

# lifeline



## T H E A T R E

Big Stories, Up Close

Winter 2009

Dear Educators,

Thank you for bringing your students to our second KidSeries production of 2009-10, *The Last of the Dragons!* We are delighted you have chosen Lifeline Theatre, and we hope your experience here will be fun, entertaining, and educationally rewarding.

This year we have been offering a new-and-improved version of our Study Guide this year, here enclosed. Additions and changes include a thorough play synopsis, cast bios, writing and drama activities, and a number of easy-to-copy worksheets for your class, which are best used **after** your field trip as a way to bring the learning back to the classroom. The cover of the guide also includes a suggestions for preparing your class for the performance and discussion questions to lead a critical review with your class. On the whole, we hope you will find the packet beneficial towards enhancing your Lifeline experience and allow you to integrate the play's themes with your classroom teaching

Last but not least, towards the back there is a teacher comment form and student review sheet, ready for copying. **We ask that you PLEASE send back your teacher comment form, once completed!** Your feedback is invaluable to helping improve our materials. If you would like the form electronically, just email me at [lea@lifelinetheatre.com](mailto:lea@lifelinetheatre.com) and I'll send it to you. We'd also love to receive your student reviews, as we take to heart their response to the show.

Right beside the study guide, we have enclosed a few materials about other education programs we offer here, including in-school theatre residencies with professional theatre artists. If you are interested in learning more about these programs, do not hesitate to call me or send an email. We aim to meet your goals.

Thank you again for your support of Lifeline Theatre, and we'll see you at the show!

Sincerely,

Lea Pinsky, *Education Director*  
[lea@lifelinetheatre.com](mailto:lea@lifelinetheatre.com)  
773-761-4477 x707

a closer look at

# THE LAST OF THE DRAGONS



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Based on the children's book by Edith Nesbit  
Adapted by David Bareford ★ Music by Mikhail Fiksel ★ Directed by Dorothy Milne

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# **PLAY SYNOPSIS**

**Scene 1:** King of Astoria and his parrot D'Artagnan review marriage applications from two finalist princes: one the strong but brutish Prince of Escundia, and the other the smart but weaker Prince of Tuscany. Princess Andromeda fences into the scene and play fights with her father. The King scolds her tomboyish-ness, and tells her the importance of tradition-- she should try to be a traditional princess. He tells her about the upcoming fight against the dragon for her hand in marriage, and how she'll need to immediately prepare for her wedding on Saturday. The King orders D'Artagnan to fly the acceptance letter to Escundia, but the D'Artagnan takes it to Tuscany.

**Scene 2:** The Queen and Chamberlain of Tuscany have just received the acceptance letter from Astoria. They immediately tell Prince Stanley, who is surprised and a little terrified by the news that he will be getting married that weekend, and that he will have to slay a dragon to do so... or perish in the attempt! He is not excited by this tradition, as he is a bookish young man and not much of a fighter. Stanley decides to run away, but is caught by the Queen. She tells him he needs to be brave, and encourages him that he can do it.

**Scene 3:** Both Stanley and the Andromeda are alone in their rooms lamenting the upcoming marriage and battle. They sing a split duet about how they wish they could make their own decisions, be able to break from tradition.... But still they know they have to face their future, and so both go to sleep planning for the big day.

**Scene 4:** The Princess tells D'Artagnan she is looking for her father, having decided she is not going to marry the prince, and she will fight the dragon herself. The King enters and dismisses her nonsense, and tells her she will fall in love with the prince when he arrives. They hear a motorcar approach, and the Queen and Prince Stanley enter. The King is surprised to see the Prince of Tuscany rather than Escundia, but they charm him and win his approval to meet the princess. Andromeda enters and is introduced to Stanley. She sees that like her, he is not very traditional either. The families go celebrate the upcoming battle, and D'Artagnan goes to scout out the dragon.

