

SCHULICH CHILDREN'S PLAYS

THE NEVERENDING STORY

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BASED UPON THE NOVEL BY MICHAEL ENDE

ADAPTED BY DAVID S. CRAIG

DIRECTED BY JILLIAN KEILEY

GRADE RECOMMENDATION

Suitable for Grade 3 and up.

CONTENT ADVISORY FOR STUDENTS

Deals with mental health, grief and bullying. Contains intense music and strobe lighting effects.

STUDENT MATINÉE DATES

May 16, 20, 23*, 28; June 6*, 12, 14, 19, 21; September 11, 12, 19*, 26*, 27; October 2, 10*, 17*, 24*, 25, 29; November 1.

(* = Performance starts at 12:30 p.m.)

ABOUT THE PLAY

German award-winning author of fantasy and children's fiction Michael Ende (1929-1995) published *Die Unendliche Geschichte* (*The Neverending Story*) in 1979. It has since been translated into over forty languages and sold more than 20 million copies worldwide. It was adapted for the screen in 1984. David S. Craig adapted the novel for the stage. The Roseneath Theatre production premiered at Young People's Theatre in Toronto in 2012.

SYNOPSIS

Ten-year-old Bastian Balthazar Bux and his father are grieving the death of Bastian's mother. Bastian is also bullied at school. He finds solace from his sadness in reading and his own imagination. One day, while running from the bullies, Bastian finds refuge in a bookstore owned by Carl Conrad Coreander, an old curmudgeon. Coreander pulls out a book titled *The Neverending Story* and tells Bastian it's magical. When Coreander is distracted, Bastian steals the book and escapes to the attic of his school to begin reading this adventure.

The story takes place in a magical land called Fantastica. The Childlike Empress is dying and a dark force called the Nothing is causing the world of Fantastica to disappear. Atreyu, a young warrior hunting the purple buffalo, accompanied by his loyal horse, Artax, has been chosen



EMILE GRIMES

to find a cure for the Empress which will destroy the Nothing. She gives Atreyu the Aurn, a medallion to protect him on his journey.

Atreyu goes on this quest, which tests his courage and perseverance. He meets many fantastical creatures on his journey. Along the way he discovers that the Empress can only be saved by a person who exists outside of Fantastica; this person must name her in order to do so. At various points in Atreyu's journey, Bastian realizes that he has been able to break into the world of Fantastica and alter the story's events. Bastian discovers he plays a vital part in saving Fantastica. Just as the Nothing moves towards the Empress, Bastian calls out her name and cures her, driving out the Nothing and saving Fantastica. As a reward, the Empress gives him a grain of sand from the remains of old Fantastica and invites him to visit the new world often. A delighted Bastian runs off to show his father the grain of sand and to tell him about his wonderful adventure.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES:

- Creativity
- Learning to Learn/Self-Awareness
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking

GRADES 3–12:

- Language/English (listening to understand, speaking to communicate, reading for meaning)
- Drama, Music, Visual Art
- Health and PE (harassment, bullying, care for self and others, decision-making, visible and invisible differences, respect, actions, self-concept, leadership)

GRADE 11:

- Raising Healthy Children (neglect and abuse, society's role in the lives of children and families)
- Gender Studies (representation of gender)
- Equity, Diversity and Social Justice (social awareness and individual action)
- Dynamics of Human Relationships (self-concept and self-esteem, making decisions, resolving conflicts)

GRADE 12:

- Human Development Throughout the Lifespan (risk and resilience, identity)
- Working with School-Age Children and Adolescents (positive environment for development, guiding children's behaviour, neglect and abuse)

THEMES

- The Power of Imagination: Joy of Reading; Value of Storytelling; The Hero's Journey; Finding Hope; Love of Adventure
- Identity: Coming of Age; Developing Self-Confidence; Finding Courage; Freedom to Discover and Be Oneself
- Mental Health, Relationships and Well-Being: Finding Hope in Sadness and Grieving; Strength in Community; Dealing with Bullying
- Growing Up: Self-Discovery; Standing Up for Yourself; Grappling with Failure

CLASSROOM WARM-UP

Tell your students that *The Neverending Story* takes place in a world called Fantastica: a magical land where amazing creatures live.

As a class, brainstorm what you imagine Fantastica might be like.

Then invite each student to imagine they are a citizen of Fantastica.

Have them draw a picture of what they would look like.

Beside their drawing, encourage students to list what positive traits they have that would help the world of Fantastica.

Have students share their Fantastica personas with one another, displaying their drawings and describing their traits.

Still working in pairs, have students imagine these two Fantastics meet on their way to the Childlike Empress' palace. How would these two friends greet each other? Have each pair come up with a special way for their characters to say hello to one another.

When everybody in the class has created something with their partners and had some time to practise it, ask for volunteers to show the class their imaginative greeting.

ENRICHMENT

Study Guide available at stratfordfestival.ca/studyguides

Prologues (interactive presentations on stage) at 11 a.m. before every student matinée except May 16, 20, 23, 28; June 6; September 11, 12, 19, 26; October 2, 10, 17, 24.

Workshops and post-show chats may be arranged by calling the Education Department at 519.271.4040, ext. 2354.

Festival Theatre and Costume Warehouse tours may be arranged by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Online: www.stratfordfestival.ca/schools

Email: groups@stratfordfestival.ca

Phone: 1.800.567.1600 or 519.273.1600

Mail:

Stratford Festival

Attn: Groups and Schools

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