

PLAY GUIDE

The Princess AND THE PEAS

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THE RICHARDSON SALSMAN GROUP
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The Princess and the Peas

By Vivian Snipes

Presented on the LCT Main Stage: January 25-31, 2020

And on Tour: February 8-May 8, 2020

Major Contributors:



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Dear Educator -

Lexington Children's Theatre is proud to be producing our 81st season of plays for young people and their families. As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Play Guide for teachers to utilize in conjunction with seeing a play at LCT.

Our Play Guides are designed to be a valuable tool in two ways: helping you prepare your students for the enriching performance given by LCT's performers, as well as serving as an educational tool for extending the production experience back into your classroom.

We designed each activity to assist in achieving the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), including the National Core Arts Standards for Theatre. Teachers have important voices at LCT, and we rely heavily on your input. If you have comments or suggestions about our Play Guides, show selections, or any of our programming, your thoughts are greatly appreciated. Please email Jeremy Kisling, our Associate Artistic Director in Charge of Education, at jkisling@lctonstage.org.

Please use the Teacher Response form following a performance. We are thrilled that you rely on LCT to provide your students a quality theatrical experience, and we hope this resource helps you in your classroom.

-LCT's Education Department

The mission of our education programming



The mission of Lexington Children's Theatre's Education Department is to **provide students of all ages with the means to actively explore the beauty, diversity, complexity, and challenges of the world around them through the dramatic process.** We strive for young people to develop their own creative voice, their imagination, and their understanding of drama and its role in society.

Your role in the play

You may wish to have a discussion with your class about your upcoming LCT experience and their role as audience members. Remind your students that theatre can only exist with an audience. Your students' energy and response directly affects the actors onstage. The quality of the performance depends as much on the audience as it does on each of the theatre professionals behind the scenes and on stage.

Young audiences should know that watching live theatre is not like watching more familiar forms of entertainment; they cannot pause or rewind us like a DVD, there are no commercials for bathroom breaks, nor can they turn up the volume to hear us if someone else is talking. Your students are encouraged to listen and watch the play intently, so that they may laugh and cheer for their favorite characters when it is appropriate.

At the end of the play, applause is an opportunity for your students to thank the actors, while the actors are thanking you for the role you played as an audience.



Meet the Cast - *The Princess and the Peas*



DEREK BROOKENS (*Prince Charming*) Originally from Pennsylvania, Derek escaped to earn his BFA at Ohio Northern University, then continued to work and travel around the country. He's been happy to work in theatre for young audiences with The National Theatre for Children and Prairie Fire Children's Theatre over the past six years. This is his first LCT experience and his first time in Lexington. For the next few months you can find Derek enjoying the area's hiking, restaurants, farmer's market, and anything barrel-aged.



DANAE DESHAZER (*Queen/Princess Eliza/Princess Leascelyn/Highwayman*) is happy to be making her debut with Lexington Children's Theatre! Originally from Overland Park, Kansas, Danae stays busy as a freelance director, choreographer, and actor across the United States. Recent directing credits include: ...*Spelling Bee*, *Polkadots! The Cool Kids Musical*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, and *9 to 5! The Musical*. As an actor, Danae has worked with McLeod Summer Playhouse, National Theatre for Children, Prairie Fire Children's Theatre, Blue Gate Musicals, Venice Theatre, TheatreZone, Show Palace, and RWS & Associates. "Thank YOU for supporting live theatre and for keeping the arts alive!" www.DanaeDeShazer.com



ALEX REEVES (*Pei*) loves collaborating with Lexington Children's Theatre on another wonderful play! She graduated from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. You may have seen her on the LCT stage as Archie in *The Snowy Day and Other Stories*, Jane in *Sacagawea: Discovering History*, or as Hen in *Why Mosquitoes Buzz*. DC credits include: Ensemble/Puppeteer in *The Velveteen Rabbit* (Adventure Theatre), *Rebel in Columbinus* (1st Stage Theatre), Mela in *The Goodies: A New Devised Piece* (Iron Crow Theatre), Marcy Park in *25th... Spelling Bee* (Starstuff Theatre Collective) and Slank in *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Contact: artistalexreeves@gmail.com



