



# BIG DRAMAS second edition

## The Princess and the Nag Hag

### DRAMA TEACHER NOTES

#### Group discussion

- There are a number of dilemmas or turning points contained in *The Princess and the Nag Hag*. Choose one and describe it as fully as possible, and then discuss how you think the characters could have or should have reacted to the dilemma or turning point. An example is the issue of Nikki's mother deciding to move to Albury. Should the mother go? Should she have discussed it with Nikki before talking to Nikki's father? Should Nikki go to Albury with her mother?
- Nikki is the central character of this play. List all that you know about her from the script, examining what she says and does and what other people say about her. What are her good points? What are her bad points?
- As a group, predict what you think might happen in the months and years following this play. Will the birth of the baby change things for the better or worse? Will Nikki stay with her father and Kathryn?

#### Improvisation

- In interpreting a script, actors are called on to consider their characters' motivation in each scene. To explore characters in depth, a useful exercise is to place them in different situations and see how they behave. In small groups, improvise one of these scenes:
  - two years before this, when Nikki first meets Kathryn
  - the dinner at which Nikki is told that Kathryn is pregnant
  - a scene where Kathryn finds Nikki trying on Kathryn's clothes
  - Nikki and Eloise meeting up at their school reunion twenty years from now—one of them is a stepmother.
- Set up a situation where Kathryn meets a woman who is considering marrying a man who already has a child. What advice would Kathryn give the woman? What questions would the woman ask Kathryn?

#### Scripting

This play contains turning points. Write a short scene or monologue for a character at a turning point in his or her life. Focus on developing a well-rounded character. Try not to rely on stereotypes. You may, of course, draw on your own experiences but remember not to bring into the public domain anything you do not want to become general knowledge. Turning points can be big or small. Some examples are:

- starting at a new school
- achieving a long-held dream
- realising the tooth fairy doesn't exist
- failing an important test
- surviving a life-threatening incident.



## Taking it further

- Write a letter Nikki might have written to Eloise before she returned home. To do this, carefully examine the script for information about their friendship, particularly scene 15. Would Nikki be angry with Eloise?
- The script does not call for realistic sets but imagine you are a set designer for a realistic production. Your director has asked you to design two of the sets. Make detailed notes on these, reflecting the function of the space, the characters who use it and the action that needs to take place there.
- Write an essay explaining the purpose of including the following three characters in *The Princess and the Nag Hag*: Amanda, Ruth and Sally.



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