



Teacher Resource Guide

HEIST

By Arun Lakra
B.C. Premiere



Image Description: A graphic of someone dressed in all- black descending from above and hovering over a large diamond, encased in glass. The show title reads "HEIST" and there are laser beams across the image.

2026.27 Season

**The Stanley BFL Canada Stage
September 17–October 18, 2026**

This show is generously sponsored by:



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Welcome

This guide was created for teachers and students. It contains an overview of the play's story as well as informative resources and activities for teachers and students. The guide aims to provide background knowledge and critical perspectives on the play that will yield fruitful discussion and foster an understanding and appreciation of theatre arts.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the guide, please contact our Education & Community Engagement Manager, Mikenzie Page, mpage@artsclub.com.

This study guide was written by Delaney Lathigee, Education Program Liaison, and Mikenzie Page.



About the Arts Club Theatre Company

The Arts Club of Vancouver was founded in 1958 as a private club for artists, musicians, and actors. It became the Arts Club Theatre in 1964 when the company opened its first stage in a converted gospel hall at Seymour and Davie Streets. Now in its 63rd season of producing professional live theatre in Vancouver, the Arts Club Theatre Company is a non-profit charitable organization that operates three theatres: the Lindsay Family Stage at Granville Island, the Stanley BFL CANADA Stage, and the Olympic Village Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre. Its popular productions range from musicals and contemporary comedies to new works and classics.



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Learn more about the
Arts Club Theatre Company
at artsclub.com.

Ćəsnaʔəm: The Story of this Land

The Stanley BFL CANADA Stage stands on the ancestral territory of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm Nation, and the former city of Ćəsnaʔəm, which was located at the mouth of the Fraser River. The city of Ćəsnaʔəm is an important historical site for xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam). It symbolizes the nation's resilience and its connection to the land. We honour the history of this land as a step towards recognition and respect to the Musqueam people. Just as Musqueam was named for the blooming flower məθkʷə́y, we hope to grow our connection with the land and its people.

The Arts Club Theatre Company would like to acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and sə́lilwə́təʔ Nations, the original stewards of this land on which we operate. We would like to ask those visiting or living here to share their thanks by supporting local Indigenous artists and communities. Acknowledging is always a start to supporting; as we step forward, we wish to be better partners, healers, and helpers to our Indigenous neighbours.

For further reading, click below to read more about xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam's) Story from the Musqueam Indian Band website:

[Musqueam's Story](#)

<https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/our-story/our-territory/place-names-map/>



Attending the Show



Arriving at the Theatre

Please arrive at the theatre with 30 minutes before the show to pick up and distribute tickets. Buses may unload passengers in the loading zone in front of the theatre, but engines must be turned off while doing so. They will have to find alternate parking for the duration of the show. More parking information can be found at our website [HERE](#).

Theatre Etiquette

In order to ensure an enjoyable show for all audience members, please share these general theatre etiquette guidelines with students and participants.

- Please turn off mobile phones and other electronic devices for the duration of the show. If you are concerned about missing an emergency call, please leave your name or device and seat location with a front of house attendant and they will alert you.
- No outside food or drink is allowed in the theatre (sealed water bottles are fine!).
- Please be modest with your use of fragrances so that audience members with allergies can also enjoy the performance.
- If you must leave the theatre during the performance, you will be seated again at the intermission or another appropriate interval.
- Reactions are welcome and the best part of live theatre! We do ask that you please respect your fellow audience members and the performers by refraining from talking during the performance.
- If you have a complaint about another guest, please tell a front of house attendant or the Front of House Manager rather than approaching the person yourself. They will be happy to address your concerns.
- The Arts Club seeks to create an environment with reduced barriers for all. We want to provide a place where all people feel welcome and can maintain their independence and their dignity. Learn about our [Accessible Performances here](#).
- Our Accessibility Coordinator, Amy Amantea, will be happy to have a conversation with you about you or your students' access needs, and how they may be addressed during your time with us at your performance, workshop, and/or backstage tour. Reach out at aamantea@artsclub.com.

Learning Objectives

After viewing *Heist* and working through the following activities, students will:

- Engage critically with a new Canadian theatrical performance, including acting choices, direction, sound, stage and lighting design
- Explore facets of the crime genre, including the use of an unreliable narrator, flashbacks and memory, and heist/caper film story beats.
- Reflect upon the difference between film and theatre and how different art forms can be blended and molded together to transform into a multidisciplinary art piece



Connections to BC Curriculum



Drama 10-12

Big Ideas

- Drama offers dynamic ways to explore and share identity and a sense of belonging
- Drama encourages creativity, innovation, and collaboration in a variety of contexts
- Growth as an artist requires perseverance, resilience, and reflection

Curriculum Competencies

Explore and Create

- Explore and create dramatic works to express ideas, meaning, and emotions
- Develop a repertoire of dramatic skills and techniques through presentation or performance
- Demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience

Reason and Reflect

- Reflect on dramatic works and make connections with personal experiences
- Examine the influences of social, cultural, historical, environmental, and personal contexts on dramatic works

Connect and Expand

- Explore the impacts of dramatic works on culture and society
- Demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to dramatic works
- Explore educational, personal, and professional opportunities in the performing arts



Big Ideas

- The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world.
- People understand text differently depending on their world views and perspectives
- Language shapes ideas and influences others

Curriculum Competencies

Comprehend and Connect

- Recognize and understand how different forms, formats, structures, and features of texts enhance and shape meaning and impact
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world
- Select and apply appropriate strategies in a variety of contexts to comprehend written, oral, visual and multimodal texts, to guide inquiry and to extend thinking

Create and Communicate

- Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways
- Respectfully exchange ideas and viewpoints from diverse perspectives to build shared understanding and extend thinking



Big Ideas

- Active participation in theatre creates personal and cultural connections, which offer insight into human experience
- Both the process and the product of theatre are dynamic ways of exploring our identity and sense of belonging
- Growth as a theatre company requires perseverance, collaboration, and reflection

Curriculum Competencies

Explore and Create

- Explore and demonstrate a repertoire of theatre vocabulary, skills, and conventions, through presentation or performance

Reason and Reflect

- Develop and refine performance based on self-reflection, audience response, and director feedback
- Describe, and respond to ways in which props, technologies, and environments are used in theatre productions, using discipline-specific language

Connect and Expand

- Explore the personal, educational, and professional opportunities in the performing arts
- Connect with other theatre companies on a local, regional, or national scale



Media Arts 11–12, Film & Television 11–12, Directing & Script Development 11–12



Big Ideas

- Directors shape the audience's aesthetic experiences through script interpretation and artistic choices.
- Media arts are an essential element of culture and reveal insights into the human experience.
- Production of moving images develops creativity, innovation, and collaboration in a variety of contexts.

Curriculum Competencies

- Explore historical and contemporary Canadian film and television, and emerging media.
- Examine ideas, emotions, and perspectives through dialogue and action
- Explore personal, educational, and professional opportunities in media arts and related fields

*Other courses that may also find some cross over content:
English 9, Drama 9, and Creative Writing 10-12*

Show Content

Genre: Thriller, Mystery, Heist

Show Dates: September 17 – October 18, 2026

Age Range: 13+, Grade 8 – 12

Venue: Stanley BFL Canada Stage

CLASSIFIED

SPOILER ALERT

**Anything past this page may contain major plot
point spoilers!**

Read at your own discretion...

