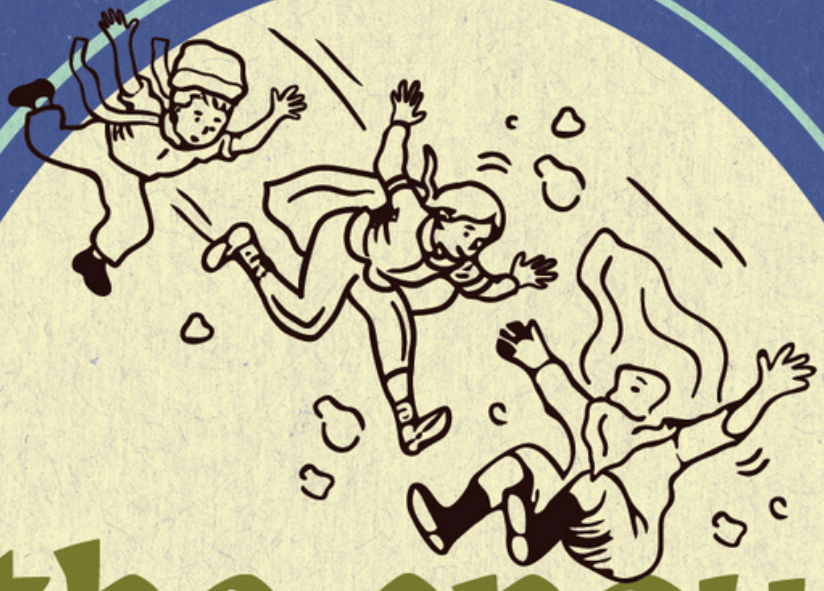
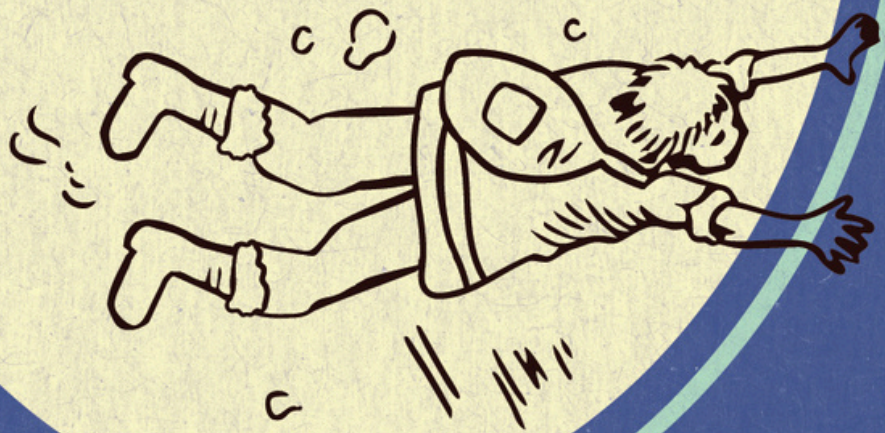
ENRICHMENT GUIDE



the snow

by finegan kruckemeyer



FIRST STAGE

INTO THE SNOW: SYNOPSIS

A group of narrators introduce our story, setting the scene in the village of Kishka. One winter, the Snow came heavier than ever before. It was too tall to climb over and too deep to dig through. The people of the village got along as best they could. At the end of winter, they expected to the Snow to melt: but it did not. They decided that something needed to be done, and assembled a committee to come up with a solution. But the person that ended up having the best idea was not a part of this committee at all: he was a child, named Theodore Sutton.

He told the villagers to build a catapult and fling him over the Snow; he would explore beyond the Snow and come back with an answer. He needed companions to travel with him; seven brave men and women volunteered to join him on his adventure. They were flung over the Snow, past the neighboring village (which they hated and who hated them), over a vast expanse of Darkness, and soon they began to question the landing part of Theodore's plan. His six brave companions died, leaving only a giant man who didn't speak as his travel companion: Oliver. Oliver lifts Theodore up onto his shoulders and he sees the challenges to conquer: a giant forest, a canyon, a clearing with a small house, the Darkness, and the Snow.

INTO THE SNOW: SYNOPSIS

They begin to make their way through the forest, but soon find it nearly impossible to find their way. They encounter a talking Mean Bird who tells them they will never leave the forest. The Mean Birds do not share food and will not tell Theodore where the lake is; getting food and drink also seems hopeless. Then, Theodore comes up with a plan. They follow fig trees to the lake and edge of the forest, where they then encounter the canyon. Theodore and Oliver see a man across the canyon. The man tells the travelers that the forest is his, but it got out of hand and ran him out. Now, the man wants to return to his forest and Theodore and Oliver want to get across the canyon without being attacked by the Mean Birds.

