Teacher’s Guide for

*The Velveteen Rabbit*
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OBJECTIVES OF THE PERFORMANCE

This performance serves to:
- Introduce students to the environment of a professional performing arts center;
- Expose students to a live performance with high caliber performers;
- Maximize students’ enjoyment and appreciation of the performing arts;
- Help students develop an understanding of the arts as a means of expression and communication.

This teacher’s guide is designed to extend the impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, experiential activities, and further reading that can promote learning across the curriculum. This program can be incorporated into study addressing the Learning Standards for the Arts as stipulated by the N.Y. State Education Department. Detailed information is available at: www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/pub/artlearn.pdf.

Learning Standards for the Arts (Theater):

Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theater, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

Theater: Students will create and perform theatre pieces as well as improvisational drama. They will understand and use the basic elements of theatre in their characterizations, improvisations, and play writing. Students will engage in individual and group theatrical and theatre-related tasks, and they will describe the various roles and means of creating, performing, and producing theatre.

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

Theater: Students will know the basic tools, media, and techniques involved in theatrical production. Students will locate and use school, community, and professional resources for theater experiences. Students will understand the job opportunities available in all aspects of theater.

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Theater: Students will reflect on, interpret, and evaluate plays and theatrical performances, both live and recorded, using the language of dramatic criticism. Students will analyze the meaning and role of theater in society. Students will identify ways in which drama/theater connects to film and video, other arts, and other disciplines.

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Theater: Students will gain knowledge about past and present cultures as expressed through theater. They will interpret how theater reflects the beliefs, issues, and events of societies past and present.
ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE AT TILLES CENTER

The concert hall at Tilles Center seats 2,200 people. Hillwood Recital Hall seats 500 people. When you attend a performance at Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, there are a few things you should remember.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- **Groups will be seated in the theater on a first-come, first-serve basis.**
- Tilles Center cannot reserve seats for school performances.
- Plan to arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the show.
- Performances cannot be held for late buses.
- C. W. Post Public Safety will direct buses to parking areas.
- Remain seated on the bus until instructed to unload.
- Shows generally last one hour.

ENTERING THE THEATER

- Please stagger chaperones throughout the group to help keep students in line and moving quickly to the seating area.
- Groups are directed into the theater in the order that they arrive.

GETTING SEATED

- Upon entering the theater for seating, ushers will direct students and teachers row by row. It’s possible that classes may be split up into two or more rows. With adequate adult supervision, a group split into two or more rows should have enough chaperones to ensure safety.
- **Please allow ushers to seat your group in its entirety before making adjustments.** This allows us to continue seating groups that arrive after you. **You are free to rearrange students to new seats and to go to restrooms once the group is seated.**

ENJOY THE SHOW

So that everyone can enjoy the performance:

- There is no food or drink permitted in the theater or lobby areas.
- Photography and audio/video recording is not permitted during the performance.
- Please turn off (or leave behind) all walkmans, pagers, cell phones. The devices may interfere with the theater’s sound system and ringing, alerts, etc. are extremely disruptive to both the audience and the actors.
- Please do not talk, whisper, shuffle or rattle papers or candy wrappers during the performance.
- Please do not leave and re-enter the theater during the performance. **There is no intermission so make sure you visit the restroom prior to the start of the show.**
DISMISSAL
• A Tilles Center representative will come onstage following the performance to provide directions for dismissal. Please remain seated until you have received these directions.

Please Note:
⇒ CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 4 WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IN THE THEATER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES – PLEASE MAKE CHAPERONES AWARE OF THIS POLICY.

⇒ TILLES CENTER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REMOVE STUDENTS (UNDER SUPERVISION OF THEIR TEACHER OR CHAPERONE) FROM THE VENUE SHOULD THEY BE OF INAPPROPRIATE AGE OR A DISRUPTION TO THE PERFORMANCE.

⇒ FOOD AND DRINK ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE LOBBY AREAS OR THE THEATER. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN NOT PROVIDE SEATING IN THE BUILDING FOR STUDENTS TO EAT BAGGED LUNCHES.

Thank you and enjoy the show!
YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

TO THE TEACHER:
The audience is a very important part of the performance. Please talk to your students about what it means to be an audience member and how a “live” performance is different from TV and movies. Please share the following information with your students prior to your visit to Tilles Center. Some performances may involve audience participation so students should be prepared to behave appropriately, given the nature of the performance and the requests of the artists on the stage.

BEING AN AUDIENCE MEMBER:
A theater is an energetically charged space. When the “house lights” (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, everyone feels a thrill of anticipation. By discussing appropriate audience behavior as a class ahead of time, the students will be much better equipped to handle their feelings and express their enthusiasm in acceptable ways during the performance.

Audience members play an important role—until an audience shows up, the performers are only rehearsing! When there is a “great house” (an outstanding audience) it makes the show even better, because the artists feel a live connection with everyone who is watching them.

