GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU

Applause Series Curriculum Guide
March 26, 2018

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS
CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS
Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the return Applause Series presentation of Guess How Much I Love You and I Love My Little Storybook. Of the many companies that present work for young audiences, Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia is one of our favorites. Their ability to lift the work of classic children’s authors and illustrators off the page and onto the stage is nothing short of exquisite. This sweet double bill brings illustrator Anita Jeram’s lovable rabbits to the stage — unfolding a touching story of the love between a father rabbit and his son, as well as an imaginative story that celebrates the wonderful world of books.

We hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a wide variety of discussion questions and activities. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

Support for Des Moines Performing Arts education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:


This study guide was compiled and written by Michelle McDonald; edited by Karoline Myers.
ABOUT THE APPLAUSE SERIES

TAKE THOUSANDS OF IOWA STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR CLASSROOMS, PLACE THEM IN A THEATER, SPRINKLE THE STAGE WITH WORLD-CLASS PERFORMERS, AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE? A RECIPE FOR LEARNING THAT REACHES NEW LEVELS OF POSSIBILITY—FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

WE CALL IT THE APPLAUSE SERIES.

BRINGING ARTS EDUCATION TO LIFE
The Applause Series is a flagship education program of Des Moines Performing Arts. Since its launch in 1996, more than a half million students and teachers have attended school-time performances as part of the series. You are joining us for the 22nd season of school performances!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Each year, more than 55,000 students and teachers attend an Applause Series performance. The actual cost per person is $8, but thanks to the caring contributions of donors, schools pay just $1 per ticket. By removing the financial barriers to participation, donors introduce a whole new generation to the power of arts in action. That means stronger schools and communities now and in the future.

TICKET TO IMAGINATION
The Applause Series annually delivers 60 age-appropriate performances for pre-school to high school students. The impact stretches far beyond the Des Moines metro, reaching schools in over 35 Iowa counties. The theater becomes the classroom. One-hour matinees energize students to imagine new ways of creative expression, cultural diversity and even career opportunities.

BEYOND THE STAGE
For many Applause Series performances, we offer the opportunity for schools to go deeper by exploring an art form or theme that connects with what is seen on stage. Invite a professional teaching artist into the classroom or visit another cultural destination in Des Moines to help students make more meaning of a piece of theater.

ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS
Des Moines Performing Arts is central Iowa's premier not-for-profit performing arts organization.

More than 300,000 guests attend performances and events in our four venues each year:
- Civic Center, 2744 seats
- Stoner Theater, 200 seats
- Temple Theater, 299 seats
- Cowles Commons (outdoor plaza)

Guests experience a wide variety of art forms and cultural activities, with presentations ranging from Broadway, comedy, professional dance, to family programming.

Des Moines Performing Arts education programs serving more than 75,000 Iowans annually.

Programs for schools, such as the Applause Series and teacher professional development, help enliven students’ learning. Public education programs such as master classes, workshops, Q&A sessions and summer camps allow audience members and aspiring artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages.
GOING TO THE THEATER

ATTENDING A LIVE PERFORMANCE IS A UNIQUE AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITY! UNLIKE THE PASSIVE EXPERIENCE OF WATCHING A MOVIE, AUDIENCE MEMBERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN EVERY LIVE PERFORMANCE.

WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?

YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Artists on stage are very aware of the mood and level of engagement of the audience. As such, each performance calls for a different response from audience members.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

◊ What kind of live performance is this (a musical, dance, or concert)?
◊ What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
◊ What is the mood of the artists? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
◊ Are the artists encouraging the audience to clap to the music, move to the beat, or participate in some other way?
◊ Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

REMEMBER....
THE THEATER IS DESIGNED TO MAGNIFY SOUND. EVEN WHISPERS CAN BE HEARD!

DID YOU KNOW?
ALTHOUGH NOT REQUIRED, SOME PEOPLE ENJOY DRESSING UP WHEN THEY ATTEND THE THEATER.

THEATER ETIQUETTE CHECKLIST

☐ Do not bring food, drinks or chewing gum into the theater.
☐ The use of cameras and recording devices are not permitted.
☐ Turn off and put away cell phones and other electronics before the performance begins.
☐ Do not text during the performance.
☐ Respect the theater. Keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
☐ When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
☐ Talk only before and after the performance.
☐ Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end.
☐ Remember that this is a special experience. The artists are creating something just for you. Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists — they will let you know what is appropriate.
☐ Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!
WE WANT YOUR FIELD TRIP TO BE SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL!

PLEASE READ BELOW FOR IMPORTANT TIPS AND DETAILS TO ENSURE A GREAT DAY.

