

Your Family Arts Center

# DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER

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## LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET

### SYNOPSIS

#### One Act (approximately 70 minutes)

In a bustling city, CJ and his grandma, Nana, are on their way to church. It's the day of CJ's big choir solo! He's nervous, but Nana helps him calm down. As they walk to church, rain begins to fall. At church, with encouragement from the choir, CJ sings his heart out! Reverend Morgan, inspired by CJ's performance, encourages the congregation to go out into the world in the upcoming week and truly "see" with more than just their eyes. But, CJ isn't sure what that really means.

Rain continues to fall as CJ and Nana leave church and head to the bus stop on Market Street. CJ is frustrated as he sees friends driving away in cars. Why do other people have cars and he has to ride the bus? And why does he always have to go to the soup kitchen after church? As they wait at the bus stop, CJ continues to complain. When he wonders why it has to rain, Nana points out how important rain is for the flowers and trees. And, when CJ wishes he had headphones to listen to music, Nana reminds him that music is all around them if he just listens.

Nana passes him a sandwich to eat while they wait, but he throws it away because it has pickles on it. Waiting for the bus, CJ reads a book and Nana knits. He notices a woman has picked his sandwich out of the garbage and is eating it, but she quickly throws it back when she sees him watching her. CJ wonders why some people have food and cars, and some people don't.

As CJ watches all the cars pass them by, he becomes upset that they must walk in the rain or take the bus. Nana patiently explains (again) that they use the bus and that's not going to change any time soon. Finally, their bus arrives. It has a dragon painted on the outside of it, and a kind bus driver, Mr. Dennis, who pulls out a coin from behind CJ's ear. Impressed, CJ asks him where he got his magic and Mr. Dennis says that everyone has magic within them. On the bus, CJ admires someone playing a video game. But, Nana says that if his eyes were watching a video game, he would miss out on making others smile. Then, she compliments a stern-looking man's tattoos. The man proudly shares the stories behind his tattoos and, at his stop, departs the bus with a grin on his face.

At the next stop, CJ watches as kids ride brand-new bikes. He wishes he had a new bike, too, so he could go on adventures. Nana says she's glad she has feet to take her where she needs to go, and a lady sitting close by agrees with her. The lady is carrying a jar full of butterflies and, when CJ asks about them, she says she's taking them to a

park to live. When CJ complains again about not having a car, she tells him about when she was a little girl. She lived in a war-torn country and her family had to escape. But, fortunately, she had her feet to help her walk towards freedom. Nana adds, because of people like Dr. King walking for freedom in America, they can sit at the front of the bus.

A blind man gets on the bus at the following stop and CJ is curious about him. When he asks Nana why the man can't see with his eyes, the man replies that he can "see" with his other senses. CJ is surprised at how well the blind man can dance and, after he's offered a cookie, amazed at how well the blind man can bake.

The bus continues to pick up new passengers at each stop, including a man with a guitar. CJ once again wishes he could listen to music on headphones and Nana points out that there is someone who could play music sitting right next to them. The man with the guitar agrees and sings a song about helping others find their special song. Then, with Nana and the others encouraging him, CJ closes his eyes and is transported to a magical place. He rides on raindrops, fights a dragon (who he eventually convinces to blow bubbles instead of fire), and flies above Market Street. When he opens his eyes again, CJ realizes that magic exists all around him. All he has to do is try to "see" it for himself.

Finally CJ and Nana reach the last stop on Market Street. This stop is different from the other stops. Trash litters the street, graffiti is on the buildings, and there is a stinky smell in the air. CJ is scared, but Nana tells him that "sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt...you're a better witness for what's beautiful." CJ starts to look around and see the beauty: a rainbow, a woman sharing food with a cat, a homeless man playing a saxophone, a boy spraying graffiti in the shape of a heart.

At the soup kitchen, CJ and Nana lovingly serve the people. CJ wonders if they can see the beauty and the magic around them, too, just like he's recently started seeing himself. CJ befriends a new woman who offers him a book to read, and he introduces her to the others. When he looks around, he "sees" the soup kitchen in a way he never has before, CJ is astonished to discover that all the people look like rainbows!

Note: This show includes sound effects such as thunder and cars that backfire.

**For further understanding of the content, we encourage you to read Matt de la Peña's *Last Stop on Market Street*.**