

THE RED SHOES

The Red Shoes

By Hans Christian Andersen, adapted by Maxine Fisher

Themes: Feelings, Friendship, Growth and Change, Music

Grade Level: 2–6

Running Time: 27 minutes

SUMMARY

This story is a retelling of a tale by Hans Christian Andersen. The narrator is Alphonse, a neighborhood shoemaker. The story begins on a block of apartment buildings in a rundown neighborhood. Two girls, Lisa and Jenny, are best friends who dream of being ballet dancers. Lisa especially needs her dreams. Her older brother is very sick, and her family life is not happy. Finally Lisa's brother dies. It is a dark time, but after a few months the family gets a surprise: they have won the lottery, and are now millionaires! Even as she is saying goodbye, Lisa's behavior starts to change. Before long she has cut off her old friends. At Christmas time Alphonse takes Jenny to a performance of *The Nutcracker*, which Lisa and her mother also attend. Afterwards, the girls see each other's reflections when they both look at an exhibit of famous dancers' shoes. Lisa snubs Jenny. To cheer Jenny up, Alphonse makes her a pair of red ballet shoes. Meanwhile, Lisa is insisting on a pair of red shoes, and her mother remembers Alphonse's skills. In Alphonse's shop, Lisa sees the red shoes. Alphonse won't sell the shoes, so Lisa steals them. She puts the shoes on—and then can't stop dancing. The shoes carry her back to memories of dancing with her friend and with her brother, and teach her to value love and friendship over material things.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to a modern story based on a classic tale.
- Children will identify and appreciate qualities that enable people to overcome misfortunes, including ingenuity, patience, hope, imagination, and perseverance.
- Children will appreciate the use of humor in both words and pictures.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Introduce the title of the story and inform students that magical red shoes are important to the plot. Ask them for ideas on what putting on a pair of magic shoes might do. If students know the Anderson tale, ask students to tell the others how the shoes affected a person who put them on. Alert students to watch for the red shoes and notice how the shoes change the attitudes and feelings of the characters.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

In recalling and discussing the story, focus on the character of Lisa. What are Lisa's good points and bad points? Ask students to describe their own impressions and to recall the exact details that gave that impression. Discuss how Lisa changes throughout the story. Then ask students what made the red shoes magic. Help students make the connection between Lisa's emotions over the loss of her brother and the big changes in her life and her feelings upon putting on the shoes.

Connect the story to music and dance by having students prepare and perform a musical and ballet of the story. Have students read the original Anderson tale and see movie versions. Encourage students to use the forms of music and dance they

know best, from classical ballet to hip-hop.

Connect the story to music and history by having students research and report on the history of classical ballet. Encourage students visit the web sites of ballet companies for inside looks at the world of ballet today.

Connect the story to writing by focusing on the feelings. Discuss how dance and other forms of art can help people express their feelings and overcome adversity. Suggest that students write imaginary letters or e-mail messages between Lisa and Jenny. Encourage students to keep journals that record their own feelings about traumatic events in their lives.

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