



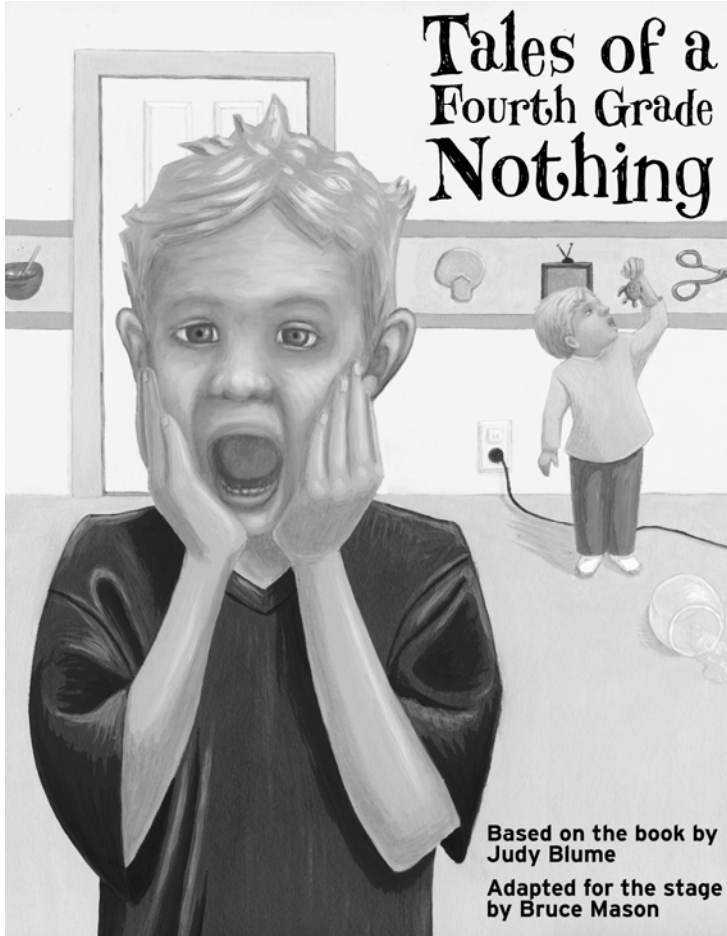
Teacher Resource Guide

And Lesson Plan Activities

Children's Theatre of Charlotte is delighted to bring you *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. This resource guide provides you with some general information about our production along with some creative activities which will help you make connections to your classroom curriculum.



By attending this production, students are meeting the **North Carolina Standard Course of Study Theatre Curriculum Goal 8.04: To experience a live performance.** Resource Guide activities address additional goals; please look for this symbol for curriculum references.



Directed by Nicia Carla



ImaginOn is a collaborative venture of the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and the Children's Theatre of Charlotte. With cutting-edge services and library collections, award-winning professional theatre and innovative education programs, ImaginOn brings stories to life through extraordinary experiences that challenge, inspire and excite young minds.

Learn more at www.imaginion.org.

About the Story

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing started as a book that was adapted into a play. The book tells the story of a regular fourth grade kid, Peter Hatcher, and his family – especially his little brother Fudge, who is always in the way, taking all the attention, and making Peter feel like...well, nothing.

Author Judy Blume first wrote a short picture book called "Peter, Fudge and Dribble," inspired by a true story about a toddler who swallowed a tiny pet turtle. She sent the story to a few publishers, but none wanted to turn the manuscript into a book. A few years later, a children's book editor read the manuscript and thought it would make a good chapter in a longer book about the Hatcher family. Judy spent the following summer writing the book, which was published without any revisions – the editor loved it exactly as it was. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* became the first in a five book series about the funny adventures of Peter, Fudge, and the Hatcher family.

About the Author

Judy Blume has always made up stories – inside her head as a child, and on paper as an adult. Readers of all ages identify with her characters and stories because they are often based on real people and events. For example, Fudge is based on Judy's son Larry when he was a toddler. Judy's children provided her with lots of ideas for stories as they were growing up – sometimes about subjects that some adults thought children shouldn't read about. But Judy Blume has always been more interested in writing honest stories for kids than in writing books for adult approval. She says, "Kids live in the same world as adults do. They see things and hear things. Problems only get worse when there are secrets, because what kids imagine is usually scarier than the truth."

Questions for Discussion

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing is a collection of short stories about things that happen in a family. Every family is different, but we all have some things in common – like getting along with one another.

