



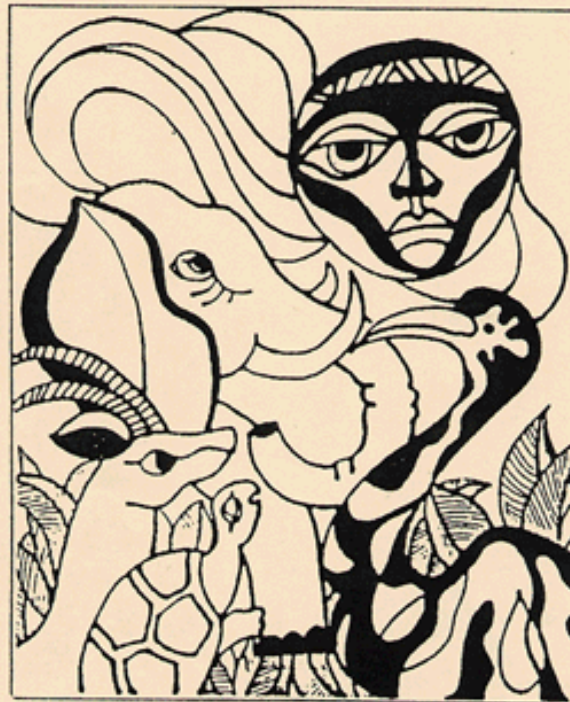
# Shadow Box Theatre



at the YWCA of Brooklyn



## Teacher's Guide to Creative Projects for Classroom Use



## The African Drum

The Shadow Box Theatre Office

325 West End Avenue, New York, NY 10023 • Phone: (212) 724-0677

Fax: (212) 724-0767 • Email: [sbt@shadowboxtheatre.org](mailto:sbt@shadowboxtheatre.org)

[www.shadowboxtheatre.org](http://www.shadowboxtheatre.org)



## Welcome to The Shadow Box Theatre's Arts in Education Program: It's as Easy as ABC

### A -- Assembly Programs and Performances

**1. Theatre-in-Residence Performances:** The Shadow Box Theatre (SBT) offers full stage productions (7-10 performers), such as you have seen today, at our home-based theatre-in-residence at the YWCA, as well as at other major venues in the city. Reservations for these shows are made by individual teachers and Arts Coordinators through SBT's reservation office.

#### **2. Assembly Programs in Your School:**

- Full Stage Productions: You may book a full stage production to tour to your school for performances in your school auditorium. *Suggested* audience size: up to auditorium capacity.

- Story Book Theatre: For a more intimate experience you can book an interactive musical storytelling show (a storyteller and musician) to come to your classroom, library, or auditorium. Suggested audience size: up to 150 students. Our stories are derived from our picture books and audio tapes, which are based on our full stage productions.

### B -- Books, Tapes, and CDs from See-More's Workshop

"Read-More with See-More!" This program of Read-Aloud picture books and accompanying Read-Along/Move-Along audio tapes or compact discs, based on the musical puppet productions of The Shadow Box Theatre, was developed at the request of many teachers who had come to our shows. SBT's objective was to increase literacy, as reading skills are enhanced by both seeing the words and hearing the words. The learning is reinforced when the children creatively act, sing and move to the story-based activities on the move-along side of the tape or CD, allowing them to re-experience the excitement of theatre.

Our newest book is *The Earth & Me*, a large-format book, beautifully illustrated in full color, with accompanying CD or tape. We have 8 other picture books with accompanying Read-Along/Move-Along audio tapes or CDs: *How The Turtle Got Its Shell* - An African Tale (one of the stories from *The African Drum*); *No Balloons Today* - A Zoo Story; *Ring Around A Rainbow* - A Health & Safety Adventure; *The Growing Rock* - A Native American Tale; *Lumpy Bumpy Pumpkin* - A Halloween Story; *Tobias Turkey* - A Thanksgiving Story; *Big Annie* - An American Tall Tale; *The Firefly Star* - A Hispanic Folk Tale. *Little is Big* is available as a charming Color-Me Story Book. In addition, we offer cast albums of *The African Drum*, *See-More's Surprise*, *The Earth & Me*, and *Play it Safe*. *Play It Safe* can also be purchased on video.