CODY TAYLOR (*Narrator*) is a graduate of the BFA physical theatre program at Coastal Carolina University, in association with the Accademia dell'Arte in Arezzo, Italy. Aside from his many years with LCT, he has worked as an actor for many companies including the Unto These Hills Outdoor Drama, the National Theatre for Children, Brian Clowdus Experiences, AthensWest Theatre Company, the Sterling Renaissance Festival, and various others. He is also a musician, playwright, clown, and Commedia dell'Arte instructor.

What to know - before the show!

Things to know before you see *The Princess and the Peas*

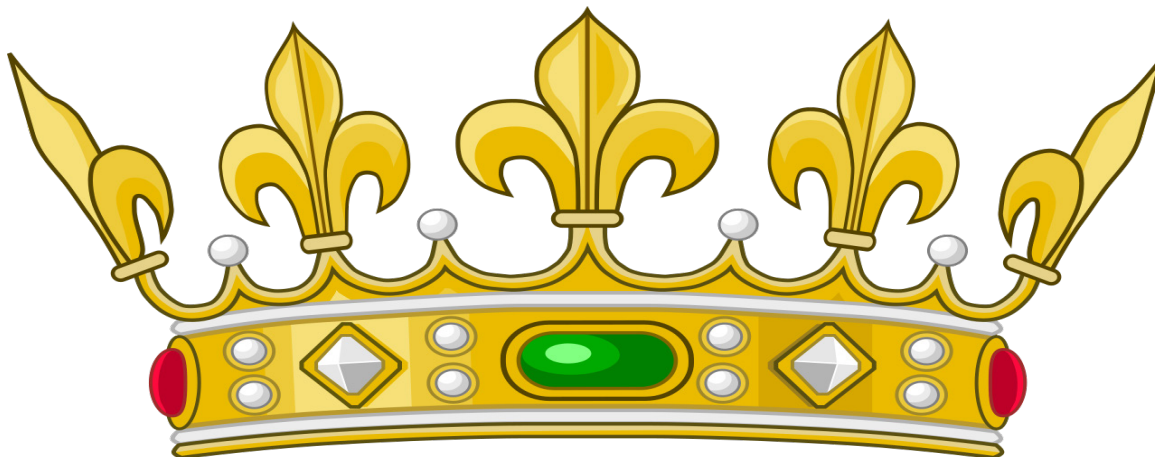
The Princess and the Peas is a world premiere play written by LCT's Artistic Director Vivian Snipes and adapted from the original fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen. Our story follows Crown Prince Charming and his best friend and courtier Pei as they go on a quest to find a true princess, someone who has vision, courage, and character and who can help Charming rule the kingdom. In order to do so, the Queen and Charming come up with a test that will help determine whether someone is a true princess. Pei doesn't think this is the best idea, saying that a test is not always the best measure of anyone's capabilities, but goes along anyway to protect the Prince and help him on his quest.

Throughout our story, you will find references to many other fairy tales, from *Snow White* to *The Nightingale* to *The Emperor's New Clothes*. See if you can spot them all while watching the play! In particular, two of the princesses Charming meets along his quest are the main characters of their own stories – Eliza from *The Wild Swans* and Leascelyn, the youngest princess in *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*. While both women clearly pass the “princess test,” possessing great vision, courage, and character, Charming realizes that they are both on important quests of their own, as they work to save their families from evil curses placed upon them. It would be unfair to ask them to leave their kingdoms to come and live in his.

