

Alliance Theatre

institute

Study Guide

This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing

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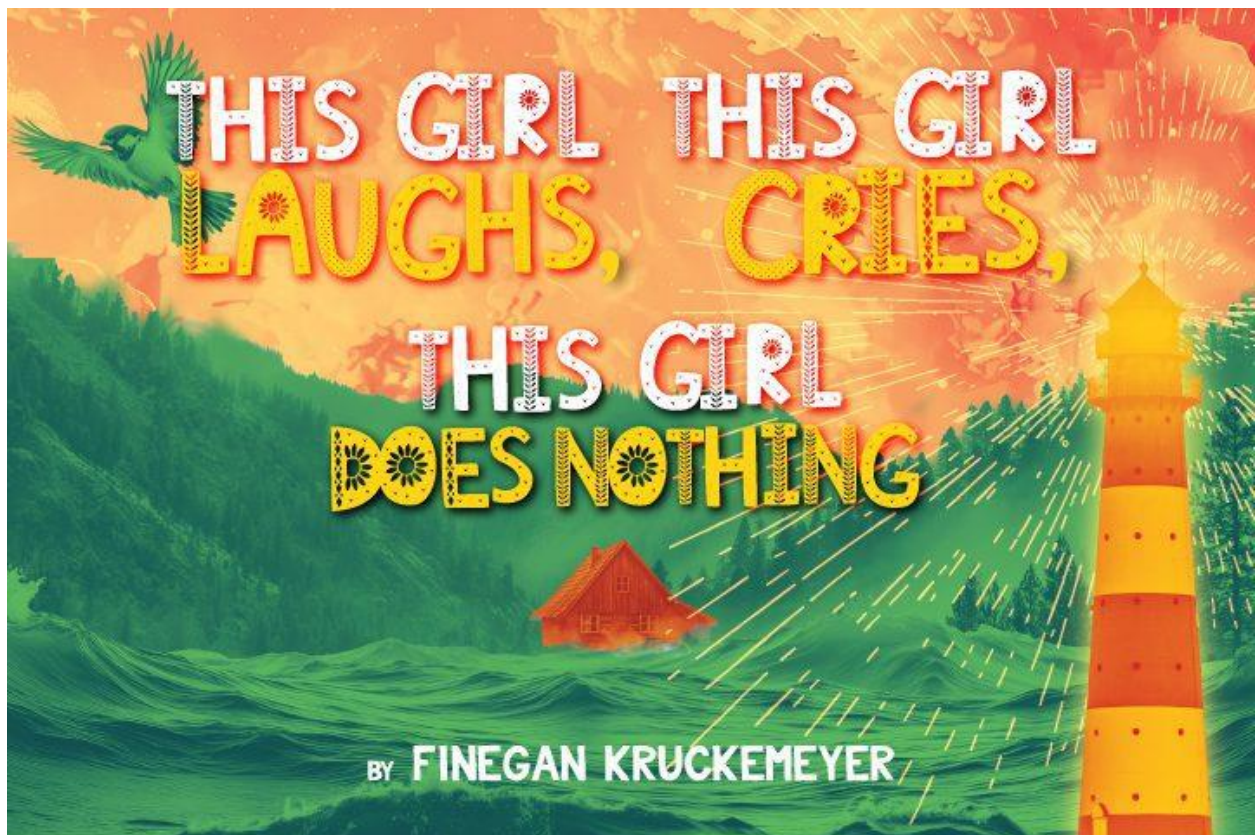
This Girl *Laughs,*
This Girl Cries,
This Girl Does Nothing

By Finegan Kruckemeyer
Directed by Sam Provenzano
Presented in partnership with Theater Emory

Touring in October 2026

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Georgia Standards of Excellence
Elementary School: Grades 3 - 5

English Language Arts

- 3.T.C.2.a - Describe different perspectives of the narrator or speakers and distinguish them from their own.
- 3.T.T.1.a - Explain how narrative techniques are used to present ideas, design texts, and convey information about characters, setting, and plot.
- 3.T.T.1.b - Explain how characters, setting, problem, and solution function in the plot.
- 3.T.T.1.c - Describe characters' traits, motivations, actions, thoughts, and feelings and explain their connection to the central message, lesson, or moral of the story.
- 4.T.C.2.a - Compare and contrast the perspectives of different narrators or speakers in a text.
- 4.T.T.1.c - Identify and describe common themes in texts (e.g., good vs. evil) that are revealed through details about characters.
- 5.T.T.1.a - Analyze the use of narrative techniques to present ideas, design texts, and convey information about characters, setting, and plot.
- 5.T.T.1.b Analyze how setting, events, conflict, and characterization contribute to the plot.
- 5.T.T.1.c - Explain how a theme is demonstrated through a character's growth or conflict resolution.

