

An illustration of three children peeking from behind a red curtain. The child at the top is a girl with curly brown hair, wearing a blue tank top and white pants. The child in the middle is a girl with long brown hair, wearing a purple shirt. The child at the bottom is a girl with long brown hair, wearing a black dress and a blue polka-dot skirt. They are all looking towards the right.

Ellie THE DRAMA PRINCESS

*A Child's Introduction
to the Theater Process*

Storybook & Guidebook
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Illustrated by Caitlyn Nielson



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Dedicated to:

Kim Ostler &

The Volunteers of

The Riverton Arts Council



Preface

I was introduced to the performing arts at a young age and am very grateful for its influence on my growth. Theater has helped me gain confidence, social skills, a sense of community, as well as foster a spirit of hard work and accomplishment in my life. To this day, I volunteer with my local community youth theater. I love watching these shy kids gain friends, confidence and life skills as they work through our productions.

This book is to help more children be introduced to and gain confidence through the arts. As children are invited into Ellie's world of the arts and the multicultural, multigenerational nature of her beloved community center, they will fall in love with the *process* and *community* that make the theater possible. This book is meant as a guide to help elementary age children (1st- 6th graders)

understand the process of a theatrical production.

An early introduction to theater can give a child confidence in the arts before immersion into the competitive world of High School theater. Giving the child an advantage in the classes, productions, and competitions that he or she might become involved in.

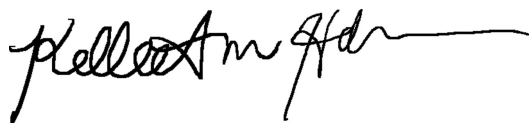
This book is two books in one, a Storybook and a Guidebook. The first is a child friendly Storybook where we are introduced to the world of theater through our main character, 6-year-old Ellie's eyes. She experiences the magical process of her beloved plays and introduces you to the people that put them together. Throughout the storybook are **bold face** theater terms; these new words are defined in the Storybook Glossary and explained in greater depth in the Guidebook.

The Guidebook thoroughly explains the process and people that are part of a production. This part of the book is written with the intent of being read by a child with the assistance of an adult. I have found in my theater experience, that as a child is immersed in the world of a show, they don't necessarily understand all the new words, work, and responsibilities that are involved in it. That misunderstanding can lead to embarrassment and self-doubt for the child. This guide is meant to educate them and address some common concerns in a kind and clear way, thus giving them the confidence they need to succeed.

I imagine this book to be found on the shelves of budding artists and actors. The Storybook worn with love, the Guidebook reserved for deeper reference. The book is designed to be used in part, or as a whole, in community theater as well as schoolroom classes. They are best used during the first parts of a production or a unit on performing arts. They are well-suited as orientation material for young children, and other beginners, to understand their responsibilities, and other responsibilities, in a production.

The Storybook and Guidebook are the first in a series that will introduce children to the arts. Ellie and her friends have a lot more adventures to live, stories to tell, plays to preform, and lessons to learn, and teach, as they explore the stage. To keep up-to-date on their adventures, please visit their website at **www.DramaPrincess.org**. As the series expands, I will have a collection of books and products available as instructional or fundraising material for performing arts groups across the nation. My desire for this series is to help the arts succeed, as they have helped me to succeed.

Ellie is intentionally a very young child, to show that no matter how old you are, no matter your skill level or experience, YOU can play a big part in the arts. I hope her childlike sense of awe and eagerness to help is contagious and relatable to the life of the reader, regardless of age. I have come to know the magic and fun of being involved in the performing arts and I hope that this book can help you experience that same personal transformation and magic.



