



PERFORMANCE GUIDE

IN THE YEAR OF THE BOAR AND JACKIE ROBINSON

**BASED ON THE BOOK BY BETTE BAO LORD
ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY MARK BRANNER**



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ALOHA FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ERIC JOHNSON



Aloha and welcome to the work of Honolulu Theatre for Youth! We are delighted to share these resources with you. We believe wholeheartedly in the power of stories to bring us together across time and distance. When that happens we often find great similarities with our fellow humans that strengthen our sense of belonging, heritage and shared purpose. We also find profound differences which should be equally celebrated. Differences stretch our sense of self and tickle our curiosity for what is possible. Coming from a place that is both geographically remote and culturally diverse, we treasure stories in our community and are deeply honored to share this one with you now. If you would like more information on the company or our work, look us up at htyweb.org.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Adapted by Mark Branner

Directed by Eric Johnson

Set and Projection Design by Chesley Cannon

Costume Design by Iris Kim

Sound Design by Barrett Hoover

Performed by Qiaoer Zheng & Emily Wright

Video Credits: Moses Goods, Eden-Lee Murray, Walter Gaines, Marla Merlano, Solomon Alexander, Isabella Montgomery, Audrey Branner, Micah Branner, Polly Miao, Yunshan Feng, Min Li, Ruiyao Li, Xiaolei Xu, Winning Liu, Wenli Wang

Voiceover Credits: Sophia Arguijio, Noah Asato, Brooke Asato, Jude Barone, Blaze Caya, Ethan Cantillo, Chesley Cannon, Benjamin Dworkin, Elia Gomez, Devon Inabata, Maki'ilei Ishihara, Eric Johnson, Josephine Litz, Kelsey Litz, Mia Myers, Arianna Nichols, Sienna Nordstrom, Louisa Rasca, Samantha Richmeier, James Robinson, Rhea Salvido, Junior Tesoro, Keone Tesoro, Adrianna "Aulani" Tudela, Kaz Wachendorf-Pono Wong

Film Clips: "Biography: Jackie Robinson," "The Army-Navy Screen Magazine No 2 Navy Edition 01 Dem Bums," "Industry on Parade: Outgoing Cargo," "Arteries of New York City," "A Better New York City," "New York City in the Fifties 1950-1959," "Driving in New York 1845," "The Passenger Train," "San Francisco, Pacific Ocean, China," New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library.

Performance Guide Activities + Standards by Daniel A. Kelin, II

Performance Guide Design by Reiko Ho



SHOW SYNOPSIS

This play is adapted from the award-winning novel by Bette Bao Lord and was inspired by the author's own memories of immigrating to the United States. Our protagonist, Shirley Temple Wong, and her family move from China to the United States in 1947, the year Jackie Robinson was breaking records and assumptions. Told through humor and a rich multi-media staging, the play celebrates the bravery and sacrifice of those who bring new perspectives to our country.

PRE-SHOW TALKING POINT: DO KIDS HAVE HEROES?

Discuss with students the controversy about young people and heroes.

- Is it true that kids these days have no heroes or that their “heroes” are not good role models?
- Do young people today have heroes? Who are they? Are they all contemporary figures?
- Are there any historical figures whom students recognize as heroes? What makes them heroes?
- What traits must someone have to be considered a hero?
- Can a kid be a hero? Who might be an example of a kid hero?

Guide students to write down the names of up to five personal heroes; they can also choose to record no names if they have no heroes. Students should not be required to include their name on their paper. After the writing, collect examples from each. Revisit the first question, ‘Do kids have heroes?’

DISCUSSION

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

Below are some questions related to the themes and action of the play.

Identity

- How do you define who you are?
- How does your ethnicity influence who you are and what you believe?
- Many of us can claim more than one ethnicity. If you claim more than one, how does each influence who you are?
- Why is your ethnicity or ethnicities important to you?
- How do you share your ethnicity with others?

Cultural Heritage

- Where is the place you call 'home'? Why is that place 'home' to you?
- What do you know about the history of your culture(s)?
- What do people in your family or from your 'home' value? Why is that important?
- What would you want other people to respect about your cultural heritage?

Cultural Clash

- What is 'cultural clash'? Why might people of different cultures come into conflict with each other?
- Why do you believe that some people disrespect those of a different culture?
- How might people avoid such clashes?
- How might you help people better understand your own culture(s)?

Tolerance

- What is 'tolerance'?
- Why do you believe tolerance is important in our world today?
- In the news we hear of groups that disagree with each other turning to violence and riots? Why do you think they believe fighting helps solve their disagreement?
- How might you suggest groups that disagree solve their differences?



ACTIVITY

EXPLORE CHARACTER THROUGH DRAMA

A great way to enrich a student's experience before or after viewing this HTY show is to read the original book, *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord. The book is inspired by the author's experiences when she came to the United States at the age of eight when her father, a British-trained engineer, was sent there in 1946 by the Chinese government to purchase equipment. In 1949, Bette Bao Lord and her family were stranded in the United States when Mao Zedong and his communist rebels won the civil war in China.

