

# Young Sophia: the Dundurn Castle Diary

inspired by the diary of Sophia MacNab

written at Dundurn castle 1846 age 13

Study guide for teachers - Kindergarten



## *Sophia & Minnie MacNab*

Welcome to our production of **Young Sophia: the Dundurn Castle Diary** performed by Studio Babette, an innovative puppet theatre troupe that has entertained the local Hamilton community for the past five years. We value that you have chosen us as a teaching resource; your students are in for a treat!

**Young Sophia: the Dundurn Castle Diary** is inspired by the diary of 13-year old girl and brought to life through the magic of beautifully hand crafted rod puppets that were modeled on ancient puppets.

This study guide was designed to enhance student learning after seeing our play with puppets.

Thank you for choosing Studio Babette's production of **Young Sophia: the Dundurn Castle Diary** for your study trip. We hope that your students' experience here will live on for many years to come!

Sincerely,  
Marie Franek, Kerry Corrigan, Helena Adamczyk

“Participating in and responding to appropriate arts experiences gives children opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and those of others. These activities can enhance children’s self-concept and increase their sense of accomplishment, and can help them develop their oral language ability and their ability to respond to others.”

### **The Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program**

#### **Synopsis of the play**

It is a typical day in Dundurn Castle, and Sophia, daughter of Sir Allan Napier MacNab, is writing the events of the day in her diary. The household is as busy as ever. Father is practising a speech to convince his fellow politicians to bring the railway to Hamilton. Sophia's annoying younger sister Minnie is in trouble again with their teacher Mr. Thomson, but happily Mama, who has been sick for quite a while, is having a good day. Their housemaid Kitty keeps the girls on track with their many chores. The girls recount their daily routine, which includes writing in journals, lessons, praying and reciting catechisms, sewing and sitting with “dear Mama”.

A trip to town in the sleigh turns into a happy catastrophe when the sisters purposely tip the sleigh. The girls also have great fun watching from an upstairs window as important guests arrive for a fancy ball.

As winter turns to spring, Mama's condition worsens. The girls hear news from their father that he is bringing them poodle puppies back from a trip to Montreal, but the celebration of this news causes a run-in with the cook. They take turns riding the horses Jim and George in the garden and the gardener Mr Reid helps them to start their own plots in the large kitchen garden adjacent to the castle which sustains the MacNab family and their large collection of servants. The girls decide to have a watermelon growing contest.

Mama passes away, and the girls are understandably distraught. Contact with Mr. Reid in the growing garden shows them the healing power of working in nature. Their father's love and good humour restores their outlook on life and the watermelons continue to grow, as the girls play with their beautiful poodle puppies, Finn and Finette.

When Minnie cheats at the watermelon growing contest, Sophia shows her newfound maturity on discovering the deceit by playing along with the charade and conceding the win to her little sister. When the puppies go missing and Sophia finds them, Minnie is so overcome with emotion and remorse that she confesses her trickery, Sophia quickly forgives her and the sisters bond is strengthened.

The play ends with a newly matured Sophia being presented at another fancy ball, while Minnie and Kitty observe with excitement from the upstairs window.

*To enrich students’ appreciation for the performance you might want to read Sophia MacNab’s diary or some excerpts from it.*

## Discussion Points

### Historical

What did you think of the tour in Dundurn Castle?

Is it a real castle? Did it have kings?

Who were Sophia and Minnie?

Why was Sir Allan MacNab famous?

*He was the boy hero of the War of 1812*

*He was chiefly responsible for the construction of the Great Western Railway.*

*Member for Hamilton in the Upper Canada House of Assembly.*

What servants lived in the castle and what were their jobs?

What servants did the girls interact with?

What role did Kitty play in their lives?

How was school different from today?

What technology that we take for granted was unavailable to the girls?

What did they do for fun instead?

How did they travel?

What chores did they do?

How are their clothes different from yours?

How were they punished?

How were they rewarded?

### Social

Despite the difference in years (166!) how are the lives of Sophia and Minnie similar to yours?

What did they learn from Mr. Reid the gardener?

Why didn't Sophia confront Minnie when she discovered what Minnie did in the garden?

What did the garden teach both girls? *Describe the role of the garden, providing food and flowers for the family, as well as a place of recreation, exercise and comfort.*

How did the girls learn responsibility?