Since our story is a fairy tale, there are also elements of fairy tale danger throughout. The princesses share their stories of curses placed on their families and the hardships they have endured to try and break the spells. The Prince and Pei get in an intense sword fight with a mysterious highwayman who recognizes, then immediately tries to disarm and kidnap Pei. It seems that the Prince's best friend is hiding some fairy tale secrets as well! All stage combat you see is carefully choreographed and rehearsed multiple times before the show to make sure it is 100% believable for the audience yet 110% safe for the actors as they must be able to repeatedly perform the production.

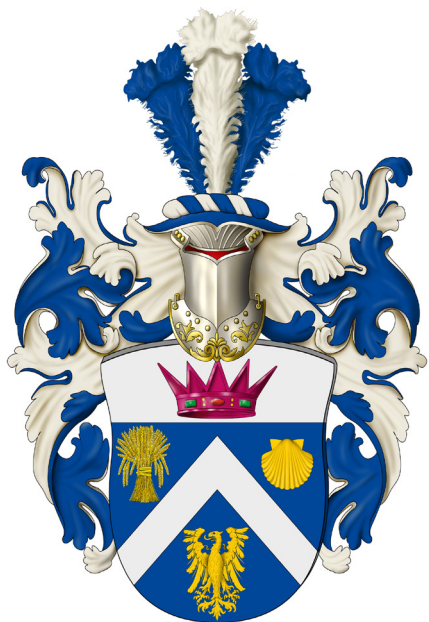
This play is a great way to spark conversations about the idea that no one can define you... but you! As Pei reminds Prince Charming, “Not all princesses wear ball gowns.” Throughout the play, we meet all kinds of princesses, and they are each strong and brave women, even if it is not in a way that might be expected. Not all princesses wield a sword, but they are all courageous and kind in their own unique way. We hope this story helps your family have conversations about what makes someone brave, or truthful, or kind – and how you can keep developing those qualities in your own lives.

We love this story because it is a beautifully updated fairy tale told with humor and heart. It's the kind of story we all know and love, one that begins with “Once Upon a Time” and ends with “Happily Ever After” while teaching us important lessons along the way. We love this story because it reminds us that we are all strong and capable, that princesses don't need anyone to rescue them, and that courage comes in all shapes and sizes. We can't wait to share it with you!



What to know - before the show!

Creating a Royal Crest



In *The Princess and the Peas*, we meet a whole host of royal characters. Historically, royal families would display their crests on large tapestries. These crests would feature images that symbolized things that the family valued. For instance, a lion could represent a family's value of courage.

Utilizing a blank piece of paper, glue, scissors, and magazine clippings, allow students to create their own tapestry featuring things that are important to them and their family.

VA:CR2.1.2; VA:CR2.2.2; VA:PR2.1.2; SS:HIST2.20

Fractions of the Swan's Sweaters

The Princess and the Peas features a retelling of the lesser-known tale "The Wild Swans." In this story, the youngest daughter of twelve children must knit twelve sweaters from thread of the nettle bush in order to undo a spell that has turned her eleven older brothers into swans. However, due to limited resources, the princess is left with ten whole sweaters and three-quarters of the eleventh.

Using the sweater template on the next page, students will design a sweater that can then be divided in to quarters, halves, or three-quarters. In groups, students will try to assemble the pieces of the sweaters to add up as many whole sweaters as possible.

*This activity continues on the next page.

M:3.NF.1; M:3.NF.3; VA:CR2.2.2

The Twelve Dancing Princesses Forbidden Dance

The Princess and the Peas also features a retelling of the lesser-known tale "The Twelve Dancing Princesses." In this story, twelve princesses secretly go to an underground palace in the middle of the night in order to dance with twelve princes that the girls' father has forbidden them to marry.

