

Tangle of Tales

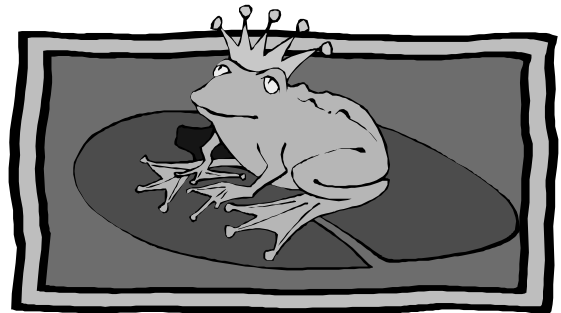


Teacher's Study Guide

A taste of the familiar and a touch of the new-- it's *Tangle of Tales*, the imaginative creation of Grey Seal Puppets. In this show, three favorite folk tales from around the world come to life, along with a whole menagerie of zany characters. *Tangle of Tales* is fun for everyone!

ABOUT TANGLE OF TALES

Tangle of Tales by Grey Seal Puppets combines not only a variety of puppet styles, but also a variety of stories from around the world. *The Frog Prince*, from Germany, uses traditional hand puppets to deliver a message about keeping promises. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, from Scandinavia, is performed with rod puppets to show how the clever goats outsmarting the greedy troll. And *The Three Little Pigs*, from England, uses whimsical rod characters to demonstrate that hard work pays off—especially when you're hiding from a wolf! But what makes *Tangle of Tales* truly unique is the menagerie of zany characters in between each of the tales. With everything from "The Blockheads" to "The Wobblies," *Tangle of Tales* has something for everyone.



Tangle of Tales consists of three stories, each told separately. A non-verbal, musical variety piece acts as a buffer before and after each story. The stories average 10 minutes each. The variety pieces total another 15 minutes.

ORDER OF ACTS:

- ACT ONE: Wobblies
- ACT TWO: The Frog Prince
- ACT THREE: Ant Dance
- ACT FOUR: The Three Billy Goats Gruff
- ACT FIVE: Blockheads
- ACT SIX: The Three Little Pigs
- ACT SEVEN: Tourists



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Twenty-one puppets are used in the production including hand puppets, moveable mouth puppets and rod puppets. All characters are made of polyfoam and are either painted or covered with fabric. Puppets range in size from 8 inches to 30 inches tall. Props and set pieces are minimal. They include a golden ball, a well, a bridge and a meadow.

This one-man show is performed on a traditional, 6-foot puppet stage. The puppets are worked entirely overhead with the puppeteer hidden behind the curtained frame. The puppeteer wears a headset microphone and provides voice characterizations and various sound effects (i.e. clip clopping of goats on the bridge). The puppeteer starts and stops the music and controls his own lighting.

ABOUT THE STORIES

The Frog Prince, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* and *The Three Little Pigs* have been adapted for stage and puppet theatre many times before. Each story draws clearly defined characters and situations: a princess must live up to her promise; a troll learns a lesson about greed; and three little pigs find taking the easy way out can be dangerous.

A minimum of dialogue and a large dose of action are keystones in the development of any show by Grey Seal Puppets. *Tangle of Tales* is no exception. The variety pieces that serve as "breathers" between each story are in themselves fascinating studies in movement. In fact, the show opens with a puppet ballet by four abstract characters that challenge the audience to define not only who they are, but also what they are all about.

THEMATIC VOCABULARY

THE FROG PRINCE

Banish: To send away forever.

Favor in return: To do something kind for someone who has done something kind for you.

Foul: Rotten, putrid, unfair, crooked, wicked, evil.

Horrid: Terrible, very ugly and mean.

Mere Mortal: Someone who is only human.

Proposal: An offer of marriage.

Word, as in "my word," "your word": A promise that you must keep to keep your honor.

Wretched: Miserable, disgusting.

THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

Appetizer: A delicate serving of food that you eat before the main meal.

Billy goat: Male goat.

Butt: To attack with the horns, as a goat would do.

Exceptional: Rare, unusually fine.

Exquisite: Rare, fabulous, delightful.

Gobble up: To eat very fast.

Hoof: The horny, callused foot of some large four legged animals, such as goats and horses.

Splendid: Beautiful, rich, glorious.

Sup: To eat.

Troll: A magical and troublesome being in Scandinavian folklore who is sometimes very small and sometimes very large and always lives outside, in caves or hills or, in this case, under a bridge.

Vegetarian: Someone who eats no meat (which comes from animals), only grains and vegetables that are grown in gardens and fields.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

Chap: A young boy.

Disgusted: To feel sickened by something; to turn away from it and reject it.

Embarrassed: To feel silly and sorry about something you have done.

High time: Time to do something; almost too late.

Live under one roof: To live together in one house.



Themes to Discuss and Develop

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Before the performance, introduce your students to the theater experience and to theater etiquette.

