



SQUIRREL STOLE MY UNDERPANTS

THE-SECRET-AGENTS.COM



About the Show

A lonely, awkward girl is sent out to the backyard to hang up the laundry and keep herself busy. The moment Sylvie's back is turned, a mischievous squirrel appears, steals her favorite piece of clothing and runs off. When the girl gives chase, she finds herself lost in strange lands. As the story unfolds, an entire world emerges from her laundry basket and Sylvie learns that she is a strong girl with magic within herself.

Talented performer-creator Bonnie Duncan brings her handmade puppets, fanciful sets, charming stage persona, and always imaginative flair to this family-friendly piece. – Boston Globe

Why I make theater for family audiences



As a performer, I want audiences to relate to the story on stage in a way that sparks their imaginations and lifts them out of their ordinary lives. I make work that is delightful, and silly, and moving, and beautiful, all at once. I want the audience to discover the story for themselves. I want them to laugh, I want them to cry, then I want them to laugh again. My shows are often stories told without words—I embrace the physical and the visual in theater. The result is a poetic, non-linear story that surprises audiences and inspires kids to make their own living room shows.

Bonnie Duncan grew up in the South where she danced and swam competitively. She studied education and theatre in college and graduate school. She performs as one-half of They Gotta Be Secret Agents, where she blends puppetry with acrobatics. Prior to her work as a Secret Agent, Bonnie danced for eight years with Snappy Dance Theater, touring the world, and has been making puppet shows in her living room and fancy theatres for 13 years. She is also mom to Jack Ozro (five), Rex & Adelaide (two & two).

Collaborators

Brendan Burns (music) is a guitarist & educator rooted in Somerville, MA. He released his debut album TimeStamp in 2012. Brendan holds a Bachelor's Degree from Berklee College of Music and is the guitar department coordinator at Brookline Music School. <http://www.brendanburns.com/>

Tony Leva (music) Tony Leva is an educator, improviser, collaborator and performer. Tony also studies the sintir (a North African bass lute) and has occasionally performed on trumpet, melodica, accordion and clown nose. <http://anthonyleva.wordpress.com/>

Dan Milstein (director/husband) is the founding Artistic Director of Boston's Rough & Tumble Theater with whom he has made over thirteen original plays. He holds fast to his quixotic belief that theater should be cheap, fun, and deeply satisfying.

Penney Pinette (costumes) is currently a Costume Design MFA student at Boston University. She was lead pattern maker for the Huntington Theatre Company for 10 years. She continues to design costumes for theatre, film, & dance.

Hamideh Rezaei-Kamalabad (set) is a jewelry maker who sometimes dabbles in theater when asked. She is a recent graduate of Massachusetts College of Art and works as a fabricator for local jewelers. She is currently working on a new line of her own art jewelry.



This show was awarded a 2013 Jim Henson Foundation family project grant and was developed with the generous support of the Puppet Showplace Theatre's Incubator program.



Preparation Activities

These are student activities to do before seeing **Squirrel Stole My Underpants**. Do one activity or all of the activities! They will introduce students to the show by providing context clues, giving them a working knowledge of how the story works, and exciting them about seeing the live performance.

Discuss, Write, Draw

Use these questions to frame student discussions, individual drawings, or prompts for writing:

- Describe your favorite object in the whole world. *It might be the object you sleep with, take everywhere with you, the object that makes you feel better when things are difficult.*
- Have you ever lost something or had something taken from you? How did it make you feel? What did you do about it?
- What animal do you think is the most mischievous? What makes them seem naughty?
- If you went on an adventure, where would you go? What does this place look like? How do you get there?



Draw a comic book thought bubble on paper so that everyone can see it.

- What is this? How is it used?
- *Definition: thought bubbles used in comic books, comic strips and cartoons to allow words to be understood as representing the speech or thoughts of a given character in the comic.*
- What do you like to think about? If you had a thought bubble following you right now, what would it have in? Can you draw a picture of it?

Print out the attached images of SIGNS and hang them in your classroom.

- What does each of the signs mean?
- How might these signs be used in the show?

Read and discuss these stories about naughty animals:

- *Curious George* series, H.A. Rey
- *Five Little Monkeys* series, Eileen Christelow
- *Giggle Giggle Quack*, Doreen Cronin
- *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, Jon Scieszka

Read and discuss these adventure stories:

- *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, Crockett Johnson
- *Not a Box*, Antoinette Portis
- *Olivia Saves the Circus*, Ian Falconer
- *Where the Wild Things Are*, Maurice Sendak



Audio Activity

Go to this webpage: <http://www.bonnie-duncan.com/for-presenters.html>

Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on Music Sample, “Out to Sea” by Brendan Burns and Tony Leva. Play the audio link for students.

- What instruments do you think are being played? (acoustic guitar and upright bass)
- What do you think might happen while this music plays?
- How does the music make you feel?
- Write a story or draw a picture of what you think might happen while this music plays.

Vocabulary

Define and discuss these words and how they might be related to the performance:

Brave	Mime
Chase	Mischievous
Dance	Music Box
Excited	Party
Frustrating	Puppet
Hand puppet	Relief
Hero	Rod Puppet
Hide	Sad
Imaginary	Scared
Lonely	Sneak
Lost	Theater
Lullaby	Trick



A Little Note About Audience Etiquette:

When you watch a performance, it is different from watching TV. You are in the same room as the performers—they can see and hear you! Performers do their best when the audience looks and listens quietly.

1. Pay attention to what the performers are doing so that you do not miss any action.
2. Stay quiet and seated during the performance so that others may also see and hear what is happening.
3. Applaud when the performance ends to tell the performer that you appreciate all of their hard work.
4. At funny moments, it is OKAY to LAUGH!



Follow-Up Activities

These are activities for students to do after seeing **Squirrel Stole My Underpants**. Do one activity or all! They will give students opportunities to understand what they saw more deeply, be inspired by what they saw, and to imagine their own adventure stories.

Discuss, Write, Draw

Use these questions to frame student discussions, individual drawings, or prompts for writing:

- How did Sylvie's feelings change as she chased after the squirrel? When and how did Sylvie show that she was sad? Afraid? Brave? Proud?
- Why do you think Squirrel stole the underpants?

Review the vocabulary and discuss how each term relates to the show.

Ask students to write Bonnie a letter with any questions or comments about the show. *I love writing letters and promise to respond! Email me for my mailing address: bonnie@bonnie-duncan.com*

Act It Out!

Photocopy the page cover of this packet and distribute to students. Ask students to design and color their own squirrel and underpants. Then, cut out the squirrel and tape a popsicle stick to the back of the paper to create a rod puppet.

Use these prompts for drama activities and/or writing:

- Interview the squirrel and ask why he/she stole the underpants.
- Ask the squirrel to describe his/her home.
- Ask the squirrel to retell the story of the show.



Ask students to write or act out their own version of *Squirrel Stole My Underpants*. Here are some guiding questions to structure the story:

- What is the story's setting?
- Are the characters people or animals?
- What is lost / stolen?
- Who is trying to find them?
- Who took them?
- What 3-4 tactics do they try to use to find the missing object? (These tactics fail!)
- What tactic works to find the missing object?
- How does the story end?

Here are some guiding scene prompts, if students act out the story:

- Scene 1: Setting the Scene: where & who
- Scene 2: Discover that something is missing
- Scene 3: Try to get back = fail
- Scene 4: Try to get back = fail
- Scene 5: Try to get back = SUCCESS
- Scene 6: Celebration

If you have any questions or feedback for Bonnie, please get in touch! bonnie@bonnie-duncan.com.

