

**GREAT
LAKES
THEATER**

TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDE

Dracula:

THE BLOODY TRUTH

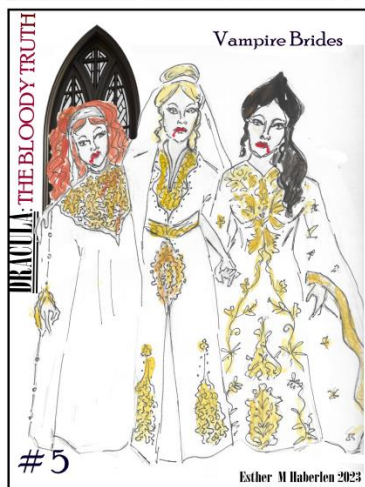


By Le Navet Bête & John Nicholson
Directed by Charles Fee

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Fall 2023

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your student matinee ticket order to Great Lakes Theater's production of *Dracula: The Bloody Truth*. We offer special thanks to Great Lakes Theater education outreach associate David Hansen for by Le Navet Bête and John Nicholson. This production will be performed in the beautiful Hanna Theatre at Playhouse Square from October 20—November 5, 2023.

Professor Van Helsing is on a mission to tell the "truth" about the terrifying story of the legendary vampire Dracula. With four spirited actors playing forty characters, this breakneck adaptation takes you from spooky Transylvania to the charming English coast. A wild, zany, (almost) authentic adaptation that provides a spooktacular evening full of campy horror fun!

This guide is designed – through essays, discussion questions and classroom activities – to give students both an introduction to, and a point of entry for, a personal exploration of *Dracula: The Bloody Truth*. We offer special thanks to Great Lakes Theater education outreach associate David Hansen for his outstanding contributions to this guide.

Great Lakes Theater is proud to provide you with the finest in classic theater and the necessary educational resources to support your work in the classroom. We are thrilled that you will be coming to see us and we welcome your input on how best to support your classroom preparation for our work. Please let us know what you think!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Schaffer Florian".

Kelly Schaffer Florian
Director of Educational Services
Kflorian@greatlakes theater.org

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Hansen".

David Hansen
Education Outreach Associate
dhansen@greatlakes theater.org



A NOTE TO STUDENTS: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEATER

You may or may not have attended a live theater performance before. To increase your enjoyment, it might be helpful to look at the unique qualities of this art form — because it is so different from movies or video.

The live theatrical performance not only involves the actors on the stage; it is meant to involve you, the audience, in ways that film and television cannot. In truth, although you are sitting in an auditorium and the actors are on stage, there is very little separating the audience from the performers. How you react to the play *deeply affects* the actors. Something as seemingly trivial as *whispering* or *unwrapping a candy bar* can distract them and disrupt the mood and tone of their performance. Due to the important relationship between actors and audience members, there are certain, perhaps obvious, provisions of live theater we wish to call to your attention.

In the Hanna Theatre, it is important to know that the taking of pictures, either with or without a flash, is strictly prohibited. Also, it is essential that all electronic equipment, including cell phones, music players (even with headphones), alarm watches, etc., be completely powered off once you have entered the theatre. Even the glow from a watch or a silent cell phone (used for checking the time, text messaging, or posting social network updates, for example) can be very distracting to fellow audience members, even if you try to mask it under your hand or an article of clothing. Our goal is to provide every person in the audience with the best possible theatrical experience, so we appreciate your respectful cooperation during the performance.

Other differences live theater provides: in film or video, the camera and editing define what we will see. In the theater, however, each of us works as our own camera and editor, choosing our own personal points of focus. And in the Hanna Theatre, you should know that often we do not use microphones. As audience members you'll need to actively listen and "tune in" to the sound of the unamplified human voice.

As for our lighting and scenery, it might surprise you to know that these are not necessarily meant to be realistic. In this production, for example, there may be design elements that are abstract or metaphorical.

The theater's ability to focus on human experience — distilled through the dialogue and behavior of people on stage and enhanced by the scenery, costumes, lighting, music and dance — is a centuries-old tradition. Being part of the communal magic when performer and audience connect — whether at a baseball game, music concert or theater performance — cannot be duplicated.

The performance you will see at Great Lakes Theater will happen only once. It is unique and personal. Though this play will be performed more than a dozen times, the performance you see belongs only to you.

We hope you enjoy it, and we'd like you to share your response with us.



A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The script of the play you are about to watch evolved through a process of devising in response to writing, and then writing in response to devising, and then writing in response to rehearsal.

Although we wanted to make a comedy, we didn't want to write a comedy. Or rather, we wanted to write a play about Dracula that was extremely loyal to Bram Stoker's original story.

The comedy, we decided, would emerge from the framing device: The idea that Van Helsing, who hates theater, has hired three idiots to help him broadcast the true events that happened to him and his friends — the true events that Stoker has shamelessly fictionalized. So in this respect, this play is not a spoof version of *Dracula*. It's a serious (albeit wooden) script, within which terrible directorial decisions have been made and which is primed to derail at every turn. But despite all, the company somehow pulls it off.

One of the delights of the production is the sheer number of quick-changes the cast of four has to accomplish in order to play the 40 or so characters. Sometimes the actors share characters, sometimes an actor is keeping three characters alive in one scene. As in a break-neck farce, the timing must be nanosecond precise in order to nail the comedy.

The most commonly used word in rehearsal was: "Again!"

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Actor 1:

Professor Van Helsing, Bride 1, Quincey Morris, Peasant,
Train Conductor, Bloke, Box Man, Paper Boy..... Lynn Robert Berg*

Actor 2:

Dracula, Dr. Seward, Bride 3, Dad and Son on Cliff,
Mrs. Westenra, Cart DriverJeffrey C. Hawkins*

Actor 3:

Man in DJ, Mina Murray, Holmwood,
Dock Worker, Bride 2, Mrs. Westenra,
Ship's First Mate, Cart Driver's Wife, Margaret..... Jodi Dominick*

Actor 4:

Jonathan Harker, Lucy Westenra, Renfield,
Ship's Captain, Cart Driver's Wife, Dock Boy..... Joe Wegner*

*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

Synopsis for DRACULA (1897)

In Bram Stoker's Gothic horror novel *Dracula*, young solicitor Jonathan Harker travels to Transylvania to assist Count Dracula, a nobleman, with purchasing a property in London, England. However, Harker soon becomes Dracula's prisoner, discovering the Count's supernatural nature and his intentions of moving to England where he would find plentiful victims.

After a harrowing escape from Dracula (and the Count's three vampire "brides") Harker reunites with his fiancée, Mina, in England. Meanwhile, Dracula arrives in England via the ship *Demeter*, and begins to exert his influence over Lucy, Mina's friend. Lucy's strange illness attracts the attention of Professor Abraham Van Helsing, who recognizes the symptoms as those of a vampire's victim.

As Lucy succumbs to Dracula's curse, Harker, Mina, Van Helsing, and their friends form a coalition to confront and destroy the ancient vampire.

The novel delves into themes of sexuality, colonialism, and the clash of civilizations. It also embodies late 19th-century anxieties about immigration, the unknown and the boundaries of scientific knowledge.

An "epistolary" (a tale told through first person accounts: letters, journal entries, and newspaper clippings) the narrative paints a chilling picture of Dracula's powers and his impact on the lives of those who cross his path.

ABOUT BRAM STOKER

Bram Stoker (1847-1912) was an Irish novelist, best known for his Gothic horror masterpiece, *Dracula* (1897). Born in Dublin, Stoker initially pursued a career in civil service and also as a theater critic. Later, he became the manager for the famed actor Sir Henry Irving, overseeing the Lyceum Theatre in London.

While involved in the theatrical world, Stoker penned several novels, but it was *Dracula* that immortalized his name in literary history. The novel introduced the character of Count Dracula and popularized the modern vampire mythos, influencing countless adaptations across various media. Stoker's contribution to the horror genre remains unparalleled and continues to inspire writers and filmmakers.



