



## The Big Friendly Giant

By Roald Dahl

Adapted by David Wood

Directed by **David Saar**

Scenic Design by  
**Carey Wong**

Costume and Puppet Design by  
**Rebecca Akins**

Lighting Design by  
**Michael Eddy**

Sound Design by  
**Anthony Runfola**

Stage Manager  
**Samantha Ries**

### THE CAST

Gizzardgulper, Meatdripper,  
Mr. Tibbs.....Michael Arbuckle  
Boncruncher, Mary, Queen  
of Sweden, Rebecca..... Julie Cotton  
Bloodbottler, Dad, Head of the Army.....Jon Gentry  
The BFG.....Dwayne Hartford  
The Queen of England, Childchewer,  
Miss Plumridge.....Katie McFaden  
Sophie.....Debra K. Stevens  
Fleshlumpeater, Sam, Head of the  
Air Force, Headmaster.....Kyle Sorrell

Herberger Theater Center/Stage West -- March/April 2004

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Phoenix Arts Commission

## Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers to Childsplay's Production of The Big Friendly Giant

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

### The Story...

Sophie, an orphan girl, finds herself whisked away by a giant as she looks out her dormitory window one dark night. The only reason the giant snatched her is because he was afraid that if she told anyone about him, the "human beans" would have a giant hunt and put him in a zoo! Luckily for Sophie, this is the Big Friendly Giant and he never eats "human beans," only the horrible vegetable "snozzcumbers." He's a gentle, thoughtful, vegetarian giant. But the other mean giants eat people. Sophie soon learns that the BFG spends most of his time collecting and spreading good dreams by blowing them from a trumpet into the windows of boys and girls. Through the use of puppets and masks, this wonderful story of an unlikely friendship unfolds: Sophie finds a friend she can count on and the BFG finds a friend who can accept him for who he is. Sophie and the BFG soon discover that the other giants are planning to go to England and eat children who live in orphanages. They enlist the help of the Queen of England who calls out her army and air force to capture the bad giants and put them in a zoo. The Queen invites Sophie to live with her and asks the BFG to promise and visit each year on Sophie's birthday.

### A Word About Theater Etiquette...

Whether going to the theater or having theater come to you, there are a few important things to communicate to your students before seeing a play. Since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students, please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance.

- ◆ Stay seated during the performance.
- ◆ Remember that the performers can hear and see the audience just like the audience can hear and see the performers. Be respectful to the performers and other students in the audience by not talking and staying in your own space.
- ◆ Appropriate responses such as clapping or laughter are always welcome!

**"I cannot be right all the time. Quite often I is left instead of right."**

~The BFG to Sophie

Things to Talk About  
and do Before Seeing  
the Show...

**About the Author: Roald**

**(ROO-ahl) Dahl** was born in Llandaff, South Wales, to Norwegian parents Harald and Sofie (Hesselberg) Dahl.



After graduating from Repton School in 1933, he went to work for the Shell Oil Company of East Africa until World War II started in 1939. He then served in the Royal Air Force as a fighter pilot. In 1940 Dahl's plane was hit by machine gun fire, and he was severely injured. It took him six months to recover. Dahl was then reassigned to Washington, D.C., and it was there that a meeting with C.S. Forester drove him to writing. He started writing short stories. For 15 years he wrote for adults, but thinking of his children, he began writing longer and funnier stories, which he published from 1960 on. His first two children's books, *James and the Giant Peach* (1961) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) were, and still are, tremendously popular. He wrote many other books, making him one of the best-known writers for children all around the world. He was married to actress Patricia Neal for 30 years and together they had five children. In 1983, they divorced and he married Felicity Crosland. Roald Dahl was given the World Fantasy Award in 1983. He died on the November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1990.

**Read *The BFG*!** Read the book as a class in one (or more) of the following ways: by reading aloud to the class, by assigning students different chapters to read aloud, or getting the book on tape and listening to it as a class. You could even compare/contrast with the video version of the story (check the library, video store or amazon.com).

