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39  
STEPS



The mission of Prime Stage Theatre is to entertain, inspire and enrich through professional theatre by bringing literature to life.



Prime Stage Sprouts brings literature to life for elementary students beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and their families, as we inspire their imaginations and foster a love of reading with the joy of live theatre.

**THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS SUPPORT OUR MISSION AND PROGRAMS**

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- John Dolphin, Education Consultant
- Ponny Conomos Jahn, Education Coordinator

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# Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2022-2023 Season

## Suspense, Hope, and Wonder

### Bringing Literature to Life!

Dear Educator or Parent,

We are pleased to bring you *The 39 Steps*, adapted in 2009 by Patrick Barlow from the 1915 novel by John Buchan and the 1935 film of Alfred Hitchcock. This hilarious and multi-faceted piece of theatre parody, directed by Scott Calhoun, is an outstanding example of the storytelling possibilities that can be achieved through highly effective theatre stagecraft.

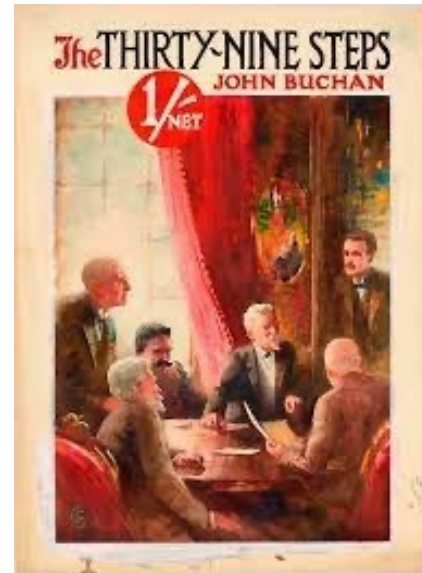
This resource guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities, and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with both the literature and with live theatre itself. We encourage you to use the theatrical exercises and creative thinking activities to enrich understanding of the plot themes, and hope that the Theatre Etiquette section helps encourage deeper personal connections between the performers and audience in a live theatre setting.

If you have any questions about the information in this resource guide, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions!

*Ponny Conomos Jahn, Education Coordinator*

Prime Stage Theatre

[pconomos@primestage.com](mailto:pconomos@primestage.com)





# Before You Go Prep

## An Important Message About Theatre Etiquette

*It goes without saying that when most students today hear the word “theatre” they think, “oh, MOVIE theater.” And with that thought comes all of those things that we do at movie theater: eat popcorn, drink noisily from soda cups, put feet on the seat, text message—and the list goes on from there.*

But live theater is just that: it’s LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience. Because of this, live theatre requires a higher level of respect between the audience and performer in order for the experience to be a positive one. As an audience member, you are a very important component of this production of *Frankenstein!*



## House Rules

Please review the following “House Rules” with your students prior to attending:

- 1) Please stay with your group and wait for an usher to help you find your seat.
- 2) Please turn all cell phones completely off before the performance. If you are texting during the performance, you will be asked to leave. (FYI, the theater will be dark, and light from your phone shines up on your face when you text. Everybody, including the actors on stage, can see you!)
- 3) No photography or videotaping.
- 4) Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the play.
- 5) No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance.
- 6) We encourage active listening and appropriate responses such as laughing or clapping. Please do not talk during the performance!
- 7) Be polite and attentive. Show your appreciation by clapping. (FYI - the actors really love to see how much you enjoyed the show!)

(PDE Academic Standards 1.6, 9.1)

# THINKING LIKE A CRITIC



**Critics play an important role in theatre because they share their opinions about a production which they are often the first to see (called a “preview”) with the world to discuss and debate.**

## **Prepare your students to attend the show by thinking like a critic:**

(PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4- 1.5)

**Actor choices**—How did they move and speak? Did they seem like people we know? How did they relate to other characters?

**Designer choices**—What design element captured your attention the most - the set, costumes, lights, or sound - and why? How did the design elements work together to support the entire production? What choices did the designers make in materials, colors, intensity, detail, etc.? What symbols were in the design elements?

**Director choices**—What was the style, pace, and rhythm of the play? What stage pictures helped to tell the story? How did the director unify all of the elements of the production?

**Interpretation**—Did the director make a statement about life in our current time? How did the characters, design, and play make you feel? What did the play mean to you? What might it mean to others?

**Evaluation**—Why do you suppose the playwright wrote the play? Why was the play produced now? When were moments where the storytelling was very clear? When were moments you were confused about the story? Who would enjoy the play and why?

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**BEFORE & AFTER** Ask students to answer the Guided Anticipation Questions below before attending Prime Stage’s production of *The 39 Steps*. Have them review it again after the performance and compare possible changes in their perspectives.

