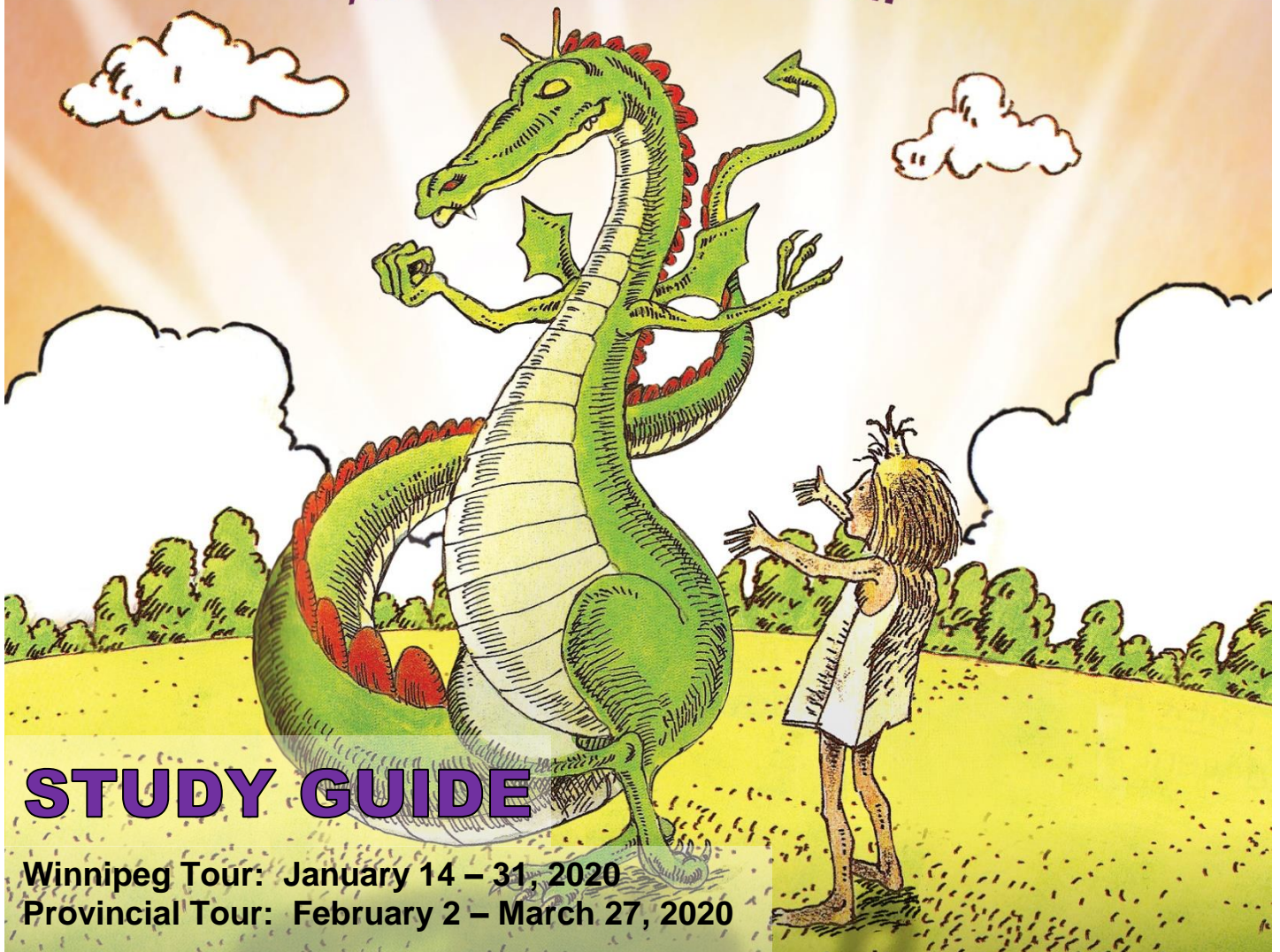


# THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS

Based on the story by **Robert Munsch**  
Adapted by **Alissa Watson**



## STUDY GUIDE

**Winnipeg Tour: January 14 – 31, 2020**

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# THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS

**Based on the story by Robert Munsch**  
**Adapted by Alissa Watson**

<b>Director:</b>	Alissa Watson
<b>Set and Costume Designer:</b>	Linda Beech
<b>Lighting Designer:</b>	Larry Isacoff
<b>Sound Designer &amp; Music:</b>	Christine Fellows
<b>Stage Manager:</b>	Katie Hoppa

## Featuring:

Johanna Burdon	Dragon
Dutchess Cayetano	Elizabeth
Chris Sousa	Ronald

The performance is approximately 45-50 minutes long.

