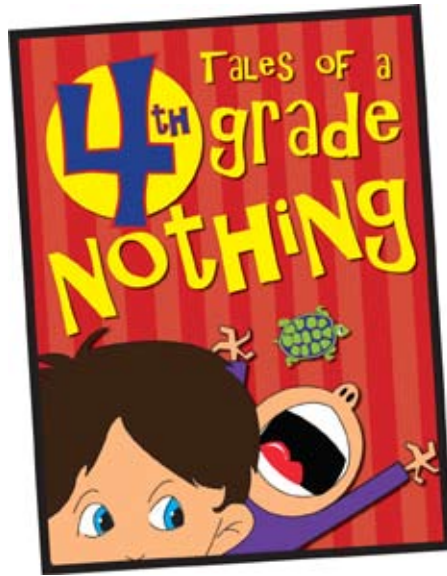


South Coast Repertory

to the
2008-09 Theatre for Young Audiences Production
of



Based on the Book by
JUDY BLUME

Adapted for the Stage by
BRUCE MASON

Directed by
JESSICA KUBZANSKY

Honorary Producer **THE FIELDSTONE FOUNDATION**

Prepared by Linda Sullivan Baity, PhD
Theatre for Young Audiences Coordinator

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Part I: THE PLAY

Making Something Out Of *Nothing*

Nine-year-old Peter Hatcher feels like a big fat zero. Living in the same house with his super-annoying baby brother (who gets called Fudge because his real name is Farley Dexter) makes Peter crazy. Fudge screams, kicks, bangs, pesters, and messes stuff up all the time. Whether he's throwing a temper tantrum in a shoe store or scribbling on Peter's social studies homework, Fudge is never far from getting himself—and Peter—in big, big trouble. Yet somehow, this pint-sized terror manages to get away with murder while remaining the apple of every grown-up's eye.

Pity Poor Peter Hatcher. All he wants is to be a good student, play with his pet turtle, Dribble, and lead a calm, peaceful life with his friends and family without the World's Worst Little Brother always ruining everything. When Fudge commits the ultimate sin which results in the untimely demise of Dribble, Peter decides he's finally had enough. It's time for him to prove this fourth grade nothing is really a first class something!

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing is based on Judy Blume's iconic children's book published in 1972. It was the first in a series of popular "Fudge" books, which also includes *Superfudge* (1980), *Fudge-a-Mania* (1990), and *Double Fudge* (2002). The book was adapted to the stage by Bruce Mason in a script commissioned by Seattle Children's Theatre in 1987. Mason's dramatization utilizes Peter as the play's narrator, which makes perfect sense stylistically as Blume's book is written in first-person from Peter's point of view.

The cast for *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* features Daniel Chaffin as Peter and Dan Parker as Fudge, as well as Tom Shelton, Jeanne Sakata, Larry Bates and Brenda Canela playing multiple roles. Jessica Kubzansky, whose award-winning stagings are seen up and down the West Coast, is making her SCR mainstage directing debut with this opening production of Theatre for Young Audiences for 2008-09.

Performances of *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* begin November 7 on the Argyros Stage and continue through November 23. More than 3,000 local elementary students will attend free weekday matinees which are made possible through the generous support of Honorary Producer The Fieldstone Foundation.

Judy Blume: In Her Own Words

How do you come up with such great ideas for plots, like in *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*?

I like to create characters and just see what will happen to them when I let them loose!

When did you get the idea for the characters of Fudge and Peter?

Fudge is based on my son, Larry, when he was a toddler. A very interesting child. Peter is from my imagination. At least, I think he is.

Will you be adding books to the Fudge series?

I have a seven-year-old grandson who MUST have another Fudge book and it MUST be dedicated to him. So, I am trying really hard to come up with another adventure for the Hatcher family. In fact, that's what I'm thinking about doing next.

Why do you like to write about families?

What else is there? I like all the drama about families, and we all come from families, don't we? For me, character is everything. I'm interested in people and how they cope and how they relate.

Do you prefer writing for children or adults?

I have no preference. It's just a question of whose story I'm telling. But if I could only write for one audience, I'd choose kids.

When you first started writing, did you have any doubts about whether you could do it? What kept you going?

I was filled with doubts. At night I would think, I'll never get anything published. But in the morning I'd wake up and

say I CAN do this. It's hard to deal with rejection, but if you write it's a fact of life.

What was your favorite subject when you were in school?

English. And drama. I was always dramatic! My aunt called me "Camille."

