

THE
GOODMAN



DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA

STUDY GUIDE
2026/2027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	A WELCOME LETTER TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS
3	SETTING THE SCENE: THE WORLD OF <i>DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA</i>
6	THE INVESTIGATION TEAM: <i>DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA</i> CHARACTER BREAKDOWN
7	THE FACTS: <i>DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA</i> SYNOPSIS
9	IT'S THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE: A CONVERSATION WITH PHANÉSIA PHAREL
11	BEHIND THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS: MEET THE DESIGNERS
13	TRUE CRIME 101: STEAM ACTIVITIES
16	*DUN DUN*: HUMANITIES ACTIVITIES
19	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
20	GLOSSARY
23	TEEN STUDIO AT THE GOODMAN
24	2026/2027 STAGE CHEMISTRY WORKSHOPS
25	2026/2027 SCHOOL MATINEE SERIES
26	SPONSORS

NOTE: THIS STUDY GUIDE REFLECTS THE SCRIPT AS OF JULY 2026.
ARTICLES MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS.

PRODUCER

TYRA BULLOCK | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

CONTRIBUTORS

JARED BELLOT | CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT
TYRA BULLOCK | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
ANNA ROGELIO JOAQUIN | SCHOOL PROGRAMS MANAGER

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

ANGELENA BROWNE | CASTING ASSISTANT
MICHAEL COTEY | NORTHWESTERN DIRECTING FELLOW
GRACE DOLEZAL-NG | CASTING COORDINATOR
ALKA NAYYAR | MARKETING COORDINATOR
LAUREN PORT | CASTING DIRECTOR
CLARA ZUCKER | LITERARY ASSISTANT

DESIGNER

ALMA D'ANCA | SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

EDITOR

MICHEN DEWEY | COMMUNICATIONS CONTENT MANAGER

TRANSLATOR

ALEXIS A. TORNEZ MARTINEZ

A WELCOME LETTER TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

BY JARED BELLOT, CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Welcome to Season 101 at The Goodman!

One of my favorite things about theater is that it asks questions without simple answers. A great play invites us to sit with uncertainty, consider perspectives different from our own and, if we're lucky, leave seeing the world just a little differently than when we entered.

Dead Girl's Quinceañera, playwright Phanésia Pharel's vibrant and deeply moving world premiere, is a theatrical love letter to true crime and television procedurals. Like the best mysteries, it asks us to question our assumptions and reconsider what we think we know. And at the heart of Salma, Este and Phoebe's investigation lies a wondrous question for us to grapple with: How and when do we grow up?

HOW AND WHEN DO WE GROW UP?

The quinceañera at the heart of the play makes answering that question all the more complicated. Though quinces celebrate the transition from childhood to adulthood, *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* asks whether growing up can ever be defined by a single celebration or whether it is shaped by the moments we experience and the people who experience them with us.

When you are 15 years old, the stakes are impossibly high. Friendships become families. First loves can feel all-consuming. A promise made between friends can carry the weight of an oath. The people who stand beside us help shape not only who we are, but who we believe we can become. *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* takes those relationships seriously, reminding us that adolescence is not simply the cold open before the real story of adulthood begins; it is a big and complicated story worthy of our full attention.

Of course, not everyone experiences that story in the same way. The play asks us to consider whose stories we tell and how young people, particularly Black and Brown girls, navigate a world that often asks them to grow up too quickly. The responsibilities we inherit, the expectations placed upon us and the communities that surround us shape each journey differently.

Telling stories like these requires new voices. One of the great joys of experiencing a world premiere is that there are no definitive interpretations waiting in the wings. We encounter this story for the first time together, asking questions, noticing details and discovering what resonates with us. It is thrilling to share the voice of Pharel with Chicago, one of a remarkable generation of playwrights expanding what American theater can look, sound and feel like. Pharel's stories are playful, deeply personal and unafraid to experiment with form, inviting us to imagine new possibilities for the stage and for ourselves.

In the pages that follow, we invite you to continue the investigation and explore the larger questions this play asks about identity, friendship, family and growing up. Along the way, you'll hear directly from Pharel, make connections across disciplines and perhaps even unearth new discoveries of your own.

We hope you remember the people who helped you become who you are.

We hope you leave wondering whether growing up is ever really finished.

And, like all great theater, we hope you leave with a few more questions than when you arrived.

Thank you for being here.



JARED BELLOT
CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

SETTING THE SCENE: THE WORLD OF *DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA*

BY CLARA ZUCKER, LITERARY ASSISTANT

Set in contemporary Miami, *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* explores grief, family, identity and the stories society chooses to tell. Against the backdrop of South Florida's Haitian and Latino communities, Phanésia Pharel's play examines what happens when a young girl's disappearance becomes public spectacle and her humanity threatens to fade. Understanding the history of Haiti, Miami's Caribbean communities, quinceañera traditions and America's fascination with true crime offers a richer lens through which to experience the play.

A HAITIAN STORY IN MIAMI

Phanésia Pharel is a Haitian American playwright and screenwriter raised on a dragon fruit farm in Miami, Florida. The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Pharel frequently writes about the intersections of family, migration, memory and Caribbean identity. (To learn more about Pharel, check out *It's the Immigrant Experience: A Conversation with Phanésia Pharel* on p. 9 of this guide.)

Pharel's hometown of Miami serves as an ideal setting for *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*. Long known as a gateway to the Caribbean, South Florida is home to one of the largest Haitian communities in the United States with more than 130,000 Haitians living in Miami-Dade County, according to the 2020 United States Census.



PART OF A LARGE WELCOME MURAL IN MIAMI, FLORIDA'S LITTLE HAITI, LONG A NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATED BY MANY HAITIAN EXILES, WHICH IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY BECAME HOME TO OTHER CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS AND HISPANICS FROM ELSEWHERE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA. (PHOTO BY CAROL M. HIGHSMITH VIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

While Cuban immigration transformed Miami after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, Haitian immigration grew significantly beginning in the 1970s as thousands fled political violence, dictatorship and economic hardship. Neighborhoods such as Little Haiti, located in northern part of the city, became cultural centers where Haitian language, religion, food and traditions thrived alongside other Caribbean communities.

To understand the history that shaped this diaspora, it's helpful to begin with Haiti itself. Located in the Caribbean, Haiti takes up the western third of the island of Hispaniola, with the Dominican Republic in the eastern two-thirds. Haiti also occupies a unique place in world history. In 1804, formerly enslaved people defeated the French colonial government during the Haitian Revolution, establishing the world's first independent Black republic. Yet, independence came at a devastating cost. France demanded enormous financial reparations from its former colony, burdening Haiti with debt that crippled its economy for generations. Combined with environmental challenges and international isolation, these conditions shaped many of the economic hardships that later contributed to migration.