**Scene 5:** Stanley finds a note that Andromeda has left for him, asking to meet him that evening. He finds her, and she asks him whether he thinks he can really kill the dragon. He tries to convince her that he can, but she doubts him and challenges him to a fencing match. She wins, and he falls in love with her for her strength and confidence. They discuss the dragon battle—she insists that he not fight the dragon, and he insists that he must, now that he loves her.... They agree to both fight him together. D'Artagnan returns from scouting out the dragon with news of how HUGE he is!

**Scene 6:** The King and Andromeda are at the site of the dragon cave. The King second-guesses his decision to follow tradition. He does not want to leave his daughter in danger -- or to lose her to marriage. He suggests she come home with him instead. Andromeda reassures him and says she now sees that this is an important passage for her. The King ties Andromeda to the rock. Stanley arrives soon after the King leaves, and unties her. Stanley tells her to go home instead of fight, as he doesn't want her to get hurt. She says she'll stay, as she loves him and doesn't want him to get hurt either. They enter the cave, and coax out the dragon. He comes out and tells them he is not interested in this fight at all. He will fight and kill them if they bother him, though. They decide to tame him with kindness and cookies. He doesn't understand their intentions and fights back at first, but when they call him "dear," he softens, never having been called that kind word before. Stanley proposes to Andromeda and invites the dragon to the wedding, who is quite moved.

**Scene 7:** The King and Queen come looking for their children at the cave, wanting save them. They find the kids with the dragon, having befriended him. They are shocked—having been so concerned with "tradition", they never imagined the dragon could be tame, and things could be different than expected. They ask what the dragon wants in life, and he answers "to have a purpose". The King offers him a position in his kingdom to fly the children to and from the beach. Everyone sings in celebration of freedom from traditions and new futures ahead.

## MEET THE CAST AND CREW

(in order of appearance)



**David Fink (Chamberlain, D'Artagnan, Dragon)** is thrilled and very proud to return to the Lifeline stage! He was last seen here as Duck in *Duck for President* and Lyle in *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*. A graduate of Columbia College, David has been working steadily around the city with such fine troupes as the hypocrites, Silent Theatre, Nothing Without A Company, and most recently with Dragon Cello Theater in their inaugural show, *And Time Runs On*, at the Irish American Heritage Center.



**Scott Allen Luke (Stanley, Tailor)** is thrilled to be back at Lifeline, having appeared last season in the KidSeries production of *Mrs. Piggie Wiggle*. Scott has worked extensively in the theatre scene around Chicago with companies like Next Theatre, Light Opera Works, Raven Theatre, Circle Theatre, The Mill Theatre Co., Keyhole Theatre, Chase Park Theatre, Lincoln Square Theatre, and Rubicon Theatre Project, which he co-founded.



**Mallory Nees (Queen, Lady-in-Waiting)** is a recent graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. Some favorite roles include Pennywise in *Urinetown* (dir. Dexter Bullard), Florina in *Mad Forest* (dir. Carlos Murillo) and Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She's worked with Rivendell Theatre, Point of Contention, Gorilla Tango, and Theatre-Hikes Chicago. You may have seen her in *Dooby Dooby Moo* here at Lifeline, and later this season, she'll be in the KidSeries production of *The Blue Shadow*.



**Mike Ooi (King)** is happy to return to Lifeline after joining them for the 2008 summer extension of *The Mark of Zorro*. Other Chicago credits include *1985* and *Mop Top Festival* (Factory Theatre), *Three Penny Opera* (the hypocrites at Steppenwolf Garage), *Old Town* (Strawdog Theatre), *Curse of the Crying Heart* and *The Rocketman* (House Theatre of Chicago). Mike has also worked as a stage manager and in other aspects for The House Theatre of Chicago, the hypocrites, and Lifeline Theatre.



**Anne Sears (Princess)** is delighted to making her debut at Lifeline Theatre. Recently she appeared as Kate in *The Wild Party* (Silent Theatre Company) and Kathleen Mooney in *Flanagan's Wake* (Noble Fool Theatricals).