About the Hatcher family:

- In this play, Peter is 9 and Fudge is 3. What are the advantages of being 3? What are the advantages of being 9? Which would you rather be?
- Sometimes Fudge drives Peter crazy, but deep down he loves his little brother. How did Peter show this love/hate relationship? Is it realistic?
- Fudge's real name is "Farley Drexel Hatcher." How do you think he got his nickname Fudge? Do any of the people in your family have nicknames?

About your family:

- Do you have brothers or sisters? Do you always get along? How do you resolve disagreements?
- What are your family responsibilities? What are some of the responsibilities Peter has? Do you get more responsibilities as you get older? Do you get any rewards for acting responsibly?

About the production:

- Who were your favorite characters and why?
- The actors in this play are all adults, but they play people of all ages – kids, toddlers, parents, bosses, and more. What did the actors do with their bodies to themselves seem younger or older than they really are?
- Peter's pet turtle Dribble is an important character. How was Dribble portrayed onstage?



North Carolina Standard Course of Study Goals: English Language Arts Goal 2: Develop and apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard and viewed. Theatre Arts Goal 7: Analyze, critique, and construct ideas from informal and formal theatre productions.



Try your hand at Adaptation!

You can turn any story into a play. Here's one way to start:

1. Write about a problem between two people.
2. Share the story with a friend, choose roles, and act out the problem you described. You will have to "improvise" your lines, or make them up as you go along, to help your audience understand what's happening. Record the scene with a video camera or tape recorder if you can.
3. Now write a play script that captures the dialogue and actions you improvised. Remember that a script is for other people to use – so you must identify the characters and the lines that they speak, and the actions or movements they make.

What are some of the challenges of adapting a paragraph into a script? How long did it take? Which takes longer – reading the paragraph out loud or acting out the script?

Adaptation

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing is an adaptation of a novel. Adaptation means change – and a lot of famous books have been adapted into plays like Bruce Mason did for this one. Playwrights often adapt stories for the stage in some or all of the following ways:

- Characters and events may be combined, simplified, or eliminated
- Characters and events may be added.
- Settings may be simplified for the stage

Pre-show Discussion

- Do you think the play will be longer or shorter than the book?
- Will the characters look the same as the illustrations or their descriptions?
- What might be different about them?
- What about the story might be different?
- Why would changes to the story be made to present it on stage?
- What changes would *you* make to adapt this book for the stage?

Post-show Discussion

- Compare the play with the novel.
- Which characters, events, and settings were changed?
- How were they changed?
- Do you think these changes helped or hurt the story? Why?

X-Rays

Fudge goes to the doctor for an X-ray to see the turtle in his stomach.

One century ago, Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen discovered the X-ray, which began the use of energy to visualize medical problems in patients. X-rays are not visible with the eye. Another method or material (such as film) must be used to convert the information to a visible or useable form.

Activity: X-Rays

Place a piece of ordinary window screen over a box. Place a pattern made of cardboard on top of the screen. Sprinkle sand over the whole box. The sand (X-rays) will pass through the screen to the bottom of the box, except where they are blocked by the pattern. An outline of the pattern can be seen in the bottom of the box. You can find this activity on line at www.exploratorium.edu.



North Carolina Standard Course of Study Science Goal 4.01: Assess the invention of tools and techniques to solve problems.

Says Who?

The book and the play versions of *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* are told from Peter's point of view. Choose a chapter from the book or a scene from the play and re-write it or retell it from another character's perspective. How does the story change?

Try this activity with any familiar story!

Family Tree

Family is an important theme in *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. The Hatcher Family includes two parents: Anne Hatcher and Warren Hatcher, and two kids: Petter Warren Hatcher and Farley Drexel Hatcher (Fudge).

A "family tree" is a way to diagram your own family. Everyone's diagram looks different. Can you create your own family tree? How far back can you go? Ask a relative to help you fill in the names of your family members. You can also add photos, facts about each person, or drawings.

This is just the start of a family tree – add as many "branches" as you need!



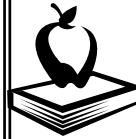
North Carolina Standard Course of Study Social Studies Goal 1.04: Recognize that families and groups have similarities and differences.

Sell It!

Peter's father works for an advertising agency. Throughout the show he is involved in the producing of commercials for products new to the market.

Activity: Commercial Creation

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Each group is responsible for inventing a product. Once the initial inventing is completed, the group must decide how they will market their product. Each group concludes their project with a sixty second commercial advertising their product.



North Carolina Standard Course of Study English Language Arts Goal 3.01: Create and present a product that effectively demonstrates a personal response from a selection or experience. Information Skills Goal 5.02: Produce media in various formats appropriate to audience and purpose.