HISPANIOLA - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-HAITI BOUNDARY
(SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF STATE VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



QUINCEAÑERA. SANTA FE (PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER MICHEL VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Although Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola, the two nations developed under dramatically different colonial histories. France colonized Haiti while Spain controlled what is now the Dominican Republic, creating distinct languages, political systems and cultural traditions that continue to shape both nations today. Those differences have also been accompanied by centuries of political conflict, racial tensions and anti-Haitian discrimination in the Dominican Republic, leaving a complicated legacy that extends far beyond the island itself. In *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, these histories live on in Miami's Caribbean diaspora, where identity is often shaped as much by family memory and cultural expectation as by personal experience. Phoebe, in particular, embodies this complex narrative. As she navigates the weight of Haiti and the Dominican Republic's shared yet fractured history, she also forges friendships that challenge these historical divisions.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

THE MEANING OF A QUINCEAÑERA

The word quinceañera means "15-year-old girl," but the celebration itself marks one of the most important coming-of-age traditions in many Latin communities. Rooted in Indigenous ceremonies practiced by the Maya and Aztec peoples, the tradition recognized a young woman's transition into adulthood. Spanish colonization later blended these Indigenous customs with Catholic rituals and European court traditions, creating the modern quinceañera celebrated today.

The celebration typically begins with a Catholic Mass before moving to a reception filled with symbolic rituals. A father-daughter dance, the changing of flat shoes into high heels, and the Court of Honor, known as *damas* and *chambelanes*, all represent a young woman's passage from childhood into adulthood. Another tradition is *la última muñeca* ("the last doll"), in which the quinceañera gives away a childhood toy—often a doll dressed to match her own attire. This gesture signifies her farewell to childhood and her embrace of adult responsibilities.



THE BEAUTIFUL VICTIM OF THE ELM CITY, A PAMPHLET FROM 1881 VIA U.S. NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

For many immigrant families, the quinceañera represents much more than a birthday celebration. It becomes a communal affirmation of cultural identity, bringing together extended family and friends to preserve traditions that span generations and national borders. In diaspora communities especially, the celebration reminds young people that they belong not only to their immediate family but to an entire cultural community.

In *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, this familiar rite of passage takes on an entirely different meaning, transforming a celebration of growing up into an examination of loss, memory and the futures that are stolen too soon.

AMERICA'S FASCINATION WITH TRUE CRIME

Even before podcasts and streaming documentaries, people have been captivated by stories of violent crime. As early as the sixteenth century, pamphlets detailing sensational murders circulated throughout England, satisfying public curiosity about violence and morality. By the nineteenth century, newspapers regularly featured crime

reporting, while twentieth- and twenty-first-century media transformed true crime into one of America's most popular genres.

Modern true crime often promises justice by centering victims' stories, yet not all victims receive equal attention.

Researchers have found that missing Black and Brown women and girls receive significantly less media coverage than their white counterparts despite being disproportionately affected by violence. When stories of Black and Brown women are covered, reports are often shorter, less personal and more likely to focus on sensational details than on the lives of the victims themselves. Scholars argue that this disparity reflects broader racial and gender biases within American media, shaping whose stories are remembered and whose disappear from public consciousness.

The consequences extend beyond headlines. Media attention often influences public awareness, community advocacy and even resources devoted to criminal investigations. When certain victims remain invisible, their families are left not only to grieve but also to fight for recognition.

THE INVESTIGATION TEAM: DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEÑERA CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

BY LAUREN PORT, CASTING DIRECTOR; GRACE DOLEZAL-NG, CASTING COORDINATOR AND ANGELENA BROWNE, CASTING ASSISTANT



SALMA/ENSEMBLE

Two days away from 15 years old. Latina. Brainy, anxious, always on the go. Not an ounce of the sentimental in that smart mind. She is the driver of the play and investigation.

PLAYED BY JACQUELINE GUILLÉN



ESTE/ENSEMBLE

Six months away from 15 years old. Latina. Underdog. She is a very smart young woman. The only immigrant out of the characters in the play. The only working-class member of the team, and someone for whom English is a second language.

PLAYED BY CARMEN BERKLEY



PHOEBE/ENSEMBLE

Three months into 16 years old. Afro-Latina. A softer but formidable opponent in her friend group. A bad case of good girl syndrome, she hides her power through her politeness and care. But the fierceness is there.

PLAYED BY ARIANA BURKS



MARIA/ENSEMBLE

15 years old. Afro-Latina. The glue of this group. No rose-colored glasses for her, she sees everything clearly in her life and sees her friends clearly as well.

PLAYED BY ANDREA FERRO

THE FACTS: DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA SYNOPSIS

BY ALKA NAYYAR, MARKETING COORDINATOR

NOTE: The following article references mature themes explored in *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, including sexual abuse. We encourage educators to review the content and consider the needs of their students.

SCENE ONE

Present-day Miami. We open in a teenage girl's lair, filled with political posters, swim medals, pageant sashes and plushies. Salma is dictating facts about her friend Maria's disappearance and explaining why her own quinceañera cannot happen without her. Este enters, changing out of her fast-food work uniform before joining Salma in transforming the room into a detective headquarters.

Maria has been missing since the night of her own quinceañera, and no one has heard from her in 19 hours. As they bounce between a procedural TV-style investigation and planning Salma's upcoming celebration, the girls retrace Maria's steps, organizing clues on a board labeled "Facts."

Maria's cousin, Phoebe, arrives skeptical that anything is wrong. However, Salma reveals a key piece of evidence: a single designer slipper found near the quinceañera banquet hall that belongs to Maria. Phoebe also shares that, on the night Maria disappeared, she received a text from her cousin simply reading, "I need you" - a message she never answered. Convinced the situation may be more serious than she thought, Phoebe joins the investigation.



PHOTO BY ABSOLUTVISION ON UNSPLASH

The girls compile a list of suspects. Phoebe hopes Maria simply wanted privacy. Salma and Este discuss using social media to get the word out. Phoebe begs them not to post to the psycho PTA mom Facebook group, fearing it will further strain her family's already fragile relationships. Salma agrees, sealing the promise with "Milkshake," a sacred childhood bond shared by Phoebe, Maria and Salma.

The girls decide to question Manny, Maria's boyfriend, and Mr. Evans, their "Plant Daddy" agriculture teacher, while continuing the search for clues.

SCENE TWO

The next day, Salma and Este return to their lair. While waiting for Phoebe, Este and Salma discover unexpected common ground despite coming from very different backgrounds—Este from a working-class Salvadoran family and Salma from a wealthier Cuban one. The two begin to develop a deeper connection.

When Phoebe arrives, the girls re-enact a series of interviews with potential suspects that reveal new clues. Jesús "Gold Chain" Sánchez reveals he saw Maria leave through the banquet hall's back door and later spotted her dress in the bed of a blue truck parked in the alley. Manny admits he was planning to give Maria a promise ring but reveals that she broke up with him on the night of her quinceañera. Although Mr. Evans appears innocent, the girls remain suspicious of him.

As the investigation drags on, the girls struggle to focus on anything but Maria's disappearance. They reminisce about the ways she has shown up for each of them. Emotional, Phoebe begins banging her head against the wall but leaves when her phone rings.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

Left alone, Salma and Este share a sweet, intimate moment.

When Phoebe returns, she is furious. News of Maria's disappearance has spread through the PTA mom Facebook group, despite the girls' promise to keep it off social media. The online conversation turned ugly, with community members targeting Phoebe's Haitian mother and exposing long-standing anti-Haitian prejudice within her family and community. As tensions rise, Este apologizes, but Salma refuses to take responsibility, insisting the information was already public. The argument escalates as Phoebe accuses Salma of shutting her out of the search for her own cousin and replacing her with Este. Feeling betrayed, she leaves.