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## **GUIDED ANTICIPATION POST PERFORMANCE CLASSROOM QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What did you think you knew about the story of *The 39 Steps* before you saw Prime Stage’s production?
- 2) Where did you get your information? Have you changed your impressions? What remained the same?
- 3) Ask your students to write a review of *The 39 Steps* after classroom discussion.

# PLAY SYNOPSIS: THE 39 STEPS

*Richard Hannay is at a London theatre, attending a demonstration of the remarkable powers of “Mr. Memory”, a man with a photographic memory, when a fight breaks out and a shot is fired. In the ensuing panic, he finds himself holding a frightened Annabella Schmidt, who talks him into taking her back to his flat.*

*There, she tells him that she is a spy, being chased by assassins out to kill her. She claims to have uncovered a plot to steal vital British military secrets, implemented by a man who is the head of an espionage organization called “The 39 Steps.”*

*The next day, Hannay wakes up to find her dead, stabbed with a knife. He sneaks out of the flat disguised as a milkman and takes a train to Scotland, where she had told him she was going to find the leader of the espionage group. On the train, he sees the police on his trail. In desperation, he enters a compartment and, in an attempt to escape detection, passionately kisses the sole occupant, the attractive Pamela. She however manages to free herself from his unwanted embrace and betrays him to the law. He jumps from the train and escapes.*

*He stays the night with a poor older farmer and his young wife who sees in Hannay the dashing, romantic man she longs for. The next morning, he leaves in the farmer’s Sunday coat, and calls at the house the woman had told him of. There he finds the man with part of his finger missing, the seemingly respectable Professor Jordan, who shoots him and mistakenly leaves him for dead.*

*The conclusion combines mishaps, mistaken identities, and tongue-in-cheek references to everything we like about murder mysteries and film noir detective movies.*

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## MAIN CHARACTERS

*Although The 39 Steps has HUNDREDS of characters being played by FOUR actors, the following are critical to the plot:*

**Richard Hannay:** A dapper English gentleman, Richard Hannay is bored—until Annabella Schmidt comes into his life and starts him on a heroic and hilarious journey.

**Annabella Schmidt:** An exotic secret agent, Annabella Schmidt is in dire need of Hannay’s help.

**Pamela:** A beautiful women, Pamela is lured into Hannay’s adventure but is skeptical of his claims of innocence.

**Margaret:** Crofter the farmer’s wife, Margaret is a shy young woman who dreams of life and adventure in the city.

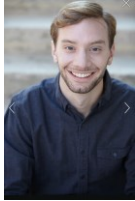
**Crofter:** A deeply jealous and suspicious Scottish farmer, Crofter houses Hannay for a night while he is on the run.

**Mr. Memory:** A stage performer, Mr. Memory has the ability to recall thousands of facts on command.

**Professor Jordan:** Surrounded in mystery, Professor Jordan may hold the key to learning what and who “The 39 Steps” are.

- partially excerpted from Utah Shakespeare Festival, 2010

# Meet the CAST!



## Trevor Buda (Clown)

Trevor is happy to return to Prime Stage after appearing in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* (Fenris Ulf). He is currently an actor in the touring productions of Saltworks Theater Company. Other credits include *The Metromaniacs* (Damis) at Little Lake Theater, *Hamlet* (Horatio), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Bertram), *Dracula* (John Seward), *As You Like It* (Silvius), and others with the Ohio Shakespeare Festival. He is a graduate of Baldwin Wallace University.

## Kendall Mason (Clown)

Kendall is so excited to be making her Prime Stage Theatre Debut with *The 39 Steps*. She recently graduated from The University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) with a degree in Performance and Leadership in the Arts with a minor in screenwriting. She has also studied classical acting at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. Her favorite past credits include: *The Skin of Our Teeth* (PlayMakers Repertory Company), *Girls Like That* (Paper Lantern Theatre), *Antony and Cleopatra* (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts), and *Colored* (Kenan Theatre Company).

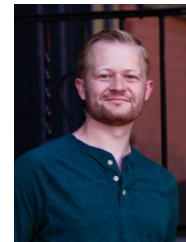


## Rachel Pfennigwerth (Pamela/Anabella/Margaret)

Rachel is excited to be with Prime Stage for a second production. Favorite credits include: *White Witch*, *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* Prime Stage; *Electra*, *Electra* Little Lake Theatre; *Kala*, *Tarzan* China National Tour; *Sheriff/Shop Lady*, *Bubble Boy the Musical*, *Arcade Comedy Theater*; *Logan*, *The Thanksgiving Play*, *Arcade*.

