GOING TO A SHOW AT THE
MARCUS CENTER'S
TODD WEHR THEATER

FIRST STAGE
Transforming Lives Through Theater
I am going to see a First Stage show at the Todd Wehr Theater.

I am going to see the show with

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Watching a play is like watching TV or a movie, except people are on stage in front of us.

They are called actors. They can see and hear me too. I can’t turn the channel or turn the volume up and down.
A play is made up of many interesting things.

- **COSTUMES**
- **SCENERY**
- **SOUND**
- **LIGHTING**
When we arrive at the theater, we will probably have to climb some stairs. There are stairs outside the building, and inside the building.

We may need to wait in line to pick up our tickets.

When we are waiting, I can stay with my family or teacher.
An usher will help us find our seats.

We will enter the theater and find our seats.

There are bathrooms in the lobby. If I need to, I can use the bathroom before we go to our seats.
Someone will show us where to sit.

The audience area is for all of us.

The stage is for the actors only.
When I am in the theater waiting for the show to start:

1. I can talk to my family or friends.
2. I can take a short break in the lobby.
There will be a lot of people in theater and it may get noisy.

If it gets too loud:

1. I can bring headphones if I want.
2. I can put my hands over my ears.
3. I can leave the room and take a short break in the lobby.

I can come back when I am ready.
During the show:

1. I can watch and listen to the actors quietly.
2. I can applaud if I like something.
3. I can hold things in my hand that make me feel comfortable.

If I need to talk:

1. I can talk quietly to my family.
2. I can write down what I want to say.
3. I can leave the room.
After the show there will be a “talkback.”

The talkback is a chance for me to ask questions.

1. I will raise my hand to show that I want to ask a question.

2. I will wait for the leader to call on me to ask my question.

3. I don’t have to ask a question if I don’t want.

I can ask different kinds of questions:

1. I can ask questions about the show.

2. I can ask questions about the scenery, costumes, lights, or sound.
After the show is finished, I will leave the theater with my family.
Meet the characters in

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane
This is Edward Tulane.

He is a prop. Edward is a china rabbit who goes on a great adventure.
This is Matt.

He is the actor who voices the thoughts of Edward Tulane.
This is Kat.

She is the main storyteller. She plays lots of music, and also plays many characters, including Lolly, Jack, and more.
This is Brian.

He plays the characters of Abilene’s Father, Amos, Lawrence the Fisherman, Bull, Lucius the Doll Mender, and more.
This is Karen.

She plays the characters of Pellegrina, Nellie, Lucy the Dog, the Old Doll, and more.
This is Bryn.

She plays Abilene and Sarah Ruth.
This is Bradley.

He plays Martin and Bryce.
All of the actors play various musical instruments, such as the guitar, chimes, accordion, and more.
Many set pieces are brought onto the stage to turn the space into different places, including a boat, a diner, a doll shop, and more.
What happens in the play?

The story of Edward Tulane takes place over 20 years, starting in the mid - 1920's. The actors play many different characters, changing between roles with small costume pieces or vocal/physical adjustments. Matt voices the thoughts of the china rabbit, Edward Tulane. The audience hears Edward’s thoughts and feelings, but none of the other characters are able to hear him. Live instruments provide sound effects and the underscore of many scenes.

Moments that are surprising or loud are underlined and bolded

A young girl, Abilene, is given a china rabbit doll from her Grandmother, Pellegrina. Abilene loves the rabbit and names him Edward. She does everything with him. She dances with him, flies airplanes with him, and talks with him about the events of her days at school. She dresses him in many fancy outfits for a china rabbit. He has suits, hats, a pocket watch, and even his own silk pajamas. When she goes to school, she leaves Edward facing out the window until her return. Upon her arrival, she quickly greets Edward and brings him along throughout the rest of her day. Edward, however, does not feel as strongly about Abilene, or any other person for that matter. He is very concerned with himself, particularly his looks. Pellegrina notices this. When it is bedtime, Edward asks Abilene and Pellegrina to place him on his side, facing the window, so that he may see the stars. But they cannot hear him. One night, before the Tulane family takes a boat ride to England, Pellegrina tells Abilene and Edward a bedtime story. A shadow puppet show brings the story to life. This story was about a princess who didn’t love anyone. The princess was cursed by a witch and turned into a warthog. Pellegrina tells this cautionary tale to Edward in particular, telling him “you disappoint me”.

The next day, the Tulane family sets sail for London on a beautiful boat. Edward feels very comfortable being among so many wealthy people. Abilene sets Edward down to wind his pocket watch, when suddenly two boys appear and begin to tease Abilene about the rabbit. They pick him up and begin to toss him back and forth on the ship’s deck. Edward cries out and Abilene begs them to stop, but they don’t listen. During one of the tosses, Edward falls from the boy’s hands and over the edge of the boat. Abilene cries out “No!” As he is falling toward the water, Edward cries out for his pocket watch.

Edward sinks down and down, wondering whether or not a china rabbit can drown. He reaches the bottom of the ocean floor and lands face down. He is confident that Abilene will come find him. Hours pass. Days pass. Weeks pass. Even months passed. Edward’s thoughts run wild, as he remembers the stars that he may never see again and the strange tale that Pellegrina told. He
thinks maybe this is a punishment. **One day, a storm brews within the waters and Edward is pulled up from the sand. He is worried about his outfit, which is being blew about by the rushing water. He is brought up to the surface through a big wave,** and finds himself trapped in a fisherman’s net. Lawrence, an old fisherman, picks him up and tells Edward that he'll take him home to Nellie, who can fix him up. As they make their way back, Edward realizes he is still alive – after all this time! – and he even sees the stars again.

When Lawrence presents Edward to Nellie, she mistakes him for a girl, and decides to call the rabbit “Susanna”. She repairs the rabbit, giving Edward a fresh pair of ears, a new tail, and a cotton dress. Nellie begins to make some bread for their dinner, and talks to Edward about being in the sea and being lonely. She tells Edward about their three children – Lolly, Ralph, and Raymond. Raymond, the youngest, died of pneunonia when he was only five years old. Lawrence and Nellie enjoy having Edward’s company. They have him join them at the dinner table by sitting in a highchair. **The night sky appears.** Lawrence takes Edward for walks and teaches him about the night sky. Nellie sings to Edward, soothing him, whenever his thoughts haunt him.

One day, Lolly surprisingly returns home. While Nellie is delighted to see her, Lolly is not so happy to see Edward. She notices that her parents have been taking care of Edward almost as if he were a child of their own. She mentions that she has heard people in the town talking about it and it makes her worried. She tells Edward that she is going to put an end to this nonsense, and with a lie to Nellie, takes Edward out of the house and into the truck. **Edward calls to Nellie and Lawrence for help, but they can’t hear him. Lolly drives away in the truck.**

Lolly takes him to the town dump and throws him into a pile of trash. Lolly leaves. More and more garbage is added onto the pile, and onto Edward. He shares that this is worse than being on the bottom of the ocean floor. A memory of Pellegrina appears. Again, time passes. On the 180th day of being in the dump, Edward notices that something is rummaging through the garbage. Lucy, a dog, releases Edward from the garbage and finally he is able to see the sun again! Lucy picks him up in her mouth and excitedly shows the rabbit to her owner, Bull. The man takes Edward away from his dog, explaining that she cannot eat this rabbit because he’s made of china. He notes that Edward is a toy, and that he was probably separated from someone he loves. Edward, for the first time, feels a deep pain in his heart as he remembers Abilene and realizes just how much she loved him.

Bull informs Edward that he and Lucy are drifters; that they are “lost”, and he asks if Edward would like to join them. Bull moves Edward's head as if he were nodding “yes”, and he nicknames the rabbit “Malone”. Bull tells his new friend that he and Lucy are always on the move, whether walking or hitching a ride in an empty train car. They find a space to rest for the night, and Edward, finally, is positioned to be facing up and looking at the stars. **The night sky appears.** He identifies all of the constellations that Lawrence taught him, and upon seeing the Northern star, he lets his new friends know that they’re not really lost.