Theatre

- TA3.RE.1 - Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
- TA3.RE.2.a - Identify artistic choices through participation and observation.
- TA3.RE.2.b - Interpret what is seen, felt, and heard in a theatre or performance experience.
- TA3.CN.1.a - Connect theatre experiences to life experiences and other content areas.
- TA5.RE.1.a - Participate as audience.
- TA5.RE.2.a - Generate a response to theatre experiences that is interpretive, evaluative, or reflective.
- TA5.CN.1.a - Analyze how theatre experiences reflect and connect with life and other content areas.

Synopsis

Three sisters. Three paths. One world full of possibilities.

When triplets are separated and sent out into the unknown, each must find her own way: one chasing adventure, one searching for meaning, and one staying close to home. Across forests, oceans, and years, their journeys unfold in surprising and deeply human ways.

This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing by Finegan Kruckemeyer is a playful and poetic exploration of what it means to grow up, grow apart, and find your place in the world.

Character Analysis

Name	Character Traits
Albienne	The oldest of the triplet sisters, Albienne is a big-hearted, passionate and strong leader. When we first meet her, she has a wonderful appetite for desserts and cakes and all sorts of tasty things. When she travels East, she encounters villages under attack, wars, and destruction. She loses her appetite and becomes a “Woman of War.” Eventually, she finds her love for baking (and sweets) again. <i>“Albienne for instance, enjoyed cake very much and by age nine, her body had become that of a true cake appreciator, round like a gateau and warm like a brioche.”</i>
Beatrix	The second oldest of the triplet sisters, Beatrix is adventurous and curious about the world. She loves to explore, and she loves the feeling of the sun on her skin. She travels West and discovers a lighthouse, an Old Lady, and eventually entire cities of people who grow to love and admire her. <i>“Beatrix in the middle enjoyed the expelling of energy and the world within which to do it, and would run around outside from sun up to sundown. And so she was a child of the sun through and through, with blonde hair and brown skin and freckles on her nose.”</i>
Carmen	The youngest of the triplet sisters, Carmen is thoughtful and reserved. She enjoys the quiet and decides to stay put in the woods, building a home with the help of many woodland creatures who become her friends and allies. She becomes known for being helpful to many people who come to her for mending, food, and a place to stay. However, she craves her time alone, her solitude, and quiet. Eventually, she finds love with a man named Peter, and they build a family together.

	<i>“Carmen found the world to be a heavy thing, and carried it upon her shoulders. It was like a school backpack that you know holds important contents, but that you sometimes wish you could just leave on the bus and never have to pick up again. The world she carried made her shoulders small and her eyes dark, though her heart was as large as her sisters – it was just a little smothered by world-carrying, that was all.”</i>
Narrator	The all-knowing figure who guides us through the story, revealing truths about the sisters and their journeys
Father	Albienne, Beatrix, and Carmen’s father. He is loving but is easily persuaded to abandon his daughters by his second wife.
Eleanor	A woman Father marries after the death of the three sisters’ mother. Eleanor is deceptive and manipulative and has ill-intentions.
Lady (in the Lighthouse)	A wise old lady who lives in a lighthouse and until she meets Beatrix, has preferred to be alone.
Peter	A kind, warm-hearted man who Carmen falls in love with. They have a son, Lionel, and another child who has not yet been born. They live together in the house in the woods.

Setting Study

The play takes place in multiple locations and spans many seasons over the course of 22 years.



When we first meet the three sisters, they live in a **forest** by a village.

"The three sisters lived in a forest...the mother sewed up clothes for the people in a village nearby, and the father chopped down trees deep in the woods."