TOP SECRET

Content Advisory

Alcohol/Drugs/Gambling

Contains depictions of gambling and sports betting. Depictions of drinking, bars, and various pubs.



Romance/Intimacy

Some romance and kisses between characters.



Strong Language

Strong language (use of the f-word multiple times throughout the show.)



Violence

Contains on-stage portrayal of violence, including a gun being pulled on multiple characters and depiction of a self-inflicted wound, used as a distraction during a crime scene. There may be fake blood used on stage.

Many gun-shot sounds are used throughout the play.



This production contains flashing lights, projections, and water-based haze and fog. Please contact our box office for more information.

Brief Synopsis

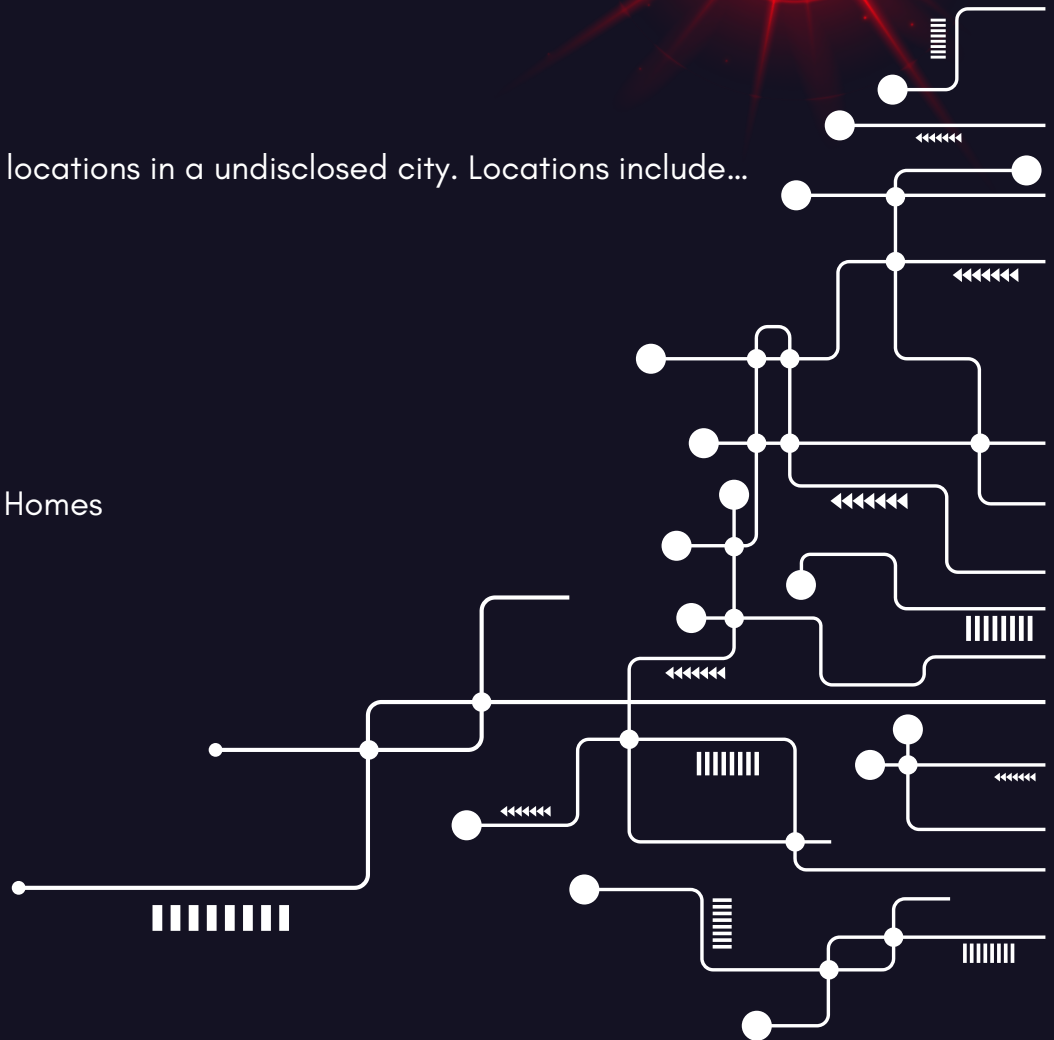
The team: four brilliant thieves—the conman, the hacker, the cat burglar, the muscle—and the mastermind who brought them together. The target: a multimillion-dollar ruby. The plan: orchestrate the perfect crime. But when the job goes awry, will a daring second-chance scheme put them back on top? As the stakes rise, the crime family members must calculate who they can trust...and who will stab them in the back.



Setting

The set serves as multiple locations in a undisclosed city. Locations include...

- Art Depository
- Boxing Gym
- Car
- Street
- Restaurant
- Yoga/Aerial Studio
- Different Character's Homes
- Driveway
- Pub
- Museum
- Wine Cellar



Characters

MARVIN he/him

The Boss, in his forties

Marvin is the main narrator of the story and a man of many secrets.

RYAN he/him

The Gilligan, in his thirties

SKILLS: Communications, Operations

RISKS: Marches to his own Drum,

MOTIVATION: Adrenaline

Unpredictable

FEARS: Commitment

ANGIE she/her

The Mary-Lou, in her thirties

SKILLS: Flexibility, Languages, Acting

RISKS: Moral Compass

MOTIVATION: Freedom

FEARS: Flying Economy Class

KRUGER he/him

The Popeye, in his fifties

SKILLS: Weapons, Security, Muscle

RISKS: Emotional Volatility

MOTIVATION: Debts, Family

FEARS: Arachnids

FIONA she/her

The Geek, in her twenties

SKILLS: Tech, Surveillance

RISKS: IQ

MOTIVATION: Intellectual Stimulation

FEARS: Teamwork

THE SPIDER she/her

The Target, in her sixties

TARGETS: Jewels, art, artifacts

RISKS: Sociopathic tendencies

WEAKNESSES: Expensive wine

FEARS: N/A

Detailed Synopsis

PROLOGUE

The play opens with an on-screen video projection, with a voiceover by Marvin. He speaks about Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "The Cask of Amontillado". He states, "...A perfect crime is plotted. Every detail has been premeditated...". The prologue ends and the story begins as the lights fade to reveal a high-tech video credit sequence.

ACT ONE

The stage lights up on Marvin, the leader of the soon to be ragtag group of criminals. He is in a pub and speaks in an Irish accent. He is holding a photo and monologues to the audience about what the perfect heist is. He slips on his trademark vintage motorcycle cap and the lights fade.

The play is back to present-day. Marvin, Angie, Kruger, Ryan, and Fiona all arrive in an alley. They enter separately and everyone is wearing all black. Marvin explains they are going to steal the Kalakaua Ruby, valued at six million dollars. He explains the intense security risks and the small five-minute window that will be available to them. Marvin confirms Fiona will be their eyes and ears from an external position as Kruger removes a manhole cover near where they stand. One by one, each member of the team descends into the manhole. The crew banters as they descend into the darkness.