First, Oliver throws a rope across the canyon...but he throws the whole rope, leaving no end for Theodore or himself to hold onto. Then, Theodore comes up with a plan. He tells the man across the canyon to pretend to be him, and to make a gooseberry bush look like Oliver. The Mean Birds think Theodore and Oliver have made it across; they fly towards the Man as plants grow across the canyon. Theodore and Oliver catch a ride on the vines and make it across safely.

INTO THE SNOW: SYNOPSIS

They arrive at the small house, and find an old woman living there, called Margareta. She tells them of a time when a heavy snow came to her village. She was the only one who thought to plant and harvest food for the tough, long winter; all the other villagers scoffed at her planning. Then one day, the snow covered everything in the village and the people were hungry. They asked her for something to eat, but she turned them away. One day she woke to the snow melting and the villagers leaving to find a better place to live. After she finished the story, she offers Theodore and Oliver food and they all eat together. Then, she tricks the two into her larder, telling them the last time she tried to feed people they all left, and this time, she didn't want anyone leaving her house.

Theodore comes up with another escape plan. He and Oliver gather the ingredients for a giant dough ball. Because of the size of the ball and the amount of yeast, it rises and rises until it bursts through the floorboards of the house. As Theodore and Oliver leave Margareta, she mentions the Darkness; how slowly after her village left, a fog began to gather, getting thicker and thicker as the years went on. Theodore and Oliver travel on, knowing their next challenge is to face the Darkness themselves.

INTO THE SNOW: SYNOPSIS

Oliver enters first, and Theodore soon loses him in the expansive dark. Theodore realizes the Darkness is really Emptiness, or Nothingness. To be Nothing, it has to give away Something...and he solves the mystery of the Snow. The Snow is a byproduct of this great dark Nothingness. Then, he steps on a tack. Tacks he had dropped when they were flying over the Darkness all those days before! He follows the tacks to the edge of the Darkness and leaves it behind, only to be captured by guards of Gretaville, the neighboring village

The guards try to determine if he's a spy or not, and once they know he's from Kishka, decide to tie him up with itchy rope in the town square. Suddenly, a voice commands them to let Theodore go; it's Oliver! Turns out, Oliver was from Gretaville all along, and stayed silent because he didn't want anyone in Kishka to know. The travelers head back to Kishka, standing on the Snow dividing the two villages. The villagers argue back and forth until Theodore interjects. He tells the villagers that they are arguing over the oldest woman in both towns, but those women are in fact one and the same; Margareta Kishka! The two villages were founded after her lovers and villages left her.

Theodore and Oliver bring the two villages together and all of the people dig through the Snow. Now facing the Darkness again, the villages sing to Margareta Kishka across the way. The Darkness clears and they all see one another. They first share a meal together, and then build a new village. Soon it is hard to remember a time when there were two villages at all.

CONTENT ADVISORY

RECOMMENDED FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 7 AND UP AND ADVENTURERS OF ALL AGES!

EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS DIFFERENT AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE READY FOR CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF EACH PRODUCTION. READ MORE ABOUT THIS SHOW'S AGE RECOMMENDATION BELOW.

Audiences will be delighted by this epic story, filled with adventure and friendship.

The performance is expected to run approximately 75 minutes including a brief intermission — very young audiences may have difficulty staying connected for the full length of the show.

The show contains moments of suspense and peril, and tension between the characters; audiences may feel anxious as the characters experience these difficult situations, but in the end will learn the power of friendship and love.

There will be changing lights, and loud music and sounds that may be overwhelming for those with sensory sensitivities. We offer sensory friendly performances and sensory kits for patrons who may need them.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

DO

Stay present

Lean in and engage with the story. Observe and listen without distraction to the story being told on stage

Oohs and Aahs

Reacting is encouraged! Please feel free to laugh, cry, clap, or ooh at appropriate moments.

Respect the space

Please sit nicely in the audience chairs, refrain from eating or drinking, and pick up after yourself.

DON'T

Be on your phone

Use of phones is prohibited and is distracting to the actors and audience around you. Recording any portion of the show is strictly prohibited.

Talk over the story

Please refrain from talking over the play. It is distracting to the actors and other audience members, and you'll miss the story!

Be disrespectful

Practice the Campsite Rule - leave the theater better than you find it!

PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. Everyone calls Theodore “tiny” and “small,” and seem to think his abilities are less because of his size. Has anyone ever told you that you can’t do something because of age, gender, or size? How did that make you feel? How did you prove the naysayers wrong?
2. This is an original story, but is written with the feel of an old folk tale. What are the components of a folk or fairy tale? Brainstorm some ideas and see if you can find them while watching the play.
3. The two towns in the story have an old feud; each of the towns hates the other and are not quite sure of the reason. Have you ever had a misunderstanding? How did you correct it? Why is communication important, especially when dealing with a large group of people?
4. A few of the characters in the beginning of the play have names that also include characteristics; for example, Rajev of the Grey Beard. If you were a character in this play or in a fairy tale story, what would your name be? What characteristic would you be famous for? This can be physical or personal (i.e. Grey Beard or the Brave, etc.)

