

# Long Island Children's Museum

## Education Packet



## Aesop's Fables

By Mike Kenny

Original produced by Sherman Theater, UK, in 2002

### Performances:

Tuesday, January 29 through Friday, February 1, 2019 at 10:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.  
Tuesday, February 5 through Friday, February 8, 2019 at 10:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.  
Tuesday, February 19 through Saturday, February 23, 2019 at 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.



# Know Before You Go

## Where You Will Go

**Long Island Children's Museum Theater** is the only theater on Long Island presenting performances specifically for family audiences on a year-round basis. Our theater has presented vibrant and engaging performances for families since the Museum opened in 1993. In 2008, the LICM Theater expanded its role and began producing professional-level family theater shows. Our productions play a central role in the range of educational experiences provided to our visitors. The scripts we select are chosen to encourage audience interaction and to develop fundamental skills for our young visitors. Our hope is to create personal experiences that children will take with them throughout their lives.



**Question Quest!** What is the difference between live theater and a movie? Have you ever seen a live theater performance? What do you do when you see something on stage that you like? Do you clap? Cheer? Smile?

**Literary Link:** Learn about determination and introduce young audience members to the art of theater with the fun and light hearted, **Amandina** by Sergio Ruzzier.

## Who You Will See

### The Cast

**Syd** – Maggie Gayford

**Wolfie** – Kyle Mahoney

**Harriet** – Liz Jeffery

**Barry** – Matthew Spina



### The Production Staff

**Director/Puppet Builder/Costumer** – Austin M. Costello

**Theater Manager/Lighting Designer** – James A. Packard

**Stage Manager** – Jes Almeida

**Theater Program Coordinator** – Lauren Vasiliades

**Question Quest!** What is an actor? What is a director? How do an actor and a director work together? What is a puppet? What is the difference between an actor and a puppet?

**Literary Link:** Check out how the Sesame Street puppeteers **make their puppets move!**

## The Show

Puppeteers, Wolfie, Syd, Harriet and Barry, work together to retell the classic fables of Aesop with their own tongue-in-cheek style. Wolfie and Syd are both our experienced storytellers and the leaders of the group. Wolfie, who is the boss, plays the "Wind" and the "Wolf." Syd is brilliant and confident and plays the "Sun," "Jackdaw" (blackbird) and "Lion." Harriet, boisterous and energetic, plays the "Hare" and a "Shepherd." Barry, our meek newcomer, serves as the underdog of the group playing characters such as the "Mouse" and the "Tortoise."



The fables represented in this show include "The Tortoise and the Hare," "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," "The Wind and the Sun," "The Lion and the Mouse" and "The Wolf and the Jackdaw." These fables teach us the timeless lessons of patience, greed, friendship and honesty through living literature.

In the show, these classic fables are intertwined and brought to quirky new life by British playwright, Mike Kenny. Through storytelling, puppetry and plenty of imagination, our actors take audiences on a wild journey while sharing important life lessons along the way.

**Question Quest!** When you listen to a story, how do you use your imagination to make the story come alive?

**Click Further:** Learn from scholars at NYU why storytelling is an important skill for children to **learn**.

**Literary Link:** Help your students **P.I.C.K.** the right story for them.

**Activity Time:** **Fun ways to explore storytelling at home.**

## Mike Kenny



Mike Kenny is one of England's leading writers, specializing in young people's theater. He is the recipient of many awards, and his plays are performed regularly throughout the UK and all over the world. Awards include Best Children's Play (Time Out Critics Choice), Best Children's Play (Writers' Guild of Great Britain) and Arts Council of England - first ever recipient of The Children's Award for playwriting for children (2000). In 2012, he won the Deutscher Kindertheaterpreis for *Electric Darkness*. In 2013, he was given an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by Nottingham University, England. In 2015, he won the Writers Guild Award for Best Play for Younger Audiences with *Three Wise Monkeys*. LICM has presented two of Mike Kenny's plays, *Aesop's Fables* and *Red Riding Hood*.