A forest is a large area of land covered with trees and plants. In fairytales, forests (or "woods") are common settings because they are dark, magical, mysterious places where characters undergo transformations, learn about themselves, and overcome obstacles. [Image Source](#)

Beatrix travels West and comes across a **lighthouse** (a tall tower with a light on top to help guide ships), which she turns into a submarine with the help of the Old Lady who lives inside. They sail the lighthouse through the Ocean, where they see sea monsters out of their windows. Eventually, they dock at a harbor (an area of water close to land where ships can safely stay) by an old, faded city. [Image Source](#)



Albienne travels East and discovers **villages** (small towns) that have been attacked by invading armies and Vikings. Eventually, she finds a community of people to bake for and creates a mobile kitchen by placing an entire bakery on top of a **wagon** (four-wheeled vehicle pulled by horses). [Image Source](#)

"The villagers during the night have got the biggest wagon they own, and tied thirty strong horses to it. And then they have lifted the bakery and placed it on the back, a perfect, mobile kitchen."

Carmen chooses to stay in the woods, and, with the help of woodland creatures, builds a **house** out of materials found in the forest.

"So, the beavers chew down trees. And the squirrels gather branches, and the worms carry ferns. Then in Spring everyone, animal and Carmen alike (except Badger) attach ropes to the structure and heave. And the walls are pulled up to standing. And then the thousands of birds gently lower the roof down. And the foxes paint letterboxes, the moles pack the holes, and the slugs slide across every surface, varnishing it with their sticky trails."

Theme

A **theme** is an important idea that is woven throughout a story or a literary work. A theme often links the main idea into actions that can be seen throughout the play. As you watch *This Girl Laughs...*, see if you can find the following themes throughout the play.

Theme	Context in the Play
The Power of a Journey	In the play, each of the three sisters embarks on a journey of self-discovery, transformation, and acceptance. Albienne and Beatrix travel long distances, whereas Carmen stays put, but all three undergo personal transformations as they face obstacles and grow up. • Albienne discovers her strength and power as a warrior and then finds her place within a community as a baker. • Beatrix is a daring, seafaring adventurer who shows a boring, dull city how to have fun, and in doing so, eventually finds her own sunshine again. • Carmen discovers that as much as she enjoys solitude, she misses company once she's alone, and she finds love and creates a family of her own. When they reunite at the end of the play, they are the same three sisters, but different because of their individual journeys. The journeys we take in life change us and ultimately help shape who we are as people. <i>ALBIENNE: I am full and happy, and my cheeks are round once more.</i> <i>BEATRIX: I am sunny and warm, and my freckles are out again.</i> <i>CARMEN: I am cozy and sure, and my belly carries the world like my shoulders once did.</i>
Choosing your own Path	When the sisters are abandoned in the woods by their father, they must decide what to do and where to go. Although they have spent their whole lives together, they realize they want different things out of life and must each forge their own path. In life, it is important to find your own path, even if it's not the same path as your friends or family.
The Beauty of Sisterhood	The sisters share a strong bond that keeps them close, even when they are physically apart. They were born together, raised together, and share mannerisms and dreams. They are sisters, and they are also loyal friends. <i>The three ready for sleep, Albienne in a ditch, Beatrix in a mansion, Carmen in her home.</i> <i>NARRATOR: And when lying in bed at night (whether in a mansion, a ditch or a house in the woods) these three women would say the same simple oath:</i> <i>ALBIENNE: I am a woman and this was my day. This I have learnt, and this thrown away.</i> <i>BEATRIX: This was a good thing, and this was a bad. Of this I feel guilty, of this I feel glad.</i> <i>CARMEN: And some things I can change, some I can't fix. I'm alone but as well, I am part of a mix.</i>

About the Playwright: Finegan Kruckemeyer



Finegan has had 105 commissioned plays performed on six continents and translated into eight languages. He has received 42 awards (at least one each year since 2002) including the 2017 Mickey Miners Lifetime Achievement Award for services to international theatre for young audiences, the 2015 David Williamson Award for Excellence in Australian Playwrighting, and an inaugural Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship.

