

THE PARAMOUNT

ARTS EDUCATION

STUDY GUIDES • 2019-2020



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THE STORY OF ROSA PARKS



WILDE CREATURES




League of Historic
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CHARLOTTESVILLE'S LARGEST CLASSROOM FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS


ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Paramount believes that a passion for the performing arts begins at an early age. We are committed to presenting the finest arts education performances for area school children. The support and generosity of our Arts Education Partners allow The Paramount to make these programs accessible to ALL children in Central Virginia by offering performances at a reduced cost or free of charge.



"Attending shows at The Paramount is always valuable for our students, and the variety of shows means that our kids are receiving a well-rounded experience. Pairing arts and education helps with retention, and visually experiencing the content helps students connect to material on a more personal level."

*Natalie Capps, Gifted Resource Teacher,
Walton Middle School*



The mission of The Paramount Theater Arts Education Program is to foster appreciation, understanding, and love of the performing arts. The Arts Education Program provides the opportunity for all students to experience live performing arts in the beautifully restored historic Paramount Theater.

Photo Credit: Andrew Shurtleff

"Engagement in the arts expands appreciation for various art forms and develops future artists while building future audiences. The arts have the power to bring people of diverse backgrounds together and to strengthen communities. The Paramount Theater is integral to providing such meaningful opportunities in the arts, making lasting impacts in the lives of our students and in our community."

*Aaron Eichorst, Coordinator for Fine & Performing Arts,
Charlottesville City Schools*

THANK YOU TO OUR ARTS EDUCATION PARTNERS

The generosity of our Arts Education Partners has made it possible for over **195,000** students and teachers from all over Central Virginia to attend live performing arts at The Paramount since 2004. In 2018-19, a record-breaking **18,667** students and teachers attended Arts Education performances reaching grades Pre-K – 12. Students and teachers came from **60** public schools (15 school divisions throughout Central Virginia), **25** private schools, and **56** home school groups. Nearly **4,800** students benefitted from additional financial assistance based on need.

If you have questions or would like more information about the Arts Education Program, please contact Cathy von Storch, Education & Outreach Manager at 434.293.1000 or cathyvonstorch@theparamount.net.



WILDE CREATURES

Education Pack - Key Stage 1

Tall Stories Theatre Company

Tall Stories was started in 1997 by directors Olivia Jacobs and Toby Mitchell. We tour to theatres and schools around the world, telling stories that we love. Some of our plays are based on well-known books or stories, like *The Gruffalo* or *Snow White*. Some are based on brand new ideas like *Alfie White: Space Explorer*.

Wilde Creatures is based on fairy tales written by Oscar Wilde.

Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde lived from 1854 to 1900. His full name was Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde! He was born in Ireland but moved to London when he was a young man. In London, Wilde met other writers, artists and rich people who loved to throw parties. Everybody wanted Oscar to come to their party – he was clever, funny and loved telling stories and jokes. He wrote plays, poems, stories and fairy tales.

Wilde Creatures

Our play *Wilde Creatures* is based on three of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales:

1. *The Devoted Friend*. In this story, the Miller thinks he knows everything there is to know about being a good friend. His best friend is a gardener called Little Hans.
2. *The Nightingale and the Rose*. In this story, the Student wants a red rose to give to the woman he loves. He is sad because he can't find one. The Nightingale (a garden bird) feels sorry for him and helps him.
3. *The Birthday of the Infanta*. ("Infanta" is another word for princess – it comes from Spanish.) In this story, the Princess has a birthday party. She meets a Wild Boy from the forest. The Wild Boy is the only person who can really make her laugh.

We also take ideas from two other Oscar Wilde stories, *The Happy Prince* (where we found the idea of the statue) and *The Selfish Giant* (where we found the idea of the garden).

Our show is based on Oscar Wilde's original stories but if you read those stories you'll find lots of differences.

What is *Wilde Creatures* about?

A travelling band of story-telling musicians called the Wilde Creatures tell the story of a poor town. The Mayor wants to put up a statue of himself but the townspeople have other ideas. They think there are other people who might deserve a statue instead. They tell stories about these people to show the Mayor how great they are, only it turns out they might not be so great after all...



WILDE CREATURES

DISCUSS: Statues

Putting up a statue is a bit like putting up a picture of someone famous on your wall. Sometimes people put up pictures of pop stars, sports people, super-heroes and people from TV that they like.

What famous people do you like? Do you have any pictures of famous people on your walls at home? Who are they and why do you think they're great?

DISCUSS: How great are they really?

The Miller thinks he is the best friend in the world. What do good friends do?

