



RIVERSIDE THEATRE
PRESENTS



You're never too small to make a difference.

Study Guide



Welcome to Teachers and Explanation of Guide



Welcome to the wonderful world of theatre! We appreciate you and your students' attendance at our production. We want to be sure to give our young audiences an even broader educational experience with help from this study guide. We want to provide tools for them to prepare for the show prior to attending it, as well as ways for them to appreciate the experience afterwards.

Riverside Theatre is committed to providing a total theatre arts experience that entertains, challenges, and educates both adults and children. The purpose of this study guide is to enrich the experience for our young audiences. There are discussion questions and activities for you to better engage your students with the show and to get even more meaning from it. Part of the mission of Riverside Theatre is to provide the youth of the community with a broad range of education opportunities that will cultivate tomorrow's artist and audiences, while building the skills of today. The lessons and ideas presented in this study guide are meant to be a springboard to help students cultivate a life long appreciation for the performing arts. We are also committed to aiding our local schools with different ways to present common core aligned lessons to their students. As the show is based on the work of literature, many Common Core standards in Reading & Writing can be applied to the students' experience with the production, in addition to ones in Theatre, Dance, and Music.

We thank you again for supporting the arts, and encouraging your students to gain a deeper appreciation for theatre!



Table of Contents



3... Plot Synopsis	12... Basic Theatre Vocabulary
4... Characters	14... Word Search
6... Meet the Actors	15... Scavenger Hunt Maze
7... About the Author	16... Crossword Puzzle
7... Production Design	17... Coloring Pages
9... In Class Discussions	19... Special Show Topics
10... Classroom Activities	20... About the Theatre
11... Theatre Etiquette	



Common Core

Standards and strands that will be addressed through the show and study guide will include:



Dance



Critical Thinking and Reflection



Skills, Techniques, and Processes



English Language Arts



Reading Standards for Literature



Reading Standards for Listening and Speaking



Writing Standards



Music



Critical Thinking and Reflection



Organizational Structure



Skills, Techniques, and Processes



Theatre



Critical Thinking and Reflection



Organizational Structure



Innovation, Technology, and the Future Skills, Techniques, and Processes



Poodleful! Plot Synopsis

The show opens and we discover Pansy, a poodle who lives at the posh Beverly Hills Palace Hotel (“It’s Fabulous Here At The Palace”). She tells us how she came to be adopted by her owner Avery. We flashback to the dog shelter as Pansy watches other dogs find their owners. (“The Dog for Me/The Kid for Me”). She wonders what it would be like to be adopted and have a home, too (“What Is Home?”) A little girl named Avery enters the shelter and instantly decides she wants the brown poodle, and will name her Pansy because her face reminds her of the pansy flower. The two instantly bond (“I Choose You”). Pansy is then brought to Avery’s home, The Beverly Hills Palace Hotel, and introduced to the friendly staff at the hotel: Nigel the doorman, Chef Jeff, and Frida the front desk manager (“Welcome to the Palace”). Among the inhabitants of the hotel are the wealthy Mr. Dumal and his posh cat, Desiree. Mrs. Gilda Goldleaf enters from a luxurious shopping trip on fancy Rodeo Drive. She and Desiree take Pansy to Mrs. Goldleaf’s room for a make-over (“Fancy Fix”). Now transformed into a show worthy poodle, Pansy is taught by Desiree how to have some attitude to fit her new look (“Me Me Me Meow”). Afterwards, the new Pansy is revealed to Nigel and Mr. Dumal. Sensing how awkward Pansy feels about her new makeover, Avery and Nigel assure her she doesn’t need all of that stuff to be special (“Poodleful”). By the end of the song, all of the



Poodleful! Plot Synopsis (contd.)

fancy additions have been removed from Pansy to return her back to her original looks. Avery takes Pansy to meet her friend Monsieur Bijoux at his jewelry shop, where Gilda Goldleaf is trying on a beautiful diamond necklace (“The Diamond”). Mrs. Goldleaf purchases the necklace and returns to the Palace. The staff and Mr. Dumal fawn over the new jewelry. Mrs. Goldleaf goes to the 7th floor to put her new necklace away. Nigel tells Mr. Dumal what he would do if he had all the money in the world, like Mrs. Goldleaf. Mr. Dumal leaves to call to confirm the lunch reservation. After he goes, Nigel receives a call about a broken chandelier on the 7th floor and he leaves to fix it. Gilda and Mr. Dumal go to their lunch. Avery and Pansy notice the empty lobby, then go outside where Pansy wishes it would rain as she explains to Avery the joys of playing in puddles. (“Splish Splash”). Mrs. Goldleaf re-enters in the lobby in distress, announcing that her diamond necklace has been stolen while she was at lunch! They bemoan the fact that a theft has occurred (“This Could Happen Here”) Chef Jeff checks the footage but sees nothing suspicious, just Nigel checking out the chandelier. Mr. Dumal hears the news and tells Ms. Goldleaf that Nigel has been wanting “all the money in the world.” All suspicion for the robbery points to Nigel now. Pansy and Avery set out to prove Nigel is innocent. Pansy then has doubts about her ability to help out, but Avery assures her she has worth (“Give To You”). Detective Delby comes to investigate the robbery of the missing necklace. Mr. Dumal begins to exit with his suitcase, saying he’ll never stay at the hotel again since it has thieves there. Pansy smells salmon and perfume in the suitcase. Then Pansy smells the other missing items. The suitcase is opened and the missing items are found, including Mrs. Goldleaf’s diamond necklace. Desiree reveals that she helped Mr. Dumal get the objects as part of their “scavenger hunt” game to get her salmon treats. Everyone then celebrates Pansy for her talent in discovering the real culprit and exonerating Nigel.