To date, Finegan's plays have had seasons in: 200 international festivals; all Australian states/territories; eight US national tours; five UK national tours; and at the Sydney Opera House (seven works), Scotland's Imagine Festival (four works), New York's Lincoln Center for the Arts (three works), DC's Kennedy Center for the Arts (three works), Ireland's Abbey Theatre (two works) and Shanghai's Malan Flower Theatre (two works).

Finegan was born in Ireland and moved halfway around the world to Adelaide, Australia at age eight. After 15 years, he and his wife left for the island state of Tasmania. And after 15 more, with their son Moe, they returned.

He is committed to making strong and respectful work for children, which acknowledges them as astute audience members outside the play, and worthy subjects within.

[Source](#)

About the Director: Sam Provenzano



Sam Provenzano is a director, dramaturg, and teaching artist currently based in Denver and Atlanta —where she is a Resident Artist and Teen Programs Manager at the Alliance Theater. She has more than a decade of experience making work as an educator and director with institutions across the globe, including the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Art Museum, Blanton Museum of Art, the University of Exeter, the High Museum of Art, The Contemporary Austin, and the University of Texas at Austin.

Recent directing credits include: *Knock Knock*, *The Sounds of Winter* (Alliance Theatre), *Gimme Please!* (Alliance Theater), *Anon(ymous)* (UT Austin), *Humans of the High* (High Museum), *Emma and the Suzies* (Austin Latino New Play Festival), and *al-halqa (is that how it's pronounced)* (UT

Austin).

Sam has her MFA in Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities from the University of Texas at Austin with a focus in Theater for Young Audiences, Museum Theater, and new play development.

[Source](#)

Interview with the Director

1. *This play is a modern fairytale that borrows many elements of a traditional fairytale (siblings, an evil parental figure, the wood, a journey, heroes who must find their way home). Did you have a favorite fairytale as a child?*

When I think of a story I was always drawn to growing up, it was Disney's "The Little Mermaid." I loved the underwater world, and I am fascinated by mermaids! But strictly fairytale? I was always curious about the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" because it was always so funny to me that this kid broke into someone else's house, used their things, and judged their preferences!

2. *The three sisters are "identical" yet very different. Which of the three sisters do you relate to most, and why?*

I have identified with each of the sisters at different stages of my life! My younger self was very Beatrix - very loud and always reaching for the future and the sun. Then, I aged into Albiene. I became a leader and felt very secure in my skin when helping others. And the older I get, I am currently feeling very Carmen in my desire to put down roots and maybe exist a little more quietly.

3. *This play has been produced all around the world. Why do you think this story is universal?*

I think this story can feel universal because people can see themselves in all three of the sisters. At any point, you can identify with a little bit of each of them. The three girls face a tragedy, and people sometimes face tragedy with a call to adventure, a call to action, or the desire to stand still and process. And all responses are valid!

This show is also very fun for actors and directors because the text makes space for artists' creativity. There is room for us to add music and movement and puppetry!

4. *There are so many characters and lands created in this story. What was challenging (and what was fun) about creating these various people and places with your team?*

A challenge with so many characters in a play is making sure each of them feels distinctly different. There are only six (6) actors that span over 30 years of characters. Actors need to ensure sure they make specific choices within the given circumstances of each character. This is also the fun part of creation! I love it when actors come in with big, bold ideas to try in rehearsal.

