



In the Shadow Beyond the Pines

Enrichment Guide

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Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Inninewak, Anishinewak, Dakota Oyate, and Denesuline, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, acknowledge the responsibilities of the Treaties, and embrace the opportunity to partner with Indigenous communities in spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

The Role of the Audience

Theatre needs its audience! We are happy to have you here. Every staff person, actor, and crew member backstage plays an important part in your experience, and you also have a role in the experience of cast, crew and the people around you.

Arrive Early: Please make sure you give yourself enough time to find your seat before the performance starts. Latecomers may not be admitted to a performance. We ask groups to arrive at least 20-30 minutes before the show.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices: Please **turn off** your cell phone/mp3 player/gaming system/camera/smart watch. Texting, surfing, and gaming during performances is very distracting for the performers and other audience members. Using cameras and recording devices during a performance is **never** allowed.

Talking During the Performance: Even when you whisper, you can be heard by performers and people around you. Unless it is a relaxed performance, disruptive patrons will be removed from the theatre. Please wait until after the performance to share your words with others.

Food/Drinks: Food and outside drinks are not allowed in the theatre. When there is an intermission, snacks and drinks may be available for purchase. There is complimentary water in the lobby.

Dress: There is no dress code at the Royal MTC, but we respectfully ask you not to wear hats in the theatre or block the view of those behind you. Please do not wear strong scents like perfume or body spray. We thank all patrons for their cooperation.

Leaving During the Performance: If you leave the theatre, you will be readmitted at the discretion of Front of House staff. If readmitted, you may be placed in an empty seat at the back of the auditorium instead of your original seat.

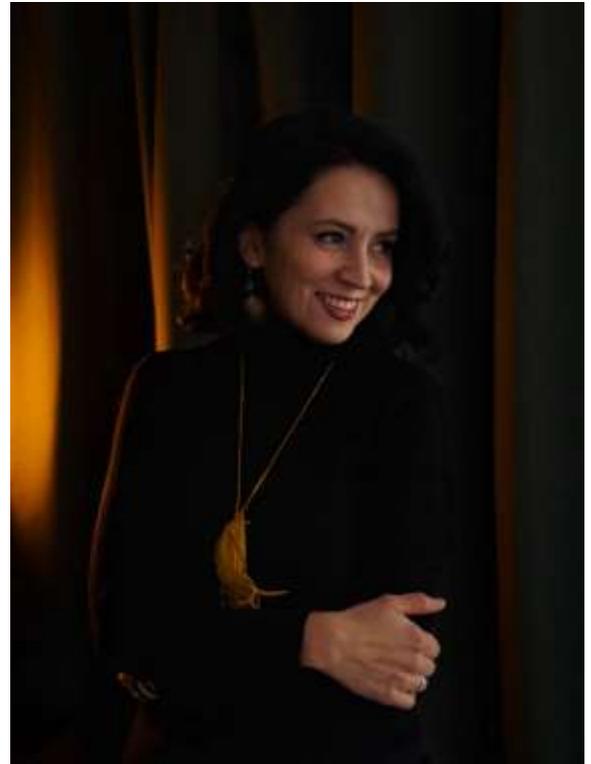
Being Asked to Leave: The theatre staff has, and will exercise, the right to ask any member of the audience to leave if that person is being inappropriate or disruptive including (but not limited to): talking, using devices that produce light or sound, and deliberately interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.).

Talkbacks: A short question and answer period with the actors takes place after student matinees, first Tuesday evening shows, and some public matinees. While watching the show, make a mental note of questions to ask the actors about the production or life in the theatre. Our artists deserve to be treated with respect! It's okay to have a negative opinion, but this is your chance to ask questions and understand the performance or process, not to criticize. If you have a concern, see the house manager after the show and they will make sure your feedback gets to the appropriate Royal MTC staff.

Enjoy the show: Laugh, cry, gasp – responding to the performance is part of the nature of theatre! As you get involved in the story, try to balance your reactions with respecting the people around you. The curtain call is part of the performance too – it gives you a chance to thank all the artists for their hard work with applause, and for them to thank you for your attention. We all appreciate when you stay at your seat and join in the applause!