The next morning, Bull gives Edward a new cowboy-kind of look that matches his new moniker “Malone”. The three friends set off toward their next location, **singing and enjoying the**
company of each other and other fellow drifters, including Jack. One night, underneath the night sky, a group of drifters sit by the fire. Jack lets Bull know that drifters have to be very careful nowadays. He pulls Edward aside for a private conversation in which Jack tells him about his three children, who are back in North Carolina with his dog. Jack is worried that if something happens to him, they will be left alone. He asks Edward to remember their names – Helen, Jack Junior, and Taffy.

Word spread about Edward’s fantastic memory and great ability to listen, and all of the drifters that the friends encounter from that point on stop to tell the china rabbit about their children. Edward hears name after name, learning little details about all of the loved ones. In a moment of realization, Edward says “So many have lost. And yet, they still hold on… This is love. This must be love.”

Edward and Lucy play hide and seek with Bull, showing just how happy this trio is together. Edward stays known as Malone and travels with Bull and Lucy for seven years. One night, Bull assists his friends into an empty boxcar and asks Edward to keep watch so Bull and Lucy can get some sleep. Suddenly, a watchman makes his way toward the boxcar. Edward tries to warn his friends, but they cannot hear him. The watchman aggressively questions Bull and becomes violent with him and Lucy. The train starts to move down the tracks. The watchman tries to provoke the group with more questioning and accusations, and then he notices Edward. He teases Bull for carrying a toy rabbit, and then starts to throw Edward out of the boxcar. Lucy launches toward the watchman, and Bull cries out “Lucy, no!”, starting to grab her. As Edward flies through the air, he yells out for his friends. He lands on the soft ground. The night sky appears. This time, he is not happy to see the stars. He hears the howls of Lucy, and he is alone. The actors pause the story for a moment, leaving him there.

Edward replays the memories in his head as he lay on the ground. The names of stars and the names of loved children run through his mind. It becomes day, and an old lady, singing, passes by Edward. She picks him up, confident that she has a great purpose for him. She puts him in a basket and continues walking. The china rabbit is brought to a vegetable garden, where a young boy named Bryce is working. The old lady affixes Edward to some poles, turning him into a scarecrow. She calls him “Clyde”. She asks him to be ferocious and scare away the crows, and she demands Bryce to get to work on hoeing the garden. She leaves to get some lunch. The sound of crows circling overhead and cawing are heard, and while Bryce tries to shoo them away, one crow in particular takes a high interest in Edward. The crow is reminiscent of Grandma Pellegrina, and
Edward exclaims “Go ahead, turn me into a warthog”, for anything would be better than this current position.

Night falls, the crows leave, and Edward even feels betrayed by the stars. They shine their light on and off, speaking out and mocking him. They remind him that he is alone and useless. Out of the darkness, Bryce appears and begins to take the rabbit down from the poles, letting Edward know that he has come back to rescue him. Bryce tells Edward that his baby sister, Sarah Ruth, once had a china doll that she loved. Sarah Ruth is sick, and their father won’t buy her any more toys because she isn’t expected to live much longer. Bryce walks Edward toward the shack where he lives. He brings Edward into the humble home and wakes Sarah Ruth to show her the surprise. She is very ill, as exhibited by her terrible cough, but she is delighted to be gifted with such a delightful doll. She holds Edward like a baby and rocks him. Bryce asks what the rabbit’s name will be, and Sarah Ruth decides upon “Jangles”. Bryce plays the harmonica while Sarah Ruth cradles her new friend.

