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The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

(Competition Version)

Adapted by

DWAYNE HARTFORD

From the book by

KATE DICAMILLO

Dramatic Publishing Company

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(THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE
[COMPETITION VERSION])

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“*The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* was originally commissioned, developed and produced at Childsplay in Tempe, Ariz., David P. Saar, artistic director; Steve Martin, managing director.”

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane was originally commissioned by and produced at Childsplay (David P. Saar, artistic director; Steve Martin, managing director) in Tempe, Ariz. The play was developed in Childsplay’s Whiteman New Plays Program and premiered on Oct. 26, 2013, at the Tempe Center for the Arts.

Cast:

The Traveler Katie McFadzen
The Musician Kyle Sorrell
The Man David J. Dickinson
The Woman Debra K. Stevens

Production staff:

Director David P. Saar
Dramaturgy Jenny Millinger
Scenic design Jeff Thomson
Costume design Addy Diaz
Lighting design Rick Paulsen
Sound design Christopher Neumeyer
Rabbit design and construction Jim Luther
Original music Kyle Sorrell
Stage manager Sarah G. Chanis

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Competition Version)

CHARACTERS

TRAVELER: The storyteller who portrays Pellegrina, Martin, Lolly, Jack, the Watchman, the Old Lady, Marlene and Lucius Clarke.

WOMAN: Portrays Abilene, Nellie, Lucy the dog, various other hobos, Sarah Ruth, Neal, the Old Doll and the Shopper.

MUSICIAN: Plays guitar and is the voice of Edward's thoughts and emotions.

MAN: Portrays Abilene's father, Amos, Lawrence, Bull, various hobos and Bryce. Plays harmonica and perhaps other instruments.

NOTE: The play was originally written to be performed by a company of four actors with the breakdown of characters above. Larger cast sizes may be used, and the assignment of characters may be modified. However, all the storyteller lines marked as TRAVELER must be performed by one specific actor. The stage directions in the script indicate the switching of characters for the original four-person cast.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The story of Edward Tulane takes place over 20 years, starting in the mid-1920s. The Traveler is the leader of a group of timeless storytellers sharing this story. The actors and the setting are transformational. Actors change characters quickly and effortlessly. The costumes for characters within the story should be minimal pieces added to the actors' base costumes. The actors never leave the stage. Set pieces should be kept to a minimum, with the same pieces being used in different configurations for the different locations.

The Musician voices the thoughts of the china rabbit, Edward Tulane. The Musician and his music are, perhaps, the spirit or soul of Edward. I've indicated some possible places for the Musician to play; however, these are just suggestions, and his music shouldn't be limited to what is indicated in the script.

Edward is NOT a puppet. He is never manipulated to suggest that he can move by himself. Once the Musician starts voicing Edward's thoughts, he stays close to Edward. Due to the fast costume changes and the various states of repair, the play requires a number of Edward dolls. There were seven different Edward dolls in the original production.

The Traveler quickly switches from the role of storyteller to specific roles in the story, sometimes going back and forth. It is intended that these quick shifts won't always require costume adjustments, rather just a shift of focus and physicality for the actress.

If needed, the voice of Edward could be played by an actor separate from the Musician. In the original production, the Musician was sometimes joined by the Man playing the violin. If interested, the music from the original production is available for licensing from Kyle Sorrell (kylesorrell@yahoo.com).

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Competition Version)

(Lights rise as the MUSICIAN, TRAVELER, MAN and WOMAN enter. The MUSICIAN carries a guitar on his back, and the TRAVELER carries a large suitcase. The four stop and look at the audience. The TRAVELER nods to the others. They move to their places. The MUSICIAN adjusts the guitar and begins to play. The TRAVELER removes a large china rabbit from the suitcase. The beautiful toy is dressed in a specially made, expensive-looking suit. The music stops.)

TRAVELER. Once, in a house on Egypt Street, there lived a rabbit made almost entirely of china. But how did such a thing come to be? Did the rabbit belong in this fine house? Was this the rabbit's home? Ah. Now that is an interesting question.

(The TRAVELER becomes PELLEGRINA. The WOMAN becomes ABILENE.)

ABILENE. Grandmother! You're back!

PELLEGRINA. You didn't think your Grandmother Pellegrina would miss your birthday, did you?

(PELLEGRINA offers the china rabbit to ABILENE.)

ABILENE. Oh, Grandmother! For me?

PELLEGRINA. Yes, Abilene. Happy birthday.

(ABILENE takes the rabbit.)

ABILENE. He is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

What's he made of?

PELLEGRINA. China. The finest china.

ABILENE. I love him. I will always love him.

PELLEGRINA. I'm glad. I thought you could use a special friend. Now what shall be his name?

ABILENE. Edward. Edward Tulane.

