

MAINE STATE MUSIC THEATRE STUDY GUIDE

Robin & Clark's
**Snow
White**



Performances: July 21, 2025

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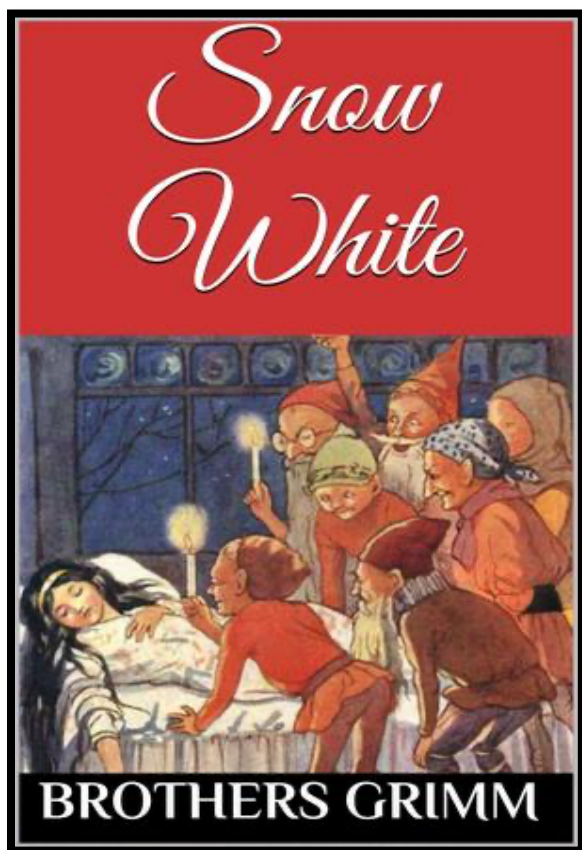
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SNOW WHITE

A SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY

by the Brothers Grimm

A queen sits sewing at an open window during a winter snowfall when she pricks her finger with her needle, causing three drops of red blood to drip onto the freshly fallen white snow on the black windowsill. She says to herself, "How I wish that I had a daughter who had skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony." Some time later, the queen gives birth to a baby daughter whom she names Snow White, but the queen dies shortly thereafter.

A year later, Snow White's father, the king, takes a new wife, who is very beautiful, but a wicked and vain woman. The new queen possesses a magic mirror, which she asks every morning, "Magic mirror in my hand,

who is the fairest in the land?" The mirror always replies: "My queen, you are the fairest in the land." The queen is always pleased with that, because the magic mirror never lies. But as Snow White grows up, she becomes more beautiful each day and even more beautiful than the queen, and when the queen asks her mirror, it tells her that Snow White is the fairest.

This gives the queen a great shock. She becomes envious, and from that moment on, her heart turns against Snow White, whom the queen grows to hate increasingly with time. Eventually, the angry queen orders a huntsman to take Snow White into the deepest woods to be killed. As proof that Snow White is dead, the queen demands that he return with her lungs and liver. The huntsman takes Snow White into the forest. After raising his knife, he finds himself unable to kill her. When Snow White finds out about her stepmother's plan, she tearfully begs, "Spare me, this mockery of justice! I will run away into the forest, and never come home again!" The huntsman reluctantly agrees and lets Snow White go, bringing the queen the heart of a wild animal instead.

After wandering through the forest, Snow White discovers a tiny cottage belonging to a group of seven dwarfs. Since no one is at home, she eats some of the tiny meals, drinks some of their wine, and then tests all the beds. Finally, the last bed is comfortable enough for her, and she falls asleep. When the dwarfs return home, they immediately become aware that someone had entered secretly, because everything in their home is in disorder. During their loud discussion about who had sneaked in, they discover the sleeping Snow White. She wakes up and explains to them what happened, and the dwarfs take pity on her and let her stay with them in exchange for housekeeping. They warn her to be careful when alone at home and to let no one in when they are away mining in the mountains.

