An Educational Packet

The Miraculous Journey Of Edward Tulane

By Kate DiCamillo
Adapted for Stage By Dwayne Hartford

Created and distributed by Synchronicity Theatre
HAPPY FEBRUARY FROM SYNCHRONICITY THEATRE!!

Welcome to Synchronicity’s production of *The Miraculous Journey Of Edward Tulane*, written by Kate DiCamillo and adapted for the stage by Dwayne Hartford. This brief educational packet was created with the young student audience in mind, with the intent of sparking conversation between children, teachers, and parents as they indulge and reflect upon the important themes and morals present in this production.

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About Synchronicity Theatre

Synchronicity Theatre produces smart, gutsy and bold theatre to spark community connections and uplift the voices of women and girls.

Founded in 1997 by four women with a desire to bring challenging, meaningful theatre to Atlanta audiences, Synchronicity Theatre now reaches nearly 8,000 patrons through our seasons of plays for adults (Bold Voices) and families (Family Series); community outreach; and educational programming, including our Playmaking for Kids (PFK) summer camps and after school programs and our award-winning Playmaking for Girls (PFG) program.

Located in the heart of Midtown, we believe in the power of bond between artist and audience, and our intimate 140-seat theatre brings us together to experience stories, music and drama as a community.

Please feel free to check us out online at synchrotheatre.com or by visiting our Facebook and Instagram sites (@synchrotheatre).

Theatre Etiquette

“Attending a live theatre performance can be a magical and memorable experience for even young children. Done well, you will be planting the seeds of appreciation in a young patron for a love of live theatre.” –Leach Theatre, Missouri University of Science and Technology

To ensure the most positive experience for all of our patrons, we have included some tips that can be useful to parents and teachers in helping to guide their children to behaving appropriately during live performances.

1. Arrive early! Arriving early ensures plenty of time to find seats, visit concessions, and take care of personal needs (such as drinks of water or the restroom).
2. Sit in your assigned seats.
3. Mention to your children that it will be dark and that they will be expected to be quiet and to sit as still as they can throughout the performance. Avoid disturbing others by talking or fidgeting.
4. Keep feet on the floor. Gently remind your children to keep their feet and hands to themselves and to not kick the chair in front of them or stand during the performance.
5. Do not leave the theatre in the middle of the performance. All personal needs should be taken care of prior to the show or during intermission, so please refrain from leaving the theatre during the production unless it is an emergency.
6. Please refrain from talking, singing, or interacting with the show unless prompted to do so by the performers.
7. Last but not least, have fun! Feel free to laugh or applaud when it’s time! Courtesy and respect go a long way and help to create an enjoyable experience for all.
About the Author: Kate DiCamillo

Kate DiCamillo is an American author whose award-winning children’s books have captured the hearts of thousands across the world. After being born in Philadelphia, she moved to Florida with her mother at the age of five, where she went on to earn a B.A. in English from the University of Florida. While studying in Florida, Kate worked several part-time jobs, one of them included working at a book warehouse, where she fell deeply in love with children’s books. Her first book, *Because of Winn Dixie* was a wild success and was later awarded the Newbery Honor.

Since her success with *Because of Winn Dixie*, Kate has written multiple other children's books, including two Newbery Medal-awarded books, *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* [2004], *Flora and Ulysses* [2014], as well as THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE (2006), which received the Boston Globe Horn Book Award. Kate currently resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota and thinks of herself as being an “enormously lucky person” in that she is able to tell stories for a living.

"We get our ideas from listening and looking and eavesdropping and imagining. Stories are everywhere. All you have to do is pay attention."

- Kate DiCamillo [On where writers get ideas]

About the Playwright: Dwayne Hartford

Dwayne Hartford is an established actor and playwright who is currently serving as the Artistic Director of Childsplay in Arizona, an internationally and nationally respected professional theatre for young audiences and families.

Dwayne grew up in the small town of Smithfield, Maine and then went on to receive his B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from the Boston Conservatory. He has written and premiered a number of plays, all of which have premiered at Childsplay. In 2005, his play, *Eric and Elliot*, went on to receive Distinguished Play Award from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education Award. Another one of his works, *The Imaginators*, was produced and published by KAET TV, the Phoenix PBS affiliate. Additionally, his adaptation of A Tale of Two Cities was part of New York University’s New Plays for Young Audiences Workshop and has since been performed in children’s theatres across the country. Other playwriting credits include: *The Bully Pulpit*, THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE, *The Color of Stars*, and *Rock the President*. Most recently, Hartford received the 2015 Medallion of Merit from the National Society for Arts and Letters-Greater Arizona Chapter. He currently resides in Phoenix with his dog, Henry.

