

NEW STAGE *Theatre*

Arts in Education Touring Production 2014-2015



THE RELUCTANT DRAGON STUDY GUIDE

2014-2015 Arts-in-Education Tour Sponsored by

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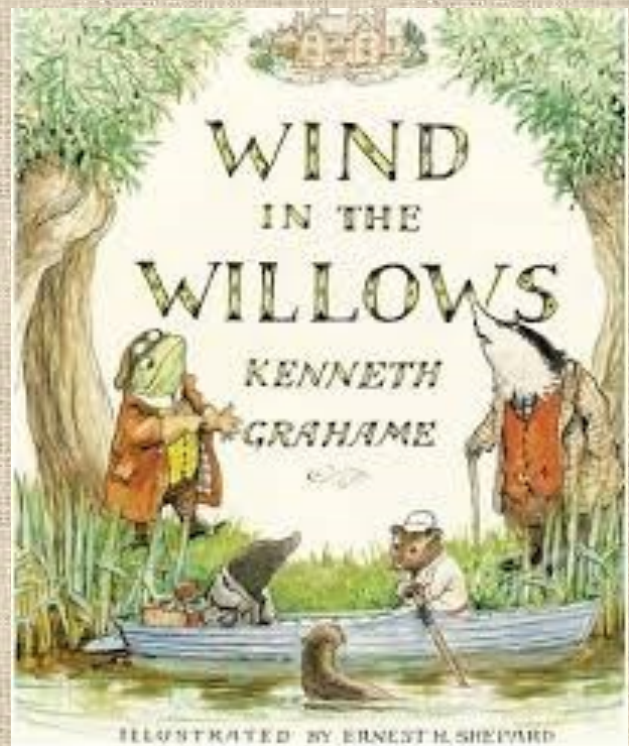
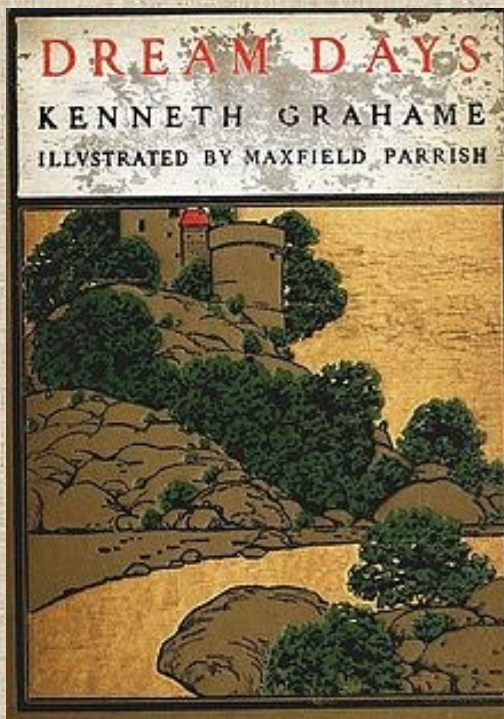


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KENNETH GRAHAME

Kenneth Grahame (1859-1932) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. After the death of his mother when he was only five, he and his siblings went to live with their grandmother. He spent some of his happiest years there in a large old house with an attic and a garden near the Thames River. Though Grahame did very well in school, he could not afford to go to Oxford University. Instead, he started working at the Bank of England. While in London, he began to write short stories for local publications and literary magazines. In 1899, *Dream Days*, a collection of his short stories was published. The most famous of these short stories is *The Reluctant Dragon*! Ten years later he published his most famous work that you might have heard of, *The Wind in the Willows*, which was inspired by the bedtime stories that Grahame would invent for his son.



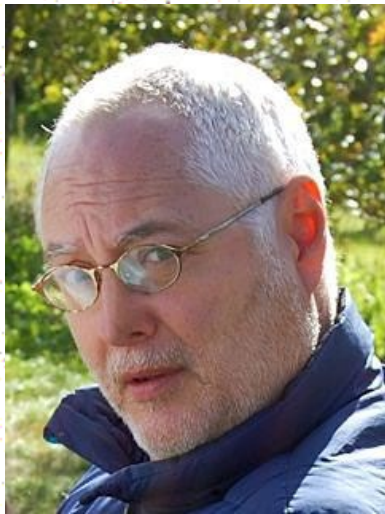
Grahame's book of short stories *Dream Days*.

Have you read *The Wind in the Willows*?

