

CHOICES

A short film about choices

Single Line Pitch

A non-binary kid faces down their own fear and outside prejudice to prove adventure is for everyone.



Synopsis

Indi (they/them) recently decided that they aren't sure exactly which gender they identify as. On a trip to a supermarket in search of new clothes, Indi realises that the choice isn't great.

Things get complicated when the clothes come to life and start attacking; a shark t-shirt is hungry for blood, a 'cute' t-shirt squeezes Indi's body into an impossible shape, skull t-shirts invoke death, rainbow unicorns spew out eye-melting toxic sparkles.

It's exhausting, nothing fits, and Indi feels that their identity is brought into question by the lack of non-gendered clothing on the shelves. Indi knows they have to step up and choose their style: finding an inner power, Indi brings order to the chaos and peace to the tempest of both their inner and outer world. And finds a great look to boot.



Production Mission Statement

We passionately believe that we need to see more stories for young people which show a wide range of diverse gender and identity.

CLOTHES is the conversation we should all be having right now, with our kids, with our friends, with fellow parents at the school gates; the story behind CLOTHES is inspired by those conversations. We despair at the mainstream shops' choices of clothes for children; clothes for girls are often over-sexualised, skimpy, or with messages around being cute or decorative, whilst clothes for boys are often over-violent with sharks, pirates, video games and skulls being dominant in their designs. Finding interesting, attractive, and affordable clothes for our gender-curious young generation is tricky and in supermarkets and high street shops almost impossible. There is a growing conversation around the restrictive binary gender choices for children and CLOTHES hopes to be part of that.

We imagine this story in bright, bold colours, with huge overblown dramatic orchestral scoring, in which each moment a different item of clothing comes to life and enters the battle another style and score takes to the fore. Indi's vast and vivid imagination superimposes on the real, mundane world, ending with a maelstrom of colour and sound before the final quiet moment where Indi creates the expression of their true powerful self.

As creatives, we seek out stories that give voice to the under-represented and a starting place for a discussion between children and their grown ups. With this in mind we aim to build a representative and diverse team so that we can do justice to this story.



Story

Indi (they/them) is in the back of the car not listening to the chatter from their Mum or the hum of the radio, as they drive towards the supermarket in search of new clothes (and the weekly food shop).

As Indi looks out of the window at the world rushing past them, Indi sees patterns in the clouds being blown vigorously by an April breeze - a shark, a flower, a pirate battle ... and did the scarecrow in that field just wave? Indi's imagination is alight today, their fingers fizzing with untapped power, sparks dancing unnoticed.

Arriving at the supermarket car park, there's no time for zooming around on a trolley alongside the playful breeze; Mum's in a hurry and so it's quick march to the groceries.

Indi wants to linger, smell the flowers, run their hands along the bumps of the tomatoes, ask to taste a piece of cheese, make friends with the baked beans ... but Mum urges them on, past all the fruits and veg and bakery aisle with the tempting pastries, the fiery pizza oven and books with their stories leaping out and beckoning Indi over (this is one busy supermarket).



But Indi has grown again, shot up like a weed – and Mum is insistent that their destination is the clothes aisle. Shelves full of clothes loom ahead, threatening, and Indi hangs back. Mum, unaware, storms on, throwing clothes into the shopping trolley at an alarming pace. Meanwhile the shelves loom over Indi, growling like the throat of a terrifying monster. Trembling, Indi follows Mum to the changing room - the belly of the beast.



Story

In the changing room, Mum throws t-shirts over the cubicle door at Indi to try on. But there's a new problem - the clothes take on a life of their own. First a sparkling sequinned top that says, 'I'm Cute' nearly squeezes the breath out of Indi's body and makes their eyes so round and shiny that they look like a bushbaby. Then a shark t-shirt awakes and starts snapping its jaws at Indi, trying to bite and draw blood. A skull-and-crossbones t-shirt brings skeleton zombie pirates advancing menacingly on Indi. And a very insistent pink unicorn 'just wants cuddles'. Mum is continuing to throw t-shirts over the top of the door - it's a hailstorm of angry clothes.

Indi realises this battle is going to be EPIC. Stepping into their power and calling upon the friends they made on their journey through the shop, Indi summons up their strength - so that every time a shark, dinosaur, skeleton, narwhal, bunny, or unicorn raises their head Indi defeats and tames it.

Mum calls Indi back to Earth, 'Come on child, there's lots to do, just choose a t-shirt and hurry up.' Indi uses the final energy of their powers to magic up a t-shirt - it's striped black, purple, yellow and white. Indi puts it on and they glow with joy, stepping out of the changing room and into their future.



Indi

Indi is working out who they are and how they fit into the world. Indi is powerful, raw untapped primal energy with a side order of magic - they just don't know it yet. Indi is a 10 year old with a vast imagination and a lot of life to live. Indi is awkward and gawky and not quite knowing how they fit into their own body. But one thing they do know - once they've figured themselves out, there'll be no stopping them. Great adventures awaits Indi.

Mum

Mum is in a hurry. She isn't always in a hurry. But she usually is. And she's distracted. Very distracted. She's also not entirely convinced about Indi's current gender fluidity - she's hoping it's just a phase. But she's doing her best, taking Indi to the supermarket to try and find clothes that her kid can feel comfortable in. It's just rather tricky. Mum is perpetually exhausted.



Writer / Producer Info

RACHEL BARNETT-JONES



Rachel is a prolific children's writer with 20 years of experience. She has written over 70 commissioned works for stage and screen, including musicals and operas which have toured internationally. She has worked with Magic Light, Beakus, Polka Theatre, York Theatre Royal, and many other companies and theatres around the globe.

DEE STEVENS



Dee Stevens is development producer at Tiger Aspect Kids & Family, co-founder and director at Knights Of, the award-winning inclusive children's publisher and bookstore Round Table Books in Brixton. They most recently won British Children's Publisher of the Year 2022.

Thank you!

Rachel & Dee

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