What advice would you give to an aspiring young author?

Keep writing! Don't let anyone ever discourage you. Just keep on going because you can't help yourself. You have to write! No one chooses to be a writer. You write because you can't *not* write.

Do you think that your books encourage kids to read?

Well, I hope so. I think any book that someone likes encourages that person to pick up another, and that's how readers are made.

(Excerpted from an interview conducted with Judy Blume by students on www.scholastic.com)

Back to the Book

"Some people might think that my mother is my biggest problem. She doesn't like turtles and she's always telling me to scrub my hands. That doesn't mean just run them under the water. *Scrub* means I'm supposed to use soap and rub my hands together. Then I've got to rinse and dry them. I ought to know by now. I've heard it enough!

But my mother isn't my biggest problem. Neither is my father. He spends a lot of time watching commercials on TV. That's because he's in the advertising business. These days his favorite commercial is the one about Juicy-O. He wrote it himself. And the president of the Juicy-O company liked it so much he sent my father a whole crate of Juicy-O for our family to drink. It tastes like a combination of oranges, pineapples, grapefruits, pears, and bananas. (And if you want to know the truth, I'm getting pretty sick of drinking it.) But Juicy-O isn't my biggest problem either.

My biggest problem is my brother, Farley Drexel Hatcher. He's two-and-a-half years old. Everybody calls him Fudge. I feel sorry for him if he's going to grow up with a name like Fudge, but I don't say a word. It's none of my business.

Fudge is always in my way. He messes up everything he sees. And when he gets mad he throws himself flat on the floor and he screams. *And* he kicks. *And* he bangs his fists. The only time I really like him is when he's sleeping. He sucks four fingers on his left hand and makes a slurping noise.

When Fudge saw Dribble he said, "Ohhhhh . . . see!"

And I said, "That's *my* turtle, get it? *Mine!* You *don't* touch him."

Fudge said, "No touch." Then he laughed like crazy.

(Excerpted from Chapter 1 "The Big Winner")

And the winner is ... *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*

- 1983 Massachusetts Children's Book Award
- 1981 Great Stone Face Award, *New Hampshire Library Council*
USAREUR Kinderbuch Award, U.S. Army & 7th Army, Heidelberg, Germany
- 1980 West Australian Young Reader's Book Award
North Dakota Children's Choice Award
- 1978 Rhode Island Library Association Award
Georgia Children's Book Award
Massachusetts Children's Book Award
- 1978 Arizona Young Reader's Award, *Arizona State University*
- 1975 Pacific Northwest Library Association Young Reader's Choice
- 1972 Charlie May Swann Children's Book Award

PART II: IN THE CLASSROOM

Before the Show: Read About It! Think About It!

These introductory exercises are designed to prepare students for their visit to SCR. Try to complete as many as possible before seeing the production. The more they learn about what they're going to see, the more benefit they are sure to derive from the experience. (Please note: Parenthetical data refer to specific domains, strands, and standards for Grades 3 and 4 in the curriculum areas of English-Language Arts or Visual and Performing Arts.)

1. Introduce Judy Blume's novel *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* to the class by either reading aloud, or asking students to read aloud. **(Reading Grades 3 & 4 - 2.2, 2.3)**
2. Ask students to:
 - a. Identify the main events of the plot, their causes, and their effects on future actions. **(Reading Grades 3 & 4 - 3.2)**
 - b. Discuss the traits of major characters, their motivations and contributions to the dramatic action. **(Reading Grade 3 & 4 - 3.3; Theatre Grade 4 - 1.2)**
 - c. Identify speakers or narrators. **(Reading Grade 3 - 3.6)**
 - d. Determine underlying theme or message. **(Reading Grade 3 - 3.4)**
3. Discuss the differences between realism and fantasy. Have them talk about what they like and dislike about these two literary genres, identifying universal themes, character types, and actions. **(Reading Grade 3 - 3.2, Grade 4 - 3.1)**
4. Allow students to retell or dramatize this story by employing different vocal tones and attitudes to explore multiple possibilities in a live performance. **(Theatre Grade 3 - 2.1; Grade 4 - 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1)**
5. Examine the structural differences between fiction and drama. **(Theatre Grades 3 & 4 - 1.1; Reading Grades 3 & 4 - 3.1)**
6. Explore what it means to "adapt" literature from one form to another, specifically from fiction to drama. Discuss various ways that the content of books might have to change in order to be suitable for staging using information in the book, as well as prior knowledge of the conventions of live theatre. **(Reading Grade 3 - 3.1; Theatre Grades 3 & 4 - 1.1)**
7. Ask students to make predictions about the play they're going to see based upon their knowledge of the source text and its film adaptations, as well as other works by Judy Blume which they may have read or seen on film. For example, not every character or event in the book appears in the play. Which ones do you expect to see onstage? How do you imagine the scenery, costumes and props? Will there be music? If so, how will it sound? **(Theatre Grades 3 & 4 - 1.1; Reading Grade 3 - 2.4; Grade 4 - 2.3)**
8. Listen for these vocabulary words in the play: *museum, commercials, advertising, executive, racket, client, comfortable, adorable, vanish, reptile, delicate, manners, supervise, ignore, apologize, decorations, entertain, hollering, appointment, committee, refuse, embarrassed, bossy, monorail, pollution, expensive, transportation, microscope, agency, manage, progressing, disgusting, situation*
9. "You know, if I decided to stop eating one day, probably no one would ever even notice!" Ask students if they have ever felt the way Peter Hatcher does? What did they do about it?
10. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* takes place at various locations around New York City. Discuss ways in which life in a big city—particularly that big city—is different from life in Orange County, California.

