

Heidi

By Johanna Spyri
Adapted for the stage by Brian Hohlfeld
Music and Lyrics by Joe Dreyer
Directed by Kat Singleton

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Music Direction
Joe Dreyer

Scenic Design
John Roslevich Jr.

Costume Design
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Stage Manager
Brian Peters

Director of Education
Marsha Coplon

Artistic Supervisor
Jeffery Matthews

The Company (in speaking order)

Aunt Dete; Grandmother; Klara / **Meghan Brown**

Heidi / **Kymberlee Thompson**

Peter; Sebastian / **Matt McGaughey**

Grandfather; Frau Rottenmeier / **Alan Knoll**

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WORDS to the WISE

Alm is the German word for mountain.

Heidi first has **goat's milk** when she moves to the mountain. Goat's milk sometimes tastes sweeter or saltier than cows milk.

Yodeling is a way of singing in which one alternates quickly between high and low pitch. Yodeling originated as a form of communication between people that lived on high mountains.

Frau is a German courtesy title used for adult women. Its English counterpart would be Mrs. or Madam.

A **whippersnapper** is a name used for someone who is small but spunky and bold.

Talcum powder is a fine, often perfumed powder made for use on the skin.

A **goatherd** is someone who tends to a flock of goats. A goatherd must keep all of the goats together while also keeping them safe.

Frankfurt is a large city that was the first Capitol of Germany. Heidi thinks it is funny because Frankfurt sounds like frankfurter—a hotdog!

WHO'S WHO?

Heidi

is a very cheerful little girl even though she is an orphan and has no home.

Aunt Dete

takes care of Heidi until she moves to the mountain.

Peter

is a young goatherd who lives on the mountain. He becomes friends with Heidi.

Grandfather

is very sad and grumpy. He lives on the mountain all alone until Heidi comes along. The townsfolk call him the *Alm Uncle* (Mountain Uncle) because he never comes down from the mountain.

Old Grandmother

is Peter's Grandmother. She lives in a rundown house on the mountain and teaches Heidi to yodel.

KLARA

is a little girl who lives in the city. She has been ill and cannot walk without support.

Sebastian

is Klara's friendly butler.

FRAU

ROTTENMEIER is Klara's strict, unfriendly nanny.



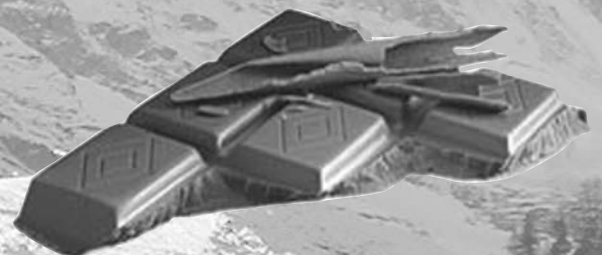
Many of the drawings in this Study Guide are by Jessie Wilcox Smith, who illustrated the 1922 edition of *Heidi*.

SETTING the SCENE

Heidi is a fictional story, but it takes place in Switzerland, a small but well known country in the heart of Europe. Switzerland is perhaps most famous for its mountains, the Swiss Alps—although some may say its chocolate is more renowned. Although other languages are spoken, there are four official languages in the country: German (which is the most common), French, Italian and Romansh. The capitol is Bern City, and the largest city is Zürich. The government is known as a confederation, and it is similar in many ways to the government of the U.S., in that the officials are freely elected and the power of the government is divided among several branches. Switzerland is also known as the Confoederatio Helvetica, which is why it is represented by the abbreviation CH. The word Helvetica derives from the Roman name of Switzerland's early inhabitants, the Celtic Helvetii, who were conquered in the Gallic Wars of 58 B.C.E. by Julius Caesar. Switzerland's rich, modern culture is a fusion of the several peoples who have inhabited the region throughout history: the Helvetii, Romans, French, Italians, Austrians and Germans. This diversity of cultural influences is also characteristic of the U.S.



