

PLAY GUIDE



The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

From the book by Kate DiCamillo
Adapted for the stage by Dwayne Hartford



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Major Contributors:



Dear Educator -

Lexington Children's Theatre is proud to be producing our 81st season of plays for young people and their families. As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Play Guide for teachers to utilize in conjunction with seeing a play at LCT.

Our Play Guides are designed to be a valuable tool in two ways: helping you prepare your students for the enriching performance given by LCT's performers, as well as serving as an educational tool for extending the production experience back into your classroom.

We designed each activity to assist in achieving the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), including the National Core Arts Standards for Theatre. Teachers have important voices at LCT, and we rely heavily on your input. If you have comments or suggestions about our Play Guides, show selections, or any of our programming, your thoughts are greatly appreciated. Please email Jeremy Kisling, our Associate Artistic Director in Charge of Education, at jkisling@lctonstage.org.

Please use the Teacher Response form following a performance. We are thrilled that you rely on LCT to provide your students a quality theatrical experience, and we hope this resource helps you in your classroom.

-LCT's Education Department

The mission of our education programming



The mission of Lexington Children's Theatre's Education Department is to provide students of all ages with the means to actively explore the beauty, diversity, complexity, and challenges of the world around them through the dramatic process. We strive for young people to develop their own creative voice, their imagination, and their understanding of drama and its role in society.

Your role in the play

You may wish to have a discussion with your class about your upcoming LCT experience and their role as audience members. Remind your students that theatre can only exist with an audience. Your students' energy and response directly affects the actors onstage. The quality of the performance depends as much on the audience as it does on each of the theatre professionals behind the scenes and on stage.

Young audiences should know that watching live theatre is not like watching more familiar forms of entertainment; they cannot pause or rewind us like a DVD, there are no commercials for bathroom breaks, nor can they turn up the volume to hear us if someone else is talking. Your students are encouraged to listen and watch the play intently, so that they may laugh and cheer for their favorite characters when it is appropriate.

At the end of the play, applause is an opportunity for your students to thank the actors, while the actors are thanking you for the role you played as an audience.



What to know - before the show!

Play Synopsis

A young girl named Abilene owns a china rabbit named Edward Tulane that she adores almost as much as Edward adores himself. Though he can't talk, Abilene's grandmother, Pelligrena, can see into Edward's mind and knows that he is a selfish and vain rabbit and warns him of the importance of love before a long oversea voyage with Abilene.

On the voyage, two boys steal Edward and toss him overboard where he drifts until a storm churns him up and brings him into the possession of a poor fisherman and his wife, Lawrence and Nellie. They care for Edward and give him a new name, Susannah. Edward lives with them and learns the names of the constellations, before their daughter comes home. She dislikes the "doll," so she takes him out to the dump and tosses him.

Edward sits covered in garbage until a drifter, Bull, and his dog, Lucy, find him. While traveling, Edward, now known as Malone, becomes known as a remarkable listener. When Bull and Lucy get caught drifting on a train car, Edward is tossed overboard, only to be picked up and used as a scarecrow.

Bryce, a young boy, sneaks up to Edward late at night and steals him away for his young sister, Sarah Ruth, who is very sick. All of Edward's adventures have led up to the moment when he realizes that he loves and cares about Sarah Ruth more than himself. Bryce and Edward, now known as Jangles, cannot keep Sarah Ruth alive. After her death, her brother goes to a diner and orders a large meal that he can't afford. The diner's owner smashes Edward's head into a countertop.

Edward awakens in a doll repair shop. He finds himself on the highest shelf, agonizing over love. "I'm done with loving. It's too painful." A wise old doll speaks frankly to him, urging him to find his courage and allow love back into his heart. As he finds hope again, an older woman came back into the doll shop—a woman who recognizes him. Abilene had returned to Edward once more, and he spent his days afterwards dancing with her daughter in their garden.



What to know – before the show!

