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# THE Velveteen Rabbit

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**JOHN DEERE**



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# Getting to Know You

We asked the cast of *The Velveteen Rabbit* what their favorite toy is or was when they were a child and why.



**Corley Blackford** (*The Rabbit*)

My favorite toy as a child was (and still is!) a little dalmatian dog stuffed animal called Spot. It's not the most original name

in the world, but I've had him since I was around four or five. All of his spots are gone and/or faded now, and he is very scruffy, but I still like him the best of the toys I had when I was younger.



**Pilar Burg** (*Stage Manager*)

I have a small stuffed mountain goat, named Jeffrey. He was the one who traveled everywhere with me; from

summer camps in elementary and middle school to a European vacation I took in high school. He now sits on the shelf behind my desk. Pilar's son, Gavin Burg, who is on the run crew, said, "I had a bunch of Tonka trucks and earth movers. I would take them out to the sandbox and build roads and cities."



**Ella Frost** (*Ensemble*)

My favorite toy when I was younger was my dollhouse which I used to decorate almost every day. I loved

playing with it with friends and would pretend like my cats were giant pets.



**Ava Gifford** (*Ensemble*)

My favorite toys were Legos. My brother and I would spend hours setting up villages with the houses and characters.

Now, I still get them out once in a while for my brother and me to make stop motion movies with them!



**Charissa L. Hamel** (*Director*)

My favorite toy was the baby dinosaur toy from the show *Dinosaurs*. It had a pull cord that made the toy say all the catch phrases like, "not the

mama."



**Tim Harris** (*Technical Director*)

My favorite toy was a stuffed horse with a music box inside. Given to me while I was a baby, I slept with him

every night.



**Michael Howland** (*Ensemble*)

I loved action figures as a child. I loved all the '80s classics: G.I. Joe, He-Man, Mask, and Transformers. But

I also loved my stuffed teddy bear that was homemade by one of my mom's coworkers. I named him Jerry Bear. I had him all the way into marriage until our first dog bit his arm off.



**Jay Michael Jagim** (*Scenic Designer*)

I remember spending a lot of time playing with Lincoln Logs. I loved building things with them. The only other thing I

can remember really doing was drawing. I started doing house floor plans at about the age of 6 or 7. By the time I left home I had boxes and boxes of them and sketches of houses.



**Caroline Johnson** (*Nana*)

My favorite is a teddy bear who I named Huggy. I've had him since I was a baby and he still sits on my nightstand by my

bed. My dad has a photo of me when I was about a year old, napping with Huggy right next to me, and good old Huggy Bear still looks the same!



**Angela Lampe** (*Costume Designer/Properties Designer*)

After reading all of the *Little House on the Prairie* books I absolutely had to have an antique china doll. I still have it.

Her name is Elizabeth.



**Kerrie Lee** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) My favorite toy was a pink stuffed dog named Doggy who I gave to my little sister after she was born.

Even though my sister is grown and has a daughter of her own now, she still has Doggy.



**Finley Snavelly** (*The Child*) I loved using my imagination to make playing Disney princess dress-up come to life. Once I would put on a princess

dress I would magically transform into

that princess for the day. I always was pretending to be in the world of adventure with my favorite Disney princesses.



**Oliver Thrun** (*Ensemble*)

My favorite toys were my Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles action figures! Rafael was my favorite turtle and my favorite

non-turtle character was the rabbit samurai Usagi Yojimbo.

What about you? What is your favorite toy? Do you have any toys that you have kept from when you were younger? Why did you keep them?

## IMAGINATION STATION

*Jabberwocky* is a nonsense poem written by Lewis Carroll that appears in his novel *Through the Looking Glass*, the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The Jabberwock in our play is a product of our scenic designer, Jay Jagim's, imagination. What would your Jabberwock look like? Design and draw it below.

