



RAG & BONE PUPPET THEATRE

The Light Princess



TEACHER'S GUIDE

Contents

Dear Teacher:	4
The Company	5
About the Production	7
The Characters	8
The Story	11
Word Search.....	14
Where is the Baby?	16
A Rag & Bone Production.....	18
Make a Puppet Show	21
Scrap Wood Puppets.....	24

RAG & BONE PUPPET THEATRE

The Light Princess



Based on the story by
George MacDonald

Dear Teacher:

We're looking forward to performing *The Light Princess* at your school.

This study guide has a synopsis of the show, a word search, a maze, and information about the production. Feel free to photocopy any of this guide for use with your class.

Thank you for inviting us to your school. We hope your students and staff enjoy the show!

Yours truly,
Kathy MacLellan & John Nolan

The Company

Founded in 1978 by John Nolan and Kathy MacLellan, Rag & Bone's shows produced include *The Snow Queen*, *The Nativity*, *The Cow Show*, *The Nightingale*, *Tug of War*, *A Bauchan in the Family*, *A Promise is a Promise*, *The Weaving of a Dream*, *The Story of Holly & Ivy*, *Felicity Falls*, *Macbeth*, and *The Light Princess* and *Zoom*. Rag & Bone has been awarded a Citation of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry from UNIMA-USA, the international puppetry association.

KATHY MACLELLAN is an award winning writer, performer and puppet-maker. She has written over fifty television scripts, including episodes of *Under the Umbrella Tree*, *Theodore Tugboat*, and *Mr. Dressup*.

Actor, puppeteer, and designer JOHN NOLAN has built sets, props and puppets for stage and television for many years, and has appeared on television and in many theatres, including the Guelph Spring Festival, Great Canadian Theatre company, The National Arts Centre and Opera Lyra. He plays Jackson on YTV's *Crazy Quilt*.

Kathy and John have also taught many puppet-making workshops in schools across Ontario.

Musician RUSSELL LEVIA is a popular Ottawa musician who appears frequently in clubs, folk festivals, and even day care centres. He plays a wide variety of instruments, from guitar and mandolin to accordion and hurdy-gurdy.



*The nurse trembled. The wicked witch had stolen
the princess's gravity.*

About the Production

In our production of *The Light Princess* we appear in full view of the audience as we work the puppets, and freely move from being narrators to being puppeteers.

This style of working puppets, in which the audience sees the puppeteers, is called *open manipulation*. The children have a chance to see “how everything works”, and the puppeteers have direct contact with the audience, combining puppetry with storytelling and acting.

In the staging of *The Light Princess* simple props and lengths of fabric indicate scenery, and imagination fills in the details.

The music is performed live on stage by Russell Levia. Russell based the music on *The Lark Ascending*, a well-known classical piece by Ralph Vaughan-Williams.

The lead instrument is a guitar, but we use a *digital effects unit* to process the sound, allowing it to echo, reverberate and shimmer.

The Characters



The Queen



The King

-
-
- THE KING, *rather foolish.*
 - THE QUEEN, *rather smart.*
 - THE PRINCESS, *their daughter.*
 - PRINCESS MEKEMNOIT, *the King's sister. A wicked witch.*
 - A PRIEST
 - THE NURSE
 - A SERVANT
 - A PAGE BOY
 - PROFESSOR KOPY KECK, *quite foolish.*
 - PROFESSOR HUMDRUM, *also quite foolish.*
 - THE PRINCE: *charming, handsome, well-bred, & well-behaved.*
-
-

The Baby



The Princess



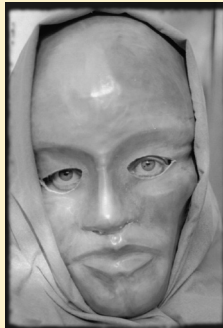
*The learned
Professor
Humdrum*



The Prince



The Nurse



*The Princess
Makemnoit*



The servants loved the ball even better than the game.

