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ROALD
DAHL

EDUCATION PACK



ROALD DAHL'S
**THE
WONDERFUL
STORY of
HENRY SUGAR**

A Perth Theatre, Helen Milne Productions and Roald Dahl Story Company co-production

Adapted for stage by **ROB DRUMMOND**

Directed by **BEN HARRISON**

PERTH
theatre

Tickets: www.horsecross.co.uk
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ROALD DAHL'S THE WONDERFUL STORY of HENRY SUGAR

HELEN MILNE PRODUCTIONS
PERTH theatre
ROALD DAHL

Introduction

HELLO and welcome to the resource pack for our production of Roald Dahl's *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar*.

We have made this pack to help you to get the most out of the stage play of Roald Dahl's *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar*. The activities in this pack will allow young people to explore themes and ideas from the show through interactive activities. All activities will work for children attending school in person or learning from home.

Synopsis

Please do not share the synopsis of the show with the students before the show begins.

Miranda Mary Piker, desperate to become a social media influencer, is in her room filming the first YouTube video for her channel 'MMP'. Suddenly, a free audio book pops up on her screen – *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar by Roald Dahl* – and Mary begins to listen...

Henry Sugar appears on stage. He is a wealthy, lazy narcissist whose only aim in life is to accumulate more wealth. But then a book lands in his hands – *A Report on Imhrat Khan, the Man Who Could See Without His Eyes*, by Dr Jane F Cartwright.

Dr Jane Cartwright appears on stage as Henry opens the book. She is rehearsing a speech in which she expresses her frustration at not receiving the respect she would have liked throughout her career – and telling the story of her meeting a young man – Imhrat Khan – with extraordinary powers...

We now see Cartwright meeting Imhrat Khan, who proceeds to prove his claim to be able to see without eyes. He tells the story of how he gained these miraculous powers by becoming a disciple of the famed Yogi Banerjee. Cartwright convinces Khan to explain how to access the power, despite his warnings of the danger, and promises him she won't tell his story publicly.

Khan explains the method and we watch as Mary, Henry and Cartwright attempt to master it, with varying degrees of success.

Some time later, Henry tells Michael, Henry's friend and accountant, how he spent months learning how to use the powers – and how they have manifested as an ability to see through solid objects – and goes to a casino to prove his skill.

Meanwhile, Cartwright experiences an intense urge to examine Khan's eyes – with or without his consent. He tells her that she has been overwhelmed by the curse of the powers and she needs to stop herself from 'wanting'.

At the casino, Henry proves his powers and wins a huge amount of money, but Michael warns him of the dangers of this behaviour.

We return to Mary, who proves her own version of the powers by performing an incredible feat of mind reading on her subscribers.

Meanwhile, Henry finds himself surprisingly unfulfilled by the ease at which he can now accumulate wealth and instead decides to work with Michael to build orphanages all over the world.

We return to Cartwright, who presents her findings on Khan, despite promising not to, with Khan dying from a blood clot as a result.

Mary meanwhile, now has thousands of subscribers – but she becomes obsessed with the power and 'wanting' – desperate to increase her following even further. Just before Mary is driven mad by the powers, she reads her mum's mind and realises that she needs her – and Mary's curse is broken.

Design A Poster

Expressive Arts: Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. (EXA 0-05a / EXA 1-05a / EXA 2-05a)

Assign your class the role of marketing officers at Perth Theatre, and explain that their job is to encourage people to come and see the show.

Task them with creating a poster for the show based on this marketing copy:

From the master of the uncanny comes a comic, dark and delightful tale of the obsessive hunt for power. From the slums of Bombay to the glamour of international casinos to the pinging, all-consuming world of social media, our characters discover the dangers of actually getting what you want.

an idle playboy who longs for even more money...

a teenage girl who longs for online fame...

a conjuror who longs to be believed...

"You asked to hear my story. Whether or not there is an explanation, I do not know. All I know is that real magic exists. And I found it."

Expect magic. Expect illusion. Expect the unexpected.

- They should include the title of the show, and any images they think will help an audience to understand what the show is about.
- What other information do they think would be useful for their audience?
- How do they want their audience to feel looking at the poster?

[Prompt pupils towards informational answers such as venue, where to book tickets, URL, social media handles, age guidance, as well as creative answers eg sourcing images from picture banks or drawing their own images inspired by the copy]



Write A Review

Expressive Arts: I can respond to the experience of drama by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work. EXA 0-I5a / EXA 1-I5a / EXA 2-I5a / EXA 3-I 5

Ask your class to write a review of *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar.*

They might want to think about:

- What was your favourite moment in the show?
- How did the show make you feel?
- Any questions you had whilst watching or after the show?
- How many stars would you give the show?

To extend this task further students could also be prompted to think about:

- What key themes did you identify?
- What do you think was the central message of the show?
- What was the effect of having on-stage magic and illusion?
- How did costume and set design help to tell the story?
- Which were your favourite performances?
- Is that the same or different from your favourite characters?



Extended Creative Writing

I. Literary Benchmarks: I can engage and/or influence readers through my use of language, style and tone as appropriate to genre. ENG 3-27a / ENG 4-27a. 2. I can recreate a convincing impression of a personal experience for my reader, sharing my feelings and reactions to the changing circumstances with some attempt at reflection. ENG 3-30a

Mary addresses her followers at the beginning of the play.

In a small group, discuss the following questions:

- What words would you use to describe Mary in this opening scene?
- To what extent do you think this is the 'real' Mary or a version of who she wants the world to see?
- Can you write her a bio for her TikTok profile?

Individual writing task:

- How do you think Mary changes through the play? What does she learn? Has her amazing ability changed her and how she sees the world?
- Can you write an alternative ending to the script? If, rather than closing her laptop, Mary directly addressed her followers one last time, what do you think she would say? How would she sign off and end the play?



THANK YOU

Thank you for watching Roald Dahl's *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar*. We'd love to hear your thoughts on the show.

You can send any comments to engagement@horsecross.co.uk

If your class has created any work in response to the show, we would be delighted to see it. You can send images to the email address above or tag us on social media.

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If you would like to be added to our termly newsletter or want to talk more to us about how we can support schools, please do get in touch.