



Marcus and the Lost Cloak

A Roman-themed Sensory Story

Encourage everyone to join in with the actions and repeated phrases of the story as you tell it. It is designed to be very flexible, so feel free to add in or take out parts, or to change the props. Create your own version, which works for you and your audience/class.

There's a list of suggested props below the story, and then some information about some of the details (in bold in the story), which your learners may enjoy.



Marcus and the Lost Cloak

Marcus was a soldier at **Hadrian's Wall**.

Marcus had sentry duty.

But he had lost his **cloak**.

It was cold.

'It's chilly, chilly, chilly!' said Marcus.

He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands.

[Stamp your feet and rub your hands together.]

And then he walked down the row of **barracks**.

[Make walking actions and noises by stamping your feet or patting your knees with your hands.]

Some soldiers were cooking a stew.

[Let everyone smell the celery and coriander.]

But no one had seen his cloak.

'There's no cloak here, Marcus!'

'It's chilly, chilly, chilly!' said Marcus.

He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands.

And then he walked over to the **granaries**.

[Let everyone feel the sack of grain.]

But the guards there had not seen his cloak.

‘There’s no cloak here, Marcus!’

‘It’s chilly, chilly, chilly!’ said Marcus.

He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands.

And then he walked out of the fort, past the **meadow**, to the **woods**.

[Make actions as above. Then use sheep and/or cow sound effects – or just make the noises yourself!]

There were soldiers collecting firewood.

[Let everyone explore some twigs and pine cones.]

But they had not seen his cloak.

‘There’s no cloak here, Marcus!’

‘It’s chilly, chilly, chilly!’ said Marcus.

He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands.

And then he walked through the noisy town and past the **inn**.

There were some soldiers playing games.

[Let everyone feel the pouch with the dice.]

But they had not seen his cloak.

‘There’s no cloak here, Marcus!’

‘It’s chilly, chilly, chilly!’ said Marcus.

He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands.

And then he walked back into the fort.

He went past the **stables**.

A soldier was feeding his favourite horse an apple.

[Use horse sound effects – or make the noise yourself. Let everyone feel the apple.]

But the soldier had not seen the cloak.

‘There’s no cloak here, Marcus!’

‘It’s chilly, chilly, chilly!’ said Marcus.

He stamped his feet and rubbed his hands.

And then he walked over to the **baths**.

He walked through the cold room.

[Make walking actions.]

He walked through the warm room.

[More walking actions.]

Some soldiers were chatting.

[Make chatting noises.]

Some soldiers were scraping their skin.

[Using very gentle pressure with an outstretched finger on the back of the child's hand 'scrape' the skin.]

Others were enjoying the warm water.

[Use a gentle spray of warm water.]

He walked into the hot room.

[More walking actions.]

And there - in a corner - was something dark.

In a heap. And crumpled up.

'Look!' said everyone. 'It's your cloak, Marcus!'

[Say this loudly – encourage everyone to join in as you shake out the cloak.]

Marcus put on the cloak.

[You could choose someone to put the cloak on at this point.]

'Hurray!'

Then he walked past the stables, and the granary, and the barracks.

And all the way to the Wall.

He climbed up high onto the Wall.

Up and up and up.

[Mime climbing up steps.]

The wind blew.

[Use a folding fan to make some wind.]

The rain fell.

[Use a rain stick.]

It began to snow.

[Use some white confetti.]

Marcus pulled his cloak around him.

'It's cosy, cosy, cosy,' he said.

Props

It can be helpful to have multiple props - particularly for things that you want people to have the opportunity to handle and smell, like the celery, twigs, etc.

Celery and coriander: The Romans introduced both celery and coriander to Britain. Try using big bunches of these - celery with the leaves on will have more of a smell and will be more interesting from a tactile point of view. Alternatively, you could use onions, cabbage, parsley, thyme or mint, as these were all also introduced by the Romans.

Sack of grain: Try using a small sack - you can buy garlic or onion sacks online. Put some oats or barley in the sack and tie it tight shut. (You could actually use any small grain you have to hand - even if you use a grain that the Romans didn't have it won't matter, as the grains will be tied into the bag and no one will see them!) The little sack will feel interesting from a tactile point of view - and also make a good sound when you shake it.

Twigs and pine cones: Roman soldiers collected firewood and also heather to burn. Pine cones are great for tactile interest, but twigs on their own are fine if you don't have any.

Pouch with dice: The soldiers enjoyed playing board and dice games. If possible, use a small leather pouch. Ordinary dice are fine - tie them tight shut inside the pouch (as they are a choking hazard) and let everyone feel them through the leather.

An apple: The Romans introduced apples to Britain. Alternatively, you can use some hay instead. (If hay is hard to come by, raffia is a good substitute. You can find this in craft supply shops.)

Spray of warm water: Gently spray the children on the back of their hands. (Be aware of body language as you do this – some children may not enjoy it.) Olive oil was also used in the baths - but be careful if you are using this as a prop as it could get quite messy.

Cloak fabric: a large piece of woollen fabric would be best, but if you don't have any, improvise with something similar. A soldier's cloak might be quite smelly as the natural sheep oils would still be in the fibre and it would also retain the smell from things such as cooking fire smoke. Try wearing your cloak near a campfire if you get the chance - to make it smell more authentic!

Weather: A folding fan and a rain stick are good for the wind and the rain. Blowing very gently into a whistle also makes a good wind sound effect. And confetti makes good snow. (You can make your own by cutting tissue paper up into tiny pieces.)

Cold/cosy: You could use a cold pack at the very beginning of the story, and a handwarmer (tied into a little drawstring bag) at the very end to emphasise the key concepts of 'cold' and 'cosy'.

Facts

If appropriate, you could include some of these facts in the story as you are telling it. Or share these and other facts you know with the children after the story is finished.

Hadrian's Wall: The Wall marked the edge of the Roman Empire, running across the north of England from Wallsend on the River Tyne to Bowness-on-Solway in the west. It was guarded by soldiers and well-defended with forts and turrets.

The cloak: For the soldiers living at the Wall, keeping warm would have been very important. Some of them came from much warmer countries and would have found it difficult to get used to the cold. Soldiers would often use their cloaks as a blanket as well, to keep warm at night.

The barracks: Ordinary soldiers lived together in groups of eight. Each group had two small rooms: an outer room for living and cooking in, and a rear room for sleeping in.

The granaries: Food was stored in special granary buildings in the centre of the fort. The floors were raised off the ground to keep out the mice! The soldiers ate bread, vegetables, beans, meat, cheese, fruit and nuts.

The meadow: The land around a fort was owned by the army and could be used for growing crops or keeping farm animals. At Hadrian's Wall the army kept oxen, sheep and pigs.

The woods: A fort needed a lot of fuel for cooking and heating. Soldiers would collect this from local woods.

The inn: Outside the fort would have been a town with shops and houses and an inn. Soldiers would go into the town when they had free time. They could buy things they needed and spend time with friends.

The stables: All the forts would have had stables, as horses were always needed to carry goods.

The baths: The Romans used their baths not just to get clean but to meet friends, eat food and read. Public baths were built around a cold room, a warm room and a hot room.

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