



THE FROG PRINCE

By the Brothers Grimm

Adapted for the stage by Gayle Cornelison

A California Theatre Center Study Guide for Teachers and Students

SYNOPSIS

An egotistical young woman smugly plucks the petals of a flower, reciting “He loves me...he loves me not.” She is furious when the final petal falls on “he loves me not,” and, when the object of her affection arrives on the scene and informs her that he likes her only as a friend, she is further enraged. A wizard appears and offers to make her an actress in a play, which she vainly accepts on the conditions that she play a character with magical powers, and that the young man she loves also be in the play. The wizard grants both requests and the play opens with the young man, now the dashing Prince Charles, lost in a forest near a pond. The young woman, now an odious, bumbling sorceress named Lizard, arrives and offers to help. When she, again, pressures him to profess his love for her, he again refuses. In her anger, Lizard casts a spell that turns the prince into a frog and tells him the only way to break the spell is for a beautiful maiden to kiss him. The Frog becomes discouraged because the prospect of being kissed seems unlikely, but soon, the beautiful Princess Charlotte wanders near the pond, admiring her prized possession, a golden ball. When her golden ball falls to the bottom of the pond, she promises to kiss the Frog if he will retrieve it for her. After he does so, the princess dismisses her promise and runs home. Her father, the King, is concerned when he finds out about his daughter’s broken promise, and invites the Frog to stay at the castle until she honors it. As the days go on, Princess Charlotte and the Frog become close friends, and she decides to fulfill her promise to kiss him. But then, Lizard returns, and is outraged at what has happened in her absence! Princess Charlotte devises a plan to save the Frog, break the spell, and teach Lizard a lesson. Chaos ensues, but in the end, promises are fulfilled and the witch gets a taste of her own medicine!

GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the following themes as they relate to *The Frog Prince*: honesty, judgement, materialism, gratitude, vanity, friendship.
2. Compare and contrast Lizard and Princess Charlotte. They may seem like very different characters, but they share several qualities. For example, they are both very vain. In what ways do both of them change by the end of story? Do they change for the better, or for the worse?
3. Why is Princess Charlotte apprehensive about kissing the Frog? Could you actually get warts from kissing a frog?
4. Princess Charlotte's favorite thing in the whole wide world is her golden ball. Discuss this fancy toy. How does the golden ball represent Charlotte's character? What does her admiration of it say about her values? How does this change during the play?
5. When asked if he likes being a frog, Prince Charles says he does not. Why does he dislike it? What does the Prince learn during his time spent as a frog? If you had to be transformed into another animal, what kind would it be?

LITERATURE/CREATIVE WRITING

1. This play includes a character, Lizard who has magical powers. Does Lizard seem like a typical fairy tale sorceress, or is she unique for this type of character? Compare and contrast Lizard with well-known fairy tale and storybook witches & wizards.
2. From whose point of view is *The Frog Prince* told? Rewrite *The Frog Prince* from the point of view of one of the other characters.
3. Define the terms "protagonist" and "antagonist". Whom do you think is the protagonist in *The Frog Prince*? Whom do you think is the antagonist? Why?
4. Discuss the Wizard. We do not learn much about him in the play. Why does he appear in the first place? Where did he come from? Write the Wizard's story, narrated in either the first-person or third-person, telling the story of how he became a wizard, how he ended up in the pond, and what happens to him after he creates the play. Be creative and use your imagination!
5. The King says that the Frog would be happier if he would accept what he is and stop deceiving himself that he is a prince. Was there a time when you surpassed someone's expectations of you, like the Prince does once he is turned back into his true form? Write a journal entry about this time.

DRAMATIC & PERFORMING ARTS

1. *The Frog Prince* use an element of a Japanese form of puppetry called "bunraku", in which the puppeteer operates the puppet in view of the audience, but is clothed in black fabric.
 - a. Discuss the experience of watching the bunraku technique. What did you like and/or dislike about this method? Was it effective in telling the story? Did you forget that the puppeteer was there while watching the frog?
 - b. Research different types of puppets and puppet theatre with the class. Possible topics include bunraku, kabuki, marionettes, shadow puppets, rod puppets, hand puppets.

