

Folklore/ Folk tales

Folklore is defined as stories, customs and beliefs in a culture that are unwritten and passed down orally from generation to generation. An example of folklore is a story about where their family came from told to a grandchild by his grandma.

Lore – a body of traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group, typically passed from person to person by word of mouth.

Folk tales are popular stories told by local folks which are handed down from generation to generation through oral (spoken) means. The original author is ordinarily unknown. Folktales may be based on some truths that has been hidden or lost with passing of time.

There is always an invaluable lesson, or the message is very important!

The ring of the king – a tale by Jay Heale

Read the folk tale and answer these questions.

‘Your ring will be found, Your majesty,’ he said. ‘The thief is close to us.’ Send for your woodcutters.’

1. We don't know how the king got his ring, or who made it or who had it before him, or even where its power lies. Do you think this is important in a story like this? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Do you think the king is so powerful? Did the ring really protect him, or did he just think that?
3. Do you think the king knows that the secret he whispered to his favourite wife would not remain a secret?
4. What do you think was the purpose of Zafusa's performance and clothing?
5. Make a list of all the ways in which the king is made to seem powerful and wealthy.
6. Was the ending a surprise?

7. Do you think the king intended that the 'secret' be spread? Explain your answer.
8. Why did the thief shorten his stick? Didn't he realise it would be measured by the king or his servant?
9. What do you think Zafusa means when he says 'Remember, there is more than one kind of magic?'
10. Write your own ending to the story. Your ending should start after this quote.

Night came as swiftly and silently as it always did. When the first tinges of dawn showed that the night was over, the crowd gathered in the square and they all had their sticks. (...)