

Alliance Theatre

Institute

Study Guide

Fat Ham

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's Dramaturgy by Students program
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Pulitzer Prize Winner
By: James Ijames

Directed by Stevie Walker-Webb
April 3-May 12, 2024
Hertz Stage

Produced in association with Huntington Theatre Company
and Front Porch Arts Collective

Content Advisory

Please be advised that FAT HAM contains considerable explicit language and addresses topics including death, violence, and sex & sexuality.

The students who created this study guide wish to inform users that these topics are addressed in this document accordingly.

Best enjoyed by audiences ages 16+

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Georgia Standards of Excellence

English Language Arts:

ELAGSE11-12RL1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELAGSE11-12RL2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE11-12RL3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

ELAGSE11-12RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

ELAGSE11-12RL5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

ELAGSE11-12RL6 Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

ELAGSE11-12RL10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

ELAGSE11-12W2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

ELAGSE11-12W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

ELAGSE11-12W7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

ELAGSE11-12W8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

ELAGSE11-12W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ELAGSE11-12SL1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

ELAGSE11-12SL4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate

Social Studies:

SSPSP1 Analyze the impact of the social environment on behaviors, and attitudes.

- a. Explain phenomena that result from the influence of the social environment on the individual and vice versa: include obedience, social facilitation, social loafing, bystander apathy, conformity such as Asch's experiment, groupthink, group polarization, and deindividuation.
- b. Analyze attribution and cognitive dissonance theories pertaining to social judgments and attitudes.
- c. Explain the factors that contribute to affiliation and attraction, include: proximity, mere exposure effect, and similarity.

Fine Arts:

TAHSFT.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.

- a. Recognize and/or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue or dramatic verse.
- b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation.
- c. Recognize and interpret artistic choices in performance.

TAHSFT.CR.2 Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.

- d. Create and perform scenes for audiences.

TAHSFT.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments.

- a. Observe and demonstrate aspects of verbal and non-verbal techniques in common human activity for performance (e.g. voice, breathing, posture, facial expression, physical movement).
- b. Construct and interpret artistic choices in performance including the objectives, decisions, and actions of characters.
- d. Perform acting choices for an audience based on critiques.

TAHSFT.RE.1 Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.

- a. Articulate why the relationship between the audience and performers is critical to the success of the production and demonstrate appropriate audience behavior.
- b. State and support aesthetic judgments through experience in diverse styles and genres of theatre.

TAHSFT.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content.

- a. Examine how theatre reflects real life.
- d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts (e.g. performance, design, production, administrative, education, promotion).

TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.

- a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures.
- b. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre.
- c. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.
- d. Interpret cultural and historical research for use in a production.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

1. Have you encountered any of Shakespeare's theatrical works?
 - If yes, which work(s)?
 - Do you enjoy Shakespeare's work?
2. What does it mean for a work of literature to be labeled as "classic"?
 - Who decides which works are "classic"?
 - What role do we play (today) in expanding the "literary canon"?
3. *The New York Times* reviewed *Fat Ham* as "a hilarious yet profound tragedy smothered in comedy."
 - What is the relationship between tragedy and comedy – how do these seemingly oppositional ideals overlap?
 - Is "dramady" the most realistic depiction of real life and true stories?
4. Is revenge ever justified?
 - Does revenge lead to resolution?
 - What's the difference between the notion of "avenge" vs. "revenge"?
5. "Meta" (of a creative work) is defined as: *referring to itself or to the conventions of its genre; self-referential*. Examples of meta include: breaking of the fourth wall, characters being aware they are characters, and/or characters being aware of their genre.
 - As an audience member, how do you feel when characters directly address the audience?
6. Describe your perfect backyard barbecue.
 - Who's invited – friends, nuclear family, extended family, neighbors?
 - Who's the cook – and what do they serve?
 - What's the vibe – what music is playing, and what conversations are taking place?