The Story

“Once upon a time, so long ago that I have forgotten the date, there lived a king and queen who had no children. The king was always grumbling about it. It was more than he deserved, therefore, when, at last, the king and queen had a daughter—as lovely a little princess as ever cried.”

The King wrote all the invitations to the christening and, of course, he forgot someone. Unfortunately, the person he forgot was his own sister, the Princess Makemnoit. And she was a wicked witch.

Makemnoit arrived at the christening with an evil spell for the baby:

*Light of spirit, by my charms,
Never weary human arms.
Light of body, every part;
Only crush thy parents' heart.*

Suddenly, the princess was lighter than air; she'd lost her gravity. One day she slipped out of her nurse's arms and floated to the ceiling. The King had to get a ladder to pull her down.

Another day, they put the baby down to sleep on the Queen's bed and a gust of wind carried her off. They found her under a rose bush, and they watched her much more carefully after that.

Everyone loved the baby, because she was always laughing. The servants loved to play ball with her, with the laughing baby as the ball.

By the time the Princess was seventeen, she had learned never to go anywhere without a heavy stone to hold her down, but she was still laughing. She laughed at everything—even sad things. Her parents were very worried.

Two wise philosophers (at least they say they are wise) from the College of Metaphysicians had many suggestions. “Give her tests and tests and tests and tests and tests!” cried one. “But with all these tests, she’ll have no time to learn,” objected the other. “True, but at least we’ll know it,” replied the first. But their majesties loved their daughter too much to try any of their solutions.

One summer evening, the whole court was out on the lake in a fleet of sail boats. The Princess accidentally fell overboard —and came up again, laughing and swimming like a swan. In the water she had gravity. It was wonderful. She stayed in the lake all day, every day, all summer long. Even her personality seemed to have more gravity in the water.

She still laughed, though, and her laugh was so odd that one day a handsome Prince mistook her laughing for screaming. He jumped in to rescue her, but she ordered him to put her back “up, in the water”. Confused, he carried her to a cliff and jumped in with her. Falling in was the most delightful fun she’d ever had; he offered to fall in with her any time and, before long, he fell in love with her.

When Princess Makemnoit learnt that her spell was broken in water, she caused all the water in the kingdom to dry up. The Princess's beloved lake began to sink. The Princess was devastated. People said she would not live an hour after the lake was gone.

A group of children found a golden plate bearing a message: "Find the hole through which the water ran. The body of a living man alone shall staunch the flow. The man must offer himself of his own free will and the lake must take his life as it fills."

The Prince offered to save the lake and the Princess, on one condition. The Princess must stay with him and keep him company as the lake filled around him. The Princess agreed. All she cared about was her lake—until she saw the Prince nearly drown. She dove into the water, pulled him out of the hole and dragged him to shore. For a while it looked hopeless. But just as the sun rose, he opened his eyes. The Princess burst into tears and fell on the floor. She had found her gravity.

Outside, torrents of rain filled the lake, flooding the witch's house and burying her in the ruins.

The Princess had to learn to walk, but the Prince helped. They got married. And none of their children ever lost a single atom of gravity.

Word Search

These words are hiding in the box of letters. Can you find them?



KING, QUEEN, PRINCESS, PRINCE,
NURSE, UP, TO, HUM DRUM,
KOPY KECK, MAKEMNOIT, SNAKE,
SHADOW PUPPETS, FROG, PAGE,
HONEYPOT, COUNTING HOUSE,
LIGHT HEADED, PHILOSOPHER,
BOAT, SWIMMING, CLIFF, FLOOD,
RAINBOW, CHRISTENING, GOLDEN
PLATE, MARRIED, HISS, BALD, FAST,
HA (14 times) & the mystery word
(4 times)

Circle the letters of the list words.

Find the word “ha” fourteen times (because she laughs too much) in the letters that are not circled.

The leftover letters will spell the mystery word four times.