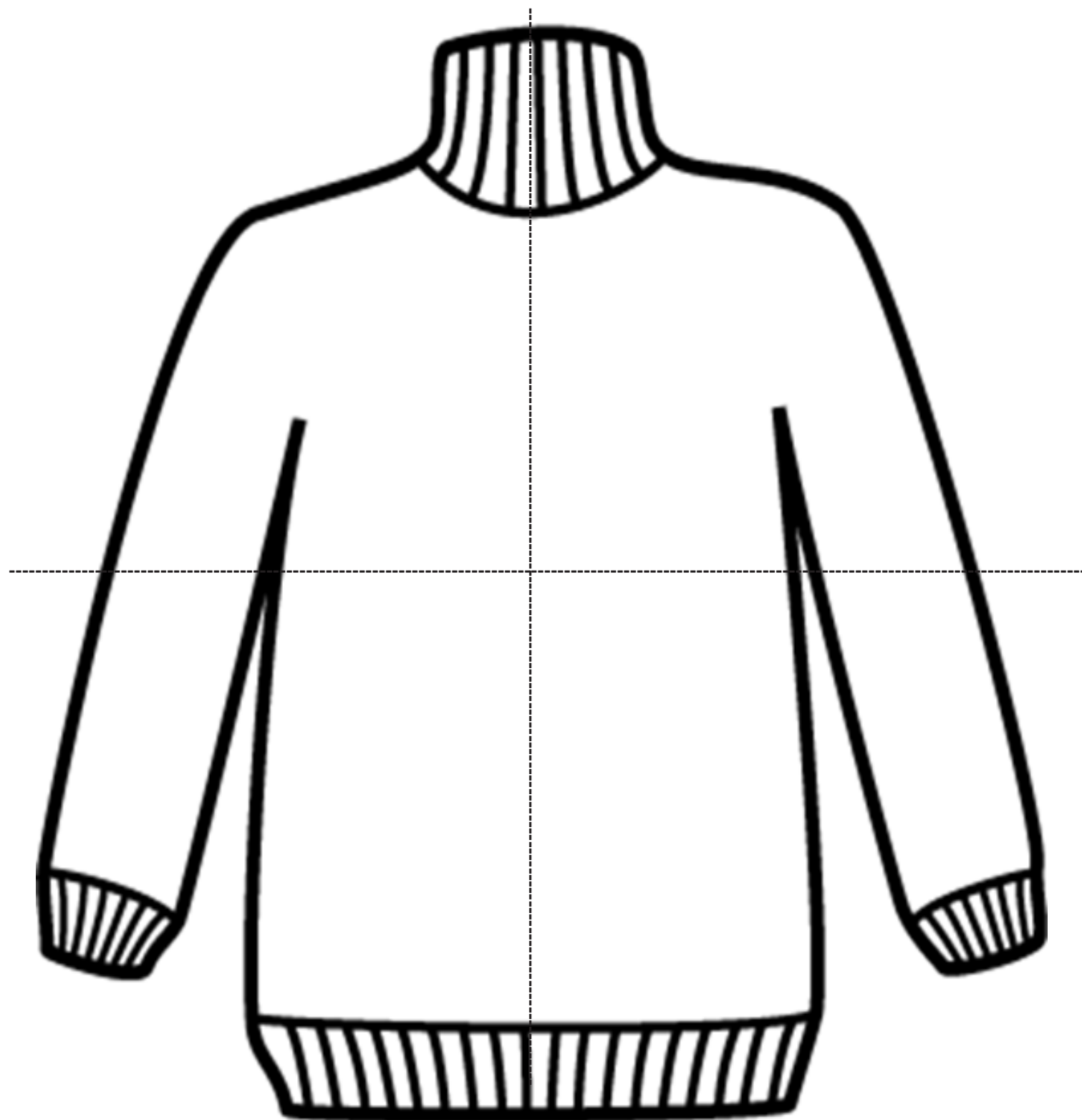
In this activity, students explore various styles of dance influenced by various styles of music that vary in tempo, volume, and instrumentation. Teachers are free to choose the style of dance and movement. However, when the music stops, the students must freeze in order to not be caught by the suspicious king (played by the teacher). This can be adapted into a contest by having students who are unable to freeze being "out," or can remain inclusive by keeping all dancers involved for the duration of the activity.