PLOT MOUNTAIN

An ELA Activity

Every story has a structure, kind of in the shape of a mountain! In the journey of a story, there are stops along the way that give the narrative its structure.

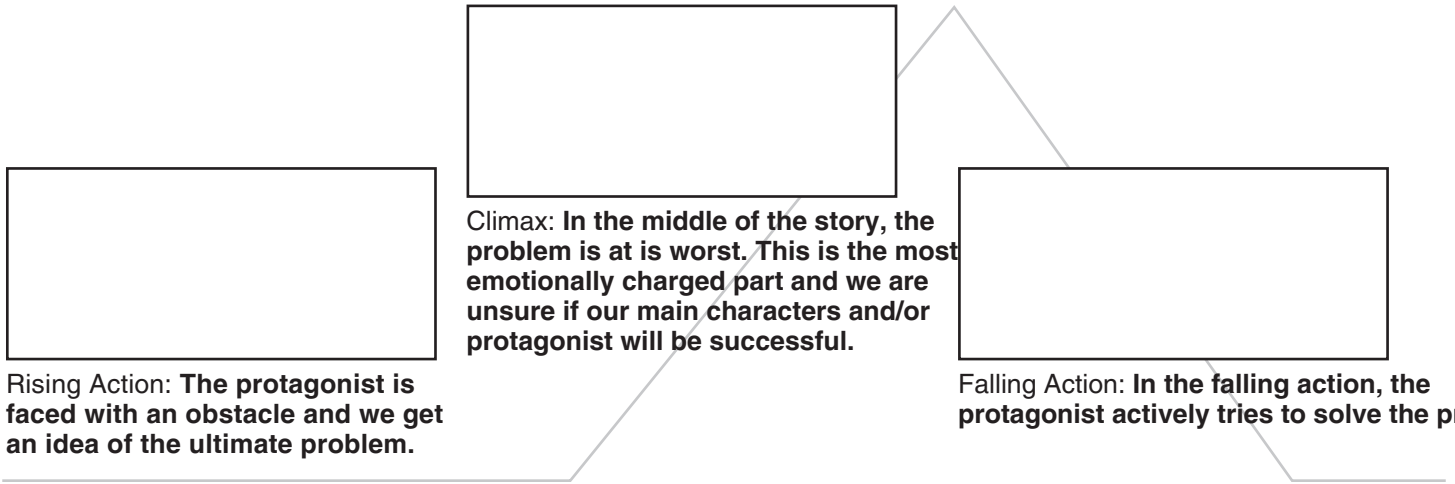
On the next page, you will find a worksheet to explore Narrative Structure, or "Plot Mountain," using the key plot points of The Snow.

Plot Mountain: Exploring Narrative Structure

Narrative structure allows us to sequence a story in order of the main action of the story. Looking at the passages from THE SNOW, place them in the correct Narrative Structure order.

Label them with Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action and Resolution, and then draw a picture of this moment from the story on the narrative structure arc.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE



Climax: **In the middle of the story, the problem is at is worst. This is the most emotionally charged part and we are unsure if our main characters and/or protagonist will be successful.**

Rising Action: **The protagonist is faced with an obstacle and we get an idea of the ultimate problem.**

Falling Action: **In the falling action, the protagonist actively tries to solve the problem**

Exposition: **In the beginning we get to know about the setting, the characters and their relationships to each other.**

Resolution: **The protagonist finds some sort of resolution to the immediate problem.**

_____ The travelers head back to Kishka, standing on the Snow dividing the two villages. The villagers argue back and forth until Theodore interjects. He tells the villagers that they are arguing over the oldest woman in both towns, but those women are in fact one and the same; Margareta Kishka!

_____ They first share a meal together, and then build a new village. Soon it is hard to remember a time when there were two villages at all.

_____ One winter, the Snow came heavier than ever before. It was too tall to climb over and too deep to c through. The people of the village got along as best they could. At the end of winter, they expected to the Snow to melt: but it did not. They decided that something needed to be done, and assembled a committee to come up with a solution.

_____ Theodore and Oliver bring the two villages together and all of the people dig through the Snow. Now facing the Darkness again, the villages sing to Margareta Kishka across the way. The Darkness clears and they all see one another.

