

# Sadko and the Sea Kingdom

A Reading A-Z Level K Leveled Book  
Word Count: 426

## Connections

### Writing

The story of Sadko is a Russian fairy tale. Write about how this story compares with another fairy tale you have read. Share your writing with a classmate.

### Music

As a class, research to learn more about guslis. Find out what they look like, what they sound like, and where they come from.

  
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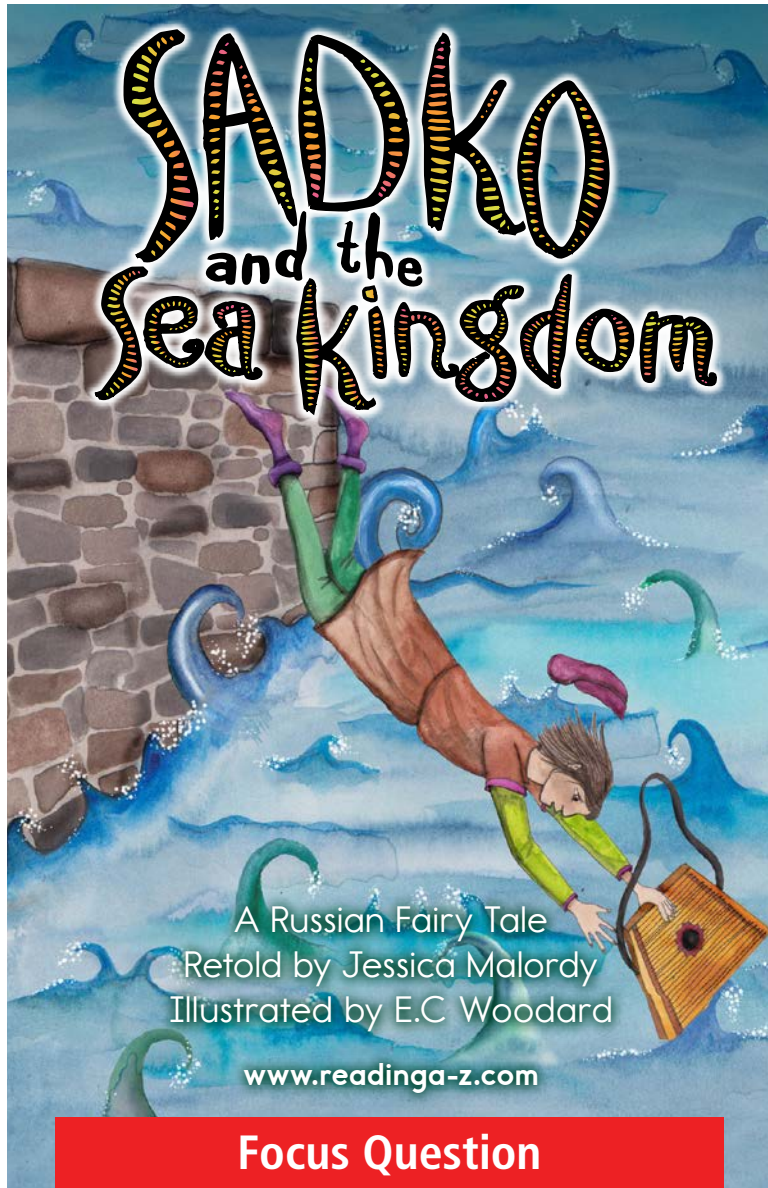
LEVELED BOOK • K

# SADKO and the Sea Kingdom

A Russian Fairy Tale  
Retold by Jessica Malordy  
Illustrated by E.C Woodard

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## Focus Question

What choices does Sadko make?  
Do you think the choices are hard  
or easy? Why?

## Words to Know

churned  
disobey  
flooded

gusli  
lowly  
strumming

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Level K Leveled Book  
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## Correlation

### LEVEL K

Fountas & Pinnell	J
Reading Recovery	17
DRA	18



My name is Sadko. I earn my living by playing music. The sweet sound of my **gusli** makes everyone dance. Everyone, that is, except me. No girl would ever dance or fall in love with a **lowly** musician.

### The Gusli

The gusli (GOOS-lee) is one of the oldest Russian stringed musical instruments. It sounds like a harp. A gusli is placed on the lap and played by plucking or strumming the strings. Guslis come in many shapes and sizes.



Some days, I sit alone by the sea, **strumming** my gusli. One day, I was strumming away when all of a sudden, thunder clapped and the water **churned**. The swelling waves nearly **flooded** my village.



Although I was afraid, I watched  
as two dancing forms rose from  
the sea.