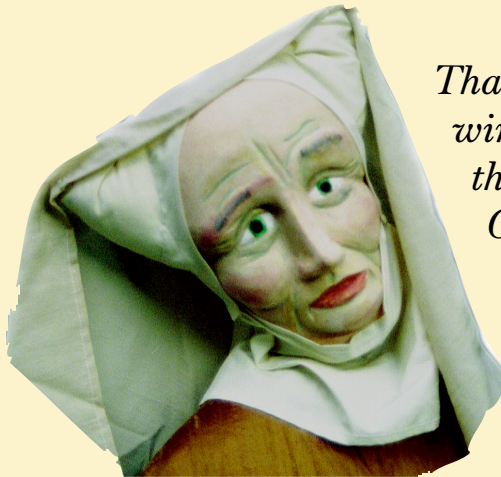


S	C	L	I	F	F	H	A	G	K	I	N	G	H	A
P	H	I	L	O	S	O	P	H	E	R	O	H	A	R
R	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	H	A	L	A	S	H	A
I	I	V	D	I	G	H	A	T	D	H	A	W	Y	F
N	S	H	A	O	M	A	K	E	M	N	O	I	T	L
C	T	O	R	G	W	R	N	H	A	A	E	M	V	O
E	E	F	F	I	T	P	Y	B	G	G	R	M	A	O
V	N	H	A	I	L	T	U	M	A	R	R	I	E	D
H	I	S	S	A	H	A	Y	P	G	L	R	N	H	A
U	N	A	T	N	U	R	S	E	P	V	D	G	H	A
M	G	E	I	L	I	G	H	T	H	E	A	D	E	D
D	H	A	P	H	O	N	E	Y	P	O	T	T	Y	B
R	C	O	U	N	T	I	N	G	H	O	U	S	E	O
U	Q	U	E	E	N	P	R	I	N	C	E	S	S	A
M	K	O	P	Y	K	E	C	K	S	N	A	K	E	T