The most important quality of a good audience member is the ability to respond appropriately to what’s happening on stage... sometimes it’s important to be quiet, but other times, it’s acceptable to laugh, clap, or make noise!

GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBERS KNOW THESE KEY WORDS:

Concentration: Performers use concentration to focus their energy on stage. If the audience watches in a concentrated, quiet way, this supports the performers and they can do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

Quiet: The theater is a very “live” space. This means that sound carries very well, usually all over the auditorium. Theaters are designed in this way so that the voices of singers and actors can be heard. It also means that any sounds in the audience - whispering, rustling papers, or speaking - can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. This can destroy everyone’s concentration and spoil a performance. Do not make any unnecessary noise that would distract the people sitting around you. Be respectful!

Keep in mind that sometimes the performers will request the audience to take part in the action by coming on stage, asking questions, or calling out answers. At these times, it is appropriate to respond in the manner in which you are directed. Above all, listen to the performer(s) on stage and follow directions.
Respect: The audience shows respect for the performers by being attentive. The performers show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their best possible work. Professional actors and musicians always show up for work ready to entertain you. As a good audience member, you have a responsibility to bring your best behavior to the theater as well. Doing so shows respect for the actors—who have rehearsed long hours to prepare for this day—and the audience around you.

Appreciation: Applause is the best way for an audience in a theater to share its enthusiasm and to appreciate the performers. In a musical or opera, it is not usually acceptable to applaud in the middle of a song. However, it is appropriate to applaud after each song has finished.

If the program is of classical music, applaud at the conclusion of the entire piece, not between movements.

At the end of the performance, it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain drops or the lights on stage go dark. During the curtain call, the performers bow to show their appreciation to the audience. If you really enjoyed the performance, you might even thank the artists with a standing ovation!

Common Sense: The same rules of behavior that are appropriate in any formal public place apply to the theater. If audience members conduct themselves in orderly, quiet ways, with each person respecting the space of those around him or her, everyone will be able to fully enjoy the performance experience.
About the Performance

*The Velveteen Rabbit* is the story of the loving relationship between a young boy and a stuffed toy rabbit he receives as a Christmas gift. The other toys in the nursery tease the rabbit because he is only made of velveteen and sawdust. While he does become the inseparable companion of the Boy, the Rabbit yearns for more—he wants to be real. His one toy friend, the wise old Skin Horse, tells him that he can only become real if he is loved by a child and gives love in return.

The Rabbit quickly learns that being real has two dimensions. One is the realness of becoming, through time and circumstance, a truly beloved toy, just as the Skin Horse had promised. The second reality comes to him through the sacrifice and devotion he gives his Boy through a long illness. After the Boy is better, and with the additional help of a little magic, the plush toy is transformed into a real woodland rabbit. Thus, the story explores the notion that loving is truly a creative act, as the rabbit becomes real, first to the Boy and then to the larger world.

Seen from that perspective, the Rabbit stands as a symbol of unqualified love and the innocence of childhood. We think it is particularly important today, in a time of war, strife and disruption, to show children the importance of love and fidelity, and the magic of stories to illuminate the world around them. To show young people an alternative to violence—how a compelling and loving relationship can bring about change and transformation—is to teach a critically important lesson. It is equally important, in our time of materialism, complexity and technology, to remind both children and parents of the value of a simple stuffed toy, as friend and companion, a faithful source of comfort.

Looking even deeper into the pages of *The Velveteen Rabbit*—behind its pastel illustrations and fanciful notions about conversations in the toy box—we find that the story is actually about the process of growing up. As the Rabbit compares himself to the real woodland rabbits he sees in the meadow behind the Boy’s house, he realizes that they have legs that hop and dance and jump, while his are only folded and sewn under him to help him sit straight. “Finding his legs” at the end of the show, after a magic fairy helps him become truly real, is a metaphor for how we all had to scramble to keep our footing in an ever-changing world, as we grew from children to adults. The Rabbit’s joy at being able to leap and dance through the meadow grasses with the other rabbits is not unlike our own feelings of independence as we acquired new skills and abilities.

In Enchantment Theatre’s adaptation of this classic tale, many things happen that will not be found in the pages of the book. As the Boy and his Rabbit sit reading a large book, for
example, the pop-up pages come startling to life, leading to an outer space adventure, an attack by pirates and a game played amidst the cactus and cowboy hats of the old West. This was done to add to the theatricality of the show—in effect, to make visible and explicit that which was only implied or suggested in the book itself. The translation from the page to the stage required some change in what the audience sees, but our adaptation remains faithful to the essential story of the book. While the story is set in Victorian England, it remains relevant to the lives of today’s young children.