GET ORGANIZED

◊ Double-check that all students, teachers, and chaperones were included in your ticket order. Request an adjustment if your numbers have increased. We want to make sure we have enough seats for you!

◊ Tickets are not issued. Bring a copy of your invoice, which will serve as your group’s “ticket”.

◊ Schedule arrival for 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This allows time to park, cross streets, find your seats, and go to the restroom.

Let drivers know that Applause performances are approximately 60 minutes, unless otherwise noted.

◊ Remind chaperones that children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause Series events.

DIRECTIONS/PARKING

◊ The Des Moines Civic Center is located at 221 Walnut Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

◊ Directions from I-235: take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd St and 2nd Ave. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.

◊ Police officers stationed at the corner of 3rd & Locust Streets will direct buses to reserved street parking near the Civic Center.

◊ Buses are not allowed to drop groups off in front of the theater. Contact us in advance if there is a special circumstance.

◊ Buses remain parked for the duration of the show. Drivers must be available to move the bus immediately following the performance.

◊ Personal vehicles are responsible for securing their own parking on a nearby street or in a downtown parking ramp.

ARRIVAL/SEATING

◊ An usher will greet you at the door and ask for your school name.

◊ Each group will be assigned a specific location in the theater based on various factors. An usher will escort you to your section.

◊ Your school may be seated in multiple rows. Adults should position themselves throughout the group.

◊ Allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging student seats or taking groups to the restroom.

This helps us seat efficiently and better start the show on time.

IN THE THEATER

◊ In case of a medical emergency, notify the nearest usher.

◊ Adults are asked to handle any disruptive behavior in their group. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.

◊ Please wait for your group to be dismissed by DMPA staff prior to exiting the theater.

QUESTIONS?

We are happy to help!

Please contact us at: education@dmpa.org

515.246.2355
ART & THEATER TERMS

**illustration:** a drawing, picture or other type of artwork that helps make something clear or attractive. Picture books use illustrations to help tell stories.

**narrator:** a person who tells a story, often as part of a performance or program.

**puppetry:** an art form in which objects, often with human or animal characteristics, are brought to life by puppeteers.

**watercolor:** technique of painting which uses water instead of oil as the base. Illustrator Anita Jeram used watercolor to create her illustrations.

RABBIT TERMS

**burrow:** a hole or tunnel in the ground made by a rabbit for shelter.

**hare:** a rodent-like mammal having long ears, divided upper lip, and long hind legs for leaping. Hares are larger than rabbits, having longer ears and legs.

**mammal:** warm-blooded animals that give birth to live young and are more or less covered in hair. Rabbits and hares are examples of mammals.

FROM THE STORIES

**adventure:** a very exciting or very unusual experience. Adventures are sometimes risky or dangerous.

**guess:** to estimate or arrive at an opinion about something without having sufficient evidence to support it.

**fern:** a type of plant that has roots, stems, and leaves but does not produce a flower.

**forest:** a large wooded area having thick growth of trees and plants.
ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Mermaid Theatre’s production of 
Guess How Much I Love You is 
based on two children’s books 
from illustrator Anita Jeram. 
Jeram’s beautiful water color 
illustrations are brought to life 
through puppetry.

Run Time: Approx. 50 minutes, 
with a 10-minute Q&A session.

THE STORIES

Guess How Much I Love You
In this touching bedtime story 
about the bond between a father 
rabbit and his son, Little Nutbrown 
Hare loves Big Nutbrown Hare as 
far as he can reach and as high 
as he can hop. But Big Nutbrown 
Hare loves him as far as his long 
arms can reach and as high as 
his strong legs can hop.

Written by Sam McBratney and 
charmingly illustrated with 
endearing watercolors by Anita 
Jeram, Guess How Much I Love 
You was first published in 
hardcover in 1995. The book is 
available in 45 languages and has 
received media praise around the 
world.

I Love My Little Storybook 
This book is an endearing 
celebration of the joy of reading. It 
features a whimsical collection of 
animals and imaginary creatures 
as an eager little bunny lies on the 
grass and opens his book. Within 
moments, the story he’s reading 
comes alive in fascinating detail.

PUPPETRY
Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia 
does not typically construct 
“traditional” puppet styles. 
Instead, the company constructs 
their puppets to make sure that 
the puppets look like the objects 
in the books. In this production, 
most of the puppets are hand 
carved from soft sponge foam 
using a pair of scissors. The 
puppets have carved wooden 
joints and handles, and are 
covered in hand-painted silk or 
soft fabric.