Poodleful! Characters

Avery Age 6; Sunny, nurturing, bright, well-mannered; and though she lives in a luxury hotel, she is as down to earth as Laura Ingalls Wilder

Pansy A small, young, brown toy poodle who is street-smart and world-curious; genuine, frisky, enthusiastic

Gilda Goldleaf In her 40s; blousy, giddy, and exuberant; she enjoys her life of luxury but is never condescending

Mom 35; a good-natured career woman, trusting and practical

Female Shelter Dog Demure and sweet

Desiree A sassy pampered cat; self-centered but a softie underneath her sleek, cool exterior

Front Desk Frida Manages the luxury hotel; crisp, inviting, ready to handle anything

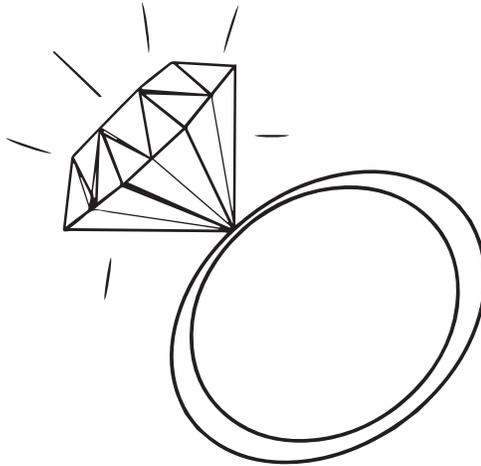
Girl Kid 8ish; doe-eyed girly girl; prissy but friendly

Nigel Late 20s; the hotel’s amiable doorman who is everyone’s best buddy; compassionate, dependable, good through and through



Poodleful! Characters (contd.)

- Detective Delby** 45; officious and bumbling, but ultimately benign
- Male Shelter Dog** Playfully rowdy and a little dopey
- Mr. Dumal** 40s; on the stout side, effete and educated, but obsequious and sly
- Monsieur Bijoux** 40s; very French and an expert salesman of fine jewelry
- Chef Jeff** 30s; loves his job, jovial, flirts with Frida
- Boy Kid** 8ish; ruddy-cheeked type who likes the library as much as the playground



About the Actors

What is an actor's job?

An actor portrays the characters in a story. An actor's job is to convincingly convey to the audience what it is their character wants and what they are striving to achieve. Ultimately, they are storytellers, each one play a crucial part to help an audience understand what is happening in a show!

How do actors learn their skills?

Actors train for years to develop all the tools they need as performers. Lessons in acting, dancing, and voice are essential for actors in a musical like Poodleful to have so they can successfully become their characters and help tell the story.

Where can I learn the skills to become an actor?

Actors can learn their craft in many different ways, from private lessons to classes at school. For instance, the actors in Poodleful all went to college to train as actors. You are very fortunate because right where you live you have Riverside Theatre, where you can take many classes in acting, dance, and music and perform in shows at the Children's Theatre, and also see professional actors in shows at Riverside!



Poodleful! Cast



Samantha Cho Grossman (Pansy) is a recent college graduate from Pace University in New York, graduating with a degree in Musical Theatre. Past credits include *Our Time: A Graduation Mixtape* (54 Below), *The Pajama Game* (Ann), *Great Wall* (Michelle), *Little Miss Fix It* (Neptune), *West Side Story* (Maria), and *Hatched: New Works in New York* (Joe's Pub). Samantha is very excited to be an apprentice for the Riverside Theatre and can't wait to see what the year will bring.



Kelsey Flannery (Desiree, Front Desk Frida, Girl Kid) is thrilled to be joining Riverside Theatre this year as a performance apprentice! She has recently graduated from Morehead State University in Kentucky with a theatre degree, as well as taken classes through Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. She has performed on stages in Kentucky, Virginia, Ireland, and China. Some of her favorite shows she's performed in have included *Cabaret*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Evil Dead: The Musical*, and *The Children's Hour*.



