

The Awakening

A Skit by Helen Abernathy



Based on Mary Mapes Dodge's classic, *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*, chapter 34

Dramatis Personae

RAFF BRINKER	DR. BOEKMAN
DAME BRINKER	DR. BOEKMAN'S ASSISTANT (no speaking)
HANS BRINKER	2 MEN (no speaking)
GRETEL BRINKER	3 NARRATORS

Setting

The setting is the winter of 1860 in the Brinker cottage, a small peasant Dutch dwelling.

Scenery and Props

hang snowflakes the children made during the unit

fireplace with a hearth (a painted cardboard box with "Dutch Delft tiles" around the fireplace)

small rug

three stools or chairs

small cot with a blanket

sewing or knitting (for both Gretel and Dame Brinker)

doctor's bag

Introduction

*Narrators stand to the side of the setting
and read their scripts with animation.*

- Narrator 1: Welcome to our skit called “The Awakening.” It is based on a scene from Mary Mapes Dodge’s classic, *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*.
- Narrator 2: Mary Mapes Dodge was an acclaimed 19th century American, Christian author of children’s stories and the editor of St. Nicholas children’s magazine for over 30 years.
- Narrator 3: *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* is really two stories in one. The first story centers on the Brinker family and their sacrificial love and loyalty to one another in difficult times. It inspires the reader with the love of God and His Word, the love of family, and the love of country.
- Narrator 1: The secondary story is a lengthy travelogue that takes the reader on a winter canal tour of Holland and imparts the rich culture and unique geography of the Netherlands. It is a classic loved by many generations of both children and adults!
- Narrator 2: Many years ago in the land of windmills, tulips, and wooden shoes there was a modest Dutch family called the Brinkers. They were hardworking and honest people, who lived a simple life in the Dutch village of Broek, just south of Amsterdam on the Zyder Zee.
- Narrator 3: There was Raff [*Rafe*] Brinker, the father, a strong and able man who was employed on the canal dikes. [*Father enters stage away from the cottage setting. Pretends to be lifting and hammering.*]
- There was the loving Dame Brinker, Raff’s wife. [*Mother enters, sits on a stool and begins sewing.*]
- Narrator 1: Also, Hans Brinker, their son [*Hans enters and warms his hands by the fire.*] . . .
- . . . and young Gretel Brinker, their precious daughter. [*Gretel enters with her sewing and sits by the fire.*]
- Narrator 2: One stormy night, while Raff was working in darkness and sleet, there was a terrible accident on the dike. He fell from a great height and hit his head. [*Father falls down on the ground as if hurt.*]
- Narrator 3: He was taken home insensible, [*Two men lift Raff and carry him to the cot in the Brinker cottage*] and from that moment, has never worked again. Though he lived on, his mind and memory were gone!
- Narrator 4: All Raff did was watch the burning peat in the fireplace. He didn’t know the names of his wife and children, and he could no longer provide for their needs. Life grew very difficult for the family, as poverty became a reality for the Brinkers.
- Narrator 2: The children were scorned by the village youth. They were known as the “rag pickers” who lived in the “idiot’s cottage.” They had scarce enough to eat each day and skated the frozen canal on homemade wooden ice skates.

Narrator 3: Hans did odd jobs to earn money and Gretel tended geese. Their many challenges, however, only brought them closer together.

Narrator 1: Ten long years went by. The Brinkers loved each other very much. They each did all they could to care for Raff, who could only look on with his usual dull stare. They never gave up hope that someday their father would be well again.

Narrator 2: Hans had heard about the fame of a doctor in Holland. One day while skating towards Amsterdam, he met Dr. Boekman, *[Bokeman]* the most famous physician and surgeon in all of Holland. *[Doctor appears on the stage with his doctor's bag that holds a long, white bandage.]*

Narrator 3: After hearing Hans's sad story about his father's loss of memory, Dr. Boekman agreed to perform surgery on Raff Brinker.

Narrator 1: The Brinkers prayed that God would guide the doctor's hands to help their father recover totally. The Brinkers were very concerned about their father, but they put their trust in the Lord and waited patiently.

