
The Lute Player: A Tale from Russia

Retold by Suzanne I. Barchers

Illustrated by Viktor Sluzhaev

Overview

The king, who loves adventures, is imprisoned during one of his long journeys. But when the queen sets out to find her husband, she must travel in disguise. Will she find the king? Themes: bravery, devotion, perseverance

Before Reading

- Show students the cover of the book and read aloud the title. Ask: *Find the lute in the picture. What instrument does it look like?* (Accept reasonable answers.) *Who do you think the lute player is?*
- Find Russia on a globe or world map. Ask: *What does the cover tell you about the time of the story?* Discuss the turrets, the cobblestone road, and the clothing and horse, which all indicate the story is from long ago.

During Reading

- Read through page 11. Ask: *Why do you think she is playing her lute? What do you think she wants to happen?*
- Read through page 19. Ask: *What do you think is going to happen next?* Confirm predictions and read through page 21. Ask: *Why do you think she didn't tell her husband who she was? What do you think will happen next?*
- Read through page 27. Ask: *What do you think is going to happen next?* Accept reasonable answers and finish the story.

After Reading

- Ask the questions on page 31. Then ask: *How do you feel about the king leaving on an adventure in the first place? Was it fair of him to risk other peoples' lives and his own? Why or why not?*
- Have students review the illustrations, noting the wide variety of facial expressions of the characters. Note the bold colors and attention to detail on the clothing. Read the information about the artist on page 32. Find the Kursk region on a map (south of Moscow, near Ukraine).

Word Work

Write these words from page 12 on the board: **sigh**, **nigh**. Discuss how the letters *gh* are silent. Brainstorm other words with silent *gh* such as: *high*, *thigh*, *blight*, *bright*, *Dwight*, *fight*, *flight*, *fright*, *height*, *knight*, *light*, *might*, *night*, *plight*, *right*, *sight*, *slight*, *tight*.

ELL Tip

Record a reading of the words to the song on page 12. Have students listen and read along with the words. You may want to discuss the meaning of words such as *foreign*, *parting*, *cruel*, *nigh*, *desire*.

Extension: Nesting Dolls

Russian nesting dolls (or matryoshka) often follow a theme. Have students look at images online (ie: Wikipedia) or bring in an example. On art paper, have students paint a variety of nesting dolls using bold colors and patterns for their clothing (pp 6, 10, 11, 22, and 25 provide inspiration). The theme of your matryoshka could be *The Lute Player* story. You might want to bring in 3 sizes of Styrofoam or paper cups and have students use markers to create their dolls.

Worksheet Note

Answers will vary on the worksheet.

Common Core State Standards

ELA-Literacy: RL.2.1; RL.2.2; RL.2.3; RL.2.5; RL.2.6; RL.2.7

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it's conveyed through key details in the text.

Name _____

A STORYBOARD JOURNEY

Look at each of the pictures from *The Lute Player*.

Write a phrase or sentence that tells the main point of the illustration.

The first one is done for you.



A king leaves for
an adventure











