

The cow-tail switch: key story stages

- A hunter has a pregnant wife and four sons.
- He goes into the forest and doesn't return.
- The family waits; they search for him; they can't find him.
- One month passes and they begin to forget him.
- After three months, the hunter has disappeared from their memories. The woman gives birth to her fifth child.
- The baby's first words are, 'Where's my father?'
- 'How could we have forgotten him?' The four brothers search again and find his scattered bones in the undergrowth.
- First son has the power to bring his scattered bones together.
- Second son has the power to give him flesh, skin eyes, hair etc.
- Third son has the power to give him life (but he's still in a deep sleep).
- Fourth son has the power to give him speech, movement, laughter.
- The hunter sits up, speaks and they go home. The family is re-united, and they have a feast.
- Hunter carves a beautiful wooden handle for a cow-tail switch. 'This is for the one who saved my life.'
- All four brothers claim it but the hunter shakes his head
- 'It's for the little one. He was the one who remembered me... and as long as a person is remembered by somebody he's not altogether dead.

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