

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource: Sisters: The Summer We Found Our Superpowers (Tottori! Sommeren vi var alene)

First Level / Ages 8+

Created by Helen Appleyard

Discovery Film Festival: Sat 23 October - Sun 7 November 2021

DCA

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Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery.

They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals. Each resource aims to:

- support and extend working with film in the classroom
- help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy / moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from

www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/resources



Sisters: The Summer We Found Our Superpowers (Tottori! Sommeren vi var alene)

Dirs: Silje Salomonsen, Arild Østin Ommundsen

Norway 2020 / 1h17m

Norwegian with English subtitles

Synopsis

The film is a heart-warming journey of two sisters Vega (9) and Billie (5) who go on a hiking trip with their Dad while their Mum is in hospital. Things do not go as planned - after Dad falls down a hole twisting his ankle and can't climb out, the sisters have to try to find their way out of the mountains to find help. The sisters embark on an enchanting and at times daunting journey through the Norwegian countryside, overcoming obstacles and challenges which bring them closer together. The story is a tale of sisterhood, told through the eyes of older sister Vega, and is about finding their inner strength to persevere in a difficult situation.

This film is in Norwegian with English subtitles.



In more detail

The story is focused on the relationship between the two sisters and is mainly told from the view point of the elder sister Vega (9) who keeps a journal.

Their Dad loves to explore and is basically a kid at heart. Their Mum is in hospital for a rest, there's a hint at Mum's illness (possibly related to her mental health) but the filmmakers do not focus on this.

Vega is like her Mum, a quiet calming personality who likes to read and learn. Her sister Billie is the complete opposite, she loves to explore and is often in her own fantasy world. Billie helps pack some unusual things for the trip, which have significance later on, and chooses to wear an unusual superhero outfit to travel in.

The first part of the film is a captivating trip exploring the Norwegian countryside with Billie, Vega and their Dad; fishing, camping and stargazing.

The mood of the film changes after Dad falls in a hole. The focus of the journey then switches to the sisters as they work together to search for help and a way home. After deciding to take the long way back, avoiding the bridge which they are scared to cross, they become lost and start walking in circles. They have lots of mini adventures; catching fish, making a fire, hiding in a cave and discovering an old shack as well as climbing a steep cliff, wading rivers and navigating an old mine. The girls fall out, make up and both try to help keep each other's spirits up to find their way back. There are joyful moments as they explore their relationship and interact with the nature around them.

Advisory note

This is a film which appeals on many levels and is suitable for all ages. Though we have suggested an 8+ viewing audience, this is because there are some scary situations which might upset younger children, but could be watched by younger children if considered appropriate.



Before the film

Activity 1– The Trailer

Explain to the children that the film is set in Norway, and is about the journey two sisters who have to find a way to get help after their Dad is hurt when he falls down a hole.

Billie is 5 and Vega is 9 at the time of filming; it was filmed on location in Norway during lockdown by their director/writer/filmmaker parents.

Watch the trailer: <https://youtu.be/oVrkpoKUMT0>

Warning: There are one or two spoilers in the trailer which may give hints of the ending.

Discussion Questions

- Why do the children have to set out on a journey alone?
- What do you think will happen on their journey?
- Can you predict the ending of the film?
- What do you think about the two sisters?
- What can you tell about their personalities from the trailer?

Activity 2 – Making Links

Use Google Earth to help the children locate Norway on a map. Find out a little about the country before watching the film.

The children can compare their own country with Norway.

I listen or watch for useful or interesting information and I use this to make choices or learn new things. LIT 0-04a

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. LIT 1-04a

To help me understand stories and other texts, I ask questions and link what I am learning with what I already know. LIT 0-07a / LIT 0-16a /ENG 0-17a

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to and asking different kinds of questions. LIT 1-07a

Teachers may be interested to watch an interview with Billie, Vega and their parents who wrote, filmed and directed the film during lockdown.
You can find this at <https://vimeo.com/476987307>



After the film

Activity 1 – Ideas for discussion after the film

Can the children identify some of the main themes in the story?

