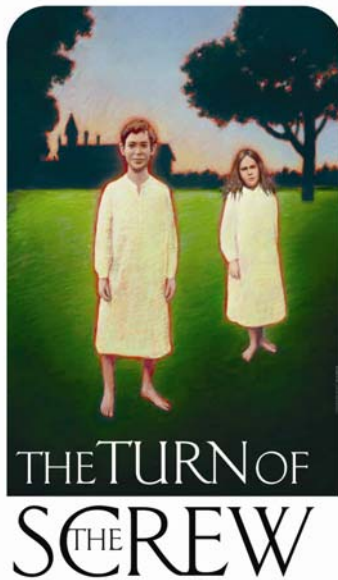


# the acting company

ALL AMERICA'S | OUR STAGE

**Margot Harley**  
Producing Artistic Director



Written by **Jeffrey Hatcher**  
Adapted from the novel by **Henry James**

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Teacher Resource Guide  
by **Paul Michael Fontana**

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# Section 1: Introduction

Thanks for taking some of your classroom time to work on *The Turn of the Screw*! Although your students will enjoy the play without preparation, the experience can be deepened by some pre- and post-performance classroom work.

The exercises in this guide are intended to help you and your students get the most out of the workshop production. Please do not feel that you need to do everything in this guide! They provide a wide variety of drama-based teaching techniques that you can use as they are presented or you can adapt for your class or for other pieces of literature. You can experiment with them and add the ones that work for you to your “bag of tricks.”

The education programs of The Acting Company are intended to mirror the mission of the company itself: to celebrate language, to deepen creative exploration, to go places where theater isn’t always available. We try to use the same skills in our outreach programs that actors use in the preparation of a role. Many of the exercises here are adaptations of rehearsal “games” and techniques.

In addition to the Teacher Resource Guides for our performances, the Education Department provides week-long artist-in-residence experiences called **Literacy Through Theater**, Actor-driven **Workshops and Master Classes**, post-performance **Question and Answer Sessions**, teacher training workshops called **Partners in Education**, and a variety of specially-designed outreach programs for high school students, college students, and adults. We also provide **The Student Workshop Series**, a series of performance-based workshops for young theatergoers meant to introduce them to Shakespeare. This year, the play in this series is *Love, Shakespeare*.

If you need more information on any of these programs, please call Melanie Trainor, Education Associate at 212-258-3111 or e-mail her at **[mtrainor@TheActingCompany.org](mailto:mtrainor@TheActingCompany.org)**. We wish to be of service to you and your students. Please contact us if there is anything we can do for you.

Enjoy the Show!

Paul Michael Fontana  
Director of Education  
**[pfontana@theactingcompany.org](mailto:pfontana@theactingcompany.org)**

## Section 2: Who was Henry James?

- **Overall Objective:** The students will know the facts of the life and career of Henry James and his work.

Three things in human life are important.  
The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.

**Henry James**

### Interviewing Henry James

#### Objective:

- The students will learn about James's life
- The students will write interview questions based on James's life.

**Henry James (1843-1916)**, American-born writer, gifted with talents in literature, psychology, and philosophy. James wrote 20 novels, 112 stories, 12 plays and a number of works of literary criticism.

Henry James was born on April 15, 1843 in New York City into a wealthy family. His father, Henry James Sr. was one of the best-known intellectuals in mid-nineteenth-century America. In his youth James traveled back and forth between Europe and America. He studied with tutors in Geneva, London, Paris, Bologna and Bonn. At the age of 19 he briefly attended Harvard Law School, but preferred reading literature to studying law. James published his first short story, "A Tragedy of Errors" two years later, and devoted himself to literature. In 1866-69 and 1871-72 he was a contributor to the *Nation* and *Atlantic Monthly*.

From an early age James had read the classics of English, American, French and German literature and Russian classics in translation. His first novel, *Watch And Ward* (1871), was written while he was traveling through Venice and Paris. After living in Paris, where he was contributor to the *New York Tribune*, James moved to England, living first in London and then in Rye, Sussex. During his first years in Europe James wrote novels that portrayed Americans living abroad. In 1905 James visited America for the first time in twenty-five years, and wrote "Jolly Corner".

Among James' masterpieces are *Daisy Miller* (1879), where the young and innocent American, Daisy finds her values in conflict with European sophistication and *The Portrait Of A Lady* (1881) where again a young American woman becomes a victim of her provincialism during her travels in Europe. *The Bostonians* (1886) was set in the era of the rising feminist movement. *What Maisie Knew* (1897) depicted a preadolescent young girl, who must chose between her parents and a motherly old governess. In *The Wings Of The Dove* (1902) a heritage destroys the love of a young couple. James considered *The Ambassadors* (1903) his most "perfect" work of art. James's most famous work is *The Turn of the Screw*. The novella was written in 1897, three years after the suicide of James's close friend Constance Fenimore Woolson, five years after his sister Alice's death, at a time when James suffered from crippling gout.

Between 1906 and 1910 James revised many of his tales and novels for the New York edition of his complete works. His autobiography, *A Small Boy And Others*, appeared in 1913 and was continued in *Notes Of A Son And Brother* (1914). The third volume, *The Middle Years*, appeared after his death in 1917. The outbreak of World War I was a shock for James and in 1915 he became a British citizen as a declaration of loyalty to his adopted country and in protest against the US's refusal to enter the war. James suffered a stroke on December 2, 1915. He died three months later in Rye on February 28, 1916.

**Exercise:** Provide each student a copy of the biography of Henry James above (a copy is found on page 25 in the Reproducibles Section at the end of this Resource Guide). After everyone has read it, discuss what aspects of his life the students think contributed to his ultimate career as an interviewer and oral historian.

Ask each student to look, again, at the biography of James. Have them individually devise a list of 8-10 interview questions that they might ask him about his life.

As an extension, have a volunteer play Henry James and, with the help of the class, answer some of the questions on the other student's lists.