**David Bareford (Adaptor)** makes his Lifeline writing debut with this production. His other work has been produced locally by R&D Choreography's Action Theatre, including the short plays *IX-47*, *Catalan Grand*, *The Jesuit Files: Butcher of Firenze*, and *HMS Barnacle* (which also received a staged reading at the Goodman Studio Theatre). Regionally, his one-act *Pulitzer Prize* was showcased at Northwestern College of Iowa, and his writing also appeared at the Port Washington Pirate Festival of Wisconsin in an outdoor pirate stunt show extravaganza. David holds a BA in Theatre and has studied at the American Conservatory Theatre Academy in San Francisco.

**Mikhail Fiksel (Composer, Co-Lyricist & Sound Designer)** is delighted to be back at Lifeline, having previously worked on *Talking It Over* and *Mrs. Piggie Wiggle*. He is an ensemble member of Strawdog Theatre Company (where he recently received an After Dark award for Original Score, *Old Town*, and a Jeff Award for Original Incidental Music, *A Lie of the Mind*) and Serendipity Theatre Collective where he is a resident musical director for *2ndStory*. He is also an Artistic Associate with Teatro Vista (Jeff Award for Sound Design, *Blindmouth Singing*) and Collaboraction (Orgie Award for Original Music, *Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*). Other recent projects include *Mojo Mickybo* (Seanacháí); *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, *Living Green* and *A Park in Our House* (Victory Gardens); *Last of My Species*, *Winter Pageant Redux* (Jeff Award Nomination for Sound Design) and *Once Upon a Time* (Redmoon Theatre); *El Grito del Bronx*, *Another Part of the House* (Teatro Vista), *Frankenstein*, *Oedipus* (The Hypocrites); *The Revenants* (Wildclaw Theater); *Jon* (Collaboraction); *The Cherry Orchard*, *R.U.R.* (Strawdog); *Stupid Kids* (About Face); *Maria's Field*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Uncle Vanya* (TUTA); *Fake Lake* (Neofuturists); *Massacre* (The Goodman Theatre w/Teatro Vista); and various productions with Adventure Stage Chicago, where he is a resident designer, and Loyola University, where he teaches Sound Design.

**Dorothy Milne (Director)** has been the Artistic Director of Lifeline Theatre since 1999 and an ensemble member since 1992. She has directed nineteen productions at Lifeline, receiving a Non-Equity Jeff Award (Direction) for *Around the World in 80 Days* in 2003; and Non-Equity Jeff Nominations (Direction) for *Pistols for Two*, *Jane Eyre* (for which she also received an After Dark Award), *Strong Poison*, and *Gaudy Night*. She most recently directed *The Mark of Zorro*. Outside of Lifeline, she directed *Little Brother* and *Stardust* for Griffin Theatre. Back in 1992, she received an Equity Jeff Nomination for her direction of *Eleemosynary* at Interplay Theatre Company. Dorothy is also a 14-year member of the writing-performing collective Sweet Girls.

**Jennifer Aparicio (Stage Manager)** is excited to be back at Lifeline where she stage managed the 2008 production of *Snowflake Tim's Big Holiday Adventure*. She has worked with The Second City, etc., Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, New World Repertory Theater and 16th Street Theater. She graduated from Columbia College with a BA in Theater.

**Sarah Hughey (Lighting Designer)** This is Sarah's second lighting design at Lifeline, after designing for *Mariette in Ecstasy* last season. Recent Chicago credits include *Wind in the Willows* (City Lit Theatre), *Mojo Mickybo* (Seanacháí Theatre), *Girls vs. Boys* (House Theatre of Chicago with American Musical Theatre Project/Northwestern University), *Little Brother* and *On the Shore of the Wide World* (Griffin Theatre), and *Parlour Song* (Steep Theatre). Upcoming projects include *The Blue Shadow* with Lifeline, as well as work with the House Theatre and Seanacháí Theatre.

**Joanna Iwanicka (Puppet Design)** is thrilled to be back at Lifeline, where she first exhibited her passion for puppets in *The True Story of 3 Little Pigs*. She has later developed her interest in puppetry during her graduate studies in Scenic Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland. Upon returning to the United States, she showcased some of her acquired skills in Lifeline's recent production of *Dooby Dooby Moo* (talent show judges). Joanna has also designed sets for Congo Square Company, Chopin Theatre, The Library Theatre, Vintage Theatre Collective and Metropolis Performing Arts Centre. She has also experienced creative processes of Santa Fe Opera, Denver Center Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Des Moines Metro Opera, and most recently Redmoon Theatre and *The Addams Family*, *A New Musical*.

