



Childsplay's  
360° Theatre Resources for Schools

About *The Velveteen Rabbit*  
and Your Theatre Experience

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**U-S AIRWAYS**  
WHERE EDUCATION AND IMAGINATION  
TAKE FLIGHT

# *The Velveteen Rabbit*

By Brian Burgess Clark

Adapted from the book  
by Margery Williams



Directed by David Saar

Original Music Composition by Alan Ruch

Scenic Design by Jeff Thomson

Lighting Design by Paul Black

Costume and Puppet Design by Rebecca Akins

## The Cast

Boy. . . . .Kaleena Newman  
Nana. . . . .Eric Boudreau  
Velveteen Rabbit. . . . .Katie McFadzen  
Skin Horse. . . . .Dwayne Hartford  
Tin Soldier. . . . .Jon Gentry  
Toy Boat/Nursery Fairy. . . . .Kate Haas  
Narrator. . . . .Debra K. Stevens

November 17 - December 22, 2013  
Tempe Center for the Arts, Theatre  
Recommended for Ages 3 and up

This production is sponsored in part by:



### Themes/Curricular Ties:

page to stage ~ imagination ~ pretend play ~  
Edwardian period ~ the power of love ~  
childhood illnesses ~ transitions ~ loss ~  
puppetry ~ seasons

### The Story:

Margery Williams' classic story of a velveteen rabbit, who becomes real through the love of a boy, is brought to life in this adaptation by Brian Burgess Clark. The play opens on Christmas Day with all of the wonder and excitement of the season. The boy receives a beautiful velveteen rabbit, who is destined to become his best friend. On his first night in the nursery, the velveteen rabbit meets all the other toys (larger-than-life puppets) and learns about becoming real. Soon the velveteen rabbit and the boy are having adventures in Africa and flying through the clouds. When the boy becomes ill, his friend the velveteen rabbit must help him recover. After the boy is better, Nana declares all his toys must be burned because they are full of germs—even the velveteen rabbit. But, just before the velveteen rabbit is going to be put on the bonfire, the Nursery Fairy comes and turns him into a real rabbit.



D. Scott Withers as Nana and  
Jannese Davidson as The Boy



## About Childsplay:

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**Our Mission** is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.

## What We Do:

In addition to our weekend public performances, we also offer three theatre experiences for our school audiences: Field Trips, School Tours and Artist in Residence Programs. Field trip performances, where students come to the theater and see a production, can be booked by contacting Beth Olson at 480-921-5757. School Tour Performances, where we come to your school or other location and perform, can be booked by contacting Jaime Fox at 480-921-5751. Artist in Residence Programs, where students do theatre activities in the classroom, can be individually designed to meet the needs of your school or can be based on one of our many existing formats (page to stage, creating original work, use of drama to teach curriculum, professional development for teachers), can be booked by contacting Korbi Adams at 480-921-5745.



## Our Home:

The Sybil B. Harrington Campus of Imagination and Wonder at Mitchell Park (formerly Mitchell School) is where you'll find our administrative offices, costume shop, prop shop, rehearsal spaces, and Academy classrooms. We love to hear from our audiences. Send your letters and reviews to:

**Address:** 900 S. Mitchell, Tempe, AZ 85281

**Phone:** 480-921-5700

**Email:** [info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org) **Web:** [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/childsplayaz](http://www.facebook.com/childsplayaz)

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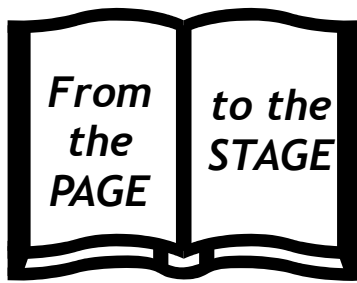
## Theater Etiquette:

It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance:

- Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.
- Stay seated during the performance.
- Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance. Remember, the actors can see and hear the audience just like the audience can see and hear them.
- Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- Food, candy, gum and beverages will not be allowed in the theater/during the performance.
- Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is not allowed in the theatre/during the performance at any time.
- Following the performance (time permitting) there will be a brief question/answer session where audience members will have an opportunity to ask the actors questions about the production.







