



Brothers Grimm  
*The Fisherman and the Flounder*

## Study Guide

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## 1. Enchantment Theatre Company

For more than 30 years, Enchantment Theatre Company has been guided by our mission: to create original theater for young audiences and families. We accomplish this through the imaginative telling of new and classic fables, myths and legends set to classical or original music that inspire, challenge and enrich our audience – onstage, in the classroom and in the community.

*Why do we do, what we do?* Enchantment deeply believes in the transformative power of theater and that all children should have a chance to experience the joy and wonder of live theater. Our unique style of performance – incorporating expressive masks, life-sized puppets, magical illusion, music, movement and pantomime – is accessible to all children and encourages everyone – regardless of age and language barriers – to explore creative worlds, awaken imaginations and engage with others in the joy of a live theatrical production.

## 2. Enchantment Theatre Company's Style

Our unique style of performance brings stories to life in a way that inspires children to use their imaginations and then explore the story in different ways when they go back to their classroom.

- **Masks** - the actors wear masks on their faces so they can play characters different from themselves
- **Puppets** – the actors use puppets to play characters that are children and animals
- **Music** – a composer wrote the music to go along with the story and to reinforce the action that is seen on stage
- **Narration** – one voice will tell the story as we watch the actors use their bodies to tell the story



*Rehearsal photos for The Fisherman and the Flounder*

## 3. Why Fairy Tales and Brothers Grimm

Enchantment Theatre Company believes in the intrinsic value of myths, fables and fairy tales in the development of children. These classic and magical tales are not only filled with promise – the weak can become strong, the poor can become rich, the unimaginable becomes possible – they provide children with possibilities of how to be in life. And most importantly, they invite children into new worlds to discover meaning for themselves. Myths, fables and fairy tales are essential because they:

- Show kids how to handle problems
- Build emotional resiliency
- Give us a common language (cultural literacy & canon)
- Cross cultural boundaries
- Teach the dramatic structure of a story
- Develop a child's imagination
- Give teachers opportunities to teach critical thinking skills
- Teach lessons
- Support new Common Core Standards

### a. **About the Brothers Grimm**

The story of *The Fisherman and the Flounder* was written by two brothers. They were named Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. We call them the Brothers Grimm. They lived over 200 years ago!

When Jacob was 11 and Wilhelm was 10, their father died. This was very hard for the brothers and their family. They were very poor for many years. When Jacob and Wilhelm grew up they went to college at the University of Marburg.

Together, the Brothers Grimm became authors. They wrote down many stories that they knew from growing up in Germany. The stories they wrote down are known as folk stories.

Folk stories are tales or legends that are passed on as a tradition of a group of people. Most of the time these stories were told out loud. Because Jacob and Wilhelm were from Germany, they wanted to write down and have recorded all of the stories they found from the German people. Did you know the Brothers Grimm wrote down more than 200 stories!

So, what is the difference between a folk story and a fairy tale? As we said above, a folk tale is a short story that comes from the oral tradition. Folk tales often have to do with everyday life and frequently feature wily peasants getting the better of their superiors. In many cases the characters are animals with human characteristics. Fairy tales are a subgenre of folk tales and almost always involve some element of magic and good triumphing over evil.

Do you recognize any of these stories?

- The Frog Prince
- Rapunzel
- Cinderella
- Little Red Riding Hood
- Hansel and Gretel
- Rumpelstiltskin
- Sleeping Beauty

All of these were stories written down by the Brothers Grimm!

### **b. Brothers Grimm Version of “The Fisherman and the Flounder” (Condensed)**

There once was a poor fisherman who lived with his wife in a hut by the sea. One day the fisherman catches a golden flounder who claims to be an enchanted prince. The fisherman kindly releases it. When his wife hears the story, she says he ought to have had the flounder grant him a wish. The wife tells him to go back and ask the flounder to grant her wish for a nice house. The fisherman returns to the shore but is uneasy when he finds that the sea seems to be turning dark when it was so clear before. He makes up a rhyme to summon the flounder, and it grants the wife's wish. The husband hopes that he and his wife will be happy, but the wife decides to keep asking for more and more things. The wife asks for a castle, then to be the king. She asks to be the emperor, and the pope. The fisherman knows this is wrong but asks anyway. The sea grows stormy every time the Fisherman returns, but the flounder grants each wish. Lastly, she asks to be Lord of the Universe. The flounder does not grant this last wish, but instead returns the husband and wife back to their small hut.