**Joanna Melville (Costume Designer)** This is Joanna's third design at Lifeline, where she also worked on Busman's Honeymoon and the KidSeries production of *Mrs. Piggie Wiggle*. Other Chicago credits include costume design for Shattered Globe Theatre, Quest Theatre Ensemble, Strawdog Theatre Company, and Backstage Theatre Company; as well as costume design assisting for Lookingglass and the British Stage Company. Other credits include Renaissance Theaterworks of Milwaukee, American Players Theatre, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and the Santa Fe Opera. Joanna is an alumna of Illinois State University (BA), and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (MFA).

**R&D Choreography (Violence Design)** R&D Choreography is thrilled to once again be working with Lifeline in a puppet-killing capacity! R&D is a non-profit company founded by David Gregory and Richard Gilbert for the purpose of improving the power and effectiveness of Chicago area theatre through the art of violence design. Since 1997, R&D has choreographed fight scenes in over one hundred thirty-five productions, taught stage combat at universities, colleges, and workshops, and performed in professional theatre, live stunt shows, and film. They have designed violence for dozens of Chicago area theatres.

# ANTONYMS

In *The Last of the Dragons*, Princess Andromeda and Prince Stanley are very different from each other—one could say they are *OPPOSITES*! In language, when two words mean opposite things, they are called **ANTONYMS**. (Words that mean similar things are *SYNONYMS*). Here is an example: the antonym of *HIGH* is *LOW*.

**EXERCISE:** Complete each sentence with an antonym for the underlined word from the word box. Some words are used twice. Write the antonym for the bold word on the line.

awful	right	walk	hard	rough
love	late	small	happy	found
wrong	clean	over	hot	fast

1. His yard is very large. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The drapery fabric was very smooth. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I think broccoli is wonderful! \_\_\_\_\_
4. That old car moves really slow. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I always get up early in the summer. \_\_\_\_\_
6. He had the correct answer. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mrs. Brown always gives easy tests. \_\_\_\_\_
8. The detour directed us under the bridge. \_\_\_\_\_
9. They told us not to go left on the dirt road. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Sue really enjoys cold soup. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Mom got my beach towel very dirty. \_\_\_\_\_
12. My grandfather likes to run in the park. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Dad lost his car keys. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Those turtles sure do hate worms! \_\_\_\_\_
15. My neighbor is very grouchy. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I lost my shopping list. \_\_\_\_\_
17. The children do not like to get to school early. \_\_\_\_\_

# Traditions

Early in the play, the King of Astoria talks to his daughter Andromeda about the importance of traditions in the family and in their culture.

What are traditions? Traditions are the activities and beliefs in a culture or family that get passed down over the years. We celebrate many holidays with traditions. **Can you draw a line from the holidays to the traditions below?**

<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>TRADITION</b>
<b>Birthday party</b>	We dress up in costumes and go door-to-door collecting candy from our neighbors.
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	We blow out candles on a cake and get to make a wish for the upcoming year.
<b>Halloween</b>	We light candles on the menorah for 8 nights.
<b>Hannukah</b>	We wave American flags and watch parades and fireworks.
<b>Fourth of July</b>	We give people we like cards with hearts and candy.
<b>Valentine's Day</b>	We have a big meal with family, often with turkey, we celebrate the things and people we are thankful for.
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	Santa Claus rides around with his reindeer and drops off toys to children who have been good that year.

# BEING BRAVE: A PUPPET MAKING ACTIVITY

In **The Last of the Dragons**, both Andromeda the princess and Stanley the prince have to manage their fear of the dragon and fear of their futures, and learn to be brave to face them. "Courage is about being afraid, and going ahead and doing it anyway," tells the Queen to her son Stanley. This activity allows your students to discuss the meaning of bravery and engage in an art activity that helps them enact their feelings.

