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present

God of CARNAGE

by Yasmina Reza

February 28-March 24, 2012 • OneAmerica Stage

TEACHER PACKET

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God of CARNAGE

by Yasmina Reza

Veronica and Michael Novak invite Annette and Alan Raleigh over to discuss an incident of playground violence between their two 11-year-old sons: Benjamin Raleigh struck Henry Novak in the face with a stick, breaking

two teeth and causing nerve damage. A calm and rational discussion between two sets of parents quickly devolves into rudeness, insults, name-calling, profanity, and vandalism. *God of Carnage* makes audiences wonder how close to the surface the savage beast is in all of us. (**Contains adult language**)

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Comedy of Bad Manners

by Janet Allen, Artistic Director

Drawing room comedies are predicated on the joy we experience in seeing other people behave badly. (And P.S. Actors get a big kick out of pulling all the stops out, too!)

So, here in the late winter and early spring, we have decided to bring you not one, but two drawing room comedies. Thus we can both delight in the stylistic differences and yet discover how very little things have changed in human behavior in the 81 years that separate Coward's original writing of *Fallen Angels* (1925) and Yazmina Reza's *God of Carnage* (2006). In both plays, we witness two marriages nearly go boom; but in the safety of the comedic format, we trust that order will be resumed just before the precipice is reached!

Contemporary French playwright, novelist, and social commenter Yazmina Reza has crafted several plays that have defied probability: they have survived translation from French into both British and American idioms to become huge hits on the West End and on Broadway. (Earlier works of hers include *Art*, which we produced here at the IRT in 2002.) *God of Carnage* won both the Olivier Award and the Tony Award for Best Play in 2009, and this season is one of the most produced plays in American regional theatres. And now, Ms. Reza has truly navigated the leap into popular culture with the Roman Polanski film *Carnage*, which Ms. Reza adapted from her own play.

What's surprising about this success is how very socially and culturally specific comedy is: anybody knows this that has watched a British sitcom and found it only marginally funny. Reza has a knack for picking subjects and situations that transcend the specificity of culture and allow us to stand united, with all our many peccadilloes exposed. She's a master at inviting us to first revel in how sophisticated and urbane we think we are as an international culture—how well read, how well travelled, what great foodies we are, how tolerant we are, how uncorrupted we are by privilege. Then she pulls the rug out from under that sophistication by showing what a thin veneer it is over the decidedly uncivilized (but hilarious) behavior that lurks beneath. It's not for nothing that there is a swirl of jokes in *God of Carnage* about what it is to be a Neanderthal.

So, we invite you to enjoy, compare, or simply revel in the joy of adults behaving like children in *God of Carnage* and *Fallen Angels*. It's so much more fun to watch others do it than actually do it ourselves! No, we don't really behave that badly ourselves, do we? Oops!



Misbehaving

by James Still, Director



Two sets of parents meet to "discuss" an "incident" that has occurred between their 11-year-old sons. The situation announces itself quickly and clearly and even a little obviously, which is part of the point. With little external plot and a situation and setting that don't change, *God of Carnage* is a play about characters who wrestle with the terrors of parenting by wrestling with each other, and before you can say broken teeth and hamsters, you're screaming about tulips, vomit, and rum.

Sometimes the brilliance of a play is that it seems real—and then some. It's one of the things I admire about Yasmina Reza's writing: she can make you believe you're watching real people dealing with a real situation even as she keeps pushing her characters (and the characters in turn keep pushing the audience) more and more and more. And more. Part of the skill is that this emotional escalation seems to happen without us quite knowing how or when. We can't seem to make ourselves look away. We don't want them to stop misbehaving, and we don't want to stop laughing.

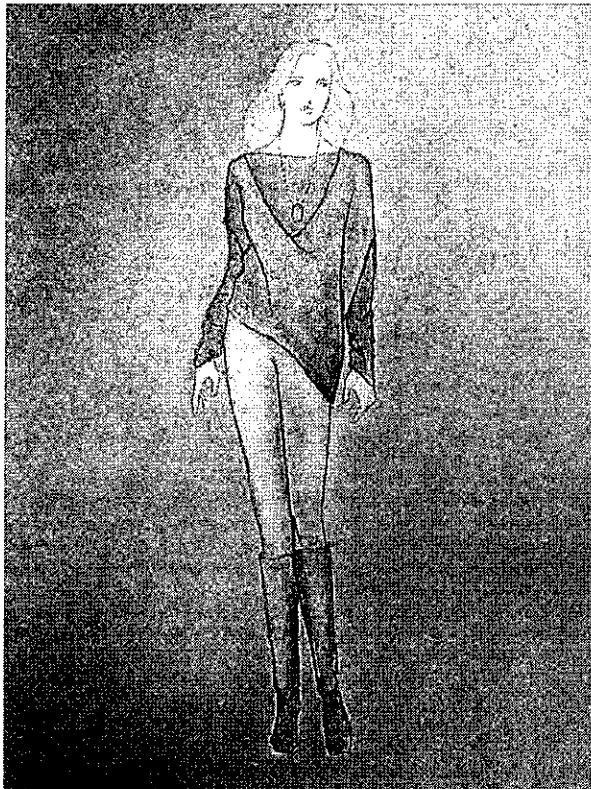
Balancing somewhere uncannily between post-modern drawing room comedy, existential despair, reality TV, and emotional theatricality, *God of Carnage* lets none of us off the hook. And that's a good thing. In the world as imagined by Ms. Reza, characters say the unspeakable, express their outrage, and reveal their ugly flaws, all with the sly result of daring the rest of us to try denying our own similarities to the characters onstage. Ms. Reza makes us face many sticky truths, including this one: it's a cathartic relief to watch other people say some of the things we secretly wish to say ourselves. We love to watch grownups misbehave.

Social satire. Cultural mirror. Theatrical voyeurism. It reminds me of being in a seemingly "normal" social situation where everyone is trying mightily to be nice and fair—but then little bubbles begin appearing above our heads filled with our true thoughts and feelings without filter or decorum. *God of Carnage* goes a long way toward exposing the hypocrite in all of us: the anxious adult who can quickly make a mess of things, the naughty child who's always lurking just below the surface. Directing *God of Carnage* (and being its audience too) reminds me of this dirty secret: inside every parent is a child just waiting to throw a fit. It's never felt so good to be so bad.

Civilization ...