At the top left is a picture of the Swiss flag. The flag (which looks much like the symbol for the Red Cross) is a perfect square, which is quite unusual. Below the flag is a commemorative, gold coin (worth 50 Swiss francs) celebrating Heidi: both the book and its author Johanna Spyri are icons in Swiss culture. The mountain pictured is known as the Matterhorn, the most famous mountain in the Swiss Alps. Lastly, of course, is a delicious piece of Swiss chocolate!



What's the Story?

Heidi is an orphan who lives with her Aunt Dete, until one day Aunt Dete can no longer care for her. Since she has no family, Heidi must travel up the mountain to live with her Grandfather. On her way, Heidi meets a young goatherd named Peter. He is watching two goats that are wandering very near the edge of the mountain. Peter swipes at the goats with a stick, but Heidi coaxes the goats down with a handful of herbs. Peter is shocked that Heidi is going to live with Alm Uncle because he is so mean to everyone.

When Heidi and Aunt Dete reach Grandfather's house, at first he does not agree to let Heidi live with him. Grandfather has been alone for a very long time, but Heidi seems so sweet that he changes his mind and allows her to stay. While Heidi is living on the mountain with Grandfather she learns to milk goats, make cheese and yodel. She spends her days playing on the beautiful mountainside, helping Grandfather or visiting Peter and his Old Grandmother. Slowly, Grandfather becomes happier and kinder; Heidi even convinces him to fix the roof on Old Grandmother's house.

One day, Aunt Dete comes to take Heidi back down the mountain in order to become a playmate for a sick little girl. Heidi does not want to leave; she loves the mountain now and wants to stay with her Grandfather. Aunt Dete convinces them that Heidi will have a much better life in the city, and even tells her that she can return if she doesn't like it. Thinking that she will come back home to the mountain the next day, Heidi agrees to go.

Klara is a sick little girl who lives in the city with her butler Sebastian and Frau Rottenmeier while her father is away on business. Klara is

very excited that Heidi is coming to be her companion, but when Heidi arrives, she is not quite what everyone expects. Frau Rottenmeier calls Heidi's name and behavior disgraceful, but Heidi's sweet stories about the mountain quickly win over Klara and Sebastian. Heidi spends her first day happily with Klara until she finds out that she must stay in the city. Heidi is very sad that she cannot return to the mountain and Grandfather, but Sebastian assures her that she will be happy living with them.

While Heidi lives in town she teaches Klara many things about the mountain and, in turn, Klara teaches her to read and write.

They play together every day, and while Klara begins to get stronger, Heidi grows more and more homesick. Klara notices the change in Heidi and so writes to her father to request permission to go with Heidi back to the mountain. Klara's father grants his permission, believing the change will do his daughter good; Heidi is overjoyed at the news.

As Heidi returns to the mountain, she shows Klara all the plants, animals, and places she loves. They meet Peter and his goats, and Klara decides that she feels strong enough to try to walk without her walker. As Heidi helps Klara, Grandfather comes upon them and calls out to Heidi. She is so startled to hear his voice that she loses her balance and falls over the side of the mountain. Grandfather quickly climbs over and returns carrying the lifeless girl. As Heidi lies unconscious, everyone pleads with her to wake safely as they remember all of the lovely things she has taught them about life. Everyone celebrates with a dance when Heidi awakes.



From the Director's Chair

My first introduction to *Heidi* was as a young girl watching the Shirley Temple version on television one rainy, Saturday afternoon. My second was discovering the wonderful Johanna Spyri book on my elementary school's library shelf. I admired our heroine's courage and optimism. I wanted to be able to make grumpy people smile and lame girls walk. Heidi helps us to view the world through the compassionate eyes of a young girl, who in spite of her tragedies seeks simple joys. This mighty lesson rings true especially today. So sit back and journey through Heidi's adventures with us. I hope it inspires everyone to read or reread this wonderful book.