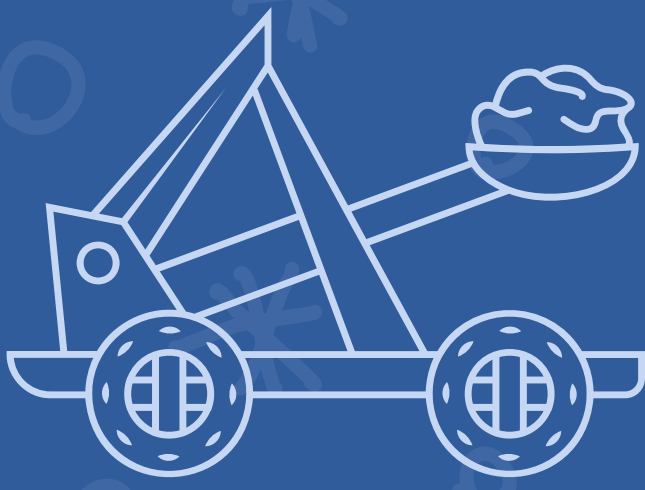
_____ A young boy named Theodore Sutton acts on a plan to save the village, but he must conquer a gia forest, a canyon, a clearing with a small house, the Darkness, and the Snow.

MAKE YOUR OWN CATAPULT

A STEM ACTIVITY

MATERIALS

- Craft sticks (they also come in cool colors)
- Spoons
- Rubber bands
- Something small and lightweight to launch (like a pompom, a small marshmallow, or crumpled up aluminum foil)



MAKE YOUR OWN CATAPULT

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Take 5 sticks and stack them, securing one end with a rubber band. You'll need to wrap the rubber band around several times to make it nice and secure.
2. Slide one more stick between the bottom stick and the rest of the stack.
3. Secure the other end with a rubber band.
4. Place the spoon on top, and attach the end of the spoon to the end of the single stick with the last rubber band.
5. Get together with your friends and see who can launch something the farthest. Or see what materials launch farther than others!

Source: https://stlmotherhood.com/popsicle-spoons-catapult-challenge/

WRITE YOUR "FROM" STORY

A Social Studies Activity

Everyone has a place they are from! Theodore is from Kishka and Oliver from Gretaville.

In this activity, answer the prompts on the following page to write your very own "From" Story.

"The place I'm from has a story."

FILL IN THE BLANKS TO WRITE YOUR FROM STORY

1. The name of the place I am from is _____
2. I live there with _____
3. The weather is usually _____
4. My favorite thing to do there is _____
5. If I were to bring a friend to visit, I would show them _____
6. I am happy I'm from here because _____

There is an example on the next page if you need help

EXAMPLE:

1. The name of the place I am from is Honolulu, Hawai'i
2. I live there with my friends and my cat
3. The weather is usually sunny and warm
4. My favorite thing to do there is swim in the ocean
5. If I were to bring a friend to visit, I would show them the Diamondhead Crater
6. I am happy I'm from here because there's always a reason to smile

YOUR OWN ACADEMY PRODUCTION LAB

A TECHNICAL THEATER ACTIVITY

The Snow is First Stage's Academy Production Lab (APL) show for the 2026-2027 season. Academy Production Lab, a one-of-a-kind program designed for students in grades 5-9 to immerse themselves in both performance and production. This exciting initiative allows students to gain hands-on experience as actors, designers, assistant directors, or stage managers, working together to bring a show to life.

In this activity, you will be able to create your own APL Production of The Snow, right in your home or classroom!