About the Playwright

Rhonda Apetagon is an Indigenous playwright and artist from Northern Manitoba. A proud member of Norway House Cree Nation, she focuses on bringing authentic Indigenous stories and northern lore to the stage. Her work is characterized by atmospheric storytelling and deep explorations of community and connection. In developing the concept for *In the Shadow Beyond the Pines*, she participated in the Pimootayowin Creators Circle under the mentorship of Governor General Award-winning playwright Ian Ross. Her previous work includes the play *Maybe This Afternoon*, which was featured in the 2022 Pimootayowin staged readings. Beyond her creative practice, she has served as the Executive Director of the Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency, demonstrating a career-long commitment to supporting First Nation families and reclaiming the traditional practices that foster community healing and long-term resilience.



See the entire creative team and cast for Royal MTC's production, including their biographies, [on our website](#), where you can also download the Ovation program.

Characters and Setting

Descriptions are by the playwright. All three characters are First Nations.

Dale has a good sense of humour and is liked by most people. He is outgoing and friendly, but not very brave or concerned about others. He prefers comfort over adventure, but he does not want to miss out on things. He married young and hasn't experienced much of the world outside his community. He looks up to his friend George, who he hasn't seen much since they grew up. He had a bit of a falling out with his other friends, Shane and Warren in recent years.

Shane usually has a good sense of humour, and is liked by most people, but he is also grieving deeply for the loss of his best friend, Warren. He is brave, stubborn, and not terribly concerned about others unless they are someone of significance to him. He is fiercely loyal and has conflicting feelings towards Dale, who he thinks has not always been a good friend. He hasn't experienced much of the world outside his community, but he's not concerned with that; he works hard and plays hard and he's generally content with his life. He respects his friend George, whom he hasn't seen much since they finished high school, but he especially revered George's late grandfather.

George is rather stoic in nature – much like his grandfather, who was the most important person in his life – but he has a quick wit and dry sense of humour. He is more experienced and worldly than his friends, and speaks in a confident manner, even when discussing things that he has limited knowledge about. He has not spent much time in his community since he left as a young adult, but he values the friendship he still has with his childhood pals. He is articulate and well mannered, a result of his professional training and the influence of his grandfather.

Setting: A clearing in the forest, about 50 km by road from the men’s community, which sits on the opposite side of a large lake. It is late autumn, at dusk.

Content Overview

This section may contain spoilers.

Some strong language; mature and potentially frightening content. These include brief implied reference to suicide by overdose, brief reference to abusive parenting, reference to violence, reference to residential schools starving children, and a few gory descriptions like mention of cannibalism. A character is injured offstage and stage blood is used. [For more details, please see our online recommendations.](#)

Plot Summary

Set in modern times but steeped in a dark and haunting past, this atmospheric ghost story explores the shadows of Indigenous life and lore with a hint of humour. Amid the mysteries of the vast wilderness of northern Manitoba, three young men wrestle with the loss of their friend by reclaiming the cultural practice of lighting a sacred fire. When they realize they’ve forgotten the flashlight and their phones have died, legends and memories are all they have to guide them through the night: will it be enough?

Synopsis

This section contains spoilers

Dale, Shane, and George arrive at a clearing in the woods that they recognize as somewhere their friend, Warren, liked to be. They have had trouble finding it without a map. George instructs them in making a fire. He has been living out of the community, and is glad his friends have waited for him to honour Warren in this way. Warren’s funeral is taking place in their community, but George and Shane want to send him off with the tradition of a sacred fire. George explains that usually they last for a few days, but doing it for one night, until they know Warren is safely buried, is better than nothing. The weather has been dry, so there’s a burn ban closer to the community. Despite it being a special place to Warren, Dale finds their location “creepy.”

The fire grows brighter. The men discover that they don’t have the flashlight they thought they packed, George’s phone is dying, and Shane’s phone is dead. They pray over the fire, sharing

memories of Warren: he was tough, fearless, stubborn, as well as troubled and “really hurting inside.” They agree that they aren’t sure what happens if the fire goes out, but that it wouldn’t be good, so at least one of them will stay awake.

Dale is scared by the noises in the woods around them, but George finds it peaceful. He is “a city Indian now” and may come home when his spirit settles; after caring for his grandfather when he became ill, George applied for school and moved after his passing. He comments that the fire is hungry, and they add more wood.