Kat Singleton
Director

From the Playwright

Everybody loves *Heidi*. Mention the title to someone and you're sure to hear a sigh of nostalgic pleasure and a list of all their favorite things in the story, which most people are familiar with through the many movie versions that have been made. The long book by Johanna Spyri presented several challenges: to find a dramatic story and through-line that could be compressed into a coherent and entertaining 45-minute telling (with four actors), and secondly, making sure we didn't leave out any of those memorable moments, not only to please those familiar with the story but to create new memories for those encountering it for the first time.

Why does everybody love *Heidi*?

I think it's because she represents what's best in people, the way we would like to be—someone who is curious about life, eternally optimistic, an independent spirit who still cherishes her relationships with other people, and someone who can positively effect the lives of others.

There is something very comforting about Heidi's world, not just the mountains and the goats and the simplicity, but the warm feeling of family and friends. It's fun to try to bring this world to life—complete with mountains, goats, and yodeling—with four actors, a set, and the most important ingredient, the imagination of the audience.

Brian Hohlfeld
Playwright



Creating Awareness of Physical Disabilities

Heidi comes into contact with two people that face physical challenges in the play: Klara, who suffers from a movement impairment, and Peter's Grandmother, who is blind. Like everyone else, they both fall in love with Heidi's exuberant personality. However, unlike Heidi, people who have little experience with disabilities often feel uncomfortable around someone who has a physical impairment.

A common request of those who are physically challenged is not that they receive pity or special treatment, but rather that others understand and appreciate the specific challenges they face. The following activities and questions are designed to give students insight into a few of the physical adversities others confront in life: in particular, blindness and movement disabilities.

Materials Needed

- eye patch
- opaque scarf or handkerchief for a blindfold
- ankle and wrist weights that strap to the body
- wheelchair, or if unavailable, crutches and a stiff, leg splint

Procedure

Have the students perform everyday tasks such as getting into or out of a wheelchair (without using their legs), opening a door without standing, standing using crutches, going to get a book from elsewhere in the classroom, etc. Have them complete each activity while inhibited by one of the items in the list above. For instance, ask them to retrieve a book from the other side of the room while pretending they are confined to a wheelchair or while wearing the blindfold.

Alternatively, create three activity centers as follows:

- 1) An area on which to walk a line or balance beam. A winding line can be made with tape or chalk, or a low level balance beam can be made by laying a 2 x 4 board on the floor.
- 2) An area for throwing, catching and kicking a ball.
- 3) An area for an obstacle course. The obstacle course should be tailored to the materials available. Obstacles that must be navigated around (such as desks) or through (such as doors), are best for wheelchair activities. If using crutches, then obstacles that must be gone over or under also work well.



Each student will first complete each activity normally, without the blindfold, wheelchair, or any other added difficulties. They will then complete the activities with the following impairments: 1) wearing an eye patch, 2) wearing a blindfold, 3) wearing arm and wrist weights, and 4) in the wheelchair or on the crutches. Each activity station will need a helper that gives assistance to the student to enable them to complete the task successfully.

Post Discussion

Ask the students to describe how they felt when attempting the activities. Did they feel frustrated? Why? Is there anything they would have liked to have available that could have made the task easier to complete?

Explain the different types of disability to students, such as partial and complete blindness and deafness, and movement disorders such as low muscle tone and paraplegia. Relate these conditions to the activities they just completed.

Explain the different causes of disabilities to your students, such as disease, birth defects and injuries.

Ask your students what they believe they would want and need if they suffered from these conditions everyday. Highlight things such as wheelchair and elevator access, brail labeling, larger signs, etc., and how such improvements are important in our society.

Friendship Activity Ideas

Have your students compare how people become friends in Heidi to how they become friends in other stories. For example, view the movie *Shrek* in class, and discuss how friendships are formed between Donkey and Shrek and the others they encounter on their quest.

Have your students (individually or as a group) create a collage board of the things they believe characterize friendship. To create their collage, suggest they use photos from magazines, books and the Internet, as well as family pictures. Poems, rhymes or sayings that characterize friendship can also be included in the collage.