Our books, tapes, and CDs may be purchased from SBT directly or through Department of Education Vendor #SEE050. Our books are also found in libraries throughout the United States.

### C -- Creative Arts Workshops

Our teaching artists are available for direct student instruction in school residencies, and for staff development workshops. We provide an interactive experience in which all students, from gifted to special education, participate in storytelling; music, art, movement and dance improvisation; puppetry; and performing. Our programs are consistent with the New York City Department of Education curriculum frameworks and the New York State Learning Standards.

Dept. of Education Theatre Vendor # SHA009    Dept. of Ed. Textbook Vendor #SEE050

Dept. of Education Contract # 6183447                      Dept. of Ed. Textbook Contract # 7000278

Dept. of Education Project Arts Contract # 9201114



## Teacher's Guide to Creative Projects for Classroom Use

It was our pleasure to perform our show for you and your students today. We believe that children's theatre can be a direct link to learning and discovery, and our aim is to provide our young audiences with an experience that extends beyond the theatre. Therefore, we are pleased to offer this collection of activities, ideas and creative projects for your classroom use. We hope that these suggestions will provide a productive and enjoyable addition to your curriculum.

### **JAMBO EVERYONE!**

In "The African Drum," we use two African languages, Swahili and Ashanti, in our stories. Swahili is a language spoken in all or parts of Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. The proper name for the Swahili language is "Kiswahili." Ashanti is the language of Ghana.

If you locate these countries on a map of Africa, you will notice that Swahili is the language of East Africa, and Ashanti that of West Africa. The following is a vocabulary list of the Swahili and Ashanti words that are used in our story.

#### Swahili

Jambo - hello	Watu - warrior	Kijana - child
Kamalo - father	Ngamu - Man of Magic	Simba - lion
Kakumba - mother	Tembo - elephant	Punda Malia - zebra
Zimwe - bad man	Kinyanga - ostrich	Chui - Leopard

#### Ashanti

Akykiegie - turtle	Osebo - leopard	Nyame - Sky God
--------------------	-----------------	-----------------

Muriel Feelings' Swahili alphabet book, Jambo Means Hello, is a beautifully illustrated book that can familiarize children with aspects of traditional East African life (Dial Press, N.Y. 1974). A few more Swahili words that can be found in her book are:

chakula - food	watoto - children	heshima - respect
karibu - welcome	shule - school	ngoma - drum or dance

### **AFRICAN FOLKLORE**

In *The African Drum*, our actors/puppeteers/musicians tell four different folk tales: *Kijana's Tale*. . .*How the Animals Got Their Colors* . . . *How the Turtle Got Its Shell* . . .and *Why the Egret Flies Free*. The folklore of Africa is rich with lessons of life and the wonders of creation.

One of the books in our series of Read-Aloud story books and Read-Along/Move-Along audio tapes and CDs for children is based on *How the Turtle Got Its Shell*. It is an Ashanti tale adapted by Sandra Robbins, and wonderfully illustrated by Iku Oseki. (Of note, the accompanying audio has been selected by the American Library Association as a Notable Children's Recording.) This book brings to your classroom all the rhythms and magic that the children experienced at the theatre. The audio portion contains a word for word Read-Along with accompanying music, and a series of songs and activities specially designed for children to act out and move along with the story. The book and audio set can be used as a touchstone for a joyous creative experience in your classroom and at home.

Here is a resource list of additional tales from Africa that can be found in the N.Y. Public Library:

Coughlan, Margaret. Folklore from Africa to the United States (Library of Congress, 1976)

Kimmel, Eric A. Anansi and the Magic Stick (Holiday House, 2001)

Korty, Carol. Plays from African Folktales (Scribner, 1975)

Njururi, Ngumbu. Agikuyu Folktales (Oxford University Press, 1976)

Troughton, Joanna. How Stories Came Into the World (Bedrick/Blackie, 1990)

## **EXPLORING FOLK TALES**

*The African Drum* is a collection of folktales and creation myths from Africa. In Africa, these folk tales and myths are often passed down from generation to generation through the storytelling arts of language, dance, and music – especially in the rhythms of the drum. In many cultures, folk tales are told by storytellers, who are people highly respected in their societies for their skill. Storytelling is an art. Every storyteller tells the story in his or her own unique way. After many tellings and variations over time, the story frequently gets written down.

