

FROZEN
By Bryony Lavery



Production Dates:

January 19—February 18, 2007

Stiemke Theater

Director: Kate Buckley

Researched and designed by the Education Department at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, this study guide is intended to prepare you for your visit to the theater. It contains biographical and production information that will aid your understanding and appreciation of the production. We've also included questions and activities for you to explore before and after our performance of

Frozen

If you would like to schedule a classroom workshop, or if we can help in some other way, please contact Jenny Kostreva at (414) 290-5370 or jkostreva@milwaukeeep.com

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About the Play

Frozen follows the three characters' stories over the course of twenty-five years. Most of the play is set in England. The three characters' stories are told through numerous short and interweaving episodes.

Ralph is a convicted paedophile and serial killer. Among his victims was Rhona, Nancy's daughter. Initially, Ralph seems remorseless for the horrendous crimes he has committed. He is the subject of Agnetha's study on crimes of illness.

Agnetha is a criminal psychologist studying the difference between crimes of evil and crimes of illness. She is studying Ralph to see if his crimes were committed out of irregularities in his brain functioning. She compares the brain's workings to the Arctic and sets out to support her theory that Ralph's neurological damage, a result of being abused as a child, may have caused him to not understand the moral seriousness of his crimes.

Nancy is the mother of Rhona, one of Ralph's victims who was ten when she was abducted. For many years, Nancy refuses to forgive Ralph for what he did to her daughter. She becomes active in the group, FLAME, for families of missing children that was created to help them keep the flame of hope alive. When she finds out her daughter was, in fact, one of Ralph's victims she convinces FLAME to shift its focus to identifying paedophiles. Nancy is convinced by her other daughter, Ingrid, to try to forgive Ralph to help her let go of some of her grief. Nancy decides to meet Ralph, in spite of Agnetha's strong recommendation that the meeting should not take place.

"Is it a sin or a symptom?"
-Agnetha on
Ralph's criminal
acts in *Frozen*.

Frozen was first performed on May 1, 1998 at the Birmingham Repertory Theater in England. The American premiere took place on March 18, 2004, at the East 13th Street Theater. *Frozen* won a Theatrical Management Association Best New Play award and was nominated for four Tony Awards, winning one for best featured actor.



About the Playwright

Bryony Lavery grew up in Yorkshire, England and was one of four children. Her father was the principal of the Dewsbury Nurse Training College. She began writing plays in 1976 and has since written over twenty plays. Shortly before she wrote *Frozen*, her mother and father died within two years of each other. She was able to project her grief into her writing.

In addition to a successful playwright, Lavery has produced television films, radio plays and books. She has been the artistic director of Gay Sweatshop and *Female Trouble*, a performer, and a teacher of playwriting at Birmingham University. Other plays by Lavery include; *A Wedding Story*, *Last Easter*, *Her Aching Heart*, *Two Marias*, *More Light*, *Illyria*, *Discontented Winter: House Remix*, *Red Sky* and *Smoke*. Adaptations for stage and radio include; *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, *The Magic Toyshop*, *Wuthering Heights*, *A High Wind In Jamaica* and *Lady Audly's Secret*.

After *Frozen* opened on Broadway, Lavery was sued for plagiarism by Dorothy Lewis, a US criminal psychiatrist who has studied many serial killers. Lewis argued that Lavery incorporated passages from an article profiling Lewis, written by Malcolm Gladwell in 1997. Ironically, Gladwell supported Lavery stating that "Instead of feeling that my words had been taken from me, I felt they had become part of some grander cause...Isn't that the way creativity is supposed to work? Old words in the service of a new idea." The case never went to court and Lavery has enjoyed continued success as a playwright as *Frozen* is currently one of the most produced plays in the United States.

"Until *Frozen*, I was always confident that I entertained people, but it was with that play I felt that I had been able to go somewhere deeper and darker, because at last I had the real tools that I needed as a writer."

- Bryony Lavery



An Interview with Frozen's Director Kate Buckley and Assistant Director Margo Gray



First of all, many people may be familiar with the role of a play's director; but what is the role of the Assistant Director?

Margo Gray: I once heard someone compare the Assistant Director's role to an external hard drive. The director can only hold so much information, so the AD is there to support or back up the director.

