

# The Star Talers

Germany, 2011. Directed by Maria von Heland. Genre: Live-action feature.

Based on the Brothers Grimm fairy tale, this film features Mina, a brave little girl whose village is in trouble. The king has taken all the adults, including Mina's parents, to work for him because he needs weavers. The king's tax system is so unjust that the longer the weavers work, the more they owe. It is up to Mina to take the last of the village's money to the castle and try to bring home the adults. As Mina sets out on the road, she sees the star that legend says brought a treasure to a goodhearted woman who followed it. With the help of a talking dog named Mr. Flix, Mina carries only her bravery, generosity, and hope.

Along the way, Mina encounters an unhappy woodsman, who has cut off the water of the nearby villagers who helped his wife abandon him. After Mina kindly gives her doll to his son, the woodsman frees the water. His gift of a woodcarving becomes the signal to the mysterious ferryman that his sister can return to the woodsman and reunite with her son. Mina's gift of a necklace to the ferryman proves to be a lure for the fish who will feed the hungry. At the castle, the queen is so impressed with Mina, that she presents the girl to the king herself. But the king gives Mina an impossible task. The gates close and Mina has failed to find her parents. Still generous, Mina gives her coat to a cold little girl. With nothing left, Mina looks to the star — which rains down gold coins — star talers! With the treasure, Mina is able to buy freedom for all the weavers — and for the talking Mr. Flix as well!

## **Assessment Tool Suggestion: Handout for Narrative Film (p.15)**

**Pre-view KWL chart:** What do you know about — (Germany, medieval times)?

What would you like to know about — (Germany, medieval times)?

**2-Column Notes:** Introduce the Story Vocabulary and WWWW Analysis.

**Post-view KWL chart:**

Write down things you learned about — (Germany, medieval times).

**2-Column Notes:** Answer the WWWW questions in Column 2.

## **Learning Activities**

**Key Vocabulary:** taler, a coin issued by German states from the 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries

**Quick-Write/Pair Share:** By working one year, the weavers can only pay off 6 months of tax due. Explain why this tax is so unfair to the weavers. Why might the King do this?

## **STORIES ABOUT MAGIC OBJECTS (Language Arts link)**

Discuss with students other stories they know that include magic objects. Write a list of titles followed by the magical objects in the story.

### **Examples: Stories about Magic Objects**

Jack and the Beanstalk – magic beans

The Red Shoes – magic shoes that dance

Strega Nona – magic pasta pot

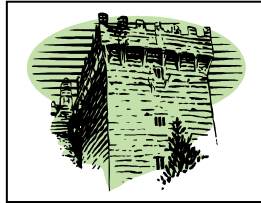
## **MY FILM BASED ON A TALE (Filmmaking)**

This film is based on a fairy tale. Assign students to plan their own film based on a tale they know. Distribute the Storyboard/3 Panels for students to use in illustrating and explaining a planned shot from the beginning, the middle, and the end of their film.

### **Example: My Film Based on the Legend of “King Arthur”**



King Arthur lived during medieval times.



He lived in a castle.



He pulled his sword, Excalibur, from a stone.

## **SET IN MEDIEVAL TIMES (Social Science link)**

The film is set during medieval times in Europe. Discuss the aspects shown in the film. What else do students know, and where did they get the information? Use a web (or a chart) to classify information and show relationships.

### **Example: Aspects of Medieval Society**

#### **Societal roles**

King, queen, princess, prince  
Knights are warriors  
Merchants live in the town  
People farm, weave, and fish  
Indentured servants pay-off debt

#### **Housing**

Castles  
Inside the walls  
Inns  
Cottages  
Huts

#### **Clothing/Objects**

Taler coins  
Armor  
Nice shirts  
Rough fabric  
Rags

### **Summative Assessment: Film Evaluation (p.17)**

**Culminating Activity:** Discuss the Film Evaluation before students complete it.

- "Use Vocabulary to 'grade' elements of the film."
- Author's Intent: "Why do you think the filmmaker made this?"
- "Give an example from the film to support your answer in B."
- "Draw & explain a shot, a visual image, you recall from the film."
- "Link to yourself: Draw & explain your own film idea."

### **Find Out More! Investigate with Research**

Germany  
Medieval times  
Tales from around the World

#### **Related Videos/DVDs**

*Countries Around the World: Germany (Grades 2-5)*  
*Life in Medieval Europe: Feudal systems, Farming, Food and Home*  
*My Family from Germany (Grades K-4)*  
*Multicultural Peoples of North America: German Americans\_(Grades 4-10)*  
*Rabbit Ears: We all Have Tales*