Katherine Hintz (Gilda Goldleaf, Mom, Female Shelter Dog) is a recent college graduate from Atlanta, GA with a degree in Theatre from Samford University. She has also trained at The Second City Chicago. She has performed on stages in Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chicago. Some of her favorite roles include *Nora in Assistance*, *Veronica in God of Carnage*, *Nina in Vonya & Sonia & Masha & Spike*, and *Aaronow in Glengarry Glen Ross*. She is very excited to be working at Riverside this year as a Performance Apprentice!



Katie Keller (Avery) is originally from Fort Lauderdale. She graduated in May from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, TX, where she earned her BFA in Theatre with an Emphasis in Acting. Her favorite previous roles include *Cosette in Les Misérables*, *Rosemary in How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Muriel in Ah! Wilderness*, and *Sarah in Born on a Sunday*. She is super excited to be performing in Riverside Theatre's first original musical *Poodleful!* and to begin her year as a performance apprentice.



Sean Potter (Mr Dumal, Mssr. Bijoux, Chef Jeff, Boy Kid) is beyond thrilled to be working as a performance apprentice for Riverside Theatre's 2015-2016 season. Originally from New Haven, CT, he is freshly graduated from Pace University's Musical Theatre program where he was seen in *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, and *Ryan Scott Oliver's We Foxes* among others. He also had the opportunity to work behind the scenes on main stage musicals, such as working alongside Victoria Clark as her Assistant Director on *The Light in the Piazza* in the fall of 2014. In winter of 2014, Sean made his NYC stage debut in *Fabulous! The Musical* as Boy 2 at the Time Square Arts Center.



Ian Thomson (Nigel, Detective Delby, Male Shelter Dog) is excited to join the Riverside team for the first time as a Performance Apprentice. Originally from New Jersey, he recently graduated from Davidson College with a BA in Theatre. While there, he participated in several productions, including *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Prophet*, and *Guys and Dolls*. He also studied abroad at the British American Drama Academy in London, UK, and toured with the Davidson College Chorale. He can't wait to see what this year has in store!



About the Author / About the Playwrights

Poodleful! is a Riverside Theatricals adaptation of the children's book *Pansy at the Palace: A Beverly Hills Mystery* by Author **Cynthia Barden**. *Poodleful!* has original music and lyrics by **Ken Clifton**, who is also one of the playwrights with **DJ Salisbury**. DJ is also the Director of the show.

What is an author?

An author is the person who writes a story. They create the ideas in the book and must convey those ideas to their readers in entertaining, engrossing ways so that the reader clearly understands the plot and themes of the story.

What is a playwright's role?

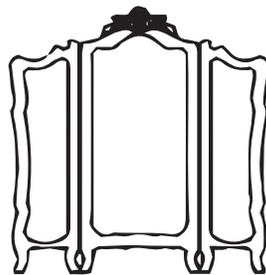
A playwright writes the script that the actors, directors, and designers use to create a show. The playwright's job is just like an author's in that they are trying to tell a story for audiences to understand, but in the playwright's case they must create a story that can be performed on actors on a stage.

What is a composer and a lyricist?

A composer writes music, and the lyricist writes the words that are set to that music. Sometimes the composer and lyricist are two (or more) different people doing the roles, and other times the composer can write their own lyrics, like with *Poodleful!*

What is a director?

A director is the person who ultimately puts everything together on stage. It is their job to interpret the playwright's intentions for the story and how to best present it onstage for audiences. They work with the actors to help them portray the characters, and they work with the designers of the scenery, costumes, lights, props, and sound to tie everything together to best tell the story.



Production Design

What is scenery?

Scenery is the collection of set pieces on stage that helps convey the locations of scenes in the show. It can be very elaborate and detailed, or simple yet expressive enough to still tell the audience where the action is taking place.

What is a scenic designer?

A scenic designer is the person who creates the look of the sets of the show. Under the guidance of the director, they decide what is necessary to help tell the story and let the audience know where the story is happening.



Production Design (contd.)

Who builds the scenery?

Talented people who have a variety of skills to help convey the designer's vision create scenery. Many skills are needed for this, from people who can use tools to build sets, to painters who can make the sets look beautiful (or ugly, if that's what the story needs!) Riverside Theatre has a team of very talented craftsmen and artists who work in the scene shop to create the amazing sets you see in *Poodleful!* The *Poodleful!* sets were designed by Riverside Theatre's Scenic Painter, **Dusty Terrell**.

Costume Design

What are costumes?