The puppetry style of this show is 
most closely related Japanese 
Bunraku, where the puppeteers 
are visible behind the puppet. One 
difference is that the faces of 
Bunraku puppeteers are masked 
by hoods. In this show, Mermaid 
Theatre performers’ faces are 
visible.

NARRATION
As with all Mermaid Theatre’s 
adaptations of classic children’s 
picture books, the stories are told 
through the use of a narrator who 
recites the book’s text verbatim. 
The recorded narration for this 
show is the work of award-
winning actor Beau Bridges.

MUSIC
Guess How Much I Love You 
features an original musical score 
by Steven Naylor, Mermaid 
Theatre’s Artistic Advisor for 
Music and Sound Design.

NON-SHUSHING SHOW
Mermaid Theatre productions are 
“non-shushing” shows. Students 
are encouraged to clap and laugh 
when they see something that 
pleases them. They may also 
help tell the story along with the 
narration.

Etiquette 
take-away...

Noises that help tell 
the story are okay. 
Side conversations are 
not.
ABOUT MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA SCOTIA

Now in its 45th season, Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia ranks among North America’s most respected creators of young audience entertainment. Nearly four million young people around the world have delighted in Mermaid’s unique adaptations of children’s literature.

LITERATURE & THE ARTS
Mermaid Theatre believes that young people benefit greatly from early exposure to literature, the arts, and the power of the imagination. Therefore, Mermaid Theatre’s creative ambition is to produce work which is quality theatre—entertaining, informative, and stimulating to all the senses—along with the goal of encouraging literacy and generating enthusiasm for the art of reading. With these core values in mind, the company produces some of the most highly regarded theater for young audiences around the world. Classic children’s literature comes to life through striking visual images, evocative original music, innovative puppetry and staging in productions that captivate young people’s imaginations.

IN NOVA SCOTIA
Mermaid Theatre is from Nova Scotia, Canada. They provide important educational outreach throughout Nova Scotia, through school visits and their Institute of Puppetry Arts based in Windsor, Nova Scotia.

AMBASSADOR ROLE
Extensive international engagements allow the company to play an important ambassadorial role for the Province of Nova Scotia and for Canada. Mermaid Theatre has represented Canada in Japan, Mexico, Australia, England, Northern Ireland, Holland, Scotland, Wales, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam.

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Other popular productions from Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia:

- Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny
- Swimmy, Frederick & Inch by Inch
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar
- The Rainbow Fish

A tiny rabbit meets a storybook princess through the power of imagination in I Love My Little Storybook.

Nova Scotia, shown here in red, is located on Canada’s southeastern coast. Map courtesy of solarnavigator.net.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATOR

SAM McBRATNEY
Sam McBratney is from Northern Ireland. He received a degree in history and political science from Trinity College in Dublin and was a full-time educator. He started writing children’s books when he was a teacher in his thirties, with a goal to help students who had trouble reading. He continued writing for a more personal reason, saying “the act of imagining simply makes me feel good.”

Guess How Much I Love You is Sam McBratney’s 57th book. It sold an astonishing 15 million copies worldwide and is available in 45 different languages. He has also written many other books for children, as well as half a dozen radio plays for adults and a prize-winning collection of short stories.

“I told my children stories when they were young.....so when I write I try to think of what they would have liked.”
—Sam McBratney

ANITA JERAM
Anita Jeram was born in Portsmouth, England, in 1965 and studied art at Manchester Polytechnic. She published her first book for children while she was still a student. She has written and illustrated many popular and critically acclaimed books for children, including a number which feature her enchanting, lovable bunnies.

For Anita Jeram, illustrating Guess How Much I Love You was a labor of love. Big Nutbrown Hare and Little Nutbrown Hare grew out of her imagination. A rabbit also figures prominently in I Love My Little Storybook, her magical tribute to the wonderful world of books, which she also wrote and illustrated.

“Every time I read this book, I want to cry. The story reminds me so much of my own son, who often plays this kind of game with me when it’s time for bed.”
—Anita Jeram
HOMES
More than half of the world’s rabbit population lives in North America. Rabbit habitats include meadows, woods, forests, grasslands, deserts and wetlands. They live in groups and often live in underground burrows, or rabbit holes. A group of burrows is called a warren.

Domestic rabbits can be kept as pets in a back yard hutch, indoors in a cage, or house trained to have free roam. Some pet rabbits live in outside hutches during the day for the benefit of fresh air and natural daylight and are brought inside at night.

FOOD
Rabbits in the wild are herbivores that feed by grazing on grass and leafy weeds. A pet rabbit’s diet typically consists of hay, pellets, and a fair quantity of fresh vegetables.