Guy Clark Costume Designer

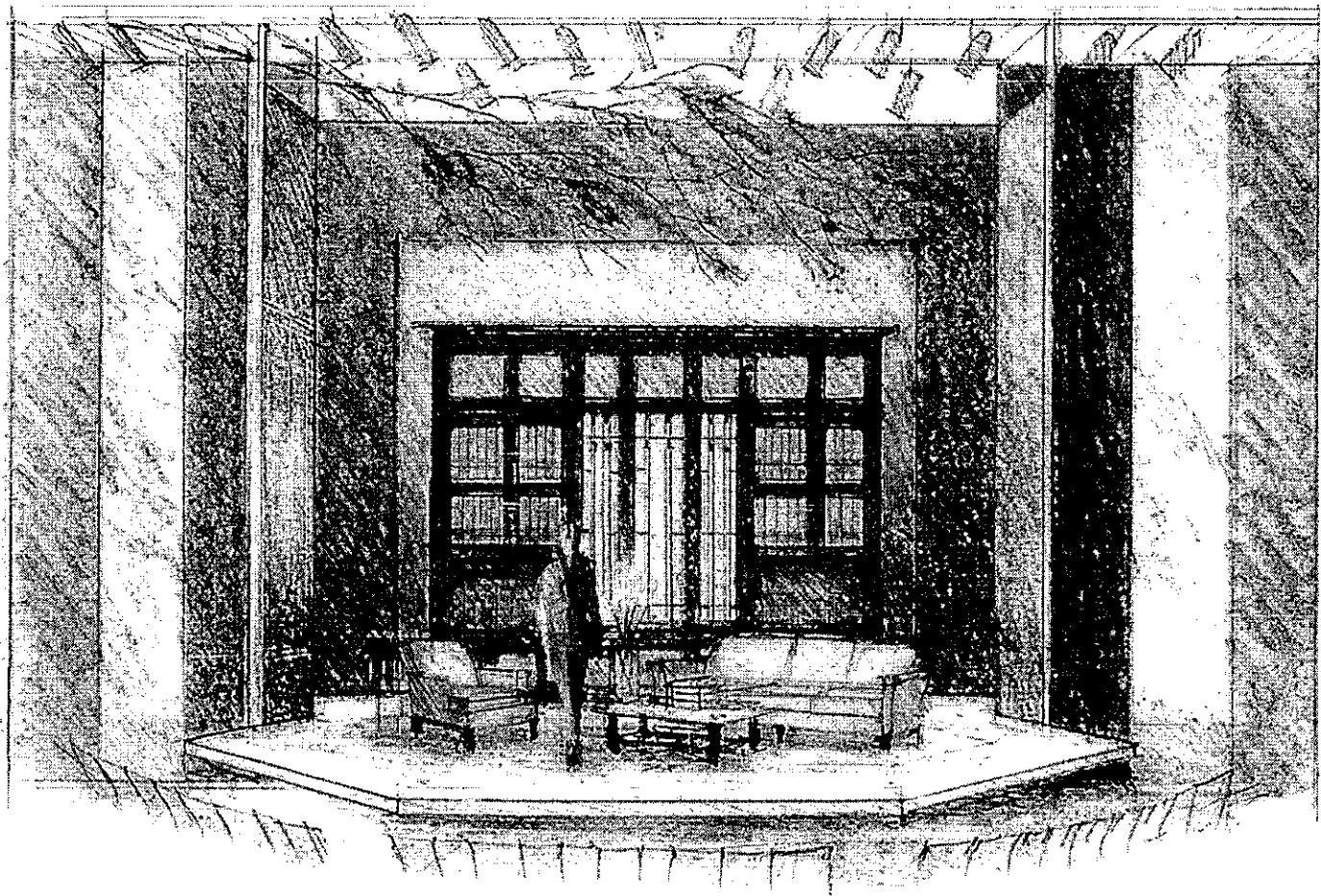
Every time we get dressed, we put on a costume. Rooting through our overflowing closets, we try—some days with more finesse than others—to pull together an outfit that we hope will be appropriate for whatever we have planned that day. Work or play, even lounging around the house, require different types of clothing. Much more than personal style shapes our choices: age, weather, occupation, even how fat we feel—all these factors influence what we wear. Costuming a contemporary play like *God of Carnage* involves a similar process: all the characters need to be attired for whatever they imagined this particular November afternoon would hold for them. The designer, however, gets to cheat. He knows how the story will end, and so takes care to ensure that the actors are equipped for what their characters don't see coming.



Costume renderings by designer Guy Clark for Veronica and Alan.

Michael Lincoln Lighting Designer

God of Carnage is a play that has everything to do with the room these four people are in and almost nothing obvious to do with the lighting of that room. There is no need for fancy theatrical effects or much of a sense of time of day. What is important is that this room is perfectly ordered and unblemished, like its owners ... until it isn't, which is the fun of the play. If I succeed in lighting this production, you probably won't even notice my work. Which is just as it should be.



IRT GOD OF CARNAGE RM '11

Preliminary scenic sketch by designer Russell Metheny.

Playwright Yasmina Reza

Yasmina Reza is a world-renowned playwright, largely on the basis of two very famous plays: *Art*, which the IRT produced in 2002, and more recently *God of Carnage*. But she started her career as an actor. Her plays have been described as acting showcases, displaying a real understanding of the relationship between actor and script. The *Complete Review* says that, as an actress, she has an "ear for what works on stage. Her dialogue is often sharp.... Plays such as *Art* ... [rise] and [fall] with what the actors can do with their roles." As a result, Reza's plays resonate with actors, attracting some of the biggest names on Broadway and in Hollywood.

What draws actors is the fact that Reza's works are character-driven and focused on relationships, or the lack thereof, and the tensions that arise in the normal course of even the most mundane of human interactions. That focus on character also resonates with audiences: few contemporary plays have experienced the international success that *Art* and *God of Carnage* have. *Art* has been translated into more than thirty languages and continues to fill theatres around the world. Audience interest in *Art* and *God of Carnage* has carried over to Reza's other plays as well.

Yasmina Reza was born in 1959 in Paris. Her background is international; her parents are Jewish. Her mother is a Hungarian violinist and her father is a successful businessman of Russian and Iranian descent. Yasmina was an intelligent child, and her father's affluence allowed her parents to instill in their family a love for art in all its forms. She says: "I grew up with wonderful parents in cultured and comfortable circumstances. My father never bought anything extravagant or expensive except art, when he had the means."

Despite her mother's musical influence, Yasmina's artistic talents bent more toward the literary and theatrical. She studied theatre at University Paris West in Nanterre, and later pursued intensive actor's training at the internationally renowned Jacques Lecoq Drama School in Paris.

As a professional actor, Reza kept fairly busy in both contemporary and classic roles, but between rehearsals and performances, she felt there was a lot of down time. She says: "Early in my acting career I saw it was a life of waiting and dependence. Writing I could do by myself, for myself." So she began writing plays. She completed her first play, *Conversations after a Burial*, in 1987, and she won the Molière Award for Best Author, the French equivalent of the Tony. She followed that up by translating a stage adaptation of Franz Kafka's novel *The Metamorphosis* for Roman Polanski. Her second original play, *Winter Crossing*, premiered in 1990 and won the Molière Award for Best Fringe Production.

In 1994, her play *Art* premiered in Paris. In the play, over the course of 90 minutes, three men feud over an all-white painting. But their discussions about the meaning of modern art are really about the meaning of friendship. After winning the Molière Award in France in 1997, the play won the Olivier Award in London, and in 1998 it came to New York and won the Tony Award. Since then has been performed around the world in more than 30 languages. It is estimated that the play has earned more than \$300 million worldwide.

Her subsequent plays have included *The Unexpected Man* (1995), *Life X 3* (2000), and *A Spanish Play* (2004). All three have been produced in theatres throughout Europe, North America, and Australia. She has also written screenplays for small European films, as well as three novels: *Hammerklavier* (2000), *Desolation* (2002), and *Adam Haberberg* (2008).

Over 2006 and 2007 she spent a year with Nicolas Sarkozy as he pursued the French Presidency. She traveled alongside him on the campaign and even sat in on many of his private meetings. After he was elected, there was an international media frenzy in anticipation of her book, *L'Aube le Soir ou la Nuit (Dawn Evening or Night)*. It was a best-seller before it hit the bookstores. When it was finally published, readers found no analysis of policy or politics, but instead a deeply personal encounter between an artist and a politician. Reza focused not on Sarkozy's electoral victory but on what she sees as his obsessive hunger for power. Reactions were mixed. The newspaper *Le Parisien* called it a "fabulous portrait of a singular man." *Le Monde* found it "caustic, at times cruel, above all juicy." The *Independent* asked Reza whether Sarkozy, an infamous ladies man, had ever tried to seduce her. She replied, "No, he wanted to seduce France." Then, she added a line that could work well in one of her plays: 'It is almost insulting to spend an entire year with a man without him trying to seduce you."