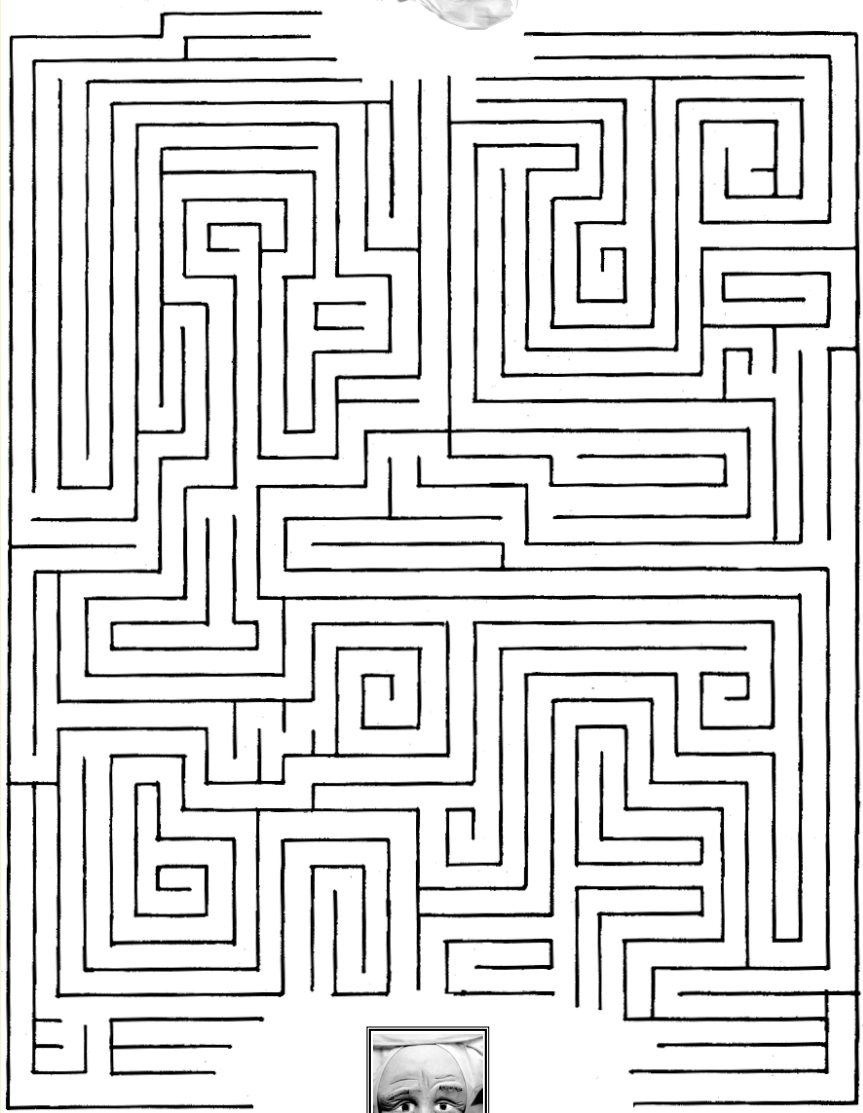
WRITE THE MYSTERY WORD HERE

Where is the Baby?

The palace garden has a large maze. Starting at the bottom of the page, can you help the nurse find her way through the maze?



*That naughty
wind has blown
the baby away.
Can you help
me get her
back?*



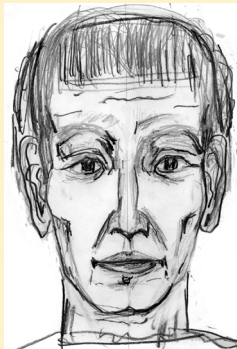
A Rag & Bone Production

How did you make the puppets? How long did it take? How long does it take to rehearse? These questions are frequently the first questions students ask in the question period that follows a Rag & Bone performance.

The first step is to select a story. Once that is done, John and Kathy spend a lot of time developing ideas about the plot, the characters and the setting before Kathy actually sits down to write the script.

Step two, the longest part of the process, can take six months or more: making the puppets. For *The Light Princess* we took as our starting point paintings of the early Flemish masters. This period seemed to have the right combination of severity and frivolity.

John designs the faces and the bodies, making lots of sketches. He then proceeds to make the heads.

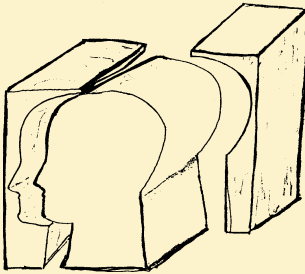
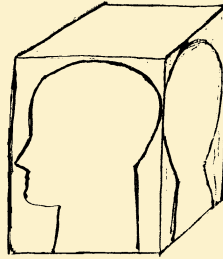


The *Light Princess* puppets were carved from wood.

John began by drawing each face twice: once in profile, and once face on.



The outlines are then traced onto a block of wood, the profile on one side and the front on the other.



The shapes are then cut out on a band saw. (Once the front is cut out, John uses a glue gun to lightly glue the pieces back together so that he can cut out the profile).

John uses a variety of carving tools to shape the heads.



that.

The masks for *Kopy Keck*, *Humdrum*, and *Princess Makemnoit* were made out of leather. John began by taking a plaster mould of his own face and adding clay to build up the character's face. Then he made a new mould of

He softened the leather by soaking it in strong tea for several hours. This pliable leather was pushed, poked and coaxed into place on the mould, and rubbed dry with a smooth stick. Then we cut out the eye holes and added straps.

Kathy made the puppets' costumes. The costume designs are first tried in inexpensive cotton fabric, then this fabric is used as a pattern for the final costume. The costumes were designed with reference to paintings of the period.

Finally, John and Kathy assembled the puppets, checking their heights, the length of their arms, and exactly how the heads attach to the bodies. The puppets were given handles and painted.

Each puppet head took John about two weeks, each costume took Kathy another week.

The third stage is to rehearse the show, and add the music. The music for *The Light Princess* was created by Russell Levia, a well known Ottawa based singer, songwriter and instrumentalist.

