The Stranger And
THE SHADOW

Co-Presented with Rough House Theater

Learning Guide
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Dear Educators, Parents, and Artists:

Thank you for taking the time to explore and use this guide. We hope it helps bring the arts to your kids in a rich and meaningful way.

As a program of the Northwestern Settlement, we at Adventure Stage Chicago strive to carry out the Settlement's larger mission: to serve our neighbors and to disrupt generational poverty. In service to this larger mission, *The Stranger and the Shadow* is the second play in our season focused on the concept of hunger.

In this play, we see the concept of physical hunger become twisted and distorted as characters eat not for pleasure, but as cogs in a machine. Additionally, we see our young protagonist, Wren, grappling with hunger in a more metaphorical sense: a hunger for justice, for beauty, for human connection.

*The Stranger and the Shadow* is a work of science fiction, exploring real social issues through a lense of a dystopian fantasy world. Over the past decade or so, we seem to have seen a resurgence in popularity of these types of stories, especially among young people. I think it is no coincidence that, in a world where systemic injustices are increasingly visible, young people would look to fantasy stories as a way to better understand and grapple with their own world. Indeed, we may have these stories to thank for the incredible leadership we’re seeing in the news from young people as they tackle social issues today.

As always, we at ASC seek to provide a path for dialogue between children and adults, students and teachers. We encourage you to use this guide to begin those conversations, tie themes from the play into your curriculum, and follow up after the show by going deeper through activities and discussions. We would love to be included in the conversations the play generates; we encourage you and the young people in your lives to write us letters after the show.

Thank you for being a part of our ASC community—we look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Sincerely,

Anne McNamee-Keels
Education Manager

education@adventurestage.org
In 1909, in the midst of government organized violence against Jews in Russia forcing the migration of hundreds of families, Rabbi Rosenberg of Warsaw turned to an ancient hero: The Golem. Golem are mystical beings in Jewish folklore, created by spiritual leaders to defend persecuted Jewish populations throughout history. Rosenberg wrote a new rendition of the stories, and claimed they were authored by Rabbi Loew of Prague, who lived 300 years previous. His book and its fictional origin captivated his community and a larger audience across Europe and is now upheld as the most influential collection of Golem folklore.

In many ways, Golem are like any other hero. They resemble humans but have a variety of powers, including super speed, super strength, telling time by smell, sensing things others cannot. However, there are three major differences that make Golem unique: 1. They are created by humans, 2. They defend persecuted peoples, and 3. They do not live on indefinitely. These distinctions are at the core of The Stranger and The Shadow, and the themes we played with in ASC Discovery Sessions with middle school students.

Rabbi Loew, Rosenberg’s principal character, builds his Golem out of mud and imbues it with life. Over the course of several short stories, the creature saves Jewish people accused of blood libel, the false accusation that Jews kidnapped and murdered Christian children and used their blood in holiday cooking.

In most versions of the Golem story, the creature becomes large, powerful, and unstable over time, and is either deactivated peacefully by its creator, or goes on a rampage and destroys what it was originally created to protect. Often, the Golem is a metaphor for violence, fear, or war, and cannot provide an ongoing solution.

Drawing inspiration from these stories and conversations with middle school students, the creative team for The Stranger and The Shadow decided our play would represent two seemingly different versions of Golem, which we refer to in our process as Monsters. The story begins when a young girl, Wren, enters Colfax, a city surrounded with a breathing barrier that feeds on the fear of its citizens. Instead of speaking face to face, or trying to understand different ideas, people lock uncomfortable emotions in jars. Every night, their shadowy feelings are released into the atmosphere, reinforcing the monstrous entity that isolates the city. Rejected for her differences, Wren accidentally generates a creature of her own. When it begins to grow, she decides to use its power to gain acceptance and help the people still outside the barrier access the resources they need to live.