Narrative Pantomime

Edward receives a new name every time he meets a new person on his journey. Have students ask at home how their parents chose their name. Have each student share the story of their name with a partner. If students use a nickname, they could add how that nickname came about and what they like about it. Then each student will share the story of their partner's name with the class. Have students focus on active listening so they can recall the details behind how their partner received their name.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Activating Vocabulary

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane contains some interesting words that we might not use all the time in our daily life. The words below are used frequently in the play. Individually or in groups, have students look up the definition of the words. As a class, create movements or gestures that communicate the meaning of the word. Practice saying each word while doing the gesture to solidify students' comprehension and build new vocabulary.

fortunate **miraculous** **dapper**
dignified **refined** **grotesque** **voyage**



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.6

Constellations of Classmates

The play uses images of constellations as a metaphor or symbol for connection. Throughout the play, Edward looks at the stars when he needs comfort. In this activity, students will use their bodies to create their own constellations of connection. First, have students stand in an open space in the classroom. Use the following prompts to create your own constellations:

- Put your hand on the shoulder of someone you knew before the school year started.
- Put your hand on the shoulder of someone new you've met since school started.
- Put your hand on the shoulder of someone who you know has something in common with you.
- Put your hand on the shoulder of someone you would like to ask a question.

After each prompt, have students look around silently and notice how everyone is connected. There might be small groups or large connections of people. Between the prompts, have students re-set to where they were standing in their own space in the room. After the last prompt, have students ask each other the question they have thought of for that person and listen to the answer. In addition to these prompts, you can create your own to meet the goals of your lesson that day.

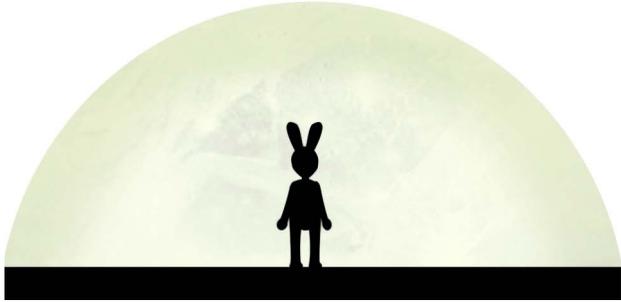
After the activity, reflect with your students about what they noticed about the patterns of people, who they found themselves standing close to, and how they made their own constellations. If we were to write a story about one of our classmate constellations, what would it be?



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

What to know - before the show!

Object Monologue



Edward Tulane is Abilene's most special object. As we see in the story, Edward is much more than a toy. Think about an object that means a lot to you. What story would unfold if that object came to life? Answer the following prompts to write a short monologue in the voice of your object character.

What object are you thinking of?

If your object had a name, what would it be?

Physical characteristics of your object or what makes your object unique?

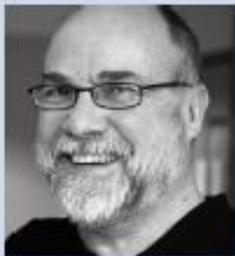
What does your object want in life more than anything?

What is in the way of your object getting what they want in life?

Write a monologue of at least five lines in the voice of your object.

What to know – before the show!

It's the Story, Not the Stuff: An Interview with the Director



The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane is a new play, and directing it for the first time at Lexington Children's Theatre is our Producing Director, Larry Snipes. The Education Department sat down with Larry to talk about the play and the unique challenges of telling such a big journey-story with only four actors.

What excites you the most about this production?

Two things about this play really excite me. First, I love the change in Edward – going from being all about him to understanding what a relationship means, and what love means, and what it means to care for someone. I love that meaning, and it's important. I guess in a lot of ways it's kind of like how we are. When we're young, it's really about "me, me, me, me, me." Then all of a sudden it becomes about "us" and "we" and family. In many ways, Edward begins the play thinking he is the center of the universe. And when you think about that parallel, it took Edward decades to come to this realization. The other thing I really like about this play is this simplistic style of storytelling. You could produce it with lots of production value and all this stuff, but the heart of this play is the story – not the stuff. And that's important in this piece.

The director collaborates with the designers to come up with the set, lights, and costumes for a play. Where did you start in the design process? How will you approach the simple storytelling style of this piece?