**About Dreams:** Where do dreams come from? Why do we have dreams? There are many different ideas about dreams and why they occur. Early impressions of dreams were that they came from some greater power or divine intervention. Modern theories suggest that dreams are a reflection of our subconscious thoughts and feelings. Other cultures have different beliefs about dreams. Native Americans, for example, share that tradition of dream catchers. These spider web-like trinkets are said to catch bad dreams before they can get into your head. The BFG collects dreams and blows them through a trumpet into the thoughts of sleeping children. His focus is on pleasant dreams but, as we all know, nightmares are all too common, especially in children.

**Talk about dreams** with your class. Ask children to share dreams, both pleasant and scary, with the class.

**Page to Stage:** *The BFG* was adapted for the stage by playwright David Wood. Reading the book, it's hard to imagine how it could be translated to the stage because of the fantastic images and ideas. A team of designers worked with the director to create the world of the play. The scenic designer, costumer designer, lighting designer and sound designer all work together to help bring the play to life. Here are preliminary costume and mask designs for the Queen of England and the giants (by Rebecca Akins):



**About Puppets and Masks:**

Puppets can be made out of just about anything that an actor can bring to life. A doll can become a puppet just by manipulating its limbs and having its eyes focus on whomever or whatever it's talking to. Puppets can be as small as a finger puppet or so large that it takes more than one puppeteer to make it come to life. Puppets can be on sticks or rods, shadow puppets (light is used to project the puppet's shape onto a wall or screen), marionettes (puppets with strings), finger puppets, glove puppets (one character per finger or hand) and just about anything else that can be given life by the puppeteer. When you watch the play, notice how the actors manipulate the puppets or bring them to life. Notice how your focus as an audience member remains on the puppet even though you can often see the actor. When an actor wears a mask, they must assume that the mask becomes their face. The mask needs to be brought to life in much the same way as the puppet. Actors focus on communicating through body language and movement when wearing a mask because their facial expressions can no longer be seen.



The masks in *The BFG* were designed to be worn on top of the actor's head (like a helmet). This type of mask ends up being an extension of the actor's body and the actor must learn to use the mask as if it is his/her own head! The actor learns how to focus the eyes and give the mask expression through movement.

After the performance. . .

### Things to Talk About:

- ▶ All plays have three P's: *People* in a *Place* with a *Problem*. Where does the play take place? Who are the people? What are the problems?
- ▶ Of the many design elements, (costumes, lights, scenery, puppets, sound) which was your favorite and why?
- ▶ If you could play any character in the play, which would you choose? Why?
  - ▶ How is the play different from the book? How is it the same?
  - ▶ Sophie goes to the Queen of England to ask for help. Who would you ask for help if you were facing a very serious situation?
  - ▶ The other giants are downright nasty to the BFG. What choices could he make to stand up to their bullying? What choices can you make when someone is nasty to you?

### Things To Do:

Creative Drama/

Theater:

- ▶ In the play, "snozzcumbers" are horrible tasting vegetables and "froboscottle" is a beverage consumed in Giant Country that produces quite a bit of gas. Write and perform a commercial for either of these products. Decide whom you are trying to sell to and how you will try and sell your product. Share your commercials with your class. Videotape them if you can!

Creative Writing:

- ▶ The BFG use all kinds of interesting made up words that have some sort of meaning—like "disgustorous" instead of disgusting. Go through the book and write down as many of these words as possible. Then, write down definitions of the words.

Next, create your own made up words complete with definitions. Put them all together in a dictionary that you can display in the classroom!

**"Words is oh such a twitch-tickling problem to me. I know exactly what words I is wanting to say, but somehow they come out all squiff-squiddly." ~BFG**

- ▶ Create a formal invitation from the Queen of England to Sophie and the BFG inviting them to an awards ceremony at which the BFG will receive his Medal of Gigantic Courage. Write it with your best penmanship on decorative paper! Embellish with royal designs. Display in your classroom!

Literature:

- ▶ Read other books by Roald Dahl! In small groups, choose a book that you can read aloud together. Put together a presentation for the class that includes a summary of the story and what you liked and/or disliked about the book.