### Style of Puppets

All of the puppet in the play were constructed by Studio Babette. We use **tabletop puppets** that are manipulated **with wooden or wire rods**. The heads were sculpted with paper clay over styrofoam and they have a fixed facial, which was painted. Arms are attached to the body and they can move. All costumes are historically accurate, sewn by puppeteer Helena Adamczyk. The puppeteers in our show are visible and are costumed as well as servants circa 1846.

Shadow play is also incorporated into the action of the play.

Rod puppets are centuries old. They evolved from Asian Bunraku and Wayang puppets. Today they are used in almost every culture. Rod puppets got their name because they are on rods or fine sticks. There are many different types of rod puppets. Shadow puppets are rod puppets. Any doll or toy set on rod is a rod puppet. Jim Henson's Rizzo is a typical Rod puppet. Greek oil-parchment shadow puppets are a form of a rod puppet. Also, Javanese Puppets are rod puppets.

**Multiple choice questionnaire:**

**1. Why did Sir Allan want the train to come to Hamilton?**

- a) To make himself famous
- b) To make Hamilton accessible for trade to the rest of Canada

**2. What illness did Mama have?**

- a) Pneumonia
- b) Plague

**3. What is the name of the girls' teacher?**

- a) Mr. Wellington
- b) Mr. Thompson

**4. What chores did Minnie and Sophia have to do?**

- a) Read, write, pray and sew
- b) Pray, cook and clean

**5. What was the punishment if they failed to do what they were told?**

- a) No allowances
- b) No sugar and outings

**6. What mischief did they do with the sleigh?**

- a) They broke it
- b) They tipped it

**7. What pets did they have?**

- a) A rabbit, poodles and horses
- b) Poodles

**8. How did they travel to Toronto?**

- a) By train
- b) By carriage

**9. How long did the trip to Toronto take?**

- a) One hour
- b) Seven hours

**10. What did the girls learn to grow in their garden?**

- a) Radishes, beans, corn and beets
- b) Flowers and onions

**11. Who was Mr. Reid?**

- a) Their music teacher
- b) Their gardener

**12. What did Sophia learn about herself from Mr. Reid about planting?**

- a) To have a lot of patience
- b) To weed and water the flowers

**13. What were the names of their poodles?**

- a) George and Georgette
- b) Finn and Finette

**14. What was their garden contest about?**

- a) Who will grow the tallest flower
- b) Who will grow the biggest melon?

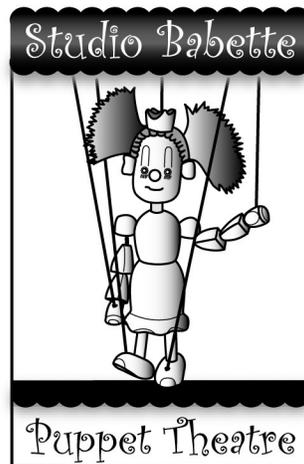
**15. What did Minnie do at the end of the contest?**

- a) She did not water the melon
- b) She switched the melons to win

**Studio Babette Puppet Theatre** was founded in 2007 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada by Marie Franek, Helena Adamczyk and Kerry Corrigan.

Studio Babette now has five shows which are available for touring and bookings, **Little Fairy Tales for Little People**, ages 2 - 8, **Carlos and His Five Reasons**, ages 3 - 12, **Pulcinella: il Cameriere**, ages 13+ , **From Ruthven to Passchendaele**, ages 7 – 15, **Young Sophia: the Dundurn Castle Diary**, all ages.

Please visit our website [www.studiobabette.ca](http://www.studiobabette.ca) for more information and news on upcoming bookings.



Songs from **Young Sophia: the Dundurn Castle Diary**

**Marie's Wedding**

Step we gaily on we go,  
Heel and heel, And toe for toe,  
Arm and arm, And row and row,  
All for Marie's wedding.

**Sur le pont d'Avignon**

Sur le pont d'Avignon  
L'on y danse, l'on y danse,  
Sur le pont d'Avignon  
L'on y danse tous en rond.

*On the bridge of Avignon*

*We all dance there, we all dance there*

*On the bridge of Avignon*

*We all dance there in a ring*

**My Puppy (sung to the tune of My Bonnie)**

My Puppy lies over the ocean,  
My Puppy lies over the sea.  
My Puppy lies over the ocean,  
Oh bring back my Puppy to me.

Bring back, bring back,  
Oh bring back my Puppy to me, to me.  
Bring back, bring back,  
Oh bring back my Puppy to me.

**Planting Rhyme**

One for the Mouse, One for the Crow  
One to Rot and One to Grow!