

Side 1 for Bastian & Bookseller

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THE NEVERENDING STORY

Act I

SCENE TWO: The Bookseller

(The lights come up on a large, high-back chair behind a desk made entirely of books. The chair is facing up-stage, concealing its occupant. A small cloud of smoke appears from behind the chair and then a voice.)

BOOKSELLER. Either come in or go out but whatever you do, close the door!

(BASTIAN does so. A bell jangles. The chair spins around revealing the BOOKSELLER. He is a rotund man with ferocious whiskers. He is smoking a huge, hooked pipe.)

BOOKSELLER. Good grief! A child! A youth! A juvenile! What are you doing in my store?

BASTIAN. The door was open.

BOOKSELLER. And because the door was open you thought you could just walk right in?

BASTIAN. Yes sir.

BOOKSELLER. Then you can just walk back out.

BASTIAN. Please sir. Let me stay a little longer.

BOOKSELLER. Stay?! Listen, "sonny." I don't like "children." Oh I know it's popular to think children are the most wonderful creatures in the world but as far as I'm concerned they're good for nothing except screaming, whining, breaking, tearing and smearing books with jam. See all these wonderful books? Not one for "children." What's the point? Children don't read anymore. They just sit and watch television until their brains dry up and then play video games un-

Act I

(Atreyu and the Great Quest)

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til their thumbs fall off. So now that we understand each other, close your mouth, turn around and get out! *(The BOOKSELLER turns back to his desk. BASTIAN goes to speak.)* And close the door behind you!

(BASTIAN walks slowly back toward the door, stops, and then summoning all his courage turns back.)

BASTIAN. Not all children are like that.

(A clap of thunder. The BOOKSELLER turns slowly.)

BOOKSELLER *(menacing)*. What did you say?

BASTIAN. I said not all children are like...like what you said.

BOOKSELLER. And I suppose you're different.

BASTIAN. Yes sir. I like books.

BOOKSELLER. You *like* them?

BASTIAN. No. I love them.

BOOKSELLER. Which ones?

BASTIAN. Well...I don't love math books. I love books about heroes that take me to faraway lands.

BOOKSELLER. What's your name?

BASTIAN. Bastian Balthazar Bux.

BOOKSELLER. Interesting. Three B's. My name is Carl Conrad Coreander.

BASTIAN. Three C's.

BOOKSELLER. Precisely. Why did you come in here?

BASTIAN. I was running.

BOOKSELLER. From the police?

BASTIAN. No sir. From bullies.