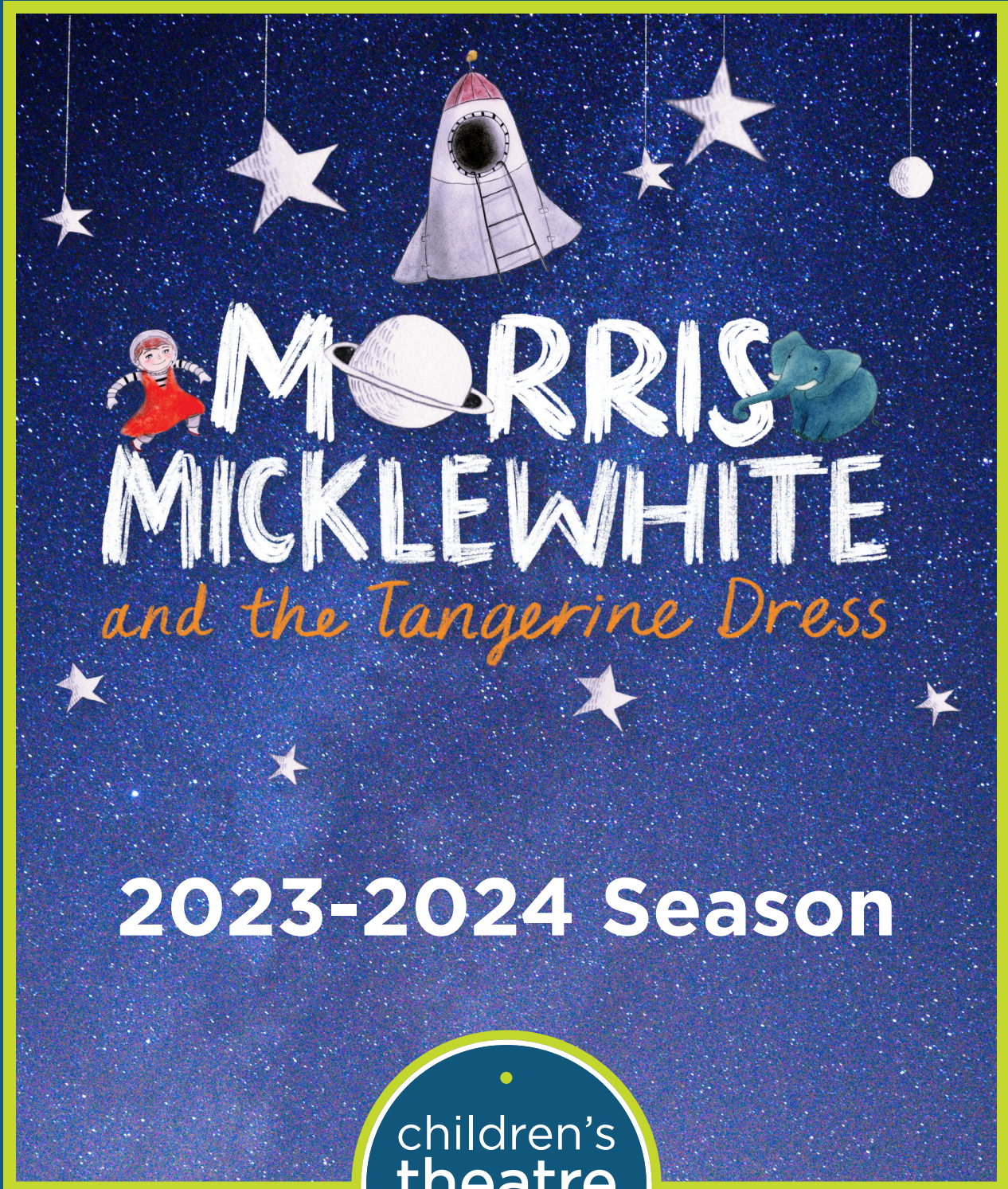


# *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress Audience Guide*



**2023-2024 Season**

children's  
**theatre**  
company

# TABLE of CONTENTS

Synopsis and Content Advisories.....p.3

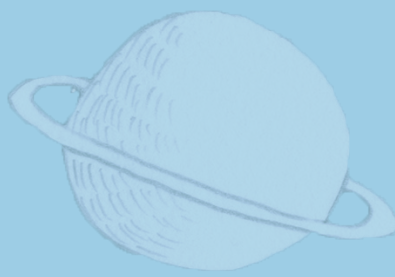
Behind the Scenes.....p.4

ACTIVITIES: Before, During, and After the Performance.....p.5

Heading to CTC.....p.6

Full Plot Description.....p.7

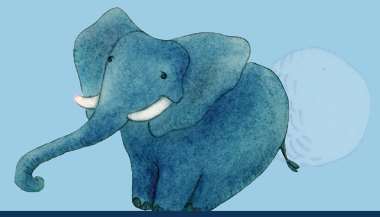
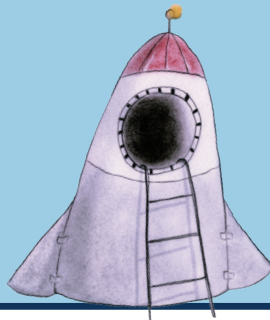
## Synopsis



### What is this show about?

Morris likes lots of things: doing puzzles, painting pictures, pretending to be an astronaut, and wearing a tangerine dress from his school's dress-up box because it "reminds him of tigers, the sun, and his mother's hair." But some of his classmates think boys can't wear dresses because...well, because they're boys. Join the wildly imaginative Morris on an adventure of self-discovery and expression, as he realizes the power of being one's whole radiant self.

## Content Advisories



**Language: 0 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

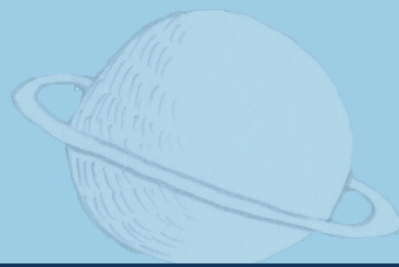
**Sensory Advisories: 1 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Morris's imagination and feelings are portrayed through stage magic. Sound effects and lights may be loud and jarring.

**Potentially Anxious Moments: 1 out of 5 stars** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Morris gets laughed at and teased for wearing a dress. Morris feels nervous about returning to school because of this.

Please contact [tickets@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:tickets@childrenstheatre.org) with any questions.