SYNOPSIS

DRACULA: THE BLOODY TRUTH

Dracula: The Bloody Truth by La Navet Bête and John Nicholson is a comedic retelling of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. It's not a traditional version of the Dracula legend; instead, it takes a humorous approach, blending farce and physical comedy.

In the play, Professor Abraham Van Helsing attempts to educate the audience about the real story of Dracula, desperately trying to prove that he is not the incompetent buffoon that many believe him to be. As the narrative unfolds, Van Helsing and his motley crew set off on a journey from the English coast to the Transylvanian mountains to track down and finally confront Dracula.

Throughout the performance, the play pokes fun at classic theatrical conventions and the well-known Dracula story, creating unexpected and hilarious moments. The story is not just a tale of a bloodthirsty vampire but is transformed into a comedic theatrical experience that is part farce, part pantomime.

Multiple roles are often played by the same actors, requiring quick costume changes and contributing to the slapstick humor. The play's design, staging, and physical comedy elements are as crucial as the narrative, often leading to chaotic and hilarious outcomes.

ABOUT LE NAVET BÊTE

Le Navet Bête is a British physical comedy theater company known for their high-energy, farcical performances and adaptations of classic stories. Le navet bête is French for "the stupid turnip."

FACT "BITES" ...

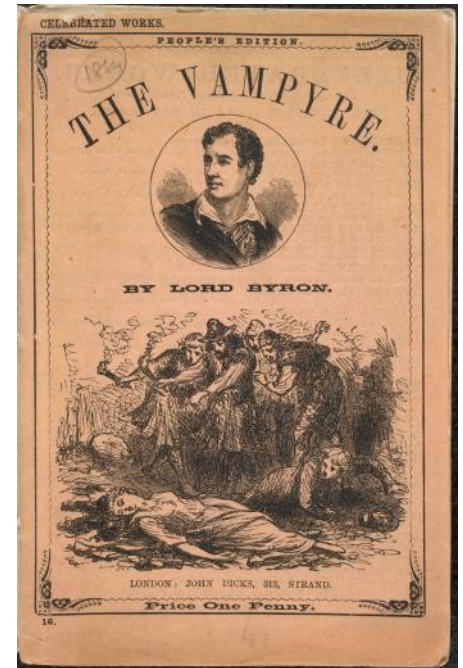
- **Formation:** Le Navet Bête was formed in 2007 by a group of graduates from the University of Exeter. They aimed to create engaging and accessible theater that combines elements of clowning, physical comedy, and farce.
- **Style and Productions:** The troupe became renowned for their humorous adaptations of classic tales. Some of their notable productions include "Dracula: The Bloody Truth", "The Three Musketeers", and "Extravaganza". These shows often involve audience interaction, slapstick comedy, and inventive reinterpretations of well-known stories.
- **Reception:** Their works have been praised for their originality, comedic timing, and the ensemble's impeccable coordination. The troupe has toured both nationally and internationally, garnering acclaim from audiences and critics alike.
- **Collaborations:** Over the years, La Navet Bête has collaborated with various theater professionals and institutions to enhance their productions. Their commitment to producing high-quality comedic theater has earned them a loyal following.



FACT “BITES” HISTORY OF THE VAMPIRE

The history of the vampire in literature and popular culture is vast and varied, stretching across different civilizations and eras. Here's an overview:

- **Ancient Civilizations:** Many ancient cultures had legends of creatures similar to vampires. The Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians all had tales of demonic entities or spirits who would drink the blood of the living.
- **Slavic Folklore:** Eastern European legends of the undead likely most directly inform our modern concept of the vampire. These creatures, often called "upirs" or "nosferatu," were seen as revenants, returning from death to harm the living. Rituals existed to prevent the dead from turning into these creatures.
- **Early Literature:** *The Vampyr* (1819): Often credited as the first modern vampire story, this short work by John Polidori introduced the charismatic and aristocratic vampire, a theme that would persist in future literature.
- **Victorian Era:** *Carmilla* (1872): Written by J. Sheridan Le Fanu, this novella introduced a female vampire and has undertones of homoeroticism.



Written by John Polidori, NOT Lord Byron, *The Vampyre* featured the first seductive, aristocratic vampire, perhaps based on Lord Byron himself. Publishers intentionally confused the public by sometimes attributing authorship to Lord Byron, hoping to capitalize on his scandalous fame. Readers would wonder if it was written by him—or written about him.

Nosferatu is a 1922 silent German Expressionist horror film directed by F. W. Murnau and starring Max Schreck as Count Orlok, a vampire who preys on the wife of his estate agent and brings the plague to their town.





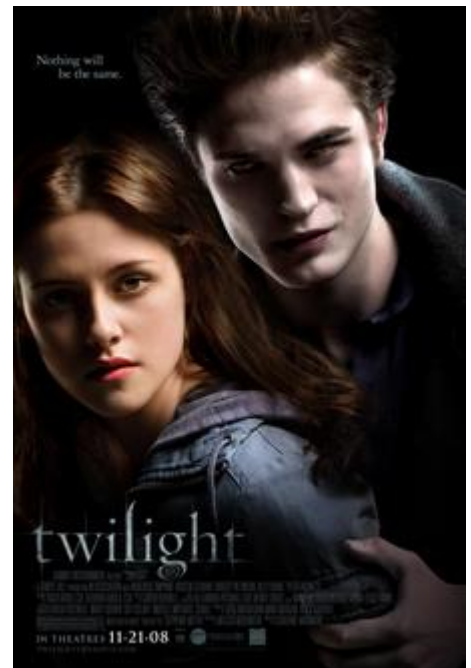
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997-2003) is television series created by writer and director Joss Whedon that follows Buffy Summers (played by Sarah Michelle Gellar), the latest in a line of young women known as "Vampire Slayers" who are chosen by fate to battle against vampires, demons and other forces of darkness.

- *Dracula* (1897): Bram Stoker's novel is arguably the most influential work in vampire literature. It established many conventions of the vampire genre, from Dracula's Eastern European origins to his vulnerability to garlic and sunlight.
- **20th Century:** The vampire myth was adapted and evolved with society's changing values and fears. Films like *Nosferatu* (1922) and *Dracula* (1931) made the creature a pop culture icon.
- Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, starting with *Interview with the Vampire* in 1976, reintroduced the vampire as a complex, emotional being, experiencing eternal existential crises.
- Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* (1975) gave the myth a modern twist, setting it in a contemporary small town.
- **Late 20th and 21st Century:** *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: This TV series combined teen drama with supernatural horror, presenting vampires as both villains and allies.
- *Twilight* Series: Stephenie Meyer's books, starting in 2005, sparked a resurgence in vampire popularity, especially among young adults. They presented a more romantic and often less menacing view of vampires.
- TV series like *True Blood* and *The Vampire Diaries* further explored vampire myths in contemporary settings, examining topics like vampire rights and integration into human society.

- **Cultural Evolution:** As society evolved, so did the vampire myth. Originally figures of horror, vampires became more humanized over time, sometimes even emerging as tragic heroes. They've come to embody various cultural anxieties, from fears of contagion to questions about morality and immortality.

The vampire's adaptability and versatility ensure its continued presence in literature and popular culture, reflecting society's evolving concerns and fascinations.

Twilight is a 2008 film based on the 2005 novel of the same name by Stephenie Meyer. It is the first installment in *The Twilight Saga* film series. The film stars Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson as Bella Swan, a teenage girl, and Edward Cullen, a vampire, and focuses on the development of Bella and Edward's relationship and the subsequent efforts of Edward and his family to keep Bella safe from another coven of vampires.



DRACULA FILMS (HORROR)

Apart from the countless novels, movies, television programs, comics and other media that feature vampire characters, film makers have returned to Bram Stoker's original novel and the character of Count Dracula to thrill and frighten audiences since the dawn of motion pictures.