*Mother on a stool with her eyes closed,
as if in prayer, clutching a handkerchief.*

Gretel is sewing.

Hans is pacing by the fireplace.

*Dr. Boekman and his assistant are standing beside
Raff on the cot and winding white bandage on his head.*

Gretel: *[Sorrowfully]* Oh, Hans, I am so afraid that the surgery won't help and Papa will be worse than before. Dr. Boekman is a famous surgeon, but can he really help Papa? What if something awful happens to him?

Hans: *[Lays his hand on her shoulder to comfort her]* Gretel, don't be sad. God has given Dr. Boekman great skill with his hands. He's been working for hours to bring father's memory back to us. *[Excitedly]* Look, he motioning for us to come into father's room! He is finally finished with the surgery.

Dame Brinker and Hans enter room with Raff.

Dame Brinker: *[Looks worried while twisting a handkerchief]* Doctor, how is my husband?

Dr. Boekman: Only time will tell, Dame Brinker. The surgery was successful, but now we must wait to see if he will awaken in his right mind. This is a critical period.

Raff Brinker: *[Mumbles with his eyes closed]* Watch out, boys! That beam is falling . . . Watch out!

Dame Brinker: *[Runs excitedly to his bedside]* Raff, Raff! Speak to me!

Raff Brinker: *[Quietly and confused]* Is it you, Meitje? I have been asleep . . . hurt, I think. Where is little Hans?

Hans: Here I am father! *[Shouting with joy as the doctor tries to hold him back and quiet him.]*

Dame Brinker: *[Joyfully]* He knows us! Great God, he knows us! Gretel, Gretel, come quickly and see your father!

Gretel runs into the room.

Dr. Boekman: *[In a commanding way]* Silence! He needs peace and quiet. *[He tries in vain to keep the Brinker family from crowding around father's bed.]*

Raff: Is the baby asleep, Meitje?

Dame Brinker: The baby! Oh, Gretel that is you! And he calls Hans "little Hans." Ten years he's been asleep. He's known nothing for ten years. Oh, doctor, you have brought him back to us! Children, thank the good doctor!

Dr. Boekman: I think there is someone greater who deserves our thanks. *[He points upwards.]*

Dame Brinker: *[Nods and smiles as she kneels by the cot to thank the Lord. The children also kneel beside her. The doctor and his assistant bow their heads but remain standing.]*

Raff Brinker: *[Feebly asks his family]* Why do you pray? Is it God's Sabbath day? If it is, then read me a verse from the Bible.

Gretel: *[Runs to fetch the big Dutch family Bible]*

Dame Brinker: *[Reads from the Bible.]* "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes! This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

Raff: *[Sleepily]* That is true. Everyday is a day to rejoice in the Lord. *[Pauses, re-adjusts blanket.]* I'm so tired. I'm going to rest now. *[Closes his eyes as if in sleep.]*

Dame Brinker: *[Rises from kneeling, dabs at eyes with handkerchief and then hugs the children.]* Children, father has come back to us. Thank you, Dr. Boekman, for all that you've done for us. We are so grateful. But I don't know how we'll ever repay you!

Dr. Boekman: *[Gruffly]* You can repay me by helping that sick man get well. No more crying and slobbering and carrying on like that! That could make a well person sick! *[Gets his doctor's bag as if to leave.]*

Dame Brinker: *[Laughing and smiling as Gretel helps the doctor put his coat on to leave.]* Goodbye Dr. Boekman, thank you again!

Hans: *[Away from the doctor, Gretel and mother, Hans faces audience but looks heavenward]* And thank you Lord for hearing our prayers and visiting our humble cottage tonight!

Narrator 2: That concludes our brief visit to Holland. I hope you are rejoicing with the Brinker family tonight at the goodness of God.

Narrator 3: The Brinker family knew that God had healed Raff. They were thankful for the Lord's years of providence and protection. Even though Raff Brinker's mind had not been with them for ten years, their heavenly Father *[Point upwards]* was with them, caring for them and protecting them.

ALL: Remember that stormy nights do not last forever for those who love the Lord. Joy comes in the morning!

THE END
AMO Program