

# Lockdown Tales Activities



## Cap O'Rushes

Folktale

Read for Wonderful Beast's Lockdown Tales by Ann Firbank, with original music by Sylvia Hallett.



Cap o' Rushes

There are many versions of '**Cap O' Rushes**', including an Italian one called '**Dear as Salt**' and an Indian one called '**Love is Salt**'.

Lots of **folktales exist in different languages and versions**. For instance, there are over 300 versions of '**Cinderella**' worldwide, including a Scottish tale, '**Fingerlock**', which has a male Cinderella, who plays the violin brilliantly and with the aid of a magical helper beats his two nasty brothers in a competition!

Why do you think countries all over the world have been **telling the same stories** across the ages? Some details may be different but the stories are all recognizable. How might they have been passed on and adapted to suit the traditions of each country?

**Can you see a connection** to the story of Cinderella in '**Cap O' Rushes**'? How many similarities can you find?

### '**Cap O'Rushes**' and William Shakespeare's **King Lear**

It is well known that folktales were a source for many of William Shakespeare's plays. '**Cap o' Rushes**' is one known to have helped inspire his famous tragedy, **King Lear**.

Both the play **King Lear** and the story **start in the same way**, with a king asking his daughters which of them loves him most. Lear's youngest daughter, **Cordelia**, does not give him the answer he expects, saying she loves him '**as is right fit**' - or, just **as much as she should** do. Like the daughter in the folktale, who angers her father by saying she loves him **as fresh meat loves salt**, Cordelia is cruelly **exiled**. The play has a very **unhappy ending**, which is why it is called a **tragedy**. On the other hand, in **Cap o' Rushes**, when the father sees the mistake he has made, he is **happily reunited** with his daughter and all is forgiven.

'Cap O' Rushes' is an old English folk tale. **Mrs Walter-Thomas** from **Suffolk** was the first storyteller to write down and **publish** her version in **1880**. But **Shakespeare**, who lived from **1564 to 1616**, would have heard the story **300 years before that**.

**Storytelling** was an important part of everyday life, **entertaining** people and **sharing experiences**, as there was no television or social media then. It is the **passing on** of these stories from generation to generation, with each person adding their own details and embellishments, that helps the tales to **travel** and **evolve**.

### **Storytelling activity: make up your own version of the tale and be part of the tradition**

**Write** a short story starting with the question 'How much do you love me?' You could set it long ago in the past, or right now. It's up to you and you can make up any ending you like, tragic or joyful.

**OR**

**Write** a scene from a play, or even a whole play if you like! starting with the same question: 'How much do you love me?'

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