When a playwright takes a book and *adapts* it into a play, he or she must answer many questions, including:

- Can this book be an effective play?
- Who are the most essential characters? What are the most essential events?
- How can I confine the action to the space of the stage?
- Do I need to suggest ways to stage certain actions, changes of location, etc.?
- Is there anything *not* in the book that should be in the play?

Theatres like to produce adaptations because typically the plays are based on well-known books that will bring in audiences. But almost always, books are not intended to be turned into plays, and so translating them into scripts can seem unnatural or awkward. The playwright must find what is theatrical about the book and concentrate on those elements in order to create a successful adaptation. Theatrical elements might include conversations between characters, supernatural or imaginary characters, actors playing more than one character, multiple events taking place at the same time in different areas of the stage, stylized movement, and use of masks or puppets.

### Vocabulary words to review before seeing the show:

splendid  
bracken  
mainsprings  
clockwork  
mechanical  
sawdust  
sensitive  
shabbier  
twitched  
velveteen  
china dog  
scarlet fever  
aviators  
threadbare

### Read the book as a class:

Pay close attention to the illustrations. How do illustrations help to tell the story? Do you think the play will look anything like the illustrations in the book? How do you think the play will be different than the book? The same?

### About Rabbits:

Rabbits are fast-moving, big-eared mammals. There are about 25 different species of rabbits. They live in a variety of environments, including deserts, swamps, marshes, forests, grasslands, and prairies. Rabbits are found on every continent except Antarctica.



**Life Span:** Most rabbits live for about a year in the wild. They are hunted by dogs, foxes, bobcats, hawks, weasels, and eagles. They have a fast reproductive rate.

**Anatomy:** Rabbits range in size from 1 to 2 feet long. They have very big and powerful hind legs which they use for hopping and for digging burrows.

**Diet:** Rabbits are herbivores (plant-eaters). They eat grass, leaves, bark, and twigs.



### The evolution of toys:



In the play, the boy plays with many toys including the skin horse (a rocking horse), a china dog (like a stuffed animal) and a clockwork mouse (a wind up toy). How are these toys similar to or different from the types of toys that young people play with today? What types of things would you play with if you didn't have computers, video games, or anything electronic? Try not playing with anything electronic for a whole day and see if it's easy or difficult to do!





## A sneak peek at Childsplay's production of:

# The Velveteen Rabbit

By Brian Burgess Clark

Adapted from the book by Margery Williams



November 19, 2013 - December 20, 2013  
Tempe Center for the Arts, Theatre  
Ages 3 and up

### The Story:

Celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Childsplay's Holiday Classic! For years, Childsplay has brought holiday magic to the Valley with its production of Margery Williams's classic picture book. Now the tradition makes a triumphant return, and it's better than ever! For any child who has ever loved a favorite toy, *The Velveteen Rabbit* will give you a reason to believe in magic. This heartwarming story will bring holiday joy to families of all ages.

### Themes/Curricular Ties:

page to stage ~ imagination ~ pretend play ~  
Edwardian period ~ the power of love ~  
childhood illnesses ~ transitions ~ loss ~  
puppetry ~ seasons

### Questions to ask before seeing the production:

- 1) How are plays different from TV shows or movies? What can be done in a movie that can't be done on stage?
- 2) What does it mean to be real? How do you know when something is real?
- 3) Do you have a favorite toy? How would you feel if it were taken away from you?
- 4) What parts of the book *The Velveteen Rabbit* do you think will be difficult to stage? Why? What other books do you know of that could be turned into a play?

### Questions to ask after seeing the production:

- 1) In the play, the boy gets an illness called scarlet fever. Have you ever been very sick and had to stay in bed? How long were you sick? What did it feel like? What made you feel better?
- 2) The boy in the play had a number of favorite toys which could be found in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century nursery. How are toys different now? If the play took place now, what might some of the toy characters be?
- 3) What other jobs do you think the Nursery Fairy performs?

