

Watts, Irene N., and Robert Munsch. *Munsch at Play Act Two: Eight More Stage Adaptations*. Illus. Michael Marchenko. Toronto: Annick, 2011. Print.

Which child should inhabit the role of the protagonist Andrew (“No, no, no, no, no”) in “I Have to Go”? What could be used to make the “sound” in “Jonathan Cleaned Up — Then He Heard a Sound”? How could you dress the titular character of “David’s Father” so that everyone can tell he’s a giant?

*Munsch at Play Act Two* will have your imagination firing with questions such as these. As with the original *Munsch at Play*, this volume gives readers/thespians eight of Robert Munsch’s tales transformed into stage plays for young performers.

Readers familiar with Munsch’s live performances will recognize his distinct rhythmic and participatory elements within Watts’ adaptations. Readers will also enjoy Michael Martchenko’s kinetic illustrations, in his style so well-known from so many Munsch storybooks.

Having said this, plays are to be performed on the stage, not just admired on the page. Irene N. Watts’ adaptations succeed for a variety of reasons. The stories have been thoughtfully selected and adapted to provide the variety that makes this sort of book worthwhile. There are stories that can be performed with a finite handful of players, such as “I Have to Go,” and there are stories whose castings can expand as much as you like, including “Pigs,” in which you may include “any number that the pigpen can accommodate.”

Watts also includes detailed, approachable notes about staging. She tells readers about suitable spaces for staging each play, such as “works well as a theatre in the round” (“Show and Tell”). She also provides exhaustive lists of sets, costumes, and props for each play. Most stories require quite a few props, but these are often indicated as optional, and could be scavenged, made into a craft project, or conjured via imagination.

Watts’ supporting documentation (lists, guidance, and recommendations) lessens the effort involved with getting each play “up on its feet.” This enables everyone involved to focus on the excitement of stories and vocal participation. It’s not likely that anybody will say “No, no, no, no, no” to *Munsch at Play Act Two*.

Highly Recommended: 4 out of 4 stars

Reviewer: Sarah Polkinghorne