked her straight in the eye.

And the fairy queen looked at Tam Lynn [pause] and he was a handsome lad, so she liked the look of him. And as he stood there the fairy queen cast a spell over Tam Lynn. And this spell was to make Tam Lynn grow into one of the fairy folk. As he grew he became one of the fairies, and as he got to his full height, when he became as tall as he was ever going to get, he stopped growing, he stopped growing old, he stayed the same age for ever.

Now many years, many generations after Tam Lynn was stolen by the fairies, the young men and young women of the borders were told *never* to go into the woods at Carter Haugh [sp?]. They were told never to go into the woods at Carter Haugh because those woods were guarded by the fairy queen's fiercest knights.

But there was one girl who didn't like being told not to go into the woods at Carter Haugh, and this girl was called Janet. And Janet's dad was the laird of Carter Haugh, and she thought, why should anyone tell *me not* to go in to my own father's woods.

So one beautiful bright sunny day Janet decided to go into Carter Haugh woods. She walked right up to the edge of the trees and she looked into the woods. Now do you think she should go into the woods?

Aud: No.

LD: You don't think she should? If you'd been warned against some woods would you go into them?

One: Yes.

Aud: No.

LD: Oh, some of you would, some of you wouldn't. Well, Janet decided that she would go into the woods. And she took one step in. And she took another step in. And she took a third step in. And she looked around the woods. And the sunlight was coming through the thin green leaves and there were beautiful flowers all over the ground, and there were birds singing in the branches; these were *beautiful* woods, these weren't woods to be scared of! So Janet went further and deeper, and deeper, and further, right into the heart of the woods.

And when she got to the heart of the woods she found a clearing, and it was one side of the clearing was an old stone well, and at the other side of the clearing was a white horse tied to a tree. So Janet sat down on the edge of the stone well to wait and see whose horse it was. And as she sat waiting to see who would come and get the horse she noticed a rose bush right beside the well. And she thought, those flowers would look really nice on my dress. She thought she'd pick just one flower to put on her dress, and she reached her hand out, and she grasped the stem of the most beautiful rose, and she bent the stem.

And as she broke the stem a voice said, who dares steal the fairy queen's flowers? Well, Janet looked up, and out of the trees just over there, stepped a tall, young man, dressed all in green with a sword on his hip, and he walked up to Janet and he said, who dares steal the fairy queen's flowers?

Well, Janet stood up and she said, *I dare*, because I am Janet of Carter Haugh, who dares challenge *me* in my own father's wood. Well, the tall young man said, *I dare*, because I'm Tam Lynn and I guard this wood for the fairy queen. Now give – back – that – flower!

Well, Janet looked at the rose in her hand and she looked up at the young man. She didn't give back the flower, she pinned it to the collar of her dress.

Well, Tam Lynn, as a fairy knight, he was strong enough and powerful enough, he could have picked her up with one hand, crushed her and thrown her out of the woods; but he didn't, he didn't because he liked the way she'd stood up to him.

So instead of picking her up and throwing her out of the woods Tam Lynn took Janet by the hand and he led her through the woods, he showed her all the best places to pick the most beautiful flowers. And as they walked they talked. Janet said, em, so, have you always been one of the fairy folk? And Tam Lynn said, oh, no, I was born just as human as you. And he told the story of how he had fallen from his horse and been pulled down the great, bright green mound and dragged along the paths and flung at the feet of the fairy queen where she had cast a spell on him.

And Janet said, oh, so do you like being one of the fairy folk? And Tam Lynn said, well, it's glamorous and it's magical and it's powerful, *but*, I don't have any choices, I don't have any power over my own life, I have to guard this wood for the fairy queen [pause] for as long as she wants me to, for *ever*, if that's what she wants.

And Janet said, well, couldn't you just stop being a fairy knight? Couldn't you just become human again? Couldn't you just [pause] break the spell?

And Tam Lynn said, oh, no, I couldn't do that on my own, I would need someone to help me.

Janet said, oh, I'll help you. And Tam Lynn said, oh, no, it's far too dangerous, you couldn't help me.

I don't mind danger, said Janet. I'm brave. Tam Lynn said, I know, I know you're brave, but I couldn't ask you to do that.

Janet said, but you're not asking me, I'm offering.

And so that's how Tam Lynn came to tell Janet how to break the fairy queen's spell. He said, tonight, midsummer's night, the fairy queen is going to march her whole army round all of her lands, and at midnight they will pass the well in Carter Haugh woods, if you hide there and wait there, the first cohort of soldiers will pass you, led by a knight on a black horse, do not let him see you. The second cohort of soldiers will pass you led by a knight on a brown horse, do not let him hear you.

But the third cohort of soldiers will be led by a knight on a white horse, that horse there, that'll be me, you'll recognise me because I will have one hand gloved and one hand bare, and if you pull me from my horse and wrap your arms around me and hold on tight, then you can break the fairy queen's spell. But she will turn me into various loathly creatures *to try and scare you into letting go*, but if you're not scared and you don't let go, and you wait until I've been turned into a burning branch, and throw that branch into the well, then you can break the fairy queen's spell.

And Janet promised that she would do that. And she left the woods clutching a bunch of beautiful flowers she'd picked, and she went back home. And she waited until really late that night.

And she put on her darkest dress, she put on a pair of black boots, she put on a big black cloak, and Janet [pause] went back to the woods. Janet went to the very edge of Carter Haugh woods, [whispering] and looked inside. Would you go in?

Aud: No.

One: Yes.

JD: You would? Would you? Do you think Janet should go in?

