

 *Enchantment Theatre Company*

*Presents*

 **The  
Velveteen  
RABBIT**

**A STUDY-GUIDE FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

*Said the old Skin Horse to the Velveteen Rabbit:  
"Only love can make you real..."*

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction to Enchantment Theatre Company.....	3
Mission Statement.....	3
About the Story.....	4
About the Author: Margery Williams.....	6
Introduction to Theatre.....	7
Introduction to Masks and Puppets.....	8
About Magic.....	9
<i>Before You See The Velveteen Rabbit</i>	
Activity One: Prepare for the Play.....	10
Activity Two: Explore Puppets.....	11
Activity Three: Magic and Transformation.....	11
Activity Four: The Role of Music.....	12.
Activity Five: The Importance of the Imagination.....	12
Activity Six: Find Out About Jobs in the Theatre.....	13
Experiencing Live Theatre.....	14
<i>After You See The Velveteen Rabbit</i>	
Activity One: Respond to the Play.....	16
Activity Two: Discover Theatre in the Classroom.....	17
Activity Three: Writing Our Own Stories.....	18
Activity Four: Magic Activities.....	18
Activity Five: The Art in Theatre.....	18
Classroom Scavenger Hunt.....	19

*(Study-guide generated by ETC's Kate DeRosa, Jennifer Smith, and Faith Wohl. Special thanks: Oregon Children's Theatre in Portland, OR and The Peace Center for the Performing Arts in Greenville, SC )*

## **Introducing Enchantment Theatre 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.

## **About the Story\***

*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 sewed 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 it's set in Victorian England, the 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>.*

## **About the Author: Margery Williams**

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.

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.

## **An Introduction to Theater**

The origin of theatre is obscure because it did not develop over-night, but evolved slowly out of the practice of ritual. Primitive man would have cultivated certain rituals to appease the elements or to make things happen that he didn't understand (for example, making crops grow or having success in hunting). In Ancient Greece, similar rituals began in honor of Dionysus, the God of fertility, and would include choral singing and dancing. These rituals were so popular, that people began to choreograph, or plan out, the dances more carefully. The songs grew more sophisticated, and eventually included actors speaking in dialogue with one another and with the chorus. Soon, writers wrote full scripts to be performed; entire festivals were organized in honor of Dionysus, and drama as we know it was born.

What makes a theatrical experience? Actors on a "stage," (which might be anything from a huge amphitheatre to the front of a classroom) portray characters and tell stories through their movement and speech. But even though there are actors playing characters and telling stories, it is still not a theatrical experience until one more very important element is added. It is the presence of an audience -- watching, participating, imagining -- that makes it a true theatrical experience. Theater enables us to collectively experience that which we may know and feel within, but which may be unspoken and unacknowledged in our outward lives. Theater is the coming together of people -- the audience and the actors -- to think about, speak of, and experience the big ideas that connect us to our inner and outer worlds.

*What does the audience bring to the theater? They bring attention, intelligence, energy and, above all, they bring imagination.*

In film and television every bit of the screen is filled and editors tell the audience where to look and what to see. The audience sits back and watches something that was filmed or taped previously, which is always the same and upon which they have no effect. Theater, on the other hand, is a live experience -- the audience is right there as the play happens. Their energy is part of the energy of the whole event. Their Imagination is free to play and soar with the images and ideas presented to it. In that empty space that is the stage, anything can happen. It is a magical place of possibility and transformation.

# **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."*

*Ron Jenkins, "Two Way Mirrors" Parabola Magazine,  
Mask and Metaphor Issue*

## 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 Velveteen Rabbit...**

### 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.

Ask the students the following questions for discussion:

1. If you were a doll, do you think you would want to become a real boy or girl?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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?
7. 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*:

1. 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](http://www.puppet.org).
2. Have the students make a simple hand puppet from a sock. What kind of expressions and characters can they portray?
3. 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?
4. 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 grandmother 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:

1. What role does magic play in this story?
2. Do you believe this story? Why or why not?

3. 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.
4. 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

When you attend the performance, encourage your students to pay attention to the music, and 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:

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

## Activity Six: Find Out About Jobs in the Theatre

1. Students and teachers can visit Kids Work, a website that allows children to explore a variety of different jobs in a typical community.  
<http://www.knowitall.org/kidswork/>
2. What kind of jobs do the students imagine people have at the theatre? Can they name five different kinds of theatre jobs?

When your class comes to the theatre, look around to see what kinds of jobs people are doing. You will see someone in the box office, ushers and actors. There are also people doing jobs you don't see, like the stage manager who will call the cues for the show, and the lighting technician who will be running the lights. There are also many others who you don't see as well: the director who directed the actors; the costume designer; the designers who created the masks, puppets and magic equipment; the people who publicize the show, answer the phones and sell the tickets.

# Experiencing Live Theater

## Preparing Your Students to be Audience Members

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 – it isn’t a theater performance until the audience shows up! 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!

## Here Are Some Key Words to Keep in Mind:

**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 the 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!

**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 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 theatre 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. At the end of the program, 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.

- Enter the building quietly.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the theater.
- Radios, tape recorders, video recorders and cameras are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off cell phones. You may not take pictures or use a video recorder during the performance.
- Please use the restrooms before the performance. Do not get up to use the restroom during the performance unless there is an emergency.

## ***After You See The Velveteen Rabbit***

### Activity One: 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:

1. What character did you like the most? Why?
2. 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.
3. Did the music play an important role in the story? How? Can you describe the music?
4. 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?
5. How did the use of puppets affect the story? Did you forget they were puppets and accept them as people?
6. Describe some of the puppets you saw? Why do you suppose they were designed that way?
7. The story was told by an unseen narrator and no actor spoke. How did you know what the characters were feeling?
8. What surprised you the most in the play?
9. How is being at the theatre different than being at the movies?
10. What do you think theatre brings to a community?

## Activity Two: Discover Theater in the Classroom

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:

1. 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.
2. 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?
3. 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. A sidewalk covered with chewed bubble gum
  - b. A frozen pond
  - c. A very steep hill
  - d. A pond scattered with stepping stones
  - e. The surface of the moon
  - f. A giant bowl of Jell-O
4. Extend the space exploration to include activities:
  - a. Carefully paint a door. After finishing, open the door and step through it without getting any paint on your clothes.
  - b. Build a snowman. The teacher should be able to tell how big the snowman is by how the student uses the space.
5. To conclude, ask the students to list the ways they saw one another

communicate without using words (through facial expressions, movement, gesture).

### Activity Three: Writing Our Own Stories

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

1. 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.
2. 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 Four: 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 or visit [http://anekdota.dydns.org/att-0848/01-optical\\_illusion.jpg](http://anekdota.dydns.org/att-0848/01-optical_illusion.jpg)). Ask:

1. What is an illusion? What is real?
2. How is magic used in this production? List the kinds of magic you saw.
3. 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 Five: The Art in Theater

1. Have the students draw a picture of their favorite character from *The Velveteen Rabbit*.
2. Create shadow puppets of some *Velveteen Rabbit* characters and perform a mini-shadow show in the classroom.
3. 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.)

# 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 below to find out what your class-mates 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. Favorite trick?

---

---

---

---

5. Find 2 people who loved the costumes. Favorite costume?

---

---

6. Find 1 person who thinks he/she has a magic trick figured out. Which 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...

The boy? And why?

---

---

The Rabbit?

---

---

Nana?

---

---

The other toys in the nursery?

---

---

The Fairy?

---

---