*For a free illustrated copy of Margery William’s The Velveteen Rabbit, go to [http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/williams/rabbit/rabbit.html](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/williams/rabbit/rabbit.html).
About the Company

Enchantment Theatre Company is a professional non-profit arts organization based in Philadelphia whose mission is to create original theater for children and families. For more than 25 years, the company has performed throughout the United States and the Far East, presenting imaginative and innovative theatrical productions for school groups and families. Originally a privately-owned touring company, Enchantment put down new roots in Philadelphia in 2000, when it was reestablished there as a resident non-profit theater. While dedicated to serving its home community, the company also maintains an extensive national touring schedule that includes performances on its own and in collaboration with the nation’s finest symphony orchestras.

Perhaps the best way to explain the qualities that distinguish Enchantment is to concentrate on the system of values that underscores its work. These are: originality, imagination, transformation and community. Everything Enchantment does reflects and is supported by these important values—from the company’s business decisions to how it presents itself on stage. These values, along with the company’s mission and set of beliefs, are a reminder of what we expect of ourselves. They also define what we promise to our audiences.

In its home city, Enchantment reaches an audience of about 12,000 for its innovative and imaginative holiday presentations of fables, fairy tales and literary classics for children. On tour across the United States each year, the theater group reaches more than 150,000 people in 35-40 states. The Velveteen Rabbit began its tour in New Jersey on September 30, 2007 and is expected to perform in about 63 venues in 28 states by the time the tour ends in May 2008. Based on long experience, about 80% of that audience will be children from 5-12 who delight in the company’s fantastic life-size puppets, skilled masked actors, original music and startling feats of magic and illusion. It is to their infectious laughs, astonished gasps and enthusiastic applause that Enchantment is dedicated.

Mission Statement
Enchantment Theatre Company exists to create original theater for young audiences and families. We accomplish this through the imaginative telling of stories that inspire, challenge and enrich our audiences, on stage and in the classroom. In doing so, we engage the imagination and spirit of our audience until a transformation occurs and the true grace of our mutual humanity is revealed.

Educational materials provided, in part, by The Enchantment Theatre Company
About the Author

Margery Williams wrote more than 25 novels and children’s books in her lifetime, but perhaps none more famous—and more cherished—than *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Published in 1922 as her first American work, the book became an instant classic, leading to numerous adaptations for children’s theater, radio, TV and the movies.

She was born in London in 1881. As a young child, she had a vivid imagination that inspired her to create different personalities for each of her toys. When she was about seven, her father died suddenly, and shortly thereafter, she and her family moved to the United States, ultimately settling on a farm in Pennsylvania. She grew up with a love for reading and soon developed an equal passion for writing. By the time she was 17, Margery Williams had decided to become a professional writer. She began by writing children’s stories for a British company that published Christmas books. To further her writing career, she moved back to London at the age of 19. In 1902, she published the first of several novels for adults, but surprisingly, none were successful.

After World War I, having married and raised two children, Williams took her family back to the United States, seeking its safety and prosperity. She returned to writing but turned her focus back to children’s books. Watching her children play with toys and animals reminded her of her own childhood, and the stories she had woven around each of her toys. This provided the inspiration for *The Velveteen Rabbit or How Toys Become Real*. She later said about her book, “*The Velveteen Rabbit* became the beginning of all the stories I have written since. By thinking about toys and remembering them, they suddenly became very much alive.”

In fact, most of her subsequent books continued her preoccupation with toys coming to life and the ability of inanimate objects and animals to express human emotion. In 1925, for example, her book, *Poor Cecco* came out, providing a wonderful adventure story about a wooden dog that sets off to see the world. That same year, she wrote *The Little Wooden Doll*, illustrated by her daughter, Pamela. *The Skin Horse*, published in 1927, was also illustrated by her daughter.

Margery Williams once said, “Nothing is easier to write than a story for children; few things are harder, as any writer knows, than to achieve a story that children will really like.” Her writings ranged widely, including translations, educational readers and even a travel book about Paris. Her book, *Winterbound*, was runner up for the Newbury Medal in 1937; it was awarded that Honor retroactively in 1971. It’s a novel for young adults, about two teenage girls, who have to assume grown-up responsibilities for two siblings when their parents leave home suddenly.

Educational materials provided, in part, by The Enchantment Theatre Company
About the Composer/Arranger

Don Sebesky is one of the most talented and respected composer-arrangers in music today. His sensitivity and versatility have enabled him to produce an enormous body of work. As a recording artist, and through his collaborations with other artists, Mr. Sebesky has received 25 Grammy nominations (three-time winner), three Tony nominations (2000 winner), two Drama Desk Awards, three Emmy nominations, and four Clio Awards.

