

Ladybug Tales: A Sheltering Puppet Story

— Suzanne Down

Here is a sweet simple little tale that is perfect for outdoor puppet telling as well as indoor. All you need is a needle-felted ladybug puppet and some flowers, real or also needle-felted.

This tale has two elements that make it meaningful for children. One is the transformation of feeling of the flowers toward the ‘different’ ladybug. At first they quickly see something unfamiliar and perceive it to be ugly and make fun of it. Then over time they come to learn of ladybug’s wonder and gifts, and not only welcome her to their flower garden, but wish that ladybug would choose each of them to snuggle and sleep in. This helps our own hearts open to others who are at first unfamiliar and points to the promise of their wonderfulness!

Another healing layer of this story comes when ladybug shares stories of the world around them to all the listening flowers. This is when all the flowers who first laughed at ladybug are so drawn in to the magic of the tales told that they sigh deeply with a joy and peace they had not known before. As ladybug sinks down into the softness of their flower bed, and bids

them goodnight, there is another layer that comes to settle the story into a feeling of sweetness and safety. The Night comes like a blanket to hold them in the dream and goodness of ladybug’s stories. There is a quiet that surrounds this part of the story, a feeling that all is well in the world of the garden. This is a very simple story of protection as well as a wee little diversity tale.

For this to be a successful story told with puppets, it helps if we can also hold the goodness of it in our own hearts. This will help us find the right tone and pace of peaceful wonder in our own storytelling voices. Our voices then also become a layer of protection for the children. As the children listen to you and watch the puppet play, just as the flowers listen to the ladybug, the children will also feel the story like a little blessing. Hear their breathing change and go deeper.

Visually, we become more conscious of our own gestures as we so gently and sweetly have the ladybug curling up and nestling in to sleep on the one flower. We can ponder, how do we move ladybug when telling the stories to the listening flowers, so that there is

reverence as well as joy when sharing the beautiful images of the world. How softly we then bring the night blanket to cover the puppet world to bring the feeling of quiet peace. We pause for a breath or two before we bring further reassurance that ladybug will stay in the garden and bring more tales of the tender good of this world.

You can see how even the simplest of stories can carry significant value and meaning in our telling and showing with puppets.

For the night sky I use a deep blue 3mm silk gauze. It leaves the flower garden still a little visible, which also brings further confidence that all is well in the flower garden.

For more information about the value and meaning of the Protection Story, here is a link to an article on my blog.

<https://junipertreepuppets.com/blogs/news/the-art-of-the-protection-story-an-introduction>

There is also a “Part 2” article you can access on the blog for a further deepening of understanding of the Protection Story.

Ladybug Tales

One lovely warm and sunny day, there was a field of yellow flowers.

They had yellow petals with golden centers, like little suns.

But one flower had a red center with black polka dots.

All the other flowers looked at her and laughed.

They thought she was so ugly as they all swayed in the breeze.

What they did not know was that a little ladybug had flown in the night
looking for a soft bed to rest on
and had chosen the flower with the softest, nicest center.

It was so cozy on the flower bed, that the ladybug decided to stay.

He flew away to explore the world each day.

And he flew back at the end of each day.

He always rested on the same soft flower.

Then he told his flower about all the things he had seen.

Now all the other flowers started to wish the ladybug had picked them to rest on.
They leaned closer to listen as he started to tell his tale.

“As I flew out one fine sunny day

This is what I saw along the way.

I passed some grasshoppers playing their fiddles,

hey diddle hey diddle hey diddle ho hey!

I stopped to listen and sway and swoon,

I danced and danced to the sweet little tune,

hey diddle hey diddle hey diddle ho hey!

I thanked them all kindly, and then flew so free

and saw some bluebirds sitting high on a tree.

they sang and they sang and they sang once more,

tra lee tra lu tra lee lee lee.

One let me sit on his back as he flew,
and did what for birds is natural and true;
in and out,
in and out,
he dove here and there
catching flies in the air.