### **Music and the Story**

In our production of *The African Drum*, when the Storyteller asks the Drummer how stories are told in Africa, he replies, “In Africa they speak many different languages, but they all use the drum to communicate.” Music is another form of language that adds many layers and dimensions to the process of storytelling. Each culture uses music differently; Africa uses percussion as a major form of expression. Discuss with the children what were the various instruments they heard in the show. There was the big conga drum, the jimbe, the talking drum, triangles, bells, maracas, the thumb piano, etc.

### **Talking Drums**

Throughout Africa the talking drum has been used as a telephone or telegraph. Even though there are now modern communication systems, drums are still used in ritual and ceremony. One type of drum has strings around the outside. When the drummer squeezes the drum, the skin is drawn tighter, and the pitch changes. In African languages, each word has its proper sound. The drum can mimic these sounds and truly communicate.

There are recordings available. Look for the percussion from Nigeria or Ghana. The rhythms are so compelling that the children might be inspired to dance. It might be interesting to compare the rhythms of Africa to our contemporary rock music, looking for the common thread.

### **Home-Made Maracas**

**Materials:** Long-necked light bulb  
Papier machÉ: strips of newspaper soaked in a flour and water paste  
Tempera paint and shellac

Cover the light bulb with about four layers of papier machÉ. Allow each layer to dry for best results. After all layers are completely dry, hit the bulb so that it breaks. The broken bulb becomes the inside of the shaker. Paint the outside in bright celebrational colors and shellac when dry for protection from moisture. Voila!

## **STORYTELLING**

Storytelling is a great way for students to practice the skills of balanced literacy, and when dramatic elements are added, they can be fun as well. The following sections offer some ideas and activities based on the tales from *The African Drum*. Our short synopses will help you and the students to remember the plot, characters and themes of each story.

**The Storytelling Circle:** Make a space in the classroom where students can move or sit in a circle. Do these activities soon after they see the show. It is a good way to test your students’ sequencing skills, and it provides them with an opportunity to reflect on the themes of the play and express them creatively. Storytelling empowers children with the ability to know, own and share a story.

- Character Circle: Each child has a chance to go into the center of the circle. They mime their favorite character from the story without telling the class which it is. The rest of the class guesses which character they are portraying.
- Circle telling: The class sits in a circle. Each student gets to tell one sentence of the story, starting at the beginning and adding on until everyone has had a turn or the story is finished.

Remember, in *The African Drum*, the story was told orally and musically by the storyteller and the drummer, as well as by the chants and songs and the movements of the puppets. When the children tell the story in the circle, add the element of sound with instruments, voices, and movement. If you have rhythm instruments in the classroom, use them, or/and you can make simple rhythm instruments such as shakers by putting beans in covered containers, or make maracas (see above.) Percussive drumming sounds can be made by hitting two wooden blocks against each other, or drumming on a block, or your hand, or a piece of wood, or against a desk or book, or a box. Make drumming sounds with your body parts by clapping your hands together; different sounds can be made, depending upon whether your palms are cupped, flat, or fingers are hitting against the palm. Make snapping sounds with your fingers, or slapping sounds by hitting your hand against your leg. Or make many different rhythmic sounds with your voice. These are just a few ideas that can be improvised spontaneously.

Different methods of telling the story:

1. You can start with just the verbal telling of the story, and a discussion of its meaning.
2. Second go round you can add instrumentation. This could be done by assigning specific children to play the music and others to tell the story.
3. You can add movement in the center of the storytelling circle by letting the children choose which animal they would like to portray.
4. You could also create a puppet play with simple finger puppets of the animals, stick puppets of the animals, simple paper plate puppets, and even shadow puppets.
5. Perhaps as a creative writing assignment, the students could compose stories that use animals as speaking characters. Pick a few of these compositions and try to dramatize them. It is very challenging to transform a story into a play. These are just a few ideas. Use the uniqueness of your students and have them come up with their own original story idea. Mostly make it fun!

. . .