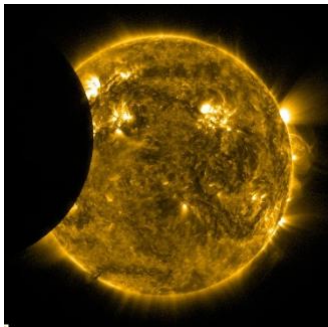
Vocabulary

Word (Part of Speech)	Definition	In Context
thrice (adverb)	Three times	"And thrice upon a time, a girl was born."
flats (noun)	A set of rooms for living in, usually on one floor of a building	"And they looked identical, in the same way that when visiting a block of flats , a person may say: 'those flats are identical'."
expelling (verb)	To force air or water out of a part of the body or from a container	"Beatrix in the middle enjoyed the expelling of energy and the world within which to do it, and would run around outside from sun up to sundown."
currants (noun)	A small dried grape, used in cakes, etc.	"That day, I was sitting beside the river, which was full of currents, and eating a cake, which was full of currants as well."
acknowledged (verb)	To accept that something is true	"And she acknowledged them all – and picked up the backpack."
obediently (adverb)	In a way that obeys what you are told to do	"But obediently , politely, they tipped their hats and headed out into the snow, following behind their father."
halted (verb)	To stop; to make somebody/something stop	"And there the man halted ."
poignant (adjective)	Having a strong effect on your feelings, especially in a way that makes you feel sad	"And I watched them both leave, and thought of clever, poignant things I could have said to them..."
resolved (adjective)	Determined to do something	"She had resolved to follow her papa, to follow the sun's path, and when one didn't turn up, she just kept following the other."
vastness (noun)	The extremely large area, size or amount of something	"I looked at the vastness of it..."
majesty (noun)	The impressive and attractive quality that something has	"The humbling majesty of so giant a stretch of water..."
dunes (noun)	A small hill of sand formed by the wind, near the sea or in a desert	"But the shoreline was only made up of rolling dunes , which are perfect for running down while screaming."
weld (verb)	To join pieces of metal together by heating their edges and pressing them together	"Then I weld it onto the bottom of the lighthouse."
submarine (noun)	A ship that can travel underwater	"And together they glide through the ocean heading West, ever West, like a super submarine with the sun at its nose."

trudging (verb)	To walk slowly or with heavy steps, because you are tired or carrying something heavy	"Very quickly my sister went from trudging in a flat way, to leaning in a steep way."
reputation (noun)	The opinion that people have about what somebody or something is like, based on what has happened in the past	"And so did her reputation ."
pillaged (verb)	To steal things from a place or region, especially in a war, using violence	"Our village – they pillaged !"
graffiti (noun)	Drawings or writing on a wall, etc. in a public place	"The Army burnt down the barns, and chased the people through the muddy streets, and wrote graffiti on the walls..."
unnerving (adjective)	Making somebody feel nervous or frightened	"And everyone stares at this shouty person who has climbed out from under a bridge, and they say nothing – because it's an unnerving thing to be told big information by little people."
hibernation (noun)	A state like deep sleep in which some animals spend the winter	"But then the Spring came, and the tree bloomed, and beautiful little bunny rabbits emerged from hibernation , frolicking happily."
ludicrous (adjective)	Unreasonable; that you cannot take seriously	"Oh, come on, this is ludicrous ."
oath (noun)	A formal promise to do something or a statement that something is true	"And when lying in bed at night, these three women would say the same simple oath ..."
silhouette (noun)	The dark outline or shape of a person or an object that you see against a light background	"Beside me is a giant house and in the window, I see a silhouette ."
fortnight (noun)	Two weeks	"Go on please – back to the village and tell everyone I'm closing for at least... a fortnight ."
echo (verb)	If a sound echoes, it is reflected off a wall, the side of a mountain, etc. so that you can hear it again	"Our bellies echo ."

Source: [Oxford Online Dictionary](#)

Allusions/Cultural References:

Allusion	Definition	In Context
Tea in China 	Tea is among the world's oldest and most popular beverages and has long been an important part of Chinese culture. According to Chinese legend, tea was invented accidentally by the Chinese Emperor Shen Nong when some dried leaves fell into a pot of boiling water. The emperor liked the way the water smelled, so he drank it and found it refreshing.	The sister's parents "...showed the girls how people drink tea in China and dance in Peru, cooked them dinners..."
Dance in Peru 	The Marinera is widely recognized as the national dance of Peru and one of the country's most refined cultural expressions. It brings together elements of Spanish, Indigenous, and African cultures to represent courtship and love, and uses smooth, flowing movements.	The sister's parents "...showed the girls how people drink tea in China and dance in Peru, cooked them dinners..."
Black Forest cake 	A rich and indulgent dessert consisting of layers of chocolate sponge cake, whipped cream, and cherries, garnished with chocolate shavings and more cherries on top. The Black Forest cake originated in the Black Forest region of Germany, hence its name. The cake was inspired by the flavors and ingredients found in the Black Forest.	"Albienne lost her appetite, and no éclair or meringue or black forest or vanilla slice could tempt it back."
Sun 	There are many myths and stories from different cultures to explain and personify the Sun. In ancient Norse legend, the sun goddess Sol travels through the sky chased by the wolf Sköll, who intends to devour her. In ancient Egypt, falcon-headed sun god Ra captained a boat crewed by gods across the sky. The Cherokee people believed the sun was jealous of her brother, the moon, because the people of Earth always looked at her with twisted-up faces and squinted eyes, while they smiled at his gentle light.	"Beatrix rediscovered the sun. One day, her father chopped down the one tall tree that blocked the morning rays from her window. And they poured into Beatrix's room and down upon a photo of her mother. And it warmed her mother and made her look alive again. And Beatrix could not be angry with the sun anymore."