Pre-Show Journal Prompt

The show's protagonist (Juicy) is "a sensitive and self-aware young Black man in search of his own happiness and liberation."

Imagine your own happiness and liberation. What does that mean or look like to you? Are any obstacles preventing you from accessing that dream? Be as specific as possible as you envision a joyful and free future for yourself.



Photo Source: thejoywithin.org

Synopsis

Fat Ham is the deliciously funny, Pulitzer Prize-winning new play that recently finished its critically acclaimed Broadway run. Playwright James Ijames has reinvented Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet*, creating what *The New York Times* calls "a hilarious yet profound tragedy smothered in comedy."

Juicy is a queer, Southern college kid, already grappling with some serious questions of identity, when the ghost of his father shows up at their backyard barbecue, demanding that Juicy avenge his murder. But here's the rub! Revenge doesn't come easy to Juicy, a sensitive and self-aware young Black man in search of his own happiness and liberation. From an uproarious family cookout emerges a compelling examination of love, loss, masculinity, pain and joy.

Source: Alliance Theatre (<https://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/2023-24/fat-ham>)

About the Playwright



Headshot by Justin DeWalt

James Ijames is a Pulitzer Prize winning and Tony Award nominated playwright, a director and educator from Bessemer City, North Carolina which is a small town of only about 5,000 people.

He received a B.A. in Drama from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA and an M.F.A. in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. James is an Associate Professor of Theatre at Villanova University. He resides in South Philadelphia.

Ijames was a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia's first playwright producing collective. He has won many awards for his plays, that have been produced all over the country. He was a 2023 Tony nominee for Best Play with *Fat Ham*.

Source: <https://www.jamesijames.com/about-margot>

About the Source Text: *Hamlet*

What is a source text?

A source text is an original text that inspires a new idea or work. *Fat Ham* is a reimagination and reinvention of the plot and themes presented in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

About *Hamlet*

Hamlet is a tragedy that revolves around the themes of revenge, conflict, family dynamics, doubt, and death. In the play, Hamlet is a young student who ponders the meaning of life when many think he should be on a quest for revenge. The famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy is from this play. The play is Shakespeare's longest, containing over 30,557 words and lasting over 4 hours (not including intermissions). It is also one of the most analyzed, debated, and adapted of Shakespeare's 38 plays. There are over 50 film adaptations of the play, not counting stage versions. Among them, Disney's *The Lion King* and most recently, *The Northman*, released in 2022. Also, many of the phrases in *Hamlet* have been adopted in today's colloquial speech such as "method in the madness" and "cruel to be kind."

Plot Summary (5 Acts)

The play begins when Prince Hamlet's friend, Horatio, greets some of the castle's guards who tell him they have just seen the ghost of Hamlet's father. The ghost appears in front of Hamlet and tells his son that he was killed by Claudius, who is Hamlet's uncle. In response, Hamlet swears to avenge his father. Claudius has wasted little time after his brother's death and married the widowed queen, Gertrude, making him the King of Denmark. Simultaneously, the royal attendant, Polonius, says goodbye to his son Laertes, who is leaving for France. Before leaving, Laertes tells his sister, Ophelia, to stay away from Hamlet.

In Act II, Hamlet decides to see if the ghost was telling the truth and begins to act weird. While Claudius and Polonius are eavesdropping, Hamlet rejects Ophelia. Worried by Hamlet's strange behavior, Claudius brings Hamlet's old friends, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, to help figure out what is happening. At the same time, a group of actors that Hamlet knows come to town. Hamlet writes a play that includes a scene that portrayed the death of his father. The ensemble of actors and Hamlet agree to present the play to the King and Queen.

At the beginning of Act III, Claudius watches Hamlet's play and storms out of the show, instantly making plans to send Hamlet away. Hamlet is summoned by his mother and sees Claudius praying while on his way. Hamlet decides to spare Claudius' life because he believes the king would be sent to heaven instead of hell because he prayed. Polonius hides behind a tapestry in Gertrude's room to protect her from Hamlet, but Hamlet sees movement and stabs the tapestry which kills Polonius. The ghost reappears again and tells Hamlet to not delay the revenge or anger his mother.