ADAPTATION

The adaptation of *The Reluctant Dragon* that you'll see was written by Tom Poole and John Cranney. A theatrical adaptation is the playwright's interpretation of a story, often written by another writer. The play will not be exactly the same story as the story that Kenneth Grahame wrote. Some parts and characters may be omitted, and places, chronology, and other elements of the story may be altered to fit the stage and the playwright's vision of the story. It would be possible to see multiple adaptations of the same story by different playwrights that would vary greatly. Throughout the history of the stage, it has remained the artistic license of the playwright to adapt the story as he or she sees fit.

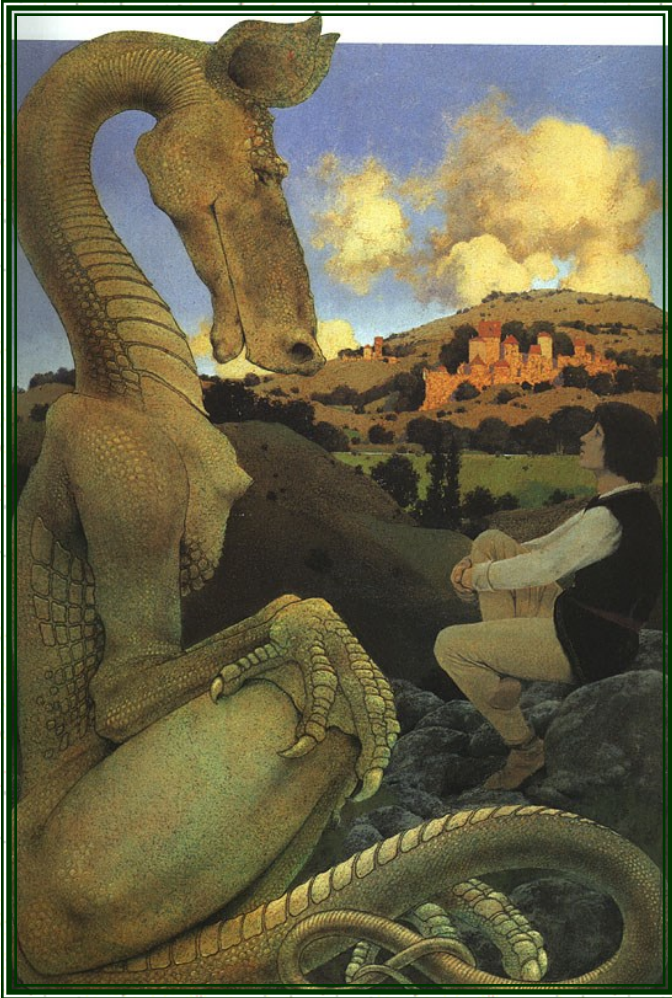
ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS



Tom Poole was a playwright, actor, and director who was based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Originally from Arkansas, he earned a masters degree in theatre and film from the University of Arkansas as well as a masters degree in creative writing from Bowling Green University. He adapted several stories for the Children's Theatre Company including *Robin Hood*, *The Reluctant Dragon*, and a trio of stories by Hans Christian Andersen.

John Cranney is a playwright. He also served as the artistic director for the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota from 1984 until 1997. Cranney directed the premiere production of *The Reluctant Dragon* for the Children's Theatre Company's 36th season.

