

THE SHIRT OF THE HAPPY MAN



Zum-ZumTeatre

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THE COMPANY AND THE SHOW

Zum-ZumTeatre has been producing spectacles for children, young and adults for 22 years, to make them enjoy and discover significant authors and texts from the universal literature and theatre. This time we have developed a story which recreates all the places and images in the English version of the tale by Leo Tolstoy.



Once upon a time there was a tsar who fell terribly ill, the diagnosis: "This man's not happy", the cure: "You must find a happy man and make him wear his shirt". Zum-Zum Teatre welcomes you to participate in one of the humanity's big adventures, the search for happiness! And to do it, we want to associate the new technologies to the purest theatricality and so create a universe of animated images, objects, music and situations in order to answer a great question: Who is the happiest person in the world?

This guide is intended to provide activities that link the tale with the learning of the English language. The didactic guide has a double goal: giving the learners the opportunity of remembering the tale collectively and in English and making all the doubts they might have to come out. Furthermore, they'll think, collectively and in English as well, about a great universal topic; the search for happiness.

CONCEPTS

- To understand the play in English.
- To reflect on the search for happiness.

PROCEDURES

- Understanding the plot of the tale and sharing doubts.
- Discrimination of the characters: how they are, how they act.

ATTITUDES

- Interest and attention to the spectacle and the actors' performance on the stage.
- Respect and interest during the performance.
- Interest in the understanding of a spectacle in English.

WORKING PROPOSALS

BEFORE THE SHOW

- The teacher can tell them Leo Tolstoy's tale in English, of which different versions can be found online under the following titles: "The happy man's shirt" or "The King and the shirt". Attached you'll find our version of the story for you to read and comment on it in class as an introduction.
- A positive interest has to be ensured in order to attend, especially since the spectacle is performed in English. An attentive and respectful silence increases for sure the quality of the play.

AFTER THE SHOW

1- Remember the spectacle you've watched with your students. Discuss it in class.

- What words, phrases in English can you remember?
- How does the spectacle begin? Can we explain it in English?
- What's happened to the tsar? He's ill but, what's his pain?
- What are the two royal emissaries looking for?
- Do the emissaries, in the end, find the happiest person in the world? How is this person?

2- Talk in English about happiness with your students.

- What's happiness?
- Do you think it's easy to find happiness?
- What would you need to be happier?
- Who might be the happiest person in the world? (Rich, famous, wise, a soccer player, etc.)
- Why is it so difficult to find someone who's absolutely happy?
- Do you know someone who could be "the happiest person in the world"?

3- Try to remember the characters appearing along the story. Write them down on the blackboard and let the students think about how they are, the things they do and the reason why they are unable to find happiness.

- Why isn't the richest woman in the world happy?
- Do you think being very powerful would make you be very happy?
- What makes the fairest judge in the world be unhappy?
- Do you think young people are happier than adults?
- The poor man in the hut, the hermit, says: *"I'm happy. Perhaps it's because I appreciate all I have so much that I don't worry about what I haven't got."* This is a very famous quote by the author of the tale, Leo Tolstoy. Discuss it in class, what does it mean?



4- Ask students to put in order the different concepts to reach happiness according to their value system.

- *Money*
- *Justice*
- *Power*
- *Fame*
- *Intelligence*
- *Beauty*



PLOT OF THE PLAY

In the lands far to the north there lived a tsar who fell terribly ill. Doctors all over the world came and tried all the cures but he wouldn't improve.

Only one, who came by train, said: "This man's not happy". The cure: "You must find a happy man and make him wear his shirt".

The Council of Ministers sent 2 royal emissaries to find the shirt that would heal the tsar. Where can we find a happy man or woman? The emissaries ask the audience for help and a volunteer will go with them along their trip.

"The happiest person is who's got more money"; the richest woman in the world was so worried about earning more that she couldn't enjoy it and so she wasn't happy.

"The happiest person is who's got more power"; the governor of the most powerful country in the world was so busy by conquering that had forgotten to be happy.

"The happiest person will be the most honest"; the best judge in the world was a corrupt person who was arrested in front of their nose.

"The happiest person is the most famous"; the most glamorous woman in the world was so stressed to become more famous that she couldn't be happy.

Tired, the Royal emissaries went back to the Palace to give the bad news. On their way, they passed by a hut made out of branches where there lived a man who owned anything but who was singing very happily. The emissaries asked him how can he be that happy, and the hermit answered "Perhaps it's because I appreciate all I have so much that I don't worry about what I haven't got."

The emissaries asked him for his shirt to the tsar but he said: "I'm sorry, I'd give it to you if I had one but I haven't, I don't need it!"

And this is how the tsar couldn't get the shirt and died.

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