Note: These are examples, and not necessarily recommendations for your students. As you will notice, several have received mature ratings due to, among other reasons, the violent and also the sexualized nature of vampire stories.



Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992 film)

1. *Nosferatu* (Not Rated, 1922) This silent, German film by F.W. Murnau was the first motion picture based on the novel "Dracula." It was also unauthorized and the subject of many lawsuits.

2. *Dracula* (Not Rated, 1931) The Universal film starring Bela Lugosi which established the iconic image (and voice) of Bram Stoker's creation.

3. *Dracula* (Not Rated, 1958) Starring Christopher Lee as the titular count, this was the first in the long series of films produced by the British Hammer Film company.

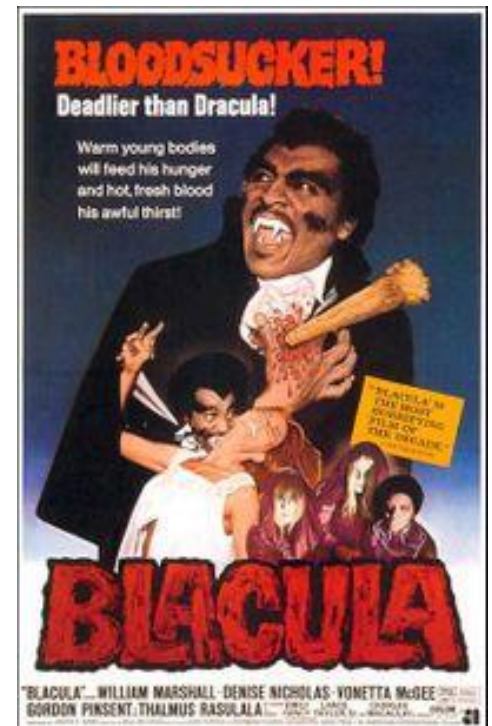
4. *Blacula* (PG, 1972) African Prince Mamuwalde is made into a vampire by Dracula and imprisoned until the 1970s when he is released in Los Angeles and exacts his revenge.

5. *Dracula* (R, 1979) Based on the successful mid-70s Broadway revival of the original stage play starring Frank Langella.

6. *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (PG, 1979) German director Werner Herzog's remake of Murnau's original.

7. *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (R, 1992) Directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starring Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder, Keanu Reeves, Anthony Hopkins, Cary Elwes, Richard E. Grant, Tom Waits ... it was a big movie.

8. *The Last Voyage of the Demeter* (R, 2023) Based on one section from Stoker's original novel.



Poster for the film *Blacula*, 1972

DRACULA FILMS (COMIC)

Vampires in general (and the character of Dracula in specific) have been the source of comic interpretation and parody since Stoker's novel first gained popularity. Here are a dozen films that get laughs from the vampire.

Note: These are examples, and not necessarily recommendations for your students. As you will notice, several have received mature ratings due to, among other reasons, the violent and also the sexualized nature of vampire stories.

1. *Renfield* (R, 2023) Centering on the character of Dracula's faithful adherent Renfield, a comic adventure set in the 21st century.
2. *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (PG-13, 1995) The Count gets the full Mel Brooks treatment.
3. *What We Do in the Shadows* (R, 2014) The film that inspired the hit streaming program.
4. *Hotel Transylvania* (PG, 2012) Adam Sandler provides the voice for an animated Dracula dad.
5. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (PG-13, 1992) The film that inspired the 1990s teen TV phenomenon.
6. *Transylvania 6-5000* (PG, 1985) An extremely silly pastiche of monster gags.
7. *Dark Shadows* (PG-13, 2012) Tim Burton's adaptation of the 1960s British TV vampire soap.
8. *Love at First Bite* (PG, 1979) A disco-era Dracula starring George Hamilton.
9. *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (Not Rated, 1948) The comedy duo Abbott & Costello encounter all the classic Universal movie monsters – including Bela Lugosi reprising his role as Dracula.
10. *Vampire in Brooklyn* (R, 1995) Starring Eddie Murphy and Angela Bassett and directed by Wes Craven, a modern cult classic.
11. *Shadow of the Vampire* (R, 2000) What if Max Schreck, star of F. W. Murnau's 1922 film "Nosferatu" was an actual vampire?
12. *Vampire's Kiss* (R, 1988) The Nicholas Cage flick that launched a thousand memes.



Poster for the animated film *Hotel Transylvania*

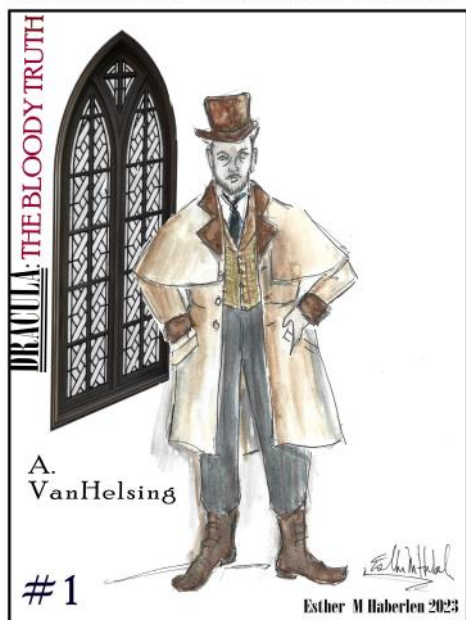
Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein, 1948 Universal International film with Bela Lugosi at left and Lou Costello