EIGHT FUN FACTS
1) Baby bunnies are commonly called “kittens”.
2) A rabbit’s teeth never stop growing.
3) Female rabbits are called “does” and male rabbits are called “bucks”.
4) Rabbits are constantly aware of their surroundings because they are prey animals.
5) Rabbits are most active in the early morning and evening.
6) Rabbits can grind their teeth, making a “purr” sound.
7) Rabbits only sweat on the pads of their feet.
8) The longest rabbit ears ever recorded measured over 31 inches long!

RABBITS vs. HARES
The most obvious difference between rabbits and hares is how their babies are born. Rabbits are born blind and hairless. Hares are born with hair and are able to see.

Hares are generally larger than rabbits, with longer ears, larger and longer hind legs and have black markings on their fur. Hares have not been domesticated, while European rabbits are kept as pets.

While most rabbits live underground in burrows or warrens, hares live in simple nests above the ground and usually do not live in groups.

“Big Nutbrown Hare settled Little Nutbrown Hare into his bed of leaves.”
—excerpt from Guess How Much I Love You
1) RETELL THE STORY WITH PUPPETS

**Goal:** To demonstrate reading comprehension through puppetry and performance.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will re-tell the story of *Guess How Much I Love You* using simple puppets.

**Preparation:** Before you begin this activity, prepare simple puppets to represent each character in the story *Guess How Much I Love You.* To do so, scan or photocopy a picture of Little Nutbrown Hare and Big Nutbrown Hare from the book *Guess How Much I Love You.* Trim away excess paper. Laminate if you so desire. Glue or tape hare cut-outs to popsicle sticks or paint sticks for students to hold onto.

**Activity:**
1. Read *Guess How Much I Love You* as a class.
2. Discuss the sequence of events. Which hare spoke first in the story? What did the little hare want the big hare to do? How did the big hare respond? What happened next?
3. Show students the puppets you have prepared.
4. As a class or in small groups, allow students to perform the story of *Guess How Much I Love You* with the hare puppets. Students may use the hare puppets to narrate the story in their own words.

**Follow-Up Questions:**
1. Why did Little Nutbrown Hare express his love in farther and farther distances?
2. Why did Big Nutbrown Hare have farther distances?

**Additional Questions for After the Show:**
1. How were the puppets in the performance similar to the ones in our classroom? How were they different?
2. Who told the story during the performance? Could you see this person?
3. What was your favorite part of *Guess How Much I Love You*? Why?

2) CREATE A STORYBOOK

**Goal:** To encourage students to use their imaginations and practice creative writing.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will create a story about characters that they would like to meet in the pages of a storybook.

**Activity:**
1. Read Anita Jeram’s *I Love My Little Storybook* as a class.
2. Ask your students whom they would like to meet in the pages of a storybook. It could be anyone – a real person, a favorite cartoon character, someone from history, a Martian. Encourage your students to stretch their imaginations.
3. Then, ask students to write a story about what that meeting might be like and the different things they might do together.
4. Have the students revise a final draft and create illustrations for their story.
5. Staple or sew pages together to create booklets, if time allows.
6. Encourage students to create book covers, title pages, and a dedication if they so desire.

**Follow-up Questions:**
1. How is your story like Anita Jeram’s *I Love My Little Storybook*? How is it different?
2. What challenges did you face as you created your story?
3. What was your favorite part about creating your story/storybook?

Who would you meet in the pages of a storybook?
POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

DISCUSSION

Comprehension:
1. In Guess How Much I Love You, what was Little Nutbrown Hare trying to show Big Nutbrown Hare? How was he trying to show it?

2. Why did Little Nutbrown Hare and Big Nutbrown Hare keep going back and forth with farther and farther distances?

3. In I Love My Little Storybook, where does the bunny’s storybook take place? What did you see during the performance that showed that?

4. What special friends does the bunny see inside his storybook?

5. Name some different things the bunny does with his storybook. How were these shown during the performance?

6. What happened when the bunny got tired?

Puppetry:
1. Were you able to see the puppeteers during the show? Why or why not?

2. What did the puppets look like? What kind of colors were they? How do you think the different puppets were made?

3. If you could ask the puppeteers a question, what would it be? (you may email student questions to Mermaid Theatre at puppets@mermaidtheatre.ns.ca. They are great at responding!)

Reality vs. fantasy:
1. Can love really be measured in a distance? Why does Sam McBratney choose to show love in this way in Guess How Much I Love You?

2. Can someone really jump into and out of a storybook? What does the little bunny really mean?

Theater Experience:
1. What was your favorite part about our trip to the theater?