SCENE THREE

The next day. It is the day of Salma's quinceañera. It has been 94 hours since anyone has seen or heard from Maria.

Phoebe reflects on her own quinceañera and the loss of her father, who died shortly after the celebration. She admits that she was relieved Maria's quinceañera ended before she was forced to relive the painful memory of the father-daughter dance. As she worries about making it through Salma's celebration that evening, Phoebe learns shocking news from her mom: Maria's father never filed a missing persons report.

Meanwhile, Salma appears in her elaborate quinceañera gown and reflects on the expectations placed on her by her family, her desire to define her own future and the ways race and identity have shaped her friendship with Phoebe.

Este arrives, apologizing for posting about Maria online and thanking Salma for covering for her. Salma finds out Este hasn't begun thinking about her dress, and the girls create an impromptu fitting room, celebrating one another through body insecurities and experiences with dumb boys. Salma nearly reveals her growing feelings for Este before stopping herself and running off to the bathroom.

Left alone, Este tries on a poofy white quinceañera dress and imagines a future larger than the limitations others have placed on her. She dreams of a life filled with success and pride in her Salvadoran heritage.

Salma returns. Phoebe enters with news from the police: they are investigating Mr. Evans who is attending Salma's quinceañera. Convinced they are running out of time, the girls split up. Phoebe heads to Mr. Evans's house, armed with a taser, while Salma and Este stay behind to make sure he does not leave the party.

Alone together, Salma takes the chance and confesses her feelings for Este.

At Mr. Evans's house, Phoebe discovers Maria alive and well. Maria explains that she was never kidnapped. Mr. Evans has been helping her after she ran away from home, and Maria's father, knowing why she had left, chose not to file a missing persons report.

Maria reveals the truth behind her disappearance. For years, she had been sexually abused by her grandfather. When she disclosed the abuse to her father, he refused to believe her. After witnessing her grandfather target a younger family member during her quinceañera, Maria fled.

As Phoebe supports her cousin and urges her to seek help, Este responds to Salma's confession. While she does not share Salma's romantic feelings, she explains that her love for Salma runs deeper than a typical teenage relationship.

In the play's final moments, the four girls reunite. They reaffirm their friendships and welcome Este into the group's sacred "Milkshake" bond. Together, they celebrate the joy, complexity and possibility of being girls and being fifteen together.

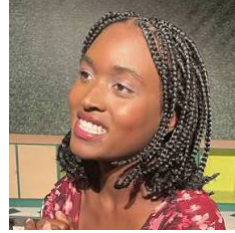


PHOTO BY JOANNA HUANG ON UNSPLASH

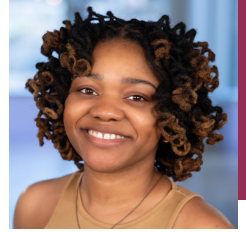
IT'S THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE: A CONVERSATION WITH PHANÉSIA PHAREL

BY TYRA BULLOCK, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TYRA BULLOCK CHATS WITH PLAYWRIGHT PHANÉSIA PHAREL TO DISCUSS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND HER NEW PLAY *DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA*.



PHANÉSIA PHAREL



TYRA BULLOCK

TYRA BULLOCK: WHAT HAS THE JOURNEY BEEN LIKE DEVELOPING THIS NEW WORK?

PHANÉSIA PHAREL: I wrote *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* when I was in graduate school. I went to UCSD (University of California San Diego), which I think is such a great playwriting program because Naomi Azuka is there, who is a wonderful playwright. I actually wanted to write a different play, but Naomi was like, this is the one you should write. And she was correct!

At UCSD, they have a festival each year. Your first year, you write a one-act. Then your second year, it's a full-length play. *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* was my first full-length play. It was a workshop production with students, and a learning opportunity about how to develop your work and train you for new play development. That first draft of the play didn't have the right ending. It wasn't until I went to the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference last summer that everything sort of clicked. The O'Neill is such a special new play development spot, as there was more availability for Afro-Latino actors. I was able to really flesh out the ending, and the play grew so much in that workshop, which was really awesome.

TYRA: HOW DID YOU GET CONNECTED WITH DIRECTOR MELIA BENSUSSEN?

PHANÉSIA: Melia runs the O'Neill and that's how we met. She read my script through a blind submission process. So, it was her who truly changed my life. She's worked with Jose Rivera, and also with Tony Kushner on world premieres. It isn't very often a younger playwright gets to work with someone who has worked with legends, who has had a lot of great experience. So, when that opportunity presented itself, I would have been a fool not to take it.

TYRA: AS A PLAYWRIGHT, WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATIONS?

PHANÉSIA: That's such a good question. I would say Ntozake Shange. I love Adrienne Kennedy, she's a huge inspiration for me. I would say Alice Childress. Jeff Augustine is a huge influence. And there's a play that I like—

all the women who are writing teen girl plays now and the reason we're writing those plays—is *Dance Nation* by Clare Baron. For *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, I was also inspired by Karen Zacarías' *Destiny of Desire* and the way she used novela. It's such a smart play.

TYRA: YOU HAVE A BROAD SPECTRUM OF LATINA REPRESENTATION IN THIS PLAY. HOW HAS YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCE AS A HAITIAN AMERICAN FACTORED INTO YOUR WRITING FOR THESE CHARACTERS?

PHANÉSIA: I was just watching New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani helping promote a woman who's running for Congress in a district with a large Dominican population. Her last name is Chevalier, which is a Haitian last name. There have been campaigns to smear her by claiming she's Haitian. She's Dominican, but they're like, "She's Haitian. She's not really one of us." Being Haitian, I think all Haitians and Dominicans share an island and a history. And to a certain extent, we share culture and for many of us, blood. And so that is always present in who I am as a person. I grew up in Miami, and it's one of the most diverse cities in the United States of America. You've got Venezuelans, you've got Colombians, you have Jamaicans—so to tell a story about these young women, it would be so crazy to not have that sort of array of diversity.

TYRA: I ALSO NOTICED THERE'S QUITE A FEW REFERENCES TO THE CHARACTERS' COMPLEXIONS AND HOW THAT FACTORS INTO THEIR IDENTITIES AS YOUNG WOMEN.

PHANÉSIA: My mom always jokes and says, "a lot of people in Miami are Black behind the ears." You've got a Black grandmother, you have a Black cousin, but you're being weird to this Jamaican or this African-American or this Haitian person? Colorism is a huge thing in the Caribbean and Latin America. It's a thing in my family. It's a thing that you experience in Miami.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

TYRA: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO HAVE THIS STORY REVOLVE AROUND A QUINCEAÑERA?

PHANÉSIA: I remember being 15 years old, and it's like, "oh my God, what's going to happen to Talia after her quince?" And there was just this idea of once you're 15, something changes.

It's been explored, especially in Latin American storytelling, but I haven't seen it in a play. It's so cool in theater when characters transform on stage, and coming-of-age plays are about, *I see the world in you. I see the world differently because of an experience I have had.* I was really interested in the quinceañera as a site for change and transformation for these characters.