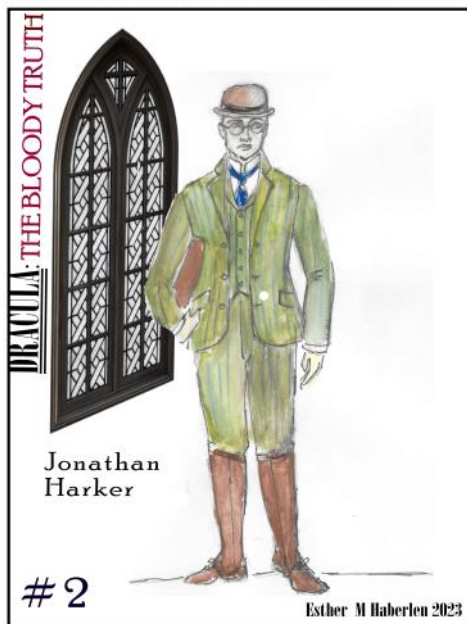
COSTUME DESIGN

by Esther Haberen

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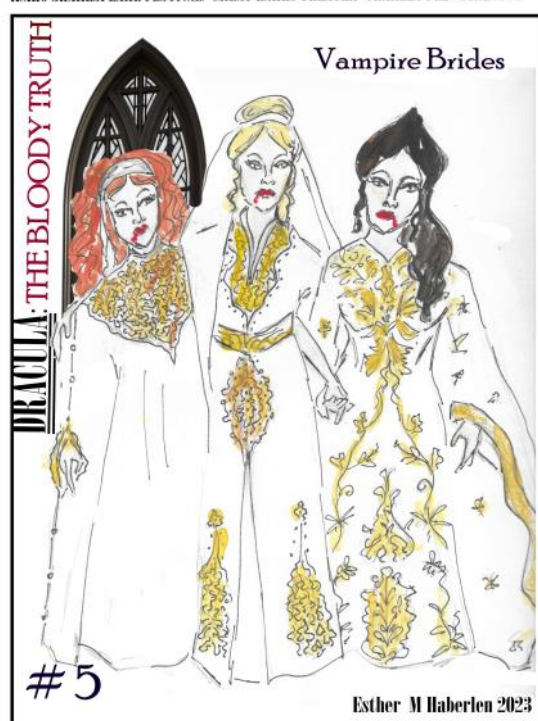
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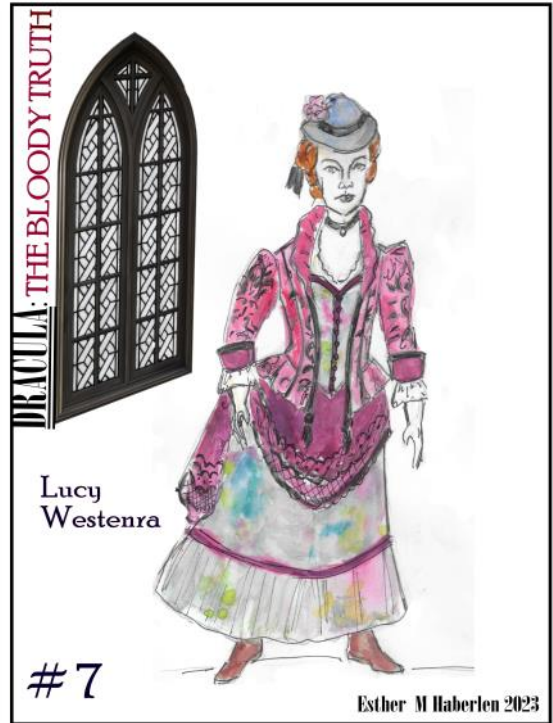
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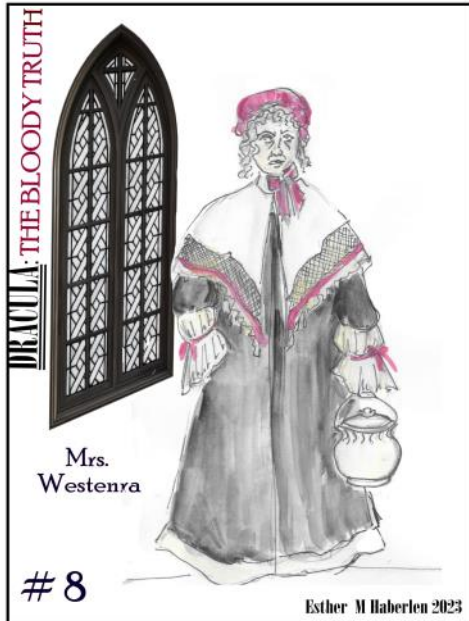
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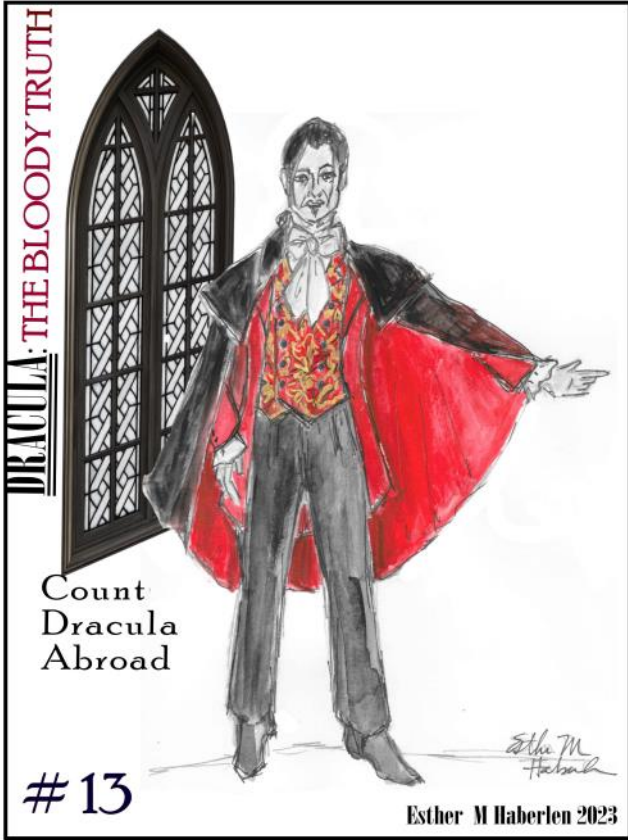
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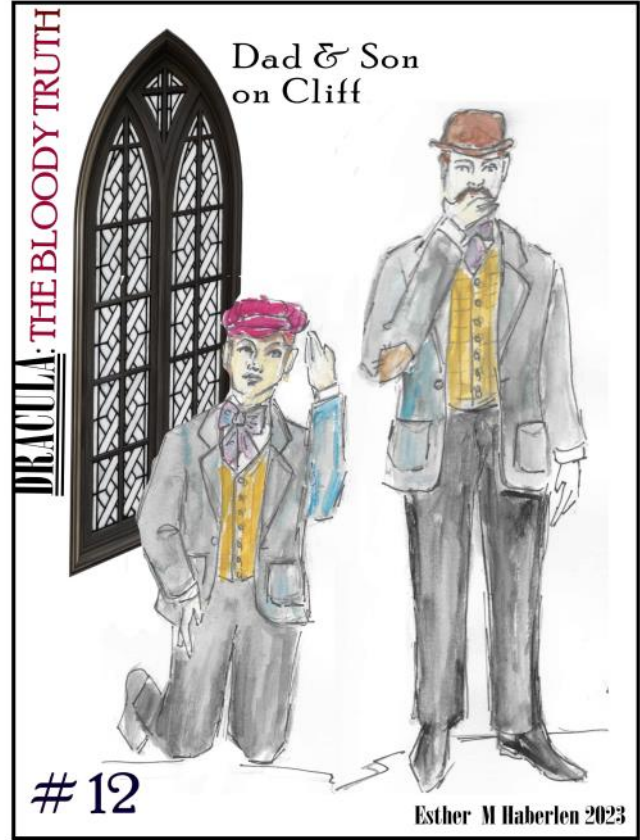
COSTUME DESIGN

by Esther Haberlen

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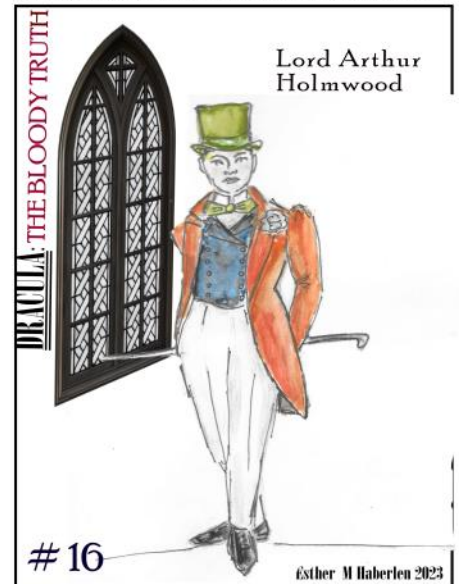
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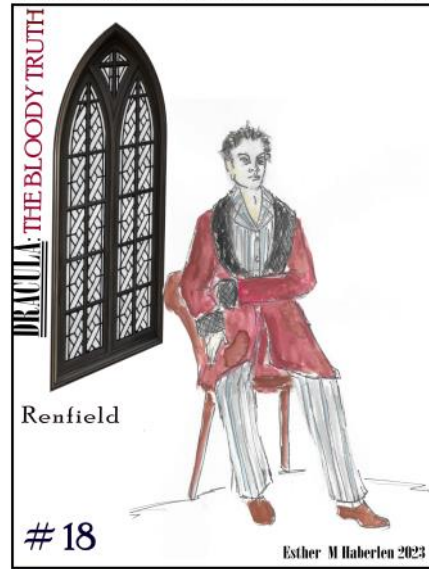
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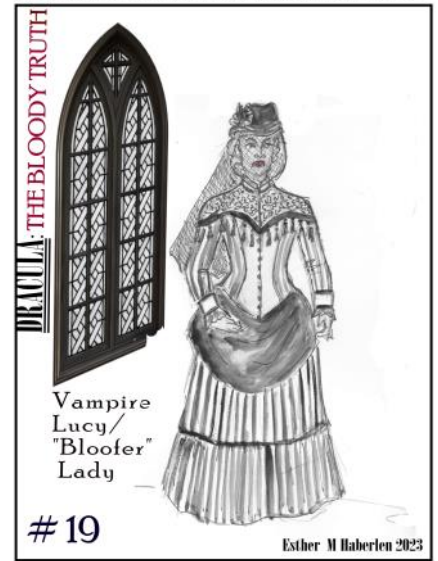
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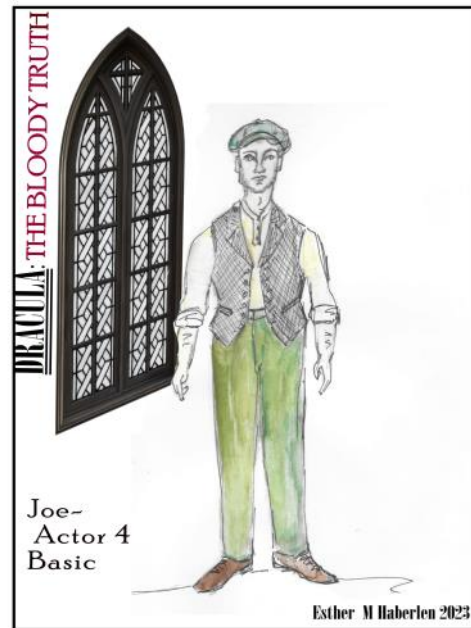
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SCENIC DESIGN