2. This play starts with a “prologue”, a short scene at the beginning of a play that is separate from, but related to, the main action. What is the purpose of a prologue? What ancient culture was the first to use it? Are the characters in the prologue the same as the characters in the play? How are the roles related?
3. Discuss the play’s use of sound effects. How did they enhance the story? How would the play have been different without the sound effects?
4. Discuss the play’s use of lighting effects and music during the two underwater scenes, in which the Frog retrieves the golden ball, and the Frog and the King go swimming. What sort of mood did the lighting create in each scene? What did the music do to further enhance the mood?
5. In scene two, Princess Charlotte and the King dance ballet together. What is ballet? Research ballet with the class. Where and when did ballet originate, and what was its original purpose? Define the following ballet terms: arabesque, chasse, grand jete, pas de deux, plie, pointe.

SCIENCE

1. When Prince Charles realizes that he has become a frog, he observes that his skin is green. Are all frogs green? Research frogs with the class. How many species of frog do we know of? What colors and sizes do they come in? Where do they live? What do they eat? What is their life cycle? Have each student draw a picture of their favorite frog.
2. The Frog spends a lot of time at the pond. On the surface, a pond may appear to be just a big hole filled with water, but it is far more complex than that. Research the pond as an ecosystem. What types of plants and animals inhabit ponds? What types of weather are common to ponds?
 - a. Construct a bulletin board or poster depicting a pond ecosystem, to which students contribute information as they learn it.
 - b. The King mentions the moat on the grounds of the castle. How is a moat different from a pond?
3. Research the properties of gold, keeping Princess Charlotte’s golden ball in mind. Locate gold on the Periodic Table. What type of metal is it? What is its atomic number? Where is it found, and in what forms?
 - a. Use the Internet to find pictures of gold in various states. If you found some gold and wanted to make a golden ball like Princess Charlotte’s, what would you have to do to the gold?
 - b. What would happen to gold if it were dropped into a pond like the golden ball? Would it sink or float? Would the water harm it?

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. The King advises Princess Charlotte that part of her royal duty is keeping her word when she makes promises. Just because someone is royal, does that mean that they do not have to be honest and courteous?
2. Part of the King and Princess Charlotte’s luxurious palace life is having a personal gourmet chef to make all of their meals for them. If you had your own gourmet chef, what would you order for breakfast, lunch and dinner?
 - a. Imagine that you are the royal chef, and the King has announced to you that the Frog will be a guest in the palace. Plan a fantastic dinner menu in honor of the Frog’s visit, including an appetizer, soup, or salad, a main course, and a dessert.

3. The King schedules lessons for Princess Charlotte in music and dance. What sorts of things are real-life nobility expected to learn when they are young? What does the term “accomplished” mean as it relates to them? As a class, research royalty from the nation of your choosing, focusing especially on their education, and how it has changed over the centuries.

VISUAL ARTS

1. Have students create their own versions of the golden ball. Start with a Styrofoam ball and either paint or color it gold, and then decorate it using a variety of arts & craft supplies (such as glitter, glitter glue, sequins, buttons, foam shapes), making it as detailed or as simple as they want.
2. Imagine what the King and Princess Charlotte’s castle looks like from the outside. Draw a picture of what you imagine it looks like.
3. Draw a colorful map of the castle area, showing the way from the castle to Princess Charlotte’s secret place in the forest. Be creative in designing the route—maybe it is filled with twists and turns, or perhaps the Princess encounters some obstacles along the way!

WRITE TO CTC!

After watching the play, write us a letter about it. Tell what you liked or disliked about the story, the characters, costumes, set, or anything else you observed. Support your thoughts with examples and reasons. (*Teacher’s comments are appreciated!*)

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