Prairie Theatre Exchange is a not-for-profit theatre and an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT), and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.



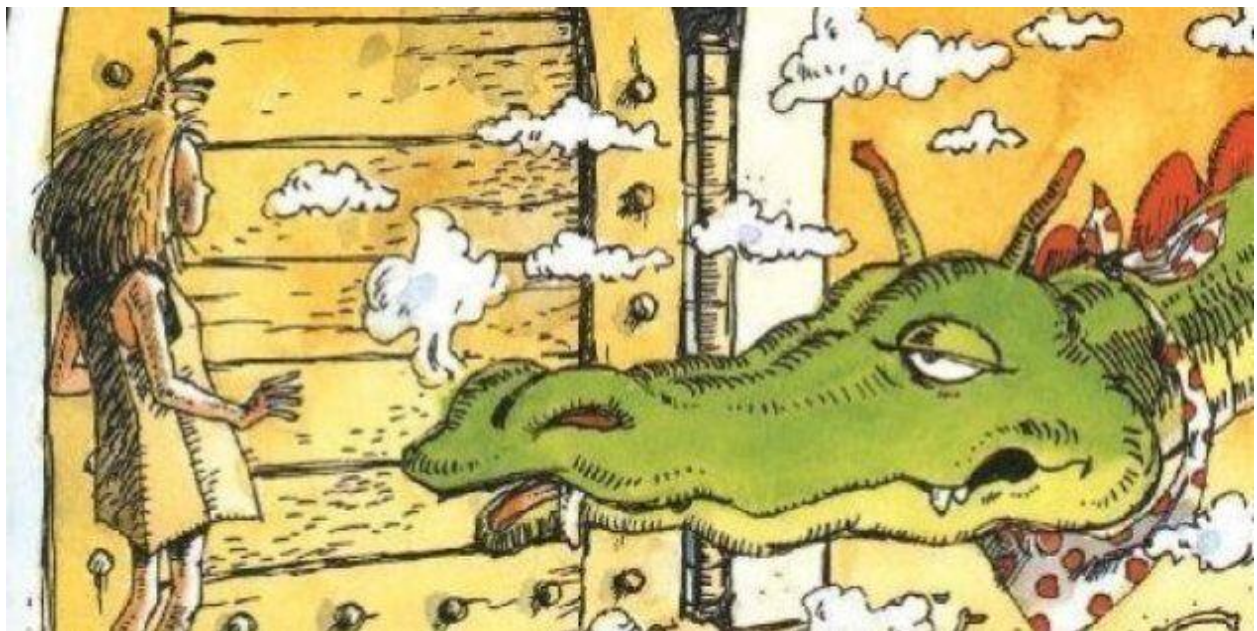
# ABOUT THE PLAY

## PLAY SYNOPSIS

Princess Elizabeth and Prince Ronald have been destined to be married since they were born and they grow up to be great friends. Elizabeth, along with her three older sisters, Julia, Marg and Bethany, is in training to be a Well-rounded Princess by practicing the “Princess-ples”: a princess is Positively Placid, Positively Patient, Positively Poised, Positively Precious and Positively Perfect. Her father, the King has plans for Elizabeth to be Queen one day.

Everything changes when the Dragon appears. In spite of the frequent dragon drills, conducted by Sir Puffy, Ronald is captured by the Dragon and taken away, leaving Elizabeth’s castle – and clothing – in smoking ruins. It’s up to her to track the Dragon down and rescue Prince Ronald. Along the way, she learns important lessons about being a Princess.

*"I hope all young readers will take from this that girls can be brave and fearless and strong — actually, that anyone can be brave and fearless and strong. To stand up to injustice where you see it ... and then to walk away from anyone who isn't worthy." – Franscesca Segal, novelist*



# ABOUT THE CREATORS

## Author – Robert Munsch

Robert Munsch was born June 11, 1945 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Although he struggled in school as a child, he had an early and lasting love of poetry. His first career path was that of a Jesuit priest, but he abandoned this after working at an orphanage, realizing that he wanted to work with children instead.