The scene cuts to a flashback and Marvin addressed the audience. He explains that this all started about six months earlier when he met Ryan at a sports bar where Marvin sees he has been conning various sports bars through betting and fake predictions. Marvin tells the audience Ryan became his second in command.

The story changes to present day, and the crew (sans Fiona) is at the museum, entering through a vent on the side of the room. Fiona is in her remote tech station and communicates with the group via earpieces. The whole group sees their target, the ruby. Fiona warns them that the laser maze is still active, even though the cameras have been disabled. The team moves into action. Ryan carries his briefcase, sets up a laser mechanism in one corner, while Marvin does the same in the opposite corner. Kruger unpacks a drone while Angie pulls out a container. As they count down, the scene flashes back to the five months earlier.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

The audience learns from Marvin, that he and Ryan met Angie while scoping out another “mark”. She drew their attention with her grace while climbing out the window of a five-story building. When she reaches the ground, she is ambushed by the duo who question her and her motives. Marvin reveals that Angie steals stolen or poached artifacts and sells them to the highest bidder, donating half the proceeds to Greenpeace. However, before she sells the item, Angie places a tracking device on it so she could steal it again. Realizing how intelligent she is, Marvin convinces her to join his team.

The scene changes to a different flashback. Angie, using a French accent, helps Marvin and Ryan attempt to pull off another fraud, however when realizing their target was a war hero, stops the scheme. During this flashback, Ryan and Angie begin to connect romantically which leads Marvin to wonder if he will get pushed out of their trio.

Back in the present day, Fiona continues feeding the team stats as they set up. Suddenly a moving laser maze appears, surrounding the ruby case. Angie approaches the laser maze and begins to weave through it. She finally arrives and attaches a device to the case. She presses a button which flashes green. Angie clips herself to her harness and is lifted back up the ceiling.

This time, the stage flashes back four months ago. Marvin begins to tell the audience how Kruger joined their team, when they saw him scamming tourists outside a train station. Marvin reveals Kruger has debts and a child to support, so is desperate for the money. Ryan doesn't trust him, but Marvin insists they need a bodyguard.

Back at the museum, Angie descends back down to the ground, towards the ruby and plinth. While Fiona and Marvin continue directing the team, Angie pulls a wire from her hair and unlocks the glass case. She carefully removes the lid and slides it off, ascending back up to the ceiling. The two lasers from earlier fire at the ruby platform. Finally, Kruger is meant to have the drone pick up the ruby, however as he presses the controller, the drone doesn't move. As Kruger yells in frustration, the stage changes to reflect a flashback from three months earlier.

Marvin begins to explain how he found Fiona, the final piece of their team. He explains her rebellious streak, intelligence, and incredible robotics skills before the story shifts back to present day at the museum.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

Marvin is trying to figure out how the drone has gone wrong. Kruger insists someone messed with the equipment while everyone else blames him and user error. As the group argues, Kruger gets the drone to work, and it rises above the case. At this moment, Marvin reveals to the audience that he “should have known it was a set-up”.

The scene flashes back to what appears to be Marvin committing a robbery alone, in the dark. However, it is revealed to be a surprise karaoke birthday party thrown by Angie, Ryan, Kruger, and Fiona. They all tease Marvin for being scared and continue to party, as Marvin reveals to the audience that “that night, they became a team”. They all begin to discuss what they want to do with their lives when their criminal days are done. This reveals cracks in Angie and Ryan’s relationship as Angie wants to retire but Ryan doesn’t. Angie makes a joke that Marvin should be her beach mate in retirement which frustrates Ryan. In his jealousy, Ryan asks Marvin what he really wants. Marvin considers the question and reveals he wants to pull off a heist nobody has ever pulled off. The scene flashes back to the present.

Present day at the museum, Marvin gives Angie instructions as she elevates back up the ceiling. The tech all seems to be working, and Angie begins to descend towards the Ruby, head-first. She reaches the plinths and hovers just over the edge. Using a claw, she reaches through the narrow opening in the plinth to grab the Ruby. She gets it and Ryan and Kruger cheer. She retrieves the ruby and drops it into Kruger’s bag. He proceeds to pack up the bag and gives the ruby to Ryan. Ryan places it in the briefcase the group brought in earlier as Angie makes her way to the ground. The group exits, celebrating their successful theft.

The team is back at Marvin’s home, drinking champagne and celebrating. Marvin brings out the ruby for them all to admire before noticing something seems wrong. He suddenly smashes the ruby against the table, shattering it and revealing it’s a fake jewel. The group begins to argue and descends into chaos when Kruger suddenly pulls out his gun and fires it into the air. He begins to threaten the team, trying to find out who screwed them over. Ryan, finally sick of Kruger’s attitude decides to leave and tells Angie to come with him. She refuses and leaves without him. Fiona follows her and Ryan leaves quickly after. Kruger, now suspicious of Marvin, also leaves. He is left and alone, speaking to the audience. Marvin explains that was the last time he saw any of the team. The projection screen flashes and reveals the story is now jumping six months later.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

The scene opens in Marvin's home. He still doesn't know what happened to the ruby and is feeling guilty for leading the team astray. He monologues to the audience before being interrupted by a phone call from his mom. It is revealed he is paying her rent for a new place. They say goodbye and he hangs up. He makes a call to someone on his phone and the scene shifts.

The scene opens in Ryan's new home as Marvin begins his journey of assembling the team. Ryan is unpacking, having just moved in after having inherited some money from a deceased relative. The conversation is tense as Marvin attempts to convince Ryan to try the heist again, with Ryan still feeling jealousy over Marvin and Angie's connection. Eventually Ryan agrees and the scene switches to Kruger at a gun range, practicing his gunshots.

At the range, Marvin now attempts to recruit Kruger, who still remains untrusting of Ryan and Fiona. Eventually Kruger is also convinced and the play flashes to Angie at her gym. Marvin and her discuss what the others have been up to. Angie asks Marvin about his acting classes and he attempts a terrible America accent for her, winning her over.

The scene flashes to a new location; Fiona's lab. Fiona works on a VR headset and has Marvin try it on. He moves around the room with it on as if he is stepping over and avoiding invisible hazards. Fiona and Marvin discuss the group's interpersonal struggles and within this scene, Marvin's earlier conversation with Ryan is woven in.

In the Ryan and Marvin conversation, it is revealed Ryan invests in crypto and owns a briefcase that requires a fingerprint sensor which Marvin comments on. Ryan pulls out a hard drive which he explains is his bitcoin wallet and it's extreme biometric authentication measures. Back in Fiona's lab, she tosses a box to Marvin which he catches and admires. The scene immediately shifts to Angie and Marvin, who is showing her the little box. The pair share a moment and Angie kisses Marvin on the cheek.

The show flashes back to Marvin and Ryan's earlier conversation where the pair discuss Ryan and his 3D printing hobby. Marvin tells Ryan he believes someone switched out the ruby. Ryan realizes that means it could've only been three people; himself, Marvin, or Kruger. The scene shifts back to Kruger who tells Marvin that Ryan believes Marvin switched the rubies, whereas Ryan tells Marvin he believes it's Kruger. Back to Fiona's lab, she promises the mysterious box will work. Finally, Marvin reveals to the whole group their target; The Spider.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

On the screen above the stage, a projection displays the stats of The Spider. She enjoys jewels, art, and artifacts while she is described as “sociopathic”. The whole group reacts, some in shock and some in fear. Kruger describes the gruesome fate of the last people who attempted to steal from her. Eventually the group comes to agreement and decides to help Marvin complete this final heist.