Do you think the Miller is a good friend to Little Hans? Why? Is Little Hans a good friend to the Miller? Why? Which one would you rather have as your friend?

The Student thinks he knows everything. What things do you think it's important to know about? (Spelling? Maths? How to play sports? How to fly a kite or make a paper aeroplane? How to be kind to other people? What else?)

Is there anything the student doesn't know about? What could he learn from the Nightingale?

The Princess thinks she can have anything she wants because she is special. You might say she is spoilt. What does it mean for a child to be spoilt?

What do you like or dislike about the Princess? What do you like or dislike about the Wild Boy? Which of them do you think is the better person and why?

The Mayor wants to put up a statue of himself because he thinks he is important. Can you think of any important people in real life?

By the end of the play the Mayor has changed his mind about the statue. Why does he change his mind? What does he decide to do instead? Do you think it is a good idea? Why?



WILDE CREATURES

HOW TO MAKE A PLAY

A play is a story told by actors, watched by a group of people called the audience. (When you came to see *Wilde Creatures*, you were the audience.) It is called a play because it is a lot like playing a game of make-believe. These are some of the things we think about when we make a play. You can try them out yourselves.

The Set

We think about where the story is happening. Is it in a house, up a mountain, under the sea? We make those places so that the audience can see them. This is called the set.

Try it yourself:

What can you find in your classroom to make a house? What about a mountain? What about the sea? What would you do each of these sets if you were an actor in the play? Would you sit in it, stand on it, pretend to swim around it?

In *Wilde Creatures*, our set is a town made of wooden boxes. Can you make a town out of things in your classroom? What buildings would there be? Would there be houses, a school, a town hall? Would there be roads, with cars? Would there be a park or a playground? What else?

Costumes

In a play, the actors wear different clothes when they are pretending to be different people. These clothes are called costumes.

In *Wilde Creatures*, the Mayor wears a bright red suit and a top hat. It shows us that he is very important and a bit of a show-off. The Princess wears a crown, the Student has a long scarf and the Miller has a cushion stuffed up his shirt to make him look fat.

When we make a costume, as well as making it look right, we have to make sure the actor can move around in it easily. Can they see? Can they speak?

Try it yourself:

Draw an outline of a person on a piece of paper. Draw clothes on the person that make them look like a mayor. Draw another person and draw clothes to make them look like a princess. Draw a third person and draw clothes to make them look like a nightingale (a kind of bird).

Use a large piece of paper to make one piece of costume that you can wear to make you look like a mayor, princess, or a nightingale. What would be the most important piece of costume so that everyone would know straight away who you are?

Movement

In our play, the actors move in different ways when they are being different people. The nightingale hops around quite quickly like a bird and uses her arms like wings. The Mayor takes big steps and puffs his chest out because he thinks he is important.



WILDE CREATURES

Try it yourself:

Walk around the room like the Mayor. What would you do with your arms, your head, your chest and your feet?

Move around the room like the Nightingale. What would you do with your arms, head and feet?

Little Hans the gardener is old. How does an old person walk? Are they quick or slow? Do they stand up straight or bent over? Walk around the room like someone who is old.

Move around the room as though you are excited because it's your birthday tomorrow. Would you move slowly or quickly? Would you shuffle or jump about? What would your arms do?

Move around as though you are sad because your best friend can't come to your birthday party. Is it different from when you were excited?

Move around as though you are scared because there's a bear hiding somewhere in the room. Would you be quick or slow? Would you be loud or quiet? Would you walk tall or crouch down? Would you keep looking around you as you go?

Stand or walk like you are feeling brave because you know you have super-strength and can beat the bear. Is it different from when you were scared?

Teachers, write some adjectives to describe emotions on slips of paper and put them in a hat. Get one student up at a time, let them choose an adjective and move around appropriately. Let the rest of the class guess what each adjective is.

Voice

In our play, the actors speak differently when they are being different people. The Miller's voice is loud because he thinks he knows everything and that everyone should listen to him. Little Hans' voice is soft because he is shy. The Nightingale is kind and brave. How do you think she would speak?

Try it yourself:

Try saying hello in a Miller voice.

Try saying hello in a Little Hans voice.

Try a Nightingale voice.

Imagine you are excited again because it's your birthday. Your friends start arriving for your party – say hello to them in an excited voice.

Imagine you are sad again, because your best friend can't come. Your friend phones you up - say hello in a sad voice.

Imagine you are scared of that bear again. It comes out of its hiding place and slowly towards you. You are backed into a corner and have no way to escape! Say hello to the bear in a scared voice!