During Act IV, Hamlet is sent to England, allegedly as an ambassador, and finds out about Claudius' plan to kill him once he arrives. Hamlet returns to Denmark and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be killed in his place. Back in Denmark, King Fortinbras of Norway is traveling with his troops to attack Poland. Ophelia feels empty after the death of her father and Hamlet's rejection, eventually going mad and drowning herself.

In the final act, while coming back to Denmark, Hamlet meets Horatio in a graveyard which happens to be the same place where Ophelia's funeral is happening. Hamlet approaches Laertes, who has taken his father's place in court, and a duel is scheduled. On the day, Claudius and Laertes plot sabotage the duel guaranteeing Hamlet's death by either a poisoned sword or poisoned wine. Chaos ensues when Gertrude accidentally drinks the wine and both Laertes and Hamlet are harmed from the sword, killing Laertes instantly. As Hamlet dies, he quickly kills Claudius, leaving Horatio the only person left and must tell the King upon his return from Poland.

Vocabulary

Word or Phrase	Definition
Assimilation	A process of consistent integration whereby members of an ethno-cultural group (minority groups) are "absorbed" into an established, generally larger community. A process through which people may lose their original traits, such as clothing, speech particularities or mannerisms when they encounter another society or culture.
Code Switching	The act of changing the way one speaks in different environments or around different people. For example, an individual may speak differently in an interview than they do around their friends.
Consternation	Amazement and dismay that makes one feel helpless or confused
Dialogue	Conversation between two or more characters in a book, film, or play
Direct Address	Moment in which a character speaks directly to the audience
Fellatio	Oral stimulation of penis
Ho-hum	Boring
'Losing My Religion'	Southern expression for losing one's temper
Memento mori	In art and spirituality, a symbolic trope or meditative practice that serves as a reminder of mortality and the transitory nature of earthly pleasures; a Latin phrase meaning "remember you must die."
Monologue	Long speech by one actor that expresses their innermost thoughts and feelings
Nuptials	Relating to weddings
Sconce	Candle holder in the wall
Shank	A crude, sharp, stabbing weapon created from otherwise non-imposing objects like a sharpened toothbrush
Shake the table	Meddling with the norm
The Royal We	The use of "we" as a replacement for "I" by couples who are so entwined in each other they can't figure out who's who
Suga	A reference to diabetes, a disease that affects one's sugar level
Youngins	young person(s)

Offensive and Derogatory Vocabulary Related to Gender and Sexuality

Throughout the play, other characters consistently comment upon Juicy's sexuality in an offensive and derogatory way. These are the words that they use:

- **The "F" Slur:** extremely disparaging and offensive; a contemptuous term used to refer to a gay person, especially a gay man
- **Pansy:** extremely disparaging and offensive; a contemptuous term used to refer to a gay man
- **Pink:** of or relating to gay people or gay sexual orientation
- **Playboy:** a man who pursues a life of pleasure without responsibility or attachments, especially one who is of comfortable means
- **Punk:** an inexperienced youth; a young male partner of a gay man
 - Also used as a derogatory term for gay
 - Half-punk used as a derogatory term for being bisexual
- **Sissy:** disparaging and offensive; used to refer to an effeminate boy or man
- **Soft:** foolish or stupid; gentle, mild, warm-hearted, or compassionate