Additional Activity: Audio Description

Did you know that blind people like to attend the theatre? At The Rep, we offer a service for the blind known as Audio Description. In this service, a Volunteer Describer thoroughly familiarizes himself with the production. He then prepares Audio Description notes on the play—although not a script—because every performance is a bit different than the others. During the production the volunteer will describe all the scenery onstage and all the actions as they happen.

Have your students watch about five minutes of a movie in class—but with their eyes closed. Ask them questions about the

movie. How much were they able to pick up from the audio clues alone? What did they miss? Then have your students split into pairs and watch another five minutes of the same movie. One student will have his eyes closed again, but the other will serve as an Audio Describer, and will try to describe everything he sees on the screen.

Afterward, ask the “blind” student to describe their experience. Was the Audio Description helpful? Did the student still miss certain aspects of the movie? Were there things that the Describer mentioned (such as a phone ringing or a person moaning) that did not need to be explained? Did the Describer not mention things that needed to be explained?



READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books, websites and videos.

There are many beautifully illustrated versions of the book *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri. Two good choices are *Heidi* (David McKay Co.; 1922) which is illustrated by Jessie Wilcox Smith, and the version by Children's Classics (1998), which has various illustrators.

There are two versions of the movie *Heidi* as well, the 1937 version starring Shirley Temple (Twentieth Century Fox), and the 1993 version by Disney, which was originally released as a two-part mini series.

Look What Came From Switzerland by Miles Harvey (Franklin Watts; 2003) is a wonderful book for teaching kids about Switzerland.

The Johanna Spyri website www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Glade/8905 has diverse information (photos, illustrations, recipes, links, music and more) related to Heidi, Spyri and Switzerland.

Project Gutenberg www.gutenberg.net is the oldest producer of free electronic books on the Internet. Most of their books are older literary works that are in the public domain, such as *Heidi*. All their books may be freely downloaded, read, and redistributed for non-commercial use.

A web-based article on teaching the disabled and helping others to understand the challenges disabled people face is currently available at www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr139.shtml. It contains links to some of the best resources, teaching aids and curriculum guides available on the Internet.

To learn more general information about Switzerland, visit www.about.ch

The Importance of Friendship

Heidi meets several people during the play. For each of the people she meets, think of one word that describes his or her personality when Heidi first meets them. Think of one more word that describes the person once he or she gets to know Heidi. Peter is completed as an example.

	BEFORE	AFTER
Peter	MEAN	NICE
Grandfather		
Peter's Grandmother		
Klara		
Sebastian		
Frau Rottenmeier		



What are three words that describe Heidi's personality?

.....

Think of two of your favorite activities to do with a friend. Draw a picture of each of these activities in two of the boxes below. Now, think of a new activity you would like to do with a friend, and draw a picture of that in the third box.

Fairy Tale Friendships

Try to identify the best friend (or friends) of the famous fairy tale, story and movie characters below.

Cinderella

Shrek

Mickey Mouse

Nemo

Wilbur (of *Charlotte's Web*)

Frodo Baggins

Harry Potter

Winnie the Pooh

Woody (from *A Toy Story*)

Willow (from the movie *Willow*)

Bugs Bunny

Bambi

Lilo

Thumbelina

Bart Simpson

My best friend (yes, your best friend)

A RECIPE FOR FRIENDSHIP



Just like a good chocolate chip cookie, a friendship has to have all the right ingredients. Fill in the blanks in the following recipe by using words that you believe describe a good friendship.