Select a chapter. Read it aloud for the class or have them read it silently. Whatever way you choose to read one chapter, stop when finished and guide students to creatively explore particular parts.

First, guide students to create frozen statues of the characters. Choose story moments of interest to you and the students.



1. Have students stand in an individual/ personal space.
2. Prompt students with, 'Show me how Bandit looked as she thought up her American name.' (p. 18, first chapter- as an example)
3. Encourage students to exaggerate their statues, count to three and call freeze.
4. Share good ideas. Repeat with the other characters.

Second, guide pairs of students to create statues together to show character relationships.

1. Pairs stand together in personal space.
2. Prompt pairs with, 'Show me how Grandfather looked when Bandit picked her American name.' (p. 18, first chapter- as an example)
3. Give pairs 10 seconds to decide who is which character and then call freeze.
4. Share good ideas. Repeat with other moments of interest to you and the students.

READ & COMPARE

COMPARE A BOOK AND A PLAY

When a book is adapted for the stage, parts of it may change. That could be the story itself, the characters, the words or even the way the story is told. Share the following pages with your students and engage them in a conversation about what they notice are the differences between a BOOK and a PLAY.

BOOK CHAPTER

From **In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson** by Bette Bao Lord

A Journey of Ten Thousand Miles

The sea was not calm, nor deep green like jade. It writhed like a fierce, black dragon with chili peppers up its snout. And Shirley never saw the skies. She lingered in her bunk throughout the month-long journey to San Francisco, with no appetite for food, much less adventure. Mother, though, never faltered. As giant waves sent slippers, suitcases, tables and the chair she sat in slithering to and fro across the floor, she knit on, unperturbed. If she did cry out, it was not because she had crashed into the wall but because she had dropped a stitch. Father had always claimed that his wife was like no other. It was true. Mother was unique. Everyday things like the tiniest cockroach or a gentle tap on the back made her shriek. Extraordinary things did not alarm her. Shirley knew better than to ask Mother to remove a splinter. Even a droplet of blood made her cringe. Yet when Precious Coins was about to be born and the hospital miles away with bombs falling like hailstones, it was Mother alone who soothed the frantic household and quietly delivered the baby. And now . . . now she who had never dared go even to the nearest market without a companion had taken charge of their journey of ten thousand miles.

At last the ocean ended, and the ship hiccupped to a halt at the harbor. Amitabha! The queasiness was gone. Shirley felt like Shirley again, not like a sick toad. "Hurry!" Mother said, taking her by the hand. "We must not miss the train." Shirley could hardly keep up with her as she snaked her way through the crowd of travelers. At every stop, whether immigration or customs, she alone gave the magic password, for not once did they have to fill out extra forms, not once were their bags opened. All the inspectors seemed bewitched by the lovely, slim Chinese woman who was in such a hurry.

Outside, there was a torrential rain. Somehow, Mother found a taxi and it delivered them to the station not a minute too soon. Only when they were safe in their compartment when nothing serious could go wrong, did Mother fret. "What if your father is not there to meet us?"

"But you wrote."

"What if the letter was lost?"

“You sent three.”

“I did?”

“You told me so yourself.”

“What if I made a mistake in the address?”

“You couldn’t have, Not on all three.”

The what-ifs continued, and Shirley tried not to smile. It was so like Mother to tame a den of tigers and then jump at the sound of a kitten’s meow.

Throughout the journey across the United States, Shirley stared out the window of the train. But she remembered nothing of what she saw. Her thoughts were always with Father. Father, who knew how everything worked. Was he not an engineer with a diploma from Shanghai to prove it? Had he not explained why the stars twinkled and how submarines slunk beneath the seas? When she asked why people must die, he had said, “Because we must make room and give others a turn to live.” And he could fix anything. Lamps that refused to light. Doors that squeaked. Even quarrels, except for the one between Grand-grand Aunt and Grand-grand Uncle.

How she missed him!

As the wheels of the train clacked along the tracks, they seemed to chant -- Four more days, just four more days. . . . Three days, just three days. . . . Only two, only two, only two. . . . Tomorrow, tomorrow. . . . Today!

At last it was the hour when their year-long separation would end. Shirley clutched her seat, afraid joy would launch her through the ceiling and whisk her high above the clouds. She fixed her gaze on Mother, who twisted her handkerchief nervously, smiling at someone who was not yet there.

“Can we go now?”

“Better wait till the train has come to a stop. You wouldn’t want to fall and skin a knee just before you see Father.”

“I’ll be careful.”

“We will be there soon enough.”

“Now?”

“The train is slowing down. Soon.”

“Now?”

“Now.”

Hand in hand they made their way down the crowded aisle toward the exit, peering out the windows at the people waiting on the platform.

“There he is!” Mother whispered.

