



## A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

for gifted Year 5 and 6 children with

a love of detective work and performance

**'Murder on the Titanic...**

***an immersive mystery'***

**G.A.T.E.WAYS** is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four sessions.

It's 1912 and the largest ship ever built is about to set sail across the Atlantic. The two thousand, two hundred and twenty-four passengers and crew on board include all types of different people. There are aristocratic lords and ladies travelling in luxurious style, as well as destitute families huddled in steerage, hoping for a better life in America. There are officers and engineers charged with ensuring the ship's successful passage across the seas and lowly stewards and kitchenhands doing the dirty work behind the scenes. As the ship takes to the sea, a shocking discovery is made; someone on board has been murdered! Over the course of this interactive murder mystery Journey, we, the passengers and crew of Titanic, must get to the bottom of this terrible crime, before the murderer strikes again! Join us on a wonderful adventure combining history, problem-solving and performance!

### **Session One: Anchors aweigh**

As we set sail from Cherbourg, France, we will meet some of the characters on board. Armed with the character notes you received before attending, you will begin to interpret and create the role you will play in this story. Are you a princess travelling first-class? A dutiful sailor? Or a poor father hoping to offer his children the chance of living the American Dream? Together, we will explore the way our characters walk and talk, and how their facial expressions, posture and gestures communicate their status, background and personality traits. Characters will interact with other characters in short improvised scenes, and we will explore the historical setting of the Titanic. At the end of this session, the shocking discovery of a murder will take place!

### **Session Two: Batten down the hatches**

Now that the murder has been discovered, everyone is a suspect! At the beginning of this session, you will be given secret information about your actions and whereabouts in the lead up to the murder, as well as your relationship with the victim, and any motive you may have. During the session, you may be called upon to defend yourself, while staying in the character you created in session one – no easy feat! We'll explore character motivation and persuasive speaking skills as the plot begins to thicken.

### **Session Three: All hands on deck!**

In this session, groups of characters will work together to decipher physical clues from the crime scene. There will be letters to read, artefacts to examine and overheard conversations to analyse. Together you will share information and discuss theories. As a group, we will narrow-down suspects and start to put together the pieces of this crime. We'll also explore character status as we look at the different groups of characters and how they interact with each other, both physically and through dialogue. Who is holding all the power?

## Session Four: Sink or swim?

With some final details coming to light in this final session, we'll gather up all the facts and try to solve this case once and for all. Once we have pieced together the series of events, we will create a dramatic recreation of the crime, and of the important moments that led to it, exploring techniques and devices of theatrical story telling. Each student will be given the opportunity to respond to the events (in character, of course!), and later, to share with us the imagined fate of their character. Now, thank goodness all that drama is behind us... wait a minute, is that an iceberg up ahead?

## Homework

You may be asked to complete short writing tasks between each of the sessions.

## About the Presenter

Suzie Thomas has worked in the professional theatre world for over twenty years. She trained as an actor at the Atlantic Theatre School in New York and founded her own theatre company in Melbourne in 2001. After many years heading the Education and Families program at Melbourne Theatre Company, she is now a freelance theatre director and teaching artist and loves sharing the wonders of all things dramatic with young people.

## Requirements

- Wear comfortable clothes that don't restrict your movement
- Bring writing implements and a notebook.
- You are welcome to bring one prop or piece of costume that you think will help with your character (e.g. hat, a fan, a pair of glasses etc) however this is not compulsory. It may be easier to choose an item after our first session.
- Please bring a labelled photo and a stamped self-addressed DL envelope for your report.
- Bring a snack for break time. No nuts please.