Allusions

Reference	Description
Apollo Theater	A famous theatre in Harlem, NY known for many famous entertainers; used to run a weekly talent show in which the audience booed some performers off the stage
“Do the Right Thing”	1989 Movie by Spike Lee on race relations in a Brooklyn neighborhood
GI Joe	Cartoon and movie military action figure
Human Resources	Person(s) or department for a company that deals with the logistical needs of other employees in the company, manages the life cycle of an employee (hiring, insurance, payroll, documentation, promotions, reprimands, leaves, retirement, etc.)
Jack Bauer	Lead character in TV series “24,” a suspenseful action series in which Bauer is a nearly unstoppable anti-terrorism agent
Ms. Cleo	Phone/TV psychic in the 80s/90s on a pay-per-call-minute service called Psychic Readers Network, documentary “Call Me Miss Cleo”
Old Testament	First part of the bible; contains references to revenge, and punishments for wrongs
PBS	North American public broadcaster and non-commercial, free-to-air television network
Rambo	American movie series franchise about a soldier surviving and beating insurmountable enemies in the jungle
Rick James	American singer/songwriter who suffered drug addiction and was convicted on two separate instances of kidnapping and assaulting two different women
Systemic Racism	Systemic racism is racism that's incorporated into laws and regulations in systems such as education, economic, and healthcare; it influences on a community level rather than an individual level (also called institutional racism).
Toxic Masculinity	Adherence to traditional male roles to the point of potential harm of others; involves cultural pressures for men to behave in a certain way; refers to the notion that some people's idea of “manliness” perpetuates domination, homophobia, and aggression
University of Phoenix-	For-profit private college, with largely online programs, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, but has been considered at times less respectable than traditional not-for-profit colleges and universities
Zuckerberg	Reference to Mark Zuckerberg, one of the founders of Facebook and CEO of Meta

Significant Themes

LGBTQIA+ Community and Queer Identities

LGBTQIA+ pertains collectively to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning their gender), intersex, asexual, (or their allies). Queer identities are a central theme in the play, and gender normative stereotypes are challenged by these characters:

- **Larry:** a soldier praised for his strength and masculinity, but longs to be 'soft' and open about it.
- **Juicy:** never explicitly puts himself in any one category; "hypothetically" would be with a man.
- **Opal:** defies her mother's expectations to help clean up, try on dresses, and be more polite; her queerness is an integral part of her identity and rejection of the feminine ideals forced upon her.



Photo Source: latimes.com

Stereotypical Gender Roles

Stereotypical gender roles push both men and women into boxes. Women are often expected to take care of the home, keep up with the household duties, raise children, be motherly, be docile, be nurturing, and are often seen as emotional. Historically, women could not own land (unless they were a widow), could not vote, and received minor education. Meanwhile, men are often expected to be providers, decision-makers, take care of the work outside of the home, and to be strong, aggressive, and non-emotional.

By 1830, women started pursuing roles outside of the home, such as working as teachers, speaking out on social reform on issues of slavery, prohibition etc. In the 1840's the women's rights movement kicked off, as events such as the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls and The National Women's Rights Convention in Massachusetts took place, as well as the founding of the National Women's Suffrage Association. However, the downside to all of this good progress, was that black women were barred off from these associations and had to march separately from the white women. It also took longer for them to receive voting rights when the 19th amendment was passed in 1919, and only received voting rights in the Voting Rights Act that was passed in 1965.

Toxic Masculinity

Toxic Masculinity is defined as a social guideline that associates masculinity with traditional aspects of aggression, and dominance. This mentality is forced upon men through the pressure of not being a "real man." Toxic masculinity can result in many men feeling that they are unable to be vulnerable and need to be tough. This mentality often results in violence and abuse towards partners or children, sexism and homophobia (as often male members of the LGBTQIA+ community are viewed as being "too feminine"). Today toxic masculinity has been able to reach a broader spectrum of people outside of the household, through today's modern technology and alpha male influencers, who often preach the ideas of toxic masculinity.

Family Dynamics and Cycles of Violence

There are several defined family structure types, such as: nuclear family, single parent household, extended family, childless couple or individual, stepfamily, grandparents. In this play, Juicy's (widowed) mother marries his uncle (his father's brother), who becomes his stepfather. Rev and Juicy's relationship is toxic, which perpetuates generational trauma and cycles of violence.

Character Analysis: Hamlet vs. Fat Ham

This section compares *Hamlet* and *Fat Ham* characters in a side-by-side format.

Note: this section contains spoilers; as such, we suggest you access this section post-show.

Hamlet	FAT HAM
<p>Hamlet: Hamlet is the main character of <i>Hamlet</i>. He is philosophical and introspective, as well as indecisive. His university studies are interrupted by the death of his father, and he returns home for the funeral. He is instructed by the ghost of his father to kill his uncle, who murdered his father. Hamlet descends into madness while trying to figure out whether or not Claudius really did kill his father. Hamlet mistreats his love interest Ophelia, driving her to suicide.</p>	<p>Juicy: Described as “thicc,” black, beautiful, lonely, and smart. Juicy’s tuition money is used to pay for Rev’s bathroom remodel. He doesn’t go mad, but he does lash out at people while trying to figure out the truth of the murder. He also hurts a potential love interest in Larry by outing him to his mother (and in a way the old Larry ‘dies’ when he decides to express himself through his clothing at the end).</p>
<p>Ophelia: In <i>Hamlet</i>, Ophelia is the sweet and innocent daughter of Polonius and sister of Laertes. She is also romantically involved with Hamlet, whose cruel treatment eventually pushes her to suicide. Ophelia obeys the orders of her father and brother.</p> <p>Ophelia is considered to be vulnerable and frail. The audience is sympathetic to her, and she is an innocent victim to Hamlet’s madness. She dies surrounded by flower garlands, a symbol of purity.</p> <p>Through interacting with Ophelia, more of Hamlet’s character and complexity are revealed. She also highlights certain themes in the play, like corruption, patriarchy, and deception.</p> <p>(Source: markedbyteachers.com)</p>	<p>Opal: The complete opposite of Ophelia in personality. Opal is tough, she wants to be powerful, she wants to be feared, she wants autonomy and freedom.</p> <p>She does wear the dress her mother told her to at the barbeque, but otherwise she doesn’t obey any orders from her mother or brother.</p> <p>Despite being so unlike Ophelia, Opal still serves the same function in <i>Fat Ham</i>. Juicy’s interactions with her display more of his complex character. Opal also helps to highlight certain themes in <i>Fat Ham</i>, like finding your own identity outside of your family and whether you can have power without being feared by those around you.</p> <p>In this way, Opal is still the Ophelia of <i>Fat Ham</i> despite being so different from her counterpart.</p>

Character Analysis: Hamlet vs. Fat Ham
(Continued)

Hamlet	FAT HAM
<p>Laertes: Laertes is a foil to Hamlet. Both are sons in their families and want to preserve their family’s honor.</p> <p>Hamlet is philosophical and introspective, and takes an incredibly long time to decide whether or not to kill his uncle.</p> <p>In contrast, Laertes is hot-headed and quick to action once his father is killed. Once he wants to pursue revenge, he doesn’t give it any more thought than finding the offender (in different cases Claudius and Hamlet) and killing him on sight.</p> <p>Both of them are looking for revenge for their murdered fathers, but their methods of going about it are very different. Both die at the end of the play, suggesting that revenge plots all have the same result, regardless of how you go about it.</p>	<p>Larry: Described as having a secret and awkward; trying to heal from PTSD. Like Opal, Larry is nothing like his <i>Hamlet</i> counterpart but serves a similar dramatic function.</p> <p>Larry is a Marine and unhappy. He wants to be soft.</p> <p>While Laertes and Hamlet are both loyal to their families and searching for revenge, Larry and Juicy are both facing conflict within their families and are trying to carve out a place. Like their Shakespearean counterparts, they are both going about these issues in different ways that serve to highlight the differences between their characters.</p> <p>Interestingly, where Laertes is more forthright with his mission, Larry holds back, hiding who he is and wants to be. It is Juicy who is unapologetically being himself, forcing a space to be made for who he wants to be and refusing to be someone more convenient for his family.</p> <p>Like in <i>Hamlet</i>, there’s a question of which method is better of dealing with the issues: whether you should try to make your family happy or be who you want to be, potentially at the cost of your family’s happiness.</p> <p>Which do you think is best, Larry’s method or Juicy’s method?</p>
<p>Polonius: Polonius is the father of Ophelia and Laertes. Polonius is a trusted advisor of Claudius. He is killed by Hamlet when hiding behind a curtain, as Hamlet mistakes him for Claudius. Polonius seems to love his children, although he uses them as pieces in his schemes at times.</p>	<p>Rabby: Rabby is the mother of Opal and Larry. Like Polonius, she loves her kids, but has plans for them that they don’t necessarily like. She says that she decided to send Larry to the marines and wants Opal to go into human resources. Rabby is also a close friend of Tedra, although she has some opinions about the functionality of Tedra’s family.</p>

Character Analysis: *Hamlet vs. Fat Ham*
(Continued)

Hamlet	FAT HAM
<p>Horatio: Horatio is the only character to live through <i>Hamlet</i>.</p>	<p>Tio: Described as clever. Tio is the only person in <i>Fat Ham</i> going to therapy. There is also a sense throughout the play that Tio is the only person not oppressed by the gender roles and dysfunctional family relations that are explored. In a sense, Tio alone is free from the expectations of what it means to be a man. He juxtaposes Juicy and the other characters who are suffering under their family's expectations.</p>
<p>Gertrude: Gertrude married her late husband's brother less than a week after her first husband died. She is an ambiguous character, and her motivations are unclear. She seems dependent on men to keep her safe and comfortable. It is unclear why she married Claudius; was it for love? or only to preserve her high station in Denmark? It is also a question whether she was involved with Claudius before marrying him.</p>	<p>Tedra: Described as a good mother. Similarly, why Tedra married Rev is unclear. She says outright that she doesn't know how to be alone. There is an open question of whether she truly cared for Rev or if he was just the easiest option for her. Similarly to Gertrude, it is possible that Tedra was involved with Rev before Pap died.</p>
<p>Claudius: When Hamlet first goes to kill Claudius, he stops because he finds his uncle praying. Claudius eventually tries to send his nephew to England to be executed. Claudius's main motivation is to maintain his own power. He needs to get power away from Hamlet to keep the throne.</p>	<p>Rev: Described as electric. Not actually a reverend. He doesn't send Juicy away, but he does encourage Juicy to leave when the subject comes up. Rev is also preoccupied with his own power and puts Juicy down whenever possible.</p>
<p>Old Hamlet: Appears as a ghost to tell Hamlet he was murdered by his brother and instructs Hamlet to avenge his murder.</p>	<p>Pap: Appears as a ghost to tell Juicy he was murdered by his brother and instructs Juicy to avenge his murder. Played by the same actor as Rev.</p>
<p>Yorick: In <i>Hamlet</i>, Yorick is the jester from Hamlet's childhood and appears as a skull.</p>	<p>Yorick: In <i>Fat Ham</i>, he is someone from Juicy's high school and is referenced through a pair of shoes.</p>

Marshall Mabry IV on Playing Juicy



Photo Source: <https://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/2023-24/fat-ham>

Playing Juicy in The Alliance Theatre’s Fat Ham Is ‘a Gift from Above’ for Marshall Mabry IV

By: Mashaun D. Simon, [Encore Atlanta](#)

Selected excerpts:

“The role of Juicy in this production is not only special to Mabry because of their love for what’s on the page, but also what it means for them professionally and personally. It marks a return to the Alliance Theatre. A native of the metro Atlanta area, Mabry was raised in South Fulton.



‘I started at the Alliance with the teen ensemble. I was the youngest in my class and spent like three years in the teen ensemble. I saw every show for those three years and then I did the [Palefsky] Collision Project. And one of my first performances was in the Hertz,’ they said. ‘The Hertz is a true place of sanctuary for me. It is where the Alliance lives its mission of expanding hearts and minds on and off the stage.’

In a time when Black masculinity doesn’t get to have the space needed to feel, to be soft, and trapped by binary constructs, *Fat Ham* seeks to make softness and vibrancy okay, Mabry believes.

‘This story looks like me. You know? Fat. Black. Queer. Empathetic. Soft. We don’t understand that human beings are meant to feel. It is so okay to be soft. And it is so okay for people to be vibrant,’...‘This story reclaims some of that. It’s just so powerful.’


This show, they said, is about their Black softness and about their Black queerness.”

Learn more about:

The Alliance Theatre Teen Ensemble	The Alliance Theatre’s Palefsky Collision Project
	

Post-Show Discussion Questions

1. Did the play's plot match your predictions?
 - Which elements were closest to the source text of *Hamlet*?
 - Which elements were most surprising and new, as a reimagination of *Hamlet*?
2. Which character do you empathize with most?
 - Why? Which part of their journey spoke to you?
 - Imagine you are that character's friend. What advice would you give them?
3. How did you feel during this play?
 - Was it equal parts comedy and tragedy?
 - Which part(s) of the story surprised you most?
 - Which part(s) of the story upset you most?
 - Which part(s) of the story made you laugh the most?
4. Imagine you are a playwright embarking upon creating a new work inspired by a source text.
 - Which source text would you choose, and why?
 - What initial ideas do you have about the concept for a new work inspired by that text?
5. Revisit the song "Creep" by Radiohead (Juicy's karaoke selection).
 - Which lyrics from the song most connect to Juicy's story and identity?
 - What would be your karaoke song?
 - Which lyrics from the song most connect to your story and identity?

	<p>Listen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFkzRNyygfk</p>
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Post-Show Journal Prompt

Engage in self-led research regarding the topic of **intersectionality** – defined as “the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.”

Suggested resources regarding the intersection of race and queer identities:

- [Black & LGBTQ+: At the intersection of race, sexual orientation & identity](http://ama.assn.org) (ama.assn.org)
- [Coming Out: Living Authentically as Black LGBTQ+ People](http://hrc.org) (hrc.org)
- [Black LGBTQ Individuals Experience Heightened Levels of Discrimination](http://americanprogress.org) (americanprogress.org)
- [Black Americans' views on transgender and nonbinary issues](http://pewresearch.org) (pewresearch.org)
- [All Black Lives Matter: Mental Health of Black LGBTQ Youth](http://thetrevorproject.org) (thetrevorproject.org)

Then, respond to the prompts below:

- If applicable - What did this research *affirm* about your understanding of intersectionality?
- If applicable - What did this research *challenge* about your understanding of intersectionality?
- Share one *call to action* (something others can do) that would meaningfully contribute to the dismantling of discrimination.

Word Puzzle

Fat Ham

M	I	B	R	R	U	T	C	I	G	A	B	C	R
A	I	B	U	Y	M	U	I	D	T	Y	A	O	A
I	F	E	S	G	B	E	D	L	U	T	R	D	I
Y	L	B	L	G	B	T	Q	G	E	I	B	E	U
O	I	G	A	J	E	H	B	Y	D	N	E	P	Y
R	B	H	C	G	R	O	N	L	I	I	Q	E	E
S	A	O	C	E	N	M	L	I	R	L	U	N	S
M	T	S	S	R	O	I	C	M	P	U	E	D	E
J	H	T	L	S	A	E	A	A	M	C	D	E	E
E	R	S	D	J	I	A	E	F	B	S	A	N	C
R	O	D	M	S	E	A	G	G	D	A	G	C	M
M	O	R	L	P	R	L	R	Q	S	M	T	Y	H
T	M	Y	G	T	Y	A	G	I	U	N	R	G	I
T	C	G	G	I	N	G	E	R	B	R	E	A	D

PRIDE
JAIL
GAY
MASCULINITY
GINGERBREAD
LGBTQ
BARBEQUE
RIBS
BATHROOM
FAMILY
CODEPENDENCY
GHOSTS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/6915190/>

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