### **c. Enchantment Theatre’s Version of “The Fisherman and the Flounder” (Condensed)**

There once was a poor fisherman who lived with his wife and two children in a hut by the sea. One day the fisherman catches a golden flounder who claims to be an enchanted prince. The fisherman kindly releases it. When his wife hears the story, she says he ought to have had the flounder grant him a wish. The wife and children tell him to go back and ask the flounder to grant her a wish. She asks for a nice cottage. The flounder grants their wish. The wife loves the cottage, but soon decides they need a bigger house. She asks her husband to go to the flounder and wish for a castle. The husband wants his family to be happy so he goes and asks for a castle. When he returns, the wife loves the castle, but soon wants to be more powerful. She tells the fisherman that he should be the King. Because the fisherman does not want to King, the wife tells him to wish that she would be Queen. The fisherman does not think it is a good idea, but he goes and asks anyway. The flounder grants the wife her wish to be Queen. The wife soon grows tired of being Queen and tells the fisherman to wish for her to be Emperor. The children have grown scared of their mother because she is so different, demanding, and cruel. The fisherman is afraid but asks the flounder anyway. The flounder grants the wish for the wife to be Emperor. Again however, the wife grows tired of being Emperor and wants to have the power to be Ruler of the Universe. The fisherman tells her that he cannot ask for such a wish, but in the end he goes to the flounder and asks. The flounder returns the family back to their hut. When the fisherman returns home, the wife realizes that everything she needed to be happy was with her family. The fisherman and his family are happy, but the fisherman realizes that he needs to do one more thing. He returns to the sea and wishes that the flounder would be turned back into a Prince. The Prince is grateful for his generosity. The fisherman returns home and the family reminds themselves that their true happiness is in being with one another and in the things they already have.

## **4. Pre-Performance Activities**

### **Class Exercise 1:**

In our experience, it is best to read the story several times before they actually come to see the show. This can be done in a single sitting or over several days.

1) **Read the story to encourage imagination**

Simply read the story to your students, no need to act it out, just keep a matter-of-fact tone. During the first reading, invite children to close their eyes, simply to listen to the story and imagine the scenes. **Ask them what did they see (castle, fish), what did they hear (ocean waves, forest), what did they smell (stinky fish, ocean water), what did they sense (peaceful beach, raging storm)?**

2) **Read the story for understanding**

On the second reading, ask your students to notice different characters, language, descriptions? What kind of story is it (fictional, fantasy)? Is it set in an imaginary world? How do you know? Is the ending happy or sad? Are there any words you don't understand? E.g. Fisherman, greediness, flounder?

3) **Read the story for elaboration**

This time read the story and ask your students to remember their favorite parts so they can retell them in their own words, retell the whole story or act out a new ending like Enchantment did.

You may want to talk about the morals of the story. What is it teaching us? If you were the Fisherman's wife, at what point would you stop wishing?

### **In our Talk Back the actors will ask the students several questions:**

- 1) If you could make wishes, what would you wish for?
- 2) Would you wish for someone else, like the fisherman did for the flounder? What would you wish for your family and friends?
- 3) What was different about the story you saw on stage and the one that you read?

Questions 1 & 2 could be discussion or activity points before or after seeing the show. Question 3 could be a discussion point after seeing the show.

### **Class Exercise 2:**

- 1) What is another story that you know and like to hear?
- 2) Can you write down what happens in the story?
- 3) Can you tell us the story out loud?
  - This could be a project that is worked on over a period of time, in multiple sessions.
  - Working with the students on writing down the story piece by piece and finding causal & temporal links.
  - Reviewing the story repeatedly and growing familiar with the through line of the story.
  - Practice telling pieces of the story out loud. What happens first? What happens next? Why did that happen?
  - The goal would be that they could tell the story to the class without looking at any paper, that they would not be reciting a memorized portion of text, but really just telling the story themselves, in the mode of passing on an oral tradition.

