Unit focus: Traditional Tales
Text focus: Narrative (660L)

STAGE 2

The Magic Mirror (Spain)

Many years ago, the King of Granada decided to marry. He was a kind king with a good heart and cared for his people. He wanted a wife who would do the same. He knew that many of the women in his kingdom wanted to marry him just to become Queen. The king worried that they wouldn't be kind or care about his subjects.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Where was the story set?
2. Who did the king ask to find him a wife?
3. What did the old man want to know?
4. Where did the shepherdess live?

The first person the king told was his barber. The barber was a bit of a gossip. He told the secret to the tailors, the bakers and the butchers. They couldn't keep the secret to themselves either. Soon, the night watchmen knew. They told the city that the king was looking for a wife.

It didn't take long for the rumour to get back to the barber. An old man had visited him to have his beard trimmed and asked if the barber knew anything. He wanted to know who the new queen might be.

"I have been set the challenge of finding a wife for the king," the barber said. "I have a magic mirror that I will use to help me. Only people who are good and kind will see their reflection clearly. Anybody who has a bad heart will see the blemishes in their character as spots covering their reflection."

The old man made sure that every woman in the city knew of the rule. No women came forward. Days and weeks went by. The king was no closer to finding a new wife than before. He was a good-looking man and had a kind heart, so it was a surprise that nobody volunteered to look into the mirror. Every day, the king would ask his barber if there were any suitors. Every day, the barber shook his head.

It soon became known that a shepherdess was living in the mountains. Many people said that she had the kindest heart and the warmest soul.

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“But sire, would you marry somebody so lowly as a shepherdess?” asked the barber.

“I do not care how rich or poor she is. All I care about is if she is kind and caring.”

The king sent for the shepherdess to come to his palace. Word spread quickly. The shepherdess arrived to find the court filled with people. The king gently approached her and asked if she wanted to be Queen. She nodded. The king asked her to look into the mirror. He warned her that any bad things she had ever done would be showed as spots on the surface.

“Everybody makes mistakes, and I am no different,” the shepherdess said. “I have made mistakes with my sheep but they still let me look after them. Maybe they have forgiven me? I look after them and care for them as though they were my own children.”

Hearing these words, the king turned to the court and declared that the shepherdess would be his wife. “There is no magic mirror,” he said. “This lady is kind and caring but is also confident in herself. Those of you who refused to look know that you have done bad things. You also know that perhaps you need to work harder for forgiveness.”

From that day, the shepherdess and the king lived happily ever after.

VIPERS QUESTIONS

S How did the night watchmen find out that the king wanted a wife?

V What are blemishes?

I Why were people surprised that nobody would look into the mirror?

I Why did the shepherdess think she could look into the mirror?

I What do you think the moral of the story is?

P How do you think the other women felt at the end of the story?

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Answers:

1. Granada
2. The barber
3. Who the new queen might be
4. In the mountains

S: The bakers, tailors and butchers told them

V: Bad spots/things that make something look less nice

I: The king was good-looking and kind

I: Everybody makes mistakes but she had made up for hers

I: Everybody makes mistakes, it is how we make up for them that counts

P: Accept predictions that link to the moral of the story and feeling embarassed that they didn't dare to look

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