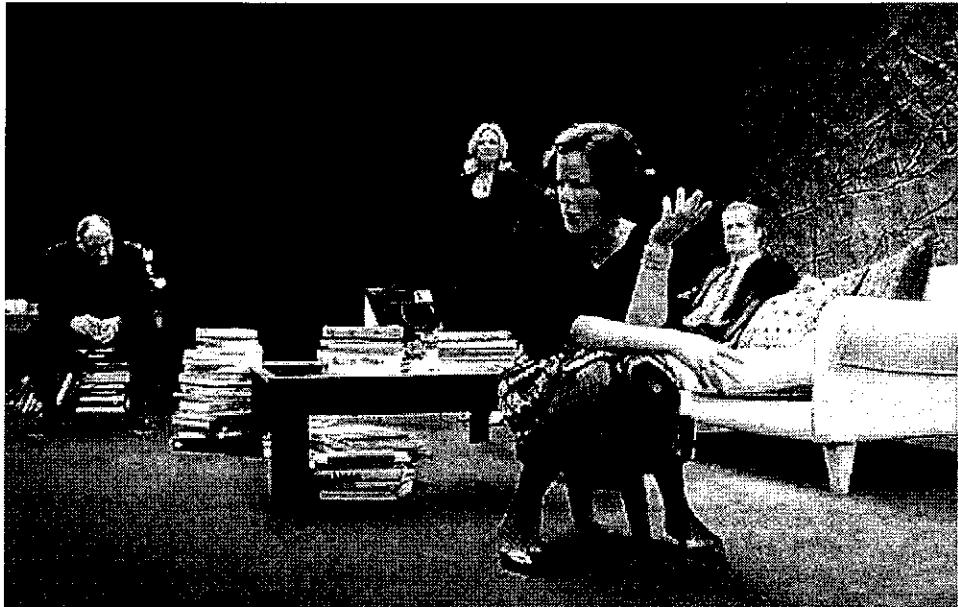


Reza has a talent for capturing the current zeitgeist, and the result is she's a very wealthy woman. But she pays a price for success in a certain amount of critical disdain. In France, especially, the intellectual elite feel that if she is popular, she must not be very good. *Libération* wrote that Reza was the perfect mirror for Nicolas Sarkozy as they are both "dry, unforgiving, ambitious, without doubt or subtlety, Balzacian species who love putting up a good show and whose willpower is their only redemption."

Theatre critics also tend to give Reza back-handed compliments. Caryn James of the *New York Times* wrote: "She is a born satirist, a gifted and wry observer of the absurdities and feints of social life," as well as "the small self-deceptions that help us all survive.... Yet in her slender dramas and fictions she has also set herself up as a mini-Proust, grasping at immense themes that elude her: the slipstream of time, the isolation of individuals and especially of artists."

God of Carnage was first performed in Zürich, Switzerland, in 2006. The play concerns two sets of parents who get together to try to resolve a dispute between their children, and find that children are not the only ones who misbehave. In 2008, the play was performed in Paris. Later that year it was performed in London in an English translation by Christopher Hampton, and it won the Olivier Award.

*God of Carnage
on Broadway with
James Gandolfini,
Hope Davis,
Marcia Gay Harden,
and Jeff Daniels.*



The play opened on Broadway in 2009 with a high-powered cast: Jeff Daniels, Hope Davis, James Gandolfini, and Marcia Gay Harden. All four actors were nominated for Tony Awards, and Marcia Gay Harden won for Best Actress. The production also won Tonys for Best Director (Matthew Warchus) and Best Play. It was sold out for 8 months and ran for more than a year.

A film version was released in December. It was directed by Roman Polanski and the title is simply *Carnage*. It stars Jodie Foster, John. C. Reilly, Christoph Waltz, and Kate Winslet. Unlike the play, the film has not been a great success. Many who have seen it have felt that the story is too confined on a realistic movie set, and that the actors need the large space of a theatre to really express the play's emotions.

Like all Reza's plays, *God of Carnage* requires a small cast and minimal staging—this makes her plays very popular with producers. This season, there are 23 regional theatre productions scheduled across the nation, more than any other play except *A Christmas Carol*.

Along with all the awards and the sold-out houses, however, there have been critical ups and downs. The *New York Times* said: "Ms. Reza's streamlined anatomy of the human animal incite[s] the kind of laughter that comes from the gut, as involuntary as hiccups or belching." But the *Financial Times* said: "I left the theatre thinking I may never laugh again." Many audiences have found the play extremely funny, but also disturbing. The *Los Angeles Times* called it: "an acidic exploration of middle-class savagery and liberal hypocrisy." The *New York Times* concluded that yes, *God of Carnage* may be "a familiar comic journey from A to B, but it travels first class."

Yasmina Reza is that rarity, a foreign-language playwright who has made a success in the United States. Ever since *Art*, all of her plays have been translated by Christopher Hampton, who is himself a highly respected English playwright and screenwriter. Hampton has talked about how his relationship with Reza has changed over the years. He says he always tries to be faithful to the author's intention, but when he translated *Art*, Reza could not speak English, so the process was pretty straightforward. Now, however, she has learned English, and she has opinions, so his translation work is much harder.

The London and Broadway productions of *Art* used the same text. When *God of Carnage* came to Broadway, however, it was thought there might be a few terms that needed to be "Americanized." Hampton says, "English and American English are really two separate languages, and it's an enjoyable game." The playwright, the translator, and the director sat down with the cast a few days before rehearsals began. They wound up with many changes, many more than in *Art*.

Along the way, they decided to change the location as well. For the London production, the play had maintained its original setting in France. James Gandolfini in particular was uncertain that he would be convincing as a Frenchman. Hope Davis lived in Brooklyn, so she was able to give advice about which parks the characters would visit and where to buy flowers. But they made no changes to the story itself. Hampton says, "Yasmina is very specific about everything. She doesn't really want anything to appear in front of the audience that she didn't write. Sometimes she gets exasperated. Once, she took me aside, and in an exasperated way said, 'English is such a poor language!'"

As an actor herself, Reza knows the theatre world inside-out. She writes first of all for actors. *American Theatre* magazine says: "The truth is that half the reason her plays get done is because actors want to do them. Her plays are so chewy for actors.... There's a crackling surface there for a performer." And the *Independent* says: "Reza serves actors great parts, saucy lines, and crunchy monologues on a platter. And they come back asking for more."

Reza says that her experience as an actress certainly influences the way she writes for the stage, but that she sees no real distinction between her acting and her writing. To her, they are simply parts of her that seemed to naturally mesh. She says: "I don't feel writing is my profession. I don't know what my profession is. I loved the theatre, and I loved words, so it was logical to write for theatre."

The French arts magazine *Telerama* wrote that famous actors dream of parts in Reza's plays because of her masterful use of silence. "[Reza] has a wonderful way with ellipses, those rejoinders embroidered on the thread of the essential, apparently simplistic, but in which any great actor can hint at great depths through perfectly timed, almost musical silences." Reza agrees. She says, "Most writers don't know that actors are never better than in the pauses or in the subtext. They give actors too many words. In a play, words are parentheses to the silences. They're useful for the actors, but ... they aren't the whole story."

Audiences who have enjoyed a good laugh at *Art* and *God of Carnage* may be surprised to know that the playwright did not intend them to be comedies. In fact, she worries that because people are laughing, they may not take her ideas seriously. She says, "My plays are tragedy, funny tragedy. To me, *Art* is heartbreaking."

