



KidSeries Season

2018-19



Educator Study Guide

Bunnacula (Fall 2018)
We Found a Hat (Winter 2019)
Time Warp Trio (Spring 2019)

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Bunnicula



Adaptation and lyrics by James Sie

Music by Doug Wood

Directed by Anthony Kayer

Based on the book by Deborah and James Howe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction to the Student Matinee Program
 - Preparing for your Field Trip
 - Traditional Plays vs. Literary Adaptations
 - Jobs in the Theatre
- 6 Synopsis of the Play
- 7 Visual Vocabulary of the Play
- 8-11 Activity Pages
 - Chester's Imagination
 - Help Bunnicula Find the Carrots!
 - What Are You Afraid Of?
 - Bunnicula Word Search
- 12 Further Adventures: Drama Games relating to *Bunnicula*
- 13 Student Review Sheet
- 14 Teacher Comment Form

Introduction to the Student Matinee Program

Lifeline Theatre's award-winning adaptations of children's literature inspire a love of reading that will activate your students' imaginations and stay with them throughout their lives. Every year, Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries Student Matinee Program serves over 3,000 students, 40 schools, 129 classrooms, and 222 teachers with school-day performances of our season productions.

We encourage you to use this study guide to enrich your students' experience of *Bunnica* and enhance the educational value of the production. Please let us know what parts are helpful to you and where you would like additional materials. There is a teacher feedback form and student survey to copy for your class, and we hope you will take the time to let us know what you thought of both the show and the study guide. We do this work for you and your students, and we want to make it beneficial and user friendly!

Preparing for Your Field Trip

Before the Play: Discuss Appropriate Behavior

Have a discussion with your students about proper theatre etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? Talk about the concentration that performing in a play requires, and ask the students what they find distracting when they are trying to accomplish a task in front of people. How can they help the actors succeed and do a good job? Let students know that in plays, actors sometimes play several different characters, and change roles by simply swapping out costume pieces and altering their voices and bodies.

After the Play: Reflect on the Experience

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? What happened that they weren't expecting? How was seeing a play a different experience than seeing a movie?

Have the students write a review of the play. Encourage students to be specific about why they enjoyed a certain part of the play. If they liked a scene because it was funny, have them explain *why* it was funny, what the characters *did* or *said* that was funny, etc. Have the students draw a picture or make a collage of their favorite scene or character. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite. We invite you to send the reviews and pictures to Lifeline – we enjoy reading them and learn from student feedback.

Traditional Plays vs. Literary Adaptations

Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries productions are often musical adaptations of picture books and short stories for children. Sometimes the playwright is very faithful to the source material, and sometimes the original book is simply inspiration. We encourage you to discuss the elements of each version and compare/contrast the two both before and after you see the play.

Before the Play: Get to Know the Original Story

Read the story to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, discuss it with your students, using these questions as launch pads:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like?
- What makes you dislike this character?
- How do you think he/she might be portrayed in the stage version?
- What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
- How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

Beginning, Middle and End

To encourage sequential thinking, have students act out the beginning, middle and end of the story. Split the students into three groups (or more, depending on the number of students in your class) and have one group enact the beginning, another group enact the middle, and the final group the end. Have the students watching the performances help the group to remember any parts they may have left out. Give the groups the chance to redo their performances, including any elements suggested by their classmates.

After the Play: Compare/Contrast the Story to the Play

- How were the book and the play different?
- How were the book and the play the same?
- What elements of the play surprised you?
- Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
- What was your favorite part of the play?
- Was that your favorite part of the book too?
- Were there any characters in the book that were not in the play, or vice versa?
- Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?
- How would you describe the style of music in the show?

Jobs in the Theatre: Behind the Scenes

Before the Play: Prepare Your Students to Observe All Aspects of the Production

When we create a play at Lifeline, we have a community of artists working together to make a complete production. Ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various people listed below:

Playwright/Adaptor/Author – writes the play

Composer – writes the music for the show

Lyricist – writes the words (or “lyrics”) for the songs in the play

Director – directs the play - makes decisions about costumes, lights, sets, and what the actors do onstage

Choreographer – creates and teaches the actors the dances in the show

Lighting Designer – designs and hangs the lights for the show; designs lighting effects

Set Designer – designs and builds the scenery and props for the show

Sound Designer – designs and records the sound effects for the show

Costume Designer – designs and finds or makes the costumes for the show

Stage Manager – helps the director during rehearsals; sets props and scenery before each performance; runs the sound and lights during the performance

Actors – perform the play

After the Play: Discuss the Students’ Observations

Ask the students what they noticed about the “behind-the-scenes” jobs:

- How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they were playing?
- What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of people or animals they were?
- Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- If there were animal costumes, how did the costume designer create them so that they would look more like animals than people?
- What are some of the locations the play took place in?
- How did the set designer make the settings look realistic?
- What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?
- Why do you think the composer chose the styles of music he did? What sorts of music would not make sense with the story?