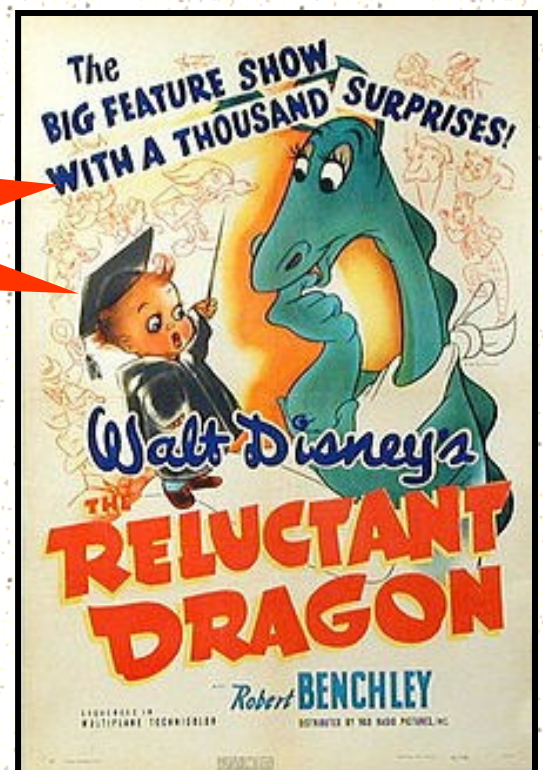
THE STORY



This charming play tells the tale of a boy who meets a kind and funny dragon on the edge of town. The boy and the dragon become friends and start spending a lot of time together. Then the people of the town find out about the dragon and send for St. George. The boy meets with St. George and takes him to meet the dragon. All three soon become friends and find themselves in a quandary. George doesn't want to kill the dragon and the dragon has no desire to kill George. A plan is hatched and at the end of the story everyone celebrates in a happy party.

Fun Fact!

The Reluctant Dragon was also made into a Disney movie in 1941!



THE CAST



AUGUSTUS BENNETT (Tour Guide/Dragon) is a recent graduate of the University of Central Florida, holding a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre. Before arriving at New Stage, he finished touring *King Arthur's Quest* with Missoula Children's Theatre. Other acting credits include *Gem of the Ocean*, *Drowsy Chaperone*, *Kiss Me*, *Kate*, *A Little Night Music*, and *The Laramie Project*. He has also directed George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* and the musical *I Love you, You're Perfect, Now Change*.

KATIE BETH JEWELL (Boy) is thrilled to spend the season with New Stage! She recently graduated with a BFA in Musical Theatre from Samford University. She spent the past summer as a production intern at Alabama Shakespeare Festival. She directed several productions at Samford including *Butterflies Are Free* and *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*. Some of her favorite roles include Velma Von Tussle in *Hairspray* (FestivalSouth), Charlotte Hay in *Moon Over Buffalo*, and Various Roles in *The 39 Steps*.

PAT MORAN (Father/St. George) is a recent graduate of West Chester University of Pennsylvania where he studied Theatre. Some of his favorite roles in undergrad include Jesus in *Godspell*, Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Georg in *She Loves Me*. This summer he appeared in the Texas Shakespeare Festival's productions of *Macbeth*, *My Fair Lady*, *Cymbeline*, and the world premiere of *The Lost Prince*. This is his first season with New Stage and he is thrilled to be here. Love to Mom, Dad, Shannon, and Kelly. www.patrick-moran.com

VALENCIA PROCTOR (Mother) a Jackson, MS native, is an acting intern for the current season here at New Stage. She is a graduate student of Mississippi College studying Marriage and Family Therapy Program. She has a love for people and the arts and hopes to continue sharing that love in theatres all over the nation. Additionally, she would like to explore teaching a Theatric Therapy course for adolescents.

THE COMPANY

The Artistic Director of New Stage Theatre

FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS has worked as a professional actress and director for more than 24 years. She has been the artistic director at New Stage Theatre since 2006 and most recently directed *The Miss Firecracker Contest*. Last season she also directed *The Whipping Man* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. She appeared in New Stage productions as Polly in *Other Desert Cities*, Lucille in *Dividing the Estate* and as Edna Earle in Eudora Welty's *The Ponder Heart*. She has directed a variety of shows including *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Hairspray*, *Mahalia: A Gospel Musical*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Lombardi*, *Boeing, Boeing*; *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*, *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Gee's Bend*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Annie*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *A Soldier's Play* and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Some of her favorite acting roles include Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Chris in *Rumors* and Belinda in *Noises Off*. Reynolds has recently been invited to serve on the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre and she is currently a member of the Leadership Mississippi Class of 2014. Panels and other associations include the National Endowment for the Arts 2013 grants panel, Poetry Outloud, Southeastern Theatre Conference adjudicator, Mississippi Arts Commission grants panel, The Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education Board of Directors and The Mississippi Theatre Association Board of Directors. Reynolds has enjoyed adjudicating and serving as commentator for the Mississippi High School Drama Southeastern Theatre Conference auditions and Mississippi's English Speaking Union Shakespeare Competition. Originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Reynolds enjoys living in Jackson with her husband, Chuck.

The Education Director of New Stage Theatre/Director of *The Reluctant Dragon*

CHRIS ROEBUCK graduated from Mississippi College with a B.A. in history. He taught for two years at Madison Central High School, where among other responsibilities he assisted with the Drama Club. Roebuck was an acting intern at New Stage Theatre, working with four other interns to take three touring shows across the state. Among his numerous professional acting credits, Roebuck has appeared in *Shrek*, *Hairspray*, *The Foreigner*, *Annie*, *The 39 Steps*, *A Soldier's Play*, *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *The Ponder Heart*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Idols of the King*, *Forever Plaid*, and *A Raisin in the Sun*. In addition to the education touring shows, his directing credits include *Goodnight, Moon*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *The Lion*, *The Witch*, and *The Wardrobe*, *The Weir*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Dead Man's Cell Phone* at New Stage and *American Buffalo* and *Dinner with Friends* with Fondren Theatre Workshop.

Resident Technical Director/Props Master of New Stage Theatre

RICHARD LAWRENCE serves as the Vice President of Fondren Theatre Workshop and most recently appeared in *A Christmas Memory* at New Stage, FTW's *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Buck Nekkid for Jesus*, and directed FTW's Christmas show, *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*. He also was the director of the widely successful production of *Cabaret*, which was a joint production of FTW, Actor's Playhouse of Pearl, with support from New Stage. Lawrence, has been seen in New Stage productions of *Trip to Bountiful* and UnFramed's *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *The Weir*, and *Circle Mirror Transformation*.

Set Designer

CLARA SEITZ is a graduate of Mississippi University for Women. She has worked off and on at New Stage three seasons. Her credits at New Stage include scenic design for *Seussical*, *Stickfly*, *High School Musical*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *Dublin Carol*.

Costume Designer

LESLEY RAYBON joined New Stage in 2004 as an acting intern and since then has worked both onstage and off. This is her second season as the resident costume designer and she has enjoyed designing shows and working with guest designers and costume shop assistants. Some of her favorite shows include: *All My Sons*, *The Little Mermaid Jr.*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *The Cat in The Hat*. When not at New Stage, she is a barista at Starbucks, a puppeteer with Puppet Arts Theatre, and wife to her wonderful husband Lawrence.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

For many of your students, *The Reluctant Dragon* may be their first theatre experience. It may be helpful to discuss with them the expected behavior of an audience. New Stage asks that prior to the performance, students are made aware of the following:

Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.

Be sure to go to the bathroom before the performance begins. It is hard to leave once the performance begins.

Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.

Please do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.

Absolutely no gum chewing, eating or drinking in the theatre.

Noise

Live theatre means live actors who can hear not only what is happening on the stage, but in the audience as well. While laughter and applause at appropriate time are appreciated by the actors, excessive noise and talking is not. Even whispering voices can be distracting to the actors and others in the audience.

Do not talk during the performance.

Cell phones are prohibited in the theatre. If you have one turn it off and put it away and do not bring it out during the performance.

Applause

Applause is used to acknowledge the performers and to voice appreciation or approval. Traditionally, applause comes before intermission and at the performance's conclusion. Dimming the lights on the stage and bringing up the house lights usually signals these intervals. A curtain call in which the cast returns to the stage for bows usually follows a performance.

THEATRE GLOSSARY

Act— Sequences of scenes in a play which are played without an interval an act may contain one or more given scenes.

Audition— A trial performance given by an actor applying for a part in a play.

Auditorium—The audience area at a theatre, also known as “the house”

Blocking—Fixing actor’s movements in rehearsal and entering them in the prompt copy of the script

Choreographer—The composer of dance steps or sequences of movement in dance.

Comedy—Comedy is usually contrasted with tragedy. It may treat serious subjects, but does so with a light and humorous touch. There are many subgenres of comedy: farce, comedy of manners, etc. Some comedy is physical and can be seen in the actions, facial expressions, or costumes of the characters. Other comedy is verbal and is heard in the spoken lines of the actors.

Cue—Words or actions to which an actor answers; the term is also used to mean the moment for a change or effect in a scene or lighting.

Director—The person who rehearses the actors in their roles, as well as deciding and coordinating the artistic aspects of a production.

Drama—The form of literature which, like all literature, creates a representation of some aspect of life in order to entertain, educate, or in some way affect the thoughts of the audience or reader. Drama is unique from other literature in that it is written to be performed live in front of an audience. The word “drama” comes from the Greek and means “to do.” We do gain much by reading and studying plays, but it is important to remember that a playwright’s intentions for his or her work are only fully realized in a live performance.

Dress Rehearsal—A final rehearsal, with full scenery, costumes, and effects.

Effects—Any sounds, special lighting devices, etc., which are required by the play.

Farce—A form of comedy based on laughter at the ridiculous. Improbably events, fast paced action, deceptions, and misunderstandings are typical elements of farce.

Flat—A scenic unit consisting of a wooden frame. It may have an opening in it to take a door, window, or fireplace.

Improvise—To depart from a script, or work without one, with the actors inventing their own lines.

Melodrama—A comedy/drama noted for its action and excitement, frequently featuring graphic on-stage fights and spectacular special effects.

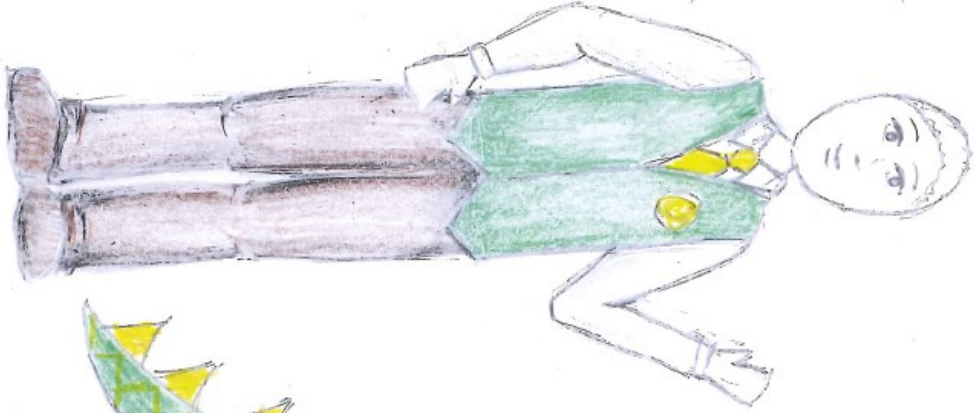
Prompt Book—Copy of the script in which positions and moves of scenery, furniture, and actors and all cues for changes and effects are recorded.

COSTUME DESIGN

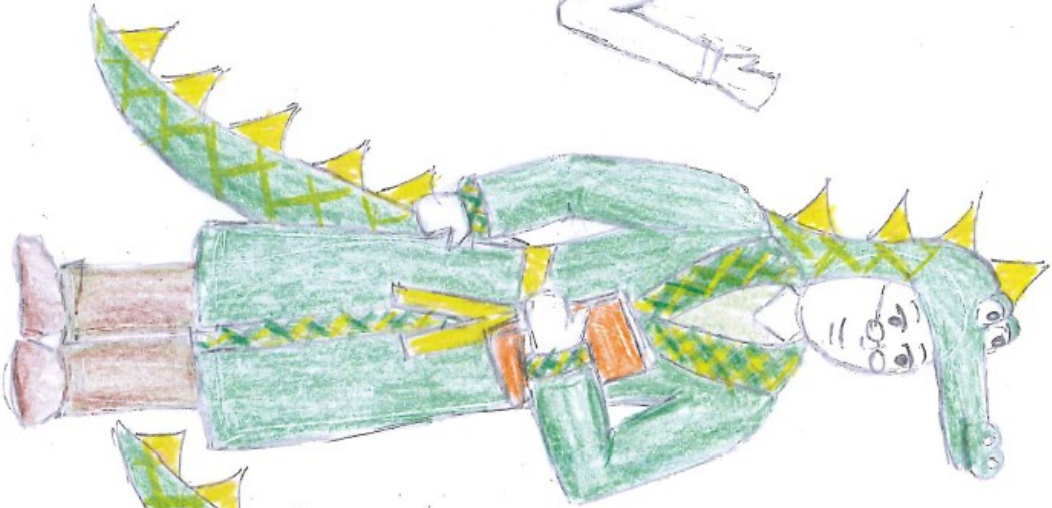
The Reluctant Dragon
Tour 2014-2015

Shirt &
vest can
be quick-
rigged

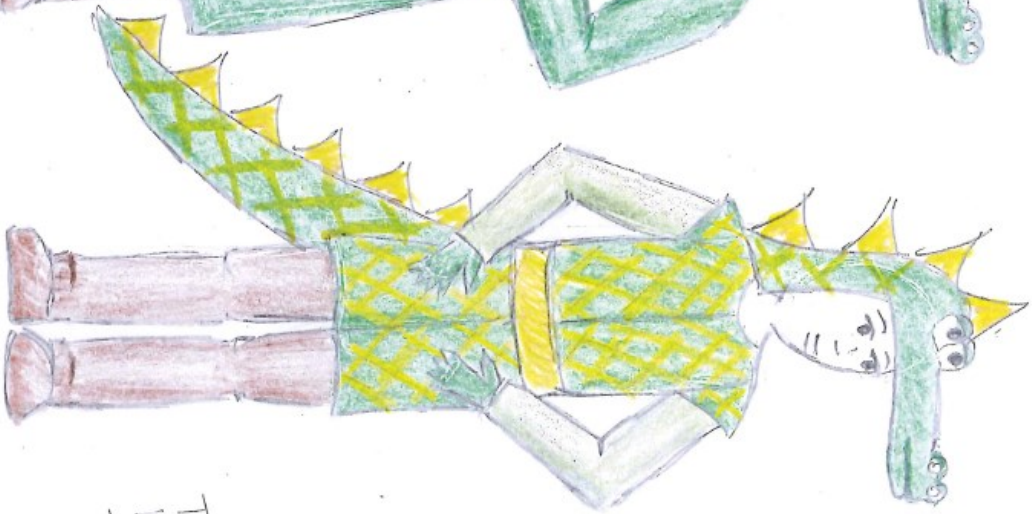
Museum
Guide



Dragon in
Cave



Dragon in
"Battle Armor"



Dragon hat
with fabric
hanging down
to hide hair.

Gloves with sharp
fingernails.

Tail attaches to
backrobe and
to belt around
vest.



Mother's jacket & Boy's shirt quick-rigged.

Mother has same shirt under jacket

Hair under wig cap & baseball cap

Mother-Museum

Boy-Museum

slip-on shoes

Tights worn under pants



Mother - Same hair or wig. Add hat

Boy add pageboy wig.

Vest quick-rigged

Add tunic

Add skirt & overskirt

change to boots

Mother

Boy



Blazer

shirt front quick-rigged

Khakis

Father-Museum



Add hat

Same shirt

Add vest

Different pants - looser fit

Father Shepherd



Black tabbard with Red Dragon

Knee high boots

St. George

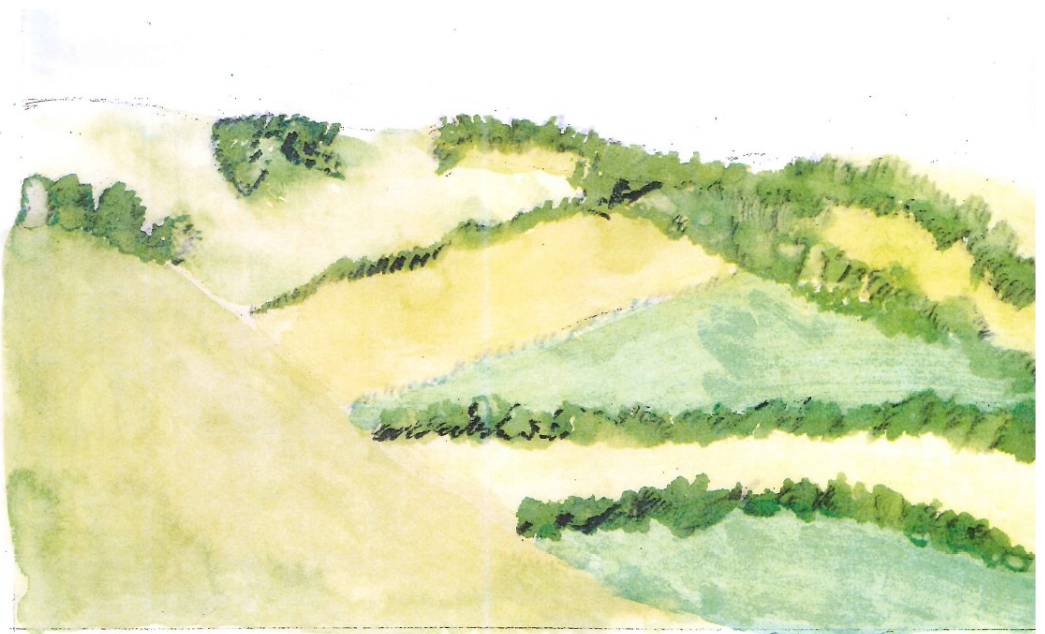
SCENIC DESIGN



Bookshelf 1

LEONARD WINTERGARD

Bookshelf 2



Reluctant Dragon

The Towns the Sick

Chick Set 2

DRAGON FACTS!

- Dragons are mythical creatures that appear in the stories of cultures all over the world.
- Dragons typically live near water or in caves and collect treasure.
- In Western cultures, Dragons were seen as dangerous monsters.
- Western dragons are typically lizard-like, breathe fire, have wings, and had dark green, gray, black, or red scales.
- In Eastern cultures, dragons were respected for their magic and wisdom. They are a symbol of wealth and power.
- Eastern dragons are more snake-like, do not have wings, often have more than four legs, and sometimes have a mane like a lion.

Western or Eastern Dragon?

Can you guess from the pictures if the dragon is from the East or West? Circle the correct answer.



Dragon from Shrek

Western or Eastern?



Mushu from Mulan

Western or Eastern?

Vocabulary!

Here are some words to know...

Skirmishing: fighting

Discombobulation: a state of confusion

Ragout: a highly seasoned stew of meat with vegetables

Downs: a range of hills in south England

Shepherd's Pie: a baked dish of ground meat with a crust of mashed potatoes.

Loot: a collection of valuable objects

Devious: not straightforward; tricky; dishonest

Banquet: a celebratory public dinner, usually honoring someone; a feast

Ramp: to assume a threatening posture; to move or rush threateningly or with fury

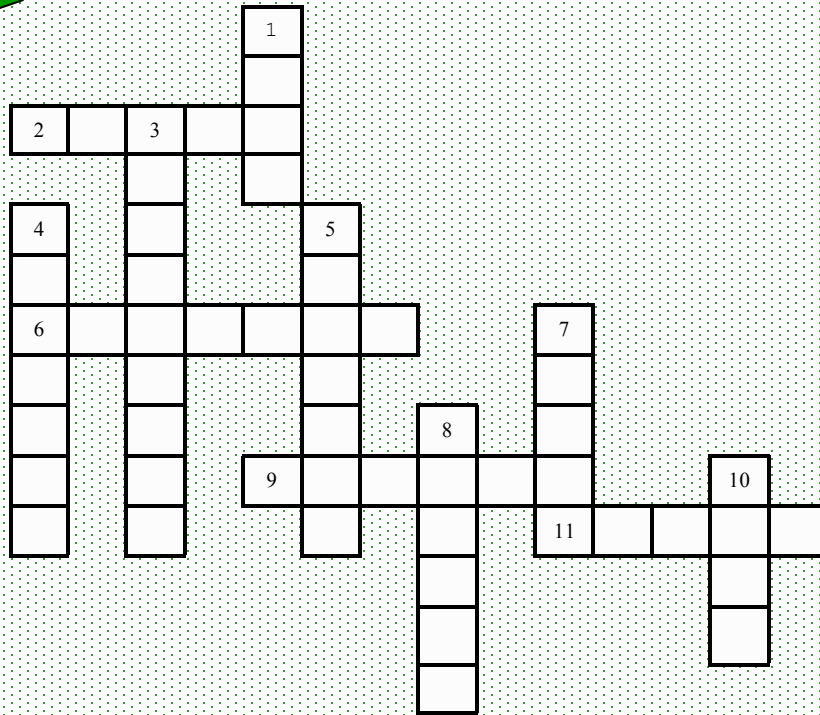
Fun Fact!

A woodchuck is also known as a groundhog, a whistle-pig, or a land-beaver.



For Fun!

Complete the crossword below

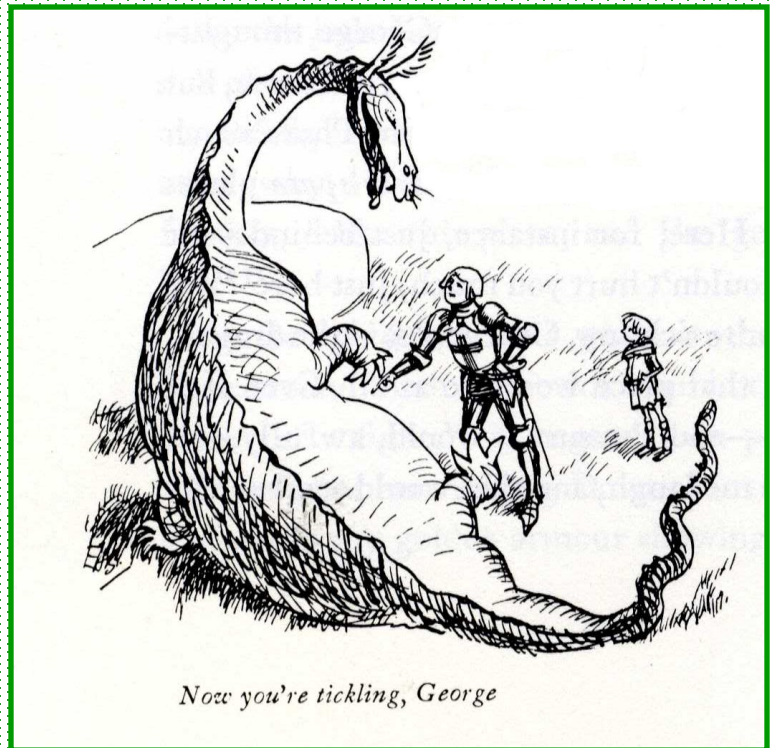


Down

- 1. Dragons from here are snake-like
- 3. Another name for a groundhog
- 4. Who first wrote this story?
- 5. A feast
- 7. Dragons often live in?
- 8. A mythological beast

Across

- 2. A range of hills in England
- 6. Really, really old
- 9. St. _____ wants to fight the dragon



Pictures!



DRAMATIZING STORIES

Tom Poole and Jon Cranney dramatized Kenneth Grahame's *The Reluctant Dragon* so that it could be performed for students. Dramatizing stories is a great tool in the classroom to help students comprehend a story, book or historical event.

Read and discuss the story, book or historical event. Make sure to help the students recognize story elements such as characters, setting, plot, conflict, climax and resolution. Reading and discussing the story several times will help.

Make a story map. A blank one is provided on the next page of this study guide. Once you have the map completed, use it to make a simple dramatic version of whatever story you wish.

Take volunteers for the first cast. There may be characters that require several students to play one character (a monster, a ghost, etc.). Whoever is not used in the reading of the play can be the audience, then everyone can switch! A narrator can be used as well. For younger students, the teacher can take this part.

Discuss the play. Try to focus the discussion on positive aspects of the performance. What did you see that you liked? Who did something interesting? What was it and why was it interesting? What can we do next time to make it even better?

Using these steps can help telling a favorite story more exciting, or help bring an historical event to life!



Main characters

Setting

Problem of the story

A story event

A story event

How the problem is solved

The ending

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Show

1. This play takes place in medieval England. Discuss the differences between then and now.
2. The dragon and the boy write poetry. Discuss the elements of poetry and read some popular poetry for children (i.e. Shel Silverstein, A.A Milne, Dr. Seuss).
3. Talk about the differences between dragons in Western cultures and dragons in Eastern cultures. What are some other myths that are different between cultures?
4. Discuss theatre etiquette. For example:
 - Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun and try to save any comments or questions for after the performance.
 - Remember, at the end of the show when the actors take their bows, give them a round of applause to say thank you for their performance.

After the Show

1. How is live theatre different than watching television or movies? Discuss the differences in characters, setting, plot, and audiences. What are some things that live theatre can accomplish that movies and television cannot? What are some of its limitations?
2. How did the actors use their voices and bodies to portray the characters in the show? How did they portray a sense of time and place?
3. The villagers make up rumors about the dragon even though they've never met him. Discuss the dangers of gossiping about others and what it means to "judge a book by its cover."
4. The dragon and St. George team up to trick the villagers. How can you use teamwork every day and what does it mean to work well with others?



Teacher Evaluation Form—*The Reluctant Dragon*

Name: _____ School: _____

What is your overall reaction to the production?

How do you feel about the production values of the performance (costumes, set, performers, etc?)

How did your students react to the production? (We would appreciate any written response from your students)

Please comment on the educational value of the program.

What is your overall reaction to the question and answer (talk-back) session?

How did you hear about the New Stage production of *The Reluctant Dragon*?

What other plays would you like for your students to see?

Please list other comments and observations.

Please help New Stage by sharing your thoughts with us! Return form to:

Chris Roebuck/ Education Director/ New Stage Theatre/ 1100 Carlisle St/ Jackson, MS 39202
or fax to 601.948.3538.

Student Evaluation Form—*The Reluctant Dragon*

Name: _____ School: _____

What was your overall reaction to the play?

What was your reaction to the production values of the play (costumes, scenery, acting, etc.)?

What was your favorite part of the play?

Did you learn anything from this production? If so, what?

What other stories would you enjoy seeing staged by live actors?

Please list other comments and observations?

Please help New Stage by sharing your thoughts with us! Return this form to
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