**Exercise:** Look up James' grave at Find-a-Grave ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)) and examine the pictures of James and the headstone. Note the inscription concerning his American and British citizenship.

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete;  
it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken  
threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness,  
and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue.

**Henry James**

## James and Homosexuality

Henry James remained a bachelor his entire life. Though lacking in definitive evidence, some critics theorize that he was a homosexual, pointing to what they perceive as homoeroticism in relationships such as that of Peter Quint and Miles in *The Turn of the Screw*. Within the gothic genre, a genre full of sexual overtones, James is not only able to criticize Victorian attitudes about sex, he is also able to discuss homosexuality in a roundabout way.

**We suggest including these theories in your lesson with sensitivity and as deeply or lightly as you feel are appropriate for your class.**

**Discussion:** Some theorists believe that James' sexuality helped him to create the female narrator's voice in "The Turn of the Screw" and other works. Discuss with the class whether male authors can write female characters and female authors can create convincing male characters.

## Section 3: What to Look for in *The Turn of the Screw*

**Overall Objective:** The students will have an introduction to the world of *The Turn of the Screw* which was inspired by the fiction of Henry James

The only reason for the existence of a novel  
is that it does attempt to represent life.

Henry James

### Brainstorm from the Title: Henry James' Novel

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will explore the title of James's *The Turn of the Screw*

**Exercise:** Have the students brainstorm a list of the types of characters, situations, emotions, themes, locations, and images they think might be included in a play called *The Turn of the Screw*. Write the list on newsprint. Post it before seeing the play

### Discussion: Judging a Book by its Cover

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will discuss their expectations of *The Turn of the Screw* from looking at the words and images on the poster for The Acting Company production and on a copy of the novel.
- The students will discuss the choices made by publishers and executives to put the images and words on the cover.

**Exercise:** Bring in a copy of *The Turn of the Screw*. Ask the students to look at the cover of the book.

Is there a picture or image? What function do those images have? Note too the colors on the cover. What do the colors mean and why were they chosen? Do these images help sell this edition?

What words did the publishers choose to put on the cover? In what font is the title of the novel? What other words or phrases are on the cover? Do these words and phrases help sell this edition? Are you more likely to buy a book or magazine based on images or words? Are there images and words on the back cover?

Why did James choose this title? Did he feel the title would help sell copies of the book?

Do the same exercise with the poster or handbill for The Acting Company production which you can get from the theater. You can also show them the image on our website: [www. TheActingCompany.org](http://www.TheActingCompany.org)

**Post Performance follow up:** Ask the students to create a poster or book cover for *The Turn of the Screw*. They can cut images out of magazines and newspapers or draw them. What words will they include and why?

## Characters in *The Turn of the Screw*

This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!

### Objective

- The students will be familiar with the characters in the play.
- The students will make assumptions about characters based on their names.
- The students will become aware of the importance of names in *The Turn of the Screw*

**Exercise:** Write the following list for the class on the board. Discuss what each of the names makes us feel about them. Predict which characters might have the most important roles in the play.

### CHARACTERS in *The Turn of the Screw*

The NARRATOR  
The GOVERNESS  
The UNCLE  
Mrs. GROSE  
FLORA  
MILES  
Miss JESSEL  
Peter QUINT

Governess and Uncle are unnamed... Miles and Flora have no last names...

Have each student choose one of the names on the list. Pondering that character from his or her name, the students can imagine what that person's mystery might be and write it out as a speech in the voice of that character.

**NOTE:** The name "MILES" is Latin for Soldier and "FLORA" was a Roman goddess of Flowers...

"I name the defiler and his power's gone."  
The GOVERNESS, *The Turn of the Screw*, Jeffrey Hatcher

## Choral Reading

### Objective:

- The students will read excerpt from *The Turn of the Screw*
- The students will create a Poem using the excerpt as inspiration

**Exercise:** Provide each student with the passage from *The Turn of the Screw* (a sheet with both excerpts it is found on page 26 in the Reproducibles Section of this guide). Ask one student to read the entire passage aloud. "Bly" is the name of the estate where the characters live.

"The summer had turned, the summer had gone; the autumn had dropped upon Bly. The place, with its gray sky and withered garlands, its bared spaces and scattered dead leaves, was like a theater after the performance – all strewn with crumpled playbills." — from Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*

Discuss the passage's meaning, use of literary devices, words that might be interesting to say aloud (like the repeated article "the" and personification words like "turned," "gone," and "dropped" in the first three phrases), and delightfully odd words and phrases (like "withered garlands" and "strewn"). You may wish to make mention of the quote attributed to Henry James: "Summer afternoon - Summer afternoon... the two most beautiful words in the English language." Point out the combination of natural imagery and sense of being entrapped by it.

Divide the class into two groups (they can remain in their seats for this exercise) and ask volunteers to be Solo 1, 2, 3, & 4. Then read it using the soloist-group divisions as indicated. Have someone read the title as well. Remind them that they have to listen to one another and create a common value for the punctuation.

Solo 4: from Chapter 13 of *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

Solo 1: The summer  
Solo 2: had turned,  
Solo 1: the summer  
Solo 3: had gone;  
Solo 1: the autumn  
Solo 4: had dropped upon Bly.

Solo 1: The place,  
Group 1: with its gray sky  
Group 2: and withered garlands,  
Group 1: its bared spaces  
Group 2: and scattered dead leaves

Solo 1: was  
Group 1: like a theater  
Group 2: after the performance  
All: all strewn with crumpled playbills.

Using the quote as a base, the students will write a short Poem in free verse. Each Poem must contain words or phrases from the original passage. Remind them of some of the literary devices they have studied (alliteration, repetition, metaphor, etc.) that you want them to use in their Poem.

Your class might enjoy working on breaking down another passage from *The Turn of the Screw* or a different novel or short story by James into a Choral Reading.



## Section 4: The Ghost Story

**Overall Objective:** The students will know the tradition of ghost stories in the Victorian Era

**Facts:** The subject matter of *The Turn of the Screw* stems from a nineteenth-century fascination with ghosts, with which James was quite familiar. His father, Henry James, Sr., had been praised by the **Society for Psychical Research** for his "observations of spirit phenomena." Henry's brother William was president of the society from 1894 to 1896 and devoted time to the research of spiritual phenomena. James's notebooks record a visit in 1895 to his friend, Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, who told him the tale of young children corrupted by the ghosts of depraved servants, and another friend, Edward Gurney, published an account of a woman and child living in a house haunted by a wicked male servant and a female ghost dressed in black. Though *The Turn of the Screw* may be considered a "ghost story," it is a ghost story written for a world in which ghosts were considered by many to be real, dangerous, scientifically-observed phenomena.

[www.gradesaver.com](http://www.gradesaver.com)

### Finishing a Ghost Story

Objective:

- The students will read part of a ghost story
- The students will write their own endings for the story

**Exercise:** Ask the students to read the following excerpt from "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes" by James and have each of them write a paragraph or two to conclude the tale. The text below is found on page 27 in the Reproducibles section of this guide.

Since this excerpt comes from near the end of the story, you may wish to give them some information about the narrative up to this point: Rosalind is the second wife of Arthur Lloyd. Her sister Perdita, who died, was his first wife.

You may wish to prompt the students' writing with some of these questions: If this is a ghost story, where is the ghost? Isn't it often greedy characters who are punished in scary tales? What does the description of the locks on the box and the way that Lloyd keeps the "secret key" tell you about Perdita's desire to keep the clothes away from Rosalind?

*from* **THE ROMANCE OF CERTAIN OLD CLOTHES**

By Henry James

Rosalind was far less of a fine lady than her sister had been. She contrived, however, to carry it like a woman of considerable fashion. She had long since ascertained that her sister's copious wardrobe had been sequestered for the benefit of her daughter, and that it lay languishing in thankless gloom in the dusty attic. It was a revolting thought that these exquisite fabrics should await the good pleasure of a little girl who sat in a high chair and ate bread-and-milk with a wooden spoon. Rosalind had the good taste, however, to say nothing about the matter until

several months had expired. Then, at last, she timidly broached it to her husband. Was it not a pity that so much finery should be lost?—for lost it would be, what with colours fading, and moths eating it up, and the change of fashions. But Lloyd gave her so abrupt and peremptory a refusal, that she saw, for the present, her attempt was vain. Six months went by, however, and brought with them new needs and new visions. She went up and looked at the chest in which they lay imprisoned. There was a sullen defiance in its three great padlocks and its iron bands which only quickened her cupidity.

On the following day, after dinner, when he had had his wine, she boldly began it. But he cut her short with great sternness.

'Once for all, Rosalind,' said he, 'it's out of the question. I shall be gravely displeased if you return to the matter.'

'Very good,' said Rosalind. 'I am glad to learn the esteem in which I held. Gracious heaven,' she cried, 'I am a very happy woman! It's an agreeable thing to feel one's self sacrificed to a caprice!' And her eyes filled with tears of anger and disappointment.

Lloyd had a good-natured man's horror of a woman's sobs, and he attempted—I may say he condescended—to explain. 'It's not a caprice, dear, it's a promise,' he said—'an oath.'

'An oath? It's a pretty matter for oaths! and to whom, pray?'

'To Perdita,' said the young man, raising his eyes for an instant, and immediately dropping them.

'Perdita—ah, Perdita!' and Rosalind's tears broke forth. Her bosom heaved with stormy sobs—sobs which were the long-deferred sequel of the violent fit of weeping in which she had indulged herself on the night when she discovered her sister's betrothal. She had hoped, in her better moments, that she had done with her jealousy; but her temper, on that occasion, had taken an ineffaceable hold, 'And pray, what right had Perdita to dispose of my future?' she cried.

'What right had she to bind you to meanness and cruelty? Ah, I occupy a dignified place, and I make a very fine figure! I am welcome to what Perdita has left! And what has she left? I never knew till now how little! Nothing, nothing, nothing.'

This was very poor logic, but it was very good as a 'scene'. Lloyd put his arm around his wife's waist and tried to kiss her, but she shook him off with magnificent scorn. Poor fellow! he had coveted a 'devilish fine woman', and he had got one. Her scorn was intolerable. He walked away with his ears tingling—irresolute, distracted. Before him was his [desk], and in it the sacred key which with his own hand he had turned in the triple lock. He marched up and opened it, and took the key from a secret drawer, wrapped in a little packet which he had sealed with his own honest bit of glazony. *Je garde*, said the motto—'I keep.' But he was ashamed to put it back. He flung it upon the table beside his wife.

## **FYI: "Kids Love A Mystery"**

"Kids Love a Mystery" is a literacy outreach program of Mystery Writers of America. There are many ways you and your students can participate! You can employ some of their classroom-based ideas. Write to the Mystery Writers of America for free support material

Janet Riehecky  
National Director, Kids Love A Mystery<sup>SM</sup>,  
Phone: 847-695-9781

## Section 5: The Theater

**Overall Objective:** The students will have a stronger understanding of the art of the Theater.

I've always been interested in people, but I've never liked them.  
**Henry James**

### Brainstorm: Creating a Theatrical Production

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will identify careers in the theater.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will know the collaborative nature of theater.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to name some of the people who work to put a theatrical production like *The Turn of the Screw* on stage. Write their answers on the board. As the brainstorm continues, present information about the various professions. When you attend the performance, see if your students can talk to some of the professionals associated with **The Acting Company**.

#### **Producer or Producing Organization**

The producers raise the money needed to produce the play - the money allows the Creative Team to build its vision of the play. Producers oversee all aspects of the production and make sure that the play sticks to their artistic standards. They often put together the package of Script, Director, Designers, and Cast. **The Acting Company** is a not-for-profit organization, which means that money to produce the plays comes from fund-raising through grants and donations rather than from investors.

[a "Not-for-Profit" organization uses money raised from donors, foundations, grants to do its work. A "Profit Making" or "For-Profit" organization gets money from investors. The investors receive a percentage of the profit made by the work.]

#### **The Playwright**

A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. A wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays. Plays are of use to other artists - Actors, Directors, Designers - who use the script to make their own artistic statement. Henry James the author of the short stories that make up *The Turn of the Screw* and Jeffrey Hatcher is the playwright who adapted his book for The Acting Company.

#### **The Director**

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production. The director meets with the Creative Team to assemble a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, and other elements. The director oversees the actors in rehearsal, often with the help of the Stage Manager.

### **The Actor**

The Cast is the group of men, women, and children who perform the play. Many people call all the performers “actors” (instead of “actors” and “actresses”), since this is the professional term that applies to people of both genders. The members of the cast may be seasoned actors or new to the stage. They may have trained at different theater schools that teach acting in various ways. They draw on their own experiences and understanding of life to create believable characters. Actors usually audition for the parts they play. This means that they had to work on the part and read, sing, or dance for the director and producers before they were given the role. All of the actors had to memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals, including some with costumes and props, before opening night.

### **The Stage Manager**

According to Carissa Dollar’s stage management website, “there is no single definition or job description for the tasks performed by the person who accepts the title of Stage Manager for any theatrical production.” However, according to Actor’s Equity Association (AEA) *at least* the following duties: organizes all rehearsals, before or after opening; assembles and maintains the Prompt Book; works with the Director and the Creative Team to schedule rehearsal and outside calls; assumes active responsibility for the form and discipline of rehearsal and performance and is the executive instrument in the technical running of each performance; maintains the artistic intentions of the Director and Producer after opening; keeps any records necessary to inform the Producer of attendance, time, welfare benefits, etc.; and Maintains discipline.

### **The Costume Designer**

Costumes in a play must help the actors as they create the characters. The costumes should not restrict the movement of the performers. The costume designer and her staff work within the vision of the director for each character. They choose colors and styles to help the audience better understand the characters. They often do historical or sociological research to make the world of the play come to life. In this production of *The Turn of the Screw*, the costumes are from the nineteenth century.

### **The Staff and The Crew**

The theater staff - house manager, ushers, box office people, and others - assist the audience in many ways and support each performance. In a large-scale performance, backstage the Stage Managers and the running crew run the lighting equipment, move the scenery, and make sure the technical aspects of the performance are perfect. In the office, Marketing people work to make sure people know about the performances and the Development staff makes sure the producers have money to put on the play.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to see how many of the members of the cast, crew and staff they can find at The Acting Company website: [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org). Feel free to have them correspond with the Company members through e-mail links.

# Casting

This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!

## Objective:

- The students will create a cast list for a movie of *The Turn of the Screw*

**Exercise:** Ask the students, “If you were casting a movie of *The Turn of the Screw*, what stars would you get to be in it?” Would you consider making a film with only two actors, as our production has? Do you think that adds or takes away from the play? Would it add or take away from a film?

While considering the film, where would each of the segments be filmed?

# Types of Theater Buildings

This exercise is designed to be used AFTER seeing the play!

## Objective:

- The students will be able to identify different types of theaters.
- The students will weigh the benefits of each type of performance space.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will write a report about a theater.

**Discussion:** In which types of theaters have the students seen plays, concerts, or other live performances? In what type of theater was **The Acting Company’s** production of *The Turn of the Screw* performed? What might be the benefits of each type of performance space? What might be the drawbacks of each?

## Facts:

Three different types of performance space are most common in the theater:

- **The Proscenium Stage** is the most common. The play is performed within a frame. The frame is called a proscenium arch; the audience looks through this frame as if the performance was a picture.
- **The Thrust Stage** extends into the audience. Spectators sit on three sides.
- **Theater-in-the-Round** has the audience sitting all around the stage. The action takes place on a platform in the center of the room. Another name for a Theater-in-the-Round is an Arena Stage because it is similar to a sports arena.

**Exercise:** At The Acting Company website, [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org), have the students find the “Itinerary” page. Many of the theaters that the Company is playing this year are linked to this page. The students can learn about different types of theaters in different parts of the country from these links. Students can write a report about one of the theaters where The Acting Company is performing this year. Their report might include a map of the location, distance from the last theater and to the next theater, and statistics about the theater (size, seating capacity, ticket prices).

## A Two Actor *Tour-de-Force*

This exercise is designed to be used **AFTER** seeing the play!

### Objective:

- The students will discuss their reactions to the storytelling in *The Turn of the Screw*

### AUTHOR'S NOTES

Playwright Jeffrey Hatcher writes that when he set out to adapt *The Turn of the Screw* he had three specific goals in mind:

1. To create a dramatic piece that was true to the essence of Henry James' story and themes.
2. To preserve the ambiguity of the story's point-of-view.
3. To provide an opportunity for two bravura performances.

"We decided early on that the play would be performed on a bare stage without props and cast with just two actors: a woman to play the Governess, and a man to play all the others. This decision to avoid naturalistic depiction of the story killed a lot of birds with one stone. It allowed us to theatricalize the narrative and move it away from "drawing room" adaptation. It also expedited exposition — the Governess could tell her tale directly to the audience, just as her written recollection does in the novella. Most important, it could underline the notorious ambiguity of the original."

"It's not giving anything away to note that for over seventy years the major question revolving around *The Turn of the Screw* has been: are the ghosts real, or are they the products of the Governess' repressed imagination? And in a production, you eventually have to deal with a very basic stage question: HOW DO YOU DEPICT THE GHOSTS?"

"It seemed to us that if we cast flesh and blood actors to play Quint and Jessel — we were implying that The ghosts were real and not products of the Governess' imagination. If the audience could see the ghosts, the ghosts existed. But if we chose not to portray ghosts *at all*, we had instead the opportunity to refocus the story as an account being told from the Governess' point of view. We'd hear only her *reactions* to the visitations. If the audience couldn't see the ghosts, they couldn't say if they were real or imagined."

"Having decided that, other elements fell into place. The woman would play the Governess, and the man would play all the other roles: Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, the Uncle and — most important — the little- boy, Miles, who is really the Governess' active nemesis in the drama. It would be as if the Governess were relating a story to us and using the other actor, this one man, to help her depict all the characters who were verifiably real. We were also free to dispense with a realistic set — just darkness, a chair, and an abstract staircase to suggest height and danger. We were free to dispense with props — this wasn't a play about lockets and keys and tea cups. And we were able to create a play that would be a tour-de-force for two wonderfully talented actors."

“Our goal was to create something rich and theatrical out of something spare and austere, so that by the play’s end, when the Governess and her demons battle to the death, the audience could be awed not only by what we had done, but what they had imagined.”

**Exercise:** Did the students feel the play fulfilled the three goals set by the playwright?

- 1) to create a dramatic piece that was true to the essence of Henry James’ story and themes.
- 2) to preserve the ambiguity of the story’s point-of-view.
- 3) to provide an opportunity for two bravura performances.

Is what is ambiguous or unseen sometimes more disturbing or frightening than in-your-face blood, gore and violence? Think about the success of *The Blair Witch Project* and how lines between illusion and reality, the imagined and the real were intentionally blurred. Henry James used the same techniques in *The Turn of the Screw* and so did Jeffrey Hatcher in his adaptation.

Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular, so long as you have your life. If you haven't had that what have you had?

**Henry James**

## Still Images

### Objectives:

- The students will do a close reading of a passage from *The Turn of the Screw*
- The students will create tableaux based on images in the passage

**Exercise:** Provide each student with the following passage from Chapter 1 of the novella (a page with the passage can be found on page 28 in the Reproducibles section of this guide). Ask eight students to each take one of the sections of the passage.

Introduce the idea of “tableau” to the class. Tableaux are living sculptures or frozen images made up of living actors’ bodies. Tell them that the poses they adopt in their tableau should be both easy to maintain for a few minutes (avoid one foot off the floor, for example) and easy to recreate.

Begin with each reader reciting his part in order so the class can get a sense of the whole passage. Break the class into separate groups by section, so in the end you have eight groups. The readers and the others in their group should prepare a series of still images to illustrate the passage. Allow them about five minutes for this process. Give a warning to the group when they have a minute left and ask the groups to rehearse what they are going to present to the class.

Reconvene the class as a whole and place them in a circle with a playing space in the center. Ask the readers to read the passages in order while the other

members of each group present their tableaux. Follow the presentation with a discussion. You may wish to show the whole piece a second time before discussing.

from *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

1. I remember the whole beginning as a succession of flights and drops, a little seesaw of the right throbs and the wrong.
2. After rising, in town, to meet his appeal,
3. I had at all events a couple of very bad days—found myself doubtful again, felt indeed sure I had made a mistake.
4. In this state of mind I spent the long hours of bumping, swinging coach that carried me to the stopping place at which I was to be met by a vehicle from the house.
5. I found, toward the close of the June afternoon, a commodious [carriage] in waiting for me.
6. Driving at that hour, on a lovely day, through a country to which the summer sweetness seemed to offer me a friendly welcome, my fortitude mounted afresh...
7. I suppose I had expected, or had dreaded, something so melancholy...
8. What greeted me was a good surprise. I remember as a most pleasant impression the broad, clear front, its open windows and fresh curtains and the pair of maids looking out; I remember the lawn and the bright flowers and the crunch of my wheels on the gravel and the clustered treetops over which the rooks circled and cawed in the golden sky.

## Why Theater?

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play with a follow-up section AFTER the performance.**

### Objective:

- The students will explore the importance of theater.

**Exercise:** Give each student a copy of the following quote (found on page 29 of the Reproducibles section of this guide) from George Cram Cook (1873 –1924), founder of New York’s Provincetown Playhouse (artistic home of Eugene O’Neill). Ask each student to identify the two reasons Cook gives for the importance of theater, especially in time of crisis. Are they important and relevant today? Are there other reasons?

Ask the students to write a paragraph or two, based on the passage, in which they explore the importance of Theater (or the Arts in general) in our time. Have volunteers share them with the class.

After seeing the performance, ask the students which reason (as a means of escape or as a gateway for imagination) does *The Turn of the Screw* provide? Or does it do something else? Can theater provide different things for different people? Can it provide many things for an individual?



"Seven of the Provincetown Players are in the army or working for it in France and more are going. Not lightheartedly now, when civilization itself is threatened with destruction, we who remain have determined to go on next season with the work of our little theatre.

It is often said that theatrical entertainment in general is socially justified in this dark time as a means of **relaxing the strain of reality**, and thus helping to keep us sane. This may be true, but if more were not true - if we felt no deeper value in dramatic art than entertainment, we would hardly have the heart for it now. One faculty, we know, is going to be of vast importance to the half-destroyed world - indispensable for its rebuilding - the faculty of creative imagination. That spark of it, which has given this group of ours such life and meaning as we have, is not so insignificant that we should now let it die. The social justification, which we feel to be valid now for makers and players of plays, is that they shall help **keep alive in the world the light of imagination**. Without it, the wreck of the world that was cannot be cleared away and the new world shaped."

George Cram Cook, founder of New York's Provincetown Playhouse, 1918

**Discussion:** How is seeing theater different from watching TV or seeing a movie (either at home or in the theater)?

## Theater Etiquette

**This exercise is designed to be used BEFORE seeing the play!**

**Objective:**

- The students will know standard rules of behavior in the theater.

To make the theater-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct:

- ❖ Be on time for the performance.
- ❖ Eat and drink only in the theater lobby.
- ❖ Turn off all cellular phones and pagers.
- ❖ Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.

- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

## Prepare for Q & A Session

This exercise is designed to be used **BEFORE** seeing the play!

### Objective:

- The students will create questions for the post-performance Q & A session

**Exercise:** To make the post-performance Question and Answer session more beneficial to everyone, the students might create a few questions before the performance. Ask the students to think what questions they might want to ask the actors in the play? Here are some starter questions:

Are there questions about the **theater** as an art form? Does it require training? Where did the actors train? Can a person make a living in the theater? What careers are there in the theater? Are any of the students aspiring actors? Are they seeking advice?

Are there questions about **traveling** the country? Have the actors seen a lot of the United States? What is the bus like? How many hours do they spend on the bus? Does everybody get along?

What about life in **New York City**? How long have the actors lived there? And where are they from originally? (Have any of the students ever been in NYC?) How has New York City survived the September 11<sup>th</sup> Tragedy and the recent terror alerts? What is the best part of living in New York? What is the worst?

What about ***The Turn of the Screw***, the play? How has it been received in places across the country? What is the best part about working on this play? What have been its drawbacks? Is fun working on the set with all its trap doors and trick? What do the actors think the themes of the play are? How is working on an original play different from a play by Shakespeare (which is a lot of what The Acting Company does)?

**NOTE:** If there are questions that your students have after the company departs, feel free to contact the Education Department of The Acting Company, and we will get an answer for you!

It is, I think, an indisputable fact that Americans are, as Americans, the most self-conscious people in the world, and the most addicted to the belief that the other nations of the earth are in a conspiracy to under-value them.

**Henry James**

### **The opening speech of *The Turn of the Screw* by Jeffrey Hatcher**

MAN: "A ghost story — that tells the tale — of an apparition appearing to a child — always lends the tale a certain 'turn of the screw'" But if our *one* child — lends the tale one turn — what then can be said — of *two* children? The answer is, of course — *two* children give two turns."

The woman was my sister's governess. She was ten years my senior. A very. Agreeable woman; very *worthy*.

She told me the story in the garden. "The best stories," she said, "always begin in the garden, A man, a woman, a forbidden fruit; the loss of innocence, the discovery of altogether ... not."

The details: a letter, a locket, a riddle, a name. The words are her own — written in her diary in ink faded ink on the pages of seven days. This is the story she tells. It is a story of terror ... and horror ... and death. It made my very heart — *stop*.

## Section 6: What to Do After You See This Play

Please encourage your students to reflect on the play in some of the following ways. We would love to have copies of some of the writings or artwork your students create: **The Acting Company, Box 898, New York, NY 10108 or fax 212-258-3299**. We have also included in the appendix short pre- and post-performance questionnaires, and would be interested in gathering data about the play.

### Write

- Write a play or scene in response to the play.
- Improvise a scene with a partner and then write it down.
- Write a monologue for one of the characters in *The Turn of the Screw* (perhaps some words from the silent Flora).
- Write a review of our production.
- Write a theatrical adaptation of another piece of literature, perhaps a Poem.

### Draw

- Draw the world of one or more of the characters.
- Draw images from the production.
- Draw a poster for our production of *The Turn of the Screw*.
- Create a collage of images from magazines in response to the play.

## Create a Performance of Sections *Screw*

Get a few copies of James' novel *The Turn of the Screw* and distribute them to small groups of students. Have each group write a short play based on part of the story. The plays can be an adaptation of the source material, a reflection on the themes in the story, or whatever the students devise. Ask them to present their work to the other groups. Send us copies of the plays if you wish.

## Listen to or Watch the Opera

British composer wrote an opera based on *The Turn of the Screw* (Text by Myfawy Piper) which debuted September 14, 1959. There are many wonderful recordings and a 1982 video version of the Opera is widely available, check your local library. Worth listening to as another variation on the story.

## View one of the Film Versions of the Story

Try the 1999 TV version with Colin Firth (*Bridget Jones, What a Girl Wants*) as the uncle and Jodhi May (*The Last of the Mohicans*) as the Governess. There's a 1974 version with Lynn Redgrave that is more gothic. However, most people find the classic 1961 Deborah Kerr film, *The Innocents* as the best adaptation.

**The entire novel is available on-line at the Sparknotes website:**

<http://pd.sparknotes.com/lit/screw/>

# **We Want to Hear from YOU and your STUDENTS!**

## **By Mail**

The Acting Company  
PO Box 898  
New York NY 10108  
**Telephone:** 212-258-3111  
**Fax:** 212-258-3299

## **By E-Mail**

Paul Fontana, Director of Education  
Pfontana@ TheActingCompany.org  
Melanie Trainor, Education Associate  
mtrainor@ TheActingCompany.org  
Education@TheActingCompany

## **On the Internet**

[www.TheActingCompany.org](http://www.TheActingCompany.org)

## **Internships**

Please submit a letter of interest and your resume along with two references to the Intern Coordinator at the address above. You can call or check the website for more information.

## **Questionnaires and FREE Posters!**

You will find a Pre-Performance and a Post-Performance Questionnaires on pages 31 and 32 of this guide. Please have your students fill out the Pre-Performance Survey before you begin working on exercises from this guide. Ask them to fill out the Post-Performance Survey after seeing *The Turn of the Screw*.

Send them to us at the above address and we will send you a POSTER from one of The Acting Company's productions as a "Thank You."

## Section 7: The Acting Company

The Acting Company, America's only nationally-touring classical repertory theater, was founded in 1972 by current Producing Director Margot Harley and the late John Houseman with a unique mission:

- By touring smaller cities, towns and rural communities of America, the Company reaches thousands of people who have few opportunities to experience live professional theater.
- By presenting superior productions of classic and contemporary plays, the Company builds a discerning national audience for theater, helping preserve and extend our cultural heritage.
- By providing continuing opportunities for gifted and highly-trained young actors to practice their craft in a rich repertoire for diverse audiences, the Company nurtures the growth and development of generations of theater artists.
- By commissioning and premiering important new works by America's foremost playwrights, the Company fosters a theater tradition in which story-telling, language and the presence of the actor are primary.
- By making the language of the theater accessible in performance, special classes and other educational outreach activities, the Company inspires students of all ages and helps them excel in every field of study.

The Acting Company has been fulfilling this singular mission since it was formed out of the first graduating class of the Juilliard School's Drama Division in 1972. Since then, it has traveled over 500,000 miles through 48 states and nine other countries, performing a repertoire of 77 plays for more than 2 million people.

### 2003 TONY Honor for Excellence in the Theater

In the professional theater, the highest honor one can achieve is to be recognized by the American Theatre Wing with an Antoinette Perry Award, called the "Tony"®. This year, The Acting Company was presented with a special Tony Honor celebrating our 30 years touring America with classical plays and newly commissioned works. Thank you for celebrating with us!

To learn more about the Tony Awards, go to the Tony website: [www.tonys.org](http://www.tonys.org).

### Trace Our Tour

If the students want to follow the tour as it progresses across the United States, they can read the Tour Journal (on our website [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org)) and see pictures of the places we visit. You can check in with us every day, check the itinerary, and see where we are on the map.

Though there are some disagreeable things in Venice  
there is nothing so disagreeable as the visitors.

**Henry James**

# Section 8: Cast List and Information

**THE ACTING COMPANY**  
In  
**THE TURN OF THE SCREW**  
Written by **Jeffrey Hatcher**  
Adapted from **Henry James**

Scenic Design by **Narelle Sissons**  
Costume Design by **Ann Hould-Ward**  
Lighting Design by **Michael Chybowski**  
Original Music by **Michael Friedman**  
Sound Design by **Fitz Patton**  
Voice and Dialect Coach **Deborah Hecht**  
Fight Direction and Movement by **Felix Ivanov**  
Dramaturgy by **Doug Langworthy**  
Casting by **Liz Woodman, C.S.A.**

Production Manager, **Rick Berger**  
Stage Manager, **Jennifer Grutza**  
Assistant Stage Manager, **Brian Maschka**  
Staff Repertory Director, **Moritz von Stuelpnagel**

Directed by  
**Davis McCallum**

**CAST**  
*(in order of appearance)*

The Man.....Glenn Peters  
The Governess.....Aysan Celik

## Appendix: Reproducibles

For use with **Interviewing Henry James**, p. 5

Henry James was born on April 15, 1843 in New York City into a wealthy family. His father, Henry James Sr. was one of the best-known intellectuals in mid-nineteenth-century America. In his youth James traveled back and forth between Europe and America. He studied with tutors in Geneva, London, Paris, Bologna and Bonn. At the age of 19 he briefly attended Harvard Law School, but preferred reading literature to studying law. James published his first short story, "A Tragedy of Errors" two years later, and devoted himself to literature. In 1866-69 and 1871-72 he was a contributor to the *Nation* and *Atlantic Monthly*.

From an early age James had read the classics of English, American, French and German literature and Russian classics in translation. His first novel, *Watch And Ward* (1871), was written while he was traveling through Venice and Paris. After living in Paris, where he was contributor to the *New York Tribune*, James moved to England, living first in London and then in Rye, Sussex. During his first years in Europe James wrote novels that portrayed Americans living abroad. In 1905 James visited America for the first time in twenty-five years, and wrote "Jolly Corner".

Among James' masterpieces are *Daisy Miller* (1879), where the young and innocent American, Daisy finds her values in conflict with European sophistication and *The Portrait Of A Lady* (1881) where again a young American woman becomes a victim of her provincialism during her travels in Europe. *The Bostonians* (1886) was set in the era of the rising feminist movement. *What Maisie Knew* (1897) depicted a preadolescent young girl, who must choose between her parents and a motherly old governess. In *The Wings Of The Dove* (1902) a heritage destroys the love of a young couple. James considered *The Ambassadors* (1903) his most "perfect" work of art. James's most famous work is *The Turn of the Screw*. The novella was written in 1897, three years after the suicide of James's close friend Constance Fenimore Woolson, five years after his sister Alice's death, at a time when James suffered from crippling gout.

Between 1906 and 1910 James revised many of his tales and novels for the New York edition of his complete works. His autobiography, *A Small Boy And Others*, appeared in 1913 and was continued in *Notes Of A Son And Brother* (1914). The third volume, *The Middle Years*, appeared after his death in 1917. The outbreak of World War I was a shock for James and in 1915 he became a British citizen as a declaration of loyalty to his adopted country and in protest against the US's refusal to enter the war. James suffered a stroke on December 2, 1915. He died three months later in Rye on February 28, 1916.



"The summer had turned, the summer had gone; the autumn had dropped upon Bly. The place, with its gray sky and withered garlands, its bared spaces and scattered dead leaves, was like a theater after the performance – all strewn with crumpled playbills." — from Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, Chapter 13

from Chapter 13 of *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

Solo 1: The summer

Solo 2: had turned,

Solo 1: the summer

Solo 3: had gone;

Solo 1: the autumn

Solo 4: had dropped upon Bly.

Solo 1: The place,

Group 1: with its gray sky

Group 2: and withered garlands,

Group 1: its bared spaces

Group 2: and scattered dead leaves

Solo 1: was

Group 1: like a theater

Group 2: after the performance

All: all strewn with crumpled playbills.

