

Judson
Vagabond
Puppets



The Snow Queen

Study Guide

HUDSON VAGABOND PUPPETS

STUDY GUIDE THE SNOW QUEEN

“This story is about the Snow Queen who lived in her ice palace far away to the north. On winter nights, however, it was her habit to sweep down on the cities and villages and freeze them in snow and ice. Wherever the snowflakes swarm most thickly, there she flies. She is beautiful and grand, but ice all the way through, and yet she is alive.” This passage begins the Hudson Vagabond Puppets’ production as a 12 foot tall Snow Queen glides across the stage escorted by a group of flying geese.

A boy named Kay and a girl named Gerde are best friends -- as close as brother and sister. There is an evil demon in the story. He has a magic mirror that makes everything look ugly and twisted. One day he breaks the mirror and the pieces fly all over the world. Kay gets a splinter of the magic mirror in his eye. It makes everything look ugly. Another splinter goes right into his heart. His heart turns to a lump of ice and he changes from a good kid to a nasty one.

One day the Snow Queen comes riding by on her sleigh. She takes Kay away to live with her in her ice palace in the far north. Gerde begins a long journey to search for her friend and on the way she meets some scary and some interesting animals and people including a talking reindeer, a little robber girl, and a woman from Finland who tells her the way to the Snow Queen’s realm.

Can Gerde break the Snow Queen’s spell and rescue Kay? You’ll find out as you watch the Hudson Vagabond Puppets tell this wonderful story in narrated ballet, danced to the music of Arcangelo Corelli.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Hans Christian Andersen was born in 1865 in Odense, Denmark. He came from a poor family who was happiest when they sat around the fire and told stories.

Hans was a funny looking kid -- tall and skinny, with big hands, feet and nose -- and he worked too hard to make the other children like him. Children -- and adults -- are not always kind and Hans was often teased by the children he tried so hard to please. Hans spent much of his time making up stories and sometimes put his own experiences and feelings into those stories. The "Ugly Duckling" must have come from these unhappy experiences. Isn't it interesting that more than 100 years after his death Hans Christian Andersen's stories are read and loved by so many people all over the world. No one remembers the people who teased him.

As he grew up Hans had good times, and he had bad times. Some people didn't think making up stories was a grown-up thing to do. He loved to write his stories and knew this was the right thing to do. Children enjoyed his stories, and finally adults came to admire and respect his work. The King read his stories, liked them, and decided to help Hans.

Most of earlier fairy tale writers, such as Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, were more collectors of folktales. They wrote down stories that had been passed orally from generation to generation.

Hans Christian Andersen's stories were his own. If he used a traditional theme, it was transformed with his own personality and thinking. Of his 156 stories, "The Snow Queen" is the longest, but it was quickly written. Hans wrote of this story; "It took hold of my mind in such a way that it came dancing out over the paper."

By the end of his life, he was a national hero. His stories have been translated into more than 100 languages and children from all over the world still read his stories which include: *The Ugly Duckling; The Little Mermaid, The Princess and the Pea, The Steadfast Tin Soldier; The Emperor's New Clothes; Thumbelina: The Little Match Girl* and of course; *The Snow Queen*.

He died in 1875, and on that day, all the bells in Copenhagen rang as the whole country mourned the death of their favorite storyteller.

Music

Concerto, Opus 6, No. 8 Arcangelo Corelli

Not many facts are known about Corelli's life. He was a talented violinist and composer, He was well respected and became famous, eventually living in Rome at the court of Cardinal Ottoboni, one of his wealthy admirers. He died in 1713.

The style of violin playing which he developed was pure and singing, and his compositions are marked by beautiful flowing melodies and a noble style.

THE PUPPETS

Rod Puppets -- This type of puppet has its head mounted firmly to a stick. In this case -- a very long stick, which then rests in a flag pole holder around the neck of the puppeteer. Turning the stick controls the head. Sometimes there are sticks attached to the hands of the puppet and the puppeteer uses them like chopsticks to move the puppet's hands.

Body Puppets -- Many of the characters, like the Finland Woman, the Robber, and the Crow, are body puppets. Just as a hand puppet uses your hand a body puppet uses all of you -- the puppeteer is inside the puppet.

Bunraku -- HVP often borrows certain techniques from the Japanese *Bunraku* style of puppetry. The puppeteers dress in black and hold the puppets in front of them. In the Japanese Bunraku puppet companies, three puppeteers manipulate each puppet. HVP can only afford one. HVP attached the puppet's feet to the puppeteer's feet, so the puppets can walk, dance -- and climb trees with the puppeteer



When you come to see the Hudson Vagabond Puppets perform the story of The Snow Queen-- at the end of the performance, the puppeteers will show you how the puppets work. We're so glad you will be coming to see our show