After some time, he and his wife moved to Guelph, Ontario to work at the lab preschool at the University of Guelph. He regularly put the children at the daycare to sleep by telling them stories he would create, but he never wrote those stories down. At the strong urging of his employer and wife – a children's librarian – he took the time to write the stories and have them published. The first accepted for publication was *Mud Puddle*. Subsequent bestsellers include *Love You Forever* and *Mortimer*.

Robert Munsch holds a Bachelor degree in History and a Masters degree in Anthropology. He has also studied at Elliot Pearson School of Child Studies at Tufts University.

For more information on Robert Munsch, visit his official website at [www.robertmunsch.com](http://www.robertmunsch.com)

## Adaptation & Direction – Alissa Watson

Once upon a time...Alissa was teaching music at Heritage School when director Arne MacPherson cast her in her first professional show, Debbie Patterson's Magical Mystery Munsch at PTE. On opening night, the show was delayed because her zipper broke and she had to be sewn into her costume; the rest is herstory. On her quest, Alissa played with amazing artists on many stages and was welcomed to a noble order – PTE's Emerging Playwrights Unit. But this is only the beginning....To royalty young and old: you already possess all the armour you need to start writing your own story.

### Please let us know how your students reacted to the show!

We'd love a letter from you, and we'd love letters from your students even more, especially if they tell us **how the show made them feel** and **what their favourite moments were!** Or share to our Facebook page, or tag us on Instagram (@PrairieTheatre). We'd be excited to see photos and artwork!

Send the letters to Seraph-Eden Boroditsky, Prairie Theatre Exchange,  
Unit Y300 – 393 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3H6  
OR email to: [edu.tour@pte.mb.ca](mailto:edu.tour@pte.mb.ca)

# **PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

## **Grades K-3**

### **Creative Drama**

#### **WHAT AM I?**

A game of animal charades! Act out an animal – like a horse or a bird -- with or without sounds. When someone thinks they know what that animal is, they join in acting out the same animal. When everyone is up and acting, ask them what they are – hopefully, they all guessed correctly, and they're all the same animal!

#### **ROARING GOOD TIMES**

Dragons like to roar. The Dragon in the play can talk, but not all dragons are able to speak words. Divide the students into pairs, and assign one as the dragon and the other as a squeaky mouse. The student who is the dragon can only roar. The student who is the mouse can only squeak. The dragon wants to let the mouse know that it wants to be friends even though it is terribly afraid of mice. The mouse wants to let the dragon know that it is lonely, sad and terribly shy of dragons. Once each pairing has had a chance to present their scene to the group, ask the students what they saw and heard in the different presentations.

#### **MR. MUNSCH SAYS**

In a twist on the classic “Simon Says” game, give the instructions to the class as Mr. Munsch, as in “Mr. Munsch says, stick out your tongue.” Anyone who doesn’t carry through an instruction prefaced by “Mr. Munsch says” is out. Anyone who obeys an instruction that ISN’T prefaced by “Mr. Munsch says” is out. Once the class gets the hang of the game, the children can take turns being Mr. Munsch for a few rounds.

#### **EMOTION IN MOTION**

Prior to the exercise prepare a set of cards with specific emotions printed on them (words such as “angry”, “sad”, “happy”, “hungry”, “thirsty”, “sleepy”, etc.).

Assemble the group in a semicircle. One by one the players are assigned an Emotion in Motion card. You may have to read the card to the player. Once the player has an understanding of what is on the card, he or she portrays the emotion through mime to the rest of the group. Upon completion of the player’s portrayal, the group is given three chances to guess the emotion that was put into motion. When conducting this exercise, the emphasis should be placed upon individual participation.

A variation of the exercise involves having the players use only facial expressions to convey the meaning on the card given them.

# PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

## Grades K-3

### Art

#### PAPER BAG ART

Elizabeth wears a paper bag as a dress, but she doesn't have time to personalize it, what with chasing after a dragon to rescue Prince Ronald. YOU can design Elizabeth a new paper bag dress. With a paper bag and a bevy of other crafty bits at hand, see what your imagination can come up with!

#### MASK MAGIC

Have the class create masks using paper plates (you can pre-cut eyeholes before the activity – the plates could also be cut in half for demi-masks that cover just the top part of the face). The children can decorate the masks to be people or animals, using crayons and objects like feathers, pompoms, glitter or whatever can be supplied. The masks could be attached on one side to a stick (like a chopstick), or you could thread string or yarn on each side to tie the mask behind the wearer's head.

This activity can be expanded to include story-telling with the masks. Have one child start telling a story using the mask character. One by one, each child adds to the story with their mask character, with one or two sentences each.