# Meet the author:

## Margery Williams

### (b. 1881–d.1944)

Margery Williams Bianco was born in London, England, but moved to Pennsylvania when she was just nine years old. From a very early age, she was encouraged by her parents to read and use her imagination, which turned into a desire to write as she got older.

She wrote her first novel for adults at the tender age of 19, which was not very successful. *The Velveteen Rabbit, or How Toys Become Real* was published in 1922. It was her first, and most successful, book for children. In 1937, she received a Newbery Medal for *Winterbound*, a book set in the Depression about two teenaged girls who must care for their family after their parents are called away unexpectedly.

*The Velveteen Rabbit* has been adapted into numerous plays, movies, television shows and radio programs.



**“When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become real.”**

–Margery Williams

## Great Rabbits in Literature

- *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo
- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter
- *Knufflebunny* by Mo Willems
- *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown
- *Bunnacula* by James Howe
- *The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes* by DuBose Heyward
- *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney
- *The Dumb Bunnies* by Dav Pilkey
- *The Little Rabbit Who Wanted Red Wings* by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey
- *Marshmallow* by Claire Turlay Newberry
- *Rabbit Moon* by Jean Kim
- *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* by Duncan Donatuih
- *The Tortoise and the Hare* by Aesop (and others)
- *Frankenbunny* by Jill Esbaum

Check these and other great books out of your library!

# Meet the Playwright:

## Patrick Flynn (b. 1980)



Patrick Flynn is an American playwright, filmmaker, and college professor. When he was a child, he did a lot of theatre, and was inspired to write a play after

observing his friend act in, direct and write a play. As he says, “It had never occurred to me before that someone my age could write a play. I just didn’t know you were allowed.” So, he started writing and hasn’t stopped since.

In addition to several adult plays, Patrick also wrote an adaptation of *Peter Pan*, called *Tinker Bell*, that was produced in the 2019-20 Kate Goldman Children’s Theatre season.

Patrick says, “I don’t think people know how inspirational *The Velveteen Rabbit* is. I mean, it indirectly or directly led to Disney’s *Toy Story*.”

>> [Click here](#) to listen to a podcast interview with Patrick and Embracing Arlington Arts to learn more about adapting *The Velveteen Rabbit* and Patrick’s journey as a playwright and theatre artist.

**Fun Fact:** There is no dinosaur toy in the book. Patrick included one in the play at his 9-year-old son’s request!

## Compare and Contrast

Read the book and do a compare and contrast with the play, then answer the following questions.

1. Were all the characters the same in both? Which ones were only in one or the other? Why do you think some things are in one but not the other?
2. If you were to write a play based on the book, what would you do the same or differently? Would you use only characters from the book, or add additional characters as our playwright did?
3. Did you have a favorite character in the play or book? A least favorite character? Why?

# Real People in History

A bust is a sculpted statue of the shoulders and head of a person. When *The Child* and *The Velveteen Rabbit* play in the library, busts of William Shakespeare and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart come to life and talk to them.



**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (b.1756-d.1791) was a prolific and influential composer who began composing when he was only 4 or 5 years old! In *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the character of Mozart sings snippets of works that he composed.

Look up the following pieces by Mozart that are used in the play and listen to them. How do they make you feel? What do you like or dislike about them? At least one of them will sound very familiar to you.

*Rondo Alla Turca* (Turkish March) from Piano Sonata No. 11

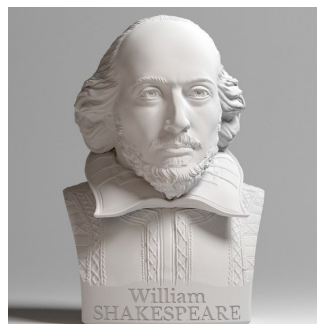
*Der Hölle Rache* from *The Magic Flute* (The Queen of the Night's vengeance aria)

*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (A Little Night Music)

Act II Commendatore Scene from *Don Giovanni*

*12 Variations on Ah Vous Dirai-Je, Maman\** (Shall I Tell You, Mama?)

