

# Turning to Meet the Storyteller

SARA CRANE

Recently I spent two idyllic months on a canal boat in France. I kept my connection with my children and grandchildren by writing stories for them to read on my return. The themes that emerged were to do with self sufficiency and transformation.

Growing up in Ulster, steeped in the mystic world of faery and as the eldest child and grandchild, I became a caretaker and storyteller for my younger siblings and cousins. It is the relational aspect of storytelling that has enabled me to re-invent for myself the psychodramatic role of storyteller. It has been a way of responding to the overdeveloped caretaking roles from a new and more vital perspective. And it has been a way of maintaining and strengthening those relationships that hold significance for me. To continue to meet and develop the storyteller, I am required to reveal myself through the stories, and through sharing them to continue to enter the realms of the imagination.

Relationships are at the forefront of Morenian theory. Psychodrama calls forth the intentional nature of interaction. Originally I wrote this story for my daughter, and now it becomes one way for me to relate to you — the ANZPA Journal readers.

## The White Cat

*Best Read Aloud*

Colette was the smallest person in her family. Her younger brother was just taller than her. Even William the dog was bigger than her. When the family moved house she was too little to help with anything interesting. And — at lunch time — her brothers and

sister ate all the chocolate biscuits before she had even finished her sandwich. Colette was cross.

She went off on her own to explore the new house. It was much bigger than she had expected. There were lots of rooms and old furniture left behind from years ago. She tried playing the piano but most of the keys didn't work. No one had lived there for ages. There were cobwebs everywhere and she even found a bird's nest in a dirty fireplace.

When the other children decided to play hide and seek Colette was very pleased. She loved hide and seek. It was her favourite game and she was very, very good at it. Once she hid in Mummy's clothes cupboard for so long that she went to sleep and when she woke up everyone else was ready for bed. Sometimes Colette felt annoyed that no-one ever seemed to miss her when she disappeared.

It was her turn to be the searcher first and she found her brothers and sister really easily. Mimi was in the bath. Mischa was reading in bed behind the curtains. Caspian was in the cellar. He had got stuck at the end of the wine rack and she had to help him wiggle out.

Colette knew just where she would hide. She ran upstairs and opened the top of the big chest that someone had left on the landing. Carefully she climbed in and lowered the lid so it wouldn't bang. She had brought Blue Rabbit and her special blanket in case she had to wait for a long time.

She did.

Mimi and Mischa went to help carry boxes into the house. The labels had come off so they stacked them in the hall. Caspian forgot he was supposed to be looking for Colette. He was very hungry so he went to see if the kitchen things had been unpacked yet. No one noticed that Colette had gone.

At dinner time Colette didn't come even when Mummy rang the big bell. Everyone was puzzled. The other children ran through the new house calling her. They looked in all the cupboards, under the beds and on top of the wardrobe. There was no sign of Colette anywhere. Mischa looked in the washing machine and in the freezer.

He tried to get William to sniff out her trail but William wasn't interested. He went out to dig another hole in the new garden.

Then Caspian noticed Colette's sneakers beside the big chest. The lid was really heavy and he almost squashed his fingers. Inside was Blue Rabbit and curled up on Colette's special blanket was a little white cat. She looked up at Caspian and blinked at the sudden light. She gave a very small meow.

The white cat leapt out of the chest and walked down the stairs with her tail in the air. 'No cats on the table' said Mummy when she jumped up and sniffed the macaroni cheese.

Caspian put her on his knee and stroked her gently.

'It's all right, Colette, you can have some of my dinner.'

'You can't call her Colette,' said Mimi.

'Why not?'

'It's a person name.'

'Well, you've got a cat name,' said Caspian.

Colette purred and snuggled up against Caspian's rather dirty t-shirt. She hoped he would remember to get Blue Rabbit and her special blanket out of the chest.



More illustrations available from Sara on request.