Our production takes place in this country store or junk store-type place, and everything from the story comes out of the context of this space full of objects. So everything we need to tell the story comes from the set, and goes back to the set. The designers and I started the process by looking at images of old country stores that were just full of objects and antiques and gadgets. For instance, the change of locales will be as simple as changing a painting on the back wall of the country store. We won't be changing the backdrop, but changing the painting will help us set the mood for each locale.

How will four actors play so many characters?

That's what really draws me to this script – that four actors will play so many characters. They will be in and out of character in a moment's notice – sometimes without even changing a costume piece. In the fantasy scenes, it's all in what the actors can do physically and vocally to change character. And that's a good challenge. Also, men will not always play men and women won't always play women. Some characters are gender neutral and played across gender. Characters will have either a costume piece or a prop (object) to help the audience recognize who they are. Also, because there is a lot of traveling in this play, we are going to play with accents and dialects. That will make characters even more distinct.

What other challenges have you and the designers of the production encountered in this process?

A design challenge we always have with the tour shows is how to make the set fit in half a van, so it can travel all over the region. But I also think that the passage of time is another big challenge. When Edward falls into the water, he is underwater for years – years! And then a storm washes him up. So understanding the passage of time in this play so that it's clear to the audience that the next scene isn't the next day. Each experience lasts for so long, and we want that to be clear in our storytelling. The whole play takes place over multiple decades. That's a fun challenge. And we'll do that with music as well to show the passage of time.

How to grow - after the show!

Lost and Found

Over the course of the play, Edward Tulane is lost and found several different times. Have you ever had a favorite toy or special item get lost? What adventures might that item have experienced? Create a comic strip of its adventure! Incorporate these three things into your story:

Two new locations: _____

Two new characters/owners: _____

Two new names: _____

How to grow - after the show!

Characters in the Hot Seat

With every new owner and adventure, Edward Tulane left behind people who loved him. Brainstorm as a class the different way the characters might have responded to the loss of Edward. Have student volunteers come to the front of the class in character as a past owner of Edward. You may choose together, or have the students choose on their own. In an interview style activity, ask the character what it was like losing Edward. Feel free to allow students in the “audience” to ask questions, as well!

Example questions:

- Did they know what happened to him?
- Do they think about him?
- Where do they think Edward ended up?
- Did they ever get a replacement toy?



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.6

Story Sequence Pictures

In the play, Grandmother Pelligrina tells a story about a beautiful, selfish princess who gets turned into a warthog. After reminding students of the plot points (included below), split students up into three groups. Secretly assign each group either beginning, middle, or end. Have them create frozen pictures of their two plot points, including everyone in the picture (some might be inanimate objects). After they've completed their two images, have each group share out to the class. Have students in the audience guess which plot point they were creating. Additional challenge: have each character or item think of one line to say in their frozen picture.

Beginning:

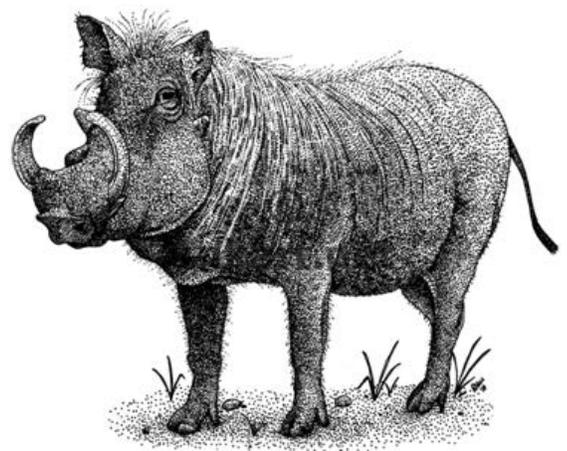
- Once upon a time there was a princess as beautiful as stars on a moonless night.
- Her father wanted her to be married, and a prince proposed to her with a golden ring that she ate.

Middle:

- She ran away and got lost in the woods.
- She came across a hut with an old witch inside. She demanded the witch help her.

End:

- The witch pointed at her and said “Farthfigery” and the princess turned into a warthog.
- Townspeople hunted the warthog, ate it, and the cook wore the princess’ gold ring.



