

König Drosselbart: Performed in clay, feathers, and other strange materials

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20080520-01

May 20, 2008



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This past weekend I went to the [Seattle International Children's Festival](#) to attend a performance of *König Drosselbart* in German. I was not familiar with [the story](#) beforehand, but that's okay. It just makes for a better surprise. The interpretation was very creative. The narrators embodied the characters in the story at times; other times characters were represented by props manufactured on the spot from clay, decorated with feathers and twigs. (With one exception: The princess was represented by [a well-known doll](#).) The most amusing parts were when both techniques were used simultaneously: For example, at one point in the story, the princess was being particularly difficult. One narrator said "She sat down" as he placed the doll representing the princess on the table in a sitting position. The other narrator (embodying the pouty princess) placed the doll flat on her back just to be contrary. The first narrator corrected himself. "The princess lay down." The other narrator made the doll sit up again. "Sat down." On her back. "Lay down." Sitting up. "Did some exercise." If you know your [Aarne-Thompson classification of fairy tales](#), the story of *König Drosselbart* is [story type number 900](#). If you go to a folklore convention, you can just say "Number 900!" and people will say, "Ah, that's a good one" or "Yeah, I'm not a big fan of that." Or they may just look at you in disgust and say, "You told that story so badly."

It's all in the delivery.

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