## FOLK TALES FROM THE AFRICAN DRUM

Synopsis

**KIJANA'S TALE:** In *The African Drum*, the story of the adventure of Kijana acts as a framing device for three additional tales. Like an African Sheharezade, little Kijana is a story teller. While Kamalo, her father, and Kakumba, her mother, work in the fields nearby, Kijana is left alone by the water to play, because her aunt whom she usually stays with is ill. She tells her animal friends the story of *How the Animals Got Their Colors*. Listening to her is Mchomba, the Zimwe (bad man); he tells her the story of *How the Turtle Got Its Shell*. Using a device from this story, he teases Kijana into getting into his drum, and he abducts her, taking her all over Africa. Meanwhile, her parents return. Finding her gone, they ask the elders to bring their masks and their magic chants, and the drummer to beat his drum, and speak to the spirits to help them. They are told, "Shika Njia," which means to take a long journey. And so they travel to look for her all over Africa. During this time Mchomba, the Zimwe, travels from village to village. Mchomba wants to trick the villagers into thinking he has a magic singing drum so that they will give him a great feast. He makes Kijana tell her stories from inside the drum. The villagers are amazed, and like the story (*Why the Egret Flies Free*) so much that they make the Zimwe a great feast and give him much to drink. When he returns from the feast he brings her only five beans and forgets to bring her a drink. Left alone in the drum in the night, she hears the sound of her friend, the little frog. She asks him to go find her mommy and daddy. But her parents taught her a song to signal for help when she was in distress. (Telling her friend, the little frog, to find her parents, helps her to remember it.) It is the "Abiyoyo" song, and as her parents look for her, they ask the children in the audience to help by singing it, too, so Kijana will hear it. She does hear it, and sings back loudly, and the family is united. The Zimwe learns a lesson, too. When Kijana is taken out of the drum, bees are called from their nest nearby, and find a new home in the Zimwe's drum. In the morning the villagers come to hear another story. But when the Zimwe beats the drum for Kijana to tell a story and she does not

answer, he beats the drum so hard that his hand goes right through the top of the drum, releasing the bees who fly out and sting and chase him, to the laughter and pleasure of everyone. In the end, he is brought before the council of the elders and they make sure he never hurts anyone again.

### **Children's Personal Safety Issues**

"If you could give me a house of my own to carry on my back wherever I go...I would no longer be afraid," said Akykiegie, the little turtle, to Nyame, the sky god. In addition to being an exciting adventure story, Kijana's tale offers an excellent lesson for children(and parents!) in personal safety.

•Have your class sing the "Abiyoyo" song which they will remember from the show. It is a simple chant and goes like this:

ABIYOYO ABIYOYO  
ABIYOYO A YOYO A YOYO

•Have children think of a personal password they can use to signal for help.

•Have your class decide upon a class password they can share when in need of help in the schoolyard or street.

•One of the themes of *The African Drum* deals with child abduction, which we have all grown to recognize as a real threat to our society's children. A child's feeling of safety must be rooted deep within the self. Children can learn to trust their intelligence and powers of instinct and to communicate fear to adults in positions of responsibility (parents, teachers, policemen, firemen, storekeepers, etc.) when in danger.

People are equipped with an internal alarm. We can sometimes sense danger even when there is no external evidence. Children must be encouraged to listen to their feelings. Strengthening a child's self-image could minimize insecurity, making the child less vulnerable.

Try this very basic guided imagery. Each child should imagine being surrounded by a bubble. This bubble guard is an imaginary house that the child lives in at all times. The bubble is filled with life-giving energy and is tinted the child's favorite color. In other words, the children surround themselves with light. The senses can also be sharpened through suggestion. Two examples: eyes are sharp as birds' eyes; ears are as sensitive as rabbits' ears. Practice these images with your students as you walk in a group through school or while on a field trip. Ask for feedback.

Children can also defend themselves with knowledge! Akykiegie, the little turtle, outsmarted the leopard with his thinking power. (Have them problem-solve a situation by using their wits.) Children should know by heart their home address, their parents' full name and telephone number at home and work (with area code). They should also have a concept of where their homes are in relationship to familiar landmarks.

Teachers, it is helpful to discover the children's own concepts of personal safety before adding new information to their present state of mind. Encourage them to share their thoughts, fears, and experiences.