KellieAnn Halvorsen

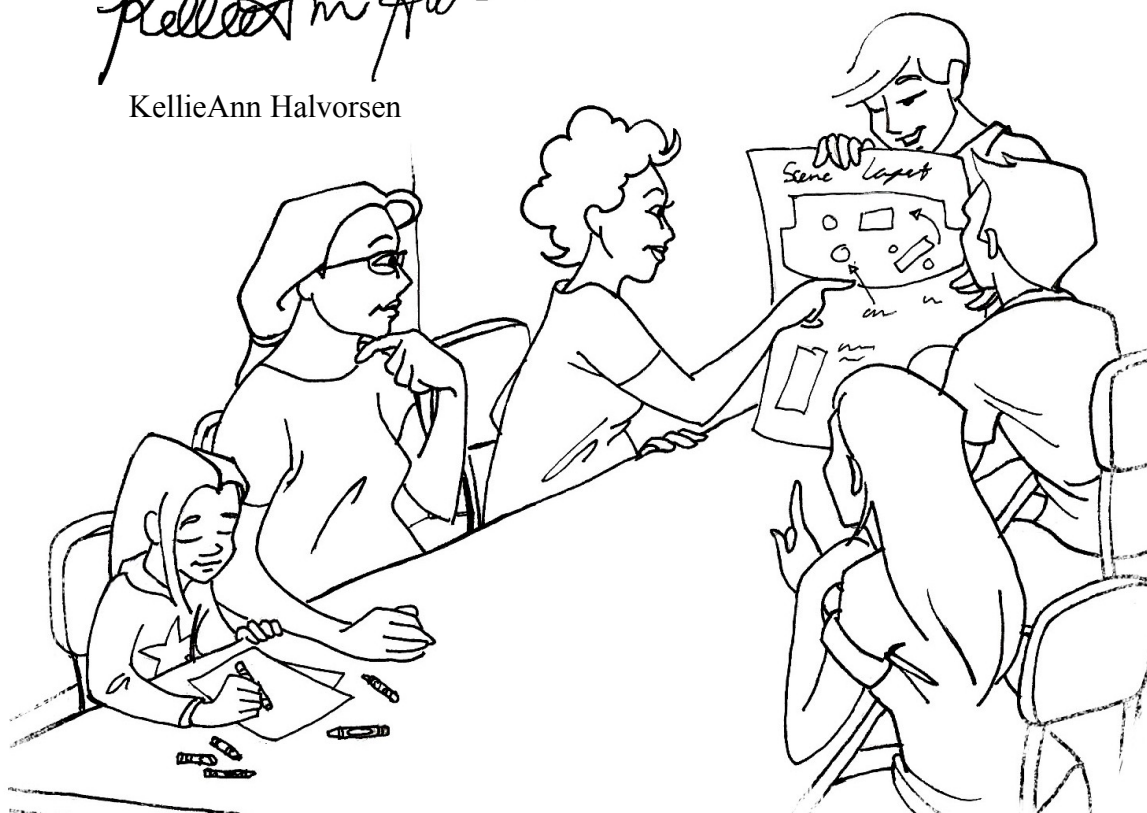


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Ellie is a six-year-old. Like most six-year-olds, she loves stories. She loves looking at picture books. She loves her grandmother reading fairy tales to her at bedtime. She loves hearing spooky tales by the campfire.

But her favorite stories don't come from a book, or a fireside, or even a television. Ellie's favorite stories come from the **Stage**.



Her grandmother is the president of the local community theater. If a president is like a queen that means Ellie is like royalty! Royalty in a land of theater and music and stories and **Drama**.

Ellie is the Drama Princess.

The stage, and all around her, are her kingdom.



There are many subjects in her kingdom. They fill the stage, the **Audience**, and **Backstage** too. Every subject is needed for her favorite stories to be told. Ellie, being a responsible royal, works along side each person through the process of a **Production**. From **Opening Night** when the show is first performed before a crowd, to **Closing Night**, Ellie is there to see it all.

Storybook Glossary

Act: The process of pretending to be something you are not.

Actor: A person who acts in plays, film, television and more. They pretend to be someone else for other people's entertainment.

Audience: The people who watch an event, production, play, or show.

Audition: The event of trying-out to perform in a production. A sample performance is given by a hopeful performer, to the people who are putting on the production. The production people can then make a choice about putting the performer in the production or not.

Backstage: The areas behind the stage and out of view of the audience.

Backstage Manager: The person in charge of the busy backstage area during a production.

Bows: After the storyline of a show is ended, the performers come on stage to bow for the audience. The audience can then clap and show the performers that they enjoyed the show.

Cast: The performers in a show, usually a play or musical.

Choreographer: The person who designs and usually teaches the dance portions of a show.

Closing Night: The last performance of a production run.

Costumer: The person in charge of the costumes in a production. They often design, find, and sew costumes with the help of tailors (people who sew well).

Crew: The people who work to get a show on stage. They build set pieces, run equipment, and the other technical parts of a show.

Introduction to the Theater Process

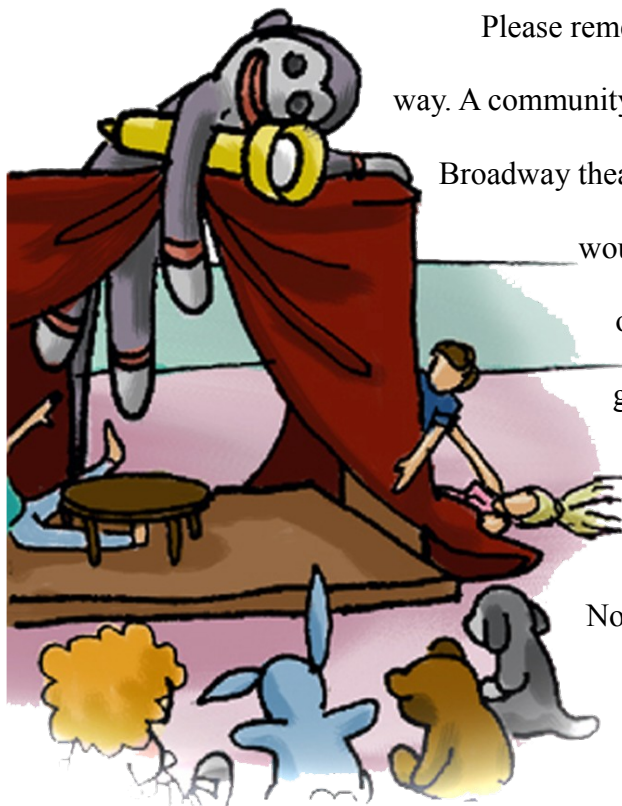
Participating in the performing arts can be a lot of fun. It is called a *play* for a reason. In this section of the book we are going to learn about how a show gets put on, thus, making the process a little less scary for beginners.