TYRA: SPEAKING OF CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION, THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION WE'RE EXPLORING FOR THIS PLAY IS "HOW AND WHEN DO WE GROW UP?" IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COME OF AGE?

PHANÉSIA: You grow up as soon as you are given the responsibility of an adult. And that is, unfortunately, for many people, too soon.

It isn't always racially based, but we do know that for women of color, they can be oversexualized as children. That is very common. The hypersexualization of Black and Brown girls is a problem. Oftentimes when I'm thinking about Este, who is an immigrant herself, she had to come to this country and might have to be the translator for her mother, might have to help with the taxes for her mother, has to work as a teenager. She has been adultified.

But what does it mean to come of age? It's that perspective shift as a young person where you see the world one way and then you see it differently.

TYRA: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A YOUNG PERSON COMING TO TERMS WITH THEIR IDENTITY? AND IN THE SAME VEIN, WHAT CAN ADULTS DO TO SUPPORT THEM ON THAT JOURNEY?

PHANÉSIA: I think that we have to engage in the political process from the perspective of being interested in young people. I think we could lower the voting age to 16 years old. I think folks of that age have a great understanding of the country that they live in, have a perspective and are very smart. What would it look like to engage in a political process where you're not thinking about today, but you're thinking about tomorrow? I think that is what young people need because the issues that are going to affect young people tend to be the issues we don't consider.

In this play, it's about that very special bond that young women have, and only young women have, where we can become home to each other, take care of each other and we save each other when we're teenagers.

TYRA: DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SCENE IN THIS PLAY?

PHANÉSIA: I love the quinceañera scene when Salma's at the quince, because it has Este's monologue. That monologue is my mom's story. I came to this country and people put me in special education classes. It's the immigrant experience.

I think Este is my mom mixed with my best friend. Salma is someone I know who I shouldn't say. People assume Phoebe is me. And I think in the very basic way of she's Black and Haitian, she is, but I think I've been both Salma and Phoebe at different points in my life. And Maria is based on two people I know. She's sort of inspired by my friend Kelsey, who my whole life was the prettiest girl. She won the most. This was a prize, the "prettiest girl in middle school." I remember this conversation I had with her where we were kind of enemies at one point, then we became friends. What I tried to get out with Phoebe and Maria is we can sometimes put other women on a pedestal or feel like we're not enough. But the truth is, we're all so special in our own ways.

TYRA: I THINK IT'S BEAUTIFUL HOW THIS PLAY, IN A LOT OF WAYS, IS A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF YOUR ADOLESCENCE. WHAT IS SOMETHING EMERGING PLAYWRIGHTS CAN DO TO HELP BRING THEIR STORIES TO THE FOREFRONT?

PHANÉSIA: I would read. There's a book by Sherry Kramer, *Perspective Shift*. This is the best book for playwrights right now, I think. Graduate school is really helpful, and it was so helpful for me. I think what helped me succeed in graduate school is that I had readings before I went, but it would have been even more helpful if I had productions. And to that, I say self-produce. I don't have to tell somebody in Chicago to self-produce, the home of the storefront theater, the home of the scrappy, the home of the "Imma get it done!" But I actually learned that from my peer who is a Chicago legend, Beth Hyland, who was in my cohort and lived in Chicago for many years. I think three plays a week is helpful, reading is helpful and study the work of your mentors.

TYRA: WHAT DO YOU WANT THE AUDIENCE TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS PLAY?

PHANÉSIA: I want you to think about when you were 15 or 16 years old. I want you to think about your best friend, and I want you to call them. I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for my best friend. She saved my life. And in a way, I think I saved hers too.

BEHIND THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS: MEET THE DESIGNERS

BY TYRA BULLOCK,
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF EDUCATION

When you see a show, you may notice several ways you are transported to the world of the play. Perhaps you have experienced lights that signal a shift in time or sound that alters the mood.

Behind the sights and sounds of *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* are a team of designers helping bring the show to life. Included on the design team for this production are Lighting Designer Dan Kotlowitz, Costume Designer Raquel Adorno and Sound Designer Salvador Zamora. Read on to learn about their vision for the show and what they hope you notice!



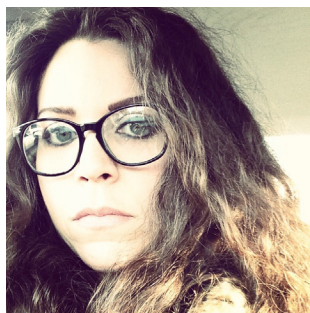
DAN KOTLOWITZ | LIGHTING DESIGNER

I try to use light to support a play's story. Light can do this in multiple ways: it can help establish geography, where we are, what time of day it is and what season it is. But more importantly, light can reflect and amplify the story's spiritual, emotional and intellectual elements. In *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, I want the lighting to heighten the sense that these young women are taking control of their world. The three girls approach the mystery of their missing friend through their experience of watching police procedurals on TV, so I spent a lot of time watching procedurals and thinking about how they use light, particularly in interrogations. The characters in the play will grab actual light sources on stage: flashlights, lamps, hanging bulbs and use them aggressively to interrogate and question "suspects." By literally controlling these moments, the girls are empowering themselves, shifting their world and searching for answers. I also noticed in these police procedurals that windows were often covered by venetian blinds, the shafts of light filtering through the blinds have an almost violent jail-like feel. In the play's interrogation scenes, the lighting will also get more angular and shadowy, elevating both the danger and the fearlessness of these young girls, while also hopefully retaining the comedy and humor of these highly exaggerated gestures.

Finally, at the end of the show, it becomes a celebration of these girls becoming women at their quinceañera. My hope is that the light will amplify the strength, empowerment and joy that these women feel at this moment of transition to adulthood. Throughout the show, I want the light to feel playfully serious, but always with a sense that the girls control their environment.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

BEHIND THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS: MEET THE DESIGNERS



RAQUEL ADORNO | COSTUME DESIGNER

Designing *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, I have meditated upon this series of questions and themes: What does it mean to have a quince? What does it mean to ask for help and be silenced? What does it mean to ask your father for help and feel abandoned? What does it mean for your best friend to be in love with you and for you to love them back in a truly platonic way that is deep and true? Why big white poufy dresses? Why is virginity so important in some cultures? What do young women in Miami look like today? The power of friendship. The enduring love of a childhood friend. True crime. Why are young women still treated like prey? Does an obsession with true crime help or hinder a young woman's need for safety?

My hope is that you will recognize these young women as your bestie, crush, sister, cousin or yourself.



SALVADOR ZAMORA | SOUND DESIGNER

My hope for my sound design is to capture the sound of the girls' community and love they have for each other and help define the different worlds they are creating.

I first focused on the young women's love for "the procedural" and using this as their own ritual observance of resolving their worst fears. The evolution of these moments is meant to express the heightened severity of their situation, and with the help of practical sound objects, we are able to leave that control in the hands of these young women.

My second focus is celebrating the specificity and overlap of the Latine cultures and stories we are sharing, and finding a way to sonify that communal love.