Wide in scope, Mr. Sebesky’s work has included composing, arranging, and producing for such well known popular artists as Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Vanessa Williams, Britney Spears, Rod Stewart, Chet Baker, Cyndi Lauper, Barry Manilow, Christina Aguilera, and George Benson, among many others. As a composer, arranger, and conductor, he has worked with such orchestras as the London Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Boston Pops, The New York Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic of London, and the Toronto Symphony. His Broadway theater credits include the 2007 production of Dr. Zhivago, Sweet Charity, Kiss Me Kate (2000 Tony Award), Bells Are Ringing, Parade, The Life, Cyrano, The Goodbye Girl, Will Rogers Folies, Flower Drum Song, and Sinatra at Radio City. Among his film credits are The Rosary Murders (starring Donald Sutherland), Hollow Image (starring Morgan Freeman), The Last of the Belles (starring Susan Sarandon), Let’s Get Lost (starring Chet Baker – Best Documentary at the Cannes Film Festival), The People Next Door (starring Eli Wallach and Julie Harris), Time Piece (Jim Henson Productions – Academy Award nomination for Best Short Subject), and How To Pick Up Girls (starring Desi Arnaz, Jr.). For television, Mr. Sebesky’s work has included Allegra’s Window on Nickelodeon (Emmy Award), The Edge of Night on ABC (Emmy Award), and Guiding Light on CBS (Emmy Award). As a recording artist, Mr. Sebesky’s work includes five recordings under his own name, all of which were Grammy nominated. Included are Giant Box, Rape of El Morro, Symphonic Sondheim, I Remember Bill (1999 Grammy Award), and Joyful Noise (winner of two Grammy Awards in 2000). Mr. Sebesky has also created the music for many well known commercials. Among the companies he has represented are: Corning (Clio Award), Hanes, Hallmark, Dodge Trucks, General Electric (Clio Award), Hershey’s, Cheerios, Calvin Klein (Clio Award), Nike, Oil of Olay, Pepsi, and Kodak.
Her final book, *Forward Commandos*, was published during World War II in 1944. It includes inspirational stories of wartime heroism. During that same year, Margery Williams became ill and died at age 63.
Cultural Context

AN INTRODUCTION TO MASKS AND PUPPETS

Masks: In this production of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, all of the actors wear masks and some of the characters in the play are puppets. Though masks are rare in American contemporary theatre, masks have been used since the very beginning of theater. The early Romans used enormous masks that exaggerated human characteristics and enhanced the actor’s presence in the huge amphitheaters of their day. Greek Theatre used masks that were human scale to designate tragic and comic characters. Masks have been used in the early Christian church after the ninth century and were revived during the Renaissance in Italy with the Commedia dell’Arte. Theater throughout Asia has used masks to create archetypal characters, human and divine. In Balinese theatrical tradition, masks keep ancient and mythological figures recognizable to a contemporary audience, preserving a rare and beautiful culture. Though used differently in every culture, the mask universally facilitates a transformation of the actor and the audience.

A mask allows the actor to submerge his ego in the service of an archetypal role whose significance dwarfs his own personality...The power of the mask is rooted in paradox, in the fusion of opposites. It brings together the self and the other by enabling us to look at the world through someone else’s face. It merges past and present by reflecting faces that are the likenesses of both our ancestors and our neighbors. A mask is a potent metaphor for the coalescence of the universal and the particular, immobility and change, disguise and revelation.


Puppets: Puppets have a long and esteemed history. They have been used to represent gods, noblemen and everyday people. In the history of every culture, puppets can be found, from the tombs of the Pharaohs to the Italian marionette and the English Punch and Judy. The Bunraku Puppet Theatre of Japan has been in existence continuously since the seventeenth century. In the early days of Bunraku, the greatest playwrights preferred writing for puppets rather than for live actors. Puppets are similar to the mask in their fascination and power. We accept that this carved being is real and alive, and we invest it with an intensified life of our own imagining. Because of this puppets can take an audience further and deeper into what is true. Audiences bring more of themselves to mask and puppet theater because they are required to imagine more. Masks and puppets live in a world of heightened reality. Used with art and skill, they can free the actor and the audience from what is ordinary and mundane, and help theater do what it does at its best: expand boundaries, free the imagination, inspire dreams, transform possibilities and teach us about ourselves.
**AN INTRODUCTION TO MAGIC**

To early humans, the world was filled with magic – stars glittered and constellations moved, lightning flashed and fire appeared out of the sky, nature went through cycles of death and rebirth. Ancient people wished to understand and control their world the same as people do today. Shamans and priests used magic in their ceremonies to assuage the gods, gain support of nature and to give their tribe a sense that they could control their fate. Those who performed magic became both revered and feared. As humans evolved, both holy men and con men were associated with the word ‘magic’: soothsayer and sorcerer; wise man and wizard; mystic and fortune-teller; prophet and trickster. Over time the practice of the magical arts transformed into the religion, art and science that we know today.

