



The Chicago International Film Festival

Cinema/Chicago and the Chicago International Film Festival

Education Outreach Program Screening: *Wolfschildren*

Director: Rick Ostermann

91 minutes, not rated

In German with English subtitles

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas/questions and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students are required to respond to the screening with a one-page essay. Essays (either all or select) must be sent to Cinema/Chicago.*

Synopsis: A remarkable story inspired by true events, *Wolfschildren* follows 14-year-old Hans and his younger brother Fritz, orphaned after WWII, on the long and difficult journey to Lithuania where family friends might take them in. Almost immediately, the brothers are separated, and Hans must make his way alone through treacherous territory, fighting off disease and hunger while outrunning the Soviet army, praying that he and his brother will find each other again in this beautifully shot, true-life thriller.

Recommended for: history studies, humanities, social studies, world studies, political studies, German language students, film and video students

Appropriate for: 8-12 grade students

Study Ideas/Questions:

1. Between Hans and Fritz, who do you think is the “stronger” or “tougher” brother? Why? How do you define *strength* and *toughness*?
2. Hans has great love for animals, and we see this love displayed often throughout the film. What do you think this says about his character?
3. The children of the film experience various losses and painful situations, yet they often display little emotion. Why do you think this is?
4. After the dog attacks Karl, Christel beats it ferociously, perhaps much more than necessary to stop it from chasing them. Why do you think she did this?
5. Hans seems willing to trade his companion’s possessions in exchange for food and shelter, but he never offers up his own precious possession – the locket from his mother. Why do you think he holds on to it so closely?

6. After nearly being attacked by one of the men in the woods, Christel cuts off her hair. What motive does she have for this action?
7. Hans is offered a place on the fisherman's boat, which most likely will lead to shelter and safety, but he refuses it. Why?
8. Anyone who aided German children was in danger of being killed by the Red Army. If you were a farmer and a German child asked for your help, what would you have done?
9. There are several disturbing actions committed in the film by Russian soldiers. The director chose to only show audiences a glimpse of the violence, and refrains from showing any truly graphic sequences. Why do you think the director made this choice, and do you think it was a good choice? How did these scenes impact you as an audience member?
10. By the end of the film how has Hans changed?

Useful Links and Resources:

Wolfschildren Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wolfskinder/289713097788242>

Information about Cinema/Chicago's Education Outreach Program:

<http://cinemachicago.org/education/>

*Schools who do not send in essay requirement will not be allowed to attend future Education Outreach Screenings.