2. How was the performance different than the books? How was it the same?

1) WRITE A LETTER

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

Explanation: In this activity, students will write a letter about their experience to the Guess How Much I Love You performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Activity:
1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:

   ◊ What was the show about?
   ◊ What parts of the show were most exciting?
   ◊ Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
   ◊ What did the characters learn?
   ◊ What was special about the puppets?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their theater experience.

Example letter starter:

Dear Mermaid Theatre performers,

My favorite part of the show was...
While watching your show I felt... because...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when...
If I could be in your show, I would play the part of... because...

3. Mail the letters to:

Des Moines Performing Arts
Attn: Education Department
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Follow-up Questions:
1. What did you include in your letter? Why did you want to share that particular idea?
POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

2) ACTING OUT A STORY

Goal: To use drama and imagination to demonstrate comprehension of a story.

Explanation: In this activity, students will use drama and their imaginations to re-tell an Anita Jeram or Sam McBratney story to demonstrate their understanding of characters and key events using tableau.

Tableau: a dramatic convention in which individuals use their bodies to create a “frozen picture” that expresses actions, locations, feelings or situations.

Activity:
1. Read a book by Anita Jeram or Sam McBratney aloud to the class.
2. As a class, brainstorm the characters in the story and determine the plot or sequence of main events.
3. Break up the story into small segments and assign each segment to a group of 3-4 students.
4. Students then create tableau (frozen picture that tells a story) of their assigned moment in the story. Students may represent the characters, objects, or setting of their assigned moment.
5. All groups then show their tableau in front of the class in the order of the story.
6. Once a group is “frozen,” tap students on the shoulder one at a time. When tapped, they should “unfreeze” and briefly describe who they are and what they are doing in the scene.

Follow-up Questions:
1. How would you describe the character or object you played?
2. What happened at the beginning of the story? In the middle? At the end?
3. How did you feel when you were depicting your tableau for the class?

3) MAKE YOUR OWN GREETING CARD

Goal: To practice writing and communication skills

Explanation: In this activity, students will practice their writing and communication skills by making a card for a loved one or friend.

Activity:
1. Print and make copies of the Guess How Much I Love You card template (page 14) on white cardstock.
2. Give one card template to each student. Ask them to identify a loved one or friend that they would like to make their card for.
3. Have students color the cards, cut them out, and fold them on the dotted line.
4. Next, have students write a special message inside the card to their loved one.
5. Allow the students the opportunity to make more than one card if time allows.

Follow-up Questions:
1. Why is it important to tell our loved ones that we care about them?
2. How do you feel when you receive a card from someone?
3. How do you know that your loved ones (parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, etc.) love you as well?

Full size template available on page 14.
Make your own greeting card

Color, fold along the dotted line, and write a message for someone you love.
RESOURCES AND SOURCES

ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Written & illustrated by Anita Jeram:

◊ All Together Now
◊ Bill's Belly Button
◊ Bunny, My Honey
◊ Contrary Mary
◊ Daisy Dare
◊ It Was Jake
◊ The Most Obedient Dog in the World

Written by Sam McBratney & Illustrated by Anita Jeram:

◊ Colors Everywhere
◊ Let’s Play in the Snow
◊ When I’m Big
◊ You’re All My Favorites

Written by Sam McBratney:

◊ I Love It When You Smile
◊ Jimmy Zest
◊ Just You and Me
◊ Put a Saddle on the Pig
◊ There, There.

RESOURCES

“An Interview with Sam McBratney.”
http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/mcbratney/
View the transcript to an interview with Guess How Much I Love You author Sam McBratney. Site also contains a short biography of McBratney and information about his children’s books.

Anita Jeram Official Website.
http://www.anitajeram.com/
Explore all about Anita Jeram’s work as an artist and illustrator, the things she loves that influence her work, and her younger years.

“Guess How Much I Love You App.”
The ‘Guess How Much I Love You™’ application takes you on an unforgettable journey to the watercolour landscape of grassy fields, mossy forests, lazy rivers and sunny green valleys.

“LeVar Burton Kids.”
https://www.levarburtonkids.com/
Continue students’ exploration of the way books have the power to transport us to far off place by downloading this interactive app.

“Rabbits.”
http://animals.pppst.com/rabbits.html
This interactive website about rabbits contains activities, games, PowerPoint presentations, and information on caring for rabbits.

SOURCES

“Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia.” www.mermaidtheatre.ns.ca

“Rabbits.” www.wikipedia.org

“Rabbits.” www.rabbitempire.org