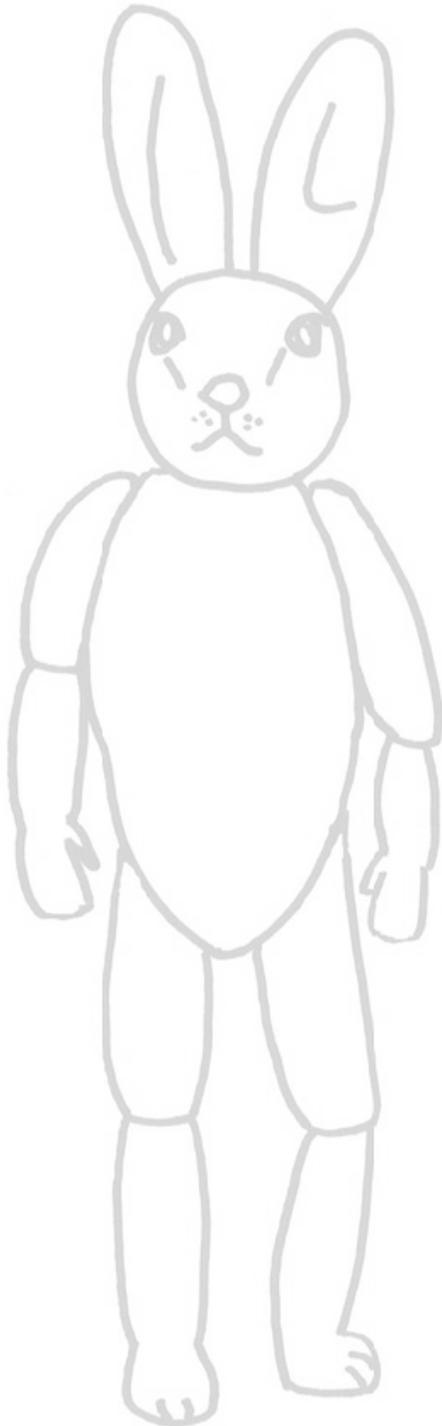
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5

How to grow - after the show!

Design Edward's Costume

The costume designer's job for a production is to decide what the actors will wear on stage. Costumes give the audience more clues and information about the character. For example, costumes can tell us if the character is rich or poor, where the character is from, what time period they live in, what the character's job is, and so much more! Costume designers also have to think about the color, texture, and shape of clothing as that gives us more clues about the person wearing the clothing.

Edward's name and clothing changed with each new person who took him in. Which name and outfit best suits him? Design a new set of clothing that you think Edward would like to wear. Be sure to label every new piece of clothing!



How to grow - after the show!

What to Read Next

***Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo**

In this Newbery Honor book, lonely 10-year-old India Opal Buloni adopts a stray dog named Winn-Dixie who changes her life.

***Gossamer* by Lois Lowry**

While learning to bestow dreams, a young dreamgiver tries to save an eight-year-old boy from the effects of both his abusive past and the nightmares inflicted on him by the frightening Sinisteesds.

***Martin the Warrior* by Brian Jacques**

The Redwall series captured the hearts of readers and critics alike with its exhilarating tales of the wondrous creatures of Redwall. Martin the Warrior continues the saga with the long-awaited history of Martin, Redwall's most glorious hero, who rises from slavery to become the greatest warrior the land would ever know.

***The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams**

By the time the velveteen rabbit is dirty, worn out, and about to be burned, he has almost given up hope of ever finding the magic called Real.

LCT teaches in YOUR school!

Would you like to see some of these play guide activities modeled in your classroom?

Book a workshop for your class with one of LCT's teaching artists! In our pre-show workshops, our teaching artists will engage students in acting skills and themes from the play through drama activities. In our post-show workshops, students will extend their play-going experience by strengthening their personal connection to the play and deepening their understanding of the themes and characters.



Call us at 859-254-4546 x226 to book a pre or post-show workshop for your class!

To learn more about Lexington Children's Theatre and our programming for your school visit:
www.lctonstage.org/for-educators/in-school-experiences/