The *Independent* says "she can achieve one of the most difficult things: making people laugh at themselves. In France, they call her humor Anglo-Saxon. She calls it Jewish. Others have described it as incisive, cruel, bitter, furious, narcissistic, compact, vicious, and stinging. She does what her [French] compatriots do best: she dissects the bourgeoisie with the playfulness and insouciance of a child discovering life by dismembering insects. She then crucifies her characters as a lepidopterist pins butterflies to a board. Asked whether she is a moralist, she replies: 'It is not for me to say, but theatre is a mirror, a sharp reflection of society. The greatest playwrights are moralists.'"

Translator Christopher Hampton

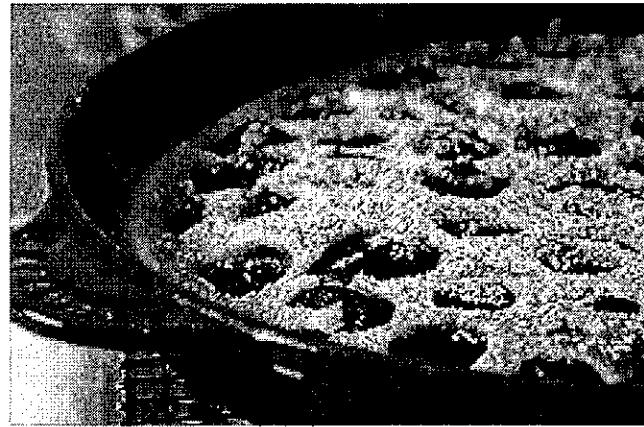
Christopher Hampton is a British playwright, screenwriter, and film director. His play *When Did You Last See My Mother?* was produced at the Royal Court Theatre and then transferred to London's West End in 1966, making the 20-year-old Hampton the youngest writer to have a play performed in the West End in the modern era. His 1975 play *Treats* was produced by the IRT in 1981 in its first season here at the Indiana Theatre. His stage adaptation of Pierre Choderlos de Laclos's 1782 novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* won the 1985 Olivier Award and was nominated for the 1987 Tony Award for Best Play. Hampton won the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay in 1988 for *Dangerous Liaisons*. With Don Black he wrote the book for Andrew Lloyd Weber's 1993 musical adaptation of *Sunset Boulevard*. Other Broadway productions include his play *The Philanthropist* and his adaptations of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Chekhov's *The Seagull* as well as his translations of Yasmina Reza's *Art*, *Life x 3*, and *God of Carnage*. Hampton was Oscar nominated again in 2007 for adapting Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement*. His latest project is an English translation of Michael Kunze and Sylvester Levay's Austrian musical *Rebecca*, based on the book by Daphne du Maurier and scheduled for Broadway production this spring.



Clafouti

Clafoutis or clafouti (pronounced *kla-foo-TEE*) is a French country dessert from the Limousin region that has become very popular in North America. Traditionally it was made with the first sweet cherries of the season, and the cherries were left unpitted so their kernels could release their delicate almond flavor as they baked. Today, most people prefer this dish with pitted cherries, which makes the clafouti much easier to eat. A clafouti is a pudding of sorts, with the sweet cherries covered by a thin pancake-like batter and baked in a hot oven until the batter has set with nicely browned and slightly puffed edges. The clafouti should be served immediately with a dusting of confectioner's sugar

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large eggs
2 tablespoons granulated white sugar
3/4 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3/4 - 1 pound fresh sweet cherries, pitted
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 tablespoons granulated white sugar



Preheat the oven to 425 degrees and place the rack in the center of the oven. Wash the cherries, remove the stems and pits.

In your food processor or blender place the flour, salt, eggs, 2 tablespoons sugar, milk, and vanilla extract. Process for about 45 - 60 seconds, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Once the batter is completely smooth, let it rest while you prepare the fruit.

In a large 9- inch heavy nonstick ovenproof skillet melt the butter over medium heat, making sure the melted butter coats the bottom and sides of the pan. When the butter is bubbling, add the pitted cherries, and cook until the cherries have softened a bit and are coated with butter (2 - 3 minutes). Then sprinkle the cherries with the sugar and cook until the sugar has dissolved and turns into a syrup (1 - 2 minutes). Pour the batter over the cherries and bake for about 20 minutes or until the clafoutis is puffed, set, and golden brown around the edges. Do not open the oven door until the end of the baking time or it may collapse.

Serve immediately with a dusting of confectioner's sugar and yogurt, creme fraiche, or softly whipped cream.

recipe from joyofbaking.com

Questions for Discussion

What were your thoughts upon first seeing the set? What did it tell you about the story and the characters who live there?

Why do the women have a different reaction to children having gangs than do the men? What other issues arise in the play where the gender difference is clearly evident and adds to the play's conflicts?

Why is it difficult to make apologies? Do you think it is easier when you are younger or older? Why? Do you think it is more difficult for women or men? Why?

What do we learn about the children's behavior from watching their parents interact?

Would you say we lose our childish behavior or do we simply take on adult behavior? What are examples of childish behavior surfacing in adults? Are people in any particular profession said to perpetuate childish behavior more than others?

Think about the "breaking point" for each character—the incident when you noticed his or her behavior had a major change. What was the immediate event that triggered this reaction? Did you see it coming? Or did it surprise you? How did the character's behavior change? How did this change in one character's behavior change the behavior of the other characters?

Early in the play, the two ladies talk about the art work of Francis Bacon. In what ways do their comments about his work parallel the themes of *God of Carnage*? Look at some of his paintings in books or online. How do these images relate to the themes of the play?

At any point in the course of the play, did you find yourself taking sides with any one character or family? Did your opinion change as the play went on? What changed your opinion?

Is either family more at fault for the events that unfold than the other? Is either child more a victim than the other? Why or why not?

Why are the most intimate and basic relationships for humans, marriage and parenting, the most difficult and trying for humans? When, if ever, are the efforts we put forth rewarding?

How do you imagine the two boys, Benjamin and Henry, have behaved towards each other since the fight? Do you think they might still be angry or have made up? Has the fight changed their relationship? If so, how? If not, why not?

In an interview with reporter Simon Hattenstone about her play *Art*, Yasmina Reza said, "Laughter is always a problem.... Laughter is very dangerous. The way people laugh changes the way you see a play. A very profound play may seem very light. My plays have always been described as comedy, but I think they're tragedy. They are funny tragedy, but they are tragedy. Maybe it's a new genre."

In another interview with journalist Alice Jones, Reza said,

"I have nothing against laughter. On the contrary. But they are not pure comedy, not nonsense. I hope that they have a deep, profound meaning.... Most of the time I don't agree with the reaction to my plays. It's very contradictory. Pierre Arditi [who starred in *Art* in Paris] once said the most wonderful thing: 'If we had to choose the audience according to your criteria, we'd play in front of 12 people.'

Do you agree with the playwright's views of her work? Why or why not? When might laughter be a problem during a performance? When in life? Cite situations of both viewpoints. As you watched the play, what were moments when the entire audience laughed? What were moments when the laughter was isolated to a few people? What are the tragic moments in the play, both onstage and off? Do any of the characters, both seen and unseen, avoid being tragic?

For further reading, here are links to the articles cited above:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2001/jan/01/features11.g21>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/yasmina-reza-on-writing-a-play-that-can-rival-'Art'-798608.html>

Writing Prompts

Have the students write a paragraph about the significance of virility in modern society. What is virility? How does it compare to masculinity? Has its importance changed? For better or worse? How do men and women have different ideas of virility? If you were to do an advertising campaign for virility, who would you hire to be the spokesperson, and why?