LIVE THEATRE VERSUS TV AND THE MOVIES

Attending live theatre is very different from attending a movie or watching TV. Many people think nothing of eating or drinking or even talking while a movie or a TV show is playing. After all, the actors aren't really there in front of us. They're on film or tape, and even if they are "live," they are thousands of miles away. But in the theatre, the puppeteer is working very hard and they are only a few feet away. Eating or talking distracts the puppeteer and prevents other members of the audience from hearing and enjoying as well. And of course, such behavior is considered inappropriate and impolite for the theatre. Attending the theatre should be considered a very formal but fun occasion, like going to a wedding or a fancy restaurant. You may even want to wear something special that day.

AUDIENCE GUIDELINES

- Eating and drinking should not be permitted.
- Talking should not be permitted. Even whispering should be limited.
- Restroom trips should be limited to before and after the performance if at all possible.
- Taking photographs during the performance is extremely distracting to the puppeteer and to the rest of the audience. The puppeteer will be glad to pose for photos after the performance.
- Please turn off all cel phones and pagers during the performance.

Explain to your students that in *Tangle of Tales* they will see stories performed by puppets. Describe the play the students will see as "puppet theatre." Explain that the puppeteer will tell stories using hand, rod, and string puppets.

A performance by Grey Seal Puppets provides an opportunity to explore first-hand the magic of the stage. For a short time we enter another world, a world of fantasy and exaggeration. We hope you enjoy taking this journey of the imagination with us.

After the Performance

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss folk tales and oral tradition. Emphasize that all three tales in *Tangle of Tales* are hundreds of years old, and have been known in a variety of versions to people across the continent of Europe. Consider questions such as: Why do you think these stories have lasted so long? What makes them interesting to you? If you knew the story and knew what was going to happen, did that make you tired of the story? Why or why not? If you didn't know the story, did you still know what was going to happen? Why do you think that was so? How did you figure the story out? Why are these stories so familiar? Especially for older students, try to highlight the motifs and patterns in folktales--the use of magic, for example, and the sequence of threes, in which the third action breaks the pattern.

Discuss villains. Begin by having the students explain or define "villain" and then identify the villains in all three stories. Ask questions such as, what did the villains look like? What did all their looks have in common? Can you always tell a villain by looks? What did the villains in all three stories do? What happened to the villains in the stories? Are there villains in real life? What happens to villains in real life?

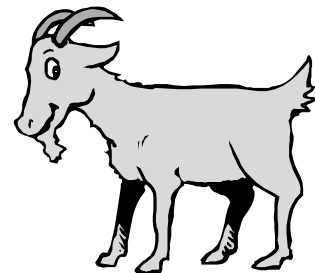


Discuss heroes and heroines. Begin by having the students explain or define "hero" or "heroine" and then identify the hero or heroine of all three stories. Ask questions such as, who was the hero of each story? How are all the heroes or heroines from all three stories the same? How are they different? What does each one do to overcome the villain? What can you do as a hero or heroine to overcome the villains in your life?

Discuss the meaning of these stories. Begin by identifying the problems the heroes and heroines face. What problem does the Frog Prince face? How does he solve his problem? What problem does the princess face? How does she solve her problem? What is she like at the beginning of the story? How does she change? What do the characters in each story learn from their adventures? What can you learn from their stories? What can you learn from the experience of the three billy goats and the troll? What can you learn from the experience of the three little pigs?



Discuss puppets and puppetry. Ask questions such as: How did you like seeing puppets as actors in a story? Were you aware while you were watching the performance that the characters were puppets operated by the puppeteer's hands? Do you think putting on a puppet performance was easy, or hard to do? How many of you have played with a puppet?



Activities

Tangle of Tales develops concepts that can be useful in classroom activities after the performance. For each concept an activity is suggested to explore its ramifications. Very young children may have difficulty in expressing feelings that may be generated. For them, puppets may provide "the voice" for newly discovered values and beliefs. For older children, script writing for their own productions may help to reinforce what they have learned.

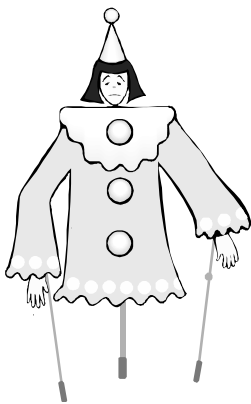
PUPPETRY

Puppetry is perhaps the most unique of all art forms. It incorporates aspects of both the visual and performing arts--from music and dance, to painting and sculpture, to theatre and mime--yet it remains a distinct art form unto itself. Making and using puppets is an excellent way to acquaint students with the medium and to provide them with tools to use in the post-performance discussions.

There are many different types of puppets. Explain to the classroom that when we say a "type" of puppet, we don't mean a dog or a cat, or other character that a puppet can be. The type of puppet is determined by how the puppeteer controls, or manipulates, the puppet. Here are just a few of the types of puppets:

HAND PUPPETS

A hand puppet is a puppet that fits over the performer's hand. The performer's first finger goes into the head, while the performer's thumb and little finger go into the arms to control the hands. Two of the most famous puppet characters in history, Punch and Judy, are hand puppets (pictured here).