Imagine your friends are bored and you want to make them laugh – say hello in a funny voice.

Imagine you are going to speak to the class about how to be safe on the roads. Say hello in a serious voice.

Teachers, try the adjectives in a hat game again. You can use the same ones as before, or new ones.

WILDE CREATURES

Music

In *Wilde Creatures* we play musical instruments. What instruments do we play?



What instruments are these?



WILDE CREATURES

How the instruments work:

The **violin** is a string instrument. You can pluck the strings or draw a bow across them to make a sound. If you put your fingers down on the strings to change their length you can make different notes.

The **clarinet** is a woodwind instrument. You blow through it to make a sound. By putting your fingers over the holes to change the length of the tube you can make different notes.

The **accordion** is a keyboard instrument. You squeeze the bellows to make a sound. By pressing down different keys on the keyboard with your right hand you can play different notes. By pressing the buttons at the other end with your left hand you can play chords (several notes at once) to go with the tune.

The **guitar** is another string instrument. You pluck the strings to play make a sound and put your fingers on the strings to makes different notes, like the violin. You can strum all the strings at once to play chords (several notes together) to go with a tune.

Sound effects

In *Wilde Creatures*, as well as playing songs, we make sound effects using our instruments and our voices.

When Little Hans is walking through the storm we use a violin, a thunder shaker and our voices to make the sounds of the storm.

Try it yourself:

All together, use your voices and any instruments you have to make the sounds of a storm.

Now try making the sounds of a zoo. Think about all the different animals.

Now try the sounds of a haunted house. Think about ghost noises, creaking doors, whistling wind, some spooky music and maybe a werewolf howling in the distance. Add anything else you can think of!

Teachers, think of some other places and situations and get the class to make sound effects to go with them. You could try a sporting event, the seaside, a busy road, or anything else you can think of.



WILDE CREATURES

Education Pack – Key Stage 2

Tall Stories Theatre Company

Tall Stories was founded in 1997 by joint artistic directors Olivia Jacobs and Toby Mitchell. We are a registered charity that tours to theatres, schools and other venues around the world, telling stories that we love. We use all sorts of inventive methods to do this – live music, physical performance and sets that do clever things, as well as original scripts. Some of our shows are based on well-known books or stories, like *The Gruffalo* or *Snow White*. Some are based on brand new ideas, like *Alfie White: Space Explorer*. *Wilde Creatures* is based on a set of fairy tales by Oscar Wilde.

Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde was a writer who lived from 1854 to 1900. His full name was Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde! He was born in Ireland but moved to London when he was a young man, because there were lots of other writers and artists there, and lots of people having parties! He thought it would be a good place to meet people and show them how brilliant he was.

Oscar was known for being funny, and for being clever. He wrote plays, poems, essays, one novel and several short stories and fairy tales. What really made him popular, though, was the way he entertained people at dinner parties. He loved to tell stories and show off. He was a master of the one-liner but his jokes always made a serious point too. Wilde's short, witty sayings are known as "epigrams". Here are some examples. What do you think they mean?

"The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast."

"Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing."

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."

"The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about."

Wilde's Fairy Tales

The fairy tales that inspired *Wilde Creatures*, like Oscar's plays and epigrams, are both fun and serious. They may be called fairy tales, but that doesn't mean they were written for small children. In fact, Wilde made them up to tell to adults at dinner parties. He wanted to entertain people but also make them think. The tales explore complicated questions, like what might make one person more important than another, what it means to be selfish or selfless, what we should do about poverty, and whether romance is worth it. What do you think about these questions?



WILDE CREATURES

How we started making *Wilde Creatures*

Wilde Creatures is based on three of the fairy tales:

1. *The Devoted Friend*. In this story, the Miller thinks he knows everything there is to know about being a good friend. His best friend is a gardener called Little Hans.
2. *The Nightingale and the Rose*. In this story, the Student is sad because he can't find a red rose to give to the woman he loves. The Nightingale feels sorry for him and helps him.
3. *The Birthday of the Infanta*. (*Infanta* is another word for princess – it comes from Spanish.) In this story, the Princess has a birthday party, at which a strange man is brought from the forest to entertain her.

A story in a book is very different from a play. One is written to be read, the other is written to be performed. Our job was to re-invent these tales in our own way and make them come alive on stage.

We started by getting together in a rehearsal room to brainstorm ideas and try them out. There were two directors, who were also writers, two music composers, a set and costume designer, a stage manager and a whole bunch of actors. That's a lot of people with a lot of ideas! We talked, drew pictures, played music and improvised. Improvising means making up the script as you go along, not planning too much what you're going to do next. It's like playing a game! Then each night our writer-directors would go home and write a bit of script based on what we had done that day. This way of making a play is called "devising". We didn't have a full script until we'd finished rehearsals.