Write two apology letters from the same family. The first is from one child to the other child about the incident, and the second is from one set of parents to the other set of parents about what happened when they met to discuss the incident.

Ask the students to write about their fears and/or phobias or those of someone else that they have witnessed. Did something happen in your past that brought about this fear? What happens to you physically and emotionally? Have you taken any measures to overcome this phobia. Is this something that embarrasses you? Do you share this fear with others you know?

Ask the students to write about the language in the play. Discuss how each character changed from civility, reserve, and decorum to profanity, excess, and disregard? What does the profanity do to the characters' relationships and how we the audience view them? Why is profanity unacceptable in some situations, but tolerated in others?

Have the students write about a social crusader they admire.

Activities

Discuss with the students that there are words that we define as "Red Flag." These are words and phrases that usually provoke an angry reaction. As Annette says in the play, "an insult is also a kind of assault." In groups have the students make a list of words and phrases from the play that might be considered "red flag" for some people, or for most people. Add other terms that provoke a similar reaction. Discuss why such words might be considered offensive. Discuss how age and other factors affect our perceptions of such terms.

List the words discussed in a column. In the next column, list words and phrases that convey the same idea but are less inflammatory, less likely to evoke an instantaneous angry reaction. Discuss how words have power and can affect action in both negative and positive ways, no matter how or when we say them. Have them talk about scenes in the play, scenes in movies they have watched, and actual events they have witnessed. Discuss what skills we use to avoid aggravated situations such as those in *God of Carnage*.

In groups, have the students talk about the impact mobile phones have had on society. In what ways have manners and professional decorum dissipated? Have them list other inventions and evolutions that have changed everyday life, and the ways both good and bad in which they influence our lives. Think of examples from clothing, housing, transportation, communication, education, and more.

Ask the students to recall the scene when the characters are eating the clafouti. How does Alan behave in an unmannerly fashion? How does Veronica try to uphold manners and proper etiquette? How does Annette try to get Alan to behave differently? How does Michael exhibit good and/or poor manners? Have the students discuss the challenges of etiquette when they are visiting other homes. Give them topics to research in etiquette books and websites and then report their findings to the class. Some reports might even be demonstrations or PowerPoint presentations with YouTube videos. Vary the topics so this is both a fun and informative activity. Examples might include: the proper way to eat finger foods, setting a table for a three-course meal, arriving at and departing from a party, disagreeing with your boss, how to invite a divorced couple to an event, etiquette in the deaf community. Have them investigate a variety of etiquette resources, from Emily Post to Miss Manners and other more modern guidelines.

Have the students research and comprise a workable definition of western society for their reference. Then have them create side-by-side collages that juxtapose western society with cultures in other countries. The collage materials might be pictures, words, articles, fabric, 3D items, etc. Students could focus on Africa, as the characters in the play do, but they might also explore such areas as Asia, India, the South Pacific, or South America. They might focus their collage on a particular aspect of life such as childhood, women, food, technology, etc.

Lesson Plans

Black or Dark Comedy

Black or Dark Comedy makes light of taboo or serious events and topics in a humorous manner, creating an experience of laughter and discomfort for the audience. A form of comedy found in movies, novels and plays.

Discuss with your students:

Does this play fall under the definition of a dark or black comedy? What elements in the play make it one?

Explore other examples of dark or black comedies that your students have read or seen (i.e. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*; comedy routines by Monty Python or Dave Chappel; Stanley Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove*). What makes these dark comedies?

What are the serious topics being addressed?

Why does this make the audience uncomfortable?

Why do they think an author or playwright might chose to write in this genre?

Natural Instincts vs. Societal Rules

What is a god of carnage? Most ancient religions have a deity that represents man's need for violence and destruction. The Greeks had Ares, the Romans had Mars, the Hindus have Kali.

Have your students research ancient gods and goddesses of war and destruction.

Why were such figures necessary in religion? What purpose did they serve?

Why do they think the author chose to call this play *God of Carnage*?

Modern societies depend upon rules of law, etiquette, religion, etc., to keep order.

Throughout time, societies have felt the need to create law and order to curb man's more animalistic inclinations towards aggression. As Alan says in the play, "Originally, let me remind you, might was right." Philosophers have argued for centuries about nature vs. nurture and man's natural state vs. society's constraints. How do the adult characters in *God of Carnage* reflect this debate? What are their animalistic instincts that are unleashed? What societal rules do they break?

Have students discuss the rules in their own societies: their home, school, religion, community, nation.

How are the rules for different groups similar? How are they different?

Why do we need rules in society?

Are there rules in place that should be done away with?

What would happen if there were no rules? What are some modern examples of people breaking the rules and the impact it has on the rest of society?

Point of View

There is much discussion in the play about the playground fight between Henry and Benjamin, but the audience never sees it. Have your students speculate on what actually took place on the playground and write from one character's point of view. Talk through some of the following questions as a class:

- What does the playground look like?
- How many other children were there? How did they react?
- How did the fight start?
- What did each boy say to each other?
- What happened immediately afterwards?

Have your students choose a character and write about the fight from that character's point of view:

- The police officer creating the incident report
- A TV news reporter reporting the incident live on camera
- Henry telling the story of what happened to his parents
- Benjamin explaining the story of what happened to his parents
- Another child on the playground
- A babysitter or another parent at the playground

—lesson plans courtesy of the Alley Theatre, Dallas, Texas

Text Glossary

Page	
1	Cobble Hill Cobble Hill is an upscale neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, renowned for its private Italianate style brownstone and brick row houses. The Landmark Preservation Commission has called its historic district "an unusually fine 19 th century residential area." Family-run shops, Italian meat markets, and old time barber shops mix with trendy new restaurants.
1	Cobble Hill Park This small park occupies half of a secluded, oblong trapezoid of a block, just steps from the commercial center of Cobble Hill. The park's original 1965 utilitarian steel and concrete were replaced in 1989 with granite entrance columns, herringbone-patterned brick paths, and cast iron—a design which won the Art Commission's 1988 Annual Award for Excellence in Design and the Parks Council's first Philip Winslow Award for Public Projects in 1990. A modest lawn, off-limits to dogs, encircles a rose garden and lends the revamped layout a formal, European feel. Locals enjoy their lunches and newspapers at the many benches and picnic tables near its Clinton Street entrance, while kids run around in the tiny playground or splash in the dolphin fountain at the rear. The park is the site of summer music concerts and an annual Halloween parade.
1	incisors the four front center teeth in the mouth, two in the upper jaw and two in the lower jaw
2	Whitman Park Whitman Park is a 2.9-acre public park in Brooklyn, named to honor Walt Whitman. In 2007, the city gave the long-neglected park to the feds for use as a parking lot while the new federal courthouse was being built; federal officials promised the city \$2.5 million to fix the park up once they were done with it. The park is currently undergoing a \$4.5 million renovation and is expected to reopen this spring.
2	endodontic surgery Endodontic surgery (commonly referred to as a root canal) is performed in order to save damaged teeth, often when the gum tissue or nerves are inflamed or exposed.
3	ceramic crowns A crown is a type of dental restoration that completely caps a tooth or dental implant. Crowns can be made from many materials and are typically bonded to the tooth using a dental cement. The most common method of crowning a tooth involves using a dental impression of a prepared tooth to fabricate the crown outside of the mouth. The crown can then be inserted at a subsequent appointment. Using this indirect method of tooth restoration allows use of strong restorative materials requiring time-consuming fabrication methods requiring intense heat, such as casting metal or firing porcelain which would not be possible to complete inside the mouth. While inarguably beneficial to dental health, the procedure and materials can be relatively expensive.
3	permanent implant A dental implant is a "root" device, usually made of titanium, used to replace missing teeth. Virtually all dental implants placed today are root-form endosseous implants (Greek: <i>endo</i> - meaning "in" and <i>osseous</i> referring to "bone"); in other words, they appear similar to an actual tooth root (and thus possess a "root-form") and are placed <i>within</i> the bone. The bone of the jaw accepts and osseointegrates with the titanium post (osseointegration refers to the fusion of the implant surface with the surrounding bone).