Recommended resource books for synthesizing the education of intellect with intuition:

Chalet, Donna. The Safe Zone: A Kid's Guide to Personal Safety (Morrow Junior Books, 1998)

Hendricks, Gay and Russel Wills. The Centering Book . . . Awareness Activities for Children, Parents, and Teachers (Prentice Hall, N.J. 1975)

Williamson, Sarah. Stop, Look and Listen: Using Your Senses from Head to Toe (a Williamson Little Hands Book, 1996)

Story Synopsis:

**How The Animals Got Their Colors:** The theme of this story offers children the opportunity to reflect upon the great

beauty and uniqueness in the diversity of creation. The story opens "In the days of the beginning." It tells of the days when the animals did not yet have their colors. Punda Malia, the Zebra, and Chui, the Leopard, look out into the horizon and see Watu, the brightly painted Warrior. They ask him how he got his color. He tells them that they must go to Ngamu, the Man of Magic, and he will paint them. But first they must sing him their song. The animals travel to Ngamu, who asks each to "sing his song." Then, with his brush dipped in the Rainbow, he paints them just like their "song." The metaphor suggests that their color is expressive of the inner qualities of each animal. Their colors reflect who they are. Thus the Zebra with his sharp and lively bark is painted in bold stripes of black and white; and Chui the Leopard's purr is depicted in browns and orange. When the other animals see the zebra and the leopard they want to be painted also, so they all go to Ngamu and he paints them, for he has "the rainbow's magic." The metaphor of color in the story suggests that our appearance on the outside -- the rhythms of how we move and talk and feel -- offer clues to who we are.

- 1) Have your students tell the story using different methods of story telling (see page 4.)  
Have students imitate an animal sound and move like the animal. Are they: quick, slow, graceful, rough, smooth, sharp, soft, loud, quiet? Are they timid, bold, introvert, extrovert?
- 2) If students could be Ngamu, how would they paint the animals? Would the colors be different from the animals' colors as they know them now? Have them do animal paintings. Let them be as creative and fanciful as they want. Just as in many story books, the animals' colors are often very different from what we know them to be.
- 3) If your students were to paint pictures of themselves, using the quality of their sound, their movement, their personality, how would they paint themselves?
- 4) Discuss how the colors the children wear do or do not reflect who they really are. What colors do they think could better reflect their true selves?
- 5) How would they paint a picture of themselves to show the essence of who they are?
- 6) Have a discussion of what colors mean to different children, remembering that each child may have a different interpretation of a color than you might expect. For example, red may mean fire, rage, anger, pain or sun, joy, pleasure, lollipops, balloons etc.

Synopsis:

**How The Turtle Got Its Shell:** This is a tale about a little turtle who outwits a fierce leopard and is rewarded with a shell, a home of his own to carry on his back wherever he goes. As in *How the Animals Got Their Colors*, this is another "How" creation myth that tells of a time when the animals were not yet finished; the turtle does not yet have his hard protective shell.

Nyame, the Sky God, wants to have a great festival and needs the drum of Osebo, the Leopard, in order to call everyone to come and feast and dance at his table. He asks the animals to bring Osebo's drum to him. Both Tembo, the mighty Elephant and Kinyanga, the swift Ostrich, try to get it. But Osebo is fierce and powerful, and they can not take his drum. Then Akykiegie the Turtle tells Nyame that he will try. No one believes that the little turtle can do it, but they are willing to let him try. And so Akykiegie, using his wits, teases Osebo, the Leopard, telling him his drum is not as large as Nyame's, that it is not large enough for him to crawl into. Trying to show off and prove the turtle wrong, Osebo squeezes himself into the drum and gets stuck. Akykiegie rolls the drum, with Osebo trapped inside, all the way back to Nyame, the Sky God. He presents not only the drum to Nyame, but Osebo himself! Nyame asks the little turtle what he would like in return. Akykiegie the Turtle asks for a hard shell to protect his back from the sharpness of the claws of Osebo the Leopard. And that is the creation story of how the turtle got its shell. The theme of this story is that in life, wits may be more powerful than size or strength. This is an important lesson for children who may feel vulnerable, yet can be clever and know how to accomplish many things.

Class Exercises:

• Use the various methods of the **Storytelling Circle** as discussed above. A class retelling of *How the Turtle Got Its Shell* offers ample opportunities for using chanting and rhythm to express the characters. The animals all have a special walk as they travel to see the leopard. Here are some ideas for incorporating rhythm in the storytelling:

• **Rhythms of Life:** In Swahili, the word "ngoma" means both "drum" and "dance." Perhaps this is because both dancing and drumming share the element RHYTHM. Just as the hand creates rhythm by beating the drum, our dancing feet create rhythms on the floor. We can consider the body a percussive instrument. Clapping, thigh slapping, finger snapping, stomping: these are among the many ways that the body can create sound and rhythm. The body can also produce rhythm while moving silently. Examples of silent rhythmic movement are swaying, swinging, bouncing, and

changing body movements on an impulse.