by Gage Williams



Curtain Look



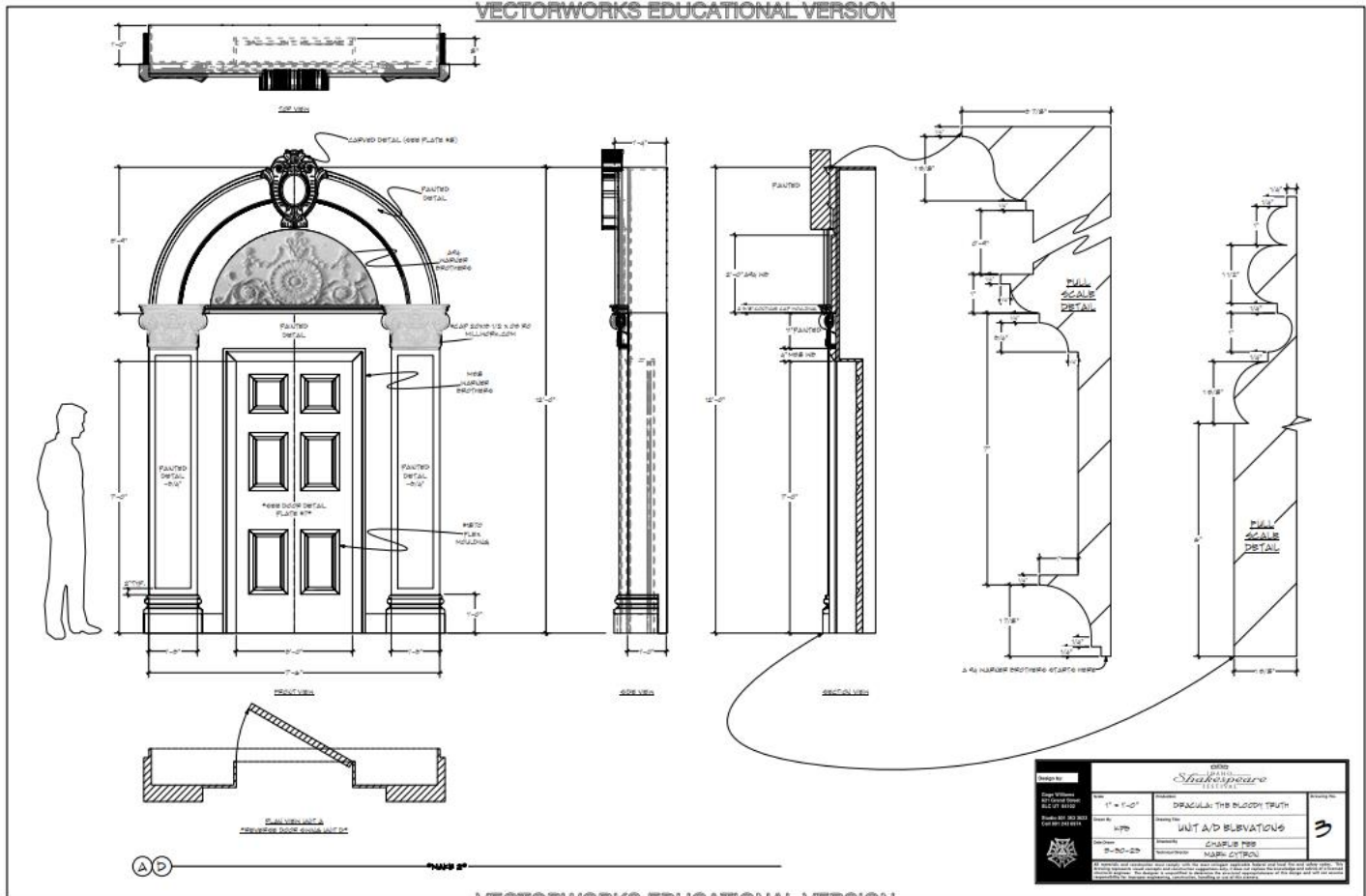
Grave Yard





Act II

VECTORWORKS EDUCATIONAL VERSION



DRACULA: THE BLOODY TRUTH ONSTAGE AT IDAHO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL



1st row: Joe Wegner & Sara J. Griffin; Joe Wegner & Jeffrey C. Hawkins; Sara J. Griffin, Lynn Robert Berg & Joe Wegner

2nd row: Sara J. Griffin , Joe Wegner, Lynn Robert Berg & Jeffrey C. Hawkins; Joe Wegner

3rd row: Jeffrey C. Hawkins & Joe Wegner; Jeffrey C. Hawkins; Lynn Robert Berg , Sara J. Griffin & Jeffery C. Hawkins

4th row: Joe Wegner, Sara J. Griffin & Jeffrey C. Hawkins; Jeffrey C. Hawkins & Sara J. Griffin
Photos by Two Birds Studio



1st row: Joe Wegner & Jeffrey C. Hawkins; Sara J. Griffin & Joe Wegner

2nd row: Jeffrey C. Hawkins & Lynn Robert Berg; Joe Wegner & Sara J. Griffin

3rd row: Sara J. Griffin, Joe Wegner & Jeffrey C. Hawkins; Jeffrey C. Hawkins, Joe Wegner & Sara J. Griffin

4th row: Jeffrey C. Hawkins, Joe Wegner, Sara J. Griffin & Lynn Robert Berg; Joe Wegner & Sara J. Griffin; Sara J. Griffin, Wegner, Lynn Robert Berg & Jeffrey C. Hawkins
Photos by Two Birds Studio



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DRACULA THE ORIGINAL NOVEL

1. In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, how does the theme of fear of the unknown contribute to the tension and overall atmosphere of the story?
2. How does Stoker contrast the roles of women in Victorian society through the characters of Lucy and Mina?
3. How does the theme of "Otherness" manifest in *Dracula*, especially in terms of the foreignness of Count Dracula? How might this reflect the fears or anxieties of late Victorian society?
4. How does Stoker use the theme of science versus superstition in *Dracula*? Are there any examples where one appears to prevail over the other?
5. How do the notions of life and death intertwine in *Dracula* and how does this dynamic affect the characters' perceptions of immortality?
6. Discuss the exploration of the theme of sexuality in *Dracula*. How does it contrast with the repressed sexual norms of the Victorian era?
7. The theme of invasion is prominent in *Dracula*. How does Stoker use this theme to evoke fear? Is this theme connected to contemporary issues of Stoker's time?
8. *Dracula* is largely written in the form of journal entries, letters, and diary extracts. How does this narrative technique impact the exploration of themes such as truth, reliability, and subjectivity?
9. Discuss how Stoker presents the theme of dualism in *Dracula*. Can this be connected to the duality of human nature?
10. How does *Dracula* explore the theme of madness? Are there any characters in the novel whose sanity is questioned, and if so, how does this contribute to the overall themes and mood of the story?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