\*Do you recognize the tune?



**William Shakespeare** (b.1564-d.1616) was a prominent playwright who wrote 39 plays and over 150 sonnets. His plays have been translated into multiple languages and are still performed today. His writing helped to shape modern English, and in fact many words and phrases that we use today first appeared in print in his works. Have you ever heard someone say that “something wicked this way comes” or “it’s all Greek to me?” Yep, all written by Shakespeare. In

fact, you’ll hear some of those lines in this play! [Go here](#) to find more words and phrases written by Shakespeare that we still use today.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Imagine your toys have personalities and could think and feel.** What stories would you tell with them?

**This play takes place about 100 years ago.** Many of the toys in The Child's nursery are very different from toys children play with today. What toys do you think children will play with 100 years from now?

**The Child and The Rabbit like to act out stories from the books The Child reads.** Do you remember what books?

**Actors in the ensemble of a play typically play a variety of characters.** How did the actors in *The Velveteen Rabbit* show that they were playing different characters? Did they use a different voice or movement? How did their costumes help us recognize each character?

**You probably see rabbits in your yard or neighborhood all the time.** Imagine that one of them started out as a stuffed rabbit. Write your own story about their life, and how they became real.

**The Skin Horse says the following line:** "Real isn't how you are made, it's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but truly loves you, then you become Real." What do you think he means?





# Word Search

Find the different characters from the show in the puzzle. Words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

M	V	T	V	A	Z	M	B	P	D	C	J	F	M	M	W	T	R	G	T
W	O	L	H	A	X	A	X	T	A	A	J	C	Q	A	C	C	M	E	N
F	C	D	D	E	C	V	I	L	B	M	T	Z	O	H	C	E	P	O	D
U	X	R	E	F	C	B	W	B	Q	B	R	A	P	G	Y	F	R	O	S
N	S	W	O	L	B	H	E	U	M	R	A	Y	I	N	X	V	K	K	W
Y	T	P	R	A	B	R	I	F	W	I	Z	A	W	I	D	T	I	V	O
S	H	C	R	O	W	O	Y	L	C	D	O	A	W	T	S	N	S	K	O
X	F	E	J	O	T	F	A	A	D	G	M	Z	S	T	H	I	S	Z	D
V	H	X	C	U	T	C	F	T	O	E	E	A	E	O	F	O	S	I	E
T	U	K	A	N	A	N	O	T	X	B	B	E	R	N	L	W	I	O	N
D	Y	C	W	I	I	Z	E	D	F	U	F	S	G	F	A	U	X	X	L
N	I	T	Y	I	J	H	T	K	O	N	E	E	R	O	M	M	Y	U	I
J	D	N	P	Z	F	F	V	Z	R	N	T	S	M	F	O	R	K	P	O
D	I	N	O	S	A	U	R	B	D	Y	K	A	H	F	I	X	Q	K	N
K	K	N	K	S	Z	B	O	W	B	Z	K	T	J	I	O	Q	D	O	B
K	O	T	E	S	U	O	M	P	U	D	N	I	W	R	J	O	G	Y	A
O	V	S	Z	Y	O	S	S	S	N	W	K	F	G	E	Y	Z	U	O	Q
A	F	G	K	T	Y	L	C	U	N	E	K	B	J	H	Q	Y	K	D	Y
Z	U	Q	O	O	D	A	P	M	Y	W	G	V	V	S	F	K	R	E	K
S	H	A	K	E	S	P	E	A	R	E	U	B	O	N	P	R	W	L	W

CAMBRIDGE BUNNY

JABBERWOCKY

NANA

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM

THE RABBIT

DINOSAUR

MODEL BOAT

OXFORD BUNNY

SKIN HORSE

WINDUP MOUSE

DOCTOR

MOZART

SHAKESPEARE

THE CHILD

WOODEN LION