Ask the class what it means to be brave. After listening to the children's responses, explain that being brave means a lot of different things, such as:

- Doing something that is really hard to do like trying to learn to ride a bike
- Getting a shot at the doctors even though it might hurt
- Saying "No" to someone who is trying to get you to do something that you know is wrong
- Trying to help yourself and others be happy even though you feel sad

Ask the class if they think it is possible to be scared and brave at the same time. Explain to the class in your own words some of the following ideas:

- It is okay to be scared sometimes and that brave people get scared too.
- Sometimes the bravest people are the ones who do what they are supposed to do even though they are scared.
- It's okay to be scared or have fears; being brave means that you try not to let those fears control how you live or act.

Recall with your class the play and the ways in which Andromeda and Stanley had to face their fears to be brave about their futures and meeting the dragon. Ask what the two were afraid of, and what were some of the things they did to act brave. Ask the class how they can act brave like Stanley and Andromeda when they are afraid of something. Guide their answers toward some appropriate actions or responses.

**Activity:** Have the students use lunch bags, crayons, yarn, and glue to make puppets of themselves being brave - these will be their brave puppets to help them be brave or act out being brave. As an optional activity, you can have the students make dragon puppets instead.

## Materials Required:

- Paper lunch bag for each student
- Crayons
- Yarn
- Glue

This lesson plan has been adapted from <http://www.lessonplanspage.com>.