### A World Premiere Production

*Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* at Children's Theatre Company is a world premiere production. Co-commissioned with Chicago Children's Theatre and The Rose Theater, CTC has been working with playwright Juliany Taveras to adapt the 2014 picture book by Christine Baldacchino and Isabelle Malenfant into a stage play. The book is a 2015 recipient of the Stonewall Book Award for Books in Children's and Young Adult Literature.

### Imaginative Play

Morris is an imaginative, creative boy whose favorite part of the classroom is the dress-up corner. Imaginative play allows children to be anyone, do anything, be any place, and experience life outside of reality. While engaging in imaginative play, they learn critical thinking skills, build expressive language, increase social skills, and learn how to manage their emotions.

After the show, you can talk with your group about how they might stage some of their imaginative adventures!

*I had a very similar experience to Morris when I was about his age. I wanted to play superheroes with the boys during playground time, and my favorite superhero was Batman. But the boys refused to let me play with them unless I agreed to be the girl who needed to be rescued. To top it all off, the girls in my class didn't want to play superhero because they were convinced superheroes were a boy thing. So, I ended up spending most of my playground time playing alone. Luckily, like Morris, I had a big imagination. I could imagine being Batman and leading my own charge of superheroes...I want my readers to know that they can wear whatever they want to wear. They can be the person that they want to be."*

- Christine Baldacchino, author of *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*



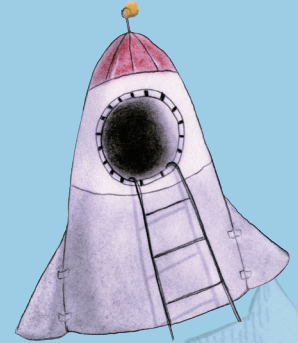
## Before You Go

### Listen to a Reading of the Book

Listen to Julie Marie at The Met read *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* and get a feel for the worlds our cast and creative team will create on stage.