Kate Buckley: She's the "go-to-guy." Margo helps with research for the play. While directing, I can consult her about a specific moment in the play and ask, "Does this work," or "Does this look right?"

MG: I also run rehearsals for the play's understudies.

How do you prepare and approach directing a play that is so emotionally disturbing like *Frozen*?

KB: Step one: after reading the play a number of times, I do a lot of research on the issues present in the play. For *Frozen*, I did research on areas such as criminal psychology, criminal justice, neuropsychology, grieving, victims of crime and abuse, and Mothers of Murdered Sons/Daughters (M.O.M.S.). I wanted to get all the information I could on the broader topics in the play as opposed to focusing on the specific incident that happens.

Step two is working with the designers. We discuss ideas that are inspired from our research. They take those ideas and design the sets, costumes, props, and lighting. After step two, I realized I had to sort of throw all the research away. It was hurting my soul to live in this world of pain and grief and it was souring my other experiences. I needed to stop thinking about my research and the play for a bit.

As I went into step three, which was hearing the play for the first time by the actors and starting the rehearsal process, I realized I had to just direct the play and not take all of the pain and grief I was carrying with me into rehearsals. I also try not to have set ideas before I start the first rehearsal. I like the blocking in the play to come organically or naturally.

Considering that there are many very short scenes or episodes throughout the play, how have you approached staging the quick shifting scenes?

KB: The play dictates a flow that we can follow. Some of the scenes overlap and some don't. I had to find when the rhythm stops or when the flow is interrupted by the shifting of scenes. We just look for what works and what doesn't. We really pared down the script, which means we looked for places we could cut down on visual elements. We are using minimal props and costume changes. In regards to furniture, there will only be a table and two or three chairs onstage with the actors. What we actually see are the actors' pure emotions involved in storytelling. This style of play is harder to do than a realistic play; we are relying on the audience to use their imaginations a lot more and the actors to conjure up images.

MG: Their acting does the storytelling, which helps the audience create the visual images.

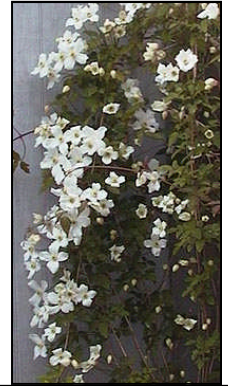
What is the difference between directing *Frozen*, which consists of numerous monologues and lecture style scenes, with directing more action based plays?

KB: This structure is different from anything I have directed so far. Again, we are relying on the acting to tell the stories. Sometimes the actors have to break the fourth wall and engage the audience on an intimate and personal level. The characters are not just talking to each other or just talking the audience. They break those types of structures by switching between them in one play.

Note: The "fourth wall" is a common theater term. Think of the stage being a box. Now think of the actors onstage as being in that box. If the walls to the sides and the back are the first three walls, then the imaginary wall between the actor and the audience is the fourth wall of the box. When an actor "breaks the fourth wall," they are speaking directly to audience members, as opposed to speaking to themselves or to another character onstage; the style that is most common in plays. A good example of actors breaking the fourth wall is "improvisational acting" where the actors may ask the audience members for suggestions.