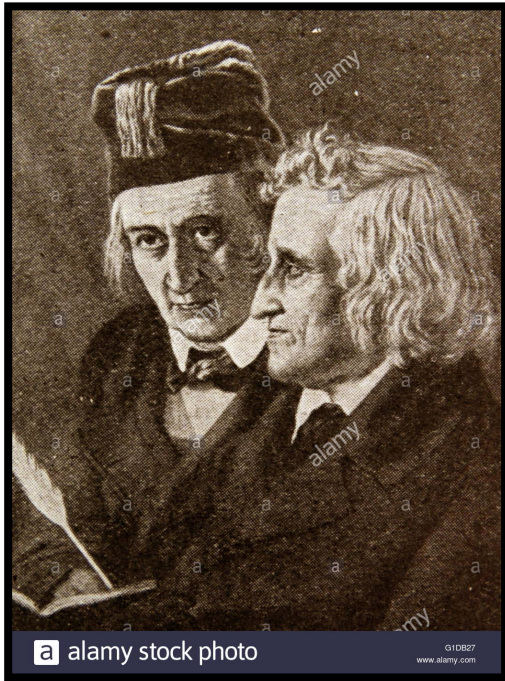
Meanwhile, the queen asks her mirror once again: "Magic mirror in my hand, who is the fairest in the land?" The mirror replies: "My queen, you are the fairest here so true. But Snow White beyond the mountains at the Seven Dwarfs is a thousand times more beautiful than you." The queen is horrified to learn that the huntsman has betrayed her and that Snow White is still alive. Planning to kill Snow White herself, the queen disguises herself as an old peddler. The queen appears at the dwarfs' cottage and offers Snow White colorful, silky laced bodices and convinces Snow White to take the most beautiful laces as a present. Then the queen laces her up so tightly that Snow White faints, causing the queen to leave her for dead. But the dwarfs return just in time, and Snow White revives when the dwarfs loosen the laces.

The queen then consults her magic mirror again, and the mirror reveals Snow White's survival. The queen dresses as a comb seller and convinces Snow White to take a beautiful comb as a present. She brushes Snow White's hair with the poisoned comb and the girl faints again. She is again revived by the dwarfs when they remove the comb, from her hair. When the mirror again indicates that Snow White still lives, the queen makes a third and final attempt on Snow White by disguising herself as a farmer's wife, and offering a poisoned apple to her. The girl is, at first, hesitant to accept it, so the queen cuts the apple in half, eating the white (harmless) half and giving the red poisoned half to Snow White. The girl eagerly takes a bite and falls into a state of suspended animation, causing the Queen to triumph. This time, the dwarfs are unable to revive Snow White. Assuming that she is dead, they place her in a glass casket.

After a short period, a prince on a hunting trip stumbles upon the coffin containing Snow White. The Seven Dwarfs succumb to his entreaties to let him have Snow White. The moment he lifts the coffin to carry it away to her proper resting place, the piece of poisoned apple falls from between her lips and Snow White awakens saying, "Where am I?" Enchanted by her beauty, the Prince instantly falls in love with her and then declares his love for her; soon a wedding is planned. Snow White and the prince invite everyone to come to their wedding party, including Snow White's stepmother.

Meanwhile, the queen, still believing that Snow White is dead, again asks her magic mirror who is the fairest in the land. The mirror says: "Thou, lady, art loveliest here, I ween; but lovelier far is the new-made queen," which enrages the queen. Not knowing that the Prince's bride is her stepdaughter, the queen arrives at the wedding and sees that the bride is Snow White, whom she thought dead. She is frozen with rage and fear, but when the Queen is about to cause pandemonium, the prince orders her to put on a pair of red-hot iron slippers and dance in them until she drops dead for the attempted murder of Snow White. The wedding then peacefully continues.

THE AUTHORS AND THEIR TIMES: The BROTHERS GRIMM



Snow White is a 19th century German fairy tale written by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm. The brothers called their version of the fairy tale *Schneeweisschen*, which means “little Snow White” in German. The Brothers Grimm developed an interest in history, folklore, and myth and began to collect stories from local people and many older cultures. They spent their careers researching, writing, and publishing these stories. At the same time they became respected teachers, librarians, and activists supporting the unification of their native Germany. Their versions of these fairy tales are often dark and contain scenes of violence or incidents that might terrify children. These are often removed in modern retellings, but the Brothers Grimm – while they urged parents to select stories appropriate to the age of their children – considered the tales to be valuable in teaching lessons.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Do you think the way the Prince punishes the Queen at the end of the story is harsh or appropriate to her crime?
2. What does the tale teach us about jealousy?
3. What do you think about the “deal” that the dwarfs make with Snow White – that she may stay with them in exchange for housekeeping?
4. Imagine what the Queen and Snow White look like. Can you describe your images?
5. What do you think about the Prince’s rescue of Snow White? Why do old fairy tales often rely on a handsome man to be the rescuer?
6. Do you think Snow White and the Prince live happily ever after? Why or why not?

