2015

Big Sister, Little Brother by Mike Kenny

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Author: Kenny, Mike

Title: Big Sister, Little Brother

Year of Publication: 1998

Publisher: Plays for Young Audiences

ISBN: Online Perusal

Number of pages: 25

Rating: Excellent

Reading/Interest Level: Toddler; Preschool; Primary

Keywords: The Emperor’s New Clothes; Hans Christian Andersen; TYA; Children’s Theater; Siblings

Production Requirements: Some multi-purpose luggage, a large performance area with room for actors to run around. Costume pieces that are quick and easy to put on.

Number of Acts: 1

Estimated Runtime: 45 minutes

Number of Characters: 2

Cast Requirements: 1 male, 1 female

Time Period: any

Review:

Adapted from Hans Christian Andersen’s The Emperor’s New Clothes, a young brother and sister are running away from a kingdom. As they tell their story we find that they are the two swindlers who sold the Emperor his non-existent clothing. Their banter and retelling of events move the story along rather than the actual unfolding of events.

Since the style of the show is heavy on the storytelling with a few bits of replayed action thrown in, it will require a very talented pair of actors to carry it out. However, the strong writing that introduces loveable characters and that is full of clever, quick and witty dialogue makes it possible to achieve a well rounded story. The fact that the argumentative brother and sister actually do love each other is a lesson learned by the end of the play, but it will be up to the actors to portray any type of lesson learned from their actions with the emperor. The abundant use of British slang throughout the script will be difficult for a young American audience to
understand; some adaptations may be required. The minimal set and small cast make this an ideal touring production.

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

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