DA:Cr1.1.2; DA:Pr5.1.2; MU:Pr4.3.2

Fractions of the Swans' Sweaters

Color in the sweater below. Then, cut along the dotted lines to have four equal pieces ($\frac{1}{4}$), two equal pieces ($\frac{1}{2}$), or one piece with three squares and one piece with one square ($\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$).

In groups, try to make whole sweater by adding up the fractions of the sweaters that your classmates have made.



What to know - before the show!

Royal Storytelling: An Interview with the Playwright



The Princess and the Peas is a new play written by Lexington Children's Theatre's very own Artistic Director, Vivian Snipes. The Education Department sat down with Vivian to talk about the play and her unique process for getting the story from ideas in her head onto the page.

Describe your writing process. What is your routine? Where do you find inspiration?

I don't really have a routine. The writing process for this play has transitioned a great deal from where it started to where it is now. I began reading all kinds of superhero and mythical adventures trying to contemporize the story because princesses are powerful in all times. But after three different drafts with three versions each, I felt like I didn't know enough about the superhero world to write a superhero play. So, I came back to the original story and began to ask myself "What is the play? What is the story about?" It ultimately boiled down to the story being about sensitivity and how we as humans tend to hide and mask our feelings. From there, I began writing. But

I don't really write; my characters speak, so I talk to write. My characters have a dialogue, so I say all the lines into a microphone which is then recorded on my computer. I then go back and put in who said what. I mostly write at home with my two dogs very close by and a cup of hot tea.

There are several stories that you drew from when writing *The Princess and the Peas*. Why did you choose these stories for this particular play?

I love them. They speak to me in so many ways. There are other stories mentioned, too, all of which speak to me in one way, shape, or form. We mention Cinderella and talk about princesses who lose their shoes, and everybody thinks they must help them. There are a lot of things like that that are so well known, and this was a way of bringing out some lesser known princesses and the struggles they faced in order to move forward in their lives and do what they believe was best for their kingdom.

Which of the princesses in the play do you feel you relate to most?

All of them. There are parts of all of them in all of me. I probably relate the most to the narrator, honestly. I selected the stories I did so I could use a variety of storytelling techniques. Princess Eliza doesn't speak; there are humans in our world who don't have the advantage of spoken language, but they have their own way of communicating. I love Eliza for that. I love how Princess Leascelyn embraces life and lives every moment to its fullest, clearly stating her dreams and finding the pathway for making them come true. I love Pei's practicality. I probably relate to Pei because I know a lot about plants and their uses and Pei's an herbalist, so she knows a lot, too. I relate to the Queen. I don't know if there's one princess I relate to the most. As an author, there's always a lot of me on the page. Even the Prince is me, too, in some ways. Sometimes I write plays and there are human beings I know that influence the characters on the page. In this play, the characters aren't based on people I know, but they are placed in circumstances that I may have been in at one point.

What are you hoping the audience takes away from this piece and the production as a

I never know the answer to that question no matter what play I'm working on. I hope the audience realizes that it's okay to have feelings. We aren't always able to control those feelings, but we must learn to channel them appropriately. It's okay to feel them and allow yourself to feel them, and then you find the best way to work through those feelings to reach a happy place inside. That would be the biggest thing I hope they take away. Also, that women are strong and can do things for themselves. We are very capable.

How to grow - after the show!

How Many Peas in a Pod?

Mix up your math routine by using peas as a manipulative to solve equations. Either purchase a bag of dried peas, or have students make their own peas by cutting small circles out of green construction paper. They can then use them in their regular math lessons, or for a fun twist have students make their own set of equations based on what you are currently learning, and then trade their equations with a classmate.

K.OA.1.; K.OA.2.; K.NBT.1.

