Summary of Accidental Friends

Jonathan Small is a twelve-year-old student who is recovering from a head injury. He sits alone in his hospital room temporarily blinded by his head bandages. He has nothing to do but contemplate why his popular best friends have not come to see him. Enter Hilda Meisberg, a geek and overachiever, who pays Jonathan a surprise visit to find out why he hasn't replied to the witty letter she was made to write in class. She challenges Jonathan to get out of his chair and join her on a sightless adventure around the room. With her persistent encouragement, Jonathan discovers that he can function quite well using his sense of touch. He realizes that although Hilda may be unusual, she is also interesting and funny. However, when Jonathan finally gets out of the hospital, his actions are anything but friendly, and he may lose the one true yet accidental friend he ever had.

Audience expectations

Younger audiences should know watching live theatre isn’t like watching more familiar forms of entertainment: there is no pause or rewind button, there are no commercials for bathroom breaks, nor can they turn up the volume if someone else is talking. Encourage your students to listen and watch the play intently, so they may laugh and cheer for their favorite characters when it is appropriate. At the end of the play, your applause is an opportunity to thank the actors for their performance. Here are some other guidelines to remember as well:

• Respect other audience members. Stay seated and keep your hands to yourself.
• Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance.
• Photography and recording of the performance is prohibited by copyright law.

The BIG QUESTIONS about the show

1. Jonathan’s injury takes away his sight because of his bandages. What are some ways he learns to use his other senses?
2. What does it mean to be a friend? What are some ways that Hilda was a better friend to Jonathan than his other friends at school?
3. What are some ways Jonathan isn’t a very good friend to Hilda when he gets back to school? Why do you think he acts that way? What would you have done in his shoes and why?

Themes explored

acceptance, inclusion, influence and friendship
Every play Children's Theatre of Charlotte produces is created by a talented team of designers, technicians, actors and a director. As a class, discuss what you experienced when you saw the performance.

1. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story? What sort of set would you have designed?
2. What did you like about the costumes? Did the costumes help tell the story? What sort of costumes would you have designed?
3. Were there any actors who played more than one character? What are some ways you can be the same person but play different characters?

Meet the Resident Touring Company

ALEX AGUILAR could not be happier returning to perform Accidental Friends (Jonathan) and The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs (Pig #3 and various roles) at Children’s Theatre of Charlotte’s Resident Touring Company. Since obtaining his Bachelor of Arts degrees in Dance and Biology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, he has been working with Children’s Theatre of Charlotte as a Resident Actor and Teaching Artist. Aguilar has performed professionally in Charlotte since 2004. He has trained in dance at UNC Charlotte, various ballroom studios, as well as Debbie Allen Dance Academy where he received recognition. Previous theater credits include: Spelling 2-5-5 (Simon), Rapunzel (Rafi), Disney’s Aladdin Jr. (Aladdin Jr.), and Shrek: The Musical (Donkey). He would like to recognize the people in his life that continue to push him to follow his dreams and motivate his unique ambitions. “You are unique, and if that is not fulfilled, then something is lost.”

RASHEEDA MOORE is excited to work with Children’s Theatre of Charlotte’s Resident Touring Company for a third year. While touring she’s enjoyed such roles as Diane in Spelling 2-5-5, Nanny in The Velveteen Rabbit, and Violet in Beauty and the Beast. Rasheeda also enjoys working with Queen City Comedy on their various sketch comedy and improvisation projects. She earned her BA from Greensboro College, and her MFA from The University of Southern Mississippi.

WILL BURTON-EDWARDS is delighted to continue his work with the Resident Touring Company of Children’s Theatre of Charlotte. Last year he played Jake in Jennifer Overton’s Spelling 2-5-5, The Musician in Mike Kenney’s Rapunzel. Will loves children, and earnestly believes in the importance of exposing children to theater arts opportunities at a young age. He completed his undergraduate work at Sewanee: The University of the South in Tennessee, double majoring in Physics and Theater Arts. He’s so excited to share our work with all of you throughout this school year!

COURTNEY REASONER has her BA in Music with focus in vocal performance. She worked for three seasons with Columbia Children’s Theatre in Columbia, SC where favorite productions included: James and the Giant Peach (Spider); Miss Nelson is Missing (Allison); Goldilocks and the Three Bears (Goldilocks); and Peter Pan and Wendy (Peter Pan). Courtney has also worked as a soprano soloist at Church of the Apostles in Columbia and has music directed with Columbia Children’s Theatre. Other credits include: Beth March (Little Women); Sally (You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown); Ariel (The Little Mermaid); and Belle (Beauty and the Beast).