

Visual Story

Jonathan: The Seagull Parable/ Jonathan: la figure du goéland



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What is a Visual Story?

A visual story is a tool to help audience members familiarize themselves with a venue and/or with a show. It allows audience members to know in advance what to expect from a theatrical experience, so that they can prepare themselves accordingly. Visual stories were created as an aid for autistic people and people with learning disabilities, but they can be used to help anyone prepare for their visit to the theatre.

Things to Look Out for

- The performance is approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes in length.
- This play is in English and French. There are French surtitles when the actors are speaking English, and English surtitles when they are speaking French.
- There are music and sound effects in the show. If audience members are sensitive to loud noises, they are encouraged to use noise-cancelling headphones.
- There is a glossary at the end of this document. There you will find the definitions of some of the more complex words in the play.

- Some themes explored in this play are:
 - Empowerment
 - Identity
 - Acceptance
 - Disability advocacy
 - Autonomy
 - Community

The Characters

This is Yousef.



He plays the role of Jon,
a young rebellious seagull.

This is Julie.



She plays the roles of Jon's father
and other unnamed characters.

This is Luca.



He plays the role of Fletcher.
He also choreographed the show.

This is Prince.



He plays the roles of Elder,
Rabble and Barryl.

This is Marilyn.



She plays the roles of the Narrator,
Epic Dave, Tiu and Yoot.

This is Lesly.



She plays the roles of
Savoy, Dylan and Nillid.

The Locations

The play mainly happens in 2 places.

- Jon's hometown. A community of seagulls live here. Jon's father is their leader. They have very strict rules that tell them how they should fly. There are lots of burgers, dried ice cream cones, fries, frozen ketchup, donairs and burritos for them to eat.
- The "paradise". Here Jon meets other seagulls who think like him. He is finally allowed to explore different ways of flying.

There is a narrator who speaks directly to the audience and is not really in the same places as the other characters.

Julie Vallée-Léger designed the set for this show, Francis-Olivier Métras designed the projections and Tiffanie Boffa designed the lighting. Together they created the world that appears onstage.

Le Futur is the sound designer for this show. They are a duo who decided which music and sounds to use to help bring the audience into Jon's world.

Sophie El-Assaad is the costume designer for this show. She decided which clothes the actors should wear to look like the characters they play.

The Story

Jonathan: The Seagull Parable is based on the story *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach. Jon Lachlan Stewart is the writer and director who turned the story into a play.

This is what happens in the play:

ACT 1

The narrator explains what a parable is. They tell the audience that some people just tell stories while others, like Jon, make their own stories. Throughout the play, the narrator explains other words and concepts.

Jon flies in his own unique way. His father, the leader of the flock, reminds him that “alternate flight” is not allowed. They argue about it. While out looking for food, the other seagulls get angry at Jon for being an alternate flyer. They attack him.

Jon’s wing is injured, but he is determined to continue flying his way. He breaks the seagull speed record! The other seagulls can’t believe it. Jon is proud of himself, but as a punishment for not following the flying rules, his father exiles him from the flock.

Jon flies freely with Fletcher, a representation of his own creativity. Their flight is like a dance.

ACT 2

Jon arrives at a beautiful place where he meets other seagulls who think like him and appreciate his way of flying. He finally gets to practice, under the guidance of Elder, a wise seagull who can do all kinds of extraordinary things, like teleporting.

Jon is a fast learner. The other seagulls look up to him. However, he is having trouble learning to teleport, because he is limited by thoughts of his father who always used to hold him back. He manages to let go of these thoughts and

successfully teleport. Elder passes on and Jon becomes the seagulls' new teacher. (Here, "passing on" is sort of dying, sort of ascending to a higher plane of existence. Perhaps both. Or neither.)

Jon decides he must go back to his old flock to help them, to teach them.

ACT 3

This part of the play is a lot more abstract. Movement becomes more important than words. Jon trains other exiled seagulls, then takes them with him back to his old flock. He wants to break the cycle of alternate flyers being violently punished, but he thinks maybe it is a hopeless cause. Maybe people like his father will never learn. But he continues to try to teach them anyway.

Like Elder before him, Jon passes on and Fletcher becomes the flock's new teacher. Fletcher is not sure if he can do it, or if it is even worth trying, but he accepts the role.

Jon, wherever he is now, reunites with his father. He finally gets him to accept his ways, and his teaching. They fly together.

End of play.

Glossary

Abide: Follow a rule

Allegorical: An allegorical story presents big ideas by using simple characters or images as symbols.

Altitude: How high in the air something is

Anticipated: Predicted in advance

Aspiration: A dream or goal that is very important to the person trying to reach it

Barrel roll: A flying trick, basically a cool flip in the air

Democratic: Equal, fair, when everyone in the group gets an equal say

Disembodied: Without a physical body. Disembodied voices are voices that you can't tell who or where they are coming from.

Dubious: Doubtful, uncertain, questionable

Ephemeral: Temporary

Euphoric: Very happy and excited

Exile: When someone is forced to leave the place where they live and isn't allowed to come back

Fluctuation: Change, shifting back and forth

Messiah: The "chosen one", a savior sent by God

Millenia: Thousands of years

Parable: A simple story that teaches a moral lesson

Slumber: Sleep

Telepathy: Communicating with someone using only your mind

Velocity: Speed