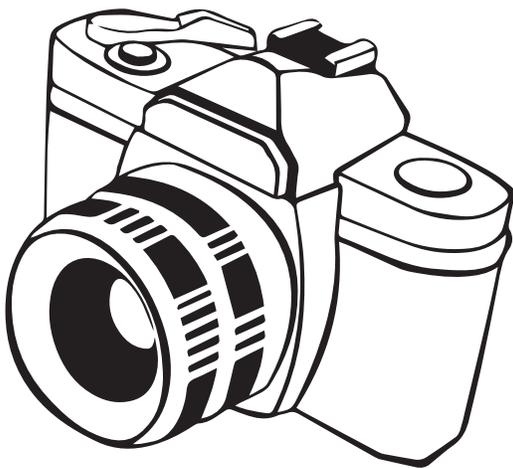
Costumes are the pieces of clothing worn by the actors to help them portray their characters.

What is a costume designer?

A costume designer is the person who creates what the clothes will look like. Working with the director, they decide what types of clothing, colors, and details are needed to best tell the audience about who each character is in the story.

Who makes the costumes?

A team of talented people with skills in sewing, crafting, and finding the clothing required to fulfill the costume designer's vision. The *Poodleful!* costumes were designed by **Stephen Stines**.





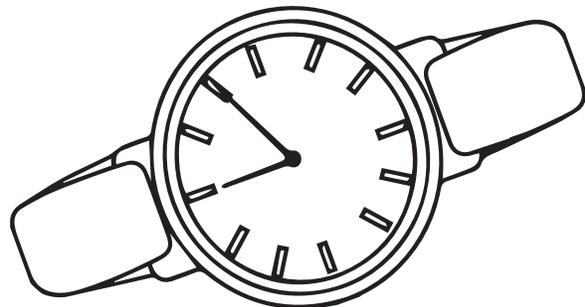
In Class Discussions

Pre-Show Discussions

-  Have you ever been to the theatre to see a live show before? What do you expect the experience will be like?
-  This show is called *Poodleful!*? What do you think that means?
-  The show is also described as a “A Musical Mystery”. What is a “musical?” What is a “mystery”? With those two words combined, what kind of a story do you expect to see?
-  The actors hope to have good audiences see their show. What are some qualities a good audience member has? What are some behaviors that an good audience member does not have?
-  Have you read the book *Pansy at the Palace*? If so, what moments from the story do you hope are included in the play?

Post-Show Discussions

-  What are three words you would use to describe your experience at the theatre?
-  Now that you’ve seen the show, what does the title *Poodleful!* mean to you now?
-  Why do you think the playwrights chose *Poodleful!* as the title to the musical, since it is not the title of the book it is based upon?
-  Who was your favorite character in the show and why?
-  What was your favorite song in the show? How would you describe that song to someone who never heard it?
-  Who was your favorite performer in the show? What did they do that you really enjoyed?





Classroom Activities

Pre-Show Activities

-  Cynthia Bardes wrote the story *Pansy at the Palace* inspired by her own family. Write a small scene inspired by your own family and perform it with some classmates.
-  The show *Poodleful!* is a musical, and you will see actors singing and dancing in the show. Bring in a favorite song of yours to sing for the class, or do a small dance to one of your favorite songs.
-  The actors in the show will pretend to be animals like dogs and a cat. Show how you would move and talk like a dog, then show how you could become a cat. Make sure your movements are similar to how a dog and cat would move around!
-  *Poodleful* was adapted from a children's book called *Pansy at the Palace*. Tell the class what your favorite book is, and how you would make a theatre show out of it.

Post-Show Activities

-  A "review" is an evaluation of a piece of art as to what is good about it, or what is not pleasing about it. Write a review of the show *Poodleful*. Be sure to give details to help support your opinion.
-  What was your favorite dance move in the show? Demonstrate how you would teach that dance move to someone who did not see the show.
-  In the show Avery and her mom adopted Pansy from an animal shelter. Have you ever adopted any pets? Please write about your experience in adopting that animal.
-  If you have never adopted or owned a pet, please write what sort of animal you would like to own and why.
-  What was your favorite song from the show *Poodleful*? Can you sing a little bit of it for the class?
-  Avery and Pansy sing a song called "Splish Splash" that is about how much fun it is to play in puddles. Can you demonstrate how you would play in a puddle? Now teach a friend how to do it, too, the way Pansy taught Avery in the show!
-  Pansy and Avery are best friends and sing a song to each other called "Give To You" that is about how much they mean to each other. Write a poem about your best friend and what they mean to you, and then read it out loud to the class.