1. Think about the narrators in novels and stories you've come across in the literature you've read so far. What qualities does a narrator need to feel like you can trust the version of events that they are giving you as a real version? What qualities do they need to exhibit to make you distrust them? Why would an author create an unreliable narrator? How does it make you feel about the story you are reading?
2. What elements are needed to create a good horror story? A good comedy? What role does suspense and surprise play in good story telling? Why would you combine these two different genres together?
3. What is a parody? Is there a show, movie, or internet artist you watch that parodies other stories? What draws you to those types of performances? Why do parodies exist? What makes a story able to be parodied? In what ways might they add to or take away from the original work?
4. The story of *Dracula* has been adapted to almost every different media, from comics to dance, and in a variety of genres since Bram Stoker first published this classic novel in 1897. What is an adaptation? What is your favorite adaptation? Why? Why do you think books are adapted for movies or plays? Why do you think the character of Dracula has transcended to so many different ways of telling a story?
5. What is slapstick? What kind of story is usually associated with it? What TV shows/movies/live performances have you seen slapstick in? Do you enjoy watching those types of performances? Why or why not? Why do you think this type of performance style has endured for so long?
6. There is a whole genre of plays in the form of "the play that goes wrong": famously *Noises Off*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, and, of course, *Dracula: The Bloody Truth*, to name a few. Why do you think this type of play is appealing to audiences? Ironically, precision timing and strictly choreographed performances make these shows work - why? Why do you think actors would work so hard to make their art look ridiculous?
7. Why are there so many different rules to ward off vampires? Think of all the different items and rituals associated with this type of monster from any story you've come across. Think about all the different ways they are to be used in relation to the character of Dracula himself. Which ones seem to appear no matter what kind of vampire story is being told? What is it about those items that seem magical or helpful in stories about vampires?

QUESTIONS: DRACULA AND VAMPIRES IN POPULAR CULTURE

1. The classic image of Count Dracula was defined by Bela Lugosi in the 1931 film: black hair, slicked back with a widow's peak, the tuxedo, cloak with high collar, medallion, incisor fangs, severe eyebrows, and an indistinct Eastern European accent. This image was once terribly frightening for audiences, but it has been parodied countless (heh) times since, even made cuddly in the form of Sesame Street's Count von Count. How can Dracula be made terrifying for a modern audience? How would you fashion the Count for a modern audience, to make him scary once again? (Note: Universal has created a new horror film, *The Last Voyage of the Demeter* (R, 2023) inspired by one section of Bram Stoker's novel, released August 11.)
2. What are the different rituals and items surrounding the story of Dracula (and vampires in general)? Why are there so many different versions? Which rituals or items seem to appear consistently? What is the symbolism or meaning behind them? Why are so many of them related to the Catholic faith?

ACTIVITIES & WRITING PROMPTS

THE PLAY THAT DOESN'T GO AS PLANNED

Version 1: Choose a famous scene from a play in the curriculum, one that involves an important prop. Not a long scene, perhaps only a monologue.

Examples:

“Alas, poor Yorick!” – or – The Gravedigger Scene: *Hamlet* Act V, Scene 1

“What if this be a poison ...” – or – The Vial Scene: *Romeo & Juliet* Act IV, Scene 3

“I took his fountain pen.” – or – The Restaurant Scene: *Death of a Salesman*, Act II, Scene 7

The Crucible/poppet

The Important of Being Earnest/cucumber sandwiches

Student(s) volunteers to perform the scene before the class. Send them out into the hall to read it over. While they do this, the rest of the class choose an object in the classroom to take the place of the central prop in the monologue.

The student is then asked to perform the monologue as seriously as possible, but are provided the substitute prop, calling it what it is and changing any other words necessary to make this prop make sense in the context of the scene.

Version 2: Ask the class to make a list of “genres” of plays, movies, or television programs. Examples; science fiction, rom-com, horror, adventure. Choose a famous scene from a play in the curriculum, one with more than one character. Cast volunteers to play the scene, and as they perform it, every ten or fifteen seconds call FREEZE, and then give the actors a different genre with which to continue the scene.

Discussion: How did these scenes go? Ask the performers what it was like to perform this way. Ask the audience how they enjoyed watching the scenes. Was it funny? Was it awkward? How does the element of surprise or uncertainty affect the way we are able to perform a task, or experience a performance?

UNINVITED GUEST

Participants have been invited to a fancy party. With their eyes closed, the game master taps one player on the shoulder. They are a VAMPIRE. All are then instructed to open their eyes and the party begins! You might even play party music. All guests must, however, greet each other and say something about the party guest they are playing – and shake hands. No one may refuse to shake hands. The VAMPIRE wants to draw blood from everyone in the room without being caught, and they do this by scratching the wrist of people they shake hands with. Party members who have been “bitten” in this way must silently count to three and then die a horrible – AND LOUD – death, lowering themselves to the floor as they do so.

To catch the VAMPIRE, a party members must raise their hand and cry “VAMPIRE!” The party stops and the accuser is given five seconds for someone to shout “VAMPIRE!” They must then point to who they believe is a VAMPIRE at the same time. If they point to two different people, or are wrong in their accusation, they also both die and must do so LOUDLY and lower themselves to the floor.

Game ends when either the VAMPIRE is caught, or all party members are on the floor.

EPISTOLARY

The novel “Dracula” is an epistolary, a story told through first person accounts, such as letters, diaries, or newspaper articles. It lends the tale a sense of realism, as the reader is led to believe they are discovering a true account of something that actually happened.

As a writing exercise, choose a turning point in another famous work of fiction and compose a brief newspaper article, reporting the facts with a journalist’s detached eye – and without the interior knowledge of the protagonist.

For example, how would a school reporter cover the parking lot scene in *Twilight* where *Bella* is almost hit by a car?

Try writing a diary entry from the point of view of a different character than the main protagonist. How would Gus have written about meeting the author in Amsterdam in *Fault in Our Stars*, and later the Anne Frank house? Write a journal entry using Gus’s unique voice, in first person, as though it had just happened earlier this afternoon.



Jeffery C. Hawkins, Joe Wegner, Lynn Robert Berg & Sara J. Griffin in *Dracula: The Bloody Truth* at Idaho Shakespeare Festival. Photo by Two Birds Studio

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

AFTER ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

1. Van Helsing is dismissive of the actors, repeatedly correcting them and calling them idiots. Why do you think he employs them to help tell his story? Why do you think he repeatedly gets caught up in the action of the story, turning into an actor himself?
2. As Van Helsing gets more and more involved in trying to help the actors, fixing the problems that arise, and creating new ones, how does that affect your perception of Van Helsing as the narrator of a “true” version of the story? Compare and contrast what the actors say to what they do; in what ways is the audience being told to trust Van Helsing and in what ways are they being told to disregard his validity?
3. *Dracula: The Bloody Truth* was originally created and performed by four male-identifying performers; Great Lakes Theater’s production has one female-identifying actor in the cast. Do you think the gender of the actors matters in this type of production - why or why not? How are different genders portrayed in this script? In what ways do you feel the portrayal of gender helped or hindered how you received the story?
4. Often, live performance works very hard to make the audience suspend their disbelief. What does it mean to suspend one’s disbelief? Have you ever had a moment where you forgot you were watching a performance? How did that feel? Why do you think this play works very hard to keep reminding the audience that they are very much watching a performance? How does that add or take away from the story? How does that add or take away from your enjoyment of the performance?
5. How did it feel when the actors invited an audience member on the stage? Were you glad it wasn’t you or did you wish you could be up there?
6. During the second act, we see a scene where Dracula meets Mina for the first time. Van Helsing makes the comment, “You see what he’s like!? A master of manipulation and deception.” After watching the scene, do you agree with Van Helsing? Why? If Van Helsing is established as an unreliable narrator, how can we trust that any scene we see is “real” or any of his commentary surrounding it?
7. Different versions of the *Dracula* story have many different endings, which this play reflects with its two different endings: the happy ending that Van Helsing assumes the audience wants and the “real” ending where Dracula is victorious and is always lurking. Why do you think the creators of this play decided to include two endings? What does each ending represent or mean to you? How does Bram Stoker’s novel end compared to how this play ends? If you could give this play the best ending possible (whatever that means to you), what would happen?