In the eighteenth century magic grew into an art form, practiced to entertain and enchant. Magicians performed sleight of hand and illusion to dazzle their audiences, using misdirection, invention and skill. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries magic flourished and elaborate magic productions toured the world. Today magic continues to delight audiences with skillful performers who take on personas both mysterious and comic. Enchantment Theatre uses magic in an innovative way to enhance the magical aspects of the tales that it tells. In the beginning of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the boy’s Christmas presents magically appear, defining the world of the play as one with extraordinary possibilities.

Discovering and learning about the art of magic is possible for everyone. There are books and magazines in libraries that explain and teach the principles and practices of the art. But one aspect of magic that makes it quite special is that there is a secret to how it’s done. The tradition of keeping magic a secret exists to preserve the foundation of this extraordinary art form and to keep it surprising and marvelous for each new generation.
Before you see the Performance

Activity One: Prepare for the Play
Read the introductory sections about The Velveteen Rabbit and read the story (available at http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/williams/rabbit/rabbit.html) aloud with your class. Then ask the students the following questions for discussion:

• If you were a doll, do you think you would want to become a real boy or girl?

• Think about your own toys.
  a. Which ones have you had the longest?
  b. Do you forget about old toys when you get new ones?
  c. Do you have a favorite toy?

• What do you think the “main idea” of the story is?
  a. What toy told Velveteen Rabbit about becoming real?
  b. What did he mean?
  c. What did the Fairy say it means to be real?

• How is the Velveteen Rabbit different from the other toys in the nursery?
  a. From the boy?
  b. From the rabbits outside?
  c. Who is more real?
  d. Describe a time when you felt different than everyone around you.

• Describe the relationship between the boy and his parents.
  a. Between the boy and Nana.
  b. Between the boy and the Rabbit.
  c. Between the Skin-Horse and the Rabbit.

• How did the Velveteen Rabbit become real at the end of this story? If the boy never got sick, do you think the Velveteen Rabbit would have become real?

• The Rabbit comforted and cared for the boy when he was sick. You can probably think of a time when a parent or family member has cared for you when you needed help. Can you think of a time when you cared for an older person who was in a similar situation?

Activity Two: Explore Puppets
In this production, the Velveteen Rabbit and Nana are played by puppets. Puppets ask the audience to use their imagination to help bring them to life. They also allow a small cast of actors to play many different roles. Puppets, like masks, also help a character become bigger than life. They can represent different exaggerated qualities of a person or an animal. Based on the type of puppet used and the way it moves, a character can be understood at first sight as silly, scary, or ethereal.

The following are some ways you may introduce puppetry to your students before they see
The Velveteen Rabbit:

- Make a list on the blackboard of all of the different kinds of puppets that can be used: hand puppets, string puppets (marionettes), rod puppets, shadow puppets. To see examples of all different kinds of puppets, visit: www.puppet.org.
- Have the students make a simple hand puppet from a sock. What kind of expressions and characters can they portray?
- Have the students find or bring objects to the class that they wouldn’t ordinarily think of as a puppet -- a paper bag, a scarf, a folded piece of paper. Can the students make their object come to life? What are the actions the puppet performs that make it look real?
- Choose one character from The Velveteen Rabbit and sketch a design of a puppet of that character. What type of puppet would it be? How would it move? What type of voice would you give it?

Activity Three: Magic and Transformation

The Velveteen Rabbit is not a fairy tale. Whereas most fairy tales that exist today have been passed down from story-teller to story-teller, from grandparent to child, and don’t have an author associated with them, The Velveteen Rabbit was written as a piece of literature and we know who the author is. However, The Velveteen Rabbit possesses an essential element that is common to most fairy tales: the existence of magic and specifically the use of magic as a vehicle for an inexplicable transformation to occur. Use the following questions and exercises to prompt a discussion about magic:

- What role does magic play in this story?
- Do you believe this story? Why or why not?
- Discuss the Rabbit’s transformation at the end of the story.
  a. Make a list of words describing the Rabbit as a stuffed toy.
  b. Make another list of words describing the Rabbit after his transformation.
  c. Create a human character based on the words in each list.
- What if The Velveteen Rabbit was not a story in a book but a true story? How would you explain the Rabbit’s transformation?

Activity Four: The Role of Music

The music in this production was composed by Don Sebesky with additional music composed by Charles Gilbert. The music underscores the action and helps the performers tell the story. It is wonderfully evocative and theatrical, meaning that if you sit and listen to the music with your eyes closed, you can feel and see with your inner eye what is happening in the story. To illustrate the role of music in storytelling, try the following activity:

Ask your students to recall a personal experience (for example, a family vacation, first day of school). Ask one student to tell his/her story to the class. After he/she is finished, have your
student retell the same story. This time, play a dynamic track of music (preferably instrumental) to underscore the story. Ask the class how this music affected the story.