TRUE CRIME 101: STEAM ACTIVITIES

BY JARED BELLOT, CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

HOW MIGHT MATH, NEUROSCIENCE AND BIOLOGY HELP INVESTIGATE KEY IDEAS
OF DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA? TRY THE ACTIVITIES BELOW TO FIND OUT!

MATH: PLANNING A QUINCEAÑERA

Quinceañeras are joyful celebrations of family, culture and coming of age. They also require months of planning, budgeting and logistical decision-making. How do event planners balance vision, priorities and financial constraints to create a meaningful celebration?

Begin by asking students what they think goes into planning a large event. As a class, create a list of the people, materials and services needed to host a quinceañera. Consider the venue, food, decorations, music, photography, attire, transportation and guest experience. Which elements are essential? Which are optional? How might priorities change from family to family?

Divide students into small groups and challenge each team to become professional event planners. Each group is responsible for planning a quinceañera for 100 guests with a total budget of \$10,000 (or another budget of your choosing).

Provide each group with a list of estimated costs for common expenses, such as:

- Venue rental
- Catering (priced per guest)
- Cake and desserts
- DJ or live entertainment
- Photography and videography
- Decorations and flowers
- Quinceañera dress and accessories
- Transportation
- Invitations and favors
- Contingency fund

Groups must create a balanced budget that stays within the allotted amount while reflecting the priorities of the quinceañeras. Students should calculate the total cost of each category, determine what percentage of the budget is allocated to each expense and justify the choices they made. For an added challenge, instruct students to visualize the budget breakdown through a pie chart, sankey diagram, stacked bar chart, etc.

Once complete, have each group present its event proposal, addressing the following questions:

- Which expenses were your highest priorities? Why?
- Where did you decide to save money?
- What trade-offs did your group have to make?
- If your budget suddenly increased or decreased by 20%, what changes would you make?

After presentations, compare each group's budget. Which celebrations emphasized food? Entertainment? Guest experience? Were there multiple successful solutions? How did different priorities shape different outcomes?

As a class, reflect: How do budgets influence the choices we make? How can financial planning help transform an idea into reality? What does the play suggest about the difference between the cost of a celebration and its meaning?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: MATHEMATICS

CCSS.Math.Content.HSN.Q.A.1 — Use units as a way to understand problems and to guide the solution of multi-step problems; choose and interpret units consistently in formulas; choose and interpret the scale and the origin in graphs and data displays.

CCSS.Math.Content.HSA.CED.A.2 — Create equations in two or more variables to represent relationships between quantities; graph equations on coordinate axes with labels and scales

CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.ID.B.6 — Represent data on two quantitative variables on a scatter plot, and describe how the variables are related.

CCSS.Math.Content.HSN.Q.A.3 — Choose a level of accuracy appropriate to limitations on measurement when reporting quantities.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

TH:Re8.1.1.b — Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the interpretation of a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re9.1.1.a — Examine a drama/theater work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering art forms, history, culture and other disciplines.

NEUROSCIENCE: EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

After Maria goes missing, Salma, Este and Phoebe attempt to piece together what happened by interviewing witnesses, gathering clues and comparing different versions of events. As they quickly discover, memory is not always as reliable as we think. How accurately do we remember what we see? How do our emotions, assumptions and experiences shape what we recall?

Tell students they will be participating in an investigation. Without warning, arrange for a volunteer (another teacher, student or staff member) to briefly enter the classroom and perform a series of actions, such as speaking to the teacher, moving an object, writing on the board or interacting with a student before leaving.

Once the visitor exits, ask students to independently write down everything they remember. Encourage them to be as specific as possible. What was the person wearing? What did they do? What did they say?

Compare observations as a class. Which details did most students remember? Which details did students disagree on? Were there details students remembered incorrectly?

Next, introduce the science of memory. Explain that memory is not a perfect recording of events. Instead, the brain processes, stores and reconstructs information. Scientists generally describe memory in three stages:

- Sensory Memory – information briefly gathered through the senses.
- Short-Term Memory – information stored temporarily for immediate use.
- Long-Term Memory – information stored for longer periods through repetition, significance or emotional connection.



"SCIENCE DIALOGUE" BY JACOB CARTER, VIA SCILIGHT (SUBSTACK), USED UNDER CC BY 4.0.

Discuss how stress, emotion, attention and prior experiences can influence memory. You may also introduce the concept of eyewitness testimony and the challenges it presents in legal investigations.

Divide students into small groups and ask them to analyze the class's eyewitness accounts. Have groups identify:

- Details most students remembered correctly
- Details students remembered differently
- Details that were forgotten entirely
- Possible reasons for discrepancies
- Invite groups to share their findings.

To close, return to *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*. Throughout the play, Salma, Este and Phoebe rely on eyewitness accounts to reconstruct what happened to Maria. Invite students to discuss:

- How might fear, stress, guilt or love influence memory?
- Why do different people remember the same event differently?
- If memory is imperfect, how do we determine what is true?

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

HS-LS1-2 — Develop and use a model to illustrate the hierarchical organization of interacting systems that provide specific functions within multicellular organisms.

HS-LS1-3 — Plan and conduct an investigation to provide evidence that feedback mechanisms maintain homeostasis.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

TH:Re9.1.1.a — Examine a drama/theater work using supporting evidence and criteria while considering other disciplines.

TH:Cn11.1.1.a — Explore how theater connects to life experiences, careers and other content areas.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

BIOLOGY: PLANT DADDY'S GREENHOUSE

Mr. Evans (also known as "Plant Daddy") shares his love of plants and botany with the students enrolled in his classes. Maria's knowledge of plants becomes something more complicated as she considers how scientific knowledge can be used to help, heal, harm or protect others. How can the same knowledge be used for different purposes? What responsibilities come with scientific expertise?

As a hook, display images of several familiar plants and ask students to identify which are beneficial, harmful or both. Examples might include aloe vera, poison ivy, foxglove, lavender, tobacco or oleander.

After students share their predictions, reveal that many plants have multiple uses. Some plants can be used for food, medicine, construction materials or environmental restoration, while others contain compounds that can be toxic to humans and animals. In many cases, the difference between a helpful and harmful plant depends on how it is used.

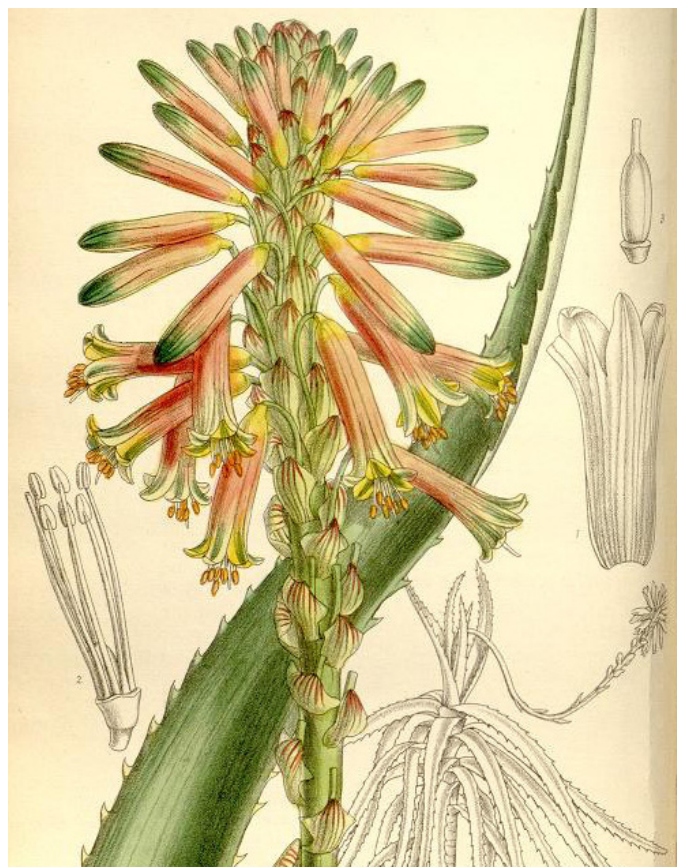
Next, introduce students to the field of botany, the scientific study of plants. Explain that plants play a vital role in ecosystems and human societies, providing food, medicine, oxygen, shelter and countless other resources.