THE ROBIN & CLARK MUSICAL VERSION OF SNOW WHITE

Marc Robin and Curt Dale Clark have written the book (play), music, and lyrics for their own version of *Snow White*. They retell the story for a present-day audience, combining song, dance, costumes, and scenery with the story to make an hour-long magical live theatre experience. Here's what they do with the original tale by the Brothers Grimm:



SNOW WHITE

Scene One The show opens with Manfred, a butler, and Woody, a woodsman, getting ready to meet the new Queen Narcissus for the first time. They wonder if she will be beautiful and kind, but her arrival and angry, commanding manner rapidly answers that question. Narcissus is very beautiful, but very vain. She orders them to bring her magic mirror and sings to herself in the mirror about her own unparalleled beauty. The mirror compliments her beauty, but says her stepdaughter, Snow White, is fairer. The Queen demands to see this Snow White immediately.

Scene Two Snow White is at her wishing well in the forest singing to the animals. A handsome Prince comes riding by on his horse and sings to her a love song, but he, too, is conceited and tells Snow White that he is sent by the angels to be her man and help her because she is only a weak woman. Snow White is put off by his attitude and rejects his offer. Narcissus enters and is amazed at Snow White's beauty. She sends her stepdaughter away to change clothes and orders Woody to take Snow White into the forest, kill her, and bring back her heart in a box as proof she is dead. Woody does as he is told, but as he is about to stab Snow White, his courage fails him. Snow White pleads for mercy and says she will run away into the woods and not return home. Woody lets her escape and substitutes an artificial heart which magically materializes.

Scene Three Snow White runs until she is tired and comes upon a little cottage which is inhabited by the seven "dwarfs." She goes in and falls asleep on one of the beds. The men return and discover her. They are each named after a famous historical figure: Columbus, Confucius, Freud, Caruso, Scrooge, Merlin, and Martin (Luther King), and they are extremely tall due to one of Merlin's spells gone awry. They are, in fact, a singing group called "The Seven Dwarfs," but because of their present height, they are having

difficulty getting work. Each introduces himself to Snow White in song, and enchanted by the girl, they invite her to stay as their guest and equal.

Scene Four Time passes and Queen Narcissus consults her magic mirror. The mirror tells her Snow White lives with the “dwarfs” and is still the fairer. Enraged, Narcissus uses magic to transform herself into an old beggar woman with a poisoned apple. She heads to the forest to kill Snow White.

Scene Five At the cottage Snow White and the men are singing and dancing merrily. The men leave, and Narcissus in her disguise enters, offering Snow White the apple. Snow White kindly invites her to come in and sit. She chats with the “old woman” telling her that her own mother died and her stepmother hates her because she is pretty. Snow White confides that, in fact, her only wish had been that her stepmother would like her. These words make Narcissus feel guilty, and she tries to prevent Snow White from eating the apple, but she is too late. Snow White takes a bite and falls motionless to the floor. The men return and try to revive her. Realizing the beggar woman is actually the Queen, they pursue and capture her, and Merlin casts a spell that works in transforming her back to her beautiful self. The Magic Mirror arrives hoping to save Snow White, but she is too late. Everyone begins to argue about what to do with the Queen until Martin tells them they must focus on saving Snow White and not on revenge. Just at that moment Prince Charming enters again, saying he knows it is scripted for him to kiss the sleeping Snow White and marry her. He kisses her, and she awakens. Charming assumes Snow White will now ride off with him, but she remains unimpressed. She thanks him for his help, but declines his marriage proposal. His vanity offended, the Prince notices the Magic Mirror and decides to take her with him instead. Narcissus is upset at the theft of her looking glass, and the “dwarfs” decide this is revenge enough. The story ends with a celebration in song as the men invite Snow White to join their singing group which they rename “The Seven Boys and Snow.”