Moon 	Like the Sun, there are many stories and myths about the Moon. In ancient Greece, the moon was personified as Selene, a goddess who drove her silver chariot across the night sky. In Japanese mythology, the moon god Tsukuyomi was cold and distant. In some African traditions, the moon was believed to influence rainfall and agriculture. The Zulu tracked moon cycles for farming, while the Khoisan linked the moon to seasonal rains.	“Beatrix lost her sun. Of course, it was still there, still hanging in the sky. But it had little to do with her any more – the moon now became her companion as she lay awake at night.”
The weight of the world (Atlas) 	In Greek mythology, Atlas was punished by the Olympians to hold up the sky and carry the heavens on his shoulders forever after losing a war.	“Carmen rediscovered her backpack called ‘The Weight Of The World.’ It happened as she was walking one day and passed a beggar in the town. And he saw her face... and he offered her some money, as she looked more needy than he. Carmen imagined his story then and a hundred other stories of other people with other lives. And she acknowledged them all – and picked up the backpack.”
Sunflowers 	The sunflower’s name comes from its tendency to reposition itself to face the sun. Its genus is “Helianthus,” and comes from two Greek words: “helios” (sun) “anthos” (flower). In the Greek myth of Clytie and Apollo, the sunflower represents adoration and loyalty. In China, people associate sunflowers with long life, good fortune, and vitality. To Native American groups, sunflowers represent harvest, bounty, and provision because they provided seeds, pigment, and more.	In the play, Eleanor plants a hundred sunflowers to win Beatrix over, but later chooses to plant radishes instead. Towards the end of the play, the “old Man” (Papa) tells Beatrix: “The sun doesn’t like me. I had a big garden of sunflowers once, and I let them die.”
Ginger snap	A spiced cookie made primarily of butter, molasses, and flour that was brought over by European immigrants. The gingersnap gets	“Beatrix collected up all these things, and while the tea

	its name from the German word "snappen," or "to seize quickly."	brewed, got started on a Ginger Snap."
Chiciquaylu tribe in the jungles of the Amazon 	There is no known tribe of this name, however there are roughly 400 tribes living in the Amazon rainforest, some in settled villages by the rivers, and some deep inside the forest.	In the play, Albienné tells a story of "the Chiciquaylu tribe in the jungles of the Amazon, (who) settle their arguments by pointing at snakes. If you and someone else are arguing, you have to both run off and find a snake to point at. And whoever does it first, wins the argument, no matter what it's about. Brilliant!"
Vikings 	Vikings were Scandinavian seafaring warriors who raided and colonized wide areas of Europe from the 9th to the 11th century. They used longships to raid towns and cities along the coasts of Europe.	Albienné helps a village who tell her they have been attacked by Vikings: "An Army! On their long, low boats rowing furiously towards land, hiding behind the large waves until... they appeared!"
Woman of War 	Legendary "women of war" include: Joan of Arc (1412 - 1431), a French peasant girl who said she saw visions of angels and saints urging her to support Charles VII in defeating the English in the ongoing Hundred Years' War. Florence Nightingale (1820 - 1910), who traveled to the Ottoman Empire in 1854 with 38 volunteer nurses that she trained to treat the wounded soldiers of the Crimean War. Harriet Tubman (1822 - 1913), an abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor who joined the Union forces during the American Civil War.	"And climbing from it, she (Albienné) picks up the biggest sword she can find, sticks it in her belt, and plants three seeds in the scorched earth, one for each of the sisters. And then – reborn as a Woman of War now – she wanders off along the road."
Cassette tape 	A flat, rectangular container made of plastic or lightweight metal that holds magnetic tape for audio recording and replay. "Tapes" were first developed in the 1960s and were mostly used for listening to music.	"But then she (Carmen) puts on a cassette tape that only she enjoys, and turns the volume up to loud."