Russell based the music on themes from *The Lark Ascending*, an orchestral work by the English composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams. Russell worked with John and Kathy for the first week so that musical ideas could be developed, John and Kathy rehearsed with the puppets for two weeks, and finally Russell came back for the fourth week of rehearsal. More ideas develop and grow once the show is on the road, but those four weeks cement most of the action and sound effects.

Make a Puppet Show

Recipe for a puppet show

Here's how to make some simple cardboard puppets. The same method can be used to make shadow puppets.

Ingredients: Pencils, newsprint, cardboard, 2 straightened coat hangers per puppet (rods), 2 brass paper fasteners per puppet, fabric, glue, scissors, hole punch, wire cutters and pliers or vise grips. Crayons & markers for cutout puppets, coloured acetate & tissue paper for shadow puppets.



Method: Draw a design on newsprint. The puppet should be about 6 inches tall. If you're making shadow puppets, make sure that you have a strong, definite outline, since that is what the audience will see: shadow puppets faces are usually best as profiles. Choose one part (leg, arm, head, whatever) to be the moveable part. Cut out the design.

Cut off the moveable part. Trace both parts of the design onto cardboard.

When you trace your moveable part onto cardboard, add an extra bit to make an overlap. Hold the pieces together, lining up the main body and the moveable part so that the extra piece overlaps.



Punch through both halves with a hole punch. Use a brass paper fastener to connect the two parts of the puppets.

Cut the hooks and twisted wire off the coat hangers and straighten the remaining pieces with pliers. These are the puppet's rods.



Now bend a “u” shape on the end of one rod. This is the support rod. Tape this one onto the puppet's body.



Bend a small eye on the end of the other rod. Use a brass paper fastener to attach this second rod through the hole in the moveable part.

The ends of the rods can be bent into loops to provide handles. To make clothes or fur,

glue fabric on the body.

Use a table top, cardboard box, or the floor for a stage. Sets and props can be made with cardboard and cardboard boxes.

If you're making shadow puppets, of course, you wouldn't colour them or dress them, but you can cut out holes in the cardboard and tape coloured acetate, tissue paper or gauzy fabric over these windows to create a stained glass effect.

An overhead is a good light source—you can even make scenery out of cardboard and acetate and put it directly on the overhead.

Have fun!



Scrap Wood Puppets

Let the shape of the wood scraps suggest characters—people, animals, imaginary creatures—then make up scenes based on these characters. Here's what you need:

wood for a handle (ruler, paint stir-stick, or moulding)	
scraps of wood	white glue
construction paper	scissors
masking tape	fabric
twist ties	heavy duty stapler (optional)

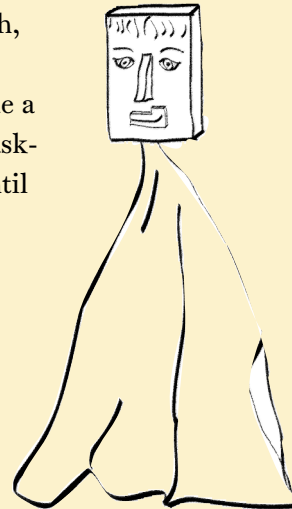


Play with two or three scraps of wood until you see a face. Glue them together, making sure that the two sides you're gluing are both flat. Let them dry.



Meanwhile, make eyes, mouth, teeth etc. from construction paper, and glue them on. Glue a handle on the back, using masking tape to hold it in place until the glue dries.

Glue a corner of fabric onto the top of the handle and secure it with a twist tie. This becomes the puppet's body and clothing.



*We gratefully acknowledge the support of
The Ontario Arts Council,
The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton,
& The Canada Council
for this production of
The Light Princess.*





Rag & Bone Puppet Theatre

John Nolan & Kathy MacLellan

1693 Boyer Road, Orléans, ON K1C 3L1

(613) 824-5972

WWW.RAGANDBONE.CA