After the Show: Talk About It! Write About It!

1. Discuss ways in which the play differed from students' predictions, paying special attention to the differences between written, film and stage versions. **(Listening and Speaking Grade 3 - 1.1, 2.0; Grade 4 - 1.0, 2.1)**
2. Ask students to use the vocabulary of theatre (see Part IV of this guide) to describe the performance. **(Theatre Grade 3 - 1.1, 4.1; Grade 4 - 1.1, 4.3)**
 - a. How did the actors look (costumes, makeup, movement)?
 - b. How did the adult actors prepare to play the child roles?
 - c. How did the stage look (scenery, lighting, props)?
(Visual Art Grade 3 - 1.5, 4.1; Grade 4 - 3.1, 4.1)
 - d. How did the play sound (music, singing, special effects)?
(Music Grades 3 & 4 - 4.1, 4.2, 5.1)
3. Give students an opportunity to create their own variations of the play:
 - a. Tell the story from the point of view of another character.
 - b. Choose another ending by rewriting the last scene.
 - c. Add a brand new character and see what happens.
 - d. Imagine a continuation: what happens after the last scene?Present to the class as dramatic interpretations. **(Speaking Applications Grade 3 - 2.2)**
4. Discuss the concept of narrator and first-person storytelling. What was the students' response to Peter's direct address of the audience? **(Reading Grade 3- 3.6)**
5. Story circle – One person begins a story featuring one character from *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* and one character from another book by Judy Blume that students are familiar with. The first person stops after a few sentences. The next person picks up the story and continues it, then stops. Next person adds to it and so on until the tale comes to a resolution. You may wish to provide a title to guide the exercise.
6. Ask students to come up with definitions for the vocabulary words listed in Question #8 on the previous page. Have students locate each of the words in the book and/or script in order to discover how context offers clues to their meaning. **(Reading Grades 3 & 4 - 1.0)**
7. Have students imagine that they are reporters interviewing one of the characters in the play about the Hatcher family. Write and present orally to the class a brief newspaper article containing descriptions of concrete sensory details to present and support their impressions of people, places, things or experiences. **(Reading Grade 3 - 2.1, 2.2; Speaking Applications Grade 3 - 2.1, 2.3)**
8. Write letters of thanks to THE FIELDSTONE FOUNDATION describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, and what they enjoyed most about their visit to SCR. **(Writing Grade 3-2.3; Grade 4-2.1; Written and Oral Conventions Grade 3 & 4-1.0)**

Please send all letters to:

South Coast Repertory
Attn: TYA
PO Box 2197
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197

PART III: AT THE THEATRE

Welcome to the Argyros

The 336-seat Argyros Stage is the newest theatre space at SCR. It opened in 2002 with a huge celebration and we are delighted that thousands of Orange County school children fill this state-of-the-art facility each season to enjoy our Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Argyros is a proscenium theatre designed to provide audiences a feeling of intimacy, with no seat more than 39 feet from the stage.



