

Tanja's Hallway

Tanja's Hallway was produced by YLE based in Finland. Tanja talks with her hands. But this is not a story about that. This is a story of how in a completely ordinary hallway anything can happen! Tanja wants to play. When her big sister Tina plays with Alina in her own room, Tanja gets pushed into the hallway. And her big brother Toni is no fun either, he only thinks about his looks. Luckily there is the hallway through the door of which anyone or anything can come in!

Tanja's Hallway was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2010 finalists in the "up to 6 fiction" category.

International experts' opinions

Many international experts appreciated the fact that the character's disability was not predominate in the program and was not considered a problem. "I thought it was a bit bizarre, but I loved the fact that she was hearing impaired was not mentioned; it was not a part of the story. It was just there. It had no bearing on the story. She held her own with her family, and everybody else didn't make an issue of it" (female expert, Australia).

Many international experts admired the use of technology in the program as a means of empowerment for people with disabilities. "I just wanted to add one thing: it was really creative to use technology. I think that kids, particularly kids who have impairments or particular kinds of needs, are becoming more and more reliant on technology that way. This was obviously a communication channel for her that was really empowering. I thought that was a great thing to show" (female expert, USA). "I just liked the inclusion of technology. I think that was great that she was using the computer and that she was smart with that. I thought it was a nice way to let her speak to camera without speaking to the a camera – like to connect with the audience. I really felt like, when we were in the screen, that I was on the other end of that computer watching in. So, that was the thing that struck me the most" (male expert, Canada).

Some international experts found the program confusing. "There were things that were confusing. Like she made clear that her brother couldn't hear. It wasn't clear where she went – so there were things that were confusing about it. But it wasn't just her creativity; it was her resilience in the fact that she was the little one. No one was really paying her attention. She was shaping this. So, she needed a dragon, and her brother was too concerned with his

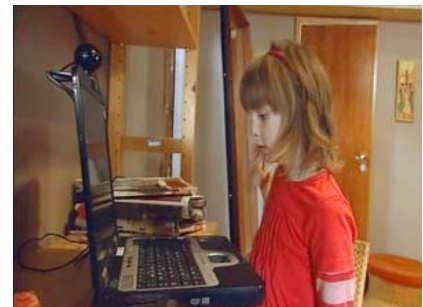


Figure 1: Tanja creates her own Hallway Theater by performing in front a video camera.



Figure 2: She decides to play the part of a princess.



Figure 3: She needs to find a dragon but can not find a proper one.



Figure 4: She asks her brother to play the part of the dragon, but he would not hear of that.



Figure 5: Tanja's brother and the lady go to the bathroom at the same time.

appearance and went out to do the thing. Then they came in and she found a dragon; she made it. She kept going back to the story. It was a little bit bizarre and a little bit hard to follow" (male expert, USA). They expressed a sense of missing information in the program. "Well, I like a little bit of craziness in children's films. But, sometimes I also like a little bit of guidance in the beginning. So, what is it about? I was all the time guessing. I didn't understand until the end: is the brother deaf too? Was he, or was he not?" (female expert, Germany).

They did not understand the characterization in the program. "It is crazy in a weird way. I think that the girls in the room, and the teenagers on the street, and the lady was having pink in her hair and going to the bathroom with a boy – and they become a dragon. I can only say one word; it is weird" (female expert, Denmark).

"I have to say that I was kind of excited at first, because I thought, Oh great – sign language. We are dealing with hearing impaired. This is a cool way to deal with hearing impaired and blah, blah, blah... Then I started watching it, and then I was like, 'well, now I really don't know what it is dealing with'. Then I thought, 'well, maybe I have missed something'. Maybe somebody else can connect to it better" (male expert, USA).

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Figure 6: The lady and Tanja's brother are wrapped in a sheet, which makes them look like a dragon.



Figure 8: Tanja finishes her performance in her Hallway Theatre.