[Storytime with The Met: "Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress" by Christine Baldacchino](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHoEi3o1Ejc)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHoEi3o1Ejc>

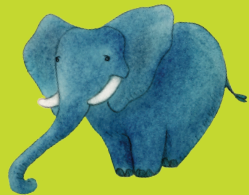


## During the Performance

### 3 Things

#### Look for...

1. Toy animals. What animals do you notice?
2. A spaceship. What is it made out of?
3. Actors playing multiple characters.



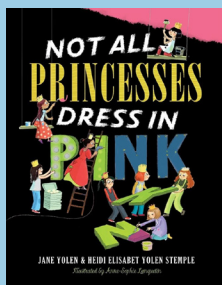
#### Listen for...

1. The swish, swish, swish and crinkle, crinkle of the tangerine dress.
2. Music that sets the mood.
3. Rumbling sounds. What does the rumbling tell us about how Morris is feeling?

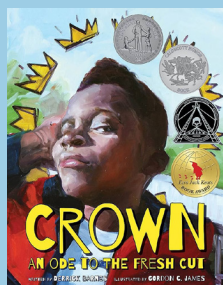
## After the Performance

### Explore Other Books

Head to your library to read other stories about the joy of being yourself:



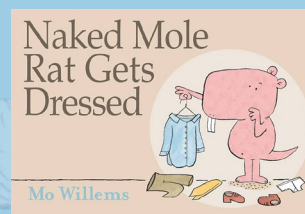
**Not All Princesses Dress in Pink**  
by Jane Yolen & Heidi Elisabet Yolen Stemple



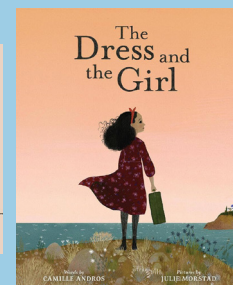
**Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut**  
by Derrick Barnes



**Mary Had a Little Glam**  
by Tammi Sauer



**Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed**  
by Mo Willems



**The Dress and the Girl**  
by Camille Andros



**Mary Wears What She Wants**  
by Keith Negley

## CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible.

# Accessibility

## Mobility Accessibility

The MacMillan Family Lobby and Cargill Stage are fully accessible on the ground level. CTC's accessible seating area is located in the front row of the theatre. Please email [tickets@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:tickets@childrenstheatre.org) in advance to request accessible seating, if needed. The rest of the seating can be accessed by going up a set of stairs.

The restrooms in the MacMillan Family Lobby are fully accessible.

## Sensory Sensitivities

The performance is live streamed in the lobby for anyone needing to take a break during the performance. Please feel free to come and go from the lobby as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

## Assistive Listening Devices

Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

## Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

Each CTC production has a sign interpreted and/or audio described performance for each production. These performances are noted in the [list of performance dates](#).

## Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.

### **This is a comprehensive description of the play, so it is full of spoilers.**

The play follows a week in the life of Morris, a young boy. We begin on...

#### **Sunday**

Moira, Morris's mom, is making pancakes and Morris tells her a story about how Zebra and Tiger became friends. Lights fade and transition to nighttime. Morris braids his mom's hair and wishes his hair was as long as hers. She says that maybe it will grow even longer than hers one day. Moira kisses Morris goodnight, and he wishes goodnight to his toy animals and falls asleep.