Bunnicula

Synopsis

We are introduced to the Monroe family by Harold, the dog. Harold and his friend Chester, (a cat, whose hobby is reading books), are happy pets of the Monroe family: Mr. and Mrs. Monroe, and their children, Toby and Petey. The Monroe family has been out at a movie theatre, seeing *Dracula*, and as they enter the house with much excitement, Petey and Toby explain to Harold that the box they are carrying contains a rabbit, which they found on one of the seats at the theatre. The rabbit was left with nothing but a blanket and a note in a foreign language. After much brainstorming and bickering about what to name the new family pet, Mrs. Monroe suggests “Bunnicula,” since the bunny was found at a showing of the movie *Dracula*, and the family agrees. Mom urges Toby and Petey to get upstairs to bed, and when they argue over whose room the new bunny will stay in, it is decided Bunnicula will stay in his box in the dining room.

Harold is not impressed with Bunnicula, who sleeps all day and can't fetch or roll over when he's awake, but Toby and Petey are delighted with their new pet. Harold notices that Chester, the cat, has been staying up all night, and when he asks her why, she informs Harold that she has grave concerns about Bunnicula. She assures him that Bunnicula is not a normal rabbit. Not only does the black spot on Bunnicula's back look like a cape, Chester swears she saw vampire-like fangs in the bunny's mouth. She tells Harold that despite the locked cage Bunnicula is housed in, she has seen the rabbit hopping around the house at night. Harold suggests that Chester's love of reading scary books has gone to her head.

Harold and Chester are interrupted by Mr. Monroe, carrying something strange, which looks like a white tomato. Mr. Monroe and Petey determine that the odd object is indeed a tomato, which has somehow turned white. They throw out the strange vegetable, and as they head off to breakfast, Chester and Harold agree to meet that evening, after the Monroe family has gone to bed.

Around midnight, Chester is reading *The Mark of the Vampire*, when Harold finds her in her favorite chair. Chester begins relating to Harold all that she has read about vampires, and tries to convince him that Bunnicula might be a rabbit vampire. After all, Bunnicula sleeps all day, has two fang-like teeth, and can get out of a locked cage, the way vampires can get out of locked rooms. Chester suggests that the strange white tomato was the result of Bunnicula sucking its juices out in the middle of the night. As they talk near Bunnicula's cage, they realize the rabbit has somehow escaped, and as they attempt to find him, they discover a zucchini squash on the floor – white and sucked dry of all its juices. Over the next few days, the Monroe family discovers that more vegetables have gone white. They wonder if vegetable blight or pesticides might be the explanation for the strange state of their vegetables. Chester tries to communicate her suspicions about Bunnicula to the Monroe family by wearing a blanket as a cape and biting Harold on the neck, but the Monroe's are simply confused by her strange behavior.

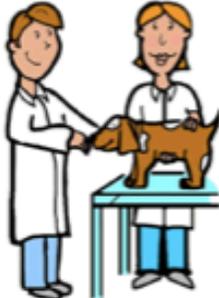
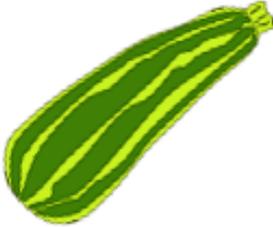
Because garlic is believed to make vampires immobile, Chester begins spreading garlic cloves around the house and wearing garlic as protection. Chester reads that a vampire can be stopped by pounding a stake through its heart, so she drags one of the steaks meant for dinner over to Bunnicula's cage, ready to try. Mrs. Monroe interrupts the process and puts Chester outside for the night. When Chester is allowed back in the next morning, she decides to play with a ball of yarn and behave like an average cat in front of the family from now on. But at night, she dons her garlic and stands in front of Bunnicula's cage, making sure he cannot escape.

Over the next few days, Bunnicula starts looking sick and weak. Harold suspects the Bunnicula is starving, now that he doesn't have access to vegetables. He confronts Chester, who claims she is protecting the family and their vegetables, which have finally stopped turning white. But when Mr. Monroe leaves a dinner salad on the dining room table unprotected, Harold sees an opportunity to help poor Bunnicula. As he unlatches the rabbit's cage and lifts him out, Chester arrives on the scene. The Monroe family finds Chester stalking a terrified Bunnicula around the dining room. When Petey scoops Bunnicula out of harms' way, he notices that Bunnicula does not look well. The rabbit is taken to a vet, who says that Bunnicula is starving and should be put on a liquid diet.

Things get back to normal in the Monroe household. Bunnicula does well on his new juice diet, and he and Harold become friends. Chester is sent to cat therapist, and the house regains a sense of warm normalcy, as Bunnicula is no longer a mysterious stranger.