APL ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

STEP #1: DESIGN

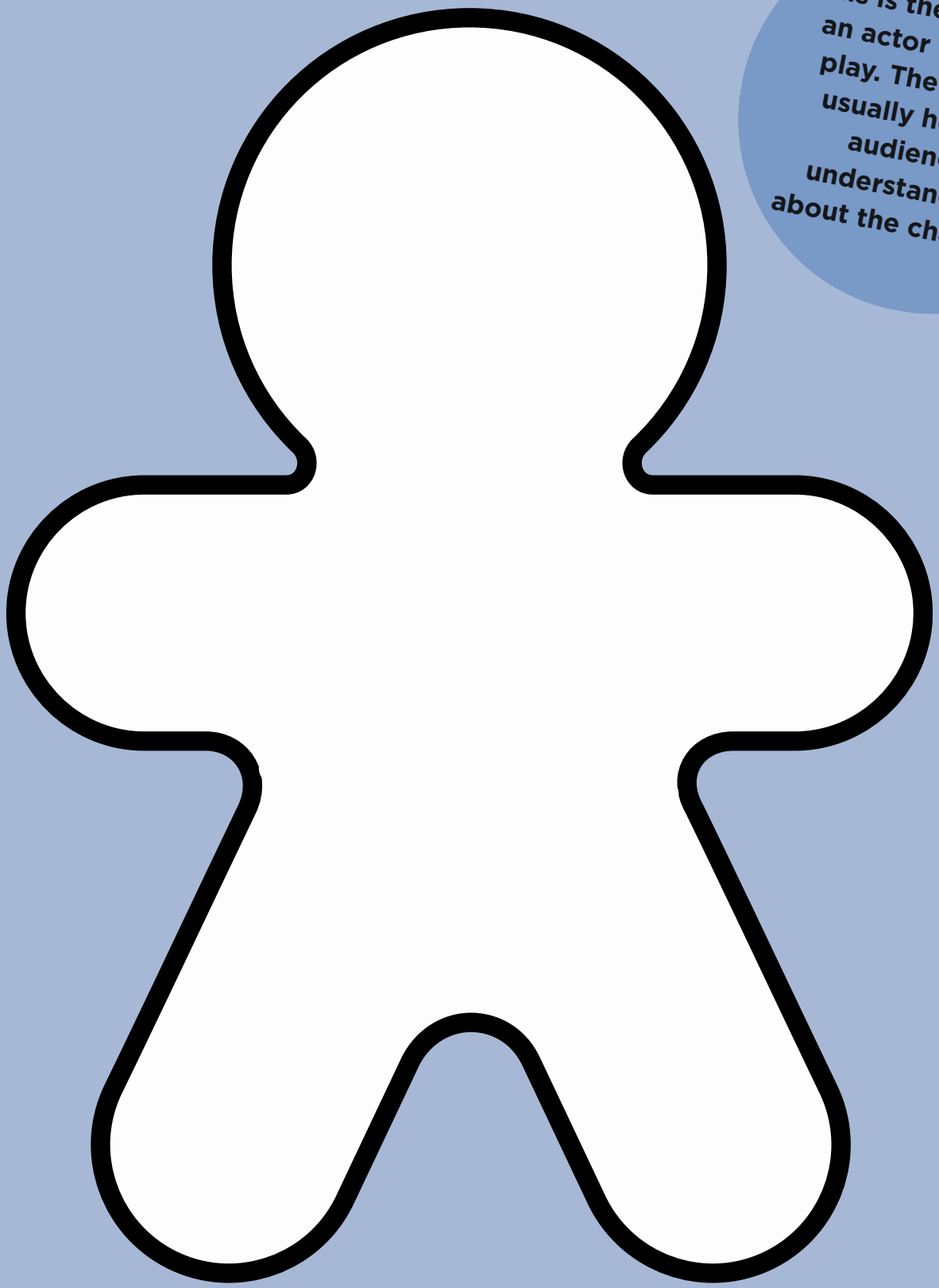
Use the templates on the following pages to design a costume, a prop, and a set piece for your APL production of The Snow.

STEP #2: CHOOSE YOUR ITEMS

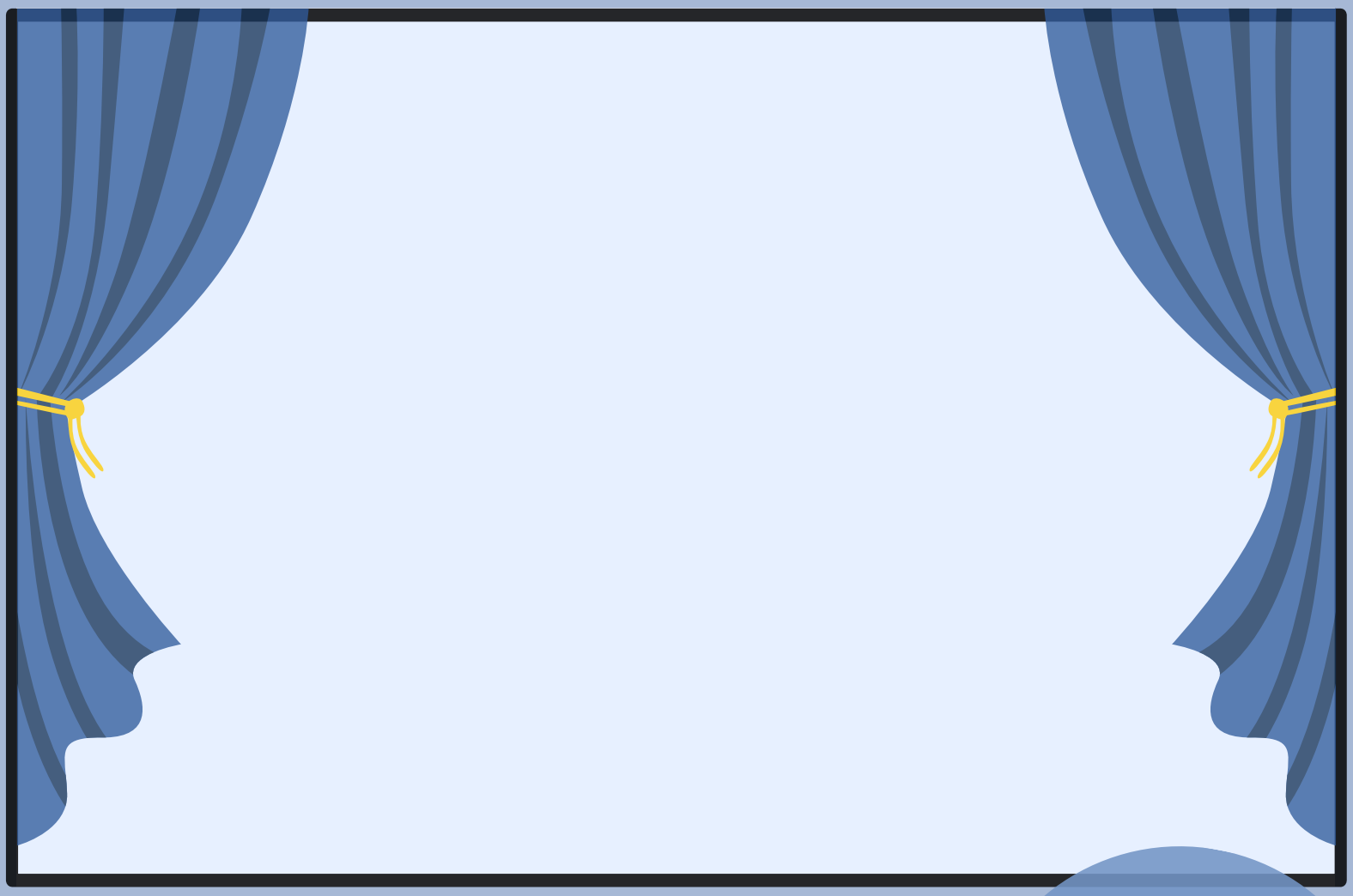
Circle the everyday items you'll use from each column for your APL production.