#### **Monday**

It's Monday, and Morris is on the school bus with the other kids. He tells us he loves Monday because it means school. At school there are lots of activities like painting, puzzles, and circle time. We see Morris, his classmates, and his teacher Ms. Melo go through the motions of their day. Morris shares that his favorite activity is free time because he likes to play dress-up. During free time, the other kids split into groups of boys and girls leaving Morris on his own. Morris doesn't seem to mind. He tells the audience that he likes dress-up because he can be anything he wants to be like a pirate or a doctor. Today, he decides to be an astronaut. He finds a tangerine dress in the dress-up trunk and decides it's the perfect space suit. He loves the color and the way it sounds and has a great time moving around the classroom hearing it move. Another student, Becky, pierces through his fantasy and says she's going to tell on him. She says he can't wear the dress because he's a boy. She grabs at the dress in an attempt to pull it off of him. When the bell rings, Becky lets go of the dress and runs off towards the others. Morris's heart is heavy and his eyes low.

#### **Tuesday**

It's free time again in the classroom, and Morris is still in the tangerine dress. He avoids the girls but approaches the boys who are playing with a cardboard spaceship. Morris asks if he can join them in their spaceship, but the boys say there's not enough room and astronauts don't wear dresses. Dejected, Morris leaves them alone. Ms. Melo notices his dejection and sits with him. He asks her if astronauts can wear dresses. She says she hasn't thought about it before and wonders what he thinks. He says he thinks a dress would look really cool in zero gravity. Ms. Melo says that it's decided then. We sense that Morris is satisfied and happy with this knowledge.

We transition to Morris arriving at home. Moira can tell that Morris has had a bad day and give him a hug. Morris notices his mom's glittery organizer case that holds her nail polish. He asks if she can do his nails too. He picks out a color called Pink Panther. Moira paints his nails and asks how Tiger and Zebra are doing. Morris spins an imaginative story about the adventures of Tiger and Zebra that conveys the tough day he had at school.

# Full Plot Description cont.

## Wednesday

This day's moving fast. By the time we see Morris again, it is already time for recess. He's back in his beloved tangerine dress shimmying alongside the trees in the breeze. The two girls, Lila and Becky, stop by and point out that he has pink nail polish on. They laugh at him and call him Pinky Fingers and Morris Mickle-pink. We then see Morris making his way to the snack table. The two boys, Eli and Henry, tell him that he can't sit with them because he might be contagious. They don't want him turning them into girls.

Ms. Melo finds Morris sitting alone. Morris asks if he's done something wrong and she assures him he has not. He asks if he can take the tangerine dress home with him, and she agrees.

## The Nightmare

Morris has a nightmare and hears echos of the kids at school making fun of him.

## Thursday

Morris is in bed, and his mom comes in to wake him up to get ready to go to school. Morris tells her that he can't go to school because he has a tummy ache. She says that he doesn't have to go to school and steps out to get him some books to read. We hear his tummy rumbling as he thinks about school. When she returns, she gives him a book about elephants and leaves again to make him some tea.

When his mom comes back, he asks her if she knows that not all elephants are the same. Some male elephants have tusks and some do not. She asks him if he'd like to tell her what happened at school and mentions how spectacular the tangerine dress is. Morris says he'll wear it at home but doesn't want to wear it at school anymore. His mom says he doesn't have to wear anything he doesn't want to but whatever he decides it should be because it's what he wants not what other people want.

## The Dream

The stage transforms into Morris's dream, a landscape that is outer space and the jungle all at once. His toy animals have all come to life and he is leading them on an adventure. They buzz excitedly around him, the captain, as they talk of the fun experiences they'll have together in their new world.

## Friday

Morris wakes up and immediately begins painting. We see that he is painting his dream. At school he shows it to Ms. Melo, and she asks who the person in the painting is wearing a tangerine dress and riding an elephant. He proudly tell her that it's him.

Morris quickly dons the tangerine dress. Henry tells him that he can't come on their spaceship, and Morris says that's ok because he is going to build a Space Jungle Explorer Mega Ship of his own.

Morris places his painting on the front of the ship. Curious, Eli and Lila come over and ask him about the painting, and Morris invites them to join him. They do and have an adventure! Later at the snack table, Eli and Lila apologize to Morris for calling him names and being mean to him. Becky comes over and says boys can't wear dresses. Morris says that this boy does. He, Eli, and Lila raise their juice boxes in a cheerful toast.