3 Smith Street

Smith Street is the eastern border of Cobble Hill. Northern Smith Street is known as Brooklyn's "Restaurant Row" due to the large number of eateries and watering holes that opened on the street during the late 1990s and early 2000s. With a second blossoming of specialized bars along the corridor in the late 2000s, Smith Street became an upscale weekend nightlife destination.

4 the Lancet

The *Lancet* is the world's leading medical journal, specializing in oncology, neurology, and infectious diseases.

4 Financial Times

The *Financial Times* is an international business newspaper published in London and printed in 24 cities worldwide.

4 Antril

In *God of Carnage*, Antril is a fictional product, a drug designed to help control high blood pressure. A real drug branded Antril was developed in the early 1990s as a treatment for bacterial infections; it was later used to combat rheumatoid arthritis.

4 hypertensive

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition in which the blood pressure in the arteries is elevated. This requires the heart to work harder than normal to circulate blood through the blood vessels. Hypertension is a major risk factor for stroke, heart attacks, heart failure, and aneurysms, and is a cause of chronic kidney disease. Even moderate elevation of arterial blood pressure is associated with a shortened life expectancy. Dietary and lifestyle changes can improve blood pressure control and decrease the risk of associated health complications, although drug treatment is often necessary in patients for whom lifestyle changes prove ineffective or insufficient.

4 beta-blocker

Beta blockers are a class of drugs used particularly for the management of cardiac arrhythmias, cardio-protection after heart attack, and hypertension. They diminish the effects of epinephrine (adrenaline) and other stress hormones on beta-adrenergic receptors, part of the sympathetic nervous system that mediates the "fight or flight" response.

4 Verenz-Pharma

A fictitious company.

4 ataxia

Ataxia (from the Greek *ataxis*, meaning "lack of order") is a neurological symptom that consists of gross lack of coordination of muscle movements in absence of muscle weakness; it is often described as clumsiness. Ataxia is a non-specific clinical manifestation implying dysfunction of the parts of the nervous system that coordinate movement, such as the cerebellum.

5 Sheba

Sheba was an ancient kingdom mentioned in both Jewish scriptures and the Qur'an. The actual location of the historical kingdom is disputed, with most modern evidence tending toward Yemen in southern Arabia; but some scholars argue for a location in either present-day Eritrea or Ethiopia. Since the two territories are separated by a narrow channel, it is possible that at various times the kingdom included territory in both Yemen and, later, Ethiopia as well.

5 Ethiopian-Eritrean war

The Ethiopian-Eritrean war took place from 1998 to 2000. Eritrea and Ethiopia—two of the world's poorest countries—spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the war and suffered tens of thousands of casualties during the conflict, which resulted in minor border changes.

5 Darfur tragedy

The Darfur Conflict is a guerrilla conflict or civil war centered on the Darfur region of Sudan. It began in 2003 when the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and Justice and Equality Movement groups in Darfur took up arms, accusing the Sudanese government of oppressing non-Arab Sudanese in favor of Sudanese Arabs. Opposing the SLM/A and the JEM are the Janjaweed, a Sudanese militia group recruited mostly from the nomadic Arab Abbala tribes of the northern Rizeigat region; although the Sudanese government publicly denies that it supports the Janjaweed, it has been providing financial assistance and weapons to the militia and has been organizing joint attacks targeting civilians. Sudan's oil wealth has played a major part in enabling an otherwise poor government to fund the expensive bombers, helicopters, and arms supplies used to launch aerial attacks on towns and villages and fund militias to fight its proxy war in Darfur. There are various estimates on the number of human casualties, ranging from under twenty thousand to several hundred thousand dead, from either direct combat or starvation and disease inflicted by the conflict. There have also been mass displacements and coercive migrations, forcing millions into refugee camps or over the border, and creating a large humanitarian crisis that is regarded by many as a genocide. The Sudanese government and the JEM signed a ceasefire agreement in February 2010, with a tentative agreement to pursue further peace. The JEM has the most to gain from the talks, and could see semi-autonomy much like South Sudan. However, talks have been disrupted by accusations that the Sudanese army launched raids and air strikes against a village, violating the February agreement. The JEM, the largest rebel group in Darfur, has said they will boycott further negotiations. To date, more than 5 million people have been affected by the conflict in Darfur.

3 wealth management

Wealth management is an investment advisory discipline that incorporates financial planning, investment portfolio management, and a number of aggregated financial services. High net worth individuals, small business owners, and families who desire the assistance of a credentialed financial advisory specialist call upon wealth managers to coordinate retail banking, estate planning, legal resources, tax professionals, and investment management. Wealth management is often referred to as a high-level form of private banking for the especially affluent. One must already have accumulated a significant amount of wealth for wealth management strategies to be effective.

7 clafouti

Clafoutis, often called clafouti in English-speaking countries, is a baked French dessert, typically made with black cherries covered in a thick flan-like batter, dusted with powdered sugar and served lukewarm. The dish's name derives from *clafotis*, from the verb *clafir*, meaning "to fill" (implied: "the batter with cherries"). Veronica's recipe uses pears and apples instead of black cherries. When other kinds of fruit are used instead of cherries, the dish is properly called a flaugnarde.

10 right of reply

the right to defend oneself against public criticism in the same venue where it was published

13 the F train

The F Sixth Avenue Local is a rapid transit service of the New York City Subway. It is colored orange on route signs, station signs, and the official subway map, since it runs on the IND Sixth Avenue Line through Manhattan. The F service operates at all times, starting at 179th Street in Jamaica, Queens, and traveling via Queens Boulevard to Manhattan, via 63rd Street and Sixth Avenue to Brooklyn, and via the Culver Line to Stillwell Avenue in Coney Island, Brooklyn.

15 **The Hague**
The Hague is the capital city of the province of South Holland in the Netherlands. The city hosts all the foreign embassies, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal court. It is a prime United Nations host city.

15 **International Criminal Court**
Located in The Hague, the ICC is a tribunal to prosecute people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.

16 **Bacon**
Francis Bacon (1909–1992) was an Irish-born British figurative painter known for his bold, austere, graphic, and emotionally raw imagery. Bacon's painterly but abstract figures typically appear isolated in glass or steel geometrical cages set against flat, nondescript backgrounds. He is considered a notably bleak chronicler of the human condition. He began by painting variations on the Crucifixion and later focused on series of half-human, half-grotesque portraits. Despite his existentialist outlook on life expressed through his paintings, Bacon always appeared to be a *bon vivant*, spending much of his middle and later life eating, drinking, and gambling in London's Soho. Since his death in 1992, Bacon's reputation has steadily grown.

17 **Linzertorte**
Linzer Torte is a crumbly pastry made with ground nuts, usually hazelnuts, added to the flour. Covered with a filling of redcurrant jam, it is topped by a lattice of dough strips. Linzer Torte is a holiday classic in the Austrian, Hungarian, Swiss, German, and Tyrolean traditions, often eaten at Christmas. It is named after the city of Linz, Austria.