Fractured Fairy Tales

Fairy tales are a type of folklore that has been passed down for centuries from one generation to the next and have changed with each retelling. One way these classic fairy tales can change, is when a writer or storyteller turns them into Fractured Fairy Tales. The storyteller is influenced by the structure, motifs, problems, themes, and characters of the original tales but adds a new twist to the story. Some of the ways a storyteller could add a twist to the tale might include making changes to the characters, modernizing the story, or telling the story from a different point of view. Have students select a familiar fairy tale and create their own Fractured Fairy Tale using this five-sentence story structure. Once they have created their retelling of the tale, have them act it out for each other and reflect by discussing what stayed the same and what changed in their versions of the story.

First create a story using this five-sentence story structure.

1. Once upon a time...
2. One day...
3. Then...
4. Suddenly...
5. Finally...

Next, have students assign who will play each role and who will be the narrator and create a frozen picture for each of the five sentences.

Then have the students explore what their characters is thinking in each frozen picture. Use these thoughts to create dialogue and turn each sentence into a short scene.

Finally, have the students act out each scene after each of the five narrations are delivered by the narrator.

TH:CR2.1.1-3.; TH:CR3.1.1-3.; TH:PR4.1.1-3.; TH:CR2.1.4.; THCR2.1.5

Once upon a time in a land far far away there lived a prince. One day his mother sent him on a quest to find the perfect princess. Then, after meeting many princesses, his courtier Pei was taken by a highwayman. The prince went back to his castle alone and defeated. Suddenly, on a dark and stormy night Pei knocks on the castle door and reveals that she has secretly been a princess all along! Finally, Pei and the Prince decide to join forces and run their kingdoms together.



How to grow - after the show!

Pei's Practical Plant Study - Ethnobotany

Did you know that the stinging nettles in Princess Eliza's story are edible once cooked? Pei knows a lot about plants, and how to use them. Ethnobotany is the study of how people of a particular region make use of indigenous (native) plants. Expand your knowledge of the plants in your region by researching edible plants that grow near you and how to make use of their seeds, flower, stem, leaves, or root. Use resources in your library or search online and document your findings below.



What plants grow in your area that are edible? Research what plants grow where you live and document your findings in the box below. Add a drawing of the plant and notes including the name of the plant and how to harvest it.



Seeds



Flower



Stem



Leaves



Root



How to grow - after the show!

What to Read Next

The Princess and the Pea **by Hans Christian Andersen**

This fairytale story is about a how young woman's royal identity is established by a test of her sensitivity.

Rapunzel by The Brothers Grimm

Rapunzel was stolen by Mother Gothel as an infant, and locked in a tower without windows or doors. Mother Gothel would visit Rapunzel every day; Rapunzel would let down her long blonde hair. When a prince hears Rapunzel singing and falls in love with her, they must overcome the obstacle of the evil Mother Gothel.

The Frog Prince by The Brothers Grimm

A spoiled princess befriends the frog prince, who she met after dropping a gold ball into a pond and he retrieved it for her in exchange for her friendship.

The Twelve Dancing Princesses **by The Brothers Grimm**

Twelve princesses are locked in their rooms by their father. Every morning their dancing shoes are filthy. The King sends out a message to the kingdom informing that if anyone knows of what his daughters are doing at night to let him know. The princesses are sneaking off to a grove of trees and meeting twelve princes and dancing all night.

The Wild Swans by Hans Christian Andersen

A widowed king, with eleven sons and one daughter, marries a wicked queen. Out of spite, the queen turns the eleven boys into swans and tries to curse the daughter but cannot. Elia must knit eleven sweaters in eleven months with poison nettles.

LCT teaches in YOUR school!

Would you like to see some of these play guide activities modeled in your classroom?

Book a workshop for your class with one of LCT's teaching artists! In our pre-show workshops, our teaching artists will engage students in acting skills and themes from the play through drama activities. In our post-show workshops, students will extend their play-going experience by strengthening their personal connection to the play and deepening their understanding of the themes and characters.



Call us at 859-254-4546 x226 to book a pre or post-show workshop for your class!

To learn more about Lexington Children's Theatre and our programming for your school visit:
www.lctonstage.org/for-educators/in-school-experiences/