## Ryan Warsing (Richard Hannay)

Ryan is very gladly making his Prime Stage debut. He is predominantly an improviser and can commonly be seen at the Steel City Improv Theater, *Arcade Comedy Theater*, and most other stages that will have him. A native Pittsburgher, Ryan has also performed with the Virginia Shakespeare Company and various theaters throughout Chicago. He is a graduate of the Second City Conservatory and a former house improviser at Chicago's iO Theater. Ryan is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and has a degree in Theatre. He would like to thank his personal friend, Alfred Hitchcock, without whom this production would not be possible.



## And a Word From the DIRECTOR: Scott Calhoon!

**Converting a novel to film has its challenges.** *Mr. Hitchcock made numerous changes to the original story including plot twists, new locations and, of course, adding love interests for the leading man to give the film a broader appeal to both sexes. His film version included many of his trademark elements; a man on the run for a mistaken deed, a MacGuffin, a cameo or two and it was immediately hailed as a classic and even a masterpiece. So, certainly some bloke needed to convert it to a live stage production. How dodgy!*

**Converting a film and it's dozens of locations and hundreds of characters to a stage play is rather, shall we say, a tad more difficult.** *So, how does one accomplish this task? Well, hmm, brilliantly, of course. Let's have all the characters played by four actors and all the locations depicted with some found objects that we had lying about and then add a pinch of daft outlandishness, creativity, talent, sleight of hand and the pure magic of theatre! Easy, right? Let's check in with the costumer, the actors, the crew and....perhaps we should skip that part (no one threw a wobbly, at least) and just proclaim...I'm bloody gobsmacked! -Scott*

# Vocabulary List

Although Americans, Canadians and British all claim English as their native language, the passing of time combined with local customs and slang can make communication vary widely. In *The 39 Steps*, there are many words listed below which may be unfamiliar to you, in spite of the fact that you are reading this in English!

Also important to know: the actors are speaking in several different dialects - British, Scottish and German, to name just a few. And some dialogue words are deliberately hard to understand like "Blinds, luggage, haddock, and the location of Alt-na-Shellach, the place circled on Annabella's map of Scotland, doesn't actually exist. The name is Scots Gaelic gibberish that would translate out to something like "The article without willows". There is a real Highlands village called Achnashellach. Part of the fun of the parody in *The 39 Steps* is the "play" on many words!

Although in English, the Scottish dialect you will hear in *The 39 Steps* will sometimes sound like it is another language altogether! Take a listen to a Scottish dialect on this youtube link:



**WRITING PROMPT:** Write a paragraph or short story using as many of the following 44 vocabulary words as possible. Bonus points if you can find a clever way to use the malapropisms!!



1. **Liverish** - disagreeable; crabbed; melancholy
2. **Flat** - British; an apartment or suite of rooms on one floor forming a residence
3. **The West End** - the main entertainment district of London; England's equivalent to Broadway
4. **Compere** - a host or master of ceremonies (MC), especially of a stage entertainment or television program
5. **Malapropism** - the mistaken use of a word in place of a similar-sounding one, often with unintentionally amusing effect
6. **Exentrinsic/extrinsinsic** - a malapropism for extrinsic; not essential or inherent; extraneous
7. **Supernumary/supermernumary** - a malapropism for supernumerary; being in excess of the usual number or amount; extra
8. **Mae West** - an early film star who worked for seven decades, known for her bold commentaries on conservative opinions and social mores
9. **Haddock/herring** - fish from the North Atlantic ocean that are staple food in some parts of England and Scotland
10. **Persecution mania** - an irrational fear that other people are plotting one's downfall
11. **Trilbies** - hats made of soft felt with an indented crown





12. **Pub** - a bar or tavern
13. **Shakedown** - any makeshift bed
14. **Paroxysms** - any sudden, uncontrolled outburst; a sudden attack of emotion or action
15. **Pound note** - British currency, equivalent to the American dollar
16. **Garrulous** - excessively talkative in a rambling manner, especially about trivial matters
17. **Biscuit** - what the British call a cookie
18. **BBC** - British Broadcasting Corporation; publicly funded, the BBC is popularly considered to be old fashioned and conservative in its entertainment content
19. **The highlands** - the northern and western areas of Scotland
20. **Communication cord** - a chain a passenger on a train can pull to stop the train in an emergency
21. **Girders** - the main horizontal support beam used in construction used to support smaller beams
22. **Crofter** - a person who rents or owns a small farm in England and Scotland
23. **Itinerant** - working in a place for a short time and then moving to another location to work at a different job
24. **Harris tweed** - a very expensive, handwoven wool cloth
25. **Inhospitable** - not favorable conditions, barren
26. **Apprehension** - the act of arresting
28. **Acquaintances** - being casually familiar with someone
29. **Convey** - take from one place to another
30. **Mein lieblich** - German for: my darling
31. **Sentimental** - having tender feelings such as love, pity, or nostalgia
32. **Pusillanimous** - cowardly
33. **Amateur** - an unskilled or inexperienced person in a particular activity
34. **Garibaldi** - a particular sandwich cookie made with a squashed fruit filling
35. **Illustrious** - highly distinguished; famous
36. **Bracing** - strengthening
37. **Procurator Fiscal** - a public lawyer in Scotland who prosecutes cases involving fines, murder, and police investigations
38. **Stile** - a series of steps by means of which a person may pass over a wall or fence that is a barrier to cows or sheep
39. **Conspiracy** - an unlawful, evil plan created in secret by two or more people
40. **Ken** - Scottish; to know or understand
41. **Squeamish** - easily shocked by anything slightly immodest
42. **Madame Tausauds** - museum in London that displays full-sized wax statues of famous people
43. **London Palladium** - A theater in the West End entertainment district
44. **surreptitiously** - acting in a stealthy or secret way