Remind your students when they attend the performance, to pay attention to the music and to remember how the music created different moods within the piece.

Activity Five: The Importance of Imagination
The setting of this play is a stage with curtains that open to reveal different locations. *The Velveteen Rabbit* takes place with very little scenery, but with costumes, puppets, masks, props, and evocative lighting. The play invites the audience to use their imagination to see a garden, a child’s bedroom, and a nursery piled with toys. Encourage your students to start imagining the play even before they see it:

- From reading *The Velveteen Rabbit*, what do you imagine they will see on stage?
- Draw a scene from the story that you see in your imagination.
After you see the Performance

Activity One: Reflection
In discussing a performance, it is often more productive to ask the question “What did you see in the production?” or “What do you remember most strongly about the performance?” rather than “Did you like the performance?” The first two questions lead to observation or analysis of the performance, encouraging recall of details, while the third question encourages more judgmental responses. Although audience members respond positively and/or negatively to a work of art, critique should come in later in the discussion process. Discussion of which aspects of a performance remain in one’s memory often reveals the artistic choices at the heart of a work. Have students describe a memorable moment from the performance in various ways — verbally, in writing, by drawing, or through movement.

Activity Two: Respond to the Play
Review the performance and ask students to describe, with as much detail, what they remember. What type of costumes did they see? How many characters were in the story? How did the actors transform themselves to play different characters? What happened in the story that was exciting? Scary? Funny? What kind of music was used?

Ask the students to help make a list of different things that happened in the performance. Write these down on the board. Questions to ask the students:
- What character did you like the most? Why?
- How did the boy change throughout the story?
  a. How did the Velveteen Rabbit change both physically and in other ways?
  b. Tell a story about a time in your life when you felt changed or transformed.
- Did the music play an important role in the story? How? Can you describe the music?
- How did the use of masks affect the telling of the story?
  a. How did the masks come to life?
  b. Did you forget the actors were wearing masks?
- How did the use of puppets affect the story? Did you forget they were puppets and accept them as people?
- Describe some of the puppets you saw? Why do you suppose they were designed that way?
- The story was told by an unseen narrator and no actor spoke. How did you know what the characters were feeling?
- What surprised you the most in the play?
- How is being at the theatre different than being at the movies?
- What do you think theatre brings to a community?
Activity Three: Communication in a Performance:

In *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the actors were able to communicate ideas and feelings without using words. Discuss with the students how the actors let the audience know what was going on, even when they weren’t using their voices. Use the following activities to explore the possibilities of communicating without speaking:

- Imagine you are holding a very heavy bowling bowl. Pass it around the circle without speaking and without dropping it! Think about how you have to stand to hold a heavy object, what your muscles feel like, how slowly you have to move. Give prompts like, “Be ready for it! It’s heavy. Make sure your neighbor has it before you let go!” When it’s gone all the way around, try passing around a very light feather, a hot potato, a live frog. “Don’t let it get away!” Don’t say what it is you are passing, have the students guess based on how you handle the imaginary object.

- Ask students to think of actions or gestures they use to communicate. For example, can they think of ways to act surprised using only their face? Have the students make different faces while seated: fear, anger, happiness, etc. How can they use their hands also?

- Make a space in the classroom for the students to move freely. Tell the students they are standing on a towel on a very hot beach and in order to get to the ocean they must walk through the scalding hot sand. Ouch! How do they move across the space? Other suggestions for environments to move through:
  - A sidewalk covered with chewed bubble gum
  - A frozen pond
  - A very steep hill
  - A pond scattered with stepping stones
  - The surface of the moon
  - A giant bowl of Jell-O

- Extend the space exploration to include activities:
  - Carefully paint a door. After finishing, open the door and step through it without getting any paint on your clothes.
  - Build a snowman. The teacher should be able to tell how big the snow man is by how the student uses the space.

- To conclude, ask the students to list the ways they saw one another communicate without using words (through facial expressions, movement, gesture).

Activity Four: Writing Our Own Stories

Get your students to start writing their own stories with the following activities:

- Think about a favorite toy that you own. Imagine that this toy could think and feel like the Velveteen Rabbit. Write a story about this toy becoming real.

- Pretend you are a toy. Write a letter applying for a position in a child’s toy box. Include experience, qualifications, and special talents. Have students exchange letters and respond.
Activity Five: Magic and Illusion
In fiction, magic is often used to explain things that are difficult to understand. Margery Williams uses magic in The Velveteen Rabbit to illustrate the Velveteen Rabbit’s transformation. As a class, look at some optical illusions. (You may have in your school library The Great Book of Optical Illusions by Gyles Brandreth, Sterling Publishing Company, New York City, 1985). Ask:

• What is an illusion? What is real?
• How is magic used in this production? List the kinds of magic you saw.
• Have you ever loved a toy so much, you treated it as though it were real? Is it possible to “believe” something is real, even when you “know” that it is not? Have them write down their experience or share it with the group.