Wren’s monster closely parallels the Golem in our source material. She creates it herself, albeit accidentally as opposed to Rabbi Loew’s careful construction. Both characters face persecution, Rabbi Loew as a Jewish person and Wren as an Outsider. Furthermore, Wren’s circumstances mimic real life situations felt by many today and throughout history, though they are not as specific as Rosenberg’s focus on Jewish populations and blood libel.

The barrier monster is a darker interpretation of the Golem. Instead of protecting the oppressed, it defends the status quo of a guarded citizenry. Its creation is not a secret upheld by a concerned leader, it is an ongoing effort requiring large scale participation. Rabbi Loew’s Golem protects people who are vulnerable, the barrier monster protects a culture of fear and intolerance that hurts everyone, including the people it seemingly supports.

Ultimately in The Stranger and The Shadow, Wren discovers that her monster, though important to her journey, is made of the same substance as the barrier monster, cutting her off from Colfax. She brings the city together to reject both the fear driven monsters that distance individuals from each other. The real heroes in Golem folklore and The Stranger and The Shadow are not the creatures themselves, but the creators. The greatest powers are not superhuman, but the ability we all possess to see the humanity in one another and take action to unite as a community.

- Kay Kron, Playwright
**Synopsis of the Play**

The play begins when our young protagonist, Wren, passes through a gelatinous barrier into the strange, unfamiliar world of Colfax. Wren is apprehended and ordered to attend “educational sessions”. At the Pedagogy Center, Wren finds she doesn’t fit in and has no idea what she is supposed to do. The other students wear goggles, use strange controls, and eat white cubes. Additionally, they all do something that Wren finds incredibly unsettling—they spit or scream into jars, producing strange, living shadows.

Wren meets Merna, a woman who kindly lets her stay in a room at her house. To pay for the room, Merna sends her off to Terger and Sons, a company where Wren is ultimately given a job.

Wren starts to notice people treating her unkindly. One day after being bullied, she screams into a pillow in a fashion similar to what she’s seen other student do. The scream magically transforms Wren’s pillow and other items into a kind of monster. Wren actually finds the creature endearing, like a pet, and starts to carry it around with her. One day she finds that another student, Gio, has kept their monster as well.

Gio takes Wren to an abandoned stadium where they see the Collector, a hunched old man who carries cages of creatures to the stadium in the center of the city. He releases them in the stadium where they are absorbed into the sky, adding to the gelatinous barrier that keeps people from entering or leaving the city.

When the authorities discover that Wren and Gio are keeping their creatures, they shut down the town and try to catch them. Knowing they are under pursuit, Wren and Gio work together to try to break the spell and restore light and life to the city of Colfax.
Speculative Fiction

Speculative fiction is a type of writing that deals with the supernatural or the future, including science fiction, utopian and dystopian fiction, and fantasy. Speculative fiction takes place in imagined worlds filled with unusual or supernatural elements, from aliens to new technologies. In works of speculative fiction, elements of imaginary worlds often serve as metaphors for things that we experience in the real world.

In the play, Wren finds herself in Colfax, a town with all the elements of a dystopian society. A dystopia is a place where conditions and quality of life are unpleasant due to deprivation, oppression, or terror. Works of dystopian fiction are often created as a way of imagining what the world might become if humans continue to make bad choices out of fear or carelessness. For example, a writer concerned about the environment might write a dystopian story or play in which characters live in an imagined future where much of the earth has been destroyed by pollution or global warming.

• What are some elements of speculative fiction in the play, and what real-world ideas might they represent?
• What other works of speculative fiction are you familiar with? These can include stories, movies, tv shows, or other plays.

Puppetry

Before 1912, the term “puppeteer” did not exist in the English language. Ellen van Volkenburg, a director with the Chicago Little Theatre housed in the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue, needed a program credit for the actors she had trained to manipulate marionettes in their production of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream. Von Volkenberg coined this word at the dawn of a movement that has brought us to the rich art form of puppetry we practice today.

Chicago is unique in that it has a substantial local theater audience that not only attends performances but supports innovative and new theater. Puppetry is active in American theater today, frequently employed in musicals and dramas. Chicago is ripe to be positioned as a leader in a renaissance of the art of puppetry.

The Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival aims to cultivate the imagination through the traditions and contemporary practices of the art of puppetry, and to establish Chicago as a cultural center for puppetry by presenting work of the highest quality as well as creating access to leaders and innovators in the art form through workshops and classes.
INQUIRY QUESTIONS

At ASC, we start every performance with a question for the audience. We ask them to keep that question in mind as they watch the show. We return to the question afterwards, allowing students, teachers, and parents to share observations and draw connections to their own lives. We encourage you to prepare your students for their field trip by investigating some of the following questions:

• What makes someone an outsider?
• If fear were a monster, what would it look like?
• When is it important to speak up for what you believe in?
• Is there ever a justifiable reason to keep a secret? If so, when?
• What drives people to bully others?
• Should authority always be obeyed? If not, when should authority be questioned?

THEMES

• Bullying
• Outsider Status
• Finding one’s place in the world
• Secrets
• Societal Fears
• Standing Out vs. Fitting In
Speak Out!

Wren knew that she wanted to make a change when she stopped hiding her monster. She told the other students and the Council what she believed. Here at ASC, we believe that young people’s voices are powerful and can make a difference.

Young people, invite your family to join you in volunteering for a cause you believe in! Thehoneycombproject.org lists kid and family-friendly volunteer opportunities around the Chicagoland area.
**Arts Integrated Activity**

**MATERIALS:**
- Marker
- Chart Paper/White Board
- Paper

**COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:**
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.B
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.C
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.D

**GRADE LEVEL:** 3 - 12

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will illustrate the themes of the play by working as an ensemble to create still images with their bodies

**PROCEDURE:**
1. Choose a word or phrase from the list of themes
2. Using a whiteboard or a large piece of paper, have the students raise their hands to tell you to write down word associations that they have with that theme. (For example, if the word picked is protection, the students might say words like safe, happy, strong, barrier, etc.)
3. Break the classroom up into small groups of four or five. Assign each group a word from the list that they came up with, without letting the other groups know what each other's words are.
4. Invite each group to create a tableaux, or frozen image, of their word. Give the groups three minutes to rehearse their image.
5. Ask the other groups to point out how that group looks, pointing out the entire image and also individual students and how their bodies are arranged in comparison/contrast to the others.
6. Have the students watching guess what word from the list the group is demonstrating.
7. Allow the performing group to comment on the observations and guesses made by the other students, and have them explain their take on it.
8. Switch out the group and repeat until all groups have gone.

**POSSIBLE SIDE-COACHING**
- Try varying the levels of bodies in the tableaux: low, medium, and high.
- Remember to choose an image that you can hold for a little while.
- What can we do to ensure we keep everyone safe?

**REFLECTION**
- What skills were required to play the game successfully?
- What did you find interesting? Surprising?
- Did any of the images help to think of the word differently? Why or why not?

**POSSIBLE VARIATIONS/APPLICATIONS**
- **READING AND WRITING** and **SOCIAL STUDIES**: Have students create tableaux to represent a setting, character, or moment from a work of history or fiction.
- **STEM** and **ELA**: Have students create tableaux to represent science or ELA vocabulary words.
COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.L.5.1.B

GRADE LEVEL: 3-12

OBJECTIVE: In this activity, students are invited to get to know one another and make connections.

In the play, Wren is an outsider in a world where people keep to themselves, neglecting to connect with others. This activity invites students to build community within the classroom.

PROCEDURE:
1. Invite students to create a circle of chairs.
2. Introduce the activity: One of our goals today is to learn more about each other. In this game the person in the center will share something about themselves by saying: “The truth about me is...” and then complete the sentence with a true fact. For example, ‘the truth about me is that I like ice cream.’ If this statement is also true about you, you like ice cream too, then you must find a new space in the circle.
3. Explain that the person in the middle is also trying to get a spot so whoever does not get a spot goes to the center and the game begins again with a new truth. Play a number of rounds.
4. Encourage students to choose truths that will get more people to move. If the same person ends up in the center multiple times, they can choose a replacement who hasn't been in the center yet.

REFLECTION:
• What skills were required to play the game successfully?
• What did you find interesting? Surprising?
• How can an activity like this help us to build community/ensemble in our class?

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS/APPLICATIONS:
• READING AND WRITING and SOCIAL STUDIES: Have students move through this activity from the perspective of a specific individual from literature or history (ie, a student portraying Martin Luther King Jr. may say, “the truth about me is that I see a lot of injustice in the world.”)
• STEM: Have students move through this activity from the perspective of a number or a science vocabulary word (ie, “The truth about me is that I'm a prime number.”)
COMMON CORE & SEL CONNECTIONS:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3

GRADE LEVEL: 4-12

MATERIALS: Paper and Pencil

OBJECTIVE: Students will make inferences in order to write an imagined interview with a character from the play.

PROCEDURE:
1. Talk to students about the idea of interviews. What does a print interview look like? You may want to show example of interviews with young heroes, such as this interview with Malala Yousafzai or this interview with Parkland shooting survivor and gun control activist David Hogg (Note to teachers: for more information on talking to your students about youth activism around school shootings and gun violence, check out this great unit plan from the New York Times).
2. Invite students to imagine they are journalists writing about Wren and Gio breaking the silence of Colfax. Invite them each to write 5-6 interview questions in the voice of Wren or Gio.
3. Once students have written their questions, invite them to trade questions with a classmate. Students can then write answers to questions in the voice of Wren or Gio.
OPTIONAL EXTENSION: Invite students to pair up and perform interviews as interviewer/interviewee. Or, conversely, have students share interviews with a partner.

REFLECTION:
• How did you decide which questions to ask? How do you decide how to answer questions in character?
• Were you surprised by anyone's responses to interview questions? Did you notice any similarities between the ways people responded to questions? Differences?
• What, if any, parallels exist between Wren and Gio’s world and our world today?
Crossword Puzzle

Stranger and the Shadow
Complete the crossword below

Across
1. What the citizens vomit
2. Where the monsters are taken
3. What Wren uses to send a message to the council
4. A place where conditions are unpleasant due to deprivation, oppression, or terror
5. Gives Wren a place to stay
6. Everyone puts their monsters in these
7. He takes the monsters in the cages and puts them in bags
8. The people who make the laws in this city
9. The city Wren comes into

Down
1. Monster
2. Stadium
3. Haversack
4. Dystopia
5. Council
6. Collector
7. Merna
8. Cages
9. Colfax

Name: __________________

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Puzzle Generator
Dear Educators:

Adventure Stage creates work for young people, and we deeply value their insights and reactions. We welcome your students to engage with us by writing letters or sharing artwork, photos, or videos with the cast of the show. We always look forward to getting their feedback, and we read through every piece we receive!

You and your students have several ways to get in touch.

Students can reach out individually via social media outlets:
- **Instagram:** @adventurestagechicago
- **Twitter:** @adventure_stage
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/adventurestage

Students can hand-write or type letters to the cast and send them to:

**Email:** ascletters@gmail.com

**Mail:**
Anne McNamee-Keels
c/o Adventure Stage Chicago
1012 N. Noble St.
Chicago, IL 60642

We will respond to all student correspondence that arrives before the show closes!

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Tips for Students:

1. Make sure your first name and school is on your artwork, photo, video or letter!
2. Ask the cast at least one question—they love to talk about the show!
3. Share your experience of watching the show!
4. You and your friends can pick different actors so that every cast member gets letters, artwork or media!
5. Send in your letters, artwork, and media as soon as you can so we have time to respond!

We may post letters, artwork, videos, and photos to our Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook pages.
Divergent Trilogy by Veronica Roth  
(Grades 5-12)  
Set in a dystopian Chicago, the trilogy consists of *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent* (2012), and *Allegiant* (2013). The society divides its citizens into five different groups by their personality. Tris is assigned Doubtless but secretly transfers to Divergent and has to make sure that her secret is not found out.

The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau  
(Grades 3-7)  
Ember is an underground city troubled by aging infrastructure created by the Builders to contain everything needed for human survival. Now the storerooms are almost out of food, crops are blighted, corruption is spreading through the city, and worst of all - the lights are failing. Soon Ember could be engulfed by darkness... But when two children, Lina and Doon, discover fragments of an ancient parchment, they begin to wonder if there could be a way out of Ember.

The Roar by Emma Clayton  
(Grades 4-9)  
In an overcrowded and flooded London, where life is a brutal struggle, a boy named Mika refuses to believe his twin sister is dead. He's right; in fact she's desperately flying a stolen pod fighter homeward, escaping from imprisonment in a mysterious spaceship. But before they're reunited, a new Program is announced that will make the kids of London “Fit and Happy.” It's a virtual reality video game, based on flying pod-fighters in combat, offering fabulous prizes to kids who have nothing.
**Related TV and Film**

*Stranger Things*  
Rated TV-14

Rated PG-13

*City of Ember* (2008)  
Rated PG

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**Related Podcasts**

*The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel*  
(Grades 3-6)  
This is a scripted podcast for middle grade kids, performed by middle grade kids. It is a fun, high-quality, serial mystery that can be described as Goonies meets Spy Kids meets Stranger Things. [Listen here](#)

*Kids Like You and Me*  
This podcast provides a unique and nurturing place to hear stories from children about how it feels to be excluded, mocked, and bullied because you’re different, in color or ability - or how it feels to be accepted despite those differences. [Listen here](#)
At ASC, we are very excited to be working with Northwestern Settlement’s new Family CARES Center. In partnership with Children’s Home + Aid, the Settlement now provides counseling services for children and families in our community. The initiative will serve families in the Settlement's Early Childhood Education and Rowe Elementary School programs, providing mental health services in areas including anxiety, ADHD, depression, exposure to traumatic experiences, family violence, grief, and general wellness. Family CARES Center clinicians identified the following themes running throughout the story:

**BULLYING**

**DEFINITION** Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

**RESOURCES FOR YOUTH**

- **Teens Against Bullying** Specifically designed to help teens learn about bullying, how to appropriately respond, and how to prevent it.
- **Kids Against Bullying** Helps elementary school children learn about bullying, how to appropriately respond, and how to prevent it.
- **STOMP Out Bullying!** Information for kids and teens on anti-bullying and how to respond to all forms of bullying.
- **National Youth Advocacy Coalition** Providing guidance, leadership, and wellness for youth.

**The Trevor Project** Supports gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Also offers the Trevor Lifeline, a 24-hour, national crisis and suicide prevention hotline: **1-866-4-U-Trevor**

**RESOURCES FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS**

- **StopBullying.gov** Government resource for parents and teachers to help children affected by bullying.
- **PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center** Interactive resources for teachers, parents, and kids of all ages that educate communities and address bullying.
- **Education.com: Bullying at School and Online** Provides parents and teachers with the information and ideas they need to help a bullied child.
- **Teaching Tolerance: Bullying** Classroom materials and activities for teachers, aiming to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations.
Getting to the Theater

DIRECTIONS TO 1012 N. NOBLE ST.

FROM THE NORTH Take the Kennedy East (90/94 toward Indiana) to the Division St. exit. At the end of the exit ramp, take a right onto Division St. and follow it to Ashland Ave. Turn left onto Ashland and follow it one light to Augusta Blvd. Turn left onto Augusta toward Noble St. (next light). Turn left onto Noble St. Arrive at the theater on left.

FROM THE SOUTH Take the Dan Ryan West (90/94 toward Wisconsin). Exit at Milwaukee/Augusta. At the end of the exit ramp, continue west on Augusta Blvd. one block to Noble St. Turn right onto Noble St. Arrive at the theater on left.

FROM THE WEST Take the Eisenhower East (290 toward the Loop) to the Dan Ryan West (90/94 toward Wisconsin). Exit at Milwaukee/Augusta. At the end of the exit ramp, continue west on Augusta Blvd. one block to Noble St. Turn right onto Noble St. Arrive at the theater on left.

At the Theater

We want your trip to ASC at the Vittum Theater to go as smoothly as possible! Here’s an idea of what to expect during your field trip.

SEATING REQUESTS: Seating for our shows is prearranged based on special seating needs and the ages of students. Please call 773.969.5573 before you arrive if we need to accommodate members of your group with hearing, vision, or mobility impairments.

ARRIVAL: Please arrive between 10:00 - 10:15 a.m.; our shows begin promptly at 10:30. Buses should pull in front of the theater at 1012 N. Noble Street. Remain on your bus until a member of our staff comes to greet you and your students. We will then lead your group into our lobby for a short speech about our theater and the performance you are about to see.

PERFORMANCE: A member of our staff will show your group to their seats. Shows run approximately 60 minutes and include a post-show discussion. The entire event usually lasts around 90 minutes. We ask that all members of your group remain in the theater until the performance and discussion are over. If you must leave before the discussion, please let us know in advance.

LUNCH: Unfortunately, we do not have space available for students to eat lunch in the theater or at the Settlement.

DEPARTURE: At the conclusion of the performance and Curtain Conversation, we dismiss the audience school-by-school in order to reduce confusion. Staff will lead you down the stairs and to your buses, which will be waiting for you on Augusta Blvd. in the bus lane in front of Rowe Middle School.

BOOKING INFORMATION:
The Stranger and The Shadow
January 18, 24, 31 | February 6, 7, 8, 15
CPS: $7 | Non-CPS: $8
All performances begin at 10:30am.
Groups receive ONE FREE chaperone ticket for every TEN student tickets purchased.
Bring an **ASC TEACHING ARTIST** into your classroom!

The **Neighborhood Bridges Residency Program** is a comprehensive storytelling and creative drama program designed to help children develop their critical literacy skills and to transform them into the storytellers of their own lives.

Through theatre games, storytelling, improvisation, reading, and creative writing, students develop their ability to write, speak, and think critically. Neighborhood Bridges helps young people grapple with complicated issues, conflicts, and questions found in today’s diverse, changing society.

Participating classrooms receive:

**PARTNERSHIP** 24 residency hours over the course of 12 weeks.

**EXPOSURE** Tickets and transportation to a single ASC performance and the opportunity to present the students’ learning at the Vittum Theater.

**RESOURCES** Learning Guide, Promptbook, lesson plans, and supplies.

**WORKSHOPS**
ASC offers pre- and post-show workshops for our productions. These **Common Core** connected theater workshops use storytelling, critical literacy, and creative drama to deepen your students’ experience at our theater.

For more information regarding **NEIGHBORHOOD BRIDGES** or **WORKSHOPS**, contact:

Anne McNamee-Keels  |  Education Manager
education@adventurestage.org or 773.969.5550

**What Else is Happening at ASC?**
Fast Food Chain
By Andrew Marikis

Fast Food Chain follows a brother and sister as they wrestle with the pressure of poverty and food insecurity in Chicago. They struggle to make it on their own until one day they discover a garden in the unlikeliest of places. It's an adventure into the magical realism of African folktale, showcasing the power of community and storytelling in combating social issues.

April 24, 25, 30  |  May 2, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17
Reservations now available!
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY Evan Barr

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The Stranger
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The Shadow