Dale explains that he’s scared because of a story from his cousin Ashley that happened just down the road. About 3 years ago, in the winter around 7 pm, Ashley was driving home from the city when she saw an unusually tall man with long arms and pale hands like branches. When she passed him, he chased the car, then galloped like an animal on all fours. Ashley was petrified. When Dale and Warren checked the back of the car, it was scratched up. Ashley became very quiet and hardly ate, but after a while she began to sing in an eerie way. She is better now, but not her old self.

Shane is upset that Dale didn’t tell him earlier, but George thinks that it was an illusion and the scratches were from a tree. He says that even if it was “paranormal” that the sacred fire will keep them safe, and with faith in the fact that their people have “lived here forever, and survived” they will too. But he doesn’t like the fact that Ashley still sings like that sometimes – he wishes his grandfather was still around. George’s grandfather knew about ceremony, healing, and “darker things” that would keep him away for days or weeks.

The men remember the first time they came out to the woods with Warren, when they were about 12. Warren had guided them to “the perfect spot” so he had been there before. Warren’s mom had thrown him out that night. She once threatened him with a knife. They remember another peer, Cassy Buck, and Dale wants to check for her on Facebook – only to discover his phone has gone from 70% to 10. Shane tells a story about Cassy’s dog, Willow going missing: it was winter when they were in high school, and Cassy asked Shane to look for Willow with her. They took his dad’s snowmobile across the lake as the winds picked up. The engine died, and unable to see their way back to town, they sheltered by the snowmobile and saw shadows circling them. Then, they heard Willow bark and saw his distinctive red fur! The engine restarted and Willow lead them back to town, disappearing as soon as they got to Cassy’s house – where Cassy’s mom told them Willow had been with her all day. This was strange enough, but Shane reveals the “weirdest part:” that the circling shadows hadn’t looked like wolves, but people.

George believes the story. He reminds them that “Winter was a dangerous time for our people. When the cold came, that’s when some people changed. They say ice formed inside them... turned them into something else.” He reiterates that legends are there for guidance to keep people safe, and that they “protect us from the worst of what we’re capable of.” As he finishes

his speech, he begins to light a joint from the sacred fire. Shane is angry, but Dale thinks Warren wouldn't have minded.

Shane agrees that there's more to legends than entertainment. What happened to him and Cassy reminds him of Swift Runner, a trapper in northern Alberta. "One winter, he killed and ate his wife, then his kids, then the rest of his family. No one knew why he did it. They hung him in Fort Saskatchewan. My mooshum told me about him." Dale doesn't believe him and goes to search the story on his phone, and realizes it's died.

The Swift Runner story reminds George of something his grandfather was involved in decades ago. George's grandfather went to investigate a killing in the next community, where when he got to "house where it happened, only a couple of them were still alive. The rest of the family was gone. He said the baby was the first; that the baby was dead before anyone even knew what was happening." The party discovered a being in the bush that had gnawed off its own lips and tongue, was covered in sores, but still had superhuman strength. George's aunt asked his grandfather if the being was gone, and he replied that "'It's gone, for now' he told her 'But I couldn't burn it... I wanted to... I tried.' Then my auntie asked him if it was like the first time." George then tells them about this first time: his grandfather had seen "another one" as a young man: "That time it was someone from their own community, one of the trappers. It killed and ate thirteen people before anyone knew what was happening. But after it was caught, they didn't know what to do with it. They tried hanging it... they put it in a wooden box and buried it deep in the forest, hoping it would eventually die. But it didn't. They could hear it screaming from under the ground, its cries echoing up through the trees... circling the community and driving the people mad. Finally, when they couldn't take it anymore, they decided to dig it up and burn it." But George doesn't know what happened to the second one, that wasn't burned; Dale thinks it must still be out there. The men discuss that this happens through greed, selfishness, wastefulness – putting yourself before everyone else to the point of cannibalism. Sharing was not just good manners, but sacred. George's grandfather would say that hunger strips away humanity and drives people to desperation.

They notice that the fire is not giving much heat; George goes to fetch more wood. Shane and Dale realize that while they have tent pegs, they don't have the tent itself – and then they hear George scream.

Act 2

George has hurt his leg with the axe and is bleeding. They wrap his leg, and Dale tells a funny story about an encounter with a tree when out on the land with Warren. They think about their friend. Dale asks the others "why do you think he did it?" Shane wonders if the overdose could have been an accident; George remembers that his grandfather had called addiction "a hunger of the soul." Shane agrees that "Warren spent every minute looking for his next fix. It was like there was a darkness inside him demanding to be fed. And the more it fed... the more empty he became."

Something seems wrong with the fire; it won't burn properly. There is movement and footsteps from the forest; George does not seem to hear. Dale threatens whatever is making noise with a gun, which he doesn't have. George walks over to the axe – his limp is gone. Shane and Dale try to build up the fire while George sharpens the axe. He wants to reminisce, since he's out in the woods with his three best friends – Dale reminds him that there are only 2 people besides him. George is hungry “but I can wait.” Dale thinks that their location is the problem, not the firewood, but George says it's special and he can see why Warren liked it. He goes to get more wood.

Dale and Shane are unsettled and think about going back to the road, but they won't make it without a light, and they don't want to leave the fire that feels like it's keeping them safe. They share that Warren used to ask both of them to come out to the woods with him; Dale began to avoid him, and his guilt made him feel like he owed it to Warren to come to the woods. Shane hasn't been here since childhood either – the last time, he heard things moving and a baby crying. But since Warren died neither of them has been able to stop thinking about this place.

Dale's dead phone rings and they hear Warren's voicemail. Then Shane's, then George's. Shane and Dale wonder if there are “bad spirits just walking around with the rest of us” and try to keep the fire going. A shadow moves through the trees. Shane can hear it speaking, and goes to the forest, fighting off Dale's attempts to stop him – “he needs me. He's waiting. And he's so, so hungry.” He kicks Dale to the ground and goes. Dale is left alone at the fire as the shadow returns. The stars come out from behind the clouds, which gives Dale courage to confront the shadow. The fire goes out, leaving darkness and silence. Wolves howl.

Playwright's Notes

The stories that I grew up listening to were not fairy tales. They were dark, fantastical and deeply human. In the quiet months, when the snow blanketed the earth and the days were short, my father would share legends passed down through generations. Mostly, he talked of Wesakechak and the dramas that played out between the animals. But when the wind howled and the fire in the wood stove burned bright, he'd tell us about Wihtikow, the cannibal spirit that roamed the land, and the power of those who stood against it. Tucked into these legends were teachings about generosity, kindness and the importance of caring for one another, although it was not until I got older that I began to understand them as more than just scary stories. With an education in social work and my years of service in the field of child welfare, I also began to understand the deep pain that has kept these legends relevant. The history of First Nations in Canada is dark, and as we try to make sense of senseless cruelty, our legends offer guidance even in the darkest places.

I believe for something to be truly scary it need not be explicit. The shifting darkness at the edge of the campfire, the echo of whispers in an empty room, the feeling of being watched when you're doing laundry alone in the basement. These experiences are as intangible as they

are disturbing. And while I hope that you enjoy this foray into the forest, please remember... without light there are no shadows, only darkness.

In the Shadow beyond the Pines was an idea that found roots in MTC's Pimootayowin Creators Circle, led by late Governor General Award-Winning Playwright Ian Ross. A gifted storyteller and teacher, Ian was a mentor that truly believed in the importance of Indigenous stories. The sudden and unexpected loss of our dear friend has really driven home the finite nature of time, and the infinite nature of art; to create is to be alive, and to share what we create with others, is to be remembered. His memory and the body of creative work that he left behind, will continue to light the way for Indigenous storytellers for many years to come.

Thank you to the many dedicated and talented individuals at Royal MTC and the Tom Hendry Theater for bringing this story to life. Special thanks to Kelly Thornton and Melissa Langdon, who have been there since the beginning, Jimmy Blais, who understood the vision, Ryan Black, for being an inspiration, and to my husband Ryan, for his unwavering support.

Ekosi, God Bless.

Rhonda Apetagon

Context and Related Resources

Sacred Fire

To many Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island, the fire has been Sacred. Fire brings life and also provides light in darkness. In ceremony, fire is a foundation to which all begins, and all ends. Sacred Fire is essential to our survival.

Fire begins the day for tasks such as cooking and the like. Fire also ends the day as it is allowed to burn out for all to sleep. Sacred Fire provides warmth in the cold winter months.

Funeral services have a fire immediately lit once it has been learned that someone has left Mother Earth. Fire keepers keep the flames continually burning throughout funeral service. It is understood to be a guiding light for those on their last journey. Many say it is a portal to which our Spirit returns from where one came to be here on Mother Earth. Most services are usually held four days after the Spirit has left the body. Fire is allowed to burn to conclusion on the last day once services have been completed. - Jhaik Windy Hair, 2026

A Supernatural Taboo

There is a being in this play, known among the Algonquian language family of Indigenous peoples, whose name is not spoken aloud in the script – nor in the rehearsal hall, where the MTC cast and creative team referred to it as “W.” In her playwright’s notes, Apetagon refers to the Wihtikow; the [Plains Cree Dictionary offers this definition](#). Ben Freeland says that “while some ancient stories portray them as giants or monsters, others speak of ordinary human beings transformed by a spiritual sickness, who then become dangerous to others in terrible

ways” and this concept is even the subject of a book on Indigenous ways of knowing in the legal system, as a metaphor for human wrongdoing.

These stories are not shared for entertainment, “but to reinforce the communal values that allow the communities in which this practice occurs to live well with one another and within their environments” (Smith). Dr Jack D. Forbes, an Indigenous American scholar, used these stories as a way to examine colonialist actions and thinking that were imposed on Indigenous peoples of the Americas, and societies everywhere. In 1978, he wrote: “a Cree term...which refers to a cannibal or, more specifically, to an evil person or spirit who terrorizes other creatures by means of terrible evil acts, including cannibalism... I have come to the conclusion that imperialism and exploitation are forms of cannibalism and, in fact, are precisely those forms of cannibalism which are most diabolical or evil... It should be understood that [‘Ws’] do not eat other humans only in a symbolic sense. The deaths of tens of millions of Jews, Slavs, etc., at the hands of the Nazis, the deaths of tens of millions of Black [people] in slavery days, the deaths of up to 30 million or more Indians in the 1500s, the terribly short life spans of Mexican Indian farm workers in the US, and of Native Americans generally today, the high death rates in the early industrial centers among factory workers, and so on, all clearly attest to the fact that *the wealthy and exploitative literally consume the lives of those that they exploit*. That, I would affirm, is truly and literally cannibalism, and it is cannibalism accompanied by no spiritually meaningful ceremony or ritual.”

Today, these stories and the being at their centre are also a source of cultural appropriation, appearing in various media: video games, horror movies, fiction... It is important to know where these elements come from and their significance, both in the cultures from which they emerge and the things they stand for.

Related Resource Links: Read more in [the article that inspired this section, from Facing History & Ourselves](#) or a more academic view in [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#). Watch a [documentary using the lens of this spirit to examine food insecurity](#) in communities (55 min) or an [episode of Red Earth Uncovered on Apple TV](#), a APTN’s youth documentary series (27 min). The [Historical Natives podcast](#) has an episode that includes a short story (26 min).

Oral Histories and Storytelling

Oral histories are a primary source that convey knowledge of Indigenous ways of life, teachings, and stories. One of the oldest ways of retelling historical events, they have been a vital part of Indigenous cultures for thousands of years. Within colonialism and imperialism, there has been a belief that the written word is more trustworthy, reliable, or “correct” which threatened traditional ways of passing down knowledge. Residential schools and other policies of forced assimilation and repression made transmitting oral traditions and customs illegal and impossible in some cases, with lasting consequences. Within and outside of Indigenous communities, using and preserving oral histories is a way to decolonize studying the history of Canada.

Glossary and Mentions

Mooshum – grandfather.

Trap line – a line or series of traps for food or fur; the route along which they're set.

Legend – a story coming from the past; especially one regarded as historical, though it may not necessarily be verifiable.

Paranormal – not scientifically explainable; supernatural (appears to transcend the laws of nature)

Pheromones – a chemical substance that is usually produced by an animal, and stimulates behavioral responses from other individuals – Dale comments on his unique pheromones.

Sacred – highly valued and important, entitled to reverence and respect; of or related to a religion or spirituality.

Explore More: Recommended Library Reading List

Explore More Local Ghost Stories

Haunted Manitoba: ghost stories from the prairies

Immerse yourself in eerie stories of the paranormal in this book of unearthly encounters.

Beneath its unassuming surface, Manitoba is rich with spooky tales of the supernatural, and this collection proves it with stories drawn from every corner of the province.

133.1097127 KOMUS 2019

Campfire stories: from coast to coast

Take a cross-country trip through over 40 stories filled with sinister spirits, urban myths, haunted houses, ghostly shipwrecks, and other unexplained phenomena. Fact and legend come together with scary results, including one ancient spirit that haunts a Cape Breton lake and a Manitoba hitchhiker that meets a UFO. Get ready to scare yourself silly around your next campfire. 398.209712 SMITH 2020

Campfire stories of Western Canada

Gather around the fire once again with this spooky collection of family-friendly campfire stories. Over thirty creepy stories await, combining truth and local legends from across Western Canada. 398.209712 SMI 2016

Explore More Indigenous Horror Anthologies

Zegaaajimo : an Indigenous horror anthology

This collection of horror stories brings together eleven indigenous authors including David A. Robertson and Waubgeshig Rice to tell chilling tales of the supernatural and the monstrous. FICTION ZEGAAJIMO

Midnight Storm Moonless Sky : Indigenous horror stories

In his debut collection of short stories Alexander Soop leads us through hauntings on the Highway of Tears, to gatherings of ghosts, to experiences of racism. Soop allows readers to

experience the social anxiety of Indigenous life woven into speculative fiction. Dip into the unlit pool of dark fantasy, paranormal enchantment, and monstrous secrets. FICTION SOOP

Never Whistle at Night: an Indigenous Dark Fiction Anthology

Named after a belief found across Indigenous cultures that whistling at night can cause evil spirits to appear, this unsettling collection of stories invites you to confront ghosts, curses, hauntings, and chilling acts of revenge.

FICTION NEVER

Explore More Horror Novels

The Only Good Indians

Blend horror, thriller, and social commentary with this Bram Stoker Award winner about four members of the Blackfeet Nation who, after wronging a spirit during an elk hunt, find themselves being followed by an entity bent on revenge. A novel exploring tradition, guilt, cultural identity, and vengeance through folklore and modern life.

FICTION JONES

Empire of Wild

Searching for her missing husband, Joan, a Métis woman, finds him after 11 months acting as a preacher in a tent revival meeting in a Walmart parking with no memory of their life together. The legend of the Rougarou, a werewolf-like creature, looms over the story, as Joan begins to suspect her husband is under its control. A tight literary thriller.

FICTION DIMALINE



There are 1.4 million books, movies, audiobooks, eBooks and more at the Winnipeg Public Library, and all you need to borrow them is your library card. There are 20 locations throughout the city and there's an online catalogue for requesting items for pick-up at your library of convenience. An e-Library has thousands of eBooks, eAudiobooks and more! All free with your card.

Visit us at Winnipeg.ca/library

Discussion and Writing Prompts

Pre-Show

- Do you enjoy scary stories? Why or why not?
- Have you ever seen a theatre piece that deals with the supernatural, or could be classified as horror?
- What are some rituals or traditions you have participated in or know of to memorialize or celebrate someone who has passed?
- Have you ever encountered the supernatural? What are your feelings about those who say they have?
- The three friends in this play have different experiences of time out on the land, and in their home community – some have stayed, some have left; some thrive in the outdoors, some choose not to engage with it. How would you describe your relationship with the land and the community where you were born or grew up?

Post-Show

- Jhaik Windy Hair gives some insight into the tradition of a sacred fire in this guide. Beyond the cultural significance, does the fire symbolize anything else to you when watching this play?
- During the writing process, there was some back and forth about whether the production should have an intermission break. Why do you think that the playwright and director ultimately opted to put this break in?
- Do any of the characters remind you of yourself, or anyone in your own life? How so?
- How were production elements used to support the mood and atmosphere in this story? Think about the set, lighting, projection, and sound. Is there anything found especially impactful, or that you wish had been done differently?
- Apetagon chose to write a play, not a book or a screenplay for TV or film. Why do you think that this story is powerful as a play in particular?

Suggested Classroom Activities

- This [CBC article provides examples of scary stories in Indigenous cultures that hold wisdom](#) and lessons.
 - Discuss as a class or in small groups: what stories from any culture do you know of that offer a lesson?
 - Research different figures and legends, using sources from the culture in question, and present your findings to the class in a poster or slide show.
 - Discuss what mood or atmosphere these stories convey – are any reassuring? Scary? Etcetera. Why do you think that is?
 - How does the geography of the origin of the story connect to the teaching conveyed?
 - Are there cross-cultural connections or similarities between the wisdom or teachings that the chosen stories offer?

- Ojibwe scholar Dr. Brady Santi has developed this [guide for teachers](#) who would like to teach students about her community's belief systems with an emphasis on the supernatural being from this play, as it appears in popular films.
- Have students write a review of the play as though they are a reporter writing for a newspaper. Here are some guidelines:
 - Think about your initial reaction to the play and explore why or what specific moments have led to you feeling that way. You can also explore the purpose of the play and the effectiveness of the production for the audience – how did others around you react? Was that the same or different than your reactions?
 - Your review should have an introduction, body and conclusion that consider the following:
 - The introduction should include information such as the title, actor, director and writer.
 - The body should summarize the plot, give the setting, and comment on the characters and content.
 - The conclusion should clearly state whether you liked or disliked the play and who you would recommend to see it or not see it.
 - Finally, edit and revise your writing prior to submitting your work. You can also do this with a partner.
- Posters are used by theatre companies to spread the word about the show to a potential audience. Visually represent this play in a way that makes people want to see it. Think about what target audience you will choose – even if this play wasn't your favourite, who would enjoy it instead, and how could you entice them? Is there a particular character, event, theme, or message that you want to emphasize? How can you use colours, shape, and images to give the impression you are going for? Make sure to include the title of the play in your poster.
- Drama class – suspenseful soundscape (adapted from TheatreFolk): This exercise is all about creating an entire story and atmosphere using only sound. It's a fantastic ensemble builder that forces students to listen intently to one another.
 - **The Setup:** Divide the class into two halves. One half are the Listeners, who will sit or lie down with their eyes closed. The other half are the Makers.
 - **The Task:** Give the Makers a simple scenario, such as these examples from the play, or other ideas of your own:
 - Driving down a dark road, when you see a being ahead
 - Crossing the ice during a winter storm, and shadows circle you
 - Out in the woods, you feel a presence.

The Makers then have 2–3 minutes to create a soundscape that tells that story. They can only use their voices, bodies, and objects in the room. No words allowed! They must create the environment (creaking doors, wind, rustling

- leaves) and the emotional journey (rising tension, a jump scare, a moment of quiet fear).
- **The Payoff:** Swap groups. Afterwards, discuss what the Listeners "saw" in their minds. What sounds were most effective at building suspense and telling the story?
- Drama class – creature in the dark (adapted from TheatreFolk): This improv exercise focuses on reacting authentically to an unseen terror. It's less about jokes and more about genuine, in-the-moment responses.
 - **The Setup:** One student is chosen to be the Explorer.
 - **The Task:** The rest of the class becomes a single Creature. Their goal is to surround and create a world for the Explorer based solely on feeling and sound.
 - The Explorer should step out of the classroom so the rest of the class can discuss and decide upon three sounds they will make that define their creature. Who will make the sounds? Will it be in unison (a soft hiss, a low growl, the sound of a nail scraping the floor)? They can also discuss how they're going to surround the Explorer without touching them.
 - The Explorer will then return to the classroom and stand in the center of a cleared space. The Explorer's eyes must be closed for the entire exercise.
 - The group will move in and surround the Explorer without touching them. The Creature is investigating the Explorer.
 - On your signal, the Creature will make their three sounds. Have pauses in between the sounds. The Explorer must react, in character, to the unseen presence they can only hear and feel around them.
 - **The Payoff:** This is a powerful exercise in building and releasing tension. Debrief with the Explorer about what they felt. What sounds were the most unnerving? How did their imagination fill in the blanks?
 - You could also assign students as observers – did they see any reactions in the Explorer's voice or body that they also saw from the actors in the play?
 - For many Indigenous cultures, **oral histories** are the way that events and teachings are passed down.
 - The Smithsonian has [a lesson plan for grades 8-12 on using and creating oral histories](#) – part of a larger unit on community.
 - Facing History and Ourselves offers a [lesson plan for grades 6-12 connecting the past to the present via oral history](#), which involves creating an [identity chart](#) for the narrator.
 - Here are some sources for stories and histories:
 - Wild Spirit has an [open access curriculum and compilation of story sources](#)
 - [Louis Bird shares stories of the Omushkegowak](#) or "Swampy Cree" people of the Hudson and James Bay Lowlands of northern Manitoba and Ontario

- [Woodland Cree stories and legends](#), including storytelling protocols
- Frog Lake Library preserves voices of elders in a [Cree oral history project](#)
- There are stories and teachings from elders [available on video from Ottawa's Wabano Centre](#)
- Royal Saskatchewan Museum has a [video series of Indigenous Storytelling](#)
- George mentions a story of their people's connection to the stars; [Legend of the Star People told by Wilfred Buck](#) from Opaskwayak Cree Nation is available on CBC
- The [Métis Oral History Project](#) is available from the Louis Riel Institute
- [The Find Your Voice Podcast](#) from the Oral History Centre features stories from new Canadians.
-

Other resources you may be interested in:

[University of Winnipeg Oral History Centre](#)

[Voice of Witness Resource Library](#)

Voice of Witness offers free curriculum downloads for 2.5 weeks of lessons (which can also be taught separately) for [How We Go Home: Voices from Indigenous North America](#)

Curriculum Connections

Attending Royal MTC's production of *In the Shadow Beyond the Pines* and discussing it or participating in some of the suggested or similar activities, will fit into Manitoba curricula in the following subjects:

English Language Arts (curriculum draft only available)

- Strand A: Explore and Discover Language Literacy
 - Oral Language Communication: Listening [viewing the play, storytelling/oral history activities]
- Strand B: Comprehend and Respond to Multimodal Texts [viewing the play, discussing, storytelling/oral history activities]
 - Acquire New Information: activate prior knowledge, engage with a variety of text
 - Construct Meaning: make connections, monitor understanding, consolidate new knowledge
 - Think Critically about multimodal Text and Respond: analyze text, recognize viewpoints, respond to text
- Strand C: Compose and Create Multimodal Texts [storytelling/oral history activities, write a review]
 - Generate Ideas, and Create a Plan and Draft/Prototype
 - Enhance the Clarity and Artistry of Multimodal Texts
 - Enhance the Clarity and Artistry of Multimodal Texts
- Strand D: Communicate Ideas and Build New Understandings [discussion, all activities]
 - Share Ideas and Information: express ideas and engage audience

Drama – Senior Years Outcomes

- DR-M1 The learner develops competencies for using the tools and techniques of body, mind, and voice in a variety of contexts
- DR-M2 The learner develops competencies for using elements of drama/theatre in a variety of contexts
- DR-R1 The learner generates initial reactions to drama/theatre experiences.
- DR-R2 The learner critically observes and describes drama/theatre experiences.
- DR-R3 The learner analyzes and interprets drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R4 The learner applies new understandings about drama/theatre to construct identity and to act in transformative ways.
- DR-CR2 The learner experiments with, develops, and uses ideas for creating drama/theatre.
- DR-CR3 The learner revises, refines, and shares drama/theatre ideas and creative work.
- DR-C1 The learner develops understandings about people and practices in the dramatic arts.
- DR-C2 The learner experiences and develops an awareness of a variety of dramatic forms, styles, and traditions.
- DR-C3 The learner develops understandings about the roles, purposes, and meanings of the dramatic arts.

Visual Arts – Senior Years Outcomes

- VA-M1 The learner develops competencies for using elements and principles of artistic design in a variety of contexts.
- VA-CR1 The learner generates and uses ideas from a variety of sources for creating visual art.
- VA-CR2 The learner develops original artworks, integrating ideas and art elements, principles, and media.
- VA-C2 The learner develops understandings about the influence and impact of the visual arts.

Grade 9 Social Studies Cluster 1: Diversity and Pluralism in Canada; Cluster 4: Opportunities and Challenges

Grade 11 History

Cluster 3: Becoming a Sovereign Nation (3.3)

Cluster 5: Defining Contemporary Canada (5.1, 5.3)

Grade 12 Global Issues Areas of Inquiry: Environment; Poverty, Wealth, and Power; Indigenous Peoples; Oppression and Genocide; Health; Social Justice and Human Rights.

Grade 12 Current Topics in FNMI Studies All clusters, particularly SLO 1.1, 1.2, 3.2, 4.1

Sources

Glossary definitions from Merriam-Webster unless otherwise noted.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/law/about/news/2018/6/wetiko.html>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/ideas-week/more-monsters-deeper-significance-wendigo-stories>

<https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indigenous-oral-histories-and-primary-sources>

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/framework/english/index.html>

<https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/haunt-your-classroom-spooky-creative-drama-activities-for-halloween>

<https://americanart.si.edu/education/learning/using-and-creating-oral-histories>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/connecting-past-present-using-oral-history>

Thank you to Canada Life for generously supporting student tickets!

