

The Online Parenting Newsletter vol.6 no.4 Apr, 2005:

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Let me share a glorious experience one grandmother (me) had on a cold February weekend in New York City. My daughter and 9-year-old granddaughter met me there for a quick girls' weekend. Hannah's twin had already gone to NYC on a guys' only weekend with his dad.

We crowded the following into 44 hours: a visit to Central Park to see the Gates, a quick look at the mummies and some paintings at the Metropolitan Museum, a walk through the newly remodeled Museum of Modern Art, the opera "Nabucco" at the Metropolitan Opera House, and an hour in two made-for-children stores: F.A. O. Schwarz and American Girl.

Hannah loved every minute of her weekend but guess what she liked the best? The opera! We prepared her by telling her the story beforehand. She was entranced by the music, the plot, the action on stage. Even though the opera didn't end until 11 pm her interest never flagged. It was apparent that she was excited by her first exposure to this art form.

My daughter and I had worried about how she would take an evening at the opera and decided one of us would take her back to the hotel if necessary. But nothing would have dragged Hannah away before the dramatic ending.

Why am I telling you this? Because parents tend to worry unnecessarily about children becoming bored by grown-up things. My philosophy is that the world is full of a lot more than TV and pop culture.

My suggestions for parents:

- Expose your kids as much as possible to the finer things in life.
- Prepare them ahead of time.
- Expect the best from your children rather than fearing the worst.