-credit: [www.greatlakestheatre.org](http://www.greatlakestheatre.org)

# WHAT IS PARODY??

*Have you ever watched Saturday Night Live? Or read a publication called "The Onion"? Are you familiar with a singer named "Weird" Al Yankovic?*

All three of these American pop culture standards are considered excellent examples of **parody**. *Parody is the act of imitating a specific target in an exaggerated manner, making light or fun of it, for comedic effect.* **The 39 Steps** play, published in 2009, is a loving parody about the much more serious 1935 film of the same name directed by Alfred Hitchcock, which was based on the 1915 thriller by John Buchan.



Examples of popular American-style parody



**WRITING PROMPT:** Choose a famous sad and/or serious story that you know well, and write a paragraph or two about it as a parody. Look for elements of the plot and characters which you can exaggerate to the point that they seem funny to you. Bonus points if you include original dialogue (characters speaking in quotations) as part of the fun.

## PARODYING THE MASTER OF SUSPENSE:



### ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) was considered among the greatest film directors of the twentieth century. He directed more than fifty feature films during a career that spanned an incredible sixty years. He was nominated for the Best Director Academy Award (Oscar) five times, although he never took the award home. However, his films were nominated forty-six times and won six awards. His film *Vertigo* is widely considered to be one of the greatest film achievements of all time. Known as the “Master of Suspense”, Hitchcock utilized very specific and unexpected film angles and tight framing to convey anxiety and fear to the audience. Some of Hitchcock’s best-known films (and parodied in the play version of ***The 39 Steps***) are *Strangers On a Train*, *Rear Window*, and *North By Northwest*.

***The 39 Steps*** novel by John Buchan was very loosely adapted into a film directed by Hitchcock in 1935. Some of the significant changes from the novel to the film version included: the introduction of strong female characters (Pamela) and the change of location from the Scottish Highlands to the London Palladium during the most critical scene. The film was billed as a “spy thriller” and much of the plot of the film is also used in the play version.

The film is also notable for the introduction of one of Hitchcock’s signature stylistic choices: the Hitchcock Blonde. The Hitchcock Blonde was characterized as the female hero or anti-hero who presents as very cool and elegant, and almost always with a secret. The actress Madeline Carroll originated the Hitchcock Blonde in ***The 39 Steps***. In *North By Northwest*, the Hitchcock Blonde was portrayed by Eva Marie Saint, and in *Rear Window*, Grace Kelly.

Hitchcock also fully developed the thriller concept of the Man On the Run - usually a case of mistaken identity where the wrong man is being dangerously pursued, not unlike Richard Hannay. Cary Grant in *North By Northwest* is probably the most famous example of the Hitchcock Man On the Run.

***The 39 Steps*** play is a loving parody mash-up of several Hitchcockian themes and styles: the Hitchcock Blonde, the Man On The Run, the Spy as the Next Door Neighbor, and the Chase Sequence to name a few. It also has many sly references to other Hitchcock films.

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**CLASSROOM IDEAS:** Watch the film versions (or clips) of *The 39 Steps*, *Strangers On a Train*, and *North By Northwest* - ideally before viewing the play, but afterwards can work, as well. After viewing the performance at Prime Stage, ask the students to identify elements of Hitchcockian style, and references to other Hitchcock films. Discuss how successful the production was to bring these elements to life.

# ***The 39 Steps* - What's In A Name?**

***It's surprising what can inspire a book title.***

**JOURNAL ENTRY:** If you were writing a novel, what do you imagine would help inspire you? Some past significant experience? A tiny detail of life that you happened to notice one day? Nature? Pop Culture? Sports? Food? Take a few minutes to consider what inspires you and write out an outline for a story using that inspiration.