PELLEGRINA. Well, Edward Tulane. I hope you realize how fortunate you are.

(ABILENE hugs PELLEGRINA, takes EDWARD and moves away. The MUSICIAN begins to play.)

TRAVELER. And so it was that Edward Tulane came to live at the house on Egypt Street. He was very fortunate indeed. Abilene loved the china rabbit.

(ABILENE's FATHER appears.)

FATHER. Abilene! Come along now. You'll be late for school.

(ABILENE approaches with EDWARD.)

ABILENE. I'm almost ready, Father. I just have to put Edward in his chair.

FATHER. Oh, I know.

ABILENE. Father?

FATHER. Oh. Good morning, Edward. You're looking dapper as always.

(ABILENE holds up EDWARD to her ear.)

ABILENE. What's that, Edward? Oh. *(To her FATHER.)* He says thank you, and that you look rather dapper yourself.

FATHER. Thank you, Edward.

(FATHER exits. The TRAVELER nods to the MUSICIAN who then moves near EDWARD. Throughout the play the other characters always relate to the rabbit and never to the MUSICIAN as he voices EDWARD's thoughts.)

TRAVELER. Now, Edward didn't say any such thing. He couldn't say anything with his painted mouth after all. And what he was really thinking was ...

(ABILENE sets EDWARD in the chair.)

EDWARD. I do look good, don't I? Now fix my tie. I'm sure it's crooked. You really should be more careful with the tie.

ABILENE. Oh, your watch. I remember.

(She removes a pocket watch from one of his pockets. She winds it and sets it on one of his legs.)

ABILENE *(cont'd)*. There you are. When the big hand is on twelve and the little hand is on three, I will come home to you.

(FATHER reappears.)

FATHER. Abilene.

(ABILENE and FATHER leave. EDWARD calls after them.)

EDWARD. The tie! Fix the tie! Oh, dear.

TRAVELER. And so Edward Tulane spent his days staring out upon Egypt Street, listening to the ticking of his watch. And at three o'clock, Abilene would return.

(ABILENE appears.)

ABILENE. Hello, Edward. I'm home. And how was your day?

(ABILENE picks up EDWARD.)

EDWARD. What are you doing? Don't move me now. It'll be dark soon, and I'll be able to see my reflection in the window.

ABILENE. Oh, Edward. I wish everyone were as considerate and as nice as you.

EDWARD. Uh-huh.

TRAVELER. Edward Tulane had little interest in people and their lives. Now, nobody knew this. Nobody could read his thoughts. That is, nobody except for perhaps one.

(The TRAVELER becomes PELLEGRINA. ABILENE enters, carrying EDWARD, who is in his pajamas now. PELLEGRINA tucks ABILENE into bed.)

ABILENE. But why won't you sail to London with us tomorrow?

PELLEGRINA. Because I will not. That's why. Now, tell me, will you take Edward on this voyage?

ABILENE. Of course! How could I possibly go on a journey without Edward?

EDWARD. Don't hold me so tightly. You'll wrinkle the silk.

PELLEGRINA. Hmmm. Yes. How could you possibly?

(PELLEGRINA picks up EDWARD.)

ABILENE. Edward watches out for me.

PELLEGRINA. Does he?

EDWARD. Why does that Pellegrina always stare at me like I'm some criminal?

ABILENE. Will you tell us a story tonight, Grandmother?

PELLEGRINA. Yes. I believe tonight there will be a story.

ABILENE. Shall Edward listen too?

PELLEGRINA. Oh yes. Edward should pay particularly close attention.

EDWARD. I don't like the sound of that at all.

(PELLEGRINA hands EDWARD to ABILENE. The following story may be told as simply or as complicatedly as desired. Perhaps PELLEGRINA uses puppets, dolls or shadow puppets in the storytelling.)

PELLEGRINA. Once there was a princess who was very beautiful. She shone as bright as the stars on a moonless night.

EDWARD. Bright as the stars on a moonless night. That's kind of nice, actually.

PELLEGRINA. But what difference did it make that she was beautiful? She was a princess who loved no one and cared nothing for love, even though there were many who loved her. One day, a prince from another kingdom came. As soon as he saw the princess, he fell in love with her. He gave her a ring of pure gold. Placing it on her finger, he said, "I love you." But do you know what the princess did?

(ABILENE shakes her head.)

PELLEGRINA *(cont'd)*. She took the ring off her finger, put it in her mouth, and she swallowed it. "That is what I think of love," she said, and she ran away, deep into the woods. Looking around, she realized that she was lost.

ABILENE. Did the prince come and find her?