The play shifts to Angie’s home. She brings Marvin out a chair and asks him how he knows he’s right about who stole the ruby. As the pair discuss how the whole group could’ve been set up, Angie ties Marvin’s hands behind the chair with rope. Angie also pulls out a blindfold and ties it around Marvin’s head. As they finish their discussion Marvin raises his hands, revealing he freed himself from the ropes as the scene changes.

“THE PLAN” flashes on the projection screen as the stage becomes Marvin’s home. He addresses the team (Ryan, Angie, Kruger, and Fiona) and begins to describe the intense security set up at The Spider’s home. It is decided only one person will be in charge of the diamond and that is Angie. There is still tension in the group, but Marvin continues explaining the plan. It involves an elaborate drone scheme to first lure The Spider into thinking someone is after her diamond, however the security person she calls is Fiona, who promises to send someone over right away. The plan is in motion and the stage changes to The Spider’s home porch.

Marvin and Angie stand on The Spider’s porch, wearing security badges. The Spider opens the door, holding a gun, aimed at the pair. Marvin and Angie raise their hands as The Spider steps past them and intensely examines the outside of the porch. The Spider looks out to the audience and makes a karmic circle motion with her gun.

Blackout.

END OF ACT ONE

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

ACT TWO

The act opens in The Spider's home. Through binoculars, Kruger, Ryan, and Fiona look out over The Spider's house. The group comments on the lack of civilization around the home, however the team quickly shifts their focus back to Marvin and Angie.

Marvin and Angie head down the stairs to The Spider's wine cellar, followed closely behind by her. The Spider commands them to stop as she closes the door at the top of the stairs, trapping the two. She presses a code on a keypad on the wall, then breathes on a special sensor. The lights change and the security system deactivates and the group proceeds. Marvin asks her what she just deactivated, however The Spider turns the question back to him, as he's supposed to be the "expert". Marvin correctly guesses her system and then clarifies that she is hoping to disable any intruders who manage to slip past her security system. The Spider reiterates she wants the intruders to be permanently dealt with. As Marvin explains their plan to install carbon monoxide canisters into the cellar, Angie explores the room which has floor to ceiling wine shelves, crates, barrels, and video cameras.

The Spider thanks them for their time, before beginning to show them the door. Angie, realizing they may be losing their chance, stops The Spider and reveals she stole a bottle of wine from the cellar. The Spider, seemingly impressed, points her gun at Marvin and tells him to leave the cellar. Marvin slowly climbs the stairs, leaves, but doesn't close the door, eavesdropping. The Spider asks Angie if she trusts Marvin, which Angie says she does. The Spider questions her further and Angie reveals she "doesn't trust anyone with her life."

Satisfied with Angie's answer, The Spider agrees to let them install the canisters, however she leaves Angie with a heavy warning to leave everything in the cellar alone. Marvin and Angie agree and leave the home.

One week later, the whole team approaches The Spider's home, in uniform, carrying their equipment. Ryan is ready to back out but the group pulls together just as Marvin rings the doorbell. The front door opens and The Spider appears. As they walk past her house, she scans each team member with a metal detector wand. Angie is clean; however, Kruger must give her his gun which was holstered to his belt. The Spider leads the way down the stairs and disables the security system. Marvin, Ryan, and Fiona follow behind her with equipment and a canister of carbon monoxide. Ryan is carrying his briefcase.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

Marvin requests The Spider leave the room as to not distract his team. She agrees but scans the canister to confirm its contents before leaving. The team begins their well-choreographed process. Fiona sets up her tech station while Angie and Kruger carry the canister. Marvin sets up the diffuser while Ryan examines the walls. As the team runs around, the room lights flicker on and off and Fiona announces the cameras have been disabled.

Suddenly Angie stumbles, and Kruger drops the canister right on her foot. She falls to the ground, in pain. As Kruger stands above her, Angie flicks her leg and sweeps his feet out from under him. Kruger falls on the floor and as he stands up, he shoves Ryan, who has been making disparaging comments throughout this interaction. The lights continue to flicker as Kruger confronts Ryan. Angie intervenes as Marvin emerges from behind the wall shelves, however it is quickly revealed Angie can't walk due to her ankle. Marvin attempts to get the team back on track, however they realize there are no signs of a safe anywhere in the cellar.

The play shifts to ten days earlier at a rock-climbing wall with Angie and Marvin. The pair discuss who took the original ruby and Angie reveals she was suspicious of Marvin but knows he is smart enough to never cross her. Angie questions Marvin and asks if this mission is a heist or a test. Marvin explains he views it as a Paraprosdokian play; when the end changes the beginning.

Back in the wine cellar, present day, the group scans the walls and explores the cellar. All they see is wine lining the walls. Fiona, wearing headphones, points a sound gun at the wall of shelves to listen for the diamond. She explains diamonds have a natural resonance, but she is hearing interference. She locates the sound to a barrel and reveals there must be a sonic jammer inside, preventing her from hearing the diamond.

Angie, still unable to bear weight on her ankle, can't help. Marvin elects Kruger who refuses quickly, citing the possibility of there being spiders or some other creepy creature in the barrel as protection. He offers to do it for an extra 20% and says they can take it out of Angie's cut of the money. Angie and Kruger argue until Angie walks away in frustration and disappears behind some wine shelves. Ryan climbs up, with his briefcase, and knocks on the barrel. Ryan unscrews the valve and shines his flashlight inside to reveal a fist-sized hole. He explains that he sees a Sonix 9000 inside, marked with an X.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

The scene flashes back to one week earlier. Angie is trying to position the diffuser in different places. It is revealed the pair suspect Ryan as their saboteur, although Angie is hesitant to believe it. The pair share a moment of romantic tension before the scene flashes back to current day, in the wine cellar.

Lights up on Ryan, who debates if he should reach in the barrel. Fiona begins to direct Ryan to put his hand inside the barrel and place his index finger inside the even smaller hole. The LED light stops flashing, but Ryan is trapped and can't remove his hand.

The team continues to search the cellar, believing a wine bottle will trigger the diamond's safe. Suddenly The Spider calls from up the stairs, and the team scrambles. Marvin repositions a bottle of wine as Ryan remains trapped on the shelf. Marvin and Angie look at each other when Kruger tells her to give him the corkscrew she is holding. He ends up grabbing it from her and slices his arm, screaming in pain.

Flashback to Ryan's home, six days earlier. Ryan uncorks a bottle of wine, while Angie sits on the kitchen counter. It is revealed the pair have never truly been separated while Ryan also reveals jealousy of Angie and Fiona's relationship, as he suspects Fiona has a crush on the former.

Back in the wine cellar, Kruger is bleeding from his self-inflicted wound. Marvin runs up the stairs to intercept The Spider. He explains they had an accident and she pushes past him to stand in front of Kruger. She dips her finger into the blood and tastes it. The Spider gives him a cloth as Marvin attempts to distract her from seeing Ryan. Kruger manages to get her attention by questioning where the most valuable items would be, for security reasons. The Spider gestures to the area previously detected by the resonance sensor, however she notices the mispositioned bottle Marvin moved earlier. As she moves forward, about to investigate, the lights go out. Fiona apologizes immediately and The Spider yells at her to put the lights back on.