**John Buchan, Scottish Novelist & Statesman in 1939** - credit Getty images

JOHN BUCHAN entered into a career in diplomacy and government after graduating from Oxford. With the outbreak of the First World War, Buchan went to write for the British War Propaganda Bureau and worked as a correspondent in France for *The Times*. In 1915 he published his most famous work, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, a spy-thriller set just prior to the First World War. The novel featured Buchan's oft-used hero, Richard Hannay, whose character was based on Edmund Ironside, a friend of Buchan from his military service days in South Africa.

John Buchan wrote *The Thirty-Nine Steps* while he was ill in bed with a duodenal ulcer, an illness which remained with him all his life. **Buchan's son William later wrote that the name of the book originated when the author's daughter was counting the stairs at St Cuby, a private nursing home in Broadstairs, where Buchan was convalescing. "There was a wooden staircase leading down to the beach. My sister, who was about six, and who had just learnt to count properly, went down them and gleefully announced: there are 39 steps." There were actually 78, but he halved the number to make a better title.** -Wikipedia

# PROPS, PROPS, AND MORE PROPS

Four actors play literally hundreds of characters during *The 39 Steps*. One important way to help the actors convey both quick changes in character is by the use of stage properties (known as props).

**Props are movable objects used on stage by actors during performance.** During production development, they are usually collected by the Properties Master who finds very specific pieces that look and feel like the time period and needs of the play. The backstage running crew or stage manager will create a prop table for the actors to use during performance where the props are laid out in a very clear order to help the actors with very swift backstage changes.



Below is an actual example of a Prime Stage props list page for *The 39 Steps*. The page numbers correlate with the place in the script where each prop is needed.

- .....
- Pg 11 - Hannay's pipe
  - Pg 12 - Show program, opera glasses?, purse, gun that shoots out a "BANG" sign, printed questions that are to be handed to the audience pre-show, easel with Mr. Memory sign?
  - Pg 16- - paint supplies in a wagon, drop cloth
  - Pg 21 - map & trick knife
  - Pg 23 - milk bottles & carrier, pound notes, trench coat/hanger that hangs on the lamp post
  - Pg 25 - either a big duster or a vacuum cleaner
  - Pg 26 - samples case, suspender belt & bra, biscuits & tin/bag?, newspapers
  - Pg 34 - Alfred Hitchcock book, reading glasses
  - Pg 35 - birds/crows on sticks for flying above train
  - Pg 39 - hoe or rake?
  - Pg 41 - supper props, place settings, kitchen towel
  - Pg 43 - newspaper w/Hannay's face on it, large herrings (3)
  - Pg 44 - big binoculars w/eyes painted on the end and another bigger set of eyes that can 'magically' attach over the smaller eyes
  - Pg 45 - three different sizes of pairs of flashlights (to be car lights coming closer from the distance)
  - Pg 46 - five pound note, hymn book, window (rear), police whistles
  - Pg 49 - Doughnuts, squirt gun, Moor cutouts & puppets (2 policeman together, loch ness monster, Hannay, plane?)
  - Pg 54 - long cigarette holder and cigarette, gun (cap?)
  
  - Pg 61 - two silver bullets, hymn book, plate of garibaldi biscuits, whistles, handcuffs (longer chain), tea set, phone
  - Pg 64 - "parade contraption" (shoulder pole with parade outfits hanging from it)
  - Pg 72 - steering wheel, "headlight hats" for crew to wear at front of car while remote controlling the 'sheep on rumba wheels'
  - Pg 74 - pipe, water tub, glasses of water, hair pin, Hanky
  - Pg 81 - room keys, registration book, maybe a second book, pen
  - Pg 83 - tray of BIG sandwiches, whiskey glass, milk glass, pipe, maybe a tv tray table
  - Pg 89 - phone, hotel desk bell
  - Pg 96 - professor's cigarette holder, binoculars or opera glasses, easel, & 'Act signs' (2), police whistles
  - Pg 100 - gun (cap), professor dummy
  - Pg 105 - Christmas tree (lit), box of snow, step ladder
- .....

## REAL-LIFE LOCATIONS IN THE 39 STEPS:

### THE LONDON PALLADIUM & THE FORTH BRIDGE



Built in the early 1910's, The London Palladium is arguably the best known theatre in London's West End. It holds 2,286 seats and is the location of the suspenseful turning point in both the stage and film version of *The 39 Steps*.