SCENE OF A PLAY

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson

Adapted for the stage by Mark Branner

SPECIAL NOTE:

This piece is as a ‘memory play’ told by two halves of one character; Shirley Temple Wong. During the story, Shirley has two part of herself that are slowly becoming one: her American and Chinese sides. The playwright explored how the two sides might each be a different character, USA Shirley and CHINA Shirley. The two Shirleys are played by different actors. The actor playing CHINA Shirley will also play the character MOTHER. In this scene, MOTHER speaks in Mandarin Chinese.

USA SHIRLEY

The sea was not calm, nor deep green like jade. It writhed like a fierce, black dragon with chili peppers up its snout. I saw no sky of brilliant blue. Instead, I joined forces with many of the other passengers in feeding the angry dragon...

(SHIRLEY – and other passengers – vomit violently “overboard.”)

Mother, though, never faltered. Father always claimed that Mother was like no other. It was true. Everyday things like the tiniest cockroach made her shriek. But extraordinary things did not alarm her. Now, my Mother – the one who never even dared to go to the nearest market without a companion – was taking charge of our journey of ten thousand miles across the sea. As giant waves sent slippers, suitcases and tables to and fro across the floor, Mother knit on, unperturbed. The only time she ever cried out was not because she had crashed into a wall but because she had dropped a stitch.

(MOTHER cries out. She has dropped a stitch.)

At last the sea ended.

(USA SHIRLEY stops suddenly, trying regain her “land-legs.” She takes a deep sigh. This is immediately interrupted by MOTHER who says her lines in Mandarin)

CHINA SHIRLEY as MOTHER

(Speaking in Mandarin)

Hurry! No time to waste!

USA SHIRLEY

Hurry?! But we’ve been on a boat for over a month!

CHINA SHIRLEY/MOTHER

You can last another week.

USA SHIRLEY

Another week?!

CHINA SHIRLEY/MOTHER

First immigration.

USA SHIRLEY

Immigration?!

CHINA SHIRLEY/MOTHER

Then customs!

USA SHIRLEY

Customs?!

CHINA SHIRLEY/MOTHER

Hurry! We must not miss the train!



USA SHIRLEY
Train?!

(The loud whistle of a train is heard. Immediately they are “traveling” again as USA SHIRLEY picks up the narration. Now both SHIRLEYS mimic each other, bouncing along the tracks.)

And now more waiting. The journey across America seemed as if would never end. The wheels of the train clacked along the tracks, chanting on and on...

(The following section should sound rhythmically like the cadence of a train clicking along, with the voices in Mandarin and English enhancing one another.)

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) Four more days and...four more days and...

USA SHIRLEY
Four more days and...four more days and...

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) Three more days and...three more days and...

USA SHIRLEY
Three more days and...three more days and...

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) Two more days and...two more days and...

USA SHIRLEY
Two more days and...two more days and...

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) One more day and...one more day and...one more day and...

USA SHIRLEY
One more day and...one more day and...one more day and...

(New York City sign appears. The sound of the train begins to slow.)

USA SHIRLEY
Can we go now?

(They react to an unseen/unheard MOTHER indicating that they need to wait.)

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) Now?

USA SHIRLEY
Now?

(Again, they react to an unseen/unheard MOTHER saying, “No.”)

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) Now?

USA SHIRLEY
Now?

(There is the screech of brakes. The train has arrived.)

USA SHIRLEY
Now, Mother. Now!

CHINA SHIRLEY
(In Mandarin) Now, Mother. Now!

(Both SHIRLEYS descend the steps of the train.)

USA SHIRLEY
There he is!

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ACTIVITY

WRITE A REVIEW OF THE PLAY

When writing a review of a performance, there is a lot to consider. You might not comment on every part of the show but the following outline can help you develop ideas for a review.

The Performance

Which parts of the play grabbed your attention most? Why?

Which character were you most interested in? Why was that character interesting?

Which of the characters seemed like people you know? How are they the same?

The Acting

What did the actors do to change characters from scene to scene?

What did you like about each of the actors?

ACTIVITY

HEROES AND HEROINES: CREATIVE WRITING PORTRAITS

Heroes and heroines excite us, inspire us and encourage us to consider ways we can each do something great with our own lives. Both Shirley Temple Wong and Jackie Robinson are heroes, each in his or her own way. Guide students to celebrate their own hero or heroine with the following activity.

MATERIALS

- Watercolor paper
- Pencil
- Black Sharpie marker
- Crayons
- Watercolor paint

DIRECTIONS

1. Students select a hero of their choice, preferably someone from their own life or from history.
2. Students draw with pencil a VERY simple profile head with simple neck and shoulders.
3. Students draw several lines to split up the face for the writing.
4. Students trace all lines with a marker.
5. Students fill in all the sections in pencil with words that define their hero: activities, descriptions, personality. The words need to creatively FILL each section.
6. Students trace all words with crayon or marker.
7. Students fill the many backgrounds of the writing with watercolor paint.

