

# Skippyjon Jones: Snow What

## STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Skippyjon Jones: Snow What as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as a related activity sheet. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

### **Background**

Our play is based on the book Skippyjon Jones: Snow What by author Judy Schachner.

### **The Story**

- Skippyjon Jones, a male Siamese kitten, lives with his sisters and his mother. He is the family troublemaker who sometimes thinks he's a chihuahua.
- As his mother reads the girls a "fuzzy tale" before bed, Skippy refuses to listen and begins fantasizing that he is "Skippito Friskito", an adventurous Chihuahua.
- Skippy travels in his fantasy to a storyland where he meets The Seven Chihuahuas (except there are only four) who are on a mission to rescue a princess (Snow What or Nieve Que) who has been cursed by a Bruja (witch) and frozen in a block of ice. They convince Skippy to help them and rescue her with a kiss.
- Stubbornly, Skippy agrees to kiss her and her ice cube melts. The princess is not happy when she finds out Skippito is not a prince at all and she leaves to find the Bruja to get cursed again and wait for another prince. Skippy tells her that she doesn't need a prince to be happy, she can be whatever she wants.
- Meanwhile the witch discovers Snow What has been unfrozen and sets out to curse her again. The curse backfires and summons the dragon who captures the witch. Skippy decides to save the witch and creates a spell of his own to freeze the dragon.
- The play ends with Skippyjon returning home to his family, relating his adventures and going to sleep with a goodnight kiss.

### **Before Seeing the Play**

1. You may want to read some of the Skippyjon Jones stories and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Discuss types of cats and dogs. In the story there are Siamese cats and Chihuahua dogs. What other kind of cat and dog breeds do you know?

- Who has a cat or a dog for a pet? Describe their behavior. Do they ever act like humans? Do they ever act like another kind of animal?
3. Discuss Spanish language words with the students. There are many Spanish words used in the play. What Spanish words do the children know? Ask if they know some common words such as amigo, gracias, hola, loco and muchacho.
  4. Discuss fairy tales. What are some favorite fairy tales you know? What elements and characters do fairy tales have in common? Tell the students that the play is about Skippyjon Jones in a familiar fairy tale. Have them make predictions about what might happen.

**After Seeing the Play** (Standard SL2 Comprehension and Collaboration)

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Skippyjon Jones books you read. How was it the same? Discuss the costumes. How did the actors portray cats and dogs?
2. Why do you think Skippyjon doesn't want to play with his sisters or read stories with them? How does he feel about his family? What do they think of him?
3. How is the story of Snow White the same as fairy tales you know? How is it different? Which characters do you recognize from familiar stories?

**Activities**

*Fairy Tale/Fuzzy Tale Rewrite* (Standard W3 Text Types and Purposes)

In the play, Skippyjon's mother reads the cats a "fuzzy tale" instead of a fairy tale with animals in place of the human characters. Have the students choose a common fairy tale and recast it using animals as characters. Create a new title and rewrite it as a group or individual activity. Students can perform it as a play or reader's theater, sharing it with the class.

*Foreign Language* (Standard L4e Vocabulary Acquisition and Use)

Word Wall- Have students choose a favorite word, define it, translate it into Spanish and illustrate it. Hang up the illustrated "dictionary" pages on the wall. Or use the list at the end of the study guide to choose a Spanish word to illustrate or use in a sentence or story.

*Story Connections*

- Help students make connections to their own experiences. Give them writing prompts to start a story of their own: (Standard SL4 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas)
  - The character \_\_\_\_\_ reminded me of....
  - The story reminds me of ...

- The play is similar to \_\_\_\_\_ because...
  - If I was \_\_\_\_\_ (one of the characters), I would...
  - Something like (part of the story) happened to me when...
- Create a Venn diagram with the words titles Snow What and Snow White in each circle. Compare the similarities and differences between the two stories. (Standard RL9 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas)

*Artistic Expression* (Standard RL3 Key Ideas and Details)

Skippyjon rescues the princess in the play but he doesn't want to be a prince. What fairytale character would you most like to be and why? Have students pick their favorite character and speak about why they chose that one.

- Students can come in costume as their character and prepare a short speech as that character describing their personality.
- Have students write a journal entry as their favorite fairy tale character describing something that happened to them in the story and how they feel about it.

*Magic Spell* (Standard W3 Text Types and Purposes)

In the play, the witch makes a magic potion to freeze Snow What and Skippyjon makes one to get rid of the dragon. Have the class create potion or spell ideas in groups or pairs. Each group should create a list of magical ingredients and then design a step by step recipe using sequence and directional words. Each group must name their spell and describe what it does when used. Students can illustrate their spells on a poster and display them for the class.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Judy Schachner is an award winning author of a many children's books including the Skippyjon Jones series which includes:

Skippyjon Jones  
 Skippyjon Jones in the Doghouse  
 Skippyjon Jones in Mummy Trouble  
 Skippyjon Jones and the Big Bones  
 Skippyjon Jones, Lost in Space  
 Skippyjon Jones, Class Action  
 Skippyjon Jones, Cirque de Olé  
 Skippyjon Jones, Snow What

### **Internet:**

Learn about author Judy Schachner:  
<http://www.judithbyronschachner.com/>

Play games, watch videos, color pictures and download a curriculum guide at:  
<http://www.skippyjonjones.com/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Skippyjon Jones Multiple Choice Quiz



1. What animal does Skippyjon think he is?
  - Tiger
  - Bat
  - Chihuahua
  - Frog
2. What must Skippyjon do to the princess to break the spell?
  - Tickle her
  - Give her a potion
  - Say a magic word
  - Kiss her
3. The witch puts the potion in the:
  - Apple
  - Water
  - Cookie
  - Dog bone
4. The witch puts what wrong ingredient in the freezing spell?
  - Lizard ear
  - Rat tongue
  - Cat whisker
  - Dragon scale
5. Nieve Que decides she doesn't really need a what?
  - fancy dress
  - prince
  - glass slipper
  - sword

## Skippyjon Jones Vocabulary

1. adios – goodbye
2. aventura - adventure
3. amigo - friend
4. besito – kiss
5. boca - mouth
6. bruja - witch
7. gato - cat
8. gordo - fat
9. gracias - thank you
10. hola – hello
11. manzana - apple
12. muchacho – guy
13. muy bien – very good
14. nada - nothing
15. nieve – Snow
16. que - what
17. salchichas - sausage
18. silencio - silence
19. tiempo – time
20. vamos / vamanos – let's go