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Stephen King's *Misery*
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It's More Than Live Theatre

Stephen King's *Misery* is a magnificent book. A well-written plot, fascinating characters, and thrills and chills that keep you wanting more. However, to experience King's tale of a captive author in the form of live theatre is something life changing. Watching with your own eyes how Paul Sheldon is kept helpless against his will, and Annie Wilkes forces him to do her bidding, truly begs some questions about live theatre.

It is not uncommon to hear of students going to see a production for school field trips. Although, this begs the question: Is access to live theatre important to students? Having access to live theatre is of significant importance because it shows the effects of hard work and effort, and that if you work your hardest to achieve a goal, you will succeed. Whenever a student is watching a production, he or she is watching a group of people who turned their goals into reality.

Live theatre, to a typical teenager, is not seen as particularly rewarding. Often, they think of live theatre as a forced activity, something you take for extra credit in school. However, dig a little deeper, and it's more than that. Historically, theatre played a vital part in the dissemination of ideas into society. When most people in the world were illiterate, when print media was not readily available, when information and knowledge was passed primarily through oral means, theatre was there. Nowadays, with access to the internet, with 24 hour TV channels, it may seem like theatre is obsolete in the 21st century. I believe that theatre is more important now than ever before. Sitting in the crowd watching a group of actors deliver their lines, without the ability to do a retake, without fancy special effects, there is a kind of rawness to the act that is perhaps missing from modern forms of entertainment.

For those who take part in a production, especially in high school, it is an opportunity to expand their horizons, to witness what hard work and dedication can accomplish in a short span of time. To form a family through theatre, to bond with people whom you would never have otherwise become acquainted with, much less become great friends, that is the power of theatre on an individual in society. Theatre doesn't extend to only those involved, but to those who *watch* as well. Being in the audience, and the lack of a physical barrier, allows one to experience the arts that the contemporary media simply does not let you do.

Live theatre can be an opportunity to those searching for a chance to prove themselves and showcase their talents, give hope and happiness to those who have lost it, or a time to become closer to one's community. Theatre can truly change one's perspective and have them think from a different angle. Not to mention have a good time with family and friends.

When I watched the production of *Misery* at the Arts Club, I was moved. There were fleeting moments during the production when I felt as though I was actually in the character's place. Emotions such as disgust, pity, and shock ran through me as I watched the production. I was not watching a production; I was *living* the production. *Misery* was a nostalgic journey for me, a teen who was involved in theatre backstage and onstage. I recalled many joyful moments with friends and family that took place during my time in theatre that I hope I would never forget. To see the actors pour their hearts and souls into the production and feel what I felt truly brought a smile to my face.

Live theatre is important us as individuals, and a society. It has helped us gain a better, deeper understanding of ourselves and others around us. Through its fictional portrayal, live theatre gives us a raw reality. A physical reward may not be presented to you, but an emotional one will. Live theatre is a creator of new friendships, a builder of character, changes perspectives, and much more. It can bring confidence to individuals who feel as though they are not exceptional in other aspects. Experiencing theatre is something that should be shared with anyone and everyone, no matter who they are.