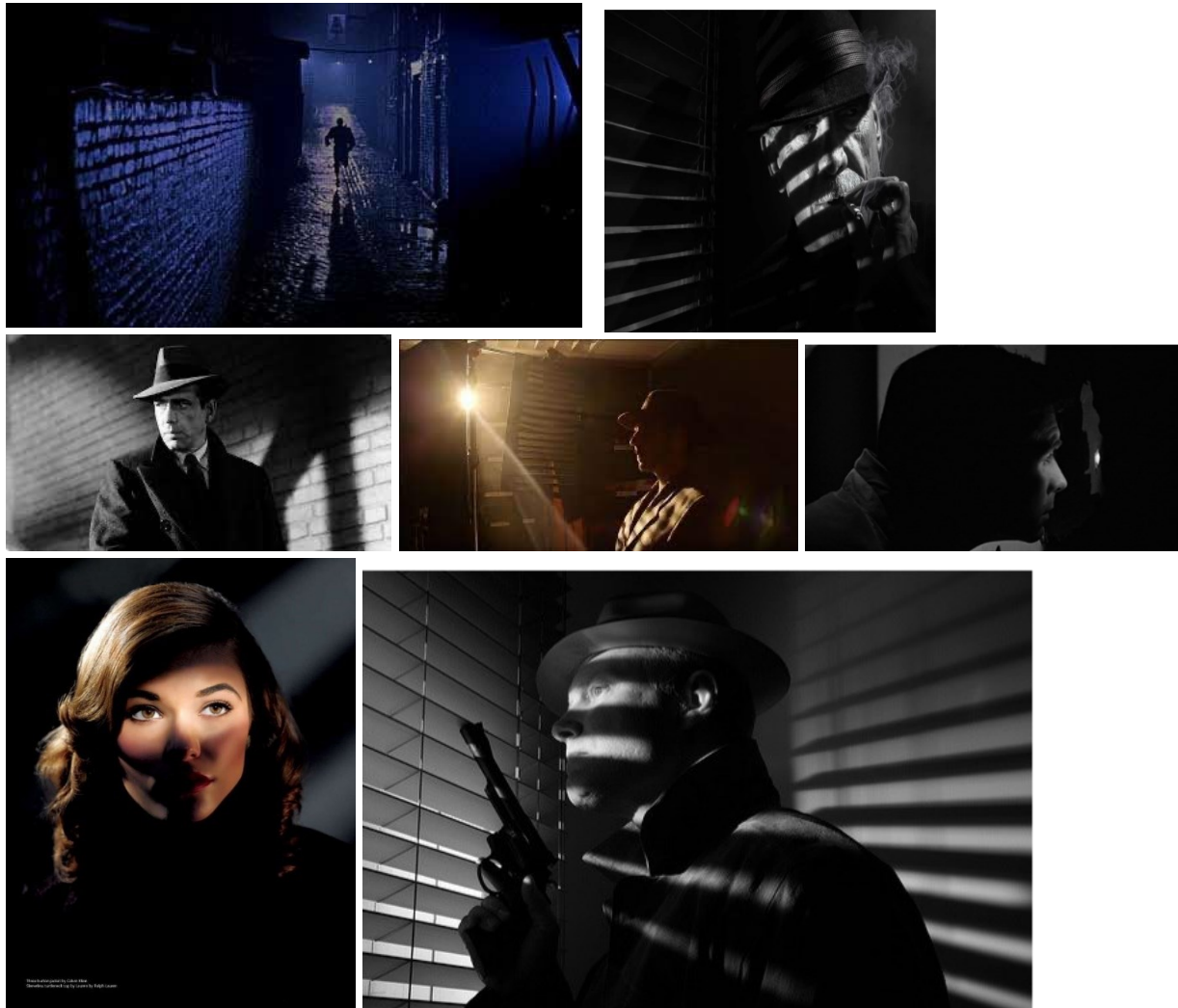


Built between 1882 and 1889, the Forth Bridge is an UNESCO World Heritage Site. Located just a few miles west of Edinburgh Scotland, the Forth Bridge is an example of cantilever: an architectural structure which projects horizontally into space and is supported only by one end. One of the most creative scenes in *The 39 Steps* is a “re-creation” of this bridge using basic stage props and scenery.

Credit: Wikipedia

## LIGHTING DESIGN INSPIRATION

**Hope Debelius** is the Lighting Designer for Prime Stage's production of *The 39 Steps*. Frequently, Designers will put together an Inspiration Collage or Book to help convey the "feel" or style of their design. This grouping below is part of Hope's Inspiration Board. Note the use of elongated shadows and light peering through the window blinds. The feel is very similar to Film Noir and suggests espionage and mystery - themes that are central to *The 39 Steps*.



**HOME ACTIVITY:** Create your own Inspiration Board for *The 39 Steps*. Lighting, props, sound cues. Use photographic images, fabrics, or even spray fragrances on paper that make your vision more specific or vivid. Anything goes! Write about your decisions in your journal and explain why you made them.