The Spider turns on a flashlight which she points at Fiona, who is at her laptop. Then Angie, to Kruger, to the wine cabinets, and soon the shelf where Ryan was stuck just a minute ago. The shelf is empty, he's gone. The cellar lights turn back on, and The Spider notices Ryan is missing.

Ryan suddenly appears from behind the shelves and finds himself directly behind The Spider. He quickly makes up an excuse about a flux capacitor and Marvin says escape phrase to cue his team to make their escape, however The Spider is not fooled. She commands them to finish the job as she pours herself a glass of wine, indicating she isn't leaving the group alone anytime soon.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

Five days earlier at Kruger's gym, he is working out while Ryan watches. The pair begin to converse while they discuss the ruby and their mutual dislike and distrust of one another, however Kruger explains he thinks Marvin is playing them both. Ryan doesn't believe him and states his loyalty is to Marvin.

Back in the wine cellar, The Spider leisurely watches the team finish the job as she sips her wine. As the final step, Marvin connects the carbon monoxide canister to the bottle. The Spider makes him also release the safety valve, which he does reluctantly. The Spider makes a motion to move the bottle, and the team screams as Marvin lunges to stop her. Satisfied with their reaction, The Spider dismisses them. Not wanting to leave without completing their mission, Marvin attempts to say they still need to clean up; however, The Spider makes it clear it's time for the crew to go. As the team starts to make their way up the stairs, Angie drops a wine bottle.

Angie begins to frantically apologize, and The Spider comes to inspect the bottle as Angie offers to clean up. The Spider recognizes the bottle from earlier and touches her hand to the wall, reactivating the security system. The team stays frozen while she climbs the stairs. She presses a button on her watch before exiting the cellar.

As The Spider activated the infrared security system, Marvin warns no one to move as Fiona investigates using her VR headset. The stage lights up in a giant spider web through projections, revealing there are sensors everywhere. Kruger advocates for the team to leave while Marvin still wants to get the diamond. Marvin offers to be the Mary-Lou and get the safe. Fiona gives him the headset and just as Marvin begins to navigate the infrared system, Kruger demands a new boss and volunteers Ryan.

The stage shifts to four days earlier with Angie and Fiona. Angie is working on a bottle of wine while Fiona prepares a wine label. They discuss Kruger as the weakest link and talk about how Ryan will do whatever Angie asks. Angie gives Fiona a soft, possibly romantic kiss on the cheek. The scene changes back to the present day situation at the cellar.

Kruger continues to pressure Ryan and eventually pulls out his polycarbonate gun, aiming it at Marvin. Marvin tosses Ryan the fake diamond, however Ryan still refuses. Kruger turns the gun to Angie and Ryan relents. Fiona begins to reprogram the sensor to Ryan's handprint.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

Three days earlier, Angie and Kruger are at the wine cellar carrying a rolled-up gym mat. Angie pretends to stumble backwards (as she did earlier in the play) and both agree she needs to be more convincing. Angie questions why Kruger is doing this job and he jokes about his daughter needing braces and Taylor Swift tickets. They practice the fall again, celebrating Angie's believable acting.

Back at the wine cellar, Ryan is navigating his way towards the wall of wine. He makes it to the shelves and Marvin tells him to move a specific bottle, believing it to be the trigger. Ryan places pressure on the bottle and it pivots down. The wall of wine slickly slides open, revealing a safe. Fiona talks Ryan through finding model numbers on the safe, which he reads back to her. On another part of the stage, The Spider pulls out a gun and fires it at the camera. The crew hears the shot and the dogs barking. Marvin realizes she is trying to make their work seem like a break in.

Flashback to Fiona's home, two days earlier. Marvin and Fiona talk as she gives him a marker which Marvin will later use to write the model number on the safe that Ryan eventually reads back to Fiona. Marvin also reveals he has a feeling there will be a mutiny in the group, led by Kruger.

Back in the cellar, Ryan is still at the safe as The Spider now fires the gun at a door lock. The group realize she intends to kill them under the pretense of "self-defence". Kruger, still brandishing his gun, tells everyone they will all ambush The Spider when she comes down the stairs. Marvin eventually agrees but reminds the group they should at least make a final attempt for the diamond. Ryan reads four words off the safe to Fiona, and as he does, Angie switches his briefcase for an identical one.

Flashback, twelve hours earlier. Marvin, Angie, Kruger, and Fiona are all together in the cellar. Fiona works at her laptop. Kruger counts out five blindfolds and five pieces of rope, puts them on the shelf behind the chairs. Angie's up high, placing the sound-jamming device in the barrel. She hides a briefcase on a shelf. Marvin holds a script, occasionally referencing it. Ryan is not with them. The group are rehearsing the "mutiny" that leads Ryan to be leader, revealing the whole thing was a rouse on Ryan, to see if he was the one who screwed them over last time. Marvin is convinced that once Ryan lifts the diamond, he's going to switch it out for a fake. Angie remains unconvinced but agrees on the plan. It is also revealed Angie was the one who was supposed to cut herself with the corkscrew, however Kruger offers instead. She turns him down. The group talks through the plan, and Marvin's voice-over continues as the scene changes to present day.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

Ryan reaches for the safe sensor and the safe opens. He pulls out the diamond and shows it to the team. Ryan pulls out his briefcase and places the diamond inside it, replacing it with a fake. In the voice-over Marvin explains he will examine the gem and say a code phrase to confirm it's a fake. Ryan brings over the fake to the group for Marvin to look at. Marvin repeats the code and Angie finally nods, accepting what Ryan did.

The team waits for The Spider to come back down, when suddenly, the lights cut. In the darkness, The Spider reappears, seizing Kruger's gun. She forces Marvin to give her the fake diamond back. She then forces the group to pull up a chair, by holding a gun to Angie's head. She forces Angie to tie the crew up and blindfold them, while revealing she knew their scheme the whole time.

Flashback to one week earlier and beginning of the last scene of Act I, however this time the scene continues inside. Marvin and Angie explain their attempt to lift the ruby and belief that one of their team members screwed them. They explain their real target is Ryan's bitcoin from when he sold the ruby, now worth over 60 million dollars. Marvin offers The Spider a cut and begins to walk the audience through the entire plan, as a slick, seamless series of enactments of previous scenes happen.

The final part of the plan involves brainwave authentication. The Spider places the device on Ryan's head while he is blindfolded and tied up in the present day. Fiona gets the scan and the crew (minus Ryan) return to their chairs, put on their blindfolds, and put their hands back into the ropes, miming Ryan's trapped state. Once they are back in their places, The Spider pretends to call the police and says she managed to capture the thieves but is afraid as her carbon monoxide alarm is going off, playing into a "little old lady" stereotype. She exits and Marvin 'frees' himself.

He pretends to struggle with the canister before untying Ryan to have him follow The Spider to track the diamond. Ryan runs to Angie to untie her, but she urges him to follow their target too. Ryan is unsure for a moment but eventually goes, following The Spider. Once confirmed he is gone, the lights come up and sound effects of dogs and sirens stops. It is revealed the transfer went through and Marvin sends each member of the team their money.