Theatre Etiquette & Tips for Theatre Trips

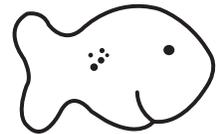
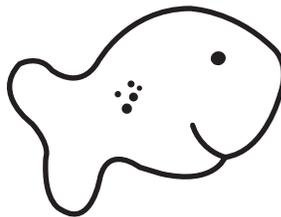
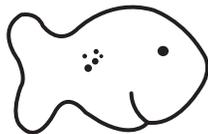
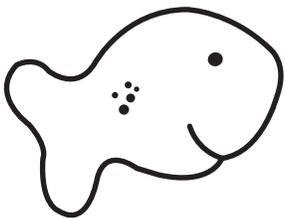
“Etiquette” is defined as “the rules indicating the proper and polite way to behave”. An audience is an important part of the theatre experience. Without an audience, there would be nobody for whom the actors can perform their show! They want to share their story with you, and an audience can either impact a performance positively or negatively. The artists and staff of Riverside Theatre are creating a world of imagination for you to visit. Everybody in the theatre is connected to all the other people in the audience and on stage. The actors can see and hear you, just as you can see and hear them. Your attention, involvement, responses, and imagination are a necessary part of every performance.

Also remember that you are representing your school, your teachers, and your fellow students when you are at the theatre. The best way you can represent them and yourself is by being the best audience member you can be! With all that being said, the actors and staff at Riverside Theatre want you to enjoy the performance, and encourage you to show your appreciation by clapping and laughing where appropriate. That’s the best way you can let the actors know they are doing a great job!



Tips for a great theatre experience

-  Stick with your group and pay attention to your teachers, chaperones, and the Riverside Theatre staff.
-  Use the bathroom and get a drink of water before the show begins so you won’t disrupt your fellow audience members or the actors during the performance.
-  Please do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.
-  Please no chewing gum, eating or drinking in the theatre.
-  Electronic devices such as phones and cameras are not to be used in the theatre.
-  You may laugh if you see something funny and clap at the end of songs and scenes you like, but please do not talk or whisper during the show.





Basic Theatre Vocabulary

- Acting** The process by which a performer uses their body, mind, voice and emotions to portray the role of a character in a story onstage.
- Actor** The artist portraying a role in a show on stage.
- Audition** The process by which an actor tries out for a role in a show.
- Backstage** The area of the stage that is out of sight of the audience.
- Blocking** The movements of the actors given to them by the director to help tell the story.
- Cast** The collection of actors who portray the characters in a play.
- Center Stage** A stage direction which describes the center area of the stage.
- Character** The role played by an actor.
- Choreography** The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.
- Conflict** The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.
- Costume** The carefully selected clothing worn by the actors.
- Cross** The actor's movement from one stage location to another.
- Cue** The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.
- Dialogue** The stage conversation between characters.
- Diction** The actor's ability to be understood.
- Director** The person who oversees the entire process of staging a production.
- Downstage** The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part further away.
- Dress Rehearsal** A full rehearsal with complete lights, sound, costumes, props, and sets during the last days before the first performance for an audience.
- Ensemble** A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.
- Flats** Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.
- House** The area in a theatre/auditorium where the audience sits.
- Intention** What the character wants from the other characters in a scene or show.
- Monologue** Part of a play when one character in which one character speaks alone. Sometimes this is a chance for the character to reveal personal thoughts or



Basic Theatre Vocabulary (contd.)

motivations, either while alone on the stage or unaware of the presence of other characters.

Pantomime Performing without words, expressing movement through physical actions/ gestures.

Play A piece of work written in dialogue form usually with a beginning, middle, and end, broken into one or more acts.

Plot The basic story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the end (resolution of the problem).

Projecting The process of speaking loudly in order for the entire audience to hear you.

Props Stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used or picked up by the actors. A shorthand term for the word “Properties”.

Rehearsal The process where the actors, director, and designers practice and prepare for the performance.

Role A part or character that an actor plays in the performance.

Script The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

Set All of the scenery—walls, platforms, doors, etc.—that show the locations of the play.

Stage The acting area on which the performance occurs.

Stagecraft The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e., scenery, lighting, costumes, and props.

Stage Crew The group of people working on set construction, props, lighting, sound, costumes, and make-up.

Stage Left The part of the stage to the actor’s left when the actor faces the audience.

Stage Manager The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

Stage Right The part of the stage to the actor’s right when the actor faces the audience.

Strike Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

Theme The central thought, idea, meaning, or significance of the action of a play.

Upstage The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.

Wings The space off stage masked by the drapes, often used for exits and entrances.



