

## **Parent/Student Guide – Pippin**

### **Rated PG-13**

Young Pippin is in search of the secret to true happiness and fulfillment. He wants his life to be extraordinary and will not settle for less. He seeks it in the glories of the battlefield, the temptations of the flesh, and the intrigues of political power. In the end, though, Pippin finds that happiness lies not in extraordinary endeavors, but rather the ordinary moments that happen every day.

Pippin is one of the most popular choices for high school theatre companies and has been shown successfully with high school aged students all over the world. Although the show is quite dark by nature, it has themes that are relevant to teens and young adults.

#### Show Content Details

##### **Violence:**

- Pippin seeks, among other things, the glory of war. There is a highly stylized battle scene that is more of a dance than a violent scene, although people are killed in the battle. A trio of dancers depicts the futility of war with a Fosse-style dance in front of the battle.
- After the battle scene Pippin speaks to a severed head. The head furthers the discussion about the futility of war and the true lack of glory and glamour to remind us of the ugliness of war.
- Pippin's stepmother, Fastrada, manipulates Pippin into killing his father in order to gain power. However, this doesn't fulfill him as he thought, and then his father is once again alive.
- The players try to lead Pippin to the conclusion that the only way to glorify his life is to go out in an actual blaze of glory – to die by suicide as the ultimate "finale" and glorious act. Pippin walks away from this in order to create a simple life with the person he loves. The message is that love of family is more fulfilling, and although "extraordinary" is nice, it won't lead to ultimate happiness.

##### **Sexual/Intimacy content:**

- A lengthy kiss. During this kiss between Pippin and Catherine, two dancers do a tango that intimates that the kiss is a symbol for their having made love. It is highly stylized and somewhat comical.
- Leading Player has intimate moments of touch/caress/and a light kiss or two with various actors of all genders throughout the show.
- The dancing is, as required by the elements of the show, stylized Fosse-type movement. Fosse movement can be sensual in nature, but is quite stunning to watch as well. The students will be in dance-style clothing so that the body can be seen well, as is important with this type of movement.
- One of the journeys that Pippin takes on his way to finding out what will make his life be "extraordinary" is his sexual awakening. This is depicted through a highly stylized dance referred to in the stage directions as an "orgy". At the end of this dance, he says he feels "empty and vacant" and wants something more. The moral here is that, for him, sex alone, without love and commitment, is not what he wants for his life.
- There will be same-sex touching/dance coupling throughout the show.

##### **Language:**

- In the opening song the Players sing about the journey the show will take. The words "Sex presented pastorally" are sung as are the words lust, murder and Holy war.
- When speaking of King Charlemagne they describe him as: "A giant on the battlefield and in the bedroom." Pippin's grandmother speaks of war with this line: "Sometimes I think men raise flags when they can't get anything else up."
- There are swear words throughout the script, although they aren't copious.

##### **Other:**

- Part of the play takes place in the Middle Ages when wars were being fought to bring Christianity to other countries. Lines similar to this one are scattered throughout the war section of the show: "Fighting wars is the most important part of being King. I mean after all, the Pope and I have dedicated ourselves to bringing Christianity to the entire world, even if we have to kill every non-believer to do it."