



2003

The Ugly Duckling

Mindy M. Nelsen

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Dubay, Bren. *The Ugly Duckling*. I. E. Clark Publications, 2000. ISBN 0886804833. Contact publisher regarding price. 28 pp.

Reviewer: Mindy Nelsen

Reading Level: Preschool; Primary;

Rating: Excellent;

Genre: Folklore; Plays; Fairy Tales;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Love--Juvenile drama; Acceptance--Juvenile drama; Self-esteem--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Life is what you make of it and friendship is worth risking everything for.

Production Requirements: Simplistic set and props. The choice of adding more to the production is left to the discretion of the director.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 25-30 min

Characters: 7-10

Cast: 4 must be female and 2 must be male, the rest are interchangeable.

Time Period: Long ago

This production follows the basic fable of the swan who is born thinking he is a duck who just can't do anything right. Finally, after many obstacles, he comes to himself and learns his magnificent potential and destiny. As new elements in this production, there are the additional characters of the Princess who is also struggling to fit in, the old duck who serves as the constant reminder of public perception, the cat who tries to exert his dominance, a wild duck who shows the ugly duckling what true love and friendship are and the man who is able to show the princess the same thing.

Because of its short nature, the action in the play happens a bit too quickly, leaving the audience with a bit of misunderstanding, but this is made up for in plot and character. The overall moral of the play is clearly present and the audience sees that it is not only the young duckling who is struggling to fit in, but that all of us are, in some way, fighting the same battle and there is hope that we will win! Though the characters are simplistic, this only adds to their charm and adaptability. There are beautiful moments where we see the importance of friendship, of standing up for what is right and of learning to see the good within every creature. Imagination is embraced in this production as the minimal set and costumes lend to that very prescription. This would make a fantastic traveling show and discussion piece.