Poodleful! Character Search

Find and circle the following character names from the show (Words may be down, across, or diagonal):

**Avery
Pansy**

**Nigel
Frida**

**Dumal
Gilda**

**Jeff
Desiree**

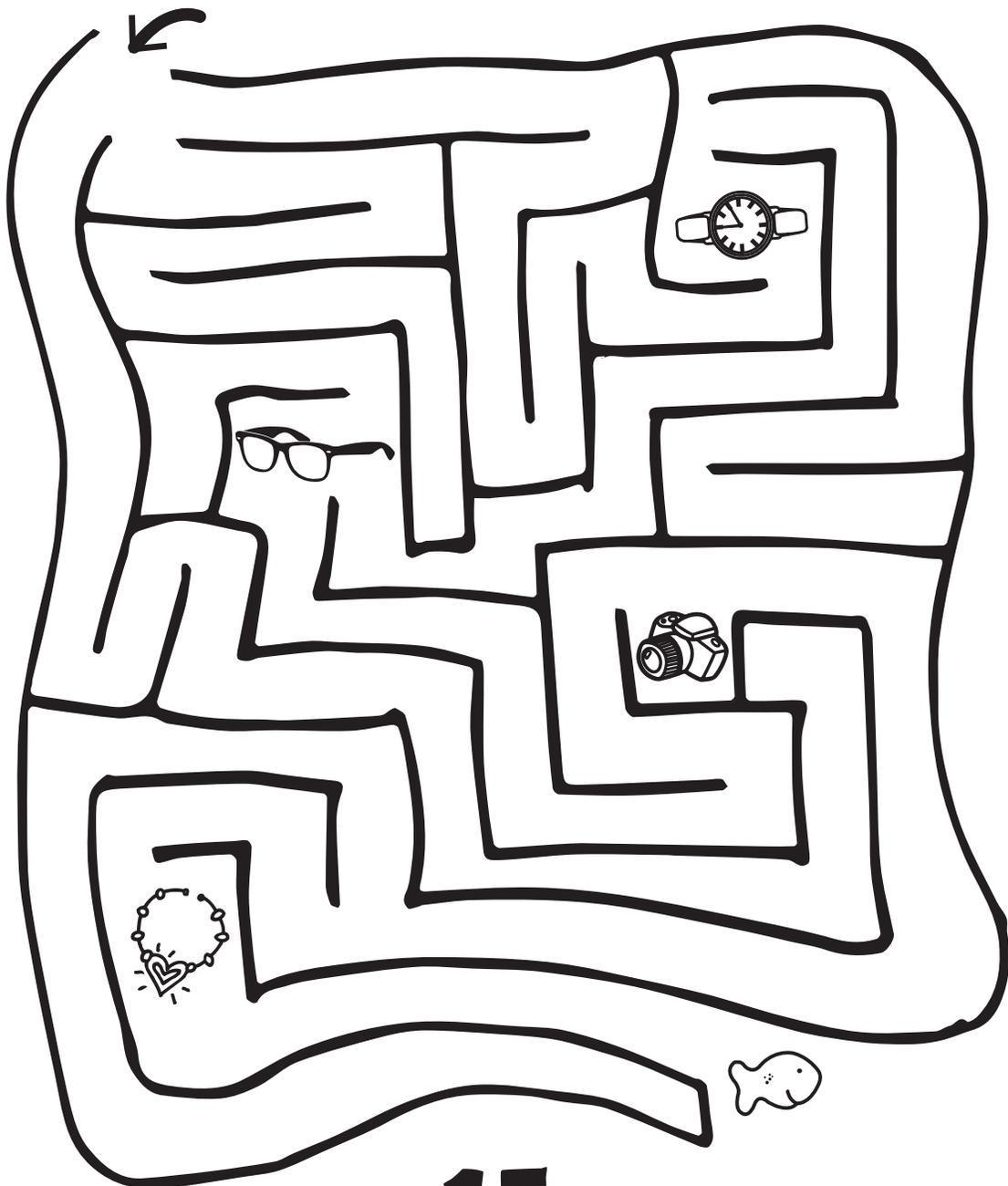
**Bijoux
Delby**

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



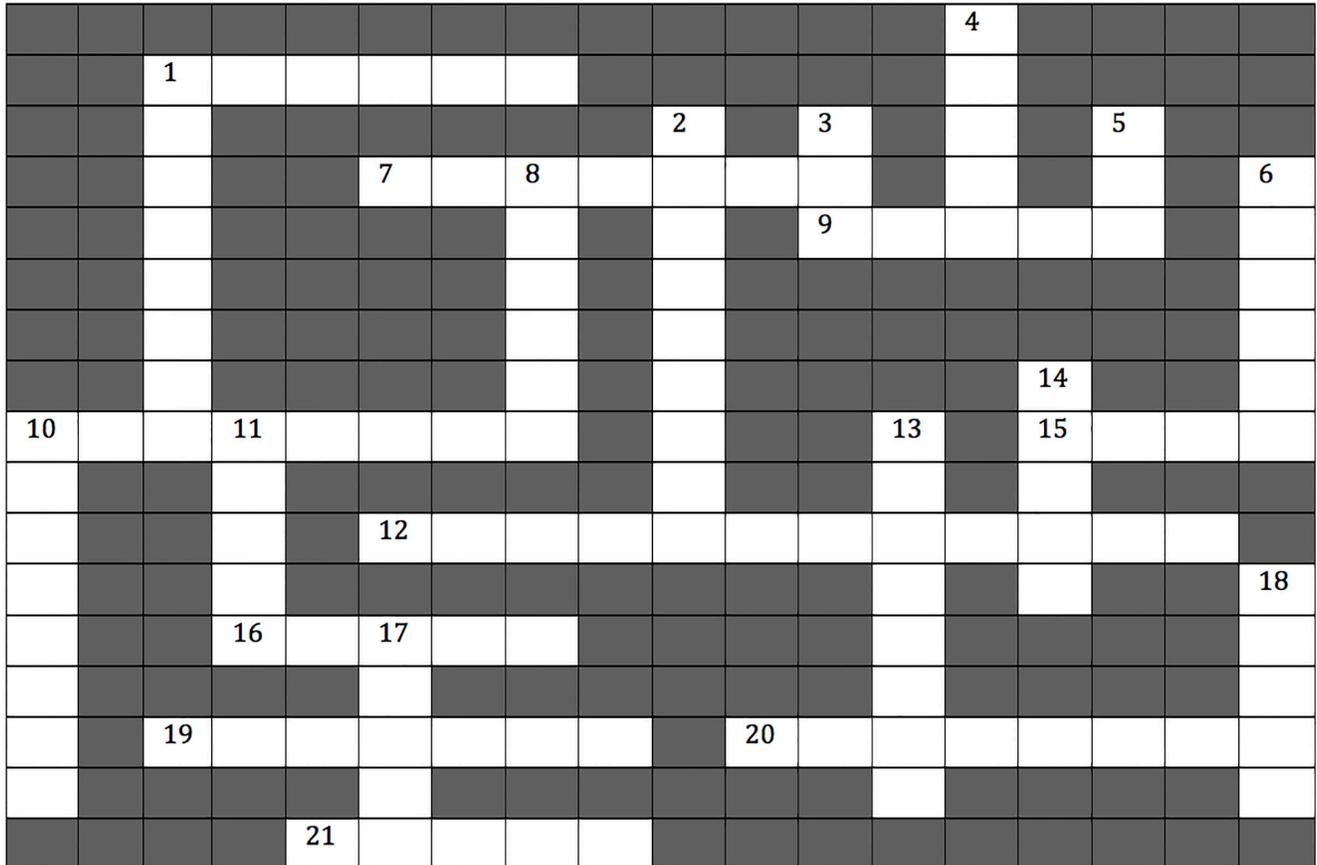
Scavenger Hunt Maze

In Poodleful!, Desiree the cat says she does a scavenger hunt with her owner Mr. Dumal to get rewarded with a salmon treat. You now must be Desiree and find your way through this maze, making sure to cross through each of the scavenger hunt items to collect them: a watch, sunglasses, a camera, and a diamond necklace. If you can get through, with all the objects, you get a salmon treat!





Theatre Terms Crossword Puzzle



DOWN

1. The process by which an actor gains a role in a show.
2. Performing without words, expressing movement through physical actions/gestures.
3. All of the scenery—walls, platforms, doors, etc.—that show the locations of the play.
4. The area in a theatre/auditorium where the audience sits.
5. The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.
6. Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.
8. The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.
10. The carefully selected clothing worn by the actors.
11. Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.
13. The person who oversees the entire process of staging a production.
14. Stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used or picked up by the actors.
17. The artist portraying a role in a show on stage.
18. The space off stage masked by the drapes, often used for exits and entrances.

ACROSS

1. The process by which a performer uses their body, mind, voice and emotions to portray the role of a character in a story onstage.
2. The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.
3. The central thought, idea, meaning, or significance of the action of a play.
4. The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.
5. The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.
6. A part or character that an actor plays in the performance.
7. The acting area on which the performance occurs.
9. The actor's ability to be understood.
12. The movements of the actors given to them by the director to help tell the story.
15. The actor's movement from one stage location to another.



Crossword Puzzle ANSWERS

DOWN

1. AUDITION
2. PANTOMIME
3. SET
4. HOUSE
5. CUE
6. STRIKE

8. SCRIPT

10. COSTUMES
11. FLATS
13. DIRECTOR
14. PROPS
17. ACTOR
18. WINGS

ACROSS

1. ACTING
7. UPSTAGE
9. THEME
10. CONFLICT
12. CHOREOGRAPHY
15. ROLE

16. STAGE

19. DICTION
20. BLOCKING
21. CROSS



A conversation with Ken Clifton

Composer and co-playwright of Poodleful!