- The change of the relationship between the two sisters
- Independence
- Families
- Exploring the environment
- Mental Health

Did they make predictions? How did the film match their predictions?

The film's tagline is "*The summer we found our superpowers*".

- Why have the film makers chosen this?
- What superpowers are they talking about?

When I engage with others, I know when and how to listen, when to talk, how much to say, when to ask questions and how to respond with respect. LIT 1-02a

When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking. LIT 2-02a

Activity 2 – The Filmmaking Process: Film Literacy

Use the 3 Cs and 3 Ss to discuss what the children saw and experienced in the film.

Film Literacy 3Cs and 3Ss	
Camera	<p>The filmmakers used different shots to create tension and atmosphere.</p> <p>They used close ups (such as Vega with the Moose and the sisters hiding in the cave) and long shots (such as dad doing handstands and playing in the fields) to change the mood of the film.</p> <p>Why do you think they did this? How did the scenes make you feel?</p>
Colour	<p>Did you notice a change in colour which influenced how you might feel?</p> <p>Think about the contrast between the green fields, which were in direct bright sunlight, and the inside of the old cabin, which is dusty and badly lit.</p> <p>What were the filmmakers trying to get you to feel in these situations?</p>
Character	<p>Talk about the similarities and differences between the two girls, Vega and Billie.</p> <p>List what makes them different and what characteristics they share.</p> <p>How did their relationship change through the film?</p> <p>Do you have a favourite character? Why are they your favourite character?</p>
Setting	<p>The story was filmed in the Norwegian countryside - is this what you expected it to look like?</p> <p>Compare it to where you live; are there similarities and differences?</p>
Sound	<p>How do the filmmakers use music or sound effects to build tension/create atmosphere?</p>
Story	<p>Can you retell the main events of the story?</p> <p>Were there any surprises in the story? What were they?</p>

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. LIT 1-04a

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to and asking different kinds of questions. LIT 1-07a



Activity 3 – Literacy: Retelling the story

Vega and Billie set out to find help, leaving their Dad behind. Can the children remember what and who they meet along the way? (Check [Appendix 1](#) for a list of the main events in the story).

Can the children map out the sisters' journey, adding all the things they did and the people and animals they met along the way?

Discuss how the girls felt at different parts of their travels, how do they know this?

Individual Task

Ask the children to think of a journey they have taken - it could be one they do regularly or a one off.

Ask them to draw a map of the journey, remembering to add as many details that they pass as possible.

How did they feel at different parts of their journey?

*As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. **LIT 1-04a***

*I can convey information, describe events or processes, share my opinions or persuade my reader in different ways. **LIT 1-28a***

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. **LIT 1-20a***

*I can describe, follow and record routes and journeys using signs, words and angles associated with direction and turning. **MTH 1-17a***

Activity 4 – Literacy: Keeping a diary



Vega tells the sisters’ story in her own words. She carries a journal/diary with her, both Vega and Billie use it to record their experiences in different ways.

Ask the children to write or draw a journal over the period of a week.

Ask them to describe how they felt during the events of that week. It could be as simple as adding emoji style images to their drawings or journal entries.

Discuss how they reacted when they felt these emotions and strategies they use to deal with these emotions. Compare these reactions to Vega and Billie’s. This could be done during a circle time session.

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. **LIT 1-20a***

*I can write independently, use appropriate punctuation and order and link my sentences in a way that makes sense. **LIT 1-22a***

*I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave. **HWB 1-04***



Activity 5 – Totems and Superheroes: Literacy / Health and Wellbeing

The original title of the film in its home country is *Tottori*.

Discuss with the class:

Who or what is Tottori?

Tottori is Billie's totem. It is a unicorn and she believes it looks after her.
The real Billie made the name up herself.

Tottori is described as a totem - discuss with the children what a totem is.

totem – a natural object or animal that is believed by a particular society to have spiritual significance and that is adopted by it as an emblem.

Billie and Vega use the Tottori chant to keep their spirits up. Billie in particular sees it as something magical that protects her.