VISUAL VOCABULARY

Bunnicula

<p>Harold (A Dog)</p> 	<p>Chester (A Cat)</p> 	<p>Bunnicula (A Rabbit)</p> 
<p>Soggy</p> 	<p>Caravan</p> 	<p>Literature</p> 
<p>Vet</p> 	<p>Zucchini</p> 	<p>Dracula</p> 

CHESTER'S IMAGINATION

In the Bunnacula book and play, it is suggested that Chester has a very active imagination - which is a good thing! But it seems that part of the reason Chester finds Bunnacula so terrifying is that she is reading so many horror stories.

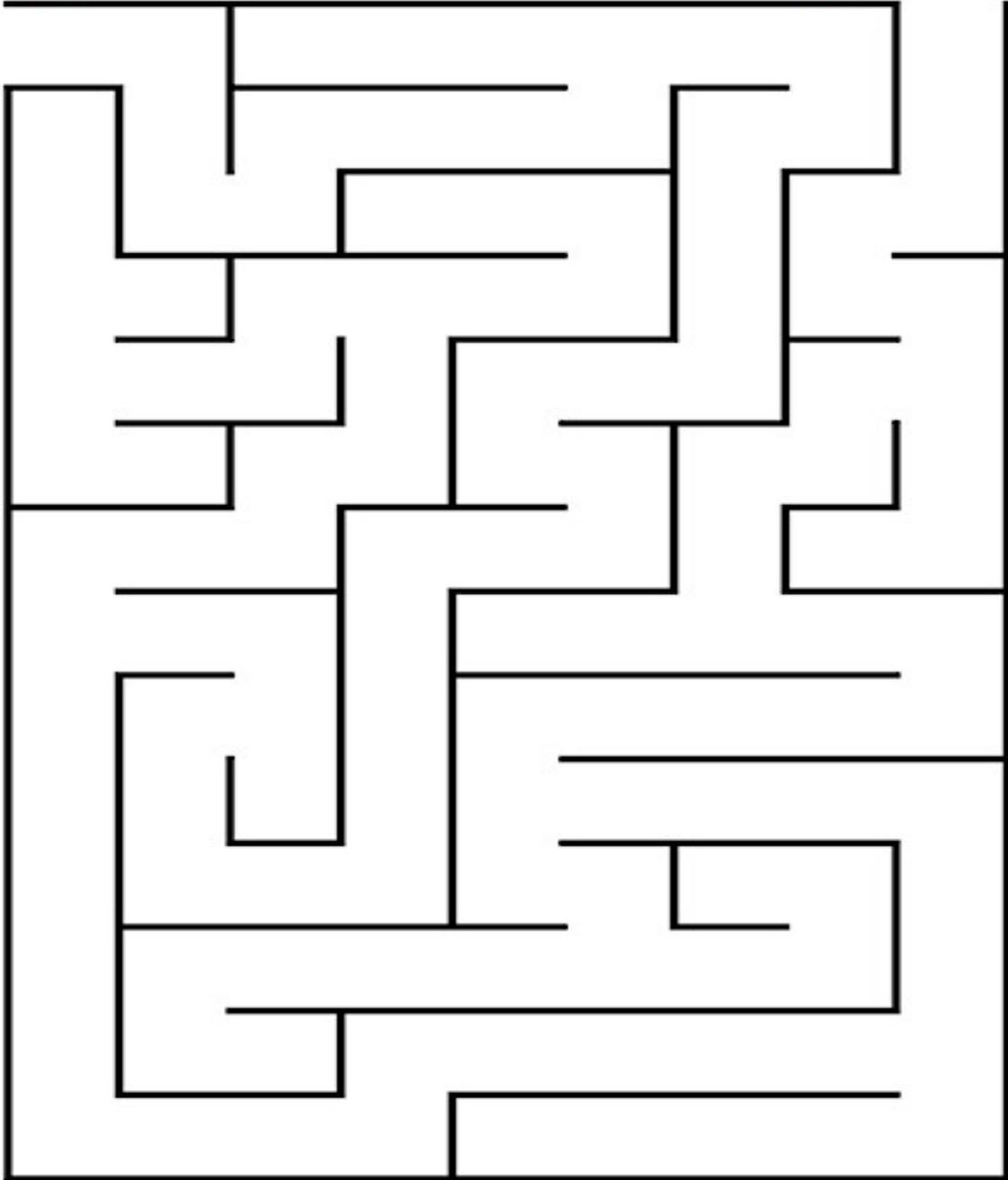
Below, draw two pictures of Bunnacula. One as he really is, and the other as Chester sees him in her imagination.

Help Bunnicula Find the Carrots!



start

finish



What Are You Afraid Of?

Everyone has experienced fear. Sometimes our fears are founded and real: a noise outside your tent turns out to be a bear! Sometimes, though, our fears are imagined - you discover the noise outside is just a squirrel, or the wind.