### Books to Check Out

*Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse* by Leo Lionni  
*Phewtus the Squirrel* by V. H. Drumond  
*The Teddy Bear* by David McPhail  
*Snow Bears* by Martin Waddell  
*Something for James* by Shirley Isherwood

### Interesting Internet Links:

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~rabbit/rabfun.htm>  
-bunny fun and games page  
<http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0768872.html>  
-a history of toys and games  
<http://www.toystimeline.com/>  
-history of toys from prehistoric times to the present

### \*Activities Connected to Arizona Common Core Standards\*

**15**

Minute Activity

Use voices, bodies, and imaginations to become

different animals. Try moving as a rabbit, butterfly, horse, lion, dog, or other animal. How does your animal sleep, eat, run, walk, and interact with others? What sounds does it make? *Theatre: S1: C2: PO101*

**30**

Minute Activity

Fold a piece of paper in half. On one side, draw a picture of the bunny when he is brand

new and given to the boy as a Christmas gift. On the other side, draw a picture of the bunny when he becomes old and shabby. What happens to the bunny as time goes by? Share with your class and describe the choices that you made. *Visual Arts: S1: C4: PO001*

**45**

Minute Activity

The lion, toy soldier, skin horse, and toy boat are toys the boy has in his room. What if the toys were played by actors instead of actors using puppets? How are toys different today? Create a toy character that you

might find in a present day bedroom. Give the character a name and an age. Decide on a walk and posture for your character. Choose a physical habit that distinguishes your character from others. How does that character talk? Take turns introducing the characters to the rest of the class by walking across the front of the room, stopping halfway and saying your name and age. Then continue walking making sure to clearly show the physical choices you made. *Theatre: S1: C2: PO201*

\*For more extensive resources go to [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)\*



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Printables for Kids

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Here are some things to think about and some activities to do now that you've seen *The Velveteen Rabbit*, performed by Childsplay:

♥ How many characters can you remember? Which characters were puppets and which were live actors? What was the problem in the play? Which character was your favorite and why? What was your favorite part of the play? The boy was played by a grown up, but do you know how they made the boy seem small?