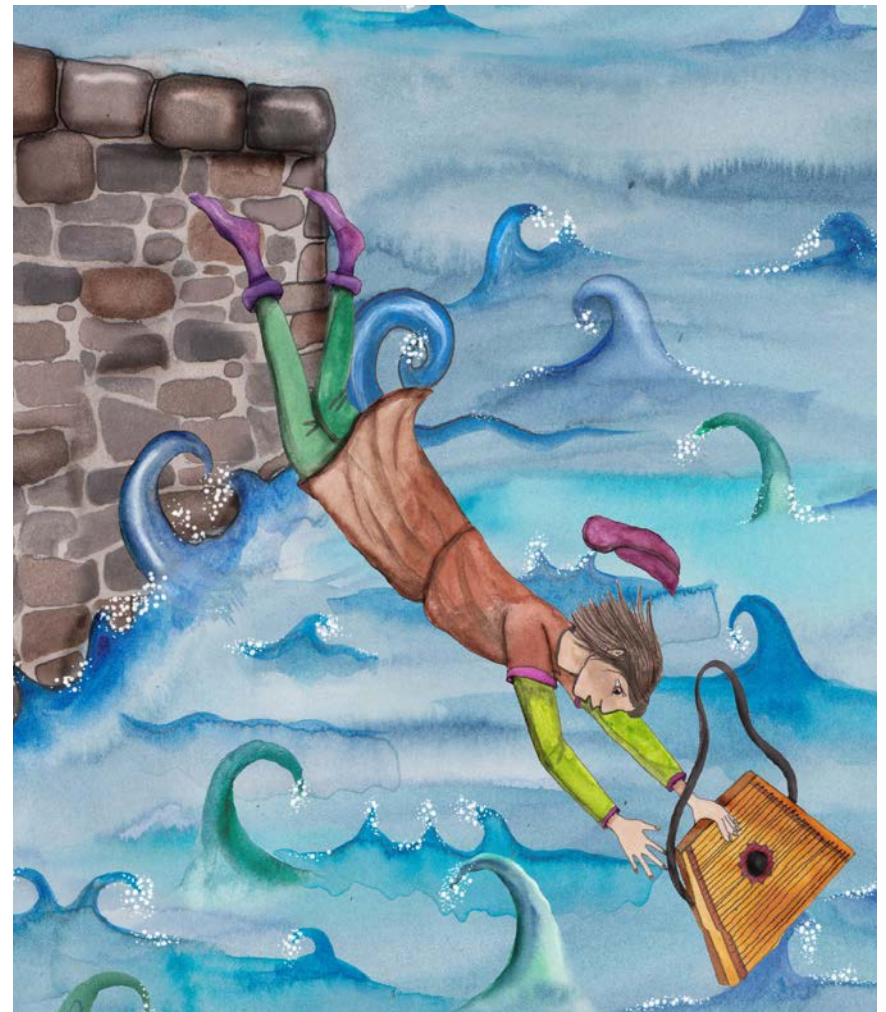
“I am Volkva, the Sea King’s  
daughter. The only thing that  
stops my tears is the sound of  
your gusli,” she said. “Would  
you play for me at our palace  
beneath the sea?”







“My daughter is the love of my life,” added the Sea King. “I can’t stand to see her sad. You must play for us until I say stop. If you play, the sea will churn, we will dance, and nothing more will happen. If you **disobey**, however, the sea will churn and flood your village.”



I had no choice. I jumped into the sea and drifted down to the Sea King’s palace.

“Play for us!” commanded the Sea King.





So I did. All night and all day I played, and Volkva and the Sea King danced. The water churned violently overhead, worse than ever. I feared for the safety of my village and dared not disobey the Sea King. I played and played until the strings on my gusli snapped.



“No matter,” said the Sea King. “You will have as many gusli strings as you need, and my Volkva’s hand in marriage. You must stay beneath the sea and play for us always.”





Volkva held out her hand. I slowly shook my head no. I wanted to stay with her but knew I could not. My real home was on land, far above the seafloor. I could not, however, return to a village in ruins.



"I know you must go, though you are my love. You have taken away my sadness, and I am forever grateful," Volkva added.



“My Volkva loves you and cries no more, so I suppose you may go,” the Sea King said.

“We will dance more carefully from now on,” Volkva added.



“Though I must go, I promise to play my gusli by the sea for you every day,” I replied.

Now, every day, I sit by the sea and play my gusli for Volkva.



Every day, the water churns  
just a little bit.

I know she is still dancing—  
very carefully.



## Glossary

<b>churned</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	moved or stirred powerfully or violently (p. 4)
<b>disobey</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to not follow an order, request, rule, or law (p. 7)
<b>flooded</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	covered with water (p. 4)
<b>gusli</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a Russian stringed musical instrument that has similarities to a harp and a guitar (p. 3)
<b>lowly</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	low in social position or importance (p. 3)
<b>strumming</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	playing a stringed instrument by brushing one's fingers across the strings (p. 4)