Getting Around

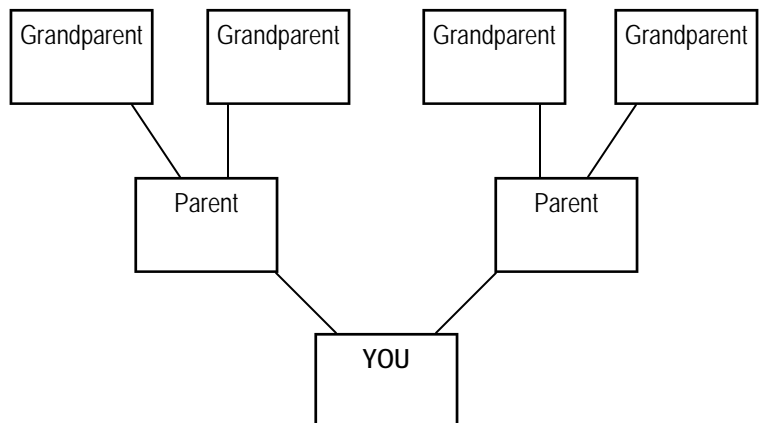
Peter is given an assignment to write a report on Transportation.

Activity: Charlotte Transportation

There are many forms of transportation available in Charlotte. Make a list of all of the different modes of travel found in this city, and describe each one. One of Charlotte's most unique types of travel is the trolley. For more information about the trolley, visit www.charlottetrolley.com.



North Carolina Standard Course of Study Social Studies Goal 9.4: Identify means and methods of human movement in local and other neighborhoods.



Recommended Reading

"I don't know where I stand in the world.
I don't know who I am. That's why I read, to find myself."
—Elizabeth, age 13, in a letter to author Judy Blume

Here are a few recommendations from the librarians at ImaginOn:

Chapter Books

Birdsall, Jeanne – *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy*
Clements, Andrew – *Jake Drake, Bully Buster*
Greene, Stephanie – *Owen Foote, Second-Grade Strongman*
Holm, Jennifer – *Middle School is Worse than Meatloaf: A Year Told Through Stuff*
King-Smith, Dick – *George Speaks*
Mason, Simon – *The Quigleys*
McDonald, Megan – *The Sisters Club*
Singh, Vandana – *Younguncle Comes to Town*
Thompson, Melissa – *Keena Ford and the Second-Grade Mixup*

Non-Fiction

DePaola, Tomi – *26 Fairmount Avenue*
Paraskevas, Betty – *Junior Kroll and Company*
Scieszka, Jon – *Knucklehead: Tall Tales & Mostly True Stories of Growing Up*

Picture Books

Graham, Bob – *Dimity Dumpty: The Story of Humpty's Little Sister*
Henkes, Kevin – *Owen*
Hole, Stian – *Garmann's Summer*
McClintock, Barbara – *Adèle & Simon*
Perkins, Lynne Rae – *Pictures from Our Vacation*
Ransom, Jeanie Franz – *What Do Parents Do? (when you're not at home)*

Storytimes to Go Kit

Storytimes to Go Staff – *Families/Las Familias Kit*



Working Together – Onstage and Backstage

Many people work together to bring a story to life in the theatre. A cast of actors and actresses perform onstage, but many more people are working hard behind the scenes. Let's meet a few of them:

- The *Director* determines the concept and overall goals of the production, guides actors in understanding their roles, and works with scenery, lighting, costume, and sound designers to create a unified effect.
- The *Stage Manager* develops and uses a "cuesheet" for the whole play – like a script, the cuesheet lists everything that has to happen onstage and off, and when. During the show, the stage manager makes sure everybody follows their cues.
- *Designers* plan scenery, lighting, costumes, and sound based on the director's concept. The *Crew* build and operate everything you see – and hear! – onstage.

And the final theatre collaborator? YOU! Before the audience arrives, there is no play, only rehearsal – a play needs an *audience!* The role of an audience is to watch and listen carefully, and let the cast know that you appreciate their hard work by applauding when you like something you see.



North Carolina Standard Course of Study Theatre Goal 8.05:
Discuss the similarities and differences between live and recorded theatre events.

Write to us!



Encourage students to write a letter, telling us what they thought about the show.

Mail it to:

Children's Theatre of Charlotte
300 East Seventh Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Or email us at:

writetous@ctcharlotte.org



Special
Thanks
to our
Sponsors:



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References used in the creation of this guide:

<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/cuesheet/pdf/4thgrade.pdf>
http://www.nct-dragonsite.org/pdf/Guides/NCTFourth_Guide.pdf
<http://www.judyblume.com/books/fudge/tales.php>
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