Activity Six: The Art in Theater
Have the students draw a picture of their favorite character from The Velveteen Rabbit.

• Create shadow puppets of some Velveteen Rabbit characters and perform a mini-shadow show in the classroom.
• Have the class make masks using paper plates or paper bags. (An excellent book on masks and mask construction is Mask making by Carole Sivin, Davis Publications Inc., Worcester, MA, 1986.)
BUNNY’S WORD SEARCH

Find these hidden vocabulary words from the play:

PIRATE
RABBIT
HORSE
SOLDIER
NURSERY
EXPLORER
CUPBOARD
VELVETEEN
JUNGLE
SAWDUST
MAGIC
PILOT
CAPTAIN
GARDEN
REAL
FAIRY
FRIENDS
SEASIDE

Word Search provided by www.companyoffools.org

The Velveteen Rabbit    Page 22
Scavenger Hunt!

When you went to see *The Velveteen Rabbit*, you were a part of an audience of many different people: people from different schools, different neighborhoods, of different ages. You all saw the same play, but you may not all have the same ideas about it. The greatest thing about theatre is that we all experience it in different ways. What is silly to you may be scary to someone else. Complete the scavenger hunt on the next page to find out what your classmates felt about *The Velveteen Rabbit*. You may be surprised!

1. Find 5 people who laughed at some point during the performance.

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

2. Find 1 person whose favorite part was the same as yours. What part was it?

   ____________________________________________________

3. Find 2 people who were sad when the rabbit got separated from the boy.

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

4. Find 4 people whose favorite part was the magic. What was their favorite trick?

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

5. Find 2 people who loved the costumes. What were their favorite costumes?

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

6. Find 1 person who thinks he/she has a magic trick figured out. Ask them to explain the trick.

   ____________________________________________________

7. Find 2 people who were afraid that the boy was going to die.

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
8. If your class was performing *The Velveteen Rabbit*, who would like to play, and why?  
The boy?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

The Rabbit?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

Nana?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

The other toys in the nursery?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

The Fairy?

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________
The Velveteen Rabbit

Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>real</th>
<th>fever</th>
<th>loved</th>
<th>flower</th>
<th>skin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>velveteen</td>
<td>burn</td>
<td>hind</td>
<td>rabbit</td>
<td>tear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A boy got a stuffed ______________________ for Christmas.

2. The rabbit was covered in ______________________ fabric.

3. The ______________________ horse told the rabbit about becoming real.

4. The boy ______________________ the rabbit very much.

5. The real rabbits said the toy rabbit had no ______________________ legs.

6. The boy became sick with scarlet ______________________.

7. To get rid of the germs, the doctor said to ______________________ the rabbit.

8. The rabbit shed a ______________________ when he thought about his life with the boy.

9. A fairy appeared from inside a ______________________.

10. The fairy turned the rabbit ______________________.
Color the Velveteen Rabbit!
Glossary of Terms in Velveteen Rabbit

bracken—a large bush with extending ferns

burrows—a hole or tunnel dug as a living space by a small animal such as a rabbit

cupboard—a piece of furniture, either built-in or freestanding, used for storing food or kitchen and domestic items

dingy—dirty-looking, discolored, or faded

disinfect—to clean something so as to destroy disease-carrying microorganisms and prevent infection

flushed—red in the face

rustle—to make a swishing or soft crackling sound such as that made by dry leaves rubbing together, or cause something to make such a sound

mantelpiece—fireplace surround

parcel—one or more things wrapped up together in paper or other packaging

plaything—a toy or other object with which to play

real—having actual physical existence

sateen—a cotton or polyester fabric with a shiny side intended to look like satin

sawdust—tiny particles of wood produced when wood is sawed

scarlet fever—a contagious bacterial infection marked by fever, a sore throat, and a red rash, mainly affecting children

shabby—worn out, frayed, or threadbare after long use

splendid—magnificent

velveteen—a brushed fabric with a soft pile like velvet

whiskers—a long stiff hair growing near the mouth of some mammals such as cats, mice, and rabbits
ELEMENTS OF A SHOW

choreography—patterns of movement and stillness

classic—having lasting significance or worth; enduring

climax—the crucial moment, turning point, or dramatic high point in the action of a play, book, story, or film that can bring the previous events together, usually at the end

costumes—what the performer wears to help enhance qualities of the character that they are portraying

curtain call—the appearance of performers or a performer at the end of the show to receive applause from the audience. They enter in order of importance, with the stars coming last and usually taking more than one bow

dialogue—conversation in a play, usually between two or more characters

director—a person who creates an overall concept for a production, supervises all elements of the production and guides the performers in the show

dramatization—a work adapted from another medium, such as a novel, for dramatic presentation

interpretation—the expression through performance of a particular concept of a role, scene, play, or musical composition