#1: DESIGN YOUR COSTUME

This is the outfit that an actor wears in a play. The costume usually helps the audience to understand more about the character.



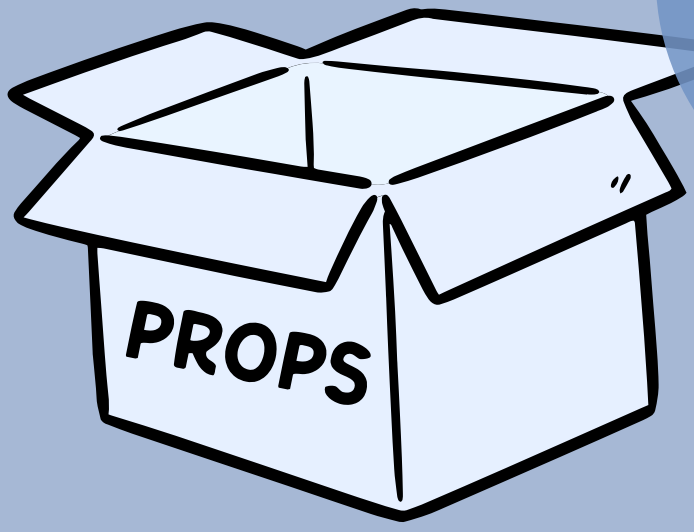
#1: DESIGN YOUR SET/SCENERY



This is the background or structures on stage that tell the audience where the story is happening.

#1: DESIGN YOUR PROPS

These are objects that actors handle in a play. Props help to enhance the story.



#2: CHOOSE YOUR ITEMS

Circle the everyday items you'll use from each column for your APL production.

SCENERY	COSTUMES	PROPS
• Blanket • Yarn/ string • Shoe box • Chair • Table • Plant (real or fake) • Step stool or step ladder	• Gloves • Jacket / sweater • Hat • Boots • Scarf • Purse or totebag • Scarf	• Book • Pencil • Comb or hair-brush • Water bottle • Pillow / stuffie • Bucket • Umbrella

APL ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

STEP #3: GATHER MATERIALS

Gather your items. Ask an adult if you can find the items you chose in your home/classroom. If not, you can draw them on cardboard or paper!

STEP #4: CREATE

Build or create your costume, prop, and set piece using the everyday items you collected.

STEP #5: PERFORM!

Retell your favorite part of the show using your costume, prop, and set piece!

POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. Theodore and Oliver become great friends throughout their journey. How did their friendship help them overcome challenges? How would the ending of the play been different if they hadn't been friends? How has friendship changed your life? What do you appreciate about your friends?
2. How did Theodore get out of bad situations without being very big? Do you like solving problems? What is a problem that you have solved in your life without using strength or size?
3. The narrators are a large part of the play, though they don't seem to belong to either village. Why do you think they are a part of this story? Did they help you understand the plot, or confuse you? How did they make the story feel more like a folktale?

WHO SAID IT?

1. “If you help me build a catapult, I can be flung over the snow”
2. “I can offer you the services of my wonderful man-chin and its grey man-locks of manmade manliness!”
3. “They just became…flat. And sort of…one person, squished together in a pancake of arms and legs and bellybuttons and beards, and bottoms”
4. “And remember—let’s not lose hope”
5. “You are doomed to spend the rest of your days lost in this unforgiving forest!”
6. “Behind the pair, a forest creeps and a flock dives, and the two sit helpless on the edge of a canyon, unable to get across and sure to die”
7. “I love plants you see, and planted many—too many. Soon they fought for space. And then they just fought for fun”
8. “Yup, all that remains of those times—the scribbles of two brothers who both loved me, and some marks in the grass”
9. “Before, when I tried to feed the people, they left. So now, no leaving. You can stay and eat and eat and eat. Whether you wish to or not”
10. “And slowly…oh so slowly but oh so wonderfully…the dough begins to rise!”
11. “Well, we are off to the Darkness. And any wandering villagers we find, we’ll send your way”
12. “The Darkness…is Emptiness. It’s the distance between an old woman and her young memory—the space that sits between the loneliest person, and a time when she wasn’t that”
13. “I got out by finding the tacks you dropped. And my voice…is this one”
14. “On the other side of the Darkness, Greta Kishka has enough to feed us all”
15. “And when I walk, my great friend walks beside me”

WHO SAID IT?