HOW TO WRITE A REVIEW

MORE HOW AND LESS WHAT

A theater review is not a book review, you do not need to summarize what happens. Provide the necessary background so the reader knows the name of the play and the basics of what kind of play it is, and then move into your commentary. You do not need to explain WHAT the play is, instead write about HOW successfully it was presented.

THE ACTOR NOT THE CHARACTER

You can disapprove of the decisions a character makes, but how well did the ACTOR perform the role? Was their behavior appropriate to the part as written? Feel free to share your opinions, comparing or contrasting their work with other actors with whom you are familiar.

WHAT IS DIRECTION?

Maybe you have heard of a “director” in theater or film, but do you know what they do? It is not a director’s job to tell the actors how to say every line, but they are the person responsible for creating the general mood and concept for the production. What was your impression of the production as a whole? Was it too funny for a serious play? Or not amusing enough for a comic play? Use words to reflect back to the director how successful the production is as a whole.

DON’T FORGET THE DESIGN

The set you see and the sounds you hear are also unique to this one production of this play. Describe what you see and hear, but also be sure to make clear how successful these designs are in telling the story of the play.

IN CONCLUSION ...

While it is not necessary to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” your concluding sentence should summarize your impression of the production as a whole.

THEATER REVIEWS IN THE NEW MEDIA

Reviews in news websites may be 1000 words, they may be as brief as 300 words. Can you write a one-page review? Can you write a 100 word review, to post on Facebook? Do you think you could create a 140-character review that sums up the production for posting on Twitter?

A sample review written by a student follows this page.

A SAMPLE REVIEW WRITTEN BY A STUDENT

"Gambit": More Poetry Than History — Mark Wood

If Aristotle was correct when he said that poetry “is a higher thing than history,” then “Royal Gambit,” which opened Friday night at Pentacle Theater, is, I suppose, on the right track.

For those who were expecting a representational treatment of the life of England’s Henry VIII, “Royal Gambit” was a shock, if not a disappointment. Those who sought poetry got it, although of a very dogmatic and simplistic sort.

This unusual, highly presentational play by Hermann Gressieker, directed by Ed Classen, is an indictment of modern man as a ruthless opportunist. The Tudor king is a representative of a rationalizing, shifty society which has become “superior to the highest” while “wallowing in the depths.”

As Henry uses the banners of “reason” and “humanism” to obtain then dispose of his six wives, so modern man uses them for his own pleasure and glorification, uses them to wage war in the name of peace, to hate in the name of love.

Such is the grim theme pleasingly presented by a company of seven actors, who performed their roles energetically, if unevenly. The presentational acting style employed here is difficult to perfect. It should be theatrical, yet believable; aimed at the head, yet acceptable to the heart.

Louise Larsen was a standout as Catherine of Aragon, Largely because she utilized this presentational approach and was not afraid of open theatricality. Her flamboyant stage presence, which needed to be toned down in her recent role in “Last of the Red Hot Lovers,” found full vent here.

Henry's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was portrayed by Gale Rieder, who quickly became an audience favorite. Her thick accent was letter-perfect and her direct humor was a welcome contrast to the bitter satire of the rest of the play.

The other four actresses—Kathy Stratton, Marcia Engblom, Polly Bond and Patricia Sloan—each had their exceptional moments. However, they generally seemed tied to more conventional, representational acting styles.

Ron Fox was superb in the role of Henry. Tuxedoed, leering with the look of a demonic marionette, the vacant stare of a deranged orator, Fox dominated the stage fully, commanding both in voice and stage presence.

The technical elements of the play were more than adequate. Musical accompaniment was appropriately sparse and simple.

At one point the play, King Henry roared, “In my realm I decide what constitutes tragedy!” Ironically, Gressieker strips modern man not only of his possibilities as a tragic figure worthy of any sympathies at all. In the final moments of the play, Catherine of Aragon announces the death of modern man and the birth of a new era. It is a scene of great hope, but it is not as profound as her earlier pronouncement to her husband that “the ways of the world are not so cut and dried!”

For my own part, I wish that “Royal Gambit’s” statement were not so cut and dried. By making man out to be such a simple monster the play defeats its own purposes and turns poetry into scathing dogma, which is probably even less interesting than, say, history.

<http://faculty.chemeketa.edu/jrupert3/eng105/Annrev.html>

LEARNING STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.A

Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.B

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

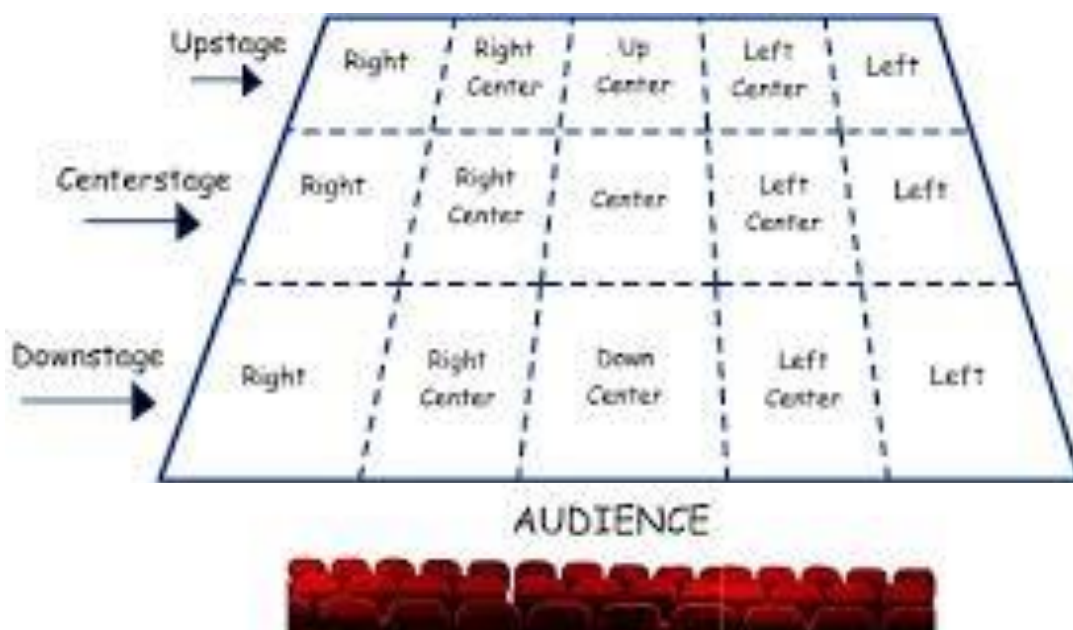
Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF THEATER TERMS

Apron	The part of the stage in front of the curtain
Auditorium or House	Where the audience sits
Beam Spread	The area a single light covers
Blackout	Turning off all the lights in the theatre at once
Board	The control center for lights, sound, or both
Book (The)	A copy of the script containing all notes and blocking
Box Office	Where the audience buys tickets
Box Set	A set in a proscenium with three walls
Call	The time certain members of the production need to be at the theatre
Cheat	When an actor takes a realistic action and modifies it for the audience to see
Cloth	Scenery painted on fabric
Cue	A line or action that immediately leads to another action by the actor (for them to speak) designer or stage manager (to change the lights or sound)
Curtain Call	The bows at the end of the show
Dimmer	Equipment that controls the brightness of a light
Director	The creative head of a production. They create a vision for the show and work with actors, designers, and crew to bring that vision to life
Flat	A frame covered with canvas, cardboard, or some other light material which is then painted as part of the set
Floodlight	A light that has a wide unfocused beam covering most of the stage
Fly	A system used to raise set backgrounds, set pieces, or potentially actors
Follow-spot	A spotlight that can follow an actor as they move across around the stage
Footlights	Floodlights on the floor at the front of the stage.
Gel	A piece of plastic placed over the light to change its color
Greenroom	A room where the company can relax, eat, or potentially watch the show if a TV and a camera has been rigged
Notes	The director's notes on the performance or rehearsal
Pit	An area between the stage and the audience where an orchestra can sit (typically below audience level)
Producer	The person responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of a production (as opposed to the creative head, the director).
Properties or Props	Items used by actors in a show (such as swords, plates, watches, etc.)