18 **Spartacus**
Spartacus (109-71 BCE) famously led a slave uprising against the Roman Republic and is regarded as a folk hero in the struggle against oppression. Stanley Kubrick's 1960 film *Spartacus* starred Kirk Douglas and popularized the phrase "I am Spartacus!" in the slaves' show of loyalty and unity to their leader.

22 **Charley's Aunt**
Charley's Aunt is a three-act farce by Brandon Thomas, popular since its original London run in 1892. In the play, an Oxford student masquerades as another student's aunt in order to supply the necessary chaperone for visiting young ladies.

24 **gravity or pressure-assist**
A gravity-fed toilet is most commonly found in homes, while the pressure-assist is most often found in large commercial buildings. Gravity types release water from an individual tank, while pressure-assist types use air to push water into the bowl from a central supply.

25 **Secaucus**
Secaucus, New Jersey, is located 15 miles southeast of Brooklyn. Before the 1950s, Secaucus was home to a number of pig farms, rendering plants, and junk yards, which gave the town a reputation for being one of the most odorous in the New York metropolitan area. In 1963, debris from the demolition of Pennsylvania Station was dumped in the Secaucus Meadowlands. In later decades Secaucus became a commuter town. Today, it has a population of 16,000, but large parts of the town are still dedicated to light manufacturing, retail, and transportation uses.

29 **Kokoschka**
Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980) was an Austrian poet, artist, and playwright, known for his expressionist portraits and landscapes. Though he is linked with German expressionism and considered a master of the form, Kokoschka did not consider himself one of that movement. He used traditional methods of oil painting to arrive at his own unique style, which made him an

outcast from modernism. He was deeply interested in what he called "the art of seeing," emphasizing depth perception in his paintings. Kokoschka's passionate two-year affair with Alma Mahler, widow of composer Gustav Mahler, inspired his most famous painting, *The Bride of the Wind*, which depicts her sleeping peacefully next to him as he stares into space, wide awake. The couple's break-up in 1914 had a profound effect on Kokoschka, whose expressive brushwork grew more turbulent. He was considered a "degenerate artist" by the Nazis and forced into exile in London.

30 cervical vertebrae

Cervical vertebrae are the spinal bones closest to the skull.

30 Mr. Clean

Mr. Clean is the brand name for a variety of home cleaning products.

30 Kouros

Kouros is a brand of men's cologne by designer Yves Saint Laurent.

31 catalogue from the '53 London exhibition

In 1953 Kokoschka moved to Switzerland and re-established ties to his native Austria, running a summer painting school, the Schule des Sehens (School of Seeing) at Salzburg for the next decade. His work was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at London's Tate Gallery in 1962.

31 People of the Tundra

Tundraens folk (*The People of the Tundra*), by Øyvind Rønna and Zoia Vylka, was published by Landbruksforlaget in Norway in 2001. A lavish, fully illustrated "coffee table" book with its text in Norwegian, it covers the cultures, lifestyle, history, and modern-day challenges of the peoples of Siberia, the Russian tundra. It is the sixth book on the Russian north by Norwegian author Øyvind Rønna, this time in collaboration with Zoia Vylka, a young woman with a background in reindeer herding. Beyond its detailed factual information and historical insight, the book features a personal point of view and extensive photography. The various cultures, villages, and individuals presented in the book are brought to life by Rønna's rambling, storytelling form of writing.

33 Foujita

Tsuguharu Foujita (1886-1968) was a Japanese printmaker and painter who used Japanese techniques in Western-style paintings. Foujita left Toyko in his twenties and moved to Paris, France, where he befriended artists Matisse and Picasso, among others. Some of his most popular works feature Kiki, the lover and favored model of photographer Man Ray.

34 darjeeling

Darjeeling tea is a thin-bodied, light-colored infusion with a floral aroma. Darjeeling, located in West Bengal, India, is a popular tourist destination, known for its Himalayan railway system as well as its tea industry.

35 cairn

Cairn is a term used mainly in the English-speaking world for a man-made pile of stones. It comes from the Irish or Scottish Gaelic. Cairns vary in size from small stone markers to entire artificial hills, and in complexity from loose, conical rock piles to delicately balanced sculptures and elaborate feats of megalithic engineering. Since prehistory, they have been built as landmarks and sepulchral monuments, or used for defensive, hunting, ceremonial, astronomical, and other purposes.

35 "How much is that doggie in the window?"

"(How Much Is) That Doggie in the Window?" is a popular novelty song written by Bob Merrill and Ingrid Reuter Sköld in 1952. The best-known version of the song was recorded by Patti Page.

41 BQE
BQE stands for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, a highway connecting the two boroughs.

45 Neanderthal
Species of the human genus (*Homo*) that inhabited much of Europe, the Mediterranean lands, and Central Asia from around 200,000 years ago to 24,000 years ago. The name derives from the discovery in 1856 of remains in a cave above Germany's Neander Valley. Most scholars designate the species as *Homo neanderthalensis* and do not consider Neanderthals direct ancestors of modern humans (*Homo sapiens*); however, both species share a common ancestor that lived as recently as 130,000 years ago. Neanderthals were short, stout, and powerful. Their braincases were long, low, and wide, and their cranial capacity equaled or surpassed that of modern humans. Their limbs were heavy, but they seem to have walked fully erect and had hands as capable as those of modern humans. They were cave dwellers who used fire, wielded stone tools and wooden spears to hunt animals, buried their dead, and cared for their sick or injured. They may have used language and may have practiced a primitive form of religion. Today the term is often used in slang as a derogatory term for someone crude, boorish, or slow-witted.

42 analogous
An analogy is the illustration of an idea by means of a more familiar idea that is similar or parallel to it in some significant features, and thus said to be analogous to it.

42 English Harbor
English Harbour 10-Year Rum is considered by many experts to be one of the finest blends of both Dark and Light Rum distilled in the Caribbean today. Expect to pay somewhere between \$100 and \$200 for a bottle.

42 Antigua
Antigua is an island in the Caribbean. Antigua rum has always been known for its lightness and elegant flavor.

52 complicity
association or participation in a wrongful act

56 AP
Cooperative news agency, the oldest and largest in the United States and long the largest in the world. Its beginnings trace to 1848, when six New York City newspapers pooled their efforts to finance a telegraphic relay of foreign news brought by ships to Boston. Today more than 15,000 organizations worldwide obtain news, photographs, and illustrations from the agency. The *AP Stylebook* has become a standard in many journalistic organizations.

56 Reuter's
British cooperative news agency. Founded in 1851 by Paul Julius Reuter, it was initially concerned with commercial news but began to serve a growing newspaper clientele after the London *Morning Advertiser* subscribed in 1858. Today Reuters is a world leader in business and financial market coverage.

58 the Congo
With the third largest land area in Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo occupies the heart of the Congo River basin and has a climate that is humid and tropical. Among the poorest countries in the world, it has an economy based on mining and agriculture. Inhabited originally by Pygmy peoples and later by migrating Bantu and Nilotic groups, the region was a Belgian colony from 1870 to 1960. Army general Mobutu Sese Seko took control of the country in 1965, ruling until his ouster by rebel forces in 1997. Instability in neighboring countries, an influx of refugees from Rwanda, and a desire for the Congo's mineral wealth led to military involvement by various African countries, which fueled existing civil conflict in the Congo. Although unrest

continued in the beginning of the 21st century, it was somewhat abated by the promulgation in 2003 of a transitional constitution and by the formation of a transitional unity government that included most rebel groups; a new constitution was promulgated and a formal government elected in 2006.