And they all live dysfunctionally ever after. . . .

THE CHARACTERS

Snow White – a beautiful princess, whose mother died in childbirth and whose stepmother is jealous of her beauty. She is kind, caring, spirited, and very much a feminist.

Prince Charming – an extremely handsome young royal, who is vain, in love with his own looks and charm, and hopelessly macho when it comes to women.

Queen Narcissus – Snow White’s beautiful stepmother, who is conceited and convinced she is “the fairest in the land.” Jealous of Snow White’s beauty, she tries to kill her. She is the villain of the story, but she repents her actions at the end.

Magic Mirror – a talking looking glass who always tells the truth.

Woody – The Queen’s woodsman/huntsman, who is Snow White’s friend and spares her life.

Manfred – the Queen’s butler

The Seven Dwarfs – seven men made tall by a spell, who belong to a singing group which is later renamed “The Seven Boys and Snow.” They are each named after an historical figure, whose personality they reflect.

Martin (Luther King), named for the great American Civil Rights leader, is the group leader, wise, forgiving, and a believer in equality.

Columbus, named for the explorer Christopher Columbus, always discovers things

Freud, named for the pioneering psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, always analyzes everything.

Confucius, named for the ancient Chinese philosopher, makes up sayings about everything.

Merlin, named for the Arthurian magician, is befuddled and has trouble making his spells work.

Caruso, named for the famous opera singer Enrico Caruso, has a powerful voice and loves pretty women.

Scrooge, named after Dickens’ Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, always complains and wants to save money.

THE SONGS



I Wonder is sung by Manfred and Woody as they wait to meet their new Queen Narcissus, and they wonder what she will be like.

Me, Me, Me is sung by Queen Narcissus to her magic mirror as she declares she is the most beautiful woman in the world.

Magic Mirror is the mirror's song in which she introduces herself to Narcissus and says she will always tell the truth.

Forest Song – is a parody of the Disney Snow White's song to the animals. Here Snow White sings to the creatures, but declares she thinks this absurd.

One Song is Prince Charming's conceited introduction of himself to Snow White. He declares he is sent to help her because she is only a woman and needs a man, and he shows off by singing high notes to impress her.

Heigh Ho is borrowed from the Disney movie and sung by the men as they return to their cottage in the woods to discover Snow White inside.

We Are the Seven Dwarfs is a song the group performs in their show, and they use it to introduce themselves to Snow White.

Nina, Pinta, Santa Maria is Columbus' self-introduction.

Freud Say, Confucius Say introduces the philosopher and psychiatrist.

I Love the Opera lets Caruso show off his great voice.

I Am a Wizard is Merlin's explanation of how he was once a great magician but has lost his skill.

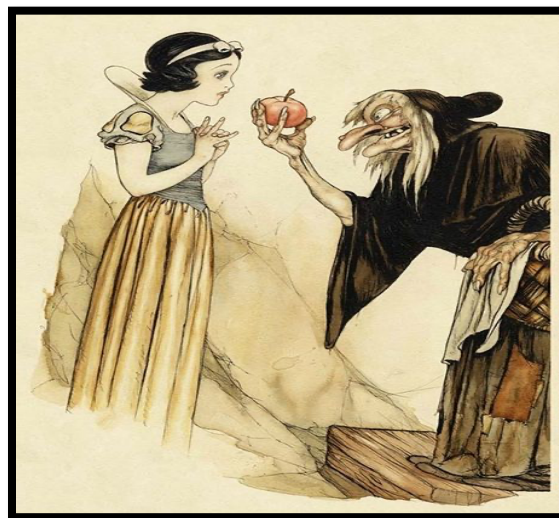
I Have a Dream is Martin's inspiring anthem about freedom and equality which reflects the words of Martin Luther King.

Seven Boys and Snow is a doo wop number for the newly renamed singing group that serves as the finale.

