

WENDI-LA

By Sir Matthew B. Jamison

ACT ONE:

Wendi-La is a girl of about eight growing up on a farm in the fanciful African land of Lisa-La. She takes care of her little brother Mo-La and baby sister Bo-La while her mother and father work the fields and hunt. But one day monsters come to her village and march all the children through the scary jungle to a prison where they starve them and treat them mean. Wendi-La tries to lead an escape but it fails: the others involved, including her brother and sister, are recaptured and she is left for dead with one hand cut off.

ACT TWO:

Discovered by magical animals (a bird, a butterfly, a bushbaby), Wendi-La is transported via underground passages to the secret Realm of the Elephants, Everland. There she is fitted with a golden arm possessed of extraordinary powers. She learns how to wield these powers and leaves the elephants with their blessing. She sets up operations in a hidden cave near the children's prison camp and with the aid of her new powers and her magical animal friends she stages a raid to rescue her brother and sister. She's partially successful: she gets away with Mo-La and some other children, but Bo-La remains in the monsters' hands. Mo-La informs Wendi-La that the monsters are holding the children hostages to force the adults to harvest valuable spider webs for them. He also tells her of the monsters' plans to kill the remaining children in retaliation for their parents' rebellion against the monsters. The rescue is even more urgent than Wendi-La imagined. She journeys back to her home village in an attempt to enlist the aid of the adults, but it is deserted. And the monsters have lain in wait for her there, so they recapture her.

ACT THREE:

Wendi-La languishes in a cell. The monsters have removed her mechanical arm to ensure she stays put. But she sends messages out via the bird and the butterfly so that her brother and the elephants can coordinate an attack on the prison camp. The bushbaby smuggles a new, more powerful arm to her and frees her in the night so that she joins the attack. This second attack is triumphant: the children are released and the monsters cast into their own gaols. There's a massive celebration, which the parents, miraculously found unharmed but lost in the jungle, join.

MATTY'S CODA:

The elephants have received ambassadors from other secret lands: the Realm of the Giraffes, the Realm of the Lions, and the Realm of Crocodiles. These places and several more are now threatened by the monsters retreating from Lisa-La. Children all over are in danger. At the behest of the elephants, Wendi-La promises to take up the battle again and sterilize the monsters' home nest.

ROLES:

Wendi-La: played by Lisette originally, then by Rima
Mo-La (little brother): played by Ilunga, Josina's son by Mwenda
Bo-La (little sister): played by Mwadi, Josina's daughter by Mwenda
Other children: from Kisangani
Butterfly: from Bukavu
Bird: from Chibanda
Bushbaby: from Bukavu
Elephant Doctor: from Boma; a recent refugee (Mola)
Elephant King: from Chibanda
Elephant Queen: from Chibanda
Elephants: from Kisangani
Lead Parent 1: from Kisangani
Lead Parent 2: from Kisangani
Other parents: from Kisangani
Giraffe Ambassador: from Kalima
Giraffes: from Kisangani
Lion Ambassador: from Kalima
Lions: from Kisangani
Crocodile Ambassador: from Kalima
Crocodiles: from Kisangani