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Activity Guide

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Irene, La Valiente

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ABOUT THE STORY

Despite a raging snowstorm, Irene, a dressmaker's daughter, offers to deliver the duchess' newly finished ball gown.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Coming from a family involved with the arts, it was not a surprise when William Steig attended the National Academy of Design and became an artist. His career took a somewhat different turn when he published his first children's book in 1968. He then went on to become the recipient of numerous American and European awards including the Caldecott Medal and the Newberry Honor. In 1982 he was selected as the U.S. candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen Medal for Illustration and in 1988 as the U.S. Candidate for Writing. His books reflect his beliefs about friendship and strong family ties.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Irene's mother must deliver the dress she just finished to the duchess in time for the ball. But she is sick and can't go. Irene, being a dear daughter, offers to deliver it for her. Outside there is a terrible storm. How will Irene ever deliver the package in time?

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "Why did Irene, rather than her mother, have to deliver the dress to the duchess?"
- "Why didn't Irene go home when the wind told her to?"
- "What happened to the dress when Irene dropped the box?"
- "Where did Irene finally find it?"
- "How did Irene finally reach the palace?"
- "Why was Irene's mother worried the next morning?"

Vocabulary

Nouns and Other Things

- Nouns are words that name people, places or things. Have the children go through the book and find ten examples of words that are nouns. Use each one in a sentence.

- In Spanish, nouns are either masculine (usually ending in -o) or feminine (usually ending in -a). Adjectives usually change their endings to match the noun with which they are used. Circle the correct adjective to go with each noun.

el vestido (bonito, bonita)

la caja (vacío, vacía)

el viento (malo, mala)

el camino (correcto, correcta)

la duquesa (simpático, simpática)

el palacia (magnífico, magnífica)

la casa (pequeño, pequeña)

el abrigo (rojo, roja)

la hija (cariñoso, cariñosa)

el tovillo (lastimado, lastimada)

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Math: Six-sided Symmetry

Did you know that all snowflakes have six points that are all alike? Share some enlarged photographs of individual snowflakes with the class to demonstrate this fact. In math, we say that they are symmetrical. Many kinds of things, both natural and man-made, display symmetry. Find examples of symmetry around the room and outside. Have children create symmetrical designs of their own. Hand out papers that are folded down the middle. Children should draw a design on one side only, being sure that the fold line is incorporated into the design. Cut out and unfold. Voila! A design that is identical on both sides.

Art: Make Your Own Snowstorm

Create a snowstorm in your room. Let each child make as many paper snowflakes as they can. You can use a book containing snowflake patterns or children can design their own. Decorate the classroom with snowflakes.

Science: Gone Like the Wind

In this story, the wind does many things. It lifted the snow (levantaba la nieve), it pushed Irene (empujaba Irene), it howled like a wild animal (aullaba como una bestia salvaje). Have the children go through the book and list as many of the wind's actions as they can find. Use these phrases to illustrate how the author creates pictures in the readers' minds.

Language Arts: Courage and Other Stories

In this story, Irene was very brave and showed much courage. Courage is a common theme of many stories written for children. Have children think of other stories they know where the characters demonstrate courage. (Fairy tales are a particularly good resource for this.) Discuss these characters with the children. In what ways are they the same? In what ways are they different? Have the children write their own stories demonstrating courage using themselves as the main character.

_____, **el valiente** / _____, **la valiente**

Determination

Irene showed determination and faced many obstacles in order to deliver the dress to the duchess. Discuss with the children a time they may have faced an obstacle they had to overcome. What did they do? How did they feel?