We will cover two main questions:

1. **The Process: What are the basic steps to get a show on the stage?**
2. **The People: Who does what in that process?**

Every Production is Unique

There are many groups of people that like to perform and put on a show. Some people do shows as their job. Other people do shows because it is fun! No matter what there are steps and jobs that need to be done.



Please remember that every group might put on a show in their own way. A community theater full of volunteers doesn't have the same tools as a Broadway theater. A college that focuses on teaching the performing arts would have more skilled workers than a church who is putting on a Christmas play. The process is different for different groups. If you are in a show, it is important to remember that the group you are in might put on a show a bit differently than the way it is described here. That is okay.

No matter what *the show goes on!*

The Process:

What are the basic steps to get a show on the stage

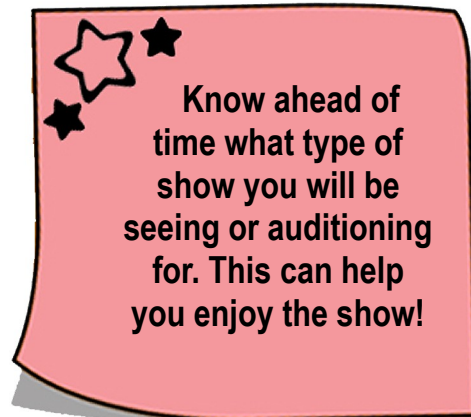
Before the Start

You have read in the storybook how the process of putting on a show starts long before the curtain rises on opening night. Ellie joined her

Grandmother and a group of people called a **production team** to meet and make choices about a show.

There are many types of shows that can be done. A **musical** with a lot of singing, dancing, and music. A **play** that is all speaking and acting. A **comedy** full of jokes and laughter. A **dramatic play** (drama) can be a bit more

serious. There are many categories of shows. The different types can even be combined together. All shows are good for their own reasons. It takes time for the production team to select the right type of show that meets their needs.



Types of Shows:

- **Plays**
- **Comedies**
- **Musicals**
- **Dramas**

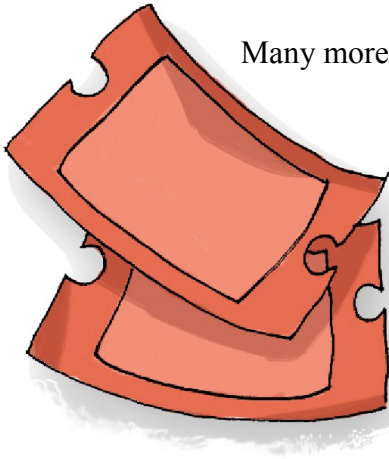
...Can you think of more?

Before selecting a show the production team asks a lot of questions, to make sure that they can do the show.

Questions like:

- What type of show do *we* want to put on?
- What type of show would *people* want to see?
- Do we have a place to perform the show?

- How much money do we have to spend on the show?
- Do we have, or know, the type of performers or workers to put on the show?



Many more questions like these are asked before a show is finally picked.

When a show is picked they need to get permission from the people who wrote or own the show in order to perform it. They get permission from the shows owner and pay the owner for the **rights** to do the show. Now the real work for the production team starts. *Figuring out how they are actually going to do the show.*

Planning

The production team discusses what they would like the stage, sets, posters, costumes, and lighting to look like. They can draw their ideas, or make small models to see what the ideas look like in the real world. They plan or **budget** how to use their money. Most of all they work really hard to make sure all these pieces and more are going to fit together. So that everyone will enjoy the show; actors, crew, and the audience.

Once the show is planned they need to get more people involved. A **publicist** makes sure other people know about the show. The production team prepares and put out posters, news articles, websites and pictures to get everyone excited. They let everyone know that they are doing this show, at this time, at this place. They let performers know when they can try-out to be in the show.

Money Matters:

**There is many things
that need to be bought,
built, or rented in
a show.**

...Can you think of any?