Modern Day Fairytale

A **fairytale**, or **fable**, is a short story originating in folklore, often created for children to enjoy. They are passed down over generations, usually with the intention to entertain and to teach. Most fairytales involve a **moral**, or lesson, for the audience to learn from.

This Girl Laughs... is considered a modern-day fairytale, because it draws inspiration from the fairytale genre, but in a modern setting featuring **three, strong female characters** as its heroes.

The play utilizes many **elements** commonly found in traditional fairytales, including:

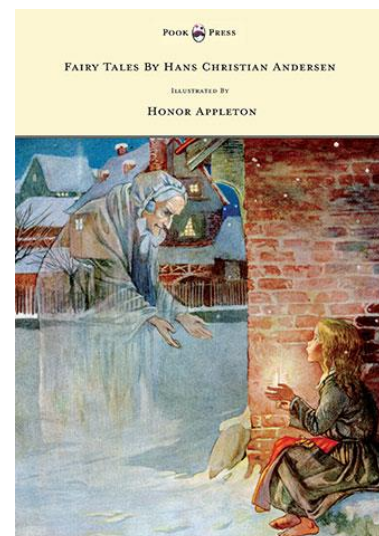
- The opening line “**Once upon a time...**”, which establishes that the story could take place in any time and any location, making it universal and relevant, no matter where you live!
- The number “**three!**” This number shows up in many fairytales (*The Three Little Pigs*, for example). This pattern helps us remember the details of the story, especially if they’re repeated three times.
- Magical elements such as **enchanted forests** and/or **talking animals**.
- Characters who are **lost** and must find their way **home**.
- **Heroic characters** who must defeat **evil villains**.

Famous fairytales include:



The Brothers Grimm (Jacob 1785–1863 and Wilhelm 1786–1859) were German brothers who collected and compiled over 200 stories, including *Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Rumpelstiltskin*, and many others! [Image Source](#)

Hans Christian Anderson (1805-1875) was a Danish author who wrote many popular fairytales which have since been translated into more than 125 languages. These include *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, *The Red Shoes*, and many others! [Image Source](#)



Pre-Show Discussion Questions

1. Make a prediction: Based on the title, *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing*, what do you think this play will be about?
2. This play tells the story of three sisters who go on separate journeys to find “home.” Describe a time that you forged your own path and did something independently of your friends or family.
3. Do you believe that someone’s personality and interests stay the same for their whole lives, or can they grow and evolve? Why or why not?
4. What is the role of a narrator in a play? How do they move the story forward, and how are they different than the other characters?
5. What is the role of an audience member during a play? How do they show their appreciation for the actors?
6. Review the elements of theater (set, costumes, props, lighting, sound). How do these elements help to share the story on the stage?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

Engage in a discussion as a class or use these questions as journal prompts.

1. In what ways could you relate to one of the sisters?
2. What was the problem that each sister encountered, and how did she solve the problem?
3. What is the central message of the play? What did the playwright want audiences to learn?
4. What was your favorite moment in the play? Why?
5. How was this play similar to a modern day fairy tale?
6. All three sisters search for years to find home. What does “coming home” mean to you?
7. Throughout their journey, each sister discovers something new about themselves. Albiene becomes a fighter but also falls in love with baking, Beatrix entertains crowds and brings music and joy, and Carmen becomes a caretaker but learns to stand up for herself. Describe a time that you learned something new about yourself.
8. If you were one of the sisters, which path would you have taken and why?
9. How did the technical elements of the play (costumes, lighting, sound, etc.) help tell the story?
10. How did the actors transform into the characters? How did they use the Tools of the Actor (body, voice, imagination, concentration)?
11. How did you know when the setting of the play changed? How did the sound or lighting change?
12. Make a prediction: What will happen one year from the time the play ends?

Post-Show Extension Activities

Writing Reflection

Using the template below, write a diary entry from one of the sister's points of view. Select one moment from the play, and write about that adventure.

Dear Diary,

Today was an adventure! First, I....

Love,

_____ (insert character's name)

Sources:

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