

UNTIL THE FLOOD

Written & performed by **Dael Orlandersmith** | Directed by **Neel Keller**
March 13 - April 22, 2018 | **Stiemke Studio**

This Teacher's Guide is designed to be used in the classroom along with The Rep's Play Guide for *Until the Flood*. These are some suggested activities for your classroom. The Play Guide is available online at <https://www.milwaukeekeerep.com/Tickets--Events/201718-Overview/Until-the-Flood/Until-the-Flood-PlayGuide/>

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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SUGGESTED TEACHING & CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- 1.) Community
- 2.) Visual Art
- 3.) Write a Monologue

BEFORE YOU GO

READ AND DISCUSS: Dael Orlandersmith's play *Until the Flood* is the artistic product of a shared desire with Repertory Theatre of St. Louis to listen to, share, and reimagine the diverse truths of our current American experience in response to the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014.

As a class, take time to read and discuss the *Until the Flood* Play Guide (see link above). Use its content to establish the context of the play - its setting, the scope, and Orlandersmith's writing process. It is crucial to our understanding that we examine the history of racial tension and systemic divides not only in Ferguson, MO, but also in Milwaukee and in our country. This research will enhance the viewing experience and support any continued discussion around the play.

CONSIDER: Reflect on the questions below and then discuss your responses as a class. Be mindful of any similarities you hear and thoughtfully consider the different experiences you and your classmates share.

- What people and/or places do you consider your community? How is your community different than your neighborhood?
- What are the commonalities between community members?
- What are some current divisions you see in your community? What are divisions between your community and others?
- Describe a time you saw a division in your community or a division between communities identified and then resolved. How did that resolution affect those communities?
- What effect does race/ethnicity have on your community? How has race influenced your own experience within your community?



Dael Orlandersmith in *Until the Flood*. Photo by Robert Altman, courtesy of Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, 2018.

AFTER THE SHOW

REFLECT: It is important for us to create the time and space to reflect on pieces like *Until the Flood*, and to show reverence for the death of Michael Brown and so many other black men in our country. *Until the Flood* invites us to consider our role in these events and how they affect our communities.

VOICES OF UNTIL THE FLOOD

LOUISA: retired teacher who grew up near Ferguson, angry at the legacy racism has created.

RUSTY: retired policeman who patrolled Ferguson's in the '60s and '70s, supports his brothers on the police force.

HASSAN: high school student who wants to escape his situation, maybe become a playwright.

CONNIE: high school teacher who lives and teaches outside of Ferguson, lost connection with fellow teacher because of their differing views.

REUBEN: elderly barber who isn't afraid to voice his opinion to the young students who visit him.

DOUGRAY: self-made electrician and real estate manager who has his own sense of justice and teaches it to his children.

PAUL: high school student who dreams of becoming an art historian and escaping St. Louis.

EDNA: Universalist minister involved in the riots and prayed with the police officers.

- What similarities do you see between the characters in *Until the Flood* and persons in your own life?
- What assumptions did you have about characters when they were introduced? How did your perspective of those personalities change throughout the play?
- Discuss moments that invoked a strong reaction in you. If you could draw it, what would the arc of your emotions look like throughout the play? Identify and describe these moments using specific details.
- Did you find yourself conflicted about any characters? Were there moments that made you hopeful?
- How has this play called you to action? What might that action look like?

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ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: Some of the most powerful pieces of art were created in response to tragedy and crisis. Visual art is a constructive exploration of our emotions, and the metaphors within the art often communicate more than the spoken word can.

- Read the *Until the Flood* quotes below. Using these quotes, take time to journal your personal response to the play. How has *Until the Flood* challenged your current perspective on race in this country and in your community?
- Create a visual art piece that represents your personal response to *Until the Flood*. Give your work a title. Challenge yourself to think metaphorically using colors, images, shapes and materials that have a personal meaning or are representative. You may paint, sculpt, construct a collage of images, use photography, or choreograph a movement piece. Use whatever medium makes you most comfortable.
- Display the art pieces in the classroom and discuss them as a class. Art is a shared experience and is subject to interpretation. Allowing your art to be discussed aloud can be intimidating. Some one's interpretation may be inaccurate, but another's may align with your original intent. After discussing each other's work, move the pieces into a more public area of the school so that other classes can join the conversation.



Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach: <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-11/visual-essay-holocaust-memorials-and-monuments>

QUOTES

- "LEGACY is the word that comes to mind – LEGACY. The legacy of self hate. The legacy of 'keeping your place.'"
- "I'm seventeen man, Sometimes I feel seven, sometimes I feel seventy, and I want out."
- "I read about Darren Wilson and his childhood, THEIR fear. I believe they BOTH were afraid. . . BOTH lives are tragic."
- "In that moment they're not having to LOOK a certain way, they're looking/feeling relaxed, they're not being judged because we DO judge people based on Looks."
- "The fact that you're told you're not intelligent enough – that you're intellectually inferior because of RACE does a number on your head and soul."
- "There are good people and bad people and I can talk to my friends about this. I can talk to all my friends – black and white about this."
- "Gentleman and I do mean it when I call you GENTLE MEN because you were born Gentle. . ."
- "The things we are taught. The things e remember. All the things we can't stop knowing/can't stop knowing in our bones."

WRITE A MONOLOGUE: Imagination requires curiosity and creativity, but to reimagine a mind needs courage. Thinking beyond ourselves, our circumstances and our own understanding will be uncomfortable, but is a necessary step toward empathy and tolerance.

Review the *Until the Flood* character descriptions on the previous page. Choose a character from that list. Challenge yourself to choose a character with whom you didn't agree. What was most memorable about that character? What was their point of view?

Rewrite a first-person monologue for the character you've chosen. Reimagine their response to the death of Michael Brown and give them a new perspective on the incident with an alternate response. Remember you are not writing as yourself, you are writing as the chosen character using "I" statements.

Consider the following when writing in role as your character:

Relationship - What is my relationship to the incident?

Objective - Why am I telling the audience this? What do I want to achieve with this monologue?

Obstacle - What is preventing the audience from understanding my point of view?

Tactics - How can I make the audience see my side?

Stakes - What will happen if I don't speak out?

The monologue must be a minimum of 250 words. When finished, rehearse the monologue a few times. Perform the monologue for the class.

DISCUSS: Compare writing as yourself and writing in role as another character. How did your writing process change? How did your feelings or assumptions about the character change after writing their monologue? How did this activity affect your personal response to the play?

Reimagine (v):
to imagine again or anew; especially
to form a new conception of.



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Common Core State Standards

SL 1,2,4,5 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SI. 8-12 Point of View

National Arts Standards

C. 1-3 Generate and complete

R. Perceive, Analyze, Interpret

C.10-11 Relate, Analyze, and Interpret

CASEL Objectives

Social Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills

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