Rhythm is an internal sensation! "Listen" to movement. Let's try skipping. Clap the rhythm of a skip. Can you hear the accent? Ask your students and ask yourself to listen, not just with your ears, but with your body. Now try skipping again...with a "listening body"! Try a variety of movements, varying the accent. For example, walk slowly at an even tempo. Then accent the first of every four beats: \* . . . \* . . . \* . . . \* . . . The beat can be accented by stomping loudly or by lifting the arms up or dropping them, or by moving the head on the first beat. You have just created a rhythm.

### **“Rhythm is the ebb and rise of sound and movement”**

American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

•In "The African Drum," the elephant crosses the screen, moving along to a rhythm that is solid and grounded:

Tembo      Tembo      Tembo      travel

Build this rhythm into a chant, asking the children to move to the beat with the heavy solid strength of an elephant. Go for the essence rather than sheer imitation.

The ostrich, on the other hand, travels lightly and swiftly to the rhythm of this chant:

Kinyanga      Kinyanga      Kinyanga      go

Try dividing the class so that some are clapping the rhythm, some are chanting, and some are dancing. A light-footed gallop is well-suited to this particular rhythm.

•Here are three resource books which will provide you with more ideas for incorporating rhythm into your classroom:

Jones, Bessie & Bess Lomax Hawes. Step it Down: Games, Plays, Songs and Stories from the Afro-American Tradition (Harper and Row, N.Y. 1972)

Langstaff, John & Carol Langstaff. Shimmy Shimmy Coke-ca-pop: A Collection of City Children's Street Games and Rhymes. (Doubleday & Co., N.Y. 1973)

Marino, Jane. Sing Us a Story (H.W. Wilson, 1994)

Synopsis:

**Why the Egret Flies Free**: In this story, the theme of having the freedom to choose one's life is set against the harsh realities of nature in Africa. There is drought in the land and the animals are dying of thirst. Simba the Lion, king of the animals, is dying of thirst. The animals ask the Sun, "What should we do?" The Sun answers that the rain clouds are gone and they must dig in the earth -- then the water will come. All the animals say they cannot, except for the little Egret, Nupe. Dramatically, she strikes the earth with her beak three times and the water springs up like a fountain, saving Simba the Lion, and all the animals. Simba then declares that for saving their lives, the Egret, Nupe, will become King, Chief of all the animals. However, Nupe does not want to be Chief. All she wants is to "fly free." And so the egret is granted her wish, and from that day forward "may always fly free."

•*Why the Egret Flies Free* is the story Kijana tells to the villagers from inside the Zimwe's drum. The students, in retelling the story, can discuss why Kijana, considering her circumstance, chooses to tell this story.

•This is also a story about making choices. Nupe, the Egret, could have been a powerful leader of animals, but instead she chose to live her own life in the way she saw fit – flying free. Discuss with students the implications of making choices. What does it mean to be a leader? To be a king? What kind of choices do they make in life? How do we become free to make choices?

•Again, have the children tell this story in the **Storytelling Circle** using the various techniques as described earlier in these pages.

### **•Water We Found Deep in the Ground**

*Why the Egret Flies Free* also reminds us of the importance of water to life. We often take for granted that we can turn on a faucet and take a drink of water!

•Ask your students to observe and record the many ways they and their families use water for one weekend. Combine

your findings and build a large collage of original drawings, which illustrates our daily dependency on water.

•This project can be followed up by researching the threat of pollution, and learning what can and must be done to protect our environment. Go backwards! Trace the route of water from the faucet to its source.

Here are two resource books for a unit on water:

Lefkowitz, R.J. Water for Today and Tomorrow (Parents Magazine Press, N.Y. 1973)

Wick, Walter. A Drop of Water (Scholastic, 1997)

---

We hope you've enjoyed using our guide with your class. The activities we've described are only intended as a touchstone for your own ideas and imagination. So have fun!