Detailed Synopsis (Cont'd)

On Fiona's laptop, the team can still see the live security footage, and they gather to watch it. Ryan eventually turns his attention to his briefcase and realizes the hard drive is gone. Suddenly, there's a flash of light, and simultaneously, hundreds of small strips of paper explode into the air from the briefcase, like confetti, and float to the ground. The team celebrates their success but quickly realize Marvin has disappeared.

Kruger checks his phone to call Marvin and realizes no money was sent to them. Angie recalls The Spider and Marvin both said a similar phrase earlier in the play as the faint sound of a helicopter plays. Angie pieces it together that the whole thing was a set-up. She moves over to an area Marvin didn't want the rouse near, revealing a secret passageway. On screen, a video of a helicopter plays with Marvin inside, with The Spider. Angie explains to the crew that The Spider must be Marvin's mother.

A flashback, one year earlier. Both The Spider and Marvin now speak in American accents. The Spider shows Marvin a picture, an image of the previous photo from Ryan's mantle, the one he showed Marvin. Two families. The boy's face is circled. The Spider explains Ryan is the nephew of Marvin's father's old partner, who tipped off the cops and sent Marvin's dad to prison. Ryan inherited everything that should have been left to them. The pair then discuss where Marvin should be from. He tries on an Irish accent, the one he has been using the whole play.

On screen, there are a series of surveillance telephoto shots of Ryan and the scene begins again from when Marvin first recruits Ryan, with Marvin masterminding the plan all along.

THE END

EPILOGUE

Applause and bows happen. The audience stands, prepares to leave the theatre. Suddenly, Angie spins around and goes to centre stage. She refuses to let the story end like this and recruits Kruger and Fiona to enact revenge on Marvin. Fiona laments that they won't be able to find them, when Angie pulls out her phone. On screen, a projection of a helicopter's location in real time is displayed. Angie reveals she slipped a tracking device in Marvin's wallet. The screen flashes TO BE CONTINUED and the lights go out.

END OF PLAY

About the Playwright

Arun Lakra

Arun has spent the last 20-plus years dividing his work life between his creative pursuits and his medical career. He has written plays, screenplays, a song to protest the demotion of Pluto (unsuccessful), and more than a few illegible prescriptions. Arun's multi-award-winning play *Sequence* has been published, produced across North America, and recently had its international (translated) premiere in Istanbul, Türkiye. His most recent play, *Heist*, has been produced at Vertigo Theatre (Calgary), Grand Theatre (London, ON), Citadel Theatre (Edmonton), and Arizona Theatre Company (Tucson/Phoenix), and will be produced across North America in the upcoming season.



Arun is also a University of Toronto-trained eye surgeon, and he enjoys sharing his embarrassing stories (from both worlds!) to medical students across Canada and the US through his presentation, "Playing Doctor: Moments, Mistakes, and Lessons Learned from a Life in Medicine and the Arts." Arun lives in Calgary, Canada with Roopa, Taro, Siya, and (woof) Zephy.

Learn more at arunlakra.com or heistplay.com. Instagram: @alohalakra.

Context: Interview with the Playwright

Arts Club: What inspired you to write *Heist*? This kind of dynamic, action-packed caper story is something audiences are more conditioned to seeing presented in a movie or on television, not so much on stage. Why did you decide that theatre was the right medium for *Heist*?

Arun Lakra: The story began a few years ago when I was approached to write a heist for the stage, which was very kind and flattering. I was told that there were lots of great heist movies, but nothing really for the stage, and I was offered the opportunity to create a heist for the theatre. So I thought about it...And then I said no. I told them, there's a reason nobody has done a heist on stage before. You can't do it! I mean, how can you take a glitzy, pricey, Clooney-Pitt story and just bring it to a simple stage. In the movies they can use cool camera angles and sneaky editing to help shape the audience's journey, using flashbacks and subtle glances, to direct (and misdirect) the audience's attention. You can't do that on stage. And that was the biggest challenge. How can you take a genre that works so well in a different medium and bring it onto the stage. It was doomed to fail. Plus, audiences are getting so sophisticated these days. They can spot a suspicious butler a mile away. How can you possibly surprise them, without any screen magic, on a simple stage? Which is why I said no. But then I had an epiphany. What I had been looking at as an obstacle, as a challenge—having a captive audience watching our every move on stage—was actually an opportunity. What if, I asked myself, we could find a way to surprise the audience even as they've been watching the whole show unfold before their eyes. Not easy, but once I framed that as a goal, at least I knew the direction I wanted to head. Part of the reason I think this play has been successful on stage is that *Heist* was conceived of for the stage. It was developed as a play; it's not an adaptation of a movie or a book being shoehorned into this medium and onto the stage. It's meant for theatre audiences, which I think is a big part of the reason it works.

AC: What were your research and writing process like for this play?

AL: My research process was pretty intense...I sprawled on the sofa and watched every caper movie ever made (all the while trying to persuade my family that I was "working")! There may have been some work-related popcorn consumed. Once I felt like I understood the genre, I needed to put my own spin on it—while maintaining the core elements of what a caper story should be. There were multiple drafts,

concocted in the migraine-inducing confinement of my basement office, hanging out with my two best friends: caffeine and ibuprofen. I knew one thing early on. I wanted to create a cinematic experience; in some ways, a hybridization of a movie and a play. My goal was to take advantage of modern high-tech video projections and aerial acrobatics to complement the on-stage storytelling and the theatrical twists. Of course, I needed my own team of Ocean's-like specialists to pull this off. Along this journey, I was fortunate to find myself surrounded by a brilliant and generous team of co-conspirators: directors, actors, producers, dramaturgs, designers, aerialists, musicians, who have helped bring this story to life. At every step of the journey, from workshop to premiere to various productions, this play has evolved. Each iteration has helped the show become stronger and tighter and funnier and hopefully better, thanks to all of these talented folks. And the process continues today. This play is a living, breathing, growing organism and the version Arts Club audiences will see has never been seen before!

AC: Stepping back, how did you become a playwright?

AL: When I attended medical school at the University of Toronto, I had no idea that there was some sort of latent creative side buried inside of me. I stumbled into writing when, for reasons I still don't understand, I decided to write a short story one night when I was on call. I submitted this to the Faculty of Medicine short story competition and, inexplicably, I won. (I later realized mine was probably the only entrant!) Regardless, I was encouraged, and I soon discovered that writing helped to sort of balance out the hardcore science side of my brain. I continued to cultivate the creative side through my internship at the University of Hawaii (great decision!) and my ophthalmology residency in Toronto.

I have spent much of the last 25 years, in different ways, dividing my work week between my medical practice and my creative endeavours. Initially, I would work as a doctor for a couple of months, then go somewhere (preferably where there was a beach) and write for a bit. Then when the money ran out, I would repeat the cycle. Family and kids then appeared, and that sort of existence became farfetched. I tried to immerse in full-time medicine for a while, but it soon became apparent that without writing in my life, I was pretty cranky. So, with the help and understanding of the people in my life, I carved a couple of days every week to write.