How our play took shape

The set

The set is the way the stage is made to look – it shows us where the action takes place. It could be inside a palace, up in the Himalayan Mountains or deep under the sea. You can make a set out of all sorts of things – it doesn't have to look exactly like the real thing. The set for *Wilde Creatures* is a dark and dingy town but it's made out of wooden crates and pallets!

Try it yourself

In small groups, find an object in your classroom to use as a piece of set. Think of three different things that object could become. For example, you could choose a table. You could sit underneath it and pretend it's a house, then you could tip it on its side to become the front of a boat, and then you could put it back up and stand on it to pretend it's a mountain. This is the kind of thing we do with our pallets and crates in *Wilde Creatures*. If your object is small, you can act around it rather than in or on it.

Next, make up a story to link these three ideas. For example, the table story could be about a group of old people sitting shivering in their tiny house and deciding to go on an adventure across the sea to climb the highest mountain in the world. Have one person in your group as the narrator, telling the story in words, while the others act it out. Make sure the story is exciting, makes sense and has a satisfying ending.



WILDE CREATURES

Costume

The clothes we wear on stage tell the audience something about the character, such as their job or their personality. In *Wilde Creatures*, the Miller has a big fat belly because he's selfish and greedy. The Princess wears a crown because – well, because that's what princesses wear. The Mayor wears a bright red suit and a huge top hat. What do these say about him? Is he humble or proud? Why do these clothes go with his job as mayor?

Try it yourself

When we were creating our play, our costume designer would often make things out of paper so we could try them out before he made the real thing. The Mayor's hat and the Princess's bow were both originally made out of paper. In your groups, invent one character together, which you are all going to play. Talk about the job they do and one thing about their personality. (They could be shy, brave, anxious, stupid, etc.) Can you make one piece of costume out of paper that tells us about their job and one that tells us about their personality? Everyone in the group could make a version of these two pieces of costume and try them on. (Hint: it helps to make them nice and big, to make the character really clear.)

Movement

When we play different characters in the play, we change the way we move. Like the costume, the movement tells the audience something about the character. For example, the Miller walks with his legs out wide and makes big gestures with his arms. This goes with his personality – he is full of his own importance and likes telling people what's what. Little Hans is stooped because he has been bending over his flower beds all his working life.

Try it yourself

In your groups, think about your character again. Talk about their personality and their job. How would they walk? How would they move their arms? How would they hold their head? Everyone in the group have a go at walking around like the character.

Voice

Another part of making a character is the way they speak. In our play, the Princess's voice is high and harsh, because she is spoilt and badly brought up. Her accent is very posh. Little Hans, on the other hand, is humble and gentle. He speaks softly.

Try it yourself

In your groups, talk about how your character would speak. Remember what they do for a living and their personality. You could think about where they come from too – what's their accent like? Think of a word or sentence your character might say. Do they speak quickly or slowly? Loudly or quietly? What sort of words do they use? Try out your ideas to each other.



WILDE CREATURES

Put it all together!

You are now ready to perform your complete character. One group at a time, put your costumes on and walk around in front of the rest of the class saying your word or sentence. Discuss the other groups' characters. Can you describe how they moved and spoke? What did those things tell you about the character? What did their costumes show you about who this person was?

Themes from Wilde Creatures

Statues

At the beginning of Wilde Creatures, the Mayor thinks the town square needs a new statue. He thinks it should be a statue of him because he is important. The Wilde Creatures disagree. They have some other suggestions. Discuss the following questions as a class:

Why do we make statues of people?

Can you think of any statues you have seen?

What sort of people do we make statues of and why?

Write a paragraph about a statue you have seen, or one you can find in a picture. What personal qualities does it make you think of? Don't worry if you don't know who the statue is – what do you think about that person just from looking at the statue?

The townsfolk suggest a statue of the Miller because is an example of friendship. Then they suggest the Student because he is an example of knowledge. Finally they suggest the Princess because she is an example of nobility. Friendship, knowledge and nobility are qualities that the townsfolk admire. Discuss the following:

What qualities do you admire in people?

Can you think of someone who is a good example of that quality? It could be someone you know or someone famous.

Write a paragraph to persuade your head teacher to build a statue of your chosen person outside the front of your school.

Write a paragraph to persuade your school friends. (Remember you speak to your teachers in a different way from your friends, so the way you write your two paragraphs should be different too.)

Build a statue of your chosen person out of Lego or dough.