Divide students into small groups and assign each group a different plant species to investigate. Students should research:

- Habitat and growing conditions
- Ecological role
- Traditional or cultural uses
- Medicinal applications
- Potential risks or toxic properties
- Interesting scientific facts

Have each group create a "Plant Profile" poster, infographic or digital presentation. Encourage students to include photographs, diagrams and scientific sources.

When presentations are complete, invite students to compare findings. Which plants had the greatest variety of uses? Which plants surprised them? Did any plants have both beneficial and harmful properties?



ALOE BRACHYSTACHYS ILLUSTRATION BY M. SMITH (1895).
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / PUBLIC DOMAIN (CC0).

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

HS-LS1-2 — Develop and use a model to illustrate the hierarchical organization of interacting systems that provide specific functions within multicellular organisms.

HS-LS2-2 — Use mathematical representations to support and revise explanations based on evidence about factors affecting biodiversity and populations in ecosystems of different scales.

HS-LS2-6 — Evaluate the claims, evidence, and reasoning that complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms under stable conditions, but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

TH.Cn11.2.a — Research societal, historical and cultural context for a performance.

TH.Cn10.a — Explore the connections of theater artists to their community and the world at large.

DUN DUN: HUMANITIES ACTIVITIES

BY JARED BELLOT, CLIFFORD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

WANT TO DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF *DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA* THROUGH ENGLISH, MUSIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES? CHECK OUT THE ACTIVITY IDEAS BELOW!

ENGLISH: MARIA IS MISSING

NOTE: Students should read '*The Facts: Dead Girl's Quinceañera Synopsis*' (see p. 7) or read/see the play before completing this activity.

Throughout *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, the audience learns about Maria through the memories, stories and assumptions of the people who love her. How do playwrights develop a character before that character ever speaks?

Begin by asking students to think of someone they know well - a friend, sibling or teammate. Have them write a brief description of that person without mentioning physical appearance. Instead, encourage them to describe the person's personality through memories, actions or experiences.

Explain that authors often develop characters indirectly, revealing who they are through dialogue, relationships and the perspectives of others.

As students read the play, ask them to collect evidence about Maria, including:

- Facts about Maria (consider descriptions of her physical appearance and personality)
- Memories and stories other characters share
- Opinions or assumptions about her
- What each account reveals about both Maria and the speaker

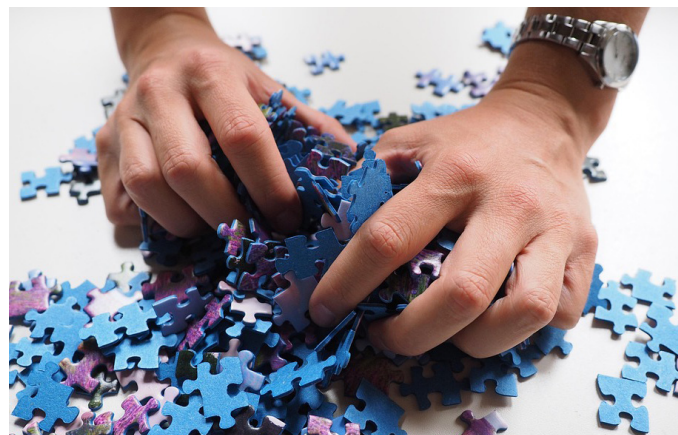


PHOTO BY HANS BRAXMEIER VIA PIXABAY / CC0

After reading, tell students they have been asked to write a missing person profile that could be shared with the community. Using only evidence from the play, students should write a one-page description that introduces Maria to someone who has never met her. Rather than simply listing facts, encourage students to capture Maria's personality, relationships and values by weaving together details from multiple perspectives. Students should support their writing with evidence from the text while recognizing that different characters sometimes describe Maria in different ways.

Invite students to share excerpts from their profiles. Which details appeared most often? Where did students' portrayals differ? How did multiple perspectives help create a fuller picture of Maria?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 — Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3 — Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3 — Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

TH:Re7.a — Identify choices in a drama/theater work to understand personal reactions as a participant in a drama/theater event.

TH:Re8.a — Use personal experience and background knowledge to create or interpret a drama/theater work.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



"OUR PROJECTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC" BY EU CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

SOCIAL STUDIES: A SHARED ISLAND, A SHARED HISTORY

NOTE: Students can also read 'Setting the Scene: The World of Dead Girl's Quinceañera' (see p. 3) for deeper context on the relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

As Maria's disappearance gains attention, Phoebe fears her family will become targets of anti-Haitian prejudice. Throughout the play, references to ideas like *Mejorar la Raza* ("improve the race") reveal a history of discrimination that continues to shape race, identity and belonging. How has the shared history of Haiti and the Dominican Republic influenced life on and beyond the island to this day?

Begin by displaying a map of the Caribbean highlighting the island of Hispaniola. Ask students what they already know about Haiti and the Dominican Republic and why two nations sharing one island might have a complex relationship.

Next, share this excerpt from an interview with playwright Phanésia Pharel:

"ALL HAITIANS AND DOMINICANS SHARE AN ISLAND AND A HISTORY. AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, WE SHARE CULTURE AND FOR MANY OF US, BLOOD."

Invite students to discuss what Pharel means by "sharing a history" and how history can continue to shape relationships in the present.

Divide students into groups and assign each one a chapter in the shared history of Haiti and the Dominican Republic:

- Indigenous Taino communities and colonization
- The Haitian Revolution
- Dominican independence
- The Trujillo dictatorship and anti-Haitian ideology
- Migration and Haitian-Dominican identity today

Have each group create a timeline panel, infographic or digital presentation explaining what happened, who was affected and why the event still matters.

After presentations, arrange the events into a class timeline and discuss the patterns that emerge. Where do themes of colonialism, migration, race, identity and resistance appear? Which historical moments continue to shape life today?

To close, invite students to reflect: What surprised you most about this shared history? How can history continue to shape communities across generations? Why is it important to understand history from multiple perspectives?

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS: SOCIAL SCIENCE

SS.9-12.H.1 — Evaluate the context of time and place as well as structural factors that influence historical developments.

SS.9-12.H.8 — Analyze key historical events and contributions of individuals through a variety of perspectives, including those of historically underrepresented groups.

