



The Fox and the Tiger

A Chinese Parable



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This is a film version of an age-old teaching form, the parable. Traditionally an oral form for transmitting moral insights, the parable concisely expresses a human dilemma, with a surprise twist at the end. *The Fox and the Tiger* remains faithful to this tradition.

In this Chinese parable, a hungry fox hunts for his dinner one dark jungle night. Unknown to the fox, a tiger lurks nearby, also determined to dine. The tricky fox charms then eats his evening catch, a mouth-watering fish. While Fox savors this morsel and admires the elegant fish skeleton, burly Tiger pounces.

Cornered, wily Fox tries all his verbal skills to avoid being devoured. When obsequy fails, Fox boldly calls on the gods to witness his superiority. Thus, proud but guileless Tiger, normally considered King of the Jungle, is outwitted by cunning Fox.

Viewers will delight in the rich and stylized treatment of this ancient drama. Actors in masks and animal costumes enact the story against cutout backdrops, and the action is complemented by a suspense-evoking soundtrack reminiscent of Chinese ritual.

Intended for children in grades 4 to 6, *The Fox and the Tiger* will stimulate energetic discussion on human behavior, values, and relationships among older students and adults as well.

Subject Areas

English; art and language arts; social studies; values education; ethics; family studies; peace education; history and contemporary studies; film studies (original film form).

Themes

Leadership qualities and styles (e.g., brains versus brawn); conflict resolution; animal parables as metaphors for human situations; similarities and differences between animal behavior and human behavior; different visual interpretations of animals throughout the ages.

Sample Questions for Discussion

1. Why was the fox's trickery so effective? Is it "good" or "bad" to save your life by trickery? How do you decide?
2. What are the qualities you would look for in a leader? Who makes the better leader, the person with muscles or the one with brains? Does a person with brains sometimes lack other important qualities?
3. Name some contemporary leaders who seem more like a fox; more like a tiger.
4. How would you deal with a bully who came up to you and said, "I don't like your face"?

Activities

1. Write about your vision of an ideal leader. As this leader, imagine you have to solve a problem. What would you do if people disagreed with your solution?
2. Write about how some human beings might have handled their basic needs differently than did the fox and the tiger.
3. Write about the parallels between the film and recent or historical international events.
4. Make up your own parable using animal characters. Draw or paint the main characters. Tell the story to your class or direct some of your classmates and present the story as a drama.

For Younger Students

1. To appropriate music, explore the movements and sounds of a fox, then of a tiger. Interact with your classmates when you are all foxes; all tigers. Then, half the class acts out the foxes, the other half becomes tigers. Interact. Switch roles so everyone has a chance to experience both sides of the relationship.
2. Draw your version of a fox and of a tiger. Name your picture with adjectives that describe the animal you drew.

(Note: See also *A Dog's Tale*, the companion film.)

Design and Direction
Caroline Leaf

Actors and Collaborators
Grant Heisler
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Sound Composer
Daniel Feist

Camera
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Costumes and Masks
Bob Pot
Grant Heisler

Sound Recording
Shelley Craig

Re-recording
Hans Peter Strobl

Producer
Marrin Cannell

Executive Producer
Andy Thomson

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Color

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4 minutes 50 seconds

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