Theatre Etiquette

Theatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. The artists and staff of South Coast Repertory are creating a special new world for you to visit. When you walk into the theatre, you will feel that behind the curtain lies the secret of that new world which is about to come to life before your eyes. Sometimes it's so exciting, you can barely hold still. But remember that once the play begins, you have a very important job to do. Everybody in the theatre is a part of the play. You are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage. Remember, you're all in the same room. They can SEE you, HEAR you, FEEL you, just as you can SEE, HEAR, and FEEL them. Your attention, involvement, responses, and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

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Student Tips for Theatre Trips

- * Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- * Listen carefully to the SCR staff member who will board your bus with last-minute tips.
- * Take your seat in the theatre *before* going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- * Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- * Please do not stand up, walk around, or put your feet on the seat in front of you.
- * Absolutely no chewing gum, eating, or drinking in the building.
- * No backpacks, cameras, or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- * Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- * Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- * After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

Filling the Bill

Everyone who attends a Theatre for Young Audiences performance at SCR receives a program, also called a playbill. Patrons at weekend public performances receive their programs from the ushers upon entering the theatre. At the conclusion of each weekday matinee, teachers will be given programs for their students which can be distributed back in the classroom.

In addition to the customary information about the play and the players, the program for *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* contains these features and activities that students will have fun working on after the show, either in class or at home on their own.

“Writing the Book” – the author’s account of her creative process
“Growing up Judy” – autobiographical insight
“Don’t Try This at Home” – explaining why owning baby turtles is not a good idea
“Orange County’s Highway in the Sky” – a look at the Disneyland monorail
“Foolproof Fudge” – a no-cook, kid-friendly recipe
“Double Trouble” – two-step word search game using vocabulary words
“Buy Now” – design and draw your own Juicy-O television commercial

PART IV: EDUCATION STATION

Five Strands of Arts Education

Students in a comprehensive program are expected to master the standards of an arts discipline, which includes the following five strands:

1.0 Artistic Perception refers to processing, analyzing and responding to sensory information through the use of the language and skills unique to dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

2.0 Creative Expression involves creating a work, performing and participating in the arts disciplines. Students apply processes and skills in composing, arranging and performing a work and use a variety of means to communicate meaning and intent in their own original formal and informal works.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context concerns the work students do toward understanding the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of an arts discipline. Students analyze roles, functions, development in the discipline, and human diversity as it relates to that discipline.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing includes analyzing and critiquing works of dance, music, theatre or visual arts. Students apply processes and skills to productions or performances. They also critically assess and derive meaning from the work [. . .] and from performances and original works based on the elements and principles of an arts discipline.

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications involves connecting and applying what is learned in one arts discipline and comparing it to learning in the other arts, other subject areas and careers. Students develop competencies and creative skills that contribute to lifelong learning.

From the California Visual and Performing Arts Framework

Education in the arts is essential for all students. California’s public school system must provide a balanced curriculum, with the arts as part of the core for all students, kindergarten through grade twelve, no matter what the students’ abilities, language capacities or special needs happen to be. Each of the arts disciplines maintains a rich body of knowledge that enables the students to understand their world in ways that support and enhance their learning in other core subjects. In addition, through this rich body of knowledge, students learn how each of the arts contributes to their own sensitivity of the aesthetic qualities of life. Students learn to see what they look at, to hear what they listen to, feel what they touch and to understand more clearly what they integrate into their own experience.

Basic Theatre Vocabulary (Theatre 1.1)

Acting The process by which an individual interprets and perform the role of an imagined character.

Action The core of a theatre piece; the sense of forward movement created by the sequence of events and the physical and psychological motivations of characters.

Ad-Lib To extemporize stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.

Apron The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.

Backstage The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.

Balcony An upper floor of seats projecting out over the main seating area of a theatre.

Blocking The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.

Boxes Seats separated from the main seating area located on the upper level near the stage.

Box office A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.

Business Any action performed on stage.

Character The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another's identity.

Choreography The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

Conflict The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.

Costume The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.

Cross The actor's movement from one stage location to another.

Cue The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.

Dialogue The stage conversation between characters.

Diction The clarity with which words are pronounced.

Director The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.

Downstage The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part further away.

Ensemble A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.

Flats Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.

Green Room A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room's name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or patch of grass).

Improvisation The spontaneous use of movement and speech to create a character.

Lobby The public waiting area outside the theatre space.

Mezzanine Lower level seating area beneath the balcony overhang.

Monologue A solo speech during which the character reveals personal thoughts.

Narrator A character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience.

Orchestra Lower level seating area immediately in front of the stage.

"Places" Direction given by the Stage Manager for actors to be in position before each act begins.

Plot The "what happens" in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

Project To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

Props All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

Proscenium Stage A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage.

Run Length of time the play will be presented (i.e two weeks, two months, two years).

Script The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

Set All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

Stagecraft The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e., scenery, lighting, costumes, and props.

Stage Left That part of the stage to the actor's left when the actor faces the audience.

Stage Manager The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

Stage Right That part of the stage to the actor's right when the actor faces the audience.

Strike Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

Theme The central thought, idea, or significance of the action of a play.

Upstage The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.

PART V: RESOURCES

Books by Judy Blume (chronological order)

The One In The Middle Is the Green Kangaroo (Bradbury Press, 1969, paperback Dell)
Iggie's House (Bradbury Press, 1970, paperback Dell)
Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret (Bradbury Press, 1970, paperback Dell)
Then Again, Maybe I Won't (Bradbury Press, 1971, paperback Dell)
Freckle Juice (Four Winds Press, 1971, paperback Dell)
It's Not the End of the World (Bradbury Press, 1972, paperback Dell)
Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing (Dutton, 1972, paperback Dell, paperback Penguin, 2003)
Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great (Dutton, 1972, paperback Dell paperback Penguin, 2003)
Deenie (Bradbury Press, 1973, paperback Dell)
Blubber (Bradbury Press, 1974, paperback Dell)
Forever (Bradbury Press, 1975, paperback Dell)
Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself (Bradbury Press, 1977, paperback Dell)
Wifey (Putnam, 1978, paperback Pocket Books paperback Berkley Trade, 2005)
Superfudge (Dutton, 1980, paperback Dell paperback Penguin, 2003)
Tiger Eyes (Bradbury Press, 1981, paperback Dell)
The Judy Blume Diary (Dell, 1981)
Smart Women (Putnam, 1983, paperback Pocket Books paperback Berkley Trade, 2005)
The Pain and the Great One (Bradbury, 1984, paperback Dell)
Letters to Judy: What Kids Wish They Could Tell You (Putnam, 1986, paperback Pocket Books)
Just as Long as We're Together (Orchard Books, 1987, Delacorte Press as *BFF*, 2007)
Fudge-a-mania (Dutton, 1990, paperback Dell, paperback Penguin, 2003)
Here's to You, Rachel Robinson (Orchard Books, 1993, paperback Dell)
Summer Sisters (Delacorte Books, 1998, paperback Dell)
Places I Never Meant to Be [Ed. Judy Blume] (Simon and Shuster, 1999, paperback Simon and Shuster)
Double Fudge (Dutton, 2002, paperback Penguin 2003)
Soupy Saturdays with the Pain and the Great One (Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2007)

Web Links

Additional Study Guides:

Coterie Theatre

http://www.coterietheatre.org/TOA4GN_Resource_Guide.pdf

Dallas Children's Theater

http://www.dct.org/Portals/0/docs/Tales_SG.pdf

Kennedy Center

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/cuesheet/pdf/4thgrade.pdf>

Nashville Children's Theatre

http://www.nashvillechildrenstheatre.com/pdf/Guides/NCTFourth_Guide.pdf

Judy Blume:

Author Bookshelf

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/authors/results.pperl?authorid=2611>

Books and Authors in Your Classroom

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/read.jsp>

Downloadable Files for Teachers

<http://www.gigglepotz.com/themes-nothing.htm>

Judy Blume's Website

<http://www.judyblume.com>

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing: A Telecollaborative Literacy Project

<http://www.mskreul.com/Tales/index.htm>

Teacher Resource File on Judy Blume

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/blume.htm>

New York City:

Empire State Building's Kids FAQ

http://www.esbnyc.com/kids/kids_faq.cfm?CFID=14220&CFTOKEN=1408

New York.com's Virtual Tour Bus

http://www.newyork.com/attraction/attraction_vr.html?cat=attraction

Official Website of Central Park's Kids Day Out Tour

<http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/photogalleries/kidsdayouttour>

Statue of Liberty Photo Tour from nyctourist.com

<http://www.nyctourist.com/liberty2.htm>

World Book Encyclopedia

http://www.worldbook.com/wb/Students?content_spotlight/reptiles/facts

Pets:

ASPCA

http://www.aspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=kids_pc_bird_home

American Veterinary Association

<http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/livingwithpets/livingwithpetsfl.asp>

American Humane Association

<http://www.americanhumane.org/kids/moretips.htm>

Humane Society of the United States

http://www.hsus.org/wildlife/wildlife_news/baby_turtles_and_children_a_dangerous_combination.html

San Diego Zoo

<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/animalbytes/t-turtle.html>