**Question Quest!** What does a playwright do? How do playwrights get their ideas?

**Click Further:** Mike Kenny on the importance of **inclusive theater**.

**Literary Link:** An **interview** with Mike Kenny.

**Activity Time:** **Learn about play scripts** to use with your student/child to direct them as they create their own characters, plot and dialogue.

## Aesop, the Fabulist

Do you know that Aesop was a fabulist? No, not that he was fabulous, but that he was a fabulist – a creator of fables.

Aesop was a Greek folk figure who is supposed to have lived in the 6th century BC. He gained a great reputation as a teller of animal fables. Aesop used animals as metaphors for different types of people. Through these many fables, Aesop showed the wise and foolish behavior of people, and taught lessons in the form of morals. Not much is known about the life of Aesop. It is believed Aesop was born in Thrace, Greece, as a slave. It is said that his wisdom so delighted one of his masters that the slave was given his freedom.

There are no records that Aesop ever wrote down his fables or published them. His fables were not meant to entertain children. He told them as moral lessons for adults, who in turn passed them on to others. Not until 200 years after his death did the first written collection of fables appear. Since then Aesop's Fables have been translated into almost every language in the world.

**Question Quest!** If Aesop never wrote down his stories, how did generations of people know about his fables?

## What is a fable?

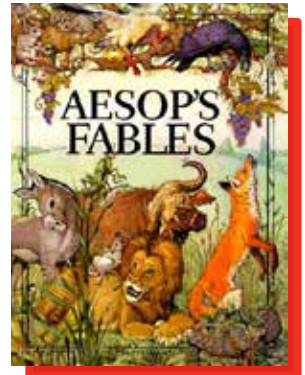
**Question Quest!** What makes a fable different from other stories?

**Click Further:** More info on the **history** of Aesop.

**Literary Link:** View all of Aesop's **fables**.

**BONUS Literary Link:** Explore 70 fables and folktales from around the **world**.

**Activity Time:** **Write your own fable**.



## Vocabulary

You can prepare your child/students for language and ideas they will hear in the play by reviewing this list of vocabulary words with them in advance.

- **Fable** – A short story that teaches a lesson, especially one in which the characters are animals.
- **Moral** - A valuable lesson in behavior, usually the final sentence of a story where advice is given.
- **Double-take** – A delayed reaction of surprise or astonishment after an initial hesitation.
- **Underdog** – Someone who has the disadvantage and is expected to lose a fight or contest.
- **Fabulist** – A writer or reciter of fables.
- **Despair** – A strong feeling that there is no hope.
- **Boasting** – Making an excessively proud statement about possessions or achievements.

- **Challenge** – To invite or dare someone to participate in a contest or competition.
- **Plodded** – Walked slowly but steadily along.
- **Plight** – A difficult, dangerous or unfortunate condition or situation.
- **Embankment** – A raised area of land.
- **Playboard**- A surface on which a puppet is manipulated.
- **Rods**- Sticks or wires that are used to control a puppet.

## During Your Visit

### Show Time!

#### Before the Show:

- Please do not bring food or beverages into the Theater (bottled water is permitted).
- Please turn off or silence cell phones when entering the Theater. This makes the experience more enjoyable for everyone.

#### During the Show:

- LICM Theater is a place that encourages audience interaction in most of our shows. However, we ask that the audience remain seated until prompted by the actors to enter the stage area or respond to questions.
- Keep the aisles clear as per fire safety regulations and in case of emergency.
- We know that young children are curious and will want to ask you questions during the performance—feel free to talk quietly with your children.
- The use of recording and/or photographic equipment is strictly prohibited. You will have an opportunity to take photos of our performers and chat with them at the end of every show.

#### After the Show:

- You will have an opportunity to take photos of our performers and chat with them at the end of every show if time permits.



**Question Quest!** What was your favorite part of the show? How did the show make you feel? What do you think the performers did to prepare for the show? What question would you like to ask our performers?