WILDE CREATURES

Complex Characters

Some of the characters in Wilde Creatures turn out not to be quite so wonderful as they think they are. Discuss the following questions as a class, then write a short paragraph on each.

Is the way the Miller treats Little Hans a good example of friendship? What about how Little Hans acts towards the Miller? How are the two of them different? Which of them is the better friend and why?

Is the Student a good example of a knowledgeable person? Is there anything he doesn't know? What could he learn from the Nightingale?

What is nobility? Is the Princess a good example of this? What do you think of the way she treats the Wild Boy? How is the Wild Boy different from the Princess? What could she learn from him?

Can you think of any celebrities who have a less admirable or less enviable side? For example, you could be world famous but still very lonely or unhappy; or very talented but not very pleasant – or extremely clever but not very honest.

Balloon Debate

Have a group of four students stand up in front of the class. One of them plays the Miller, one the Student, one the Princess and one the Mayor. Pretend they are in a hot air balloon which is running out of fuel and starting to sink. There is only enough fuel to carry one person to safety – any more and the balloon will crash. Three people must sacrifice themselves and jump, in order to save the fourth. Who should be left in the balloon? Each character has 30 seconds to persuade the class that it should be them. The class then votes to save one character.

Try the same again with another four students playing Little Hans, The Nightingale, the Wild Boy and the Mayor.

Try again with each student playing someone they admire, preferably someone the rest of the class has heard of. It could be someone famous or someone they know.



WILDE CREATURES

Further Study: History

There have been stories in the news recently about statues. Here are a few of them:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bristol-torn-apart-over-statue-of-edward-colston-but-is-this-a-figure-of-shame-or-a-necessary-9555333.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/jan/28/cecil-rhodes-statue-will-not-be-removed--oxford-university>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/43783743>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32236922>

Discuss them as a class:

Why are these statues being put up or taken down?

Have people changed their minds about what qualities they admire? Why?

At the end of Wilde Creatures, the Mayor has a very different idea about the new statue than the one he started with. Why has he changed his mind?

Further Study: Music

At Tall Stories we often use music in our plays. Sometimes we sing songs and sometimes we use instruments to create an atmosphere or mood.

Do you remember the Mayor's song, the Student's song and the Princess's song? What were these songs about and what did they tell the audience about the characters?

When Little Hans first appears, looking after his flowers, the accordion and violin play in the background. This music is quite slow, relaxed and jolly. What does this make the audience feel? Why is it a good match for Hans' gardening?

Then, when the Miller makes Little Hans run around doing lots of chores, faster and faster until he collapses and falls asleep, the same music is played again but quickly. What does it make the audience feel this time? Does it match what Hans is doing? How can the same piece of music be used differently to create different moods?

As well as music, we use sound effects to create different atmospheres. When Little Hans is walking through the storm, we use instruments and our voices to make the sound of the storm. Can you use your voices (and instruments if you have them) to make the sound of a storm?

What sounds would you make for a haunted house? What about a warm day by the seaside? What about a car chase? It's amazing what your voices can do!



WILDE CREATURES

Further Study: English

Two other Oscar Wilde fairy tales we thought about whilst making our play are *The Happy Prince* and *The Selfish Giant*.

Read these together as a class.

The Happy Prince: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/902/902-h/902-h.htm#page1>

The Selfish Giant: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/902/902-h/902-h.htm#page43>

Talk about *The Happy Prince*:

Why does the Happy Prince statue give away his jewels? Why is the statue pulled down?

Why does the swallow stay to help the Prince when it should fly away?

Why does the angel say the Prince's heart and the swallow are the most precious things in the city?

Talk about *The Selfish Giant*:

Why does Winter stay in the garden?

Why does the little boy disappear?

What happens to the Giant at the end of the story?

What do you think Oscar Wilde was trying to make you think about?

Do you notice a connection between the end of *The Happy Prince* and the beginning of *Wilde Creatures*? What about the end of *Wilde Creatures* and *The Selfish Giant*?

Discuss some themes from these two tales:

- Selfishness
- Self-sacrifice
- Rich and poor people
- Loneliness and friendship
- Being nasty and being kind

Can you write your own fairy tale – like Wilde's? It should have interesting characters, plenty of description – and perhaps something to make the reader think about how to treat other people. You could have one character who is selfish and another who is kind, or one who is brave and one who is a coward. Perhaps the bad character learns a lesson from the good, or perhaps they fail to learn. Notice how in some of Wilde's fairy tales, the bad people learn nothing and the good people give away their lives. Not all fairy tales have a happy ending!