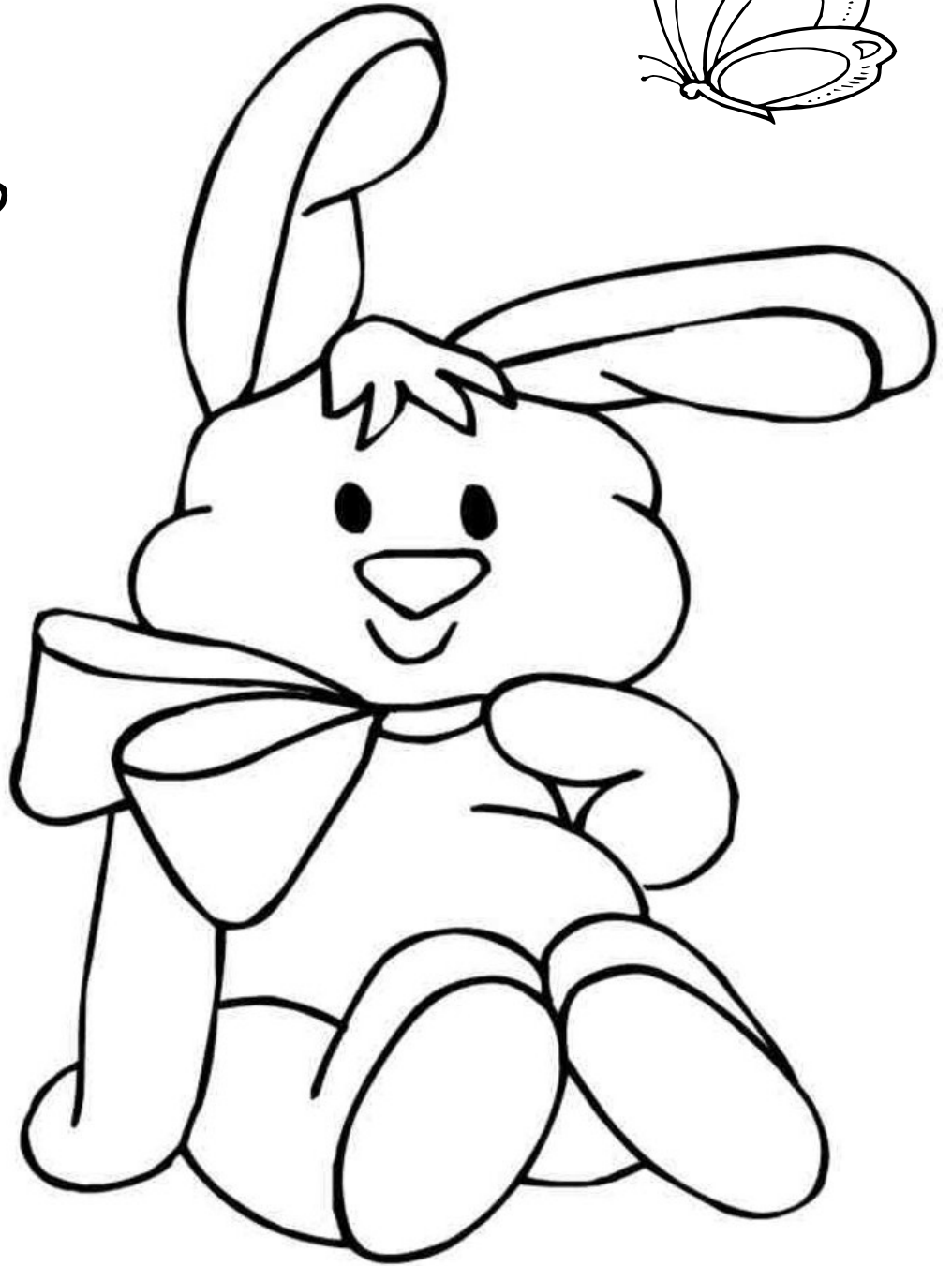
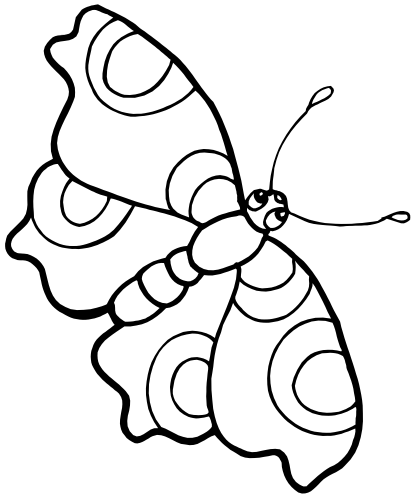
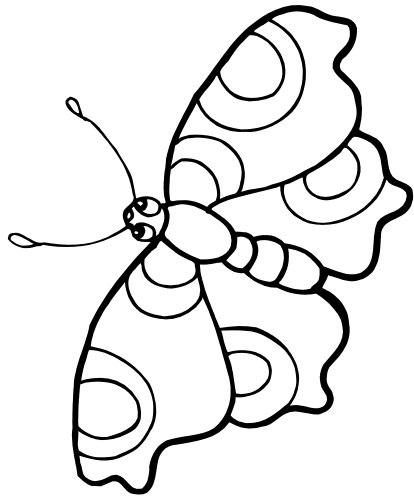
♥ How was the play different from the book? Which parts of the book weren't included in the play?

♥ The boy and the velveteen rabbit become the best of friends. What is your favorite toy? Have you ever lost a toy that you really loved? How did you feel?

♥ Imagine that you take a trip to the seaside. Make a postcard to send to a friend. Draw a picture of the seaside town on one side. Write to your friend on the other side, describing your trip. Don't forget the address and a stamp.