Think of times you have experienced fear, real or imagined. Write about the fear and how you over came it.

A real fear:

An imagined fear:



Word Search!

L S S V N R V G F R S U I S
I I G E V E P A O R I N H O
T V N G E E A R O E L O H I
E R A E L T P L C D R S M M
R T F T G O R I P M V A T E
A E I A V C N C H E S T E R
T M T B G A D D U N P G A H
U O A L B C M S L M E T R A
R T R E E M E P H O L O T R
E C A S R T E E I N R M H I
L S A L U C A R D R M A E A
N M O R V N O O T O E T H L
A L U C I N N U B E B O I O
A C E C A R R O T R A M R H

FIND:

Chester
Carrot
Vegetables
Vampire
Bunnacula
Harold
Tomato
Dracula
Literature
Fangs
Monroes
Garlic

FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES

Drama Games relating to *Bunnicula*

Once back in the classroom, we encourage you to maximize your students' experience at Lifeline by using drama to teach drama! In our residency program, we use theatre games to not only teach the basics of performance, but also to explore themes in the student matinees. Below are some games you can play with your class that touch upon some of the concepts conveyed in the story.

Family Portraits *(Because all families are different and everyone belongs.)*

How To Play: 5 – 8 students are brought to the front of the room, facing the audience. The facilitator explains that they are going to be a family who is getting a group photograph taken. When the facilitator says, "1,2,3, click!" the students must create a frozen family pose with levels, making sure all faces can be seen, etc. Then, ask students to use their imaginations to create family portraits using prompts that will be given, such as, "The Sick Family! 1,2,3,Click!" or "The Sports Family! 1,2,3,Click!" Other ideas: The Silly, Sad, Terrified, Circus, Explorer, Penguin, Artistic, Exhausted, Bully, Zoo Family.

Sneaking Past Chester: *(Because it takes focus to be sneaky.)*

How to Play: One person is chosen to be Chester. Divide the rest of the students into two groups: Bunniculas and Vegetables. Bunniculas should spread along one wall of the room, and Vegetables should move to the opposite wall and spread out. Chester is in the center of the room, looking and moving around the space. The Bunniculas and Vegetables should slowly move toward each other and the middle of the room -- but only when the Chester isn't looking! If Chester sees or hears a Bunnicula or Vegetable move, she calls that person's name and they must sit down where they are. The object is for Bunniculas and Vegetables to reach the middle of the room and join hands with a player from the opposite side. Students soon discover that moving quickly or making noise will get them caught!

Emotion Masks *(Because it's okay to feel any way we feel.)*

How to Play: This game helps explore different emotions. The teacher or leader selects an emotion. Students use their hands as a "mask." When the leader says "masks up," everyone covers his or her face and makes a face that expresses that emotion. Then the leader says "masks down" and those faces are revealed. Students can look around and make note of each others' facial expressions to better create their own emotions. The leader can also have the students select their own emotions, and students have to guess what each other's emotions are.

Statue Stories *(Because there's more than one way to see things.)*

How to Play: Play "Emotion Masks" as a warm up. Then choose 2 volunteers to come to the front of the class. Ask them to each pick an emotion (don't say it out loud) and on the count of three, both students will strike a pose representing their chosen emotion. (They cannot discuss it with each other, they can't touch each other, and it doesn't matter if they both end up doing the same emotion.) Now the rest of the class has to come up with short explanations of what's happening to make each person feel what they are representing. (i.e. "Mary is happy because she just got a great present, and Leo is jealous.") Hear as many versions as you have time for. Then choose another pair of volunteers. You can have 3 or 4 people at once as the class gets better at it. The volunteers should freeze into their pose, but they only need to display an emotion. The observers (the class) place the story on top, and all stories are possible. (None of the volunteers can say "That's not what I was doing!")

Student Review of *Bunnicula*

By: _____

I give this play a (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was _____

because _____

My favorite character was _____

because _____

If I had to choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story the characters the music the costumes the scenery

because _____

KidSeries Teacher Comment Form

We'd love to hear from you! Please fill out this comment form, and get it back to us one of two ways: Either mail it to Julie Ganey, Education Director, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626, or email it back to us at julie@lifelinetheatre.com. If your students have completed review sheets, we'd love to see those too!

School: _____ Grade Level: ____ Number of Students: _____

Show your class saw: _____

Have you attended a Lifeline KidSeries show before? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, which one(s) have you seen?

Did you read your class the book before coming to see the show? ___ Yes ___ No

What was the strongest part of the show for you, or what did you like best?

What was the weakest part of the show for you, or what did you like least?

Would you bring your students to another performance at Lifeline? ___ Yes ___ No

Why or why not? _____

Which activities in the study guide were most beneficial to your students?

Please tell us about any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt:

(optional) Name _____ Email _____