ANSWER KEY

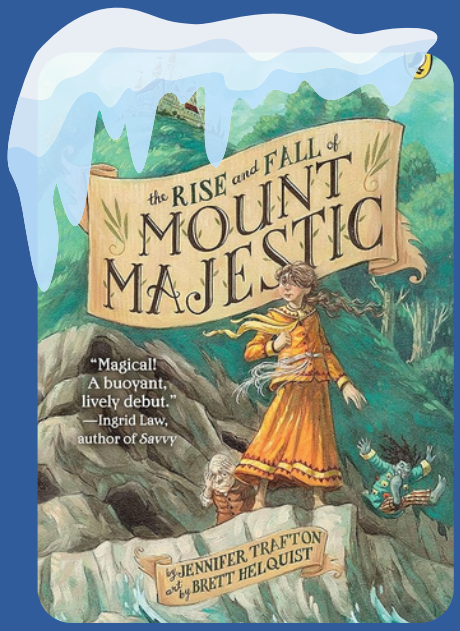
1. THEODORE
2. RAJEV THE GREY BEARD
3. NARRATOR
4. THEODORE
5. TALKING BIRD
6. NARRATOR
7. FARAWAY MAN
8. MARGARETA
9. MARGARETA
10. NARRATOR
11. THEODORE
12. THEODORE
13. OLIVER
14. THEODORE
15. THEODORE