**Click Further:** Read about **research** that proved the importance of live theater for students.

**Literary Link:** Learn about the process of writing a play as you read the playful picture book, **Full Moon and Star**, by Lee Bennett Hopkins.

## Making Connections

When you come to see the show, be sure to stick around afterwards and check out all of the galleries in the Museum. There are some specific ways you can use the galleries to expand upon your trip to see *Aesop's Fables*. Teachers should look into extending your visit if you have not already!

## Activity Time: *Broken? Fix it!*

Come visit our *Broken? Fix It!* gallery! When something breaks, what do you do? Learn to diagnose problems, then roll up your sleeves and get inside the repair process. You can also tell the tale of something you broke in our "Truth Booth" or hear the confessions of other visitors.



The Hare and the Tortoise teach us to take our time- slow and steady wins the race. Maybe this advice could help to remember to be thoughtful when fixing something.

The Lion and the Mouse teach us that help comes in all sizes! If something breaks and we don't know how to fix it, we can ask a friend for help.

**Question Quest!** What is the best thing to do when you realize you've done something wrong?

**Click Further:** Learn how to help children develop **problem solving** skills.

**Literary Link:** Dig deeper into problem solving with ***But It's Not My Fault*** by Julia Cook.

## Activity Time: *Feasts for Beasts*

Feast your eyes on our Feasts for Beasts exhibit where you can learn about carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores. Study what each category means and then see if you can classify the critters from the show into those three groups. Also check out how animals have different teeth depending on what type of food they eat and see if you can complete the Diner Dash activity in the center of the Gallery!

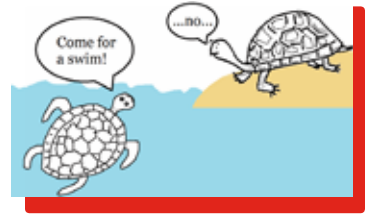
**Question Quest!** Are you a carnivore, herbivore or omnivore? Which animals did you see in this exhibit? Which is your favorite?



# After Your Visit

## Tortoise or Turtle? Hare or Rabbit?

So what's the difference between a tortoise and turtle? What's the difference between a hare and a rabbit? Tortoises and turtles are both reptiles, but they happen to be pretty different from each other. The major difference between the two is that tortoises live on land, while turtles live in the water nearly all of the time! Turtles tend to have hands and feet that look a little like flippers since they need to swim all day.



Hares and rabbits have quite a few differences: hares like to eat hard foods like bark or twigs, while rabbits like to eat softer grasses and vegetables. Rabbits make their homes in burrows underground, while hares make nests in open prairies. Baby rabbits still need a lot of help from their moms, as they are born without fur, the ability to see and the ability to regulate their body temperature. Baby hares, on the other hand, are born fully developed and can move on their own after their birth. Rabbits are very social creatures, while hares like to roam alone.

**Question Quest!** Do you think you could tell the difference between a rabbit and a hare if you saw them in the wild? What about a tortoise and a turtle? Do you see these animals on Long Island?

**Click Further:** Read more about the differences of commonly **confused** animals.

**Literary Link:** Find out what animal **scientists** think would win in a real race between the tortoise and the hare.

## Activity Time: Ready, Set, Go!

Participate in relay races that demonstrate speed is not always the answer.

### Directions:

1. Divide players into teams and line the teams up.
2. Pass out a spoon and egg to each person in the front of the line.
3. Blow the whistle, signaling the start of the relay. Each person with a spoon and egg must carry the egg on the spoon to and from a designated spot (to the tree and back, to the fence and back, or whatever you choose).
4. As soon as the player returns to the line, he or she passes the egg and spoon on to the next person in line.
5. Award the winning team with a prize
6. Ask students if only fast people are the best at racing. Discuss how being fast relates to school. Review the idea that doing work fast is not important, but that doing your best makes everyone a winner. Discuss how Tortoise's friends didn't give up on him. Talk about how we can encourage others in our classroom.