♥ Create a puppet from common objects (a sock, a clothespin, a toilet paper roll). Choose a character from the play and make your own version of a puppet for that character. Use crayons, markers, pipe cleaners, feathers, scraps of fabric or any other found objects that might be interesting to use. Now, create a puppet play. First, work on manipulating (moving) the puppet by having it look at another puppet while having an improvised (made up) conversation. Try to make your puppet walk, run or do other physical things. Then, decide on a short story that has some kind of problem in it and play it out a few times until you are ready to share with your friends and family.

Color the bunny and butterflies!





## 15 Minute Activities:

1) Use voices, bodies, and imaginations to become different animals. Try moving as a rabbit, butterfly, horse, lion, dog, or other animal. How does your animal sleep, eat, run, walk, and interact with others? What sounds does it make? *Theatre: S1: C2: PO101*

2) Write a short story about what happens to the Velveteen Rabbit after he becomes real. What does he do throughout his day? Who are his friends? Give the story a clear beginning, middle and end.

AZ 1.W.3, <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/1/3>

3) Write a short story about the boy's trip to the seaside. What does he do first? Does he like his new rabbit? Does he miss the Velveteen Rabbit? Give the story a clear ending.

AZ 1.W.3, <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/1/3>

## 30 Minute Activities:

1) Fold a piece of paper in half. On one side, draw a picture of the bunny when he is brand new and given to the boy as a Christmas gift. On the other side, draw a picture of the bunny when he becomes old and shabby. What happens to the bunny as time goes by? Share with your class and describe the choices that you made.

*Visual Arts: S1: C4: PO001*

2) Using paper plates and elastic or string, make a rabbit mask. Cut out eyes and add ears and a nose out of construction paper. Use construction paper or pipe cleaners for whiskers.

3) Using the internet, research what kinds of toys were popular in the late 1800's and early 1900's, when Margery Williams was a child. Print out a picture of a toy from that period. Cut out a picture of a toy from a current magazine or catalogue or find one on the internet. Paste them side-by-side. Tell how they are the same and how they are different.

## 45 Minute Activities:

1) The lion, toy soldier, skin horse, and toy boat are toys the boy has in his room. What if the toys were played by actors instead of actors using puppets? How are toys different today? Create a toy character that you might find in a present day bedroom. Give the character a name and an age. Decide on a walk and posture for your character. Choose a physical habit that distinguishes your character from others. How does that character talk? Take turns introducing the characters to the rest of the class by walking across the front of the room, stopping halfway and saying your name and age. Then continue walking making sure to clearly show the physical choices you made.

*Theatre: S1: C2: PO201*

2) As a class, discuss and write down the sequence of events in the play. Choose one of the moments from the play that you can use as inspiration for an illustration. Give your illustration a descriptive sentence. Put them all together in a class book.

*Visual Arts: S1: C4: PO101*

3) Choose a character from *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Create puppets using paper bags, socks, cardboard cutouts and sticks, gloves or mittens, and art supplies like glue, tape, feathers, fabric or whatever else you find. Using the puppets you created, make a puppet play. Use *The Velveteen Rabbit* or stories that you wrote about the rabbit's life after he becomes real. Decide on a beginning, middle and ending for the story, discuss what the dialogue will be and then rehearse. Add music to underscore and then share with another class or just with each other.





### Questions to Ask Before Seeing the Production:

- 1) How are plays different from TV shows or movies? What can be done in a movie that can't be done on stage?
- 2) What does it mean to be real? How do you know when something is real?
- 3) What is your favorite toy? How would you feel if it were taken away from you?
- 4) What do you already know about the story of *The Velveteen Rabbit*?
- 5) What parts of the book *The Velveteen Rabbit* do you think will be difficult to stage? Why? What other books do you know of that have been turned into a play?
- 6) What is the difference between a puppet and a doll?
- 7) Which season is your favorite and why?
- 8) When you play, what are some things you like to pretend to do?

