

THE HAT

The Hat

by Tomi Ungerer

Themes: Italian Culture/Magic

Level: Grades K - 3

Length: 6 minutes, animated

Summary

THE HAT is set in Italy, where a hat blows off a rich man's head and lands on the head of Benito Badoglio, a penniless veteran. When it does a little dance for Benito, he realizes that the hat is magical. As the story progresses, Benito uses the hat to do good deeds, including saving a man who is about to be hit on the head by a falling flower pot, recovering a special bird for a reward, capturing a band of thieves, saving a baby in a runaway carriage, rescuing a lady in a horse drawn carriage when the horse runs amuck.

The end of the story finds Benito rewarded for his efforts and marrying the lady whom he rescued from the runaway horse. As Benito drives off with his new bride, his hat blows off his head and where it lands--heaven only knows!

Objectives

- Children will learn about Italian culture
- Children will explore problem-solving techniques
- Children will investigate the world of magic

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *The Hat* with children. Bring a top hat or other fancy hat to the classroom. Have chil-

dren imagine that the hat was magical. Ask: What would have to be done to the hat to make it work magic? What would you like the magic hat to do? When would you use the magic hat? How could you use the hat to help others?

Share records and tapes of Italian music and photos/illustrations of Italy with children. Locate Italy on a map. Have children who may be familiar with the language and customs of Italy to share their knowledge with their classmates. Invite an adult familiar with Italy's customs and traditions to visit your classroom. Have children pay close attention to the background music, accents of the characters, and scenery in the film as they watch.

After Viewing Activities

Have children create their own magic hat stories. Help children along by asking such questions as "Where did the hat come from?" "What did it look like?" "Who did it belong to?" What kind of magic did it do? Provide children with art supplies, including pieces of tagboard, yarn, string, pipe cleaners, artificial flowers, ribbon, pieces of felt, glue, etc. that they can use to create the magical hats in their stories. Display the stories, along with children's hat creations, on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Discuss with children where they think the hat landed at the end of the story. Ask: What happened to the hat once it landed in the town? Who might have found the hat? What kind of magic did the hat do? Give children an opportunity to dramatize their interpretations of the story endings. Supply a top hat or other fancy hat children can use as a prop for their

dramatizations.

Remind children of the different problems Benito solved with the hat. In each instance, encourage children to think of other ways Benito might have had the hat come to the rescue. For example, being by saying: "Benito had the hat catch the flower pot before it fell on the man's head. What else could Benito have had the hat do to save the man?" Continue this kind of questioning for each problem Benito solved in the story. Ask children to be as creative as possible in their thinking as they formulate their own solutions.

Other book based films and videos about Italian culture/magic are available from Weston Woods. These include:

Italian Culture:

THE CLOWN OF GOD by Tomie de Paola
STREGA NONNA by Tomie de Paola

Magic:

THE AMAZING BONE by William Steig
THE SELKIE GIRL written by Susan Cooper and illustrated by Warwick Hutton
THE SILVER COW written by Susan Cooper and illustrated by Warwick Hutton
SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE by William Steig
THE WIZARD by Jack Kent

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