#### MILK CARTON PUPPETS

1. Collect various sizes of milk cartons to make a collection of free-standing hand puppets. Cut an opening in the lower back end of each carton for the puppeteer's hand. Cover the surface with coloured construction paper and decorate as desired.
2. Simple stand-up scenery can be constructed from cardboard boxes. You can add to the table-top puppet show by including buildings, furniture, vehicles, trees, etc. in your presentation.
3. To develop basic puppetry skills, have the puppeteers practice simple puppet movements: walking, running, bowing, nodding, laughing, crying, dancing, entering the stage, exiting the stage.
4. Encourage the puppeteers to speak clearly at all times even though they cannot be seen. It is the movement of the puppet, together with the voice of the puppeteer, which gives meaning to the actions on the stage.
5. Using a scripted piece for a puppet show can be awkward for young puppeteers. Have the puppeteers first become familiar with the story and then improvise the dialogue as they perform.

# PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

## Grades K-3

### Art

#### SOCK PUPPET MUNSCH

Re-create *The Paper Bag Princess* with puppets! Each student brings in a sock, and makes a puppet of one of the characters. The story can be read aloud as the puppets do the actions, or they can re-tell the story in their own words.

##### What you need:

one sock per student

scissors

index cards (one per student)

felt squares (one per student, same size as index cards) or colored construction paper

mini glue guns (for the adults to use) and glue sticks

decorations (googly eyes, fabric and/or felt pieces, puff balls, yarn, feathers, beads, buttons, etc.)

##### Instructions:

1. Hold the sock up by the toe end, and cut downward into the sock, about the length of your index finger – this will be the mouth opening.
2. Lay the index card down on the table, and trace your hand, fingers together, on the card. Close the hand trace where your wrist is – your hand trace will become the inside of the mouth.
3. Cut out the trace of your hand, and lay it on the felt piece. Trace the shape onto the felt, and cut it out.
4. Fold the index card cut out in half, to make the top and bottom of the mouth. Place the index card inside the sock opening that was cut. Using the glue gun, glue the sides of the sock over the edges of the card, forming the open mouth of the puppet.
5. Glue the felt cut out to line the inside of the mouth, covering the index card and the glued edges of the sock.
6. Put eyes, hair, hats, etc. on your puppet.

# PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

## Grades 4-6

### Drama

#### WAZAT-U-SAY?

What if all we had to communicate with was a mess of gibberish words? Using tone, facial expression, and body language, try and communicate using only non-language in the following games (note – no words that sound eerily like real words, or using real words in foreign languages!):

- *I want to go to...* - in pairs, have students deem one person “A” and one “B”. Person A can speak only gibberish to tell person B where they want to go. Take all the A’s out of the room and assign them different places that they want to go (ie. A restaurant, school, a farm). Once their partner has correctly guessed the location, the two can sit down to indicate that they’re done. Once all the pairs are sitting, switch roles and let the B’s communicate through gibberish.
- *I’ll teach you how!* – In the same type of pairings as the above activity, person A will come in to ‘teach’ person B how to do a certain thing (ie. Bake cookies, make the bed, etc), something with several steps to be taught. As soon as person B possibly can, they should start doing the activity along with person A, who can correct them as they go along.

With both of the above games, be sure to stress that more than miming should be used – don’t leave out the vocal expression through gibberish!

#### PAPER BAG DRAMATICS

There are two tie-ins to the play in this activity: the paper bag, and the creative mind! In small groups, students are given a paper bag containing three everyday objects. It is up to them to create and act out a story where all three items are used – and bonus points for using the bag they came in!

#### MOVE GROOVE

Let the players walk freely about the room. At regular intervals announce that everyone is to move as though they are:

happy...excited...curious...proud...afraid...sleepy...hungry...sick...bored

In the play, the actors had to show a lot of fast activity while actually moving in slow motion. Divide the players into pairs, and have each pair show the others how they would look moving on a bicycle, a pogo stick, in deep snow, against a strong wind, etc



# **PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

## **Grades 4-6**

### **Drama**

#### **DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION**

Place a box full of various costume pieces and small props at the upstage edge of the playing space. Have one player go to the box and select one article. The player then begins to create a scene with the article chosen. Other players go to the box one at a time, choose an article and join in the scene that has been started.

