



# Pippi Longstocking

by Astrid Lindgren in a translation by  
Thomas W. Olson and Truda Stockenström  
music by Roberta Carlson  
lyrics by Roberta Carlson and  
Thomas W. Olson • directed by Matthew Howe

ENJOYED BY  
ALL  
AGES

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**Here she comes again!!** Pippi has got to be one of the most pivotal mischief makers

in the history of kids. She is absolutely honest - even when she's making things up. Absolutely endearing - even when she's misbehaving. Absolutely wise - even when she can't do arithmetic. This production fits her like a ....well, long-socking! This is a classic tale, radical in its own time, that sings and dances and bounces off the walls with spirit. From start to finish, a salute to independence and imagination.

## • A SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY •

**O**n the outskirts of town stands a ramshackle house. It may not seem like much 'til you peek through the railings...then, there's a horse on the porch, a monkey in the kitchen and a freckle faced, red-pigtailed, whirlwind of a girl in mismatched stockings presiding over all! This is the domain of -- ready? -- Pippilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Ephraim's Daughter Longstocking. She is outrageously unsupervised and proud of it. She has what she needs to get by, and if she doesn't she'll make something up that will do the trick. Her father is a pirate captain off sailing the seas. Her mother is an angel watching over her from heaven. And neither Mrs. Prysselius, head of the Child Welfare Board, nor Thunder and Bloom, a couple of ne'er-do-wells who try to abscond with the gold in her pirate treasure chest can get the best of her. Neither can the policemen who try to make her go to school, or the school-teacher she meets once she goes. (She decides to give school a try once she learns from her neighbors and new very-best-friends, Tommy and Annika, that if you go to school, you get a summer vacation.) In

fact, the adults who come in contact with her often are the ones who learn from the encounter. She teaches the burglars in her house a lesson in manners when they use the word, "damn," language no well behaved person should use, and she conducts a real-world mathematics lesson at school until even the teacher enjoys the romp.

But it's not that she's unteachable. Pippi swallows her fears of not knowing any of the rules of etiquette and goes to a fancy party. She cares so much more than she's willing to admit, and she learns a hard lesson that even fun can go too far, and sometimes what starts out as play can end up just plain disrespectful. She simply doesn't fit, and it's hard to imagine Pippi fitting in anywhere - unless you meet her, and then you can't imagine life without her. When her father sails (quite literally) into town just in time to rescue her from a solitary life in the Children's Home, she has the chance to join him in his adventurous pirate life, but she chooses to stay. As odd as it seems, and against all the rules, she has found a place where she belongs.

## Things to imagine, think about and do

- Pippi's full name is Pipilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Ephraim's Daughter Longstocking! Most of us have a longer name than we ever use. Make up a wonderful descriptive name for yourself that captures the best and most powerful parts of you.

- Pippi has no family with her so she lives with a horse and a monkey. **If you could choose any animal to live with, what would it be?** What would make the best companion? (Do you think they could take the place of your family? Why or why not?)

- Pippi almost never does what any grown up asks her to do. Why? What does she do instead? **Are you like her in this way or are you different?** Explain.



**Pippi Longstocking is taken from a book by Astrid Lindgren.** Her stories are classics read all over the world. They've been translated into some seventy-six languages! Why? Because when they were first written they absolutely surprised and challenged people. In some ways they still do! From her upbringing on a little farm in Sweden where children worked hard - girls and boys alike - and were responsible for the life and death of chickens and cows and potatoes (which fed their family), Astrid Lindgren learned to tell stories in which children responded to challenging circumstances with courage, intelligence, strength, and imagination. Pippi is a powerful soul! Read a Pippi book before you come to the theatre. She is a naturally rebellious, self-possessed character, and virtually anybody can find something to admire in her. You can look forward to meeting her if you read about her ahead of time.

## Check it Out!

You might also read one of Astrid Lindgren's other marvelous works. A partial listing: **The Children of Noisy Village, Ronia the Robber's Daughter, Emil's Pranks, The Children on Troublemaker Street, Mio, My Son, and The Brothers Lionheart.**

**A Series of Unfortunate Events**, Lemony Snicket. *The events that unfold are bleak, and things never turn out as you'd hope, but these delightful, funny, linguistically playful books follow the adventures of three orphan children with vast intelligence, creativity and determination.* (Ages 9+)

**Matilda**, by Roald Dahl. *An independent little girl does very well without the support of parents.* It has been made into an exquisitely surreal movie narrated by Danny DeVito.