Aud: Yeeees.

JD: Into...into magical woods, at midnight, on the most magical night of the year?

Aud: Yes.

JD: Do you think she should? Well, that's what she thought, she took one step, another step, a third step, into the woods, and she looked around [intake of breath] it were dark, with darker shadows under every tree, and [pause] rustlings, and creaking noises, from all around her, and everywhere she looked there were pairs of bright eyes flickering in and out [pause] these were woods to be scared of, these were the woods she'd been warned against. But Janet had made a promise so Janet went further and deeper, and deeper, and further, right to the heart of the woods, and she found the well, and she hid behind the well. And she waited.

She waited until she heard the noise of an approaching army, footsteps, hoof beats, jingling of harness, [whispering] and she hid. And the very first cohort of soldiers was led by a knight on a black horse. And Janet crouched as low as she could, and he didn't see her.

And the second cohort of soldiers was led by a knight on a brown horse, and Janet [pause] held her breath, and he didn't [pause] hear her.

And the third cohort of soldiers started to approach led by a knight, on a white horse, and this knight had one gloved hand and one bare hand, and Janet leapt up, and she grabbed the bare hand, and she hauled Tam Lynn off his horse and she wrapped her arms around him. And a voice came from the very back of the army, he's *mine*, let – him – go! And Janet just said [pause] no.

And the fairy queen turned Tam Lynn into a snake, into a great green scaly serpent, and Janet felt the snake winding and s-, writhing around her arms and her wrists, and Janet felt the snake hissing and flicking its tongue at her face, but Janet [pause] held on tight.

And the fairy queen turned Tam Lynn into a lion! And Janet felt the lion scrape and scratch at her shoulders, and Janet felt the lion's hot meaty bloody breath in her face, but Janet [pause] held on tight.

And the fairy queen turned Tam Lynn into a bear, a great big brown bear, and Janet felt her ribcage being crushed by the weight of the bear, and she couldn't breathe past the bear's thick fur, but Janet [pause] held on tight.

And the fairy queen turned Tam Lynn into a molten bar of iron, and Janet could smell the sleeves of her dress scorching, could...she could feel the skin of her arm blistering, but Janet [pause] held on tight.

And finally the [cough in audience] fairy queen turned Tam Lynn into a burning branch. And Janet took the flaming torch and she *threw* it into the well. And there was a *hiss* of water, and a billow of steam. And Tam Lynn stepped out of the well. He was dripping wet, but he was smiling. And he grabbed Janet's hand and the two of them ran out of the woods, away from the fairy queen, away from the fairy queen's army, because the fairy queen had no power over them at all because Janet [pause] had broken the spell.

And, because this is a fairy tale, Janet and Tam Lynn got married and they lived [pause] happily ever after. And Janet and Tam Lynn are long gone now and so are their children and their grandchildren, but [pause] there are still trees at Carter Haugh, there's still an old stone well. And you can go to Carter Haugh woods and you can sit by the well, and you can tell the story of Tam Lynn and Janet. But while you're there [pause] don't pick any flowers, because I don't know who guards the woods for the fairy queen now.

JF: Thank you very much, that was so exciting!

[applause]

JF: Huge round of applause! [applause] Wow! Yet another brave young girl. Do you think you could be as brave as Janet?

Aud: Yeeees.

JF: You...yeah?! You...well, I'm very impressed! That's great. I'm not sure I could. You're much braver than I. Do you...what do you think? Yes? You could be as brave? Well done! Thank you. What an amazing, amazing story.

Er, now you've just brought out *Breaking The Spell*, which features the story of Tam Lynn in, in this book. Do you have plans for any more Scottish story anthologies, do you think?

LD: That's a...that's a hard one, em, *Breaking The Spell* is a collection of my ten favourite Scottish stories, that's probably my absolutely favourite Scottish story...

JF: Yes.

LD: ...I have to say. But I've got far more than ten favourite Scottish fairy tales, folk tales, than this, so I've just...I've got dozens more that I would *love* to share with people, so you never know, maybe another book sometime.

JF: Well, thank you very much indeed, Lari, thank you! Now, er, indeed, thank you for all your wonderful stories, and, er, we hope that you've been inspired wherever you are to, to go and discover more stories from wherever you are, and from all over the Commonwealth.

Now, Peter, Mara, and Lari, may have finished, but, as I said earlier, they are heading off in just a moment to join the online debate about storytelling. So if you can it would just be wonderful if, if you could stay with them on the website, the Commonwealth Class website. Going to do that?

Aud: Mm.

JF: Fantastic! Er, don't forget you can watch all the previous Authors Live events as well as downloading the free learning resources from the Scottish Book Trust website – all together now – Scottish Book Trust dot com forward slash Authors Live. And just a quick reminder that Authors Live is organised by Scottish Book Trust in conjunction with BBC Scotland Learning and Creative Scotland.

Well, sadly, that's just about it for today. Aaah!?

Aud: Aaah.

JF: Yes! Sound more convinced than that. Er, we will be back, though, very soon, on Thursday the 28th of November at 11 o'clock in the morning, with the phenomenal Mairi Hedderwick, creator of, yes, the hugely popular and phenomenal Katie Morag. So before I go, I think it's only polite that we should invite our wonderful storytellers back up to take a well-earned bow. What do you think? Peter, Mara, and Lari, come over, centre stage, take a lovely bow, and, er, let's hear it for them. Thank you all very much indeed, three fabulous stories. Huge round of applause! Here, and out there [applause] thank you! [applause] Bye-bye! Thank you very much. Hey! Bye. [music]