Can the children create their own totem. This could be an imaginary magical creature or a mix of different animals.

How will their creature help them in difficult situations?

*I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave. **HWB 1-04a***

*I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. **HWB 1-05a***

*I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss. **HWB 1-07a***

*I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. **HWB 1-05a***



Activity 6 – Superheroes

Discuss:

- What makes a superhero?
- What sort of powers can they have?
- What were Billie and Vega’s superpowers?
- What would they have as a superpower and what would they use them for?

Can the children create their own superhero character? Billie’s is very unusual, made up of many different characters. What power would their superhero have?

I have the opportunity to choose and explore a range of media and technologies to create images and objects, discovering their effects and suitability for specific tasks. EXA 1-02a

I can create and present work using the visual elements of line, shape, form, colour, tone, pattern and texture. EXA 1-03a

I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. EXA 1-05a

Activity 7 – Exploring the world

The film takes us through many different settings; woods, waterfalls, rivers, meadows, field and mountains.

Take the children outside in the playground, on a walk in a local park, or wood to explore their outside world.

Use the template in [Appendix 2](#) to collect their thoughts about what they hear, see, smell and touch. Compare their answers to a setting they saw in the film.

I am learning to make notes under given headings and use them to understand information, explore ideas and problems and create new texts. LIT 1-15a

I can describe and recreate the characteristics of my local environment by exploring the features of the landscape. SOC1-07a

I have explored my senses and can discuss their reliability and limitations in responding to the environment. SCN 1-12b

Appendix 1 – Sequence of Main Events

Billie, Vega and Dad get ready to go on a hiking trip while Mum is in hospital.

They have a great day with Dad playing in the river, in fields and camping under the stars.

The next day disaster happens - while showing off his handstands Dad falls down a deep hole, hurts his ankle and can't climb out. He tells Billie and Vega to go back the way they came to find help.

The sisters set off, when they come to the high bridge across the river they are too scared to cross without their dad.

They decided to take the long way around, but it isn't long before they are lost. They wade through a river, walk through a wood and fields.

They come to a place where two rivers meet but are too deep to cross. They settle down on the beach area; after Billie has eaten all the food Vega catches a fish and Billie gives her the lighter she packed in her bag to light the fire.

They find a bird which has died and bury it on the beach.

As it gets darker they hear a noise, are scared and run away from the beach area and end up spending the night in a cave.

In the morning they wander around trying to decide where to go, Vega trying to keep her sister's spirits up by chanting which always ends in the cry 'Tottori' (Billie's totem). Billie draws a map and then spots a cabin in which they spend a second night.

In the morning Vega meets a moose and the girls set off again but this time they hear music. They find a strange man playing pipes and with underwear on his head. He shows them the path back to the farm.









The path leads back to the farm but the old woman thinks they are her daughters, as Billie puts it 'she's a bit cuckoo' but she tells Vega about a shortcut through the mountain using the old mine. Vega realises she won't get help here and that they need to think of a way to help their Dad themselves.

Vega takes a block and tackle and the map of the mines from the farm. The sisters use the shortcut in the mines to find their way back to their Dad. Vega uses the block and tackle pulley to haul Dad out of the hole and then they use the inflatable unicorn that Billie packed to float down the river so they don't have to spend another night outside.

The film ends with Mum leaving hospital to re-join the family, she seems better and they are all happy as a family again.



Appendix 2 – Sensory Walk

 What do you see? 	 What do you hear? 
 What do you smell? 	 What do you feel? 



Follow up

Activity 1 – Mental Health Issues

This film does hint at the mum having mental health issues, and we briefly meet one of the other patients at the hospital who talks to both Billie and Vega (giving Billie the lighter which comes in handy on their journey).

Others in the film display different issues, such as the lady at the farm and the pipe player who shows them the path.

If appropriate to the children in your class these issues could be discussed and explored.

I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available.

HWB 1-06a

I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support. **HWB 1-08a**



Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate.

Please do send us film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing mike.tait@dca.org.uk

Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included.

If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail sarah.derrick@dca.org.uk