Add two cups of _____ A teaspoon of _____

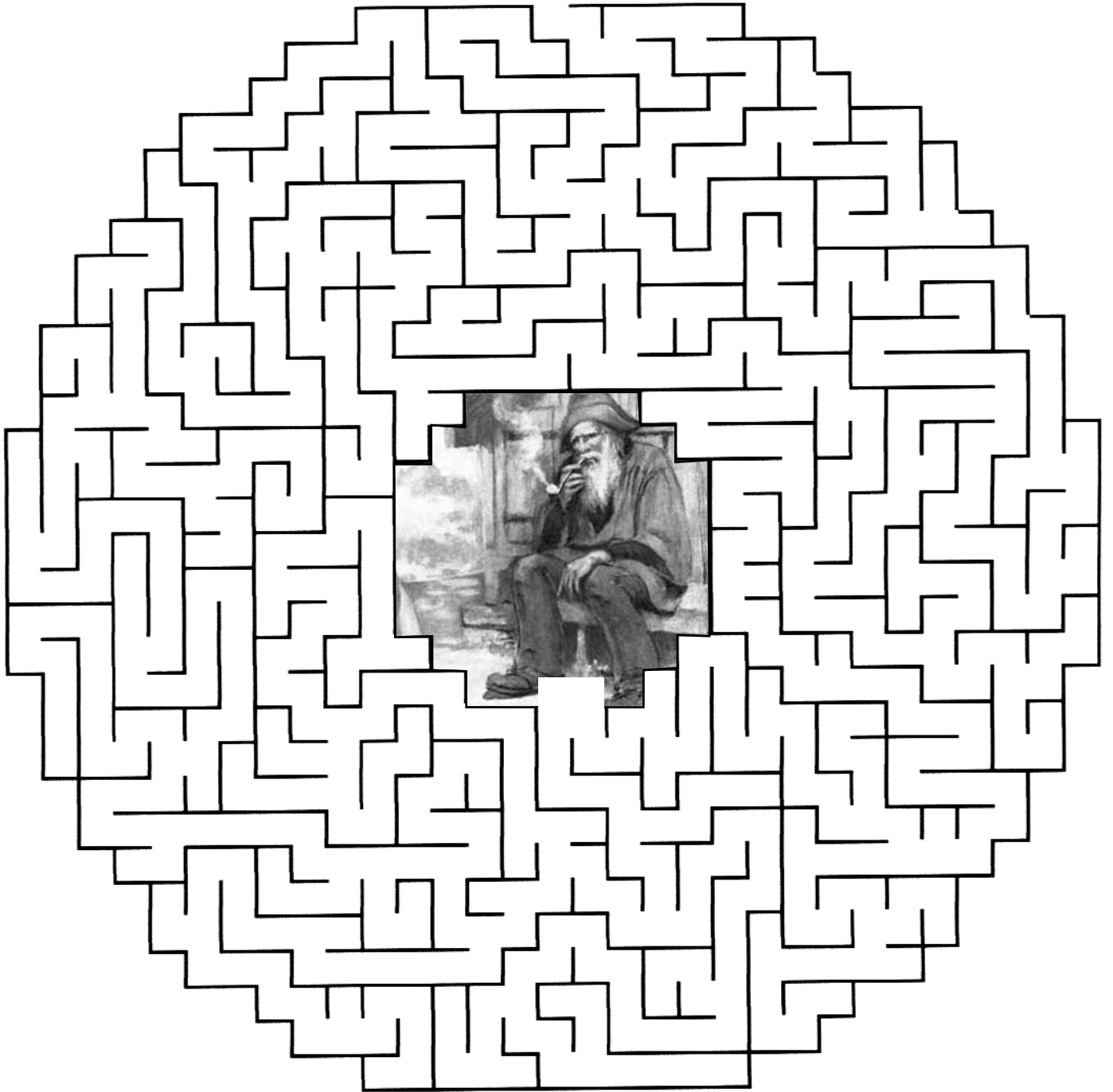
One cup of _____ And a dash of _____

One table spoon of _____

I hope you have all the ingredients you listed, and are sure to mix them well. If it turns out to be a bad batch, just start over again, because this recipe has to last you a lifetime!

To Grandfather's House

It can be difficult to find the way up Heidi's mountain when you don't know the way! Navigate the following maze in order to climb the mountain to Grandfather's house.



Smiling Friends

Color Heidi and her friends.