Tra lee tra lu tra lee lee lee,
They sang, it seemed, to me.”

As Ladybug finished telling his flower the tale of the day’s adventures,
he saw all the golden faces looking at him and listening deeply.

“Time for bed dear friends,” he said,
and he settled down on the plump, soft flower center,
and all the flowers sighed in the dream of it all,
as the night blanket tucked them in all snug and safe.

And best of all, Ladybug stayed all summer long in that field of sunny flowers.
And he told many wondrous stories for them of the beauty and magic of the world
just past the meadowland. ♦

Suzanne Down is the founder and director of Juniper Tree Puppets / Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts, sharing training in the wonder, meaning, and magic of Puppet Theater for young children.

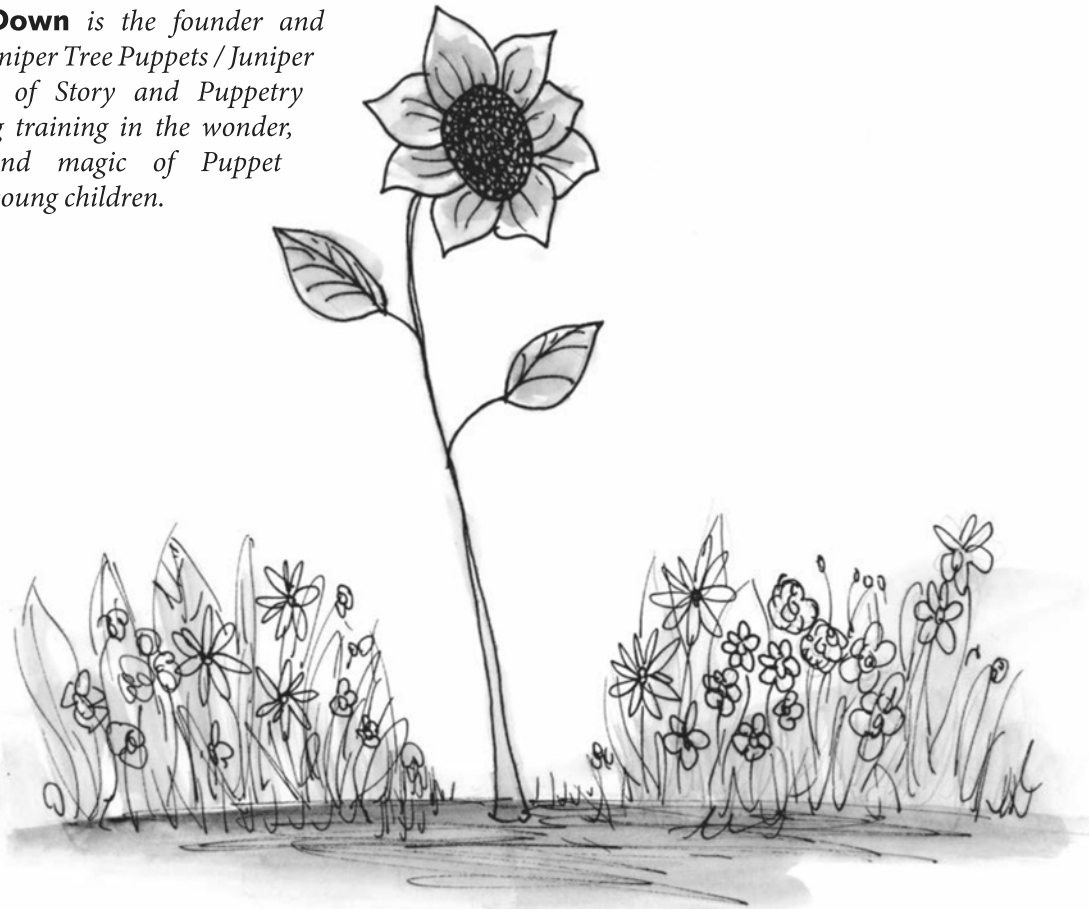


Illustration by Deborah Grieder from *Tell Me a Story* (WECAN, 2013)