### Tips & Warnings:

- Modify the game according to age group. Give out plastic eggs to younger kids; older kids can not only transport hard-boiled eggs, but also carry the spoons in their mouths.
- Make the game more challenging by setting up an obstacle course for the players. Or, add another twist: The kids must hop like a bunny, waddle like a duck, crawl like a turtle.... Possibilities are endless.
- Have extra eggs available for those unforeseen accidents!
- If a player drops the egg along the way, he or she must return to the line and begin again.

**Question Quest!** What was your favorite fable in the play and why? Did any of these stories remind you of something that happened in your own life?

## Morals

Revisit the morals of each fable. Our version of Aesop's Fables included the stories of "The Tortoise and the Hare," "The Lion and the Mouse," "The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf'" and "The Wolf and the Jackdaw." (Refer to [this link](#) to re-read the stories).

## Activity Time: R.A.K. It Up!

R.A.K. it up with Random Acts of Kindness! Use inspiration from "The Lion and the Mouse" to motivate a form of charity in your school or community. This could be in the form of a bake sale, raffle or clean up. Learn that every little act of kindness counts and you are never too small to make a difference.

Begin by telling students about a small act of kindness you experienced today, such as a student greeting you with a high five first thing this morning or another teacher bringing you a bagel for breakfast. Ask students to share small acts of kindness they experienced today or this week.



As a class, create a list of small acts of kindness they could perform for each other. Write this list on the board.

Instruct all students to write their name on a piece of paper, fold it up and put it into a hat. Shake up the hat. Ask each person to draw a name. If a student gets their own name, put the paper back and draw again. Students should not show anyone the name they have drawn.

The students' assignment for the next week is to secretly perform acts of kindness for the person on their paper. For example, they can help clean up their person's desk or place a treat in their person's cubby. Again, remind students not to get caught!

At the end of the week, ask everyone to come back together and write down who they thought drew their name. Discuss with students what it was like to try to do acts of kindness secretly. How did you feel receiving secret acts of kindness? How can our class do more small acts of kindness for one another on a regular basis? Do acts of kindness always have to be a secret?

## Playful Puppets

Many characters in Aesop's Fables are brought to life through puppetry. A puppet is any inanimate object that humans bring to life for an audience. Puppetry has been around for thousands of years and has been used for telling stories throughout history. These are the different types of puppets in Aesop's Fables.

**Hand and Rod Puppets** are manipulated by the hands of a performer in two different ways. The puppeteer's dominant hand controls the mouth of the puppet while the other hand holds onto sticks or wires, called rods, in order to control another element of the puppet. The rods can control hands and arms, wings, legs and feet, or any other feature that is useful for expression off the puppet's character.

**Shadow Puppets** are figures that, when projected from behind, cast a silhouette on a thin screen. This ancient style of puppetry has foundations in Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia.



Light travels as a wave. When you put your shadow puppet in between the lamp and the wall, the puppet blocks some of the light waves. The closer you put your shadow puppet to the lamp, the more light waves are blocked. This makes a bigger shadow. Moving the shadow puppet away from the lamp makes a smaller shadow as fewer light waves are blocked.

**Question Quest!** Have you ever played with a puppet? What types of puppets have you seen? Did you know that a lunar eclipse is the Earth casting a shadow on the moon? Just like a shadow puppet!

**Literary Link:** Learn about the power of puppetry as you read about one of the most famous puppeteers of all time, **Jim Henson: The Guy Who Played With Puppets**.

**Activity Time:** **Create your own shadow puppets** to put on your own play!

**BONUS Activity Time:** Create your own **wolf mask**.

## Plan Your Next Visit

**Click Further:** Check out the **LICM Theater page** for details on upcoming performances.

## Tell Us What You Thought!

We would love to hear from you. Share your **feedback** regarding your experience at the LICM Theater by emailing us at **[theater@licm.org](mailto:theater@licm.org)**.

We appreciate the support of the following:



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