58 machete

The machete is a large cutting tool, used in many countries for both household tasks and larger endeavors, like cutting through rainforests or sugarcane. A machete may also be classified as a sword, because it can be used like one. Many of the killings in the Rwandan Genocide were performed with machetes.

58 Kalash

Kalash is an abbreviation for the Kalashnikov, a Soviet assault rifle originally known as the AK-47. Designed by Mikhail T. Kalashnikov (AK-47 stands for Automatic Kalashnikov 1947), it had both semiautomatic and automatic capabilities and fired intermediate-power 7.62-mm ammunition. It was manufactured in the former Soviet Union and Soviet-bloc countries and soon became the basic shoulder weapon for virtually all Communist armies as well as for many guerrilla and nationalist movements. In the Soviet military, the AK-47 was replaced in the 1960s by the AKM, which featured a lighter, cheaper stamped-metal receiver, and in the 1970s by the AK-74, which fired a high-velocity 5.45-mm round.

58 thump gun ... grenade launcher

The M79 grenade launcher first appeared during the Vietnam War. Because of its distinct sound, it was nicknamed "Thump Gun," "Thumper," "Blooper," etc., among American soldiers.

59 Kinshasa

Kinshasa is the capital and largest city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is an urban area with a population of 10 million, making it the third largest city in Africa. While it is still a major cultural and intellectual hub in the Congo, Kinshasa has suffered greatly from governmental corruption, excess, and civil war.

60 "Ave Maria"

Ave Maria (Latin: Hail Mary) is a traditional Catholic prayer. The Latin text has been set to music by many composers, most famously Franz Schubert in 1825 and Charles Gounod, who in 1859 added his own melodic line to J. S. Bach's 1722 Prelude #1 in C Major.

63 SIM card

A subscriber identity module or subscriber identification module (SIM) is an integrated circuit that securely stores the International Mobile Subscriber Identity and the related key used to identify and authenticate subscribers on mobile devices (such as mobile phones and computers). A SIM is embedded into a removable SIM card, which can be transferred between different mobile devices. SIM cards were first made the same size as a credit card. The development of physically smaller mobile devices prompted the development of a smaller SIM card, the mini-SIM card—the same thickness, but about 1/3 the size. A SIM card contains its unique serial number, internationally unique number of the mobile user, security authentication and ciphering information, temporary information related to the local network, a list of the services the user has access to, and two passwords: a personal identification number (PIN) for ordinary use and a personal unblocking code for PIN unlocking.

64 Colt 45

The Colt Single Action Army (also known as the Colt 45) is a single action revolver with a revolving cylinder holding six metallic cartridges. It was designed for the U.S. government service by Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company, and was the standard military service revolver from 1873 to 1892. It has been offered in over 30 different calibers and various barrel lengths, but the .45 mm caliber originally specified by the US Army is the best known. The

revolver's overall appearance has remained consistent since 1873. Colt has discontinued its production twice, but brought it back due to popular demand. Originally the revolver was popular with ranchers, lawmen, and outlaws alike, but current models are mostly bought by collectors and re-enactors. Its design has influenced the production of numerous other models from other companies.

65 Cuban

All cigar production in Cuba is controlled by the Cuban government. Cuban cigar rollers, or *torcedores*, are acclaimed by cigar experts as the most skilled rollers in the world. *Torcedores* are highly respected in Cuban society and culture and travel worldwide displaying their art of hand rolling cigars. In 1962, when President John F. Kennedy imposed a trade embargo on Cuba to sanction Fidel Castro's communist government, authentic Cuban-made cigars became a highly desired "forbidden fruit." (The night before he signed the order, Kennedy acquired a stash of 1,200 Cuban cigars for himself.) It remains illegal for US residents to purchase or import Cuban cigars regardless of where they are in the world, although they are readily available across the border in Canada and Mexico. While Cuban cigars are smuggled into the USA and sold at high prices, counterfeiting is rife; it has been said that 95% of Cuban cigars sold in the USA are counterfeit. Although Cuban cigars cannot legally be imported into the USA, the advent of the Internet has made it much easier for people in the United States to purchase cigars online from other countries, especially when shipped without bands.

65 Cohiba

Cohiba is a brand of premium cigar produced in Cuba for Habanos SA, the Cuban state-owned tobacco company. The name *cohiba* derives from the Taíno (Cuban native) word for tobacco. The Cohiba is filled with tobacco which, unique to this brand, has undergone an extra fermentation process. Cohiba was established in 1968 as a limited production private brand supplied exclusively to Fidel Castro and high-level officials in the Communist Party of Cuba and Cuban government. Often given as diplomatic gifts, the Cohiba brand gradually developed a "cult" status. It was first released commercially for sale to the public in 1982.

65 Monte Cristo number 3 and number 4

Montecristo is another brand of premium cigar produced in Cuba for Habanos SA. The Montecristo No. 4 is the world's best-selling Cuban cigar. It is generally considered an excellent starting point for those new to Cuban cigars.

65 the Shroud of Turin

The Shroud of Turin is a linen cloth bearing the image of a man who appears to have suffered physical trauma in a manner consistent with crucifixion. It is kept in the royal chapel of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin, northern Italy. The image on the shroud is commonly associated with the crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ. The origins of the shroud and its image are the subject of intense debate among scientists, theologians, historians, and researchers. The image on the shroud is much clearer in black-and-white negative than in its natural sepia color; this negative image was first observed in 1898, on a reverse plate by an amateur photographer. In 1978, a detailed examination was carried out by a team of American scientists. They found no reliable evidence of forgery, and called the question of how the image was formed "a mystery." In 1988 a controversial radiocarbon dating test was performed on small samples of the shroud. Three separate laboratories concurred that the samples they tested dated from the Middle Ages, between 1260 and 1390, but at least four articles have since been published in scholarly sources contending that the samples used for the dating test may not have been representative of the whole shroud. Scientific and popular publications have presented diverse arguments for both authenticity and possible methods of forgery. A variety of scientific theories regarding the shroud have since been proposed, based on disciplines ranging from chemistry to biology and medical forensics to optical image analysis. The shroud is one of the most studied artifacts in human history, and one of the most controversial.

69 **Sudanese**
Darfur, the subject of Veronica's book, is a region of the nation of Sudan.

69 **coons**
The American use of "coon" as a derogatory term for black people is documented as early as 1837. It is thought to have derived from the Portuguese *barracoos*, a building constructed to hold slaves for sale. The signature song of early blackface minstrel George Washington Dixon (1801-1861) was "Zip Coon," published between 1829 and 1834 and sung to the same tune as "Turkey in the Straw." The term may be even older: one of the lead characters in the 1767 colonial comic opera *The Disappointment* is a black man named Raccoon.

71 **Jane Fonda**
Jane Fonda (born 1937) is an American actress, writer, political activist, and fitness guru. She has often been noted as an outspoken anti-war activist and feminist.

71 **the KKK**
The Ku Klux Klan, often abbreviated KKK and informally known as the Klan, is the name of a series of far-right organizations in the United States, which, since the end of the Civil War, have advocated extremist reactionary currents such as white supremacy, white nationalism, and anti-immigration, historically expressed through terrorism. Today, the Klan is officially classified as a hate group.

73 **horse chestnuts**
Aesculus hippocastanum is a large deciduous tree, commonly known as the Horse-chestnut or Conker tree. The name comes from the leaf scars left on twigs after the leaves have fallen, which have a distinctive horseshoe shape, complete with seven "nails." The shell of the seed is a