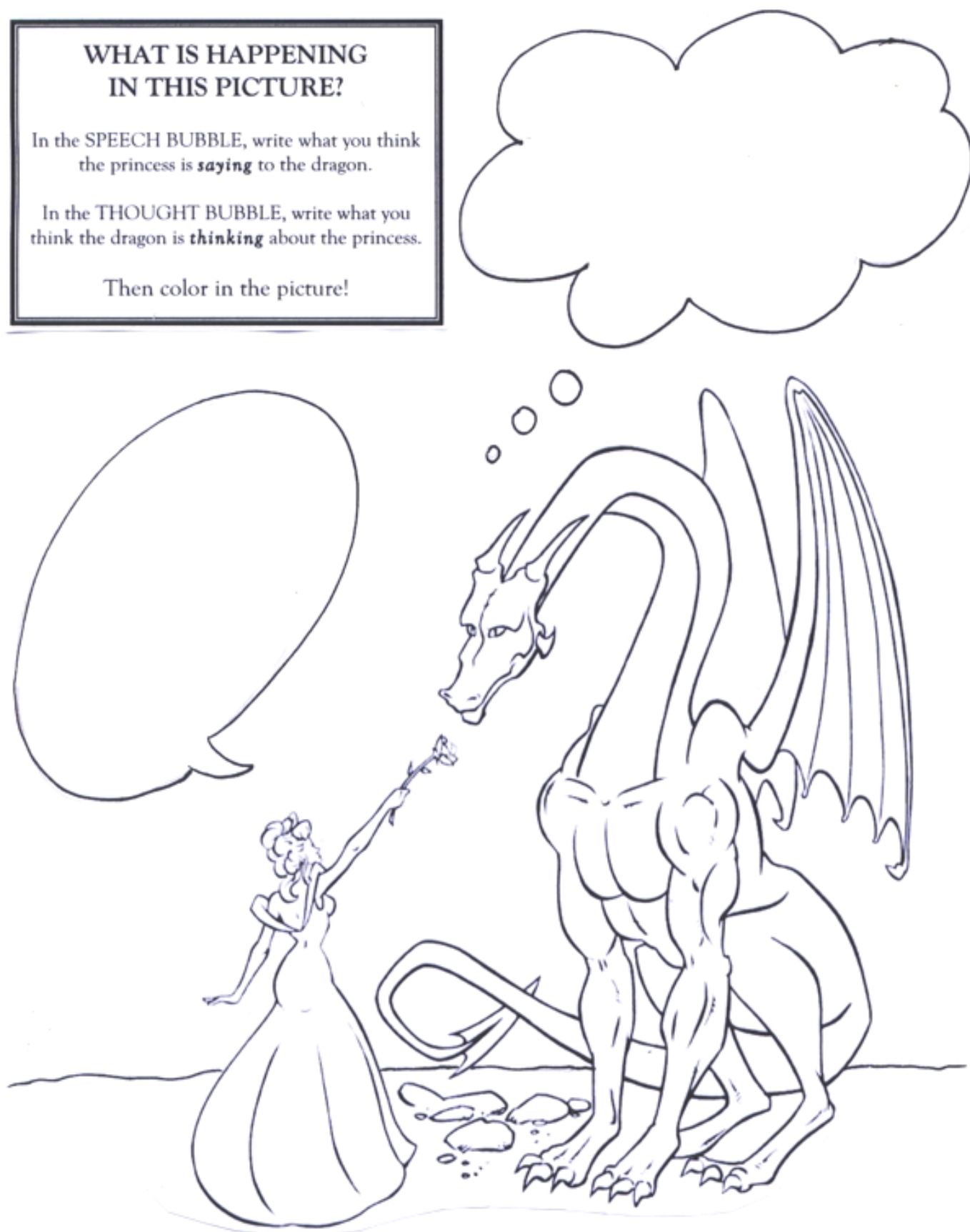


**WHAT IS HAPPENING  
IN THIS PICTURE?**

In the **SPEECH BUBBLE**, write what you think  
the princess is **saying** to the dragon.

In the **THOUGHT BUBBLE**, write what you  
think the dragon is **thinking** about the princess.

Then color in the picture!



# FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT

### ***Eight-Line Story***

*The Last of the Dragons* has elements of traditional Western fairy tales or folk tales. Here is a writing activity for small groups of students to write new stories with a fairy tale flavor.

Eight students are chosen to help tell a story. Each person is only responsible for one line. The students must listen to each other and relate their line to the one that came before. You can play this as a written exercise as well, either in groups or individually.

Once upon a time...

And every day...

Until one day...

Because of this...

Because of this...

Because of this...

Until finally...

And ever since that day...

Once all the stories are written, they may be shared aloud or acted out.

## DRAMA ACTIVITIES

### ***Emotional Wheel***

*Goals are learning emotions, teaching physicality, and building critical thinking.*

Take half of the kids and have them get in a circle. Take the other half and have them encircle the first half. Ask the student in the inner circle to turn out. Now you have a "wheel" of partners. Now that the students are paired up, have the kids in the outside circle sculpt their partners (through mirroring) to represent different emotions from the play *The Last of the Dragons*. While the sculptures in the inner circle stay still, the sculptors walk in a circle viewing the "gallery of emotions," thereby comprehending the many ways of representing a single feeling. Students take turns being sculptors and sculptures.

### ***Character Interview***

*Goals are learning character, building imagination, and telling stories*

Focusing on a specific character from the play, a volunteer is asked to come up and "be" that character for a Q&A with the class. The student is asked to consider not only the physicality of their character but also the words and feelings he or she might use in such a setting. The class speaks to this actor as the character and asks them questions about their life and experiences.

**Student Review of**  
***The Last of the Dragons***

By: \_\_\_\_\_

I give this play (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

My favorite character was \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

If I had choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story      the songs      the costumes      the scenery

I think other people should go see this play because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

## **KidSeries Teacher Comment Form**

Please fill out as much of this comment form as you can, then either: 1) mail it to Lea Pinsky, Education Director, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626; or 2) fax it to 773-761-4582. If your students have completed their review sheets, please mail them or drop them off with this form. Thank you for your time!

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), how would you rate the **performance** of *The Last of the Dragons*? \_\_\_\_\_

2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), how would you rate the **study guide** for *The Last of the Dragons*? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What were some words your students used to describe the play?

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4. Would you want to bring your students to another performance at Lifeline? Yes No

5. Why or why not?

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6. Which activities in the study guide were most beneficial to your students?

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7. How did your students benefit from these activities? (If possible, please give specific examples.)

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8. What could we do to improve the **study guide** or **our productions**?

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9. Are there any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt?

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