PELLEGRINA. Listen. Eventually, she came upon a little hut. Inside the hut, the princess saw an old witch. "I am a beautiful princess. My father is a powerful king. You must help me or there will be consequences." At this,

the witch said, “Consequences? You dare talk to me of consequences? Very well, then, tell me the name of the one you love.” “Love! I love no one,” said the princess proudly. “You disappoint me,” said the witch raising her hand. In an instant, the beautiful princess was changed into a warthog. The warthog princess ran from the hut, back into the woods. There she came across several men. They had been sent by the king to find a beautiful princess, so when they found an ugly warthog, they shot it. Pow.

ABILENE. No!

PELLEGRINA. Yes. The men took the warthog back to the castle. There, the cook slit open its belly and found a ring of pure gold. The cook put the ring on her finger and finished butchering the warthog. The end.

ABILENE. No!

PELLEGRINA. Yes. The end.

ABILENE. But it can’t be. No one is living happily ever after.

PELLEGRINA. Ah, but how can a story end happily if there is no love? Now, it’s late, and you must go to sleep. Tomorrow, a new adventure begins.

(PELLEGRINA tucks in ABILENE, kissing her. She lifts EDWARD and turns away from the bed.)

ABILENE. What are you doing with Edward?

PELLEGRINA. I’m saying bon voyage.

(PELLEGRINA looks EDWARD closely in the eyes.)

PELLEGRINA (*cont’d*). You disappoint me.

(PELLEGRINA places EDWARD back on the bed. She speaks to ABILENE.)

PELLEGRINA (*cont'd*). Good night.

ABILENE. Good night, Grandmother.

(PELLEGRINA steps out of the scene.)

EDWARD. What was that? This is why I don't listen to stories!

ABILENE. I love you, Edward. I don't care how old I get, I will always love you.

(ABILENE goes to sleep.)

EDWARD. Yes, yes, but turn me on my side so that I can see the stars. As bright as the stars on a moonless night.

(As the MUSICIAN plays, the scene transforms to the deck of a ship during the following.)

TRAVELER. And the next day, Edward, Abilene and her parents set sail for England.

(ABILENE appears carrying EDWARD. EDWARD is now in a sailor suit.)

ABILENE. Shall we sit up here on deck, Edward?

EDWARD. Is my hat on straight? I'm sure to be complimented on the hat.

ABILENE (*laying him down on a deck chair*). There. You look like you were born for the sea in your sailor suit. Oh, your watch. I forgot to wind it this morning. I'd better take care of that.

(ABILENE winds the watch. She holds onto the watch throughout the following scene. The TRAVELER becomes MARTIN. The MAN becomes his brother, AMOS. The boys approach.)

EDWARD (*to ABILENE*). Look. I have more admirers approaching. Get out of the way.

AMOS. What's he supposed to be wearing?

ABILENE. It's a sailor suit. It's very fashionable.

EDWARD. I don't like these two heathens. Take me away.

ABILENE. He has many different outfits. He even has his own silk pajamas.

MARTIN. You hear that, Amos? He has silk pajamas. Let me see him.

(MARTIN grabs EDWARD and runs away from ABILENE. AMOS blocks ABILENE as MARTIN starts pulling the shoes off of EDWARD.)

ABILENE. No!

EDWARD. Stop it! Young man, I demand you release me at once.

(ABILENE escapes from AMOS and approaches MARTIN.)

ABILENE. Give him to me!

EDWARD. This is humiliating!

MARTIN. Oh, I'm sorry. Here you are.

(MARTIN throws EDWARD to AMOS.)

EDWARD. Nooooo!

MARTIN. Oops. Good catch, Amos!

ABILENE. Don't throw him, he's made of china! He'll break!

MARTIN. Throw him back to me!

(The boys continue to toss EDWARD back and forth. AMOS runs near the railing at the edge of the deck.)

ABILENE. He's mine. Give him to me!

(Just as AMOS is about to throw EDWARD, ABILENE tackles AMOS. EDWARD flies over the railing. The TRAVELER holds EDWARD. ABILENE and the ship slowly pull back away from EDWARD and the others.)

TRAVELER. And Edward flew over the railing and sailed out over the ocean.

ABILENE. Edward! No!

TRAVELER. He caught one last glimpse of Abilene, standing on the deck, holding his gold pocket watch in her outstretched hand.

EDWARD. My pocket watch!

TRAVELER. Abilene disappeared from view, as Edward Tulane hit the water.

(A splash as EDWARD hits the water. The scene transforms to an underwater world as EDWARD sinks.)

TRAVELER *(cont'd)*. And he began to sink. He went down and down. Finally he landed on the ocean floor, facedown in the muck.

EDWARD. I don't like this. I don't like this one bit.

TRAVELER. Hours passed.

EDWARD. Abilene will come and find me. It's just like waiting for her to come home from school. If only I had my watch.

TRAVELER. Days passed. And Abilene didn't come.

EDWARD. As bright as the stars on a moonless night. I'll never see the stars again.

TRAVELER. Weeks passed.