For the last 20-plus years, I have divided my work life between the practice of medicine and the art of writing. These days, I spend a lot of time inhabiting and

Context: Interview with the Playwright (Cont'd)

thinking about the intersection of arts and science. I like to think that writing has made me a better doctor (empathy, humanity, creativity) and medicine has made me a better writer (logic, structure, methodology). And that the combination has, hopefully, made me a better human.

AC: What advice would you give to others who are balancing a professional career with creative pursuits? How can they find inspiration and motivation to pursue their passions outside of work?

AL: The dual career—the doctor-writer hyphenate, or the “subplot” as I like to call it—has its share of challenges and rewards. Through the years, I have come to realize that there are many of us who share a similar desire to explore different, often divergent, paths. While I did not deliberately set out to do so, I have stumbled onto this double life that has somehow worked for me. A few years ago, I gave a TedX talk on this subject, “Subplotting: Rethinking the way we follow our passions.” If anyone is interested, there is a link to it on my website, arunlakra.com.

AC: What do you hope Arts Club audiences will take away from attending Heist?

AL: I hope they have FUN! That’s the most important thing. Still, while Heist is supposed to be a fun show, it’s not mindless fun. There’s plot twists and flashbacks and misdirects and betrayals and breadcrumbs and clues for the audience to follow. It’s kind of like a heist whodunnit. And if all goes according to plan, by the end of the play, the audience will be satisfied. Hopefully surprised. And who knows, maybe they’ll want to see it again, with the knowledge they acquired the first time around. The most gratifying thing about Heist is that it seems to be attracting a new cohort of folks in addition to traditional theatre-goers. In particular, young people—students, young folks in their 20s and 30s. We see multi-generation families coming to enjoy the show together. Date nights. Raucous student performances. One of the most gratifying things that has been said about Heist is that it’s kind of a “gateway drug” to the theatre. And if plays like Heist can bring a new generation into the theatre, I think that would be fantastic.

Context: Interview with the Playwright (Cont'd)

AC: What project, or projects, are you working on now? And what's up next?

AL: Without giving too much away, when you get to the end of Heist, you will see that there is a springboard to a sequel. And I'm trying to crack that as we speak! I'm also working on a few other projects...a hockey-themed thriller called Deadline Day, which takes place at the home of an NHL General Manager on trade deadline day, and which I'm hoping will have its world premiere next season; Consequence, a companion piece to my first play, Sequence - a science thriller - which is also on track for its upcoming world premiere. And tangentially, I also give a presentation to medical students across North America called "Playing Doctor: Moments, Mistakes, and Lessons Learned from a Life in Medicine and the Arts."

Context: Heist as a Genre

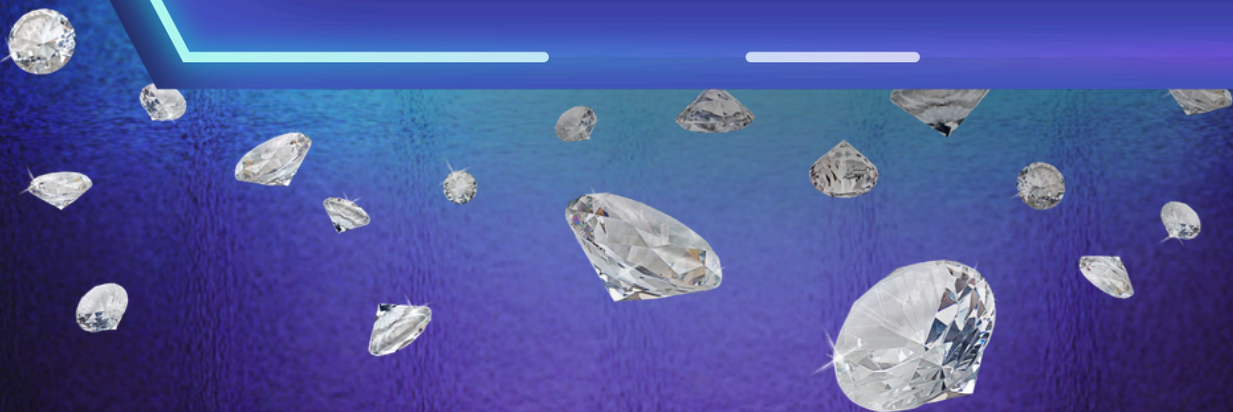
In the crime genre (films and fiction), the 'heist' or 'caper' story is a specific subgenre focused on the process of the crime. While there are no set rules for a caper film, there are common themes that most heist media will include. This involves...

- The assembly of the team/crew
- Planning of the robbery
- Execution of the robbery
- Some sort of subsequent unravelling
- The following of the criminal's narrative, leading the audience to find some sort of sympathy for the so called "bad guys"

Many filmmakers have taken these conventions and reinvented them to support their storytelling. Other troupes include a team taking on one last job or a crew trying to figure out after a failed job who betrayed them. The trend of the failure of heists began during the time of the Hayes Code (otherwise known as the Motion Picture Production Code), which was a self-imposed set of rules and standards that dictated the stories and morals portrayed on TV.

"Sympathy for criminals" is under the section titled, "Special care [must] be exercised in the manner in which the following subjects are treated, to the end that vulgarity and suggestiveness may be eliminated and that good taste may be emphasized".

June 29, 1927 (The Hays Code)



Pre-Show Discussion Questions

**All questions can be used/adapted for any course; however, they are separated by class for your convenience.*

General:

- This original play is written by Canadian playwright, Arun Lakra. Why do you think it is important to showcase Canadian art? What is some other Canadian theatre or TV/film you can think of? (Come From Away, Off Campus, The Next Step, etc.)
- Have you seen any heist films/media before? (e.g. Oceans Eleven)
 - What makes something part of the “heist” genre? What key story beats need to happen?
- What does trust mean to you?
 - Have you ever worked with a person or team you didn’t trust? How did you navigate it?
- What does community mean to you?
 - How does loyalty play into your idea of community?

English:

- What do you know about caper stories and/or crime fiction?
 - Why do you think there are so many subcultures extremely interested in this genre? Why does it continue to be so popular?
- What do you know about character archetypes?
 - What kind of characters do you think would participate in a heist?
 - What causes a character to eventually break their reoccurring pattern of behaviour?

Drama/Theatre/Film:

- Heist is a tech heavy theatre show. What makes a theatrical practical stunt look effective onstage?
- What do you know about the backstage elements of theatre? (e.g projection design, sound design, set/costumes/lighting, etc.)
- While Heist is a theatre play, it’s based heavily on the films and movies of this genre. What makes acting different for film versus theatre?
 - What might be the acting challenges artists face in each medium?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

General:

- How easy did you find the crime to follow? Were you surprised by any of the twists & turns?
 - Why or why not?
- Why might the playwrights have chosen flashbacks and high tech as the devices to tell this story? Do you think the play's portrayal of trust and revenge would have the same impact if the play was a different genre?
- What other multidisciplinary media have you seen?
 - What kinds of art forms do you think naturally complement each other?
 - Are there any art forms that cause challenges/friction when combined?

English:

- Archetypes have been a prevalent structure in the crime genre. What were some archetypes you saw in the characters onstage?
 - Do you think the characters were still well-rounded and distinct? How so?
 - Can stereotypes and archetypes ever be useful? Why or why not?
- "The end changes the beginning" is a line spoken multiple times and is used to reveal Marvin's deceit at the end. What are other meanings that can be taken from this line?
 - Can you think of other stories and/or media where the ending changes the context of the entire narrative?