ROD PUPPETS

A rod puppet is controlled by a stick (or rod) that is attached to the puppet. The rods are usually made of wood or metal. The puppet can be made of any kind of material, including fabric, wood, foam, or papier mache.



MARIONETTES

Marionettes are puppets that are controlled by strings from above. The strings are attached to the puppet's head, hands, and feet, and are controlled by the puppeteer using a wooden control at the top called an "airplane control."

CREATE A PUPPET

Language and dramatic arts objectives:

- To describe the good character traits depicted in the play
- To recognize puppetry as a way to illustrate good character traits to children
- To create a puppet that represents a good character trait, strength, or virtue
- To analyze the action of the character through a puppet

Grade level:

Two sets of instructions are included for making puppets. Finger puppets will have more appeal for kindergartners and children in lower grades. Bag puppets are fun for all levels. Both require little preparation and few materials. Time required: 3 class sessions of 45 minutes each.

Materials:

Parents are a valuable resource for puppet-making supplies. Felt scraps, buttons, sequins, yarn, cotton balls and sewing trim are transformed into features with the help of scissors and paste. You will notice that all of the characters in *Tangle of Tales* have distinct appearances and personalities. Stress to your students to be imaginative in creating unique and individual characters as they construct their puppets.

Procedure:

1. Discuss good character traits, virtues, and morals. Why is it important to practice them? How does it help others? How does it help you? Discuss the benefits of practicing good character traits.
2. Discuss the puppets in the performance. What types of puppets were used? (Hand puppets and rod puppets) How did each work? How did they display emotions? Was each puppet effective?
3. Have the students make finger puppets or bag puppets and use them act out scenes where good character traits are illustrated. You can use familiar fairy tales, or the students can write their own stories. These could be scenes that illustrate the benefits of practicing a good character trait, or the consequences of bad actions. Make these shows an ongoing class event to reinforce the importance of knowing and practicing good character traits.

FINGER PUPPET



To make little animal finger puppets, use pinking shears to cut off the top three inches from the fingers of old brown, black or tan gloves. Attach eyes and felt noses and mouths, and appropriate ears to make different types of animal finger puppets.

PAPER BAG PUPPET



For hand puppets, choose bags just large enough that the bottom fold can be easily moved up and down with fingers inserted. Indicate the tiny button placement of facial features on the bottom of the bag.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Content Area: Language Arts, Critical Thinking, Art

Activities:

Read aloud or have the students read each of the stories presented in *Tangle of Tales*. Try to find those versions that do not embellish the story with modern references or "cute" adult humor.

Talk about motivations of the characters. Compare the messages of each story. In the performance, the animal characters were personified. Discuss with the students why animals are sometimes used to deliver a moral or message rather than human characters.

2. Content Area: Language Arts, Creative Writing

Activities:

Create a motivation wheel. Use common character motivations such as jealousy, greed, fear, etc. Use a spinner or have students choose a motivation about which to write a short story. Exchange stories and have students guess one another's characters' motivations.

3. Content Area: Affective

Activity:

Have each student tell what character he/she would most like to be and why. List characteristics and traits of that character. Have students tell which character they think best represents themselves and why.

4. Content Area: Critical Thinking, Art

Activity:

Have students choose and draw the character that they think best represents one of the following characteristics:

deceit	conceit	leadership
honesty	creativity	curiosity
loyalty	ingenuity	jealousy

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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Meet Grey Seal Puppets

Founded in 1976, Grey Seal Puppets is well known nationwide. The company performs over 250 shows a year from New York to Hawaii, from Canada to Mexico. Their repertoire consists of familiar fairy tales (*The Emperor's New Clothes*), classic folk tales (*Tangle of Tales*) and original stories (*Bathtub Pirates*). Grey Seal travels to theatres such as The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, The Detroit Museum of Art and The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

In addition to live performing, Grey Seal also performs regularly on television, with clients such as The Reimler Agency (Bojangles), WTVI-Channel 42 (local PBS affiliate), the Muppets, Silver Burdett Ginn, and the International Mission Board. Grey Seal Puppets also custom designs and creates mascot characters for sports teams and corporations such as Blimpie Subs and Salads, New Orleans Hornets, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, and Lowe's Motor Speedway.

The company has garnered a number of awards including a "Citation of Excellence" for their adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and their original story called *Bathtub Pirates*. They were also awarded the North Carolina Theatre Conference's Award for leadership in theatre arts and The Puppeteers of America President's Award for outstanding accomplishment in the art of puppetry. Their television work also has been honored with several awards in the industrial and broadcast categories including a prestigious Beacon Award and the ITVA Silver Reel of Excellence.

Grey Seal puppeteer Drew Allison has co-authored two books on polyfoam puppet construction, *The Wit and Wisdom of Polyfoam Puppet Construction* and *The Foam Book*.

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