



Tracy Wells

Adapted from the novel by Johanna Spyri

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

Heidi

2

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING
P.O. Box 1401
RAPID CITY, SD 57709**

Heidi

5

For Pat Torok

When I first read this story, the character of Clara's Grandmamma reminded me so much of you. Her kindness, her spunk, and her love of books, reading, and learning could have been written with you in mind. And like, Heidi, I am lucky to have you in my life. Thank you for your support, and for being my adopted, "Grams."

Heidi

4

Heidi

CLASSIC. Adapted from the novel by Johanna Spyri. After her parents die, Heidi is taken by her aunt to live with her reclusive grandfather in the Swiss Alps. At first, Heidi's grandfather resents her arrival, but Heidi's cheerful spirit quickly wins him over. Heidi comes to love her new mountain home and becomes best friends with Peter, a goatherd, and his mother and blind grandmother. But Heidi must leave her grandfather and her life in the Alps behind when her aunt arrives to escort her to the city to work as a wealthy girl's hired companion. This delightful play will charm audiences of all ages with its timeless, heartfelt characters.

Performance Time: Approximately 100-120 minutes.



Johanna Spyri (1827-1901)

About the Story

Swiss author Johanna Louise Heusser Spyri (1827-1901) is best known for her novel *Heidi*, which has become a children's classic in English and Swiss literature. She married Bernhard Spyri, a lawyer, in 1852, and the couple settled in Zurich. In Zurich, Spyri wrote *Heidi* in just four weeks and the novel was published in 1881. Spyri suffered the death of both her husband and her only child, Bernard, in 1884. Over the course of her life, Spyri wrote more than 50 stories and engaged in numerous charitable causes.

Characters

(9 M, 13 F, 3 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 7 M, 10 F, 2 flexible)

- HEIDI:** A spirited orphan girl, who goes to live in the Alps with her grandfather; female.
- UNCLE ALP:** Heidi's reclusive grandfather who has a troubled past and lives in the mountains; wears worn-out clothing initially and then cleaner, nicer clothing in Act II; male.
- AUNT DETIE:** Heidi's aunt who takes her to live with Uncle Alp, female.
- BARBIE:** Detie's friend, who is the town busybody/gossip; female.
- PETER:** Clumsy boy who lives in the mountains near Uncle Alp and befriends Heidi; male.
- BRIDGET:** Peter's kindly mother; female.
- GRANNIE:** Peter's sickly, blind grandmother; female.
- PASTOR:** Clergyman from the town of Dorfli who wants Uncle Alp to move to the town; male.
- CLARA SESEMANN:** Disabled girl who Heidi goes to live with and befriends; female.
- MR. SESEMANN:** Clara's wealthy father; male.
- GRANDMAMMA:** Clara's Grandmother; female.
- DR. CLASSEN:** Clara's doctor; male.
- MISS ROTTENMEIER:** Strict housekeeper who runs the Sesemann household; wears a neutral dress/uniform; female.
- MISS USHER:** Clara's governess and tutor; female.
- TINETTE:** Maid in the Sesemann household; wears a maid's uniform; female.
- SEBASTIAN:** Fun, playful servant in the Sesemann household who has a crush on Tinette; wears a servant's uniform male.
- JOHN:** Coachman for the Sesemann household; wears a coachman's uniform; male.
- TEXTILE MERCHANT:** Sells knitted textiles in Dorfli; flexible.
- BAKER:** Sells baked goods in Dorfli; wears a baker's uniform/apron; flexible.
- KARL:** Lives in Dorfli; male.
- MARGARETE:** Lives in Dorfli; female.
- NANN:** Lives in Dorfli; female.

ELSBETH: Lives in Dorfli; female.

JOHAN: Lives in Dorfli; male.

BOY/GIRL: Sells two kittens to Heidi; flexible.

EXTRAS (opt.): As Townspeople.

Options for Doubling

KARL/SEBASTIAN (male)

JOHAN/JOHN (male)

BOY/BAKER (flexible)

MARGARETE/TINETTE (female)

ELSBETH/ROTTENMEIER (female)

NANN/MISS USHER (female)

Costumes

All character wear clothing appropriate for the early 1900s. Dorfli residents and Heidi wear modest clothing. Clara, Mr. Sesemann, and Grandmamma wear fine clothes indicating their wealth.

Setting

Dorfli, Switzerland, early 1900s.

Sets

Swiss town of Dorfli. A backdrop of snow covered mountains is at rear. Storefronts and homes are present, one of which is a bakery. A bench is present as is a cart displaying knit hats and scarves.

Uncle Alp's mountain home. The backdrop of snow-covered mountains. A small rundown wooden home. The home can be one or two stories, and should have a window that opens. A paddock and barn for goats is next to the home.

Interior of the Sesemann home. Décor should be ornate and expensive-looking. A large fireplace and mantle is CS with a framed portrait of Clara above it. Two windows flank the fireplace. A sofa and chair are SL, and a table with two chairs and a tablecloth is SR. There are throw pillows on the sofa and chair.

Heidi
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Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Swiss town of Dorfli.

Scene 2: Exterior of Uncle Alp's home.

Scene 3: Swiss town of Dorfli.

Scene 4: Sesemann home.

Scene 5: Sesemann home.

Scene 6: Sesemann home.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Swiss town of Dorfli.

Scene 2: Sesemann home.

Scene 3: Exterior of Uncle Alp's home.

Scene 4: Exterior of Uncle Alp's home.

Scene 5: Swiss town of Dorfli.