### Questions to Ask After Seeing the Production:

- 1) There are three parts to a play: the *People*, the *Place* and the *Problem*. Can you identify each of these in the play you saw?
- 2) What are the sequence of events in *The Velveteen Rabbit*?
- 3) What was your favorite part of the play? Why?
- 4) What other jobs do you think the Nursery Fairy performs?
- 5) In the play, the boy had a number of favorite toys which could be found in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century nursery. What were some of those toys? How are toys different now? If the play took place now, what might some of the toy characters be?
- 6) What are some of the things the rabbit enjoyed doing with the boy?
- 7) How did the rabbit feel when he first came to the nursery and met all of the other toys?
- 8) How did the rabbit feel when he met the real rabbits in the woods?
- 9) How did the boy feel when Nana told him that his rabbit would need to be burned?
- 10) When the rabbit is put outside to be burned he is all alone. Can you give an example of another time he is alone in the play?
- 11) What are some examples of emotions that the rabbit feels in the play?
- 12) Which character in the nursery do you think the rabbit feels the most comfortable with?
- 13) The Velveteen Rabbit is a puppet. What did the puppeteer do to make the puppet look real?

### Books by Margery Williams Bianco:

- ~*The Late Returning*
- ~*Spendthrift Summer*
- ~*The Bar*
- ~*The Velveteen Rabbit; or, How Toys Become Real*
- ~*Poor Cecco: The Wonderful Story of a Wonderful Wooden Dog Who Was the Jolliest Toy in the House Until He Went Out to Explore the World*
- ~*The Skin Horse*
- ~*The House That Grew Smaller*
- ~*Winterbound*
- ~*Forward, Commandos!*

### When Toys Become Real

- ~*Toys Go Out* by Emily Jenkins
- ~*Phewtus the Squirrel* by V. H. Drumond
- ~*Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse* by Leo Lionni
- ~*The Toy Farmer* by Andrew Pelletier
- ~*Orson* by Rascal



### Seasons

- ~*The Reason for Seasons* by Gail Gibbons
- ~*All Through the Year* by Anna Goodwin
- ~*Four Seasons Make a Year* by Anne Rockwell

### Childhood Illnesses

- ~*Don't You Feel Well Sam?* by Amy Hest
- ~*The Lemonade Club* by Patricia Polacco
- ~*How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon?* by Jane Yolen

### Loss

- ~*Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech
- ~*City Dog, Country Frog* by Mo Willems
- ~*The Tenth Good Thing about Barney* by Judith Viorst

## Imagination

- ~*The Story of Fish and Snail* by Deborah Freedman
- ~*My Garden* by Kevin Henkes
- ~*The House at Pooh Corner* by A. A. Milne
- ~*The Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks
- ~*Really Truly Bingo* by Laura McGee Kvasnosky
- ~*Something for James* by Shirley Isherwood

## Power of Love/Friendship

- ~*The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo
- ~*Corduroy* by Don Freeman
- ~*Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers
- ~*Emma Bean* by Jean Van Leeuwen
- ~*Fish is Fish* by Leo Lionni
- ~*Laura Charlotte* by Kathryn Galbraith
- ~*Nothing* by Mick Inkpen
- ~*The Teddy Bear* by David McPhail

## Pretend Play

- ~*Let's Do Nothing!* by Tony Fucile
- ~*Creating Clever Castles and Cars:*  
*Children 3-8 Make their Own Pretend Play Spaces* by Mari Rutz Mitchell
- ~*Princess Super Kitty* by Antoinette Portis
- ~*Toby, Who Are You?* By William Steig
- ~*Snow Bears* by Martin Waddell

## Interesting Internet Links

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~rabbit/rabfun.htm>  
-bunny fun and games page

<http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0768872.html>  
-a history of toys and games

<http://www.toystimeline.com/>  
-history of toys from prehistoric times to the present

[http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Bianco\\_\\_Margery\\_Williams.html](http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Bianco__Margery_Williams.html)  
-a biography of Margery Williams Bianco

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/ten\\_ages\\_gallery\\_08.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/ten_ages_gallery_08.shtml)  
-ten ages of Christmas gifts

<http://www.artistshelpingchildren.orgpuppetshandpuppetsfingerpuppetsartscraftsideaskids.html>  
-online puppetry resources

<http://www.puppetsnow.com/history-of-puppets.html>  
-a brief history of puppets