lighting effects—the atmosphere, moods, and time of day created by the use of light

monologue—a form of dramatic entertainment or comedic solo by a single speaker

music—patterned sound changes in pitch, rhythm, loudness, melody and other qualities, capable of setting mood, time, or atmosphere

narrator—a person who reads or speaks lines that advance a story, apart from the characters’ lines

producer—a person responsible for mounting and financing a production, selecting the material, choosing the creative artists, staff, and administration, arranging the publicity

props—a property which a performer handles on stage, ex: a wallet, an umbrella, or a letter

scene—unit within a play

scenery—onstage decoration to help show the place and period of the show
script—the written text of a play. It includes what is said and what is to happen

sketch—a hasty or un-detailed drawing or painting often made as a preliminary study

sound effects—sounds characteristic of humans, animals, objects, and forces of nature (e.g. wind, rain) that can be performed live or pre-recorded

storyteller—one who relates stories or anecdotes

translation—changing the text from one language to another by selecting words that have the same meaning and retains the spirit and tone of the text
PLACES IN THE THEATER

**lobby**—this is the first place you walk into, where the audience waits before the show

**box office**—this is where audience members can buy tickets to shows

**house**—the auditorium or area where the audience sits

**orchestra seats**—seats nearest the stage

**balconies**—upper levels of seating

**light booth and sound booth**—located at the top of the balcony or toward the back of the house, the lights and sound for the production are controlled from these booths

**stage**—area where the performance takes place, often raised

**wings**—area to the right and left of the stage that the audience can’t see, sometimes scenery is stored here, and performers come on and off stage from here

**dressing room**—place where performers put on makeup, change clothes, and store their costumes for a show
Resources

Student Resources


Teacher Resources


Websites
www.enchantmenttheatre.org
Enchantment Theatre Company

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/rabbits/
The Humane Society of the United States

http://www.rabbit.org/links/history.html
Rabbits in history

VHS/DVD
The Velveteen Rabbit (2007), DVD

Educational materials provided, in part, by The Enchantment Theatre Company
Emergency Cancellations

Tilles Center Performance Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather

If schools throughout the area are closed due to inclement weather, Tilles Center performances will be cancelled. If, on the day prior to a performance, it appears that inclement weather may cause a performance to be cancelled, all schools will be called by our staff to alert them to this possibility. *Schools should be advised to call 516 299-3379 the morning of the performance to determine if a performance has been cancelled.* A message will be posted on this number by 6:30 AM indicating if the performance has been cancelled.

If a performance is cancelled, Tilles Center will attempt to reschedule performances on a date convenient to the majority of schools booked for the performance.
Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, at LIU Post, in Brookville, New York, is Long Island’s premier concert hall. Under the leadership of Executive Director Elliott Sroka, Tilles Center presents over seventy events each season in music, dance and theater, featuring world renowned artists. The Center is also the theatrical home for many of Long Island’s leading arts organizations, including the Long Island Philharmonic.

Among the artists and organizations that have been presented by Tilles Center are the New York Philharmonic, Itzhak Perlman, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Wynton Marsalis, Patti LuPone, The Boston Pops, Herbie Hancock, Soweto Gospel Choir, Emanuel Ax., Idina Menzel, The Shanghai String Quartet, and Chris Botti.

Tilles Center has a 2,242 seat main hall and a 490 seat, more intimate Hillwood Recital Hall. The smaller theater features chamber music, cabaret, solos recitals, and theater productions for children and adults.

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School Partnership Program

An intensive part of Tilles Center’s Arts Education program is the School Partnership program, modeled on the highly acclaimed aesthetic education program that has evolved over a 35 year period at Lincoln Center. The Partnership is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning about the arts, applicable to all grade levels and academic disciplines. The Partnership inspires students and teachers to approach the arts with an open mind and to gain insights into the creative process. Attendance at professional performances at Tilles Center and viewing art works at museums is combined with experiential in-school workshops. Led by teaching artists and teachers, students, explore their own artistic capabilities while strengthening essential skills – abstract thinking, teamwork, critical judgment, problem solving. Guided to a deeper level of understanding, students learn what to look for, and listen to, in a performance or work of art.

The School Partnership works with students pre k - high school and provides professional development for teachers. New teachers who participate in the School Partnership program attend an introductory course in Aesthetic Education, presented at Tilles Center for one week in the summer.

For information about the School Partnership program and other performances visit our website: [www.tillescenter.org](http://www.tillescenter.org) or call (516) 299-2752.
ARTS EDUCATION STAFF

Dr. Elliott Sroka,
Executive Director, Tilles Center

Stephanie Turner,
Director of Arts Education, Tilles Center

Deborah Robbins,
Assistant Director of Arts Education

For information call (516) 299-2752 or visit our website at www.tillescenter.org

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