Drama/Theatre:

- How did the actors portray each character's personal growth/arc onstage?
 - Did you have any acting moments that have stuck out to you?
 - Did you have any technical moments, costumes, or set pieces that were memorable? Why?
- Which characters had the most status throughout the show?
 - Did they maintain their status, lose their status, or become equals? When and why?
 - How did power and status influence each character's decisions?
- How did the reveal at the end change your perception of Marvin's character?
 - What would change for you if you watched the show again with the knowledge you have now?

Post-Show Activities

Activity #1: The Unreliable Narrator & "The Cask of Amontillado"

Suggested for English 9-12 classes.

Essential Questions: How does an author or playwright create an unreliable narrator? How does this storytelling device engage the audience?

Description

Heist opens with reference to Edgar Allan Poe's famous short story, "The Cask of Amontillado". There are many connections between the 1846 story and the play, including an unreliable storyteller with a knack for complex revenge plots. In this lesson, students will learn about the storytelling device of the unreliable narrator, discuss how it is used in both *Heist* and "The Cask of Amontillado", and explore the strategy in their own writing.

Note: This lesson uses "The Cask of Amontillado" as its connected text; the short story is included at the end of this guide for your convenience. It can also be found online in a variety of formats to suit your class. This lesson can also be adapted to study an other text with an unreliable narrator.

Instructions

HOOK: In small groups, ask each student to share one statement about themselves. They may share a truth or a lie, but they must make it seem like the truth. Their group will guess if it was true or false. As a class, discuss some strategies students used both to tell and to notice the lies.

DEFINITION: In *Heist*, the playwright, Arun Lakra, uses strategies to make the audience distrust the storytellers on stage. This storytelling device is called the "unreliable narrator".

- Display or record the definition: An Unreliable Narrator is a storytelling device where the narrator's credibility is compromised, so that the audience doubts the truth of their account of events.
- Discuss: Who is an unreliable narrator in *Heist*? How do we know?

Activity #1: Cont'd

CONNECTED TEXT: *Heist* opens with reference to Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Cask of Amontillado". Students should read this story, keeping in mind the play and the Unreliable Narrator storytelling device. The short story is included at the end of this study guide.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: You may choose to display the essential questions of this lesson during discussion: How does an author or playwright create an unreliable narrator? How does this storytelling device engage the audience?

Below are some discussion prompts to help guide the conversation. These questions jump back and forth between *Heist* and "The Cask of Amontillado", but you should adjust the order to suit your class's conversation.

Discussion Prompts:

- How does Poe construct Montresor as an unreliable narrator?
- How are the characters in *Heist* constructed as unreliable?
- In "The Cask of Amontillado", how is Fortunato's vulnerability as a target highlighted throughout the story? (*Opportunity to discuss Dramatic Irony)
- Who appears to be vulnerable in *Heist*? How does this change throughout the play?
- In both "The Cask of Amontillado" and *Heist*, does the conclusion of the story create more doubt for the audience? How?
- In both "The Cask of Amontillado" and *Heist*, what do you believe to be true? Why?

EXTENSION WRITING ACTIVITY: Write a paragraph or short story using the Unreliable Narrator storytelling device. Consider how you will create distrust and doubt for your audience. Will you reveal the truth at the end?

Post-Show Activities

Activity #2: Action Tableaux

Suggested for Drama 8-12, Theatre Company 10-12, and Directing and Script Development 11-12 classes.

Essential Questions: How can a visual moment on stage effectively communicate a high-stakes action sequence?

Description

High-stakes action sequences are central to *Heist*, and must be produced with live actors, and without post-production editing and effects. While students are likely familiar with action sequences from film and tv, *Heist* brings these memorable moments to life in a new way. In this lesson, students will be inspired by exciting moments in *Heist* to review and expand their work on tableaux with new creativity.

Instructions

WARM UP: Have students walk around the room, then freeze and pose like they are a character in *Heist*. Or, try these games to warm up *Heist*-inspired movement: Wah!, Human Knot, or Ninja.

DISCUSS: Ask students to share the most exciting moments from *Heist*. What did you see on stage that made each moment impactful?



Activity #2: Cont'd

TABLEAUX: Review expectations and elements for creating a tableau. For example:

- Expectations: Tableaux are still stage pictures. The actors do not move or speak.
- Elements: Levels, Space, Gesture, Facial Expression, etc.

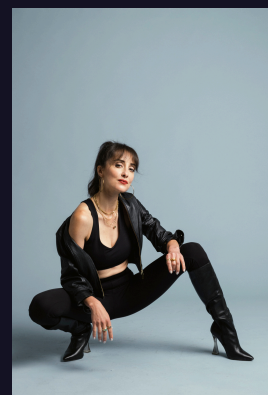
Split students into groups to create their own Heist-inspired tableaux. Groups should imagine they have created their own plot to steal a famous or valuable prize.

After each group has shared their tableau, discuss:

- How did each tableau use the elements to be effective?
- How was creative and/or unique posing used to make each tableau more exciting and impactful?

CONCLUSION: How does a show like Heist effectively build high-stakes action sequences? How can we do the same?

EXTENSION: How do you compare the action sequences in Heist to similar scenes in film and tv? Does this genre of a heist story suit the medium of theatre? Why or why not?



Resources



If you are in a crisis, distress, or having thoughts of suicide, help is available. If there is an urgent safety concern, please call 9-1-1 or go to the emergency room at your nearest hospital.

9-8-8 National Suicide Crisis Helpline

Anywhere in BC 1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789

Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line: 604-872-3311

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

KUU-US Crisis Support Line (BC Wide Indigenous Toll Free Crisis and Support Line): 1-800-588-8717

Sunshine Coast/Sea to Sky: 1-866-661-3311

Online Chat Service for Youth: www.YouthInBC.com (Noon to 1am)

Online Chat Service for Adults: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (Noon to 1am)

Hope for Wellness Help Line

Provides immediate help, including counselling and crisis intervention, to all Indigenous people across Canada 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in English, French, Cree, Ojibway, or Inuktitut.

Phone number: 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free)

Website: <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

Photo Credit

Charlie Gallant, Jennifer Tong, Tainui Kuru, Andrew McNee, Patti Allan, and Alexandra Lainfiesta; Photography by Trevor Brady for the Arts Club Theatre Company, *Heist*, 2026

Sources

BC Curriculum

Record #365". MPPDA Digital Archive. June 29, 1927 (The Hays Code)

The Cask of Amontillado

by Edgar Allan Poe

Sourced from <https://poestories.com/read/amontillado>

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely, settled --but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point -- this Fortunato -- although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmery, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially; --I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him --"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day. But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado, A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me --"

"Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi--"

"I have no engagement; --come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," he said.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi --"

"Enough," he said; "the cough's a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True --true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily -- but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"Nemo me impune lacessit."

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough --"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grave. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement --a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

"It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my roquelaire a trowel.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi --"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said--

"Ha! ha! ha! --he! he! he! --a very good joke, indeed --an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo --he! he! he! --over our wine --he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he! --he! he! he! --yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud --

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again --

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat!