



TEACHER'S RESOURCE KIT

Activities devised by Sarah Duffus

Creative Team

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| Director | Frank Newman |
| Writer | Sean Monro |
| Performers | Bryony Geeves and Emily Newton |
| Production Designer | Hanna Pärssinen |
| Composer | Heath Brown |
| Education Kit Activities | Sarah Duffus |

The Roles of the Creative Team

The Director

The Director oversees the play and the puppetry and makes sure that all elements of the production (script, design, puppets, music, performers, lights, sound and other technical requirements) come together to communicate the ideas and the story to the audience.

The Writer

The Writer develops the script, often in consultation with other members of the creative team. The script includes not only the text for the performance but also stage directions and visual descriptions.

The Designer

Because puppetry is a visual art form, design is incredibly important. The designer is not only working on the set and costumes but also the puppets. Often the designers will make 'mock-up' puppets for early rehearsals, so that problems with manipulation and movement can be identified and overcome early. In this show, the puppets include found objects. Terrapin designers also have the challenge of making a set that is quick to set up and able to fit in the Terrapin van.

The Composer

The Composer creates new music to help the audience understand the story and what is happening on stage. Music helps create atmosphere and mood.

The Performers

Puppetry is a very technical art form. Not only do puppeteers have to think about what the puppets are doing but their own bodies are also choreographed. The puppeteers often work in confined spaces, so the way their bodies move together is important. Performing is a very physical art form and requires the performers to be fit and strong.

Overview of the Performance

The Waltzing Tree is the story of a brave girl, June, who escapes her family and befriends a tree, Terry. Out of a genuine desire to help the tree she embarks on a remarkable quest. She sets out to take the pollen from Terry to the only other tree of the same species, Maggie. Maggie lives a long way away, and to guide her on the path Terry weaves a song into the wind...a waltz. As long as June can hear the song she is on the right track. Along the way June is challenged and supported by various characters. She meets the avuncular Wombat, nervous Rubber, loyal Cheryl and dastardly Edgar the eagle, foe of all trees! During the course of her journey June learns a lot about the different characters she meets but also about her own strengths and weaknesses. When she returns to her family after her great adventure she is able to weave a little magic into their lives!

Suggested Activities

The following activities are broken into groups that link to the relevant areas of the curriculum: Literary, The Arts, Science, Health and Wellbeing. They are suggestions or stepping off points for teachers to use as guides for preparing a lesson, a group or solo activity.

Literary

Morning rituals

What rituals or things happen every morning in your house? Do you get dressed, eat breakfast and watch television? Do you walk the dog, scrub the floors and talk to a tree? In pairs, tell each other your morning routine. Then tell each other's story to the class. This information could be collated into a poster or graph.

Shortcuts

Shortcuts can be fun. Shortcuts can be dangerous. Shortcuts can take you into the unknown. Write a story in which a boy or girl takes a shortcut and ends up in another world! How do they get back? Who do they meet? What is one thing they bring back with them to amaze their friends?

Adventure

There are no dragons or unicorns in Waltzing Tree, but many of the characters do things and say things that we don't normally find in the real world. Choose an object or animal and give it a voice. Make up the story of where it was born. What it eats. What it likes. Where it goes for holidays. Who are its friends. Now think of a way it does something extremely bold and adventurous. Does it save the city? Rescue a fair maiden or fight a cabbage from outer space?

Computer games

Design a computer game based on *The Waltzing Tree*. How do you score points? Think about levels and challenges. Draw pictures. Work out the controls. Create a poster or PowerPoint presentation to pitch your idea.

The Arts

Waltzing

Listen to some waltzes with the music teacher. They come in many different moods and styles. What is unique about waltzes? How can you tell a waltz from other classical music?

Hesitation

June accepts the quest without hesitation. There is a drama game called "Yes let's." The class stands in a circle. Each person makes an offer, a verbal and physical offer, for example "let's all bark like a dog". Everybody responds with the phrase "yes, let's". Then everybody does their own version of barking like a dog. Move around the circle until everyone has had a turn. The response "yes let's" is positive and loud. The movements are enthusiastic and fun.

Transformation

The Director has chosen to use everyday household objects to bring the world of *The Waltzing Tree* to life. Saucepans, kitchen cupboards, umbrellas, cooking utensils and hat stands become wombats, eagles, trees, cliffs and streams. Make your own puppets from ordinary objects. Edgar the eagle is a great example of this. It is not just manipulating an object, but adding to the object and transforming it into something new. Groups of three students could create a play using their puppets.

Dance

June is able to teach her parents something when she comes home. Think of something you really like: cars, ice skating, butterflies etc., and make up your own dance moves based on this thing. Make sure it has at least four different movements, eg. honking the horn, turning the wheel, looking over shoulder to park, wind blown back from going fast. Put all the moves together to make a short dance. Show them to the class. Take it home and teach your mum and dad.

Science

Making sound

Terry makes the song he sings by shaping the wind. How do you make sound? How does the human mouth throat work to produce sound which we shape into language with our teeth and tongue? Your class could sing some songs holding their noses, holding their tongues, clenching their teeth. How do these songs sound?

The water cycle

Terry speaks of 'miraculous water, defying gravity'. What is the water cycle? How is it important to the life of plants? How are plants important in the water cycle? Make a poster that shows the various stages of the water cycle. All life on earth is dependent on water. How does man use and manage water around the world?

The lifecycle of plants

June carries Terry's flowers containing pollen to Maggie. In the story what else do they use to make Derrick the sapling? What is the lifecycle of a plant? What is required for a plant to grow? You could plant some seeds in class and document their development. Don't forget to name your little seedlings!

Transformation

Rubber was a rubber ball when he was young. He transformed into a tree. Talk about other things that make amazing changes from when they are young to when they are fully grown, for example tadpole to frog, caterpillar to butterfly. Choose an animal and imagine it goes through a similar process. For example instead of a puppy growing up to be a dog it becomes a television. Changes take place one by one. It grows an aerial. Its tail falls off and becomes a remote. Its nose is the volume switch etc. Have fun!

Protective materials

June uses a suit of rubber to protect herself against Edgar. What are some other things people wear to protect themselves. What are they made of? What do they protect the wearer from? What are some jobs where people have to wear protective clothing all the time/often? For example, protection from sun, pressure, lack of air, bows and arrows, bullets, weather, etc. This would fit into the Primary Connections Material world unit very well.

"They say people don't care about trees!"

Is Terry right? What are some ways that people do care about trees? What are some ways that we don't? Organize a planting day where each student plants a sapling. The local council might like to help with this.

The heart of the matter

An albatross can fly for days without landing. Its flight seems almost effortless. The albatross's heartbeat is actually slower when it flies than when it "rests" on land. Take your heart beat when:

- a) you are sitting quietly and have been resting for a few minutes.
- b) straight after you have sprinted.
- c) first thing when you wake up in the morning
- d) when you stand in front of the class or watch a scary scene in a movie.

Health and Wellbeing

Fear

June is scared of water. Cheryl is scared of heights. Rubber is scared of resources disappearing. Many people are scared of different things. Some are scared of spiders. Sharks. Heights. Airplanes. The dark. Pretend you are a journalist. Interview friends, family, neighbours or teammates about what they are scared of. Ask them why they are scared, and how they cope with this fear. Write this article as a newspaper report.

Courage

June realizes that she has made the last part of the journey herself...she is beyond the range of Terry's voice. What are some things that you have done yourself that you are proud of? Have you ever done something yourself to help a stranger? What was it? This could be a think/pair/share activity or a show and tell.

Communication

There was a time when mobile phones and the Internet did not exist. Terry and Laura and Maggie communicate by shaping the wind. What are some other ways we might communicate across long distance? Make a cup and string phone. Practice semaphore, using flags you make across the school oval, letting each flag be a specific letter, signal or command. In a dark place you can use stencils on a torch to send a signal or a message. Design some stencils that can indicate the way to go, danger ahead, food, a good place to sleep and something else which the group has to guess!

TERRAPIN PUPPET THEATRE

About Terrapin Puppet Theatre

Terrapin Puppet Theatre is the Australian innovator of puppetry-based visual theatre embracing new technologies, creating contemporary storytelling, and touring and collaborating nationally and internationally. The company injects skills and programs into the Tasmanian community, entertaining family audiences and supporting and developing artists. The company is exploring digital puppetry, which uses new technologies and cross platform practice to continually challenge and redefine puppetry as a visual theatre form. Terrapin creates new works through research and developmental processes that are designed specifically for each work. Whilst Terrapin reaches to the future in its exploration of form and story telling styles, it does so with its feet firmly grounded in the age-old craft of puppetry and theatre's rich traditions. Terrapin's productions engage all age groups and are designed to tour.

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