Social Studies:

- ▶ Find out facts about the Queen of England and the British Monarchy! Assign groups to research different areas of the Queen's life: her family, what a workday is like, her different homes (Buckingham Place, Windsor Palace, etc.), her pets, her hobbies, the palace art collections and what her formal costumes are like. Create a presentation with your group and have a Royal sharing day. Why not serve tea and scones?

Science:

- ▶ Make Your Own Froboscottle! Mix a little green food coloring with cream soda in a three liter bottle and make your own soda label complete with warnings and ingredients (for ideas on warnings

and ingredients look at real labels on products) and attach it to the bottle. Careful of whizzpopping!

Geography:

- ▶ Create a map of the places in the play! Where is Giant Country in relationship to London and Buckingham Palace where the queen lives? Where is Sweden on the map? Look at real maps for ideas on how to use scale and on how to create symbol key.

Math:

- ▶ What if you were a giant...? With a partner, take turns measuring each other's height in inches. How tall would you be if you were 2 times taller than you are? ...3 times taller than you are? What about 4 times taller than you are? Now take all of the different measurements and convert them into feet and inches.

Art:

- ▶ Divide into groups of three or four and choose one of the mean giants from the story (one group can create the BFG). Using butcher block paper, cut a section at least 10 feet long. Working together, draw, paint, or color your own version of the giant. Use other materials (fabric, string, leaves, cotton balls, etc.) to add details to your giants. Display the giants in the hallway outside of your classroom or in some other area of the school.
  - ▶ Collect a variety of glass jars (from jam, olives, salsa). Soak them so the labels come off and create your own individual Dream Jar. Decorate it with glitter, ribbon, buttons, words, etc. Make another Dream Jar for the classroom. Then think of happy dreams and write them down and put them in the jar. Take turns pulling out a dream a day and sharing with the class!

**If everyone is making whizzpoppers, then why not talk about it? ~BFG**

## The Big Friendly Giant Booklist/Media list

Prepared by Tim Wadham,  
Children's Services Coordinator  
and the Children's Services Staff of the  
Maricopa County Library District



### Recommended Reading

If you liked the play you should read the book on which it was based, *The BFG*, by Roald Dahl

### You will also love these other famous books by Roald Dahl:

*Matilda*  
*The Witches*  
*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*  
*Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*  
*Danny the Champion of the World*  
*James and the Giant Peach*

### To learn more about the author of the BFG, you might like these biographies:

*Boy: Tales of Childhood*  
*Going Solo*

### For younger readers, Roald Dahl has written:

*Esio Trot*  
*The Fantastic Mr. Fox*  
*The Twits*

### Recommended Videos:

*The BFG*  
*James and the Giant Peach*  
*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*  
*Matilda*



All materials are available through the Maricopa County Library District. Check it out!

## Internet Sites of Interest:

[www.roalddahl.com](http://www.roalddahl.com)  
The Official Roald Dahl Web Site

[www.roalddahlfans.com](http://www.roalddahlfans.com)  
More on Roald Dahl

[www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Academy/4613/dahl.html](http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Academy/4613/dahl.html)  
A very detailed biography of Roald Dahl

[www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk)  
The official site of the British Monarchy



[www.royalcourt.se/net/Royal+Court](http://www.royalcourt.se/net/Royal+Court)  
The official site of the Swedish monarchy



\*Final scenic design model for

*The BFG*

by Carey Wong

## About Childsplay...

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.

We love to hear from our audience members!  
Send letters, drawings or reviews to:



Childsplay, Inc.  
PO Box 517  
Tempe, AZ 85280  
Call us at 480-350-8101 or  
1-800-583-7831 (in-state)  
Email us at:  
[info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org)  
Web Site:  
[www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

## Arizona Academic Standards:

Your visit to the theater and the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from the Arizona Department of Education K-12 Academic Standards. Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to several standards. For example, a Math activity on creating Story Problems can fulfill standards in the areas of math, language arts and the arts (theater).

To access the K-12 standards go to:  
[www.ade.state.az.us/standards/contentstandards.asp](http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/contentstandards.asp)

We are always looking for ways to help you prepare your students for the theatre experience and at the same time fulfill curriculum and standards requirements. If you have any suggestions as to how we might improve in this area, please email Katie McFadzen at [kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org](mailto:kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org)

We appreciate your input!