“I make art because creating theater helps me make some sense out of life” –Dwayne Hartford, Phoenix New Times
A Brief Synopsis

The character of the Traveler offers the most fitting and beautiful synopsis of Edward’s journey. Below is an excerpt from the Traveler’s final speech:

“Once, there was a china rabbit who was loved by a little girl. On an ocean journey the rabbit fell overboard and was rescued by a fisherman who gave the rabbit to his wife. The rabbit was buried under garbage and unburied by a dog. He traveled with hobos and for a short time was a scarecrow. Once there was a rabbit who loved a little girl and watched her die. The rabbit danced on the streets of Memphis to the music of a sad little boy. The rabbit’s head was broken in a diner and put together again by a doll mender. And the rabbit swore that he would not make the mistake of loving again. Once there was a rabbit who danced in a garden with the daughter of the woman who had loved him at the beginning of his journey. As they danced in circles it was almost as if they had wings and were flying. Once, oh marvelous once, there was a rabbit who found his way home.”

- The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, script p. 74

Importance of the Setting

Edward Tulane takes place over the span of 20 years, from the mid 1920s to the mid 1940s, and it is set directly against the backdrop of The Great Depression. It is important to discuss and take notice that a story such as this, with an over-arching theme of love, is placed in contrast to a time filled with desperation and loneliness. Of all the characters Edward encounters, Bull, Bryce, and Sarah Ruth, are among those hit hardest during The Great Depression. Despite their circumstances, these characters selflessly take Edward under their wings without a second thought; which powerfully demonstrates the power of love present throughout this story.
Vocabulary

1. **Bewitched**  
   *(v)*: To enchant or charm

2. **China**  
   *(n)*: Any porcelain item

3. **Consequence**  
   *(n)*: The effect or outcome of an earlier event

4. **Constellation**  
   *(n)*: A group of stars given a definitive name

5. **Daft**  
   *(adj)*: Senseless, foolish

6. **Dapper**  
   *(adj)*: Neat, trim, smart

7. **Dignified**  
   *(adj)*: Stately, noble

8. **Disappoint**  
   *(v)*: To fail to fulfill one’s expectations

9. **Gawk**  
   *(v)*: To stare

10. **Grotesque**  
    *(adj)*: Odd, unnatural, bizarre

11. **Humiliating**  
    *(adj)*: Embarrassing

12. **Pneumonia**  
    *(n)*: Dangerous inflammation of the lungs

13. **Refined**  
    *(adj)*: Polite, elegant

14. **Singular**  
    *(adj)*: Extraordinary, remarkable

15. **Voyage**  
    *(n)*: A journey from one place to another

16. **Vulgar**  
    *(adj)*: Improper, indecent

17. **Warthog**  
    *(n)*: A wild pig with warts and tusks
Play Discussion Questions

1. Throughout his journey, Edward is repeatedly lost by those who love him. Have you ever lost something you cherished? How did you deal with it?
2. This show revolves around Edward's story, but all of the people who take him in have their own stories, too. Which was your favorite story and why?
3. Stars are a recurring symbol in this show. How does Edward feel towards the stars? Why are they important to him?
4. If you could be any character, who would you be? Why?
5. What are some of the life lessons Edward learns on his journey? What sort of lessons have you learned in your life that you would like to pass on to someone else?

Theatrical Discussion Questions

1. How is live theatre different from going to see a movie?
2. How did the lights and scenery help tell the story?
3. There are four actors that play almost 25 different characters. How did they change character and make sure the audience understood who they were? Did they use costumes, change their voice, their mannerisms, etc.?
4. What part of the show excited you?
5. Which Edward costume was your favorite and why?
Group Activities

1. Edward travels to a lot of places on his journey. With a partner, draw a map of all the places Edward travels to. Here are some of the key places to keep in mind:
   a) The house on Egypt Street
   b) Lawrence and Nellie’s house
   c) Camps and trains with Bull and Lucy
   d) Bryce and Sarah Ruth’s home
   e) Neal’s Diner in Memphis
   f) The doll shop
   g) Abilene’s garden

2. In a small group, create a chart of all the characters Edward meets. Write down who they are, how they met, and what lesson Edward learned from them.

3. What happens to Edward after Abilene’s daughter takes him home? Either individually, with a partner, or in a small group, write an epilogue of Edward’s life at home with Abilene.

Individual Activities

1. Create a new character for Edward to meet. How do they find one another? What name does he/she give Edward? What does your character teach Edward about love? Be as creative as possible.

2. Edward is given many different outfits throughout his journey. Draw Edward a new outfit and give him a new name.

3. Pellegrina tells the story about the princess and the warthog to teach Edward a lesson. Create your own fairytale with a clear moral. Be prepared to share with the class.
Resources


“Thyrethikciu and Theatre Etiquette for Children.” Missouri University of Science and Technology, Curators of the University of Missouri, www.leachtheatre.mst.edu/theatreetiquette/.

Additional Resources

Free Edward Tulane Study Guide by Wise Guys

https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Miraculous-Journey-of-Edward-Tulane-Novel-Study-Unit-196129

Study Guide set by the Carefree Classroom


Childsplay Study Guide for their 2013 production

http://www.childsplayaz.org/download.php/explore/archive/edwardtulanearchive

South Coast Repertory Study Guide