#### **PASS IT ON**

With the students sitting in a circle, the person at the beginning of the circle gets to choose a line out of a Robert Munsch book and whisper it to the person next to them. That student whispers what they heard in the ear of another person and so on. Once the last student in the circle hears the line, they tell everyone else what was said to them, and the first student reveals what that sentence was originally. This could also be done with sentences selected by the teacher and passed to the initiating student on a folded piece of paper.

#### **SHOW AND TELL**

In pairs, students take turns miming an object for the other person. Ask them to think of an everyday object, and to think of how heavy it is, how large or small, and how it is carried and used. They then try to show through action what it is they have. Their partner gets three tries to figure it out – they might guess first by saying “Oh, that’s a very nice rock”. If the object is not a rock, the person showing may say “If it was a rock, I couldn’t do this with it”, and try showing its use a little more. The guesser can reply with their next guess – “Oh, why that’s a nifty television”. After 3 guesses, they switch roles, and try another object.

# PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

## Grades 4-6

### Art

#### SOAP BUBBLE PAINTING

Dragons can be very colourful with lots of different shades in their scales. Painting with soap bubbles can create some very scale-like effects.

1. Mix different colours of tempera paint with a squirt of liquid dishwashing soap and a little water, each in its own large bowl. Mix well.
2. Put a straw into the mixture and blow hard until bubbles puff up above the rim of the bowl.
3. Lay a sheet of white paper gently on top of the bubbles, so that it is resting on the bowl. Don't press down.
4. Lift up, and you will have a bubble print. Repeat the process with the next colour. Remember to blow up the bubbles after each print. If the mixture is not bubbly enough, add more liquid soap.
5. Let the bubble print dry. Once it's dry, pick the prettiest, scaliest part, draw a dragon over it and cut it out. Or use the print as a background for a scene from the play by drawing and gluing on figures.

#### THE BROWN BAGGER MASK

1. Take a large paper bag and cut sight- and mouth-safety openings for the person who will wear the mask.
2. Place the bag on a flat surface and decorate it with pen, paint, crayon, etc. Additional materials can be fastened on with tape or glue to add more detail to the character of the mask.
3. If you wish to give the head of the mask a more rounded shape, push in the top corners of the bag and tape on some hair-like material.
4. Sometimes, wearing a mask lets you have more confidence or helps you to do or say things you normally wouldn't. Have each student write a short play about a character whose world changes whenever they put their mask on.

# PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

## Grades 4-6

### Art

#### SOCK PUPPET MUNSCH

Re-create *The Paper Bag Princess* with puppets! Each student brings in a sock, and makes a puppet of one of the characters. The story can be read aloud as the puppets do the actions, or they can re-tell the story in their own words.

##### What you need:

- one sock per student
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6. Put eyes, hair, hats, etc. on your puppet.

# PLAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

## Grades 4-6

### Language Arts

#### I LIKE WHO I AM

In *The Paper Bag Princess*, something bad happens to Elizabeth. She doesn't waste time waiting to be rescued – she goes off to rescue Prince Ronald! But when she frees him from the dragon's clutches, he rejects her because she doesn't look like he thinks a princess should. She decides that she's fine with who she is, and that Prince Ronald isn't worth her time because of his attitude. Discuss the ending of the story and ask the students to write a story of their own, with a hero (any gender) who isn't like everyone else, but comes out on top in the end.

#### IF I WERE A DRAGON

In *The Paper Bag Princess*, the Dragon obviously enjoys all the benefits that come with dragonhood, like speed and fire-breathing. Discuss with the students what they would like about being a dragon. What would they dislike about being a dragon? After the class shares ideas, have each student write a poem about being a dragon, and illustrate it (maybe with the soap bubble painting). The poem could also be the basis of a shadow or sock puppet play.

#### MY PERFECT CASTLE

At the beginning of the play, Elizabeth and her family live in a fabulous castle. Ask the students to write a story about what would be in their perfect castle. What colour would it be? How many rooms would it have? What kind of rooms would they be, like maybe a whole room of bouncy houses, or a movie theatre. Would it have a secret hideaway space? Twelve TV sets? A wall of fish tanks? Ask them to let their imaginations go wild, and then draw a picture to go with the stories.

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT – Discussion Questions

At the beginning of the play, Elizabeth's dad tells her to “save changing the world for when she is older”. Do you think young people can change the world? Why or why not?

Elizabeth dreams of becoming Prime Minister someday. Why do you think she wants to be Prime Minister instead of Queen?

The Fairy Godmother encourages Elizabeth to start “writing her own story”. What does it mean to you to “write your own story”? What do you want to write in the story of your life?



# RESOURCES

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