Proscenium	A type of stage defined by a proscenium arch. Proscenium theatres typically distinctly separate the audience and stage by a window (defined by the proscenium arch). The stage typically will not go far past the proscenium arch (the Ohio Theatre, for example).
Raked Stage	A stage that is angled (upstage is the top of the hill and downstage the bottom) so that the audience can see the action more clearly
Set	The scenery used in a scene or throughout the play
Set Dressing	Parts of the set that don't serve a practical function but make the set look realistic.
Spotlight	A type of light that is focused so that it can light a very specific area
Strike	Taking apart and removing a set from the theatre
Thrust	A stage that goes beyond the proscenium arch so that the audience is sitting on three sides of the set - in front, and on either side (the Hanna Theatre, for example).
Tracks	The rails on which curtains (tabs) run.
Trap	A hole in the stage covered by a door where actors or set pieces can exit or enter
Understudy	An actor who learns all of the lines and blocking of another actor (typically one of the actors in a lead role) who can perform in case the main actor cannot go on
Upstage	The rear of the stage
Wings	The sides of the stage typically blocked off by curtains where actors and crew can stand and wait for their cues

STAGE DIRECTIONS





**GREAT
LAKES
THEATER**

Student Matinee Series
2023-2024 Season

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812 by Dave Malloy

Dracula: The Bloody Truth by Le Navet Bête & John Nicholson

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Agatha Christie's **Murder on the Orient Express**, adapted by Ken Ludwig

The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare

Always...Patsy Cline - by Ted Swindley

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Since 1962, students have enjoyed the thrill of experiencing classic plays, professionally produced by Great Lakes Theater. Our student audiences experience the same top-quality productions offered in our public performances, but at a fraction of the cost. The state-of-the-art classical thrust stage configuration in the gorgeously renovated Hanna Theater affords students a dynamic audience experience unequalled in our region.

[Greatlakestheater.org/education](https://greatlakestheater.org/education)

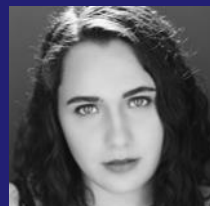


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From *The Sneetches* to *Romeo and Juliet* (and so many more in between!) each week-long residency uses an



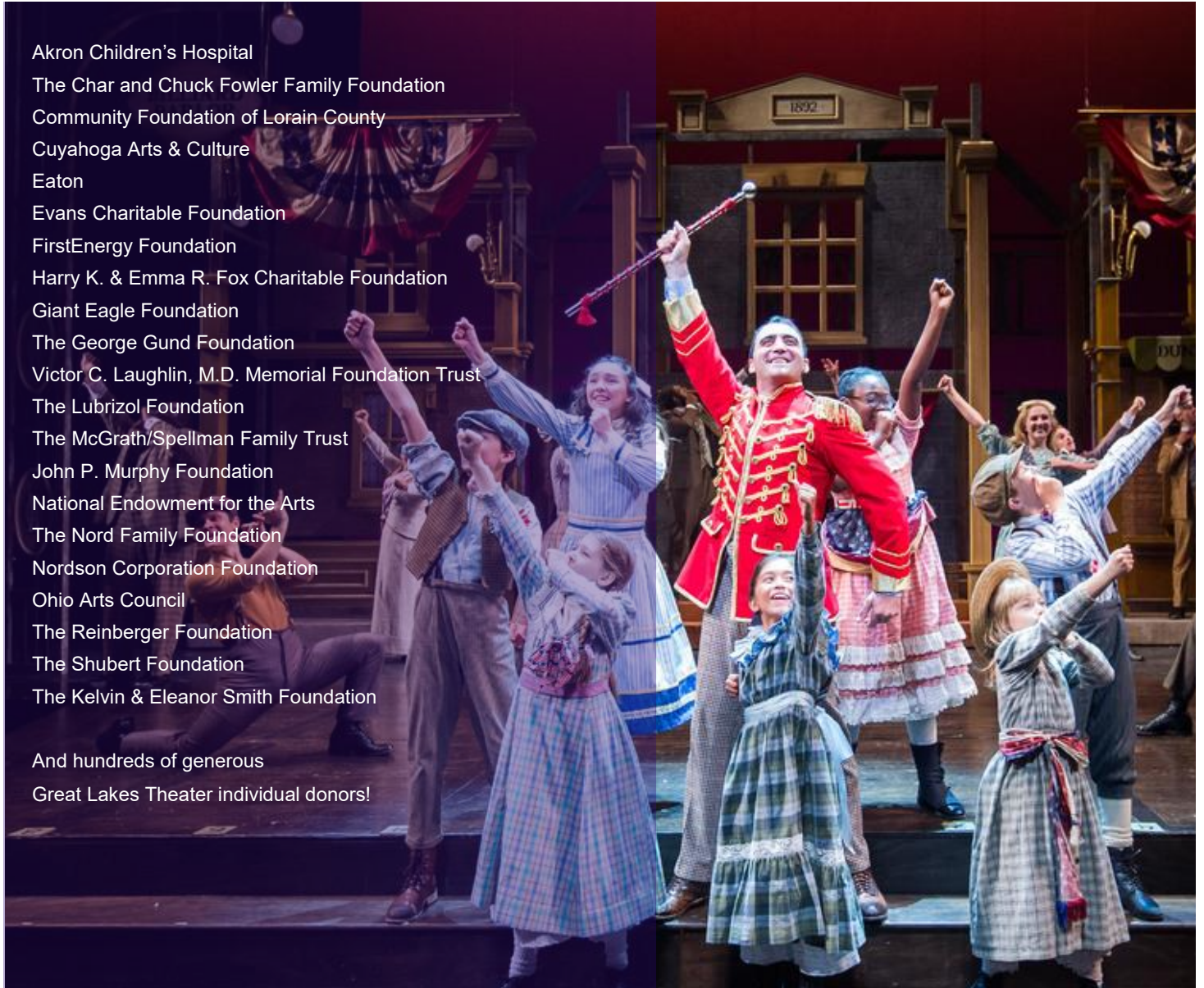
interactive, hands-on approach, and is designed to meet the common core education standards. We visit your school with scripts, props, costumes—and for high schools, swords, daggers and stage blood—to explore classic literature in an unforgettable way!

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ABOUT GREAT LAKES THEATER



Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the company's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods including the 20th century, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, bringing students to the theater for matinee performances and sending specially trained actor-teachers to the schools for weeklong residencies developed to explore classic drama from a theatrical point of view. GLT is equally dedicated to enhancing the theater experience for adult audiences. To this end, GLT regularly serves as the catalyst for community events and programs in the arts and humanities that illuminate the plays on its stage.

Great Lakes Theater is one of only a handful of American theaters that have stayed the course as a classic theater. As GLT celebrates over a decade in its permanent home at the Hanna Theatre, the company reaffirms its belief in the power of partnership, its determination to make this community a better place in which to live, and its commitment to ensure the legacy of classic theater in Cleveland.

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