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East of the Sun and West of the Moon

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Adapted by Ferguson, Claudia from the short story by Asbjornsen and Moe. *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*. Performance Publishing, 1973. \$25 for the first, \$20 for each subsequent performance. 70 pp.

Reviewer: Rebecca Hixson

Reading Level: Preschool; Primary;

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Plays; Fantasy plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Friendship--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Don't judge a book by its cover; things aren't always what they seem.

Production Requirements: Can be performed in the round, with a few simple representational props against a plain or curtain backdrop.

Acts: Three

Run Time: 55 minutes

Characters: ten female, nine male, and two extras; many of the roles can be doubled.

Cast: Can be performed by adults for children, or by children for children

Time Period: In a fantasy time.

A complex plot arises out of the troll queen's evil plan to ensure that a prince she turned into a bear will marry her daughter, the troll princess. The queen sends two humorous trolls to guarantee that the prince will be seen by another human at night, when he is in the form of a man, thus placing him in her power. This occurs through the trolls' trickery when Lara, the protagonist, looks at the prince at night. To save the prince, Lara travels to the land of the trolls, east of the sun and west of the moon, and outwits the trolls.

This play provides entertainment and crucial themes for young audiences: the important messages of "don't judge a book by its cover" and "things aren't always what they seem." The spectacle comes through the characters of the trolls and the winds because they open the audience's imagination and allow them to journey to a fantasy world. The trolls provide the witty language of the play, as well as the slapstick humor. The trolls are the most believable characters because they have many dimensions; the mortals are one-dimensional and stereotypical, displaying only one dominant trait.

The staging is very simple and can be representational. The costuming can be either elaborate or simple. Music plays an important part of this show, as it is integrated to set the mood for certain scenes and to capture the audience's attention.