

PARENT GUIDE: BUNNICULA

We are excited for your upcoming visit to Lifeline Theatre to see *Bunnacula*. This guide will help you prepare your family for the theatre experience and any moments that might be overwhelming.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Our play is narrated by Harold, the dog belonging to the Monroe family. When the family goes out to the movies one evening, they discover an abandoned rabbit and bring him home. The rabbit is named Bunnacula (a play on *Dracula*, the movie they were watching when the rabbit was discovered). The family cat, Chester, is immediately suspicious of Bunnacula and when the family discovers a tomato completely drained of its juices, Chester insists that Bunnacula is a vampire bunny. The family grows concerned after more vegetables are drained of their juices and Petey believes it to be happening due to pesticides in the food. Chester, convinced that Bunnacula is a threat to everyone, spends each night blocking his cage to prevent him from getting food. When Harold catches Chester in the act, he comes up with a plan to feed Bunnacula (from the conveniently placed bowl of salad on the table). Chester finds out, leaps on the table and chaos ensues. Mom decides that all of the pets need to go to the vet, who quickly identifies the problems, and everything returns to normal.

The running time of the show is just under 50 minutes with no intermission.

ACTORS

There are five actors in the play with two that are double-cast. The actors playing Mom, Petey, and Harold play just those characters, while the actor playing Chester appears as Tobey at the beginning of the play and the actor playing Dad has a brief appearance as the Vet near the end of the play. Chester and Harold never talk directly to the human characters and make sounds occasionally as a cat and dog (meows, barks, and howls). The character of Bunnacula is a puppet.

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SCENERY, PROPS & PUPPETS

The set for the play is a typical dining and living room with a throwback to the 1970's (when the book was written). Shadow puppets are used heavily throughout the play on the three backdrops: sometimes as silhouettes of the actors, but mostly as objects (cars, caravans) or animals (Bunnacula, cats, etc).

The main puppet in the play is Bunnacula, who spends most of the time in his cage. He does come out towards the end of the play and the actors can move his nose and head back and forth and make him wink.

The props are all very typical household items: fake plants, books, etc. The food props are all fake (the white tomato, garlic bulbs, a steak).

LIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Bunniuca is an *a cappella* musical with various sound effects used throughout to underscore certain events and to punctuate sillier moments. There are lots of thunder and lightning cues and an organ is used frequently for interlude music or as a stinger in conversation.

The house lights will be left up during the show and the sound will be reduced by approximately 20%.

THEATRE LAYOUT

When you enter the theatre, you will walk across the stage floor and up two steps to the first row of seats. The seating is eight rows total, and all stadium style so you have a good view of the stage from anywhere.

There is a second entrance into the theatre in the middle of the seating bank. This has stairs and a small hallway that leads back out to our lobby. The main entrance to the theatre will be left open during the performance so if anyone needs to take a break it will be easy to enter/exit.

There will be a yellow line on the stage floor indicating the path to come in/out of the theatre so that the pathway is safe during the show.

BUNNICULA

PARENT CUE SHEET

Action on Stage	Sensory Sensitivities & Difficult Concepts
House Manager will give a curtain speech	Stage lights will dim.
Opening number	As the stage goes dark, an organ is heard playing the theme song of <i>Bunnacula</i> as thunder is heard and lightning flashes. Musical number: "BUNNICULA". Chester, Petey, Mom, and Dad all enter from behind backdrops as each sings their first lines. When they come together, a large shadow puppet of a bunny with red eyes is seen on the backdrop behind them.
Introduction	Musical Number continues. Harold enters through the center stairs and his shadow is seen onstage as he enters. At the end of the number, the actors use flashlights pointed at the left backdrop and the word "Bunnacula" appears.
The Monroes bring Bunnacula home	As Harold introduces the Monroes, they appear in silhouette on the left backdrop. Thunder and rain are heard. A car is heard pulling into a driveway. As the Monroes explain how they discovered Bunnacula, Tobey and Petey argue and bicker. Bunnacula is brought out of his box along with a note. The note is projected onto the right backdrop.
Naming Bunnacula	An organ sting and thunder is heard when Mom comes up with the name Bunnacula.
Chester's suspicions	Musical number: "A LITERARI CAT". During the number, a cat chorus appears as shadow puppets on the right backdrop. Harold howls for an extended moment during the song. As Chester explains her suspicions to Harold, a clock chiming and violin playing are heard and there are multiple shadow puppets during the scene on the left and right backdrops: a violin playing, a caravan, and a station wagon; also, a cartoon version of Bunnacula with red eyes is shown and then it blurs and turns into a version with large fangs. Chester pulls off the cover of Bunnacula's cage quickly to reveal Bunnacula still in his cage.
The white tomato	Dad discovers a white tomato. There are two organ sting sounds and a thunder sound cue during the scene.
Midnight snack	Chester and Harold try to both sit on the chair but don't fit, so Chester falls to the floor. Violin music plays, the cover on Bunnacula's cage falls off, and the cage is suddenly empty. The sound of the refrigerator opening is heard, along with eating and slurping sounds. Harold and Chester use flashlights and go to investigate the kitchen, but Bunnacula is not there. As they look for the rabbit, the Bunnacula puppet peers out from behind the backdrop and then throws a zucchini.

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Action on Stage	Sensory Sensitivities & Difficult Concepts
“Bunnacula”	Musical number: “BUNNICULA”. The background vocals are done by the cast backstage (unseen). Chester and Harold dance a tango during the song. There is a longer organ interlude after the scene.
White vegetables/Chester's warning	Mom discovers white carrots and an organ sting punctuates her discovery. Musical Number: “THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON ‘ROUND HERE’”. The background vocals are done backstage again for this number. Chester pantomimes as Dracula and an organ underscores her. She also “bites” Harold on the neck to try to warn the family. Petey reprises “THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON ‘ROUND HERE’” at the end of the scene.
Chester tries garlic	Chester brings out garlic to spread around Bunnacula's cage. Dad and Petey exclaim when they smell the garlic. Dad, Petey, Chester, and Harold reprise “THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON ‘ROUND HERE’”.
Chester tries a steak	The sound of water spraying is heard offstage as Chester gets a bath. Chester tries to pound a steak into Bunnacula (not following the directions of her <i>Mark of the Vampire</i> book correctly). Mom and Dad catch her in the act. Musical Number: “THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON ‘ROUND HERE’”. All of the actors sing different parts of the reprise in an overlapping fashion. Dad exclaims loudly when he discovers Harold with his steak. Thunder and lightning cues end the scene.
Chester plays nice	Harold discovers that Chester has been blocking Bunnacula from getting out of his cage each night, which is starving him. An organ sting is heard. Musical Number: “BUNNICULA”. The cast singing backup vocals appear with white scarves as if they are a choir. Harold brings Bunnacula out of his cage.
Harold tries to feed Bunnacula	Harold jumps and rolls on the floor as if in <i>Mission Impossible</i> . Harold brings Bunnacula out of his cage to eat out of a bowl of salad. Chester lunges at the table when she sees Bunnacula eating. Harold and Bunnacula fall to the floor and Mom pulls Chester off the table.
The vet	The vet speaks in a German accent. There are shadow puppets of a rabbit as the vet diagnoses each animal.
Chester's therapy	The family goes home and things return to normal. Chester screams a few times as she does the therapy technique recommended by the vet.
Finale/Bows	Organ sting brings in the closing number. Musical Number: “BUNNICULA”. The final chord of the song may be loud.