# “PLAYING” WITH THE SCRIPT -

## TWO ACTING EXERCISES FOR THE CLASSROOM:

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In *The 39 Steps*, the four actors utilize many props, such as the steamer trunks you might see on a passenger train in the 1930's. These trunks are re-imagined as train compartment seats and endowed with a new purpose.

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### OBJECT ENDOWMENT EXERCISE

First assemble a laundry basket full of 25-30 different everyday objects from the house and the classroom - think chalkboard erasers, pencils, small water bottles, wooden cooking spoons, dish towels, etc. What is important is that the objects have a good variety in size and shape.

Then ask a student to select an object from the basket. After they have made their choice, ask them to mimic using the object for its intended purpose. Example: “stirring” a pot with the wooden cooking spoon. Then, ask the student to “reimagine” the object as something that it is not. Example: the chalkboard eraser might become a chocolate bar. After the student tries to change the object a few more times and runs out of ideas, someone in the audience can call out “Switch!” At this point, that person will “tag” out the first one and continue the game with another object.

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In the play version of *The 39 Steps* there are so many scenes, characters, sound effects and lighting changes that the four actors must be available to change direction quickly during a performance if something doesn't go according to plan. This sometimes requires improvisation with their fellow performers to keep the action moving.

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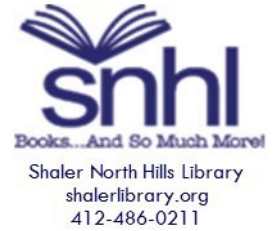
### WHAT ARE YOU DOING? EXERCISE

Select a student to come forward and begin to mime a normal everyday activity. Examples: building a snowman, hanging a picture on the wall, preparing the ingredients to make soup. The student should not say out loud what the activity is that they are doing. After observing the student silently performing their task for a minute or so, send another student into the scene to ask: "what are you doing"? At that point, the first student will say out loud what they've been doing and the second student will silently assist them in their activity. Every minute or so, add another student to the scene. The students must look to each other for visual clues as how to proceed. The exercise is finished when the activity has been completed.



## Suggested Reading List for Prime Stage Theatre: The 39 Steps

Shaler North Hills Library  
1822 Mt. Royal Blvd  
Glenshaw PA 15116  
shalerlibrary.org  
412-486-0211



If this play has piqued your interest, why not check out a book or movie and explore more? Your public libraries have many online resources you can access from home through Libby or Hoopla. Check your library's website for help in getting started.

### Children Books

#### ***Who was Alfred Hitchcock?* by Pam Pollack**

Known as one of the most influential filmmakers of all time, Alfred Hitchcock's unique vision in movies like *Psycho* and *The Birds* sent shivers down our spines and shockwaves through the film industry. His innovative camera techniques have been studied for decades and his gift for storytelling cemented his place in history.

#### ***The Mysterious Benedict Society (series)* by Trenton Lee Stewart**

Their challenge: to go on a secret mission that only the most intelligent and inventive children could complete. To accomplish it, they will have to go undercover at the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, where the only rule is that there are no rules. But what they'll find in the hidden underground tunnels of the school is more than your average school supplies. So, if you're gifted, creative, or happen to know Morse Code, they could probably use your help.

#### ***The Mystery of the Moon Tower (Pathfinder series)* by Francesco Sedita**

Summer camp just became a whole lot more interesting when five curious kids accept a mysterious project- work together as a team to uncover a series of strange clues, reveal a secret path--and follow its twists and turns to a legendary treasure!

#### ***39 Clues (series)* by Rick Riordan**

Grace is the last matriarch of the Cahills, the world's most powerful family, yet the source of the family power is lost. 39 clues hidden around the world will reveal the family's secret, but no one has been able to assemble them. Now the clues race is on, and young Amy and Dan must decide what's important: hunting clues or uncovering what REALLY happened to their parents.

#### ***Book Scavenger (series)* by Jennifer Chambliss Bertman**

Racing against time, Emily and James rush from clue to clue, desperate to figure out the secret at the heart of Griswold's new game—before those who attacked Griswold come after them too.

#### ***The Case of the Case of Mistaken Identity* by Mac Barnett**

When Steve borrows the wrong book from the library, he finds himself involved in a treasonous plot that pits him against helicopter-rappelling librarians, has him outwitting a gaggle of police, and sees him standing off against the mysterious Mr. E. And all his Bailey Brothers know-how isn't helping at all!

## **Teen Books:**

### ***The Screaming Staircase* by Jonathan Stroud**

Dive into the first book of this frightfully fun series and join the ghost-hunting gang as they defend our world from the most fearsome phantoms!

### ***Stormbreaker (Alex Rider series)* by Anthony Horowitz**

They said his uncle Ian died in a car accident. But Alex Rider knows that's a lie, and the bullet holes in the windshield prove it. Yet he never suspected the truth: his uncle was really a spy for Britain's top-secret intelligence agency. And now Alex has been recruited to find his uncle's killers . . .