CHARACTERS in  
*The Turn of the Screw*

The NARRATOR  
The GOVERNESS  
The UNCLE  
Mrs. GROSE  
FLORA  
MILES  
Miss JESSEL  
Peter QUINT

*from* **THE ROMANCE OF CERTAIN OLD CLOTHES**

By Henry James

Rosalind was perforce less of a fine lady than her sister had been. She contrived, however, to carry it like a woman of considerable fashion. She had long since ascertained that her sister's copious wardrobe had been sequestered for the benefit of her daughter, and that it lay languishing in thankless gloom in the dusty attic. It was a revolting thought that these exquisite fabrics should await the good pleasure of a little girl who sat in a high chair and ate bread-and-milk with a wooden spoon. Rosalind had the good taste, however, to say nothing about the matter until several months had expired. Then, at last, she timidly broached it to her husband. Was it not a pity that so much finery should be lost?—for lost it would be, what with colours fading, and moths eating it up, and the change of fashions. But Lloyd gave her so abrupt and peremptory a refusal, that she saw, for the present, her attempt was vain. Six months went by, however, and brought with them new needs and new visions. She went up and looked at the chest in which they lay imprisoned. There was a sullen defiance in its three great padlocks and its iron bands which only quickened her cupidity.

On the following day, after dinner, when he had had his wine, she boldly began it. But he cut her short with great sternness.

'Once for all, Rosalind,' said he, 'it's out of the question. I shall be gravely displeased if you return to the matter.'

'Very good,' said Rosalind. 'I am glad to learn the esteem in which I held. Gracious heaven,' she cried, 'I am a very happy woman! It's an agreeable thing to feel one's self sacrificed to a caprice!' And her eyes filled with tears of anger and disappointment.

Lloyd had a good-natured man's horror of a woman's sobs, and he attempted—I may say he condescended—to explain. 'It's not a caprice, dear, it's a promise,' he said—'an oath.'

'An oath? It's a pretty matter for oaths! and to whom, pray?'

'To Perdita,' said the young man, raising his eyes for an instant, and immediately dropping them.

'Perdita—ah, Perdita!' and Rosalind's tears broke forth. Her bosom heaved with stormy sobs—sobs which were the long-deferred sequel of the violent fit of weeping in which she had indulged herself on the night when she discovered her sister's betrothal. She had hoped, in her better moments, that she had done with her jealousy; but her temper, on that occasion, had taken an ineffaceable hold, 'And pray, what right had Perdita to dispose of my future?' she cried.

'What right had she to bind you to meanness and cruelty? Ah, I occupy a dignified place, and I make a very fine figure! I am welcome to what Perdita has left! And what has she left? I never knew till now how little! Nothing, nothing, nothing.'

This was very poor logic, but it was very good as a 'scene'. Lloyd put his arm around his wife's waist and tried to kiss her, but she shook him off with magnificent scorn. Poor fellow! he had coveted a 'devilish fine woman', and he had got one. Her scorn was intolerable. He walked away with his ears tingling—irresolute, distracted. Before him was his [desk], and in it the sacred key which with his own hand he had turned in the triple lock. He marched up and opened it, and took the key from a secret drawer, wrapped in a little packet which he had sealed with his own honest bit of glazonry. *Je garde*, said the motto—'I keep.' But he was ashamed to put it back. He flung it upon the table beside his wife.

from *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

1. I remember the whole beginning as a succession of flights and drops, a little seesaw of the right throbs and the wrong.
2. After rising, in town, to meet his appeal,
3. I had at all events a couple of very bad days—found myself doubtful again, felt indeed sure I had made a mistake.
4. In this state of mind I spent the long hours of bumping, swinging coach that carried me to the stopping place at which I was to be met by a vehicle from the house.
5. I found, toward the close of the June afternoon, a commodious [carriage] in waiting for me.
6. Driving at that hour, on a lovely day, through a country to which the summer sweetness seemed to offer me a friendly welcome, my fortitude mounted afresh...
7. I suppose I had expected, or had dreaded, something so melancholy...
8. What greeted me was a good surprise. I remember as a most pleasant impression the broad, clear front, its open windows and fresh curtains and the pair of maids looking out; I remember the lawn and the bright flowers and the crunch of my wheels on the gravel and the clustered treetops over which the rooks circled and cawed in the golden sky.

“Seven of the Provincetown Players are in the army or working for it in France and more are going. Not lightheartedly now, when civilization itself is threatened with destruction, we who remain have determined to go on next season with the work of our little theatre.

It is often said that theatrical entertainment in general is socially justified in this dark time as a means of **relaxing the strain of reality**, and thus helping to keep us sane. This may be true, but if more were not true - if we felt no deeper value in dramatic art than entertainment, we would hardly have the heart for it now. One faculty, we know, is going to be of vast importance to the half-destroyed world - indispensable for its rebuilding - the faculty of creative imagination. That spark of it, which has given this group of ours such life and meaning as we have, is not so insignificant that we should now let it die. The social justification, which we feel to be valid now for makers and players of plays, is that they shall help **keep alive in the world the light of imagination**. Without it, the wreck of the world that was cannot be cleared away and the new world shaped."

George Cram Cook,  
founder of New York's Provincetown Playhouse, 1918

## Theater Etiquette

To make the theater-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct:

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- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience

# Pre-Performance Questionnaire

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "7" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I feel excited about seeing *The Turn of the Screw*.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

I want to learn more about Theater.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

I have been to see plays before.

**None**

**Some**

**Many**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

Name some plays you have seen?

Theater is fun!

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

Seeing a play can teach me about life.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

Theater is more real than television and movies.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

Comments:

Student Initials:
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# Post-Performance Questionnaire

After seeing *The Turn of the Screw*, please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "7" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I enjoyed seeing *The Turn of the Screw*.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

I want to learn more about Theater.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

*The Turn of the Screw* was better than other plays I have seen before.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

**I have  
never  
seen a  
play.**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

I want to see more theater.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

Seeing *The Turn of the Screw* taught me something about life.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

**Some Lessons in The Turn of the Screw are:**

Theater is more real than television and movies.

**Disagree**

**Agree**

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

**Comments:**

Student Initials:
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