THE CREATORS



Marc Robin and Curt Dale Clark are the creators of the musical version of *Snow White*. Together they have written the book (or story and dialogue), the music, and the lyrics of the songs for fifteen musicals, including the full-length epic *Treasure Island A Musical Adventure*. Marc Robin is also a well known theatre director and choreographer, actor, dancer, and singer and now heads up the Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, PA. Curt Dale Clark is an actor, singer, dancer, and director, and with his managing partner, Stephanie Dupal, he is in charge of Maine State Music Theatre right here in Brunswick. Marc and Curt believe that it is very important to introduce Young Audiences like yourselves to live theatre because these shows open a whole world of imagination and creativity. They hope you will enjoy this little taste of the longer production and come to Maine State Music Theatre next summer to see all the Theatre for Young Audiences shows with all the costumes, lights, and beautiful sets, the dancing and the music, performed by fantastic actors and musicians.



LINKS



If you want to learn more about Snow White, here is a list of reading and internet resources you can check out.

ON THE WEB

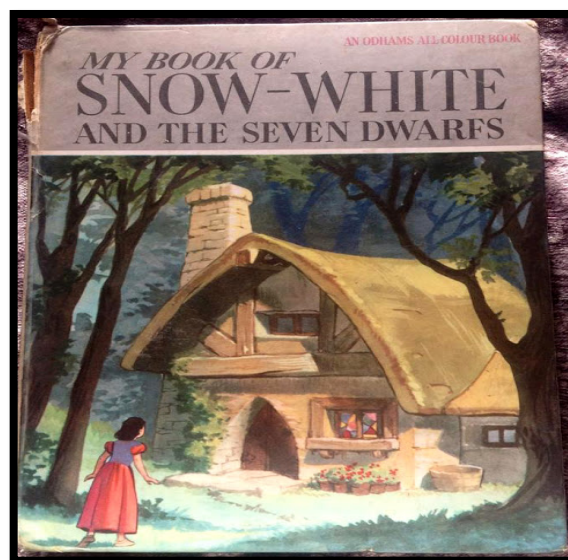
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnkf6gZ5GDY> The complete Disney movie

<https://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/schneeeng.html> The complete original fairy tale by Brothers Grimm

<https://www.istockphoto.com/illustrations/snow-white-and-the-seven-dwarfs?sort=mostpopular&mediatype=illustration&phrase=snow%20white%20and%20the%20seven%20dwarfs> Royalty free Snow White Clip art to download and print

<https://robinandclarkmusicals.com/snow-white/> Information page for Robin & Clark's *Snow White*

www.robinandclarkmusicals.com A complete list of all Robin & Clark's works, photographs, song lists, video and audio clips, and comments from the press



FOR YOU TO READ

Here are a few suggestions for reading. Many of these books and audio visual materials are available in your school or local library.

Snow White (Juvenile Version) by Chloe Perkins

Snow White The Graphic Novel by Matt Phelan

Tales from the Brothers Grimm Jakob & Wilhelm Grimm

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs DVD Disney 1938 movie classic

Snow White: An Islamic Tale by Fawzia Gilani-Williams

Princess Tales (in rhyme) by Grace Maccarone



ACTIVITIES

TELL THE PERFORMERS WHAT YOU THINK
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AFTER THE PERFORMANCE



1. How is the experience of watching the musical version of this story different from the experience of reading it?
2. When you read the story, you have to use the writer's words to imagine the people and places being described. In the musical, what helps you see these things?
3. What is different between the original fairy tale and this musical version?
4. What does "politically correct" mean and why did the musical's creators call their version that?
5. What are some of the ways in which the musical's Snow White is a more modern heroine?
6. What lessons is the musical version of *Snow White* teaching us?
7. Do you like the ending better in the Grimm fairy tale (Snow White marries Prince and stepmother is made to dance to death) or in the Robin & Clark musical (Snow White declines to marry the Prince and the stepmother loses her magic mirror as poetic justice)?
8. Which of the dwarfs do you like best in the musical version?
9. Which character(s) and song(s) did you enjoy most?

LET'S PLAY MAD LIBS!

The leader asks the group to call out specific kinds of words – **nouns** (names of people, places, things), **adjectives** (descriptive words), **verbs** (action words), **adverbs** (words that tell us how, when, or why), **exclamation** (short emotional expression). The leader fills in the blanks with these new words and reads it back to the group. The results are usually very funny! Enjoy the game with this selection from *Snow White*.