## **5. Post-Performance Activities**

Regardless of age, experience has shown that it is worthwhile to speak with your students after a performance (their favorite part might have changed or for older students ask them how costume or acting changed their response to the story) and then ask them to draw a response to the show. This is important because creating a visual piece of work allows the response to remain in the imaginative realm of their mind's eye, rather than being committed straightaway to an intellectual realm. They could also make a class collage/poster/or hallway display of the things we would wish for (for ourselves and for others).

### Art/Drama Activities for Younger Students:

**1) Make half-masks in class** (the same style that the actors wear):

- Cut a paper plate in half
- Cut out a triangle along the center of the edge, giving a space for the nose.
- Using a large hole punch, create a hole for the eyes.
- Hole punch two small holes on the sides & twist pipe cleaners through them to attach the mask behind the head
- Decorate the masks using materials of your choice (Markers, crayons, glitter, feathers, stickers, paper scraps of different colors, gems, etc).

**2) Physical activity: wearing your mask**

- What character did you create?
- How does this character walk? Do they have heavy steps, or light steps? Do they move fast or slow? Do they glide across the floor? Do they stomp their feet? (asking questions which generate different ways of moving)
- What does your character look like when they are happy? What does your character look like when they are sad?
- How does this character sound? Can they talk? What sounds do they make? (asking questions which generate different vocal qualities)



### Art/Drama Activities for Older Students:

**1) Create a cartoon of your favorite part of the story** (write the narration along the bottom and dialogue in speech bubbles.) Then create a group comic strip. Take the original cartoons and hang them up in sequence. What are the missing scenes? What is the dialogue needed in between scenes?

**2) Physical activity: acting out the story, through a variety of different ways**

- Actors mime the whole piece with someone narrating/reading on the side
- Actors mime the piece and the class make the sound effects
- Actors make the sound effects instead of words and someone narrates
- Actors use their bodies in a way that shows what character they are

### Independent Writing or Discussion Work:

- 1) Ask your students (or discuss with younger students) to describe/write about the characteristics of the fisherman's wife; e.g. greedy, selfish, mean and so on. Then have them write/describe the characteristics of the fisherman and the flounder. How are they different from the wife?
- 2) Based on the above definitions for folk tales and fairy tales, into which category does "The Fisherman and the Flounder" fit?
- 3) Compare and contrast the behavior and characters of the fisherman and his wife.
- 4) Write a personal recount from the point of view of the enchanted flounder.
- 5) Write a poem based on the story.
- 6) Choose another animal that could be "enchanted" like the fish and write a story based on the events of "The Fisherman and the Flounder."
- 7) Review the performance (pretend you are a theater critic – what was good about the performance, story, acting etc...)
- 8) Help preserve oral traditions (like Brothers Grimm). Interview a parent, guardian or neighbor and ask them to tell a story they were told when they were young. Write down the story and the context in which it was told.

# Enchantment Everywhere Student Survey for “The Fisherman and the Flounder”

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Survey can be taken individually or as a whole class. If taken as a class, we recommend that you ask your students to place their heads down on the desk (e.g. 7-up game) and have them raise their hands for a count. Please also jot down their comments to the open-ended questions below. Thank you.

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Name/Teacher’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes	No
1. “The Fisherman and the Flounder” was fun.	___	___
2. I learned many new things.	___	___
3. Watching the show made reading more fun.	___	___
4. I want to make up my own stories.	___	___
5. I want to learn more about acting.	___	___
6. I want to see another show.	___	___
7. This was my first play.	___	___
8. I told/will tell my parents about the show.	___	___

What was your favorite part of the show? Why?

What was your least favorite part of the show? Why?

PLEASE MAIL/FAX THIS SURVEY TO US AT  
Enchantment Theatre Company / Student Survey  
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