Props

Yarn and knitting needles
Hats and scarves, for Textile Merchant
Large bag or suitcase
Tray of strawberry tarts
Basket
Timepiece, for Detie
Old, dingy, frayed material scrap (for Heidi's blanket)
Small plate of bread and cheese
2 Buckets
2 Metal buckets
Suitcase or bag, for Detie
Feather duster
Clipboard
Wheelchair, for Clara
Basket of snacks
2 Kittens (stuffed animals)
Book with picture of a mountain on the cover
Nightgown, for Rottenmeier
Nightgown, for Tinette
Nightgown, for Clara
Nightgown, for Grandmamma
Candle
Pajamas, for John
Pajamas, for Sebastian
Pajamas, for Dr. Classen
Pajamas, for Sesemann
Nightgown, for Heidi
Wheelchair, for Grannie
Bandages
Small prayer book
3 Sheets decorated as ghosts (one sheet has a rope attached)
Paper
Crayons
Doctor's bag
Stethoscope
Tongue depressor

Heidi

11

White baby goat (stuffed or papier-mâché)
Suitcase, for Dr. Classen
Package of sweets
ABC book
Shovel
Crate
Assorted baked goods, for Baker
Bench
Crate

Sound Effects

Clang
Bang
Door slamming shut
Doorbell
Creaking noises
Eerie noise
Moan
Eerie ghost noise
Crash

*“Saying goodnight to the mountains,
the sun throws
his most beautiful rays to them,
that they may not forget him
till the morning.”*

—From Heidi

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The town of Dorfli, Switzerland. A backdrop of snow covered mountains is at rear. Storefronts and homes are present, including a bakery and cart displaying knitted hats and scarves. Textile Merchant is seated next to his cart, knitting. Nann is shopping. Dressed warmly, Karl and Margarete enter.)

KARL: Let's hurry, darling. It's starting to get cold.

MARGARETE: Indeed! The brisk wind from the mountains is making its way down to our humble town.

TEXTILE MERCHANT: It always does this time of year. Winter will be upon us before you know it.

KARL: I'll bet the Alps are already blanketed with snow.

NANN: I wonder how old Uncle Alp is doing up there in his mountain home.

(Pastor and Baker enter from bakery, unseen by Nann, Karl, and Margarete.)

MARGARETE: He's probably up there stomping around with a scowl on his face.

NANN: Do you think he gets lonely up there on that mountain all by himself?

KARL: We're just lucky he rarely ventures down to Dorfli to bother the rest of us.

MARGARETE: You've got that right! He can stay up on that mountain forever as far as I'm concerned.

PASTOR: Karl, Margarete, is that a kind thing to say about our mountain-dwelling neighbor?

MARGARETE: (Surprised.) Pastor Christoph, I didn't see you there.

TEXTILE MERCHANT: (Chuckles.) I did.

KARL: Sorry, Pastor. I guess we got caught up in a little bit of small town gossip.

MARGARETE: You're right, Pastor. It wasn't very kind of us to say. It's just that old Uncle Alp hardly ever comes down from the

mountain into Dorfli. And when he does, he is miserable to everyone.

PASTOR: It is not for us to judge the behaviors and actions of others.

Perhaps, there is more going on under the surface with old Uncle Alp than you or I could ever know.

BAKER: Very true, Pastor. When he comes into my bakery, he buys the stale bread that I am throwing away. I have seen him giving bits of that stale bread to the birds and squirrels in the street.

PASTOR: I know there is a kind heart inside that unhappy old man.

If only he would take me up on my offer to help him move off the mountain and back to Dorfli.

BAKER: Perhaps one day he will.

PASTOR: Perhaps. Nann, would you accompany me to the church?

I have some items of clothing that were donated for the children in the orphanage, and I need some help transporting them.

(Textile Merchant grabs a few hats and scarves.)

TEXTILE MERCHANT: Here, Pastor. Take these hats and scarves for the orphans, too.

PASTOR: Thank you, kind merchant.

(Pastor takes textiles and exits with Nann, Karl, and Margarete. Baker enters into the bakery. Detie enters, stops CS, and turns back.)

DETIE: *(Annoyed.)* Come along, Heidi. Don't dawdle. We're nearly there.

(Heidi enters, tired, carrying a large bag or suitcase and wearing many layers of clothing.)

HEIDI: I'm coming, Aunt Detie.

DETIE: Must you be so slow, Heidi? We'll never get to your grandfather's house by lunch at this pace.

HEIDI: I'm going as fast as I can, Aunt Detie. But I'm so hot with all of these clothes on, and my bag is so heavy, and we've been walking such a long way.

DETIE: Well, we still have to make our way up the mountain. I'll carry your bag for you. *(Detie crosses to Heidi and takes her bag.)* Is that better?

HEIDI: Much better. Now, if we could just take a little rest, I'll be ready to go in no time.

(Heidi sits. Baker enters, carrying tray of strawberry tarts.)

BAKER: *(Calls.)* Strawberry tarts for sale! Come and get your freshly baked strawberry tarts!

HEIDI: *(To Detie.)* Better yet, I'm certain a strawberry tart would really help me get up the mountain much faster.

DETIE: We do not have time for a rest, and we definitely don't have time for a strawberry tart. We need to get to your grandfather's house right away. *(Grabs Heidi's arm and starts to pull her.)* Now, come along.

HEIDI: But I don't know why we have to go to Grandfather's house at all. I don't want to go there. I've never even met my grandfather.

DETIE: We've been over this, Heidi. I have looked after you for many years, forsaking my own happiness out of a sense of duty to your poor late mother and father. But I have an opportunity for a good job in Frankfurt. The family I will be working for won't allow me to bring a child. So it is up to your grandfather to care for you...as he should have been doing all along.

[END OF FREEVIEW]