Terms from the Play

- Aga:** In the United Kingdom, a trademark for a large iron stove used for both cooking and heating that includes two or more ovens designed to cook at different temperatures. Ralph mentions he had a big kitchen with an *Aga* as he describes his childhood to Agnetha.
- Bathosphere:** A strong spherical chamber in which a crew can be lowered by cable deep into the ocean to make underwater observations. When Agnetha phones Mary, Agnetha's former research partner's wife, Agnetha mentions that Mary sounds like she is in a *bathosphere* or something. (In American English – Bathysphere)
- Cherry Bakewell:** A British tart with almonds, cherries, sponge cake, and icing. Nancy's daughter Ingrid offers her a *Cherry Bakewell* to comfort her in the months after Rhoda's disappearance.
- Clematis montana alba*:** A vigorous vine that grows anywhere from twenty to thirty feet, and can reach forty feet. Its two-inch, white, vanilla-scented blossoms grace the vine, May through June. As Nancy is pruning her garden, she mentions her mother's over grown *clematis montana alba*, and sends Rhona over with ***secateurs***—pruning shears or a type of scissors.
- Cortex:** The extensive outer layer of gray matter of the brain, largely responsible for higher brain functions, including sensation, voluntary muscle movement, thought, reasoning, and memory. It contains four lobes: frontal, parietal, temporal, and occipital. The ***frontal lobes*** have been found to play a part in impulse control, judgment, language, memory, motor function, problem solving, sexual behavior, socialization and spontaneity. The frontal lobes assist in planning, coordinating, controlling and executing behavior. Agnetha uses Ralph to discuss the functions of the *cortex* and the *frontal lobes* in an attempt to describe the actions of the criminal brain.
- Forlorn Hope:** A difficult or nearly hopeless task. Agnetha wonders if her request for more brandy on her flight to England is a *Forlorn Hope*.
- Gorse:** A many-branched spiny shrub having bright yellow flowers, common throughout Europe, waste lands and links style golf courses. Rhona had *gorse* on her nature table that she got from the day she spent at Brecon Beacons with her mom, Nancy and sister Ingrid. Nancy discovered the *gorse*, with some sheep's wool tangled in it, when cleaning off Rhona's nature table in hopes of her return.
- Paedophile:** An adult who is sexually attracted to children. Ralph is referred to throughout the play as a *paedophile* for his crimes against children. (In American English – pedophile)
- Paracetamol:** A mild pain reliever, known in the United States as acetaminophen (used in Tylenol). Nancy gives her husband Bob some *paracetamol* for his headache which is approaching ***Gale Force***— a measure for the intensity of the wind based mainly on sea-state or wave conditions.
- Quid:** The basic unit of money in Great Britain; equal to 100 pence. It is a slang term for a British pound. Ralph notes that his Grim Reaper tattoo cost 75 *quid*.
- Sub judice*:** Latin for "under judgment," is a legal term used to indicate that a particular case or matter is still under consideration in a trial or by a judge. Nancy didn't think the mortician would take her to Rhona's coffin because the case was still *sub judice*.



Clematis montana alba



Cherry Bakewell

Adapting to the Loss of a Loved One: Three Tips on how to Cope

By Wendy Bridger

Have you ever sat down and played a piano where one of the keys wasn't working? Or made cookies and left out an ingredient? Perhaps you've started listening to a favorite CD, and just when it gets to your favorite part of your favorite song, you realize that there is a scratch in it.

In some ways, losing a loved one is similar. Here you are going easily through life, and then, BAM, they are gone and life will never be the same. That piano piece sounds different because the middle C is broken, the cookies just aren't the same, and at times, we are frustrated like we are when our CD gets scratched. Unfortunately, with the loss of a loved one, it is more difficult to fix than the piano or the batch of cookies, and your loved one was irreplaceable, unlike the CD. Short and simple, this is what grieving is: learning to cope with the loss of someone who was apart of what made us what we are. So, what do we do? How do we go on after they are gone? I have a few suggestions that might help you through.

First of all, just as each of us has different personalities, each of us grieves in a different way. There is no right or wrong way to feel or act, as long as you are not endangering yourself or others. Some of us cry. Others of us bury ourselves in work or hobbies. If the person is still living and only the relationship has changed, it is very easy for us to do all we can to change things back to how they used to be. At times, it may take a while to truly even admit that they are gone. We just might feel numb. Some of us might even feel guilty if we don't feel sad enough! So, take your feelings and actions for what they are and be patient with yourself. After all, you have just lost a part of what makes you who you are.

Also, find a way to transition your loved one into your new life¹. My father in law lost his dad last year and he hung a picture of him up in the living room to remember him. Others write goodbye letters to their loved one, giving themselves a chance to tell them things that they never got to say. Some of us keep a little box full of pictures and memories only to be taken out when we want to remember them, because remembering them all the time would be too overwhelming. I had a friend who's little brother died. She got married on his birthday as a way to include him at her wedding. Once again, it depends on you and your relationship with the one you loved. For instance, burning every picture you had of an ex-boyfriend might be the perfect way to transition.

Another thing, you usually don't ever "get over it." Your loved one is gone. If you no longer have an ingredient to make cookies, it's easy to realize that replacing it with a different ingredient would not make the cookies start tasting like they used to. To expect that you will be able to replace your loved one is also unrealistic. This reality may sound even more depressing. Frankly, I love chocolate chip cookies, and the idea of not ever having one again is quite upsetting! But in time, if I had to, I could grow to love other sweets, like banana bread, sweet potato pie, or brownies. So, even if you aren't going to get over it, in time, you will adapt to the loss and find fulfillment through other experiences and relationships.

So, be patient with yourself. Losing someone isn't easy. It turns your life upside down. Naturally, it's going to take a while to pick up the pieces and transition to life without your loved one. Remember, Beethoven composed some beautiful music after losing his hearing, and you will find happiness and fulfillment again in your life after losing your loved one.

¹Wordern, J.W. (1991). *Grief Counseling & Grief Therapy: A guidebook for the Mental Health Practitioner*. Springer Publishing

No Person is Ever Truly
Alone
by Richard Fife
No person is ever truly
alone.
Those who live no
more,
Whom we loved,
Echo still within our
thoughts,
Our words, our hearts.
And what they did
And who they were
Becomes a part of all
that we are,
Forever.

Tibetan Prayer Flags

After episode thirteen, Nancy's daughter, Ingrid leaves to travel through the East, including India and Nepal. Nancy receives packages of Tibetan Prayer Flags from Ingrid. Nancy quotes the postcards sent with the prayer flags written by Ingrid; "They are printed with spiritual blessings, They are hung up each year to signify hope transformation and the spreading of compassion. As the year progresses the wind disperses the energy of the words, which carry the power to pacify and hear everything they touch."



Prayer Flags hung outside

Here is a little more information on Tibetan Prayer Flags taken from <www.prayerflags.com> Look up any words that aren't familiar to you in a dictionary.

Prayer flags are inscribed with auspicious symbols, invocations, prayers, and mantras. Tibetan Buddhists for centuries have planted these flags outside their homes and places of spiritual practice for the wind to carry the beneficent vibrations across the countryside. Prayer flags are said to bring happiness, long life and prosperity to the flag planter and those in the vicinity.

Prayer flags may be placed either inside of a building to increase the spiritual atmosphere or outdoors where the wind can carry their prayers. Traditionally, they are fastened to eaves or sewn onto ropes to be displayed horizontally or they are fastened to wooden poles for vertical display. Sets of five color flags should be put in the order: yellow, green, red, white, blue (from left to right or from bottom to top.) The colors represent the elements: earth, water, fire, cloud, sky.



An image of the Tibetan goddess, Tara, mankind's savior and protector across the ocean of existence. She is seen as a symbol of understanding and compassion. Her love for living beings and her desire to save them from suffering on their journey to enlightenment is said to be stronger than a mother's love of her child.

World Peace Prayer Flags



Detail



"At this very moment for the people and the nations of the earth may not even the words - disease, famine, war and suffering be heard; but rather may their moral conduct, merit, wealth and prosperity increase and may supreme good fortune and well being always arise for them."

Inscribed on a World Peace Tibetan Peace Flag and translated into English. (Inscribed on the set of Flags to the right)

Let's get creative!

After researching other Tibetan prayer flags, create your own. Think of a wish for good fortune or happiness like the inscription for world peace seen above. Write your inscription on a piece of colored paper or fabric. Draw pictures of: traditional Tibetan images that you research; draw items you feel are good luck; or include pictures that make you or someone else happy. Your prayer flag would make a fantastic personalized gift for someone special!

Post Show Questions



1. Name three reasons the play is titled *Frozen*? Explain your answers.
2. Why do you think Agnetha's partner, David Nabkus, is mentioned in this play?
Why is his character not actually present in the play?
How would the play change if David Nabkus did appear onstage?
3. In the play, Agnetha discusses the difference between a "crime of evil" and a "crime of illness."
In your own words, describe what you think she means by this.
4. Why do you think Bryony Lavery included numerous references to plants and gardening to *Frozen*?
5. It can be said that "art imitates life." Art, be it theater, music, visual art, or dance is often created as a response to influential events in society. The creation of art can give a voice to people of a society who may feel they do to have the ability to make a change. It has also been said that "life imitates art." Shortly after Bryony Lavery wrote *Frozen*, a child named Sarah Payne disappeared in similar circumstances to Rhoda's in the play. While there is no actual connection between the play and the Sarah Payne case, it is quite coincidental that the events are so similar.
 - Think of a specific example that art imitates life. It can be a book you read, a painting you have seen, or a play. In what way does that piece of art resemble events or the culture in which it was created?
 - Can you think of an example where life imitates art?
 - How does art influence the way people live?
6. Think about a time when you experienced a loss, whether it be a family member, a friend, a pet, or a prized possession. What are some techniques you used to cope with your grief?

Recommended Resources

Books

- Borris-Dunchunstang, Eileen R. *Finding Forgiveness : A 7-step Program for Letting Go of Anger and Bitterness*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.
- Esherick, Joan. *Criminal Psychology and Personality Profiling*. Philadelphia: Mason Crest Publishers, 2006.
- Gerdes, Louise, ed. *Serial Killers*. San Diego, Ca: Greenhaven Press, 2000.
- Howard, Pierce J. *The Owner's Manual for the Brain : Everyday Applications from Mind-Brain Research*. Austin : Bard Press, 2006.
- Hull McCormack, Jerusha Hull. *Grieving : A Beginner's Guide*. Brewster, Mass: Paraclete Press, 2006.
- Leverich, Jean, ed. *Child Abuse*. Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson/Gale/Greenhaven Press, 2006.

On-Line

- http://adelaidereview.com.au/_archives.php
- <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1747955,00.html>
- <http://bereavement-poems-articles.com>
- <http://moms.memorial-of-love.net/>
- <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,742199,00.html>
- <http://prayerflags.com/>
- <http://theatermania.com/content/news.cfm/story/4675>



We couldn't do it without you....

Theater is often described as a collaborative art form. This means that a lot of people's talents are needed to put on a show: playwrights, directors, designers, technicians, actors – and the audience. No kidding...we couldn't do it without you.

Plays require audiences to give a whole, new life to performances through their careful attention and enthusiastic reactions. Silence, laughter and even tears can tell us a lot about how the work is reaching out to you. Through your considerate observation of sets, costumes, lighting and the work of the actors, you'll be better able to follow the story and enjoy its live presentation.

Of course, theater is very different from movies and television since you are sitting in the same room with the actors. These performers spend weeks in rehearsal practicing how to move precisely and learning how to time the lines and reactions carefully. When inappropriate movement or conversation in the audience distracts the actors, they are not able to give you the fine performance that they rehearsed for you. Your attention literally helps them to succeed.

So, we hope you will understand how important you are to this collaboration and help the actors by watching and listening carefully. Those seated around you will either learn from your example or appreciate your thoughtful attention. Enjoy the show!



Special thanks to The Kennedy Center for a model provided by their "Cue Sheet for Students"

Visiting the Rep

Milwaukee Repertory Theater is housed in The Milwaukee Center at the corner of Wells and Water Streets, downtown. Our building was formerly the home of Electric Railway & Light Company. This name is still carved on the wall outside.

You'll enter on the Wells Street side into a large, open space. Our box office will be visible on your left as you come through the front doors. The large space is the main hub for the businesses that share this building: a bank, an office tower, the Pabst Theatre and the Wyndham Hotel. If you walk into the center of this area, you'll see a staircase on your left. You will take this staircase to the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater lobby.



Inside the lobby are restrooms, water fountains and a coat check. If you decide to bring a snack, please know that food and drink are NOT permitted in the theater. However, you can leave things (at your own risk) in the coat check room, and enjoy them outside the theater during the intermission. Most plays have one intermission that is about 20 minutes long. You might also want to look for signs in the lobby which give the full "running time" of the play.

If you arrive forty-five minutes before the show, you can participate in a FREE pre-show talk called Rep In Depth. An actor from the show usually leads this discussion. This person will tell you a little about the play, the playwright, and the period in which the show is set. Often, they will also share stories about the design and rehearsal process. You can ask questions too!

For information on our education programs and our productions, visit our website at www.milwaukeerep.com