That night, their father comes home. A large shadow of the father is seen, and his voice is heard from offstage. He sees the china rabbit. Upset, he raises his voice to Bryce and takes Edward away from Sarah Ruth. Bryce demands that the rabbit belongs to his sister, and the father slaps Bryce across the face. He leaves, and Bryce says that it’s better with him gone. The next day, while Bryce is at work, Sarah Ruth and Edward play together between her coughing fits. When Bryce returns home, he gives Sarah Ruth a biscuit and begs her to eat it, to keep her energy up. He then says he has a surprise for her. He takes Edward and attaches some twine to him, and then begins to operate him like a marionette! The siblings remember their mother, who liked to dance, and then watch “Jangles” dance in their home. Sarah Ruth is beaming with joy, giggling and clapping along to Edward’s dance. Her excitement leads to coughing, and Bryce comforts her. He brings her outside to get some fresh air. The three look at the starry sky and see a falling star. Sarah Ruth and Edward make a wish.

Edward spends weeks with Bryce and Sarah Ruth, continuing his dancing routine each evening in the hopes of making Sarah Ruth feel better. But her condition worsens and she gets weaker and weaker. One night in a coughing fit, she coughs up blood. Bryce comforts her, no longer leaving the house and staying with her at all times. He and Edward beg her to keep breathing. But one day, she stops. After Sarah Ruth is buried, Bryce states that there is no reason to stay there. He and Edward begin to head toward Memphis.

On a dirty street corner in the hot city, Bryce plays the harmonica and manipulates Edward to dance, just as he did for Sarah Ruth. Bryce weeps. People stop by and put spare change in a small box that once belonged to Sarah Ruth. One of the passerby’s is Pellegrina. Edward tells her he has learned his lesson. When they have collected some money, Bryce and Edward head to a small diner. A waitress takes Bryce’s order – he is extremely hungry. After eating all of the food and drinking two cups of coffee, Bryce realizes he does not have enough money to pay for his bill. The waitress calls out Neal, who demands that Bryce pay for the food he prepared. Bryce tries to bargain with Neal, showing him Edward’s dance and seeing if that can help to cover the cost. Neal is not
impressed, and he picks up Edward and slams him on the counter. His head shatters.

A dream scene begins. **The night sky appears.** We don’t see the rabbit prop. The actor Matt pretends to be Edward. As he walks up to Abilene’s home, the door opens and he sees all of the loved ones from his journey. He happily greets each and every one of them. He wishes that he had big, beautiful wings to fly with amongst the stars. **He begins his ascent toward the sky as he cries out “Sarah Ruth!”** But all of the others want him to stop. They begin to pull him back and tear the wings off of him. Edward weeps. The others state “it would break our hearts”, and Edward yells out “it is broken already.”

The dream scene has ended. Lucius, a doll mender, is holding Edward. The china rabbit regains consciousness, and wonders where he is. Lucius tells Edward that his head was broken, but he has fixed it! Edward states that his heart is still broken. Lucius is very proud of his craftsmanship and ability to fix the broken rabbit, but Edward is still terribly sad. He learns that Bryce dropped him off and left him with the doll mender, as he couldn’t afford to pay for his services. Bryce asked Lucius to keep him, and to promise that he would fix him. Lucius adds some finishing touches to Edward’s repair, and puts him on a shelf with many other dolls. A young doll teases him, stating that no one will want a rabbit. Time passes and Edward doesn’t experience love. He states that he is done.

An old doll is placed next to Edward, and she offers some hope to the rabbit. She encourages Edward to keep his heart open, but Edward replies that love and hope are too painful, and that he has no more courage. The old doll says Pellegrina’s signature line: “you disappoint me”. The old doll remains persistent, telling Edward, “Open your heart. Someone will come. Someone will come for you. But first you must open your heart”. The next day, someone comes and purchases the old doll. Although tricky at first, Edward began to believe “someone will come… someone will come… someone will come”.

Days became weeks, which became months, which became years. And finally, someone comes. A woman comes into the shop and tells Lucius that she is looking for something special for her daughter. She sees the other dolls, but isn’t impressed. Lucius offers her one final option, taking Edward off of the shelf. The woman is stunned and walks to the china rabbit, staring into his eyes. “I know you,” she says, “why do I know you?” The woman holds up her locket and Edward recognizes it as his pocket watch… It is Abilene! She has grown up but has not forgotten Edward! She embraces him and they dance in the doll mender’s shop. The Traveler recaps the miraculous journey of Edward Tulane, who found his way back home.
The End.