SS.9-12.H.13 — Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

SS.9-12.G.14 — Explain how a person's identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, spirituality/religion, ability status, socioeconomic group) shapes and is shaped by worldview.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

TH:Cn11.1.1 — Explore how cultural, global, and historic belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theater work.

TH:Cn11.2.1.b — Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theater work.

MUSIC: BEING 15 TOGETHER

Before a play begins, audiences hear music that welcomes them into its world. If you were tasked with creating the pre-show playlist for *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*, what songs would help tell the story of adolescence today?

Begin by asking students to think of a song that reminds them of a specific moment in their lives. Invite a few volunteers to share. What memories or emotions does the song evoke? How can music tell a story before a single line is spoken?

Explain that pre-show music is an important part of the theatrical experience. Like scenery, lighting and costumes, it helps establish the world of the play before the actors ever step on stage. Every song is chosen intentionally to introduce themes, create atmosphere and prepare audiences for the story they are about to experience.

Ask students to imagine they have joined the artistic team for *Dead Girl's Quinceañera* and have been asked to curate the pre-show playlist. Their goal is to create The Soundtrack of Growing Up, a playlist that prepares audiences for the emotional journey of the play while reflecting what it means to be a teenager today.

Working individually or in small groups, students should create a playlist of 4–5 songs. Together, the playlist should explore different aspects of adolescence, such as:

- Friendship and belonging
- Family expectations
- Identity and self-discovery
- First love or heartbreak
- Celebration and milestones
- Pressure or uncertainty
- Resilience and hope
- Looking toward the future

For each selection, students should write a brief program note explaining why they chose the song, what aspect of adolescence it represents and how it prepares audiences for the play.

Invite students to share their playlists with the class. Which themes appeared most often? How did different genres capture similar experiences? Which playlists best prepared audiences for *Dead Girl's Quinceañera*?



DIGITAL MIXER (AUDIO MIXING CONSOLE). IMAGE: RAWPIXEL. CC0/PUBLIC DOMAIN.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: MUSIC

MU:Re7.1.1.a — Apply teacher-provided criteria to select music for specified purposes, supporting choices by citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose and context.

MU:Re7.1.1.b — Compare passages in musical selections and explain how the elements of music and context inform the response.

MU:Cn10.1.1.a — Demonstrate how interests, knowledge and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing and responding to music.

MU:Cn11.1.1.a — Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts and daily life.

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS: THEATER

TH:Pr5.b — Integrate design elements that create an emotional impact or convey meaning.

TH:Re8.a — Use personal experience and background knowledge to create or interpret a drama/theater work.

TH:Pr4.a — Demonstrate that there are multiple choices for every drama/theater work and select the most supportable artistic choice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BY TYRA BULLOCK, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

BEFORE OR AFTER WATCHING

- What does friendship mean to you? What qualities do you look for in a friend?
- Describe a time you felt unseen or misunderstood by those closest to you. What made you feel that way?
- Why do you think some people grow up faster than others? What factors might contribute to this change? Do you think it differs based on a person's identity?
- Which of these do you think society values most and why—intelligence, attractiveness, wealth or power?
- What traditions or customs are celebrated in your culture? Why are they important?

AFTER WATCHING

- What stood out to you? What characters, moments, language, design elements, etc. are sticking with you?
- What were some challenges the characters experienced because of their womanhood? How was their womanhood celebrated?
- Where in the play did you see influences of Latine culture?
- Which character would you befriend in real life? Who might you have trouble connecting with?
- Were you able to predict the ending of the play? What did it leave you thinking about?

GLOSSARY

BY TYRA BULLOCK, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
MICHAEL COTEY, NORTHWESTERN DIRECTING FELLOW

NOTE: The page numbers refer to the page on which the term first appears in the play.

ABUELO

Spanish term for grandfather. (p. 22)

ANTHRAX

A serious infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis* that primarily affects livestock but can infect humans. (p. 81)

BIGOTRY

Prejudice towards a specific group of peoples. (p. 18)

CAIN AND ABEL

Biblical reference to the two sons of Adam; Cain killed his brother Abel out of jealousy. (p. 9)

CAYLEE ANTHONY

Two year old Florida girl whose disappearance and death led to one of the most widely publicized criminal trials in the United States. (p. 23)

CELIA CRUZ

Cuban singer known as the "Queen of Salsa," celebrated for her influential career in Latin music. (p. 61)

CHISME

Spanish term for gossip. (p. 15)

CHISMOSAS

Spanish term for gossipy people or busybodies; the plural form of *chismosa*. (p. 24)

COMMIES

Informal, often derogatory term for communists or people perceived to support communist beliefs. (p. 22)

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

A political and military standoff between the United States and Soviet Union from October 16–28, 1962; occurred after the United States learned the Soviet Union was developing nuclear missile sites on Cuban soil. (p. 20)

DOMINICAN

Referring to a person from or relating to the Dominican Republic. (p. 59)

EL SALVADOR

Small Central American nation bordered by Guatemala, Honduras and the Pacific Ocean. (p. 57)

FIDEL CASTRO

Cuban revolutionary and political leader who served as Prime Minister and later President of Cuba from 1959 to 2008. (p. 61)

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

GABBY PETITO

American woman whose 2021 disappearance and murder received widespread national media attention. (p. 23)

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE U.S.A

American youth organization that promotes leadership, community service, and life skills for girls. (p. 34)

HAITIAN

Referring to a person from or relating to Haiti, the Caribbean nation that shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. (p. 59)

HILLARY CLINTON

American politician who served as U.S. Secretary of State, U.S. Senator from New York, and was the Democratic nominee for president in 2016. (p. 61)

INDOCTRINATION

The process of teaching a set of beliefs without question. (p. 19)

LA NIÑA BONITA

Spanish phrase meaning "the pretty girl." (p. 6)

MAURA MURRAY

American college student who disappeared in New Hampshire in 2004; her case remains unsolved and is the subject of extensive public interest. (p. 48)

MEJORAR LA RAZA

Spanish phrase meaning "improve the race"; refers to the harmful belief that marrying someone with lighter skin will improve future generations through lighter complexion. (p. 59)

MIS HIJOS HABLARÁN ESPAÑOL. LOS HIJOS DE MIS HIJOS HABLARÁN ESPAÑOL.