When the _____(noun) came home that evening, they found Snow White lying on the ground. She was not breathing at all. She was _____(adjective). They lifted her up and looked for something poisonous. They undid her laces. They combed her hair. They washed her with water and wine. But nothing helped. The dear _____(noun) was dead, and she remained dead. They laid her on a _____(noun), and all seven sat next to her and mourned for her and _____(verb) for three days. They were going to bury her, but she still looked as fresh as a living person, and still had her beautiful _____(adjective) cheeks.

They said, "We cannot bury her in the black earth," and they had a _____(adjective) glass coffin made, so she could be seen from all sides. They laid her inside, and with golden letters wrote on it her _____(noun), and that she was a princess. Then they put the coffin outside on a _____(noun), and one of them always stayed with it and watched over her. The animals too came and mourned for Snow White, first an _____(noun) then a raven, and finally a dove.

Snow White lay there in the coffin a _____(adjective), long time, and she did not decay, but looked as if asleep, for she was still as _____(adjective) as snow and as red as blood, and as black-haired as ebony wood.

Now it came to pass that a prince entered these woods and happened onto the dwarfs' house, where he sought shelter for the night. He saw the _____(noun) on the mountain with beautiful Snow White in it, and he read what was written on it with golden letters.

Then he said to the _____(noun), "Let me have the coffin. I will give you anything you want for it."

But the dwarfs _____(verb), "We will not sell it for all the gold in the world."

Then he said, "Then give it to me, for I cannot live without being able to see _____(noun). I will honor her and _____(verb) her as my most cherished one."

As he thus spoke, the good dwarfs felt _____(noun) for him and gave him the coffin. The prince had his servants carry it away on their shoulders. But then it happened that one of them _____(verb) on some brush, and this dislodged from Snow White's throat the piece of _____(adjective) apple that she had bitten off. Not long afterward she opened her _____(noun), lifted the lid from her coffin, _____(verb), and was alive again.

LET'S DRAW AND WRITE

1. On a separate sheet of paper, **write your own fairy tale**. Try to include as many of these elements as you can: a prince and princess, an evil character, spells and curses, good and wicked deeds, and a little moral at the end of the tale. You can use traditional lines like "Once upon a time" and "They lived happily ever after" or you can change these the way Marc and Curt do in their musical version.
2. Fairy tales often take place in strange and wonderful places. **Draw a picture** of the way you imagine one of these people or places:
 - The Magic Mirror
 - The "dwarfs" cottage in the woods
 - One of the dwarfs from the musical version
 - The evil queen when she is beautiful and when she is disguised as the old beggar woman
3. Color the drawing which you find at the back of this booklet. You can make it as fantastical as you like.



We want to see what you create, so send us your stories and art work. We post some of the pictures and writing on MSMT's Facebook page.

Here's how to send:

- Mail them to **DJ Fourquet at Maine State Music Theatre, 22 Elm St., Brunswick, ME 04011** or
- Email your writing or drawing to DJ at dj@msmt.org

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

Let us know what you thought of this program by answering the survey questions below and returning it to **DJ Fourquet at Maine State Music Theatre, 22 Elm St., Brunswick, ME 04011** or by dropping DJ an email at dj@msmt.org. We hope to be able to continue to bring you similar programs, so your thoughts and comments are very important to us! Thanks for taking the time!

FOR CHILDREN

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best), how entertaining did you find *Snow White*?
2. What did you like best about the presentation?
3. What is the most important lesson you took away from this story and this program?
4. Did the program make you want to be in a play yourself?
5. What other children's stories would you like to explore in the future?

FOR ADULTS

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best), how entertaining and educational did you find *Snow White*?
2. What did you like best about the presentation?
3. What is the most important lesson your child took away from this story and this program?
4. Did the program make you want to bring your child(ren) to the Theatre for Young Audiences productions this summer?
5. Have you attended any of these at the Pickard in the past and would you consider subscribing this year?
6. How useful were the printed materials for your child?
7. Please offer us any other suggestions or thoughts you may have.

NAME

AGE (Optional)

CONTACT INFORMATION (Optional)



Bonus Question: Tell us what's missing from this picture?