



Performance Preview Guide

Flora & Ulysses

Patrons have different ideas of what material or themes are appropriate for themselves, their families, and their students. For this reason, we provide the following information. Please note that the following contains plot spoilers.

Age Recommendation

Wheelock Family Theatre's production of *Flora & Ulysses* may not be suitable for children under the age of 8.

Versions available to preview

A script is available at the Wheelock Family Theatre box office for you to read. Please email wfttix@bu.edu to arrange a time

Production length

The show is estimated to run 1 hour and 15 minutes with no intermission.

Accessibility

Wheelock Family Theatre was founded on a mission that is dedicated to providing accessible theatre for all. Wheelock Family Theatre is wheelchair accessible, and all performances are open captioned. Additionally, select performances will be interpreted in American Sign Language, and Audio Described. For more information on Wheelock Family Theatre's access programs, [please visit our accessibility web page](#) or contact Audience Services Manager, Jamie Aznive at jaznive@bu.edu (617) 353 – 1451.

Educational Content Overview

Courtesy of Plays for New Audiences

Can a little squirrel change the human heart? In Kate DiCamillo's standout play, after getting sucked up by a vacuum cleaner, a (now hairless) squirrel is rescued by Flora Belle Buckman, a 10-year-old self-proclaimed cynic. She names him Ulysses and discovers he has been reborn a superhero. Indeed, this once-average squirrel can suddenly understand Flora, fly, and even write poetry. Together they embark on an adventure full of quirky characters and bursting with heart.

Content Advisories

Please be advised that *Flora & Ulysses* contains subject material including the following.

- A depiction of CPR being performed on a squirrel
- Discussions of divorce, with one character saying to her mother, "Pop says you're so in love with books about love that you didn't know how to love him anymore, and that's why you got a divorce."
- In one discussion that uses an offensive term, one character says to another, "I'm small for my age. Excessive trauma can hinder growth" to which they reply "What kind of trauma can turn you into a blind midget?"
- One character asks another to "put the squirrel in the sack, and then hit him over the head with the shovel" in a discussion to kill one of the titular characters
- In a discussion with her father's unofficial therapist, one character hears how her father "has sat on this sofa many times and talked of his sadness" and "has wept"

- Mild peril due to a depiction of the kidnapping of a squirrel

FULL SYNOPSIS

After an incident involving a Ulysses 2000X vacuum cleaner and a previously ordinary squirrel, Flora Belle Buckman's life is thrown into chaos. A fan of comic books, Flora is delighted to find her backyard squirrel has been imbued with various superpowers following his run-in with the vacuum cleaner. The Squirrel, now aptly named "Ulysses," uses his newfound intelligence to put his thoughts and desires (especially food) on paper through the typewriter owned by Flora's mother, Phyllis. On this typewriter, she writes her romance novels, which Flora professes she has zero interest in.

Shortly after the initial incident, Flora comes to discover that Ulysses is able to understand her. She regales him with stories of her favorite superheroes, including "Incandesto." After a family dinner, Ulysses falls asleep on Flora's pillow, after which she reminisces about her father George, who used to read the Incandesto books with her. During the night, Ulysses awakens and makes his way to the typewriter once again. There, whilst snacking on some cheese puffs, he writes some words out once more.

The following morning, Flora is awoken by Phyllis in a rage regarding the state of her typewriter, which she swiftly blames Flora for. In an effort to conceal Ulysses' actions, Flora takes responsibility. Shortly afterward, Tootie Tickham returns to the house with her great nephew William Spiver. As she bore witness to the vacuum incident the previous day, she has now arrived to confirm if what she observed in the squirrel's behavior was true. William, who is one year older than Flora, is a strange child who seems wise beyond his years and claims to be blind (though Tootie insists he is not).

After ditching Phyllis, the team returns to the house of Mrs. Tootie Tickham. There, they ask Ulysses to write. To this, he responds with a poem about Flora and food among other things. William is not a fan, but Tootie is so taken aback she faints. Shortly afterward, Flora's father George arrives to collect her. However, before she leaves with him she overhears her father talking to Phyllis, who instructs him to kill the squirrel that has been causing her so much bother.

Flora now classes Phyllis as the comic-book arch nemesis of her super-powered squirrel Ulysses. Flora and Ulysses go with George, not before being thanked by Tootie once again for Ulysses' excellent poetry. During a stop on the drive home at "the Giant Do-Nut," a waiter discovers Ulysses hidden in a shoebox. To the waiter's alarm, Ulysses jumps onto them and gets in their hair. After a chef emerges with a knife, Ulysses learns he has the ability to fly and soars away from the danger right into a glass door. Following this incident, George learns to love Ulysses and vows not to kill him as Phyllis had asked.

At George's apartment building, they speak to Dr. Meescham about Ulysses' condition following the incident at the Giant Do-Nut. Being a doctor of philosophy, the best Dr. Meescham can offer is reassurance about her relationship with Ulysses and the importance of believing in the impossible. They soon return to Phyllis' house to find William there assisting Phyllis with her novel. Upon seeing Ulysses, Phyllis becomes angry, which prompts an argument with Flora. Ulysses tries to cheer Flora up by flying around the kitchen, which prompts Phyllis to leave. Next, William tells Flora that he actually came to see her, and divulges a recent incident in which he was banished from his house due to a run-in with his stepfather.

Phyllis returns with George, having had a conversation outside the room. In an oddly calm voice, Phyllis asks Flora and Ulysses to stay with her. That night, her intentions become clear as she kidnaps Ulysses as he goes for the typewriter under the cover of darkness. The following morning, Flora awakens to a note supposedly from Ulysses, declaring that he has returned to the wild. Flora, realizing the letter is a forgery, enlists William and Tootie's help to track down Ulysses. Bringing Phyllis' prized lamp as a bargaining chip, they set off in search of Ulysses.

Ulysses, trapped in the sack Phyllis intends to kill him in, remembers his superpowers and disappears into the night before Phyllis can use the shovel on him. He searches for Flora for a while before ending up at the Giant Do-Nut from earlier. There, he decides to return to the apartment building of George and Dr. Meescham. Similarly, the team has been searching for Ulysses to no avail. In the bustle, William accidentally breaks the lamp for which Phyllis cared so deeply. Eventually they too end up at the apartment building where they reunite with their lost squirrel.

Soon after, Phyllis arrives at George's apartment, screaming about her lost child. Thinking she means the lamp, Flora initially brushes off this comment. However, it soon becomes clear that Phyllis is very distraught after not being able to find her daughter, and is relieved to see her once again. In the commotion, Phyllis is attacked by Mr. Klaus, the landlords cat, but is swiftly saved by Ulysses. Having forgiven her mother, Phyllis reads Ulysses' most recent poem aloud, during which Flora realizes the true love her mother has for her. After this reading, Ulysses thinks about breakfast, and the play ends as the sun rises.