RECOMMENDED READING

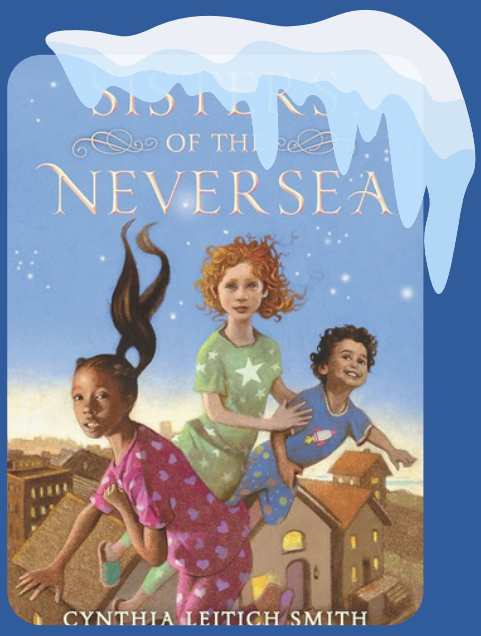
The Lightning Thief
by Rick Riordan

Tristan Strong Punches
a Hole in the Sky
by Kwame Mbalia

RECOMMENDED READING

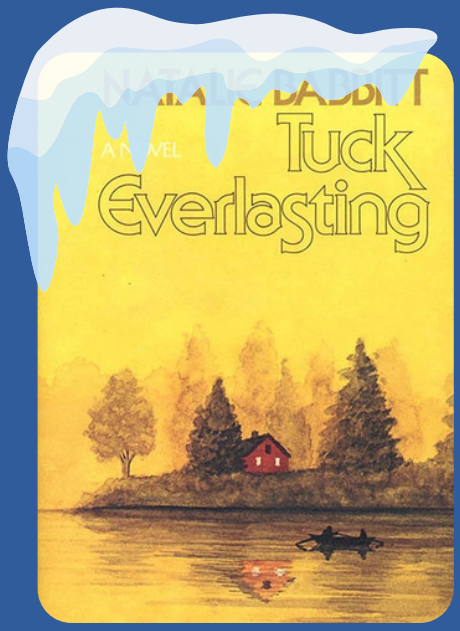


The Rise and Fall of
Mount Majestic
by Jennifer Trafton

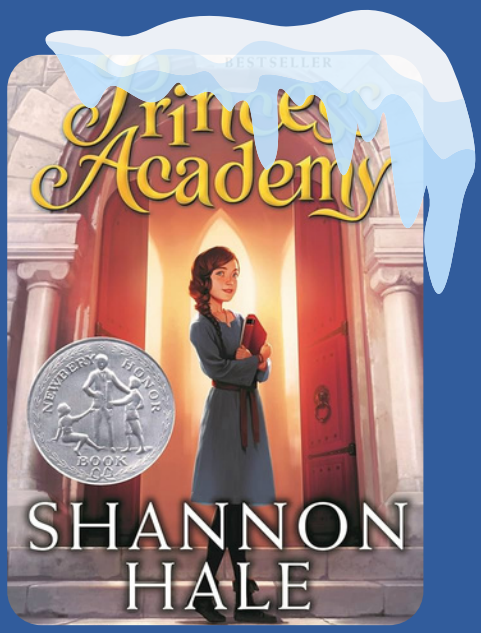


Sisters of the Neversea
by Cynthia Leitich Smith

RECOMMENDED READING



Tuck Everlasting
by Natalie Babbitt



Princess Academy
by Shannon Hale

SHOW PLAYLIST

Catapult into The Snow with this special show playlist!

This playlist aims to capture the whimsy and adventure of *The Snow* through themed music that can be enjoyed by theater-goers of all ages

COMMUNITY SPACES IN MILWAUKEE

Scan the QR codes to learn about spaces in the Milwaukee area where you can gather with your community to make great friends!

MILWAUKEE REC COMMUNITY CENTERS

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY PARKS COMMUNITY CENTERS

URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER

3RD ST. MARKET HALL

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MARKET

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL COMMUNITY PARK

MILWAUKEE YOUTH ARTS CENTER

STAFF FEATURE

GET TO KNOW SAMMY BROWN!

1. **Could you describe what you do for First Stage and how long you've been here?**
    a. I joined First Stage 18 months ago as Director of Production! My role oversees and supports the Designers that dream up our productions, the Production staff that turns those visions into reality, and the folks that aid in running rehearsals and performances. That can include (but isn't limited to!) Scenery, Props, Puppets, Costumes, Lighting, Sound, Projections, Stage Management, and other special effects like atmospheric haze or the snow you might have seen in Frozen or Rudolph.
2. **What made you want to work in the theater?**
    a. I have loved creating events since my earliest memories, beginning with skits and dances my sister and I would create and perform for our family. Along with that has been a life-long fascination with the backstage of all things. There is a front stage and back stage to most human-made environments we find ourselves in. Consider a restaurant, where the "front stages" are the areas intended for customers to see and experience (like the dining room), and the "back stage" being the spaces behind employee-only doors (like the kitchen). I have always loved seeing and learning about the unseen aspects of the many spaces we enjoy. Next time you're out somewhere, consider what front and back stages might be around you!
3. **There are many characters in The Snow with names that describe who they are, like Rajev of the Grey Beard, Connor the Calm, and Rin and Ren of the Raven-Hearts. If you could have a name that describes who you are, what would it be?**
    a. Hmm! I hope to live up to "Sammy of the green thumb" because I love to cultivate nature both in and outside my home. Particularly plants for our pollinator friends to enjoy. I find a lot in common with my work in theater and my work with plants. Both require patience, creativity, attention to detail, and love.

STAFF FEATURE

GET TO KNOW SAMMY BROWN!

- **What is the Academy Production Lab? What is the coolest part of this program?**
  - From my point of view, Academy Production Lab gives young people the opportunity to be Creative Directors. These roles are invested in every aspect of what creates a live event or experience! By considering every element of the production, from the floor to the lights above it, and everything in-between, you and your collaborators can truly harness the truest version of your collective vision within the container of resources available to make it happen. You might find that areas of theater you haven't considered are the most exciting to you!
- **The Snow is about an ordinary kid who has extraordinary ideas. What are some extraordinary ideas you had growing up? Did you accomplish any of them?**
  - I have always had a VERY active imagination, which has served me well in the work I do. When I was younger, I loved to envision myself travelling the world with friends as some of my favorite animated characters (mainly Sailor Moon). While I have yet to transform into an animated superhero, working in theater has provided me with amazing opportunities to travel to many places I wouldn't have otherwise. I've also gotten to create beautiful worlds onstage and share them with others, which is a special kind of magic in itself.
- **Academy Production Lab gives students a great opportunity to learn more about the tech and production elements in a show. What other ways can students learn more about tech at First Stage?**
  - For those in our Young Company now or in the future, we're offering more opportunities to support productions as run crew, where you can learn more about the technical side of the Arts from our incredible Designers and Production staff. Also, the next time you see a First Stage production, try to find moments to consider the many elements aiding the performers with their storytelling. Consider why a light might have changed, how the sound or music is making you feel during a scene, or how a performer was able to change into another costume so quickly. When you start asking yourself questions like that, you begin opening up an entire universe you might not have considered before!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Philanthropy is giving (time, money, goods, or talents) to make the world a better place.

At First Stage we are so thankful to our donors, sponsors, volunteers, families, students and staff who help transform lives through theater!

First Stage's current donors:

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Volunteer front of house for a production

Attend a performance

Make a monetary donation

Bring First Stage to your school

Take an Academy class

Tell your friends about First Stage