When adapting a book into a musical, how do you get started?

First thing I try to focus on is what is the central idea of the story: Who are the characters? What is their journey? What do they want? I need to discover who it is the audience is supposed to be rooting for. In this case in the opening song we learn that Pansy the poodle wants a home. Then the song for Avery is about family. Her opening line is “I am so glad mom and dad adopted me”. The journey then is about Pansy and Avery being outsiders in the worlds from which they’re from. A big part of our story is the two of them finding each other. The biggest theme in the show for me is that family can be chosen. They sing at one point “If family is something you can choose I choose you.”

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in adapting this story?

The main thing we needed to do was expand the world of the story to fit in a space as large as a theatre. Cynthia Bardes wrote a book that was beautifully suited to experience in your grandmother’s lap as she reads it to you and shows you the pictures. It is a very intimate experience as a book. To tell that same story on the stage, however, we found the story was not big enough to fill the distance of stage to audience. We had to inflate it, to add more characters, and dig into themes that were implied but not fully unpacked by the book. We were able to work with Cynthia and tell parts of the story that she wanted as part of the story. For instance, you’re never too small to make a difference is an idea that Cynthia thought was very important to include in the musical, but is not expressly spelled out in the book.

What is the most exciting thing for you about this production?

I love the variety of the music and the colorful characters. The story about a dog and her girl, about two people who can provide the missing pieces in their lives. We also discovered more about Desiree and let her teach the dog how to be palace worthy. Pansy gets to step in and teach lessons and have more of a backstory. It’s been a lot of fun using music to piece together the different elements to tell the whole story. Every song has it’s own attitude and that was fun to do, too. It’s great being aware of styles and writing more sophisticated tunes for kids of all ages to appreciate.

What advice do you have for children who want to write their own stories?

Just do it. And keep doing it. Do it for the sake of doing it. Do it because only you tell a story in your own way. It’s not about getting praise or affirmation but simply about doing it because you have something to say. And if telling stories is what you feel called to do, whether through spoken or sung words, just do it and keep doing it. It’s not about being good or bad because just doing it is how you get good!

Any final thoughts for the audience?

It’s just going to be a cute little show. The costumes and sets are off the hook. It has charming and colorful characters, and a real lovely message about finding a family. It’s just going to be so entertaining!



Poodleful! Coloring: Pansy





Poodleful! Coloring: Avery





About Riverside Theatre

Riverside Theatre is America's largest professional theatre in a small town. Originally built in 1973 on a 54-acre tract of land designated by the city of Vero Beach as a cultural park, Riverside Theatre was erected with funds solely raised from private donations. For the first few years of its existence, it served primarily as a venue for local theatre groups, traveling productions, and celebrity performances. The most pivotal moment in the history of the Theatre, however, took place in 1983 when the Theatre's Board hired Allen D. Cornell as Artistic Director and set in motion a plan to make Riverside a producing professional theatre. Riverside Theatre produces Broadway musicals, contemporary plays, and children's theatre on three stages. In 2006, Riverside went through a major renovation with the reconfiguration of seating in the Stark Stage, the addition of the Waxlax Stage, and an expansion of the lobby. Riverside Theatre serves Florida's entire Treasure and Space Coast with over 100,000 patrons and students using the facilities annually.

About Riverside Children's Theatre

In 1980, a group of parents formed the Riverside Children's Theatre Committee to offer the children of the community a chance to see and, hopefully, learn to appreciate live theatre. With enthusiastic community support, RCT brought professional children's productions to Riverside's stage. A year later, a summer workshop was established with classes in acting, directing, makeup, lighting and scenic design. The program culminated in the first Riverside Rascals' Revue featuring over 70 youngsters performing on the mainstage. RCT's success continued and as classes and programs expanded, it became clear RCT needed its own home. In 1991, The Agnes Wahlstrom Youth Playhouse opened and housed classrooms, a dance studio, offices, kitchen and a large multi-purpose room which could be turned into a performance stage seating 150 people. RCT expanded again in 1998 with the addition of the Anne Morton Theatre, a professional stage where adults and children could perform. RCT has earned statewide recognition as one of the outstanding children's theatres in Florida and serves over 15,000 children annually through its classes and outreach programs.

About Riverside Theatricals

Riverside Theatricals is a new division of Riverside Theatre. With over 40 years of experience producing Broadway shows with its own sets, casting and direction, Riverside is now creating original works from script to score and shows for tours and is launching its first original musical, *Poodleful!*



RIVERSIDE THEATRE

3250 Riverside Park Drive Vero Beach, FL 32963
772.231.6990 • RiversideTheatre.com