### ***I'd Tell You I Love You, but Then I'd Have to Kill You (series)* by Ally Carter**

Cammie Morgan is a student at the Gallagher Academy for Exceptional Young Women, a fairly typical all-girls school -- that is, if every school taught advanced martial arts in PE and the latest in chemical warfare in science, and students received extra credit for breaking CIA codes in computer class. The Gallagher Academy might claim to be a school for geniuses but it's really a school for spies.

### ***The Last Thing I Remember (Homelander series)* by Andrew Klavan**

Charlie West just woke up in someone else's nightmare. He's strapped to a chair. He's covered in blood and bruises. He hurts all over. And a strange voice outside the door just ordered his death. The last thing he can remember, he was a normal high-school kid doing normal things--working on his homework, practicing karate, daydreaming of becoming an air force pilot, writing a pretty girl's number on his hand. How long ago was that? Where is he now? Who is he really?

## **Adult**

### ***The Thirty-Nine Steps* by John Buchan**

Checkout the novel that inspired the play and movie adaptation!

In *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the best-known of his thrillers (made into a popular movie by Alfred Hitchcock), John Buchan introduces his most enduring hero, Richard Hannay, who, despite claiming to be an "ordinary fellow," is caught up in the dramatic and dangerous race against a plot to devastate the British war effort.

### ***Strangers on a Train* by Patricia Highsmith**

Here we encounter Guy Haines and Charles Anthony Bruno, passengers on the same train. But while Guy is a successful architect in the midst of a divorce, Bruno turns out to be a sadistic psychopath who manipulates Guy into swapping murders with him. "Some people are better off dead," Bruno remarks, "like your wife and my father, for instance." As Bruno carries out his twisted plan, Guy is trapped in Highsmith's perilous world, where, under the right circumstances, anybody is capable of murder.

### ***The Riddle of the Sands* by Erskine Childers**

Two amateur sailors-sleuths are pitted against the secret forces of mighty Germany, before World War I. Powers of deduction and navigational skills prove important in uncovering a plot which threatens personal and national security.

### ***N or M?* by Agatha Christie**

Set during the dark days of World War II, Tommy and Tuppence Beresford are put on the trail of a pair of Nazi spies who have murdered Britain's top agent. World War II is raging, and while the RAF struggles to keep the Luftwaffe at bay, Britain faces a sinister threat from "the enemy within"--Nazis posing as ordinary citizens. Their mission: to seek out a man and a woman from among the colorful guests at Sans Souci, a seaside hotel. But this assignment is far from an easy stroll along the promenade--N and M have just murdered Britain's finest agent and no one can be trusted.

### **Check Out These Films...**

#### ***Alfred Hitchcock's: The Thirty-Nine Steps (1935) directed by Alfred Hitchcock***

An innocent Canadian while visiting England is implicated in the theft of national secrets and murder.

#### ***The 39 Steps (2010 BBC version) directed by James Hawes III***

Rupert Penry Jones headlines this tale of intrigue based on the bestselling novel by author John Buchan. London, 1914: Richard Hanney (Jones) has just returned from a stint in Africa, and he's already bored with life back home. That is, until he crosses paths with a man named Scudder (Eddie Marsan). Shortly after revealing himself to be a British spy, Scudder winds up dead in Hanney's flat, and it appears that Hanney is about to take the fall for the murder.

#### ***The Lady Vanishes (1938) directed by Alfred Hitchcock***

While traveling by train in continental Europe, a rich young playgirl realizes that an elderly lady seems to have disappeared into thin air. The young woman then turns investigator and finds herself drawn into a complex web of mystery and high adventure.

#### ***North by Northwest (1959) directed by Alfred Hitchcock***

While having lunch at the Plaza Hotel in New York, advertising executive Roger O. Thornhill (Cary Grant) has the bad luck to call for a messenger just as a page goes out for a "George Kaplan." From that moment, Thornhill finds that he has stepped into a nightmare -- he is quietly abducted by a pair of armed men out of the hotel's famous Oak Room and transported to a Long Island estate; there, he is interrogated by a mysterious man (James Mason) who, believing that Roger is George Kaplan, demands to know what he knows about his business and how he has come to acquire this knowledge.

#### ***The Most Dangerous Game (1932) directed by Irving Pichel***

The most dangerous game: The sole survivor of a yachting accident swims to a mysterious island to save himself, where he is welcomed by the Count and introduced to two other survivors. The Count is a big game hunter and the three guests soon find that he has grown bored with hunting animals and is after a new prey ....

(Descriptions condensed from Amazon.com, Wikipedia, and GoodReads)