Walking the Tightrope

“Some things change and some things stay the same”

Walking the Tightrope is a sweet and funny story of a grandfather who, while trying to tell his five-year-old granddaughter that Grandma is gone, goes about building a beautiful new relationship with her. They get a little help along the way from a charming clown, who helps them discover the meaning of family. This play helps us all look at how we handle changes in life and how these changes can help us in ways we would never expect.

Walking the Tightrope was created by 24th Street Theater Company of Los Angeles, California. This theater company creates plays for young audiences and their families. Sometimes they tour their plays all around the United States. Comedian, actor, and singer Jack Black is a big supporter of 24th Street Theater. When he was young he took an acting class with the theatre's director, Deb Devine, and that experience changed his life.

Walking the Tightrope was created by an English playwright from the United Kingdom. A playwright is someone who writes plays for theater. Both the United States and the United Kingdom are English speaking nations. The United Kingdom is part of Europe. England, Scotland, Wales, and part of Ireland are part of the United Kingdom.

Map of United Kingdom
**Slang**

As in the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) uses slang. For instance in the US, we might say “cool” when we see something we really like. Or “dude!” when we see a friend. Can you think of some other common slang terms we use? Since the UK and the US have different cultures, the English language is spoken differently, especially regarding slang.

In the play, *Walking the Tightrope* you will hear some United Kingdom or UK slang. Can you match the UK slang to its American (US) meaning?

1. Wellies    ____ raining very heavily
2. Telly      ____ Ice cream cone
3. Oolies     ____ popsicle
4. Jim jams   ____ toilet
5. Cornet     ____ waves
6. Ice lolly  ____ galoshes
7. The Loo    ____ pajamas
8. Bucketing  ____TV set (EXAMPLE)

Answer key: 1. galoshes / 2. TV set / 3. Ice cream cone / 4. pajamas / 5. waves / 6. raining very heavily / 7. toilet / 8. popsicle /

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**Walking the Tightrope** is written as a play but also, in parts, is written in poetic verse. Here are a few lines that will repeat during the play:

Tide comes in
Tide goes out.

At the end of the day
It all washes away.

And back comes
Something else.

Can you guess what the playwright is trying to say here? See if these lines mean something different to you after you see the play.

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**VISIT THESE WEBSITES with your parents for information relating to performance of Walking the Tightrope.**

- http://www.lied.ku.edu/events/tightrope.shtml
- http://www.24thstreet.org/walking-the-tightrope/