Spanish for "My children will speak Spanish. My children's children will speak Spanish." (p. 68)

MOTHER THERESA

Albanian-Indian Catholic nun and saint best known for her humanitarian efforts to help "the poorest of the poor." (p. 19)

MOUNTAIN LAUREL

Also known as *Kalmia latifolia*, it is a toxic flowering plant native to the eastern United States. Though poisonous to taste, it can be applied externally as treatment for certain ailments. (p. 79)

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

French military leader and emperor who rose to power during the French Revolution and ruled much of Europe in the early nineteenth century. (p. 32)

NOCHE BUENA

Spanish for "Good Night"; commonly refers to Christmas Eve and the traditional family celebration held that evening in many Latin American cultures. (p. 77)

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

NOVELLA/NOVELA

Spanish-language serialized television drama, similar to a soap opera, commonly referred to as a telenovela. (p. 63)

PARKLAND

Reference to the February 14, 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in which 17 people were killed. (p. 25)

PRAGUE

Capital city of the Czech Republic, known for its historic architecture and cultural significance. (p. 38)

QUINCEAÑERA

15th birthday celebration for young women in Latin culture to indicate their coming of age. (p. 2)

RAFAEL TRUJILLO

Dictator who ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 to 1961 through an authoritarian regime marked by repression and violence. (p. 59)

ROSARY PEA

Also known as *Abrus precatorius*, a tropical vine with bright red seeds containing the highly toxic poison abrin. (p. 79)

SALMA HAYEK

Mexican actress and producer known for her work in both Mexican and Hollywood films. (p. 61)

TED BUNDY

Infamous American serial killer of the 1970s. (p. 7)

THE WEST WING

Popular American TV drama that centers on a fictional Democratic president and his administration. (p. 20)

TREINTAÑERA/TRINTIEÑERA

A woman's 30th birthday. (p. 88)

VICTIMOLOGY

Scientific study of crime victims. (p. 17)

YELLOW DOCK

A flowering plant (*Rumex crispus*) traditionally used in herbal medicine, though excessive consumption may be harmful. (p. 79)



TEEN STUDIO SERIES AT THE GOODMAN. YOUR THEATER. YOUR WORLD.

Discover your creativity, build new skills and connect with other young artists through The Goodman's Teen Studio—a free series of hands-on theater workshops led by some of Chicago's most exciting theater professionals.

Each workshop explores a different aspect of theater-making, from acting and story-telling to movement, design, playwriting and more. Whether you're already passionate about theater or simply curious to try something new, Teen Studio is a welcoming space to experiment, collaborate and grow alongside peers from across the city!

No experience is necessary—just bring your curiosity.

Join us and discover where your story can take you.

SAVE THE DATES

Saturday, September 12 | 12:00-1:30pm

Saturday, October 10 | 12:00-1:30pm

Saturday, November 14 | 12:00-1:30pm

Saturday, December 12 | 12:00-1:30pm

All workshops are free of charge. Registration is required.



Want to be notified when registration opens?

Email Education@GoodmanTheatre.org.

For more details, visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Education
or scan the QR code.



2026/2027 STAGE CHEMISTRY WORKSHOPS. SCIENCE MEETS STAGECRAFT.

Bring your students to The Goodman for an immersive Stage Chemistry workshop!

The Goodman's Stage Chemistry program brings Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) to life through the magic of theater. These hands-on, Next Generation Science Standards-aligned workshops explore how lighting, sound, costumes, scenic design and other technical elements transform the stage.

All workshops take place at The Goodman from 10am-1pm and are available for students in grades 6-12.

Each workshop includes:

- A backstage tour of the theater.
- A Q&A with a special guest highlighting career pathways in theater production.

A hands-on workshop exploring how theater professionals use STEAM principles to bring productions to life.



Interested in scheduling a Stage Chemistry experience for your students? Email Education@GoodmanTheatre.org.

For more details, visit GoodmanTheatre.org/Education or scan the QR code.

2026/2027 SCHOOL MATINEE SERIES



DEAD GIRL'S QUINCEAÑERA

BY PHANÉSIA PHAREL | DIRECTED BY MELIA BENSUSSEN

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14 | 10:30AM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20 | 10:30AM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 | 10:30AM

Detective skills: unverified. Determination: unmatched.

FACT: Maria was last seen at her Quinceañera. FACT: The party ended early due to an unknown emergency. FACT: Maria has not responded to any messages in 19 hours. Now, her three best friends—armed with confidence, questionable clues and zero adult supervision—are on the case, racing against the clock to find out what happened. The pressures of Latine girlhood punctuate this joy ride through the power and pleasure of adolescent friendships—a comic thriller of secrets, sisterhood and solving crime.



JOHN PROCTOR IS THE VILLAIN

BY KIMBERLY BELFLOWER | DIRECTED BY MARTI LYONS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 | 10:30AM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9 | 10:30AM

The kids are not only all right, they're on fire.

Fueled by pop music, optimism and fury, five young women are about to light up some of the darkest secrets of their one-stoplight town. The Chicago premiere of the Tony Award nominated Broadway smash sensation—hailed as “the new era of cool-girl theater” (*BrooklynRail.org*) “igniting its own cultural moment” (*Variety*)—pulses with humor and energy. Heroes, villains and who gets blamed when the hysteria starts are up for debate in this “vital, hilarious, thrilling and urgently necessary” (*The New York Times*) unflinching perspective of a generation staking its claim.



THE XIXTH (THE NINETEENTH)

BY KEMP POWERS | DIRECTED BY CARL COFIELD

TUESDAY, MAY 4 | 10:30AM

TUESDAY, MAY 11 | 10:30AM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5 | 10:30AM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12 | 10:30AM

“Visual pop, fleet pacing, muscular energy, welcome humor” (*San Diego Union Tribune*).

In Mexico City, 1968, courage comes with a price. When two Black American sprinters deliver a protest seen around the world, what followed was more complex—and far more dangerous. With a blend of sharp wit and searing emotion, Academy Award-nominee Kemp Powers explores what it truly costs to speak out when everyone is watching in this gripping Chicago-premiere production.

2026/2027 EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT SPONSORS

SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL MATINEE SERIES



MAJOR SUPPORT



MAJOR CORPORATE SPONSOR



CORPORATE SPONSOR PARTNER



PEOPLES GAS
NATURAL GAS DELIVERY

CROWN FAMILY
PHILANTHROPIES

MAGGIE AND
SCOTT PHILLIPS

ROBERT AND
CHERYL KOPECKY

ANTHONY AND
JULIANNE MAGGIORE

SUPPORTERS

SUPPORT FOR GENARRATIONS



SUPPORT FOR THEATER FOR THE VERY YOUNG

LAURA SACHS FAMILY
FOUNDATION

MAJOR INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS

SUPPORT FOR SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS



CORPORATE SUPPORT OF PLAYBUILD YOUTH INTENSIVE

ANONYMOUS
BRUCE B. BOYD FOUNDATION
RICHARD AND ANN CARR
KATHLEEN AND JAMES COWIE

WALTER E. HELLER/
ALYCE DECOSTA FUND
CHRISTINE FINZER
ELAINE R. LEAVENWORTH

LEE MICKUS
CYNTHIA AND MICHAEL SCHOLL
MICHAEL STEINBERG AND
SALME HARJU STEINBERG

SUPPORTERS

OVERALL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

THE
GOODMAN
WOMEN'S BOARD

ELISSA EFROYMSON
AND ADNAN HAMID

CAROL PRINS
AND JOHN HART

FRUMAN AND
MARIAN JACOBSON

KIMBRA AND
MARK WALTER

MAJOR SUPPORTERS

A&A FUND



CAROL AND
DOUGLAS COHEN

DR. SCHOLL
FOUNDATION

SCOTT AND
LENORE ENLOE



THE HEARST
FOUNDATION, INC.



THE MURIEL POLLIA
FOUNDATION

STEVEN AND
LAUREN SCHEIBE

SIRAGUSA FAMILY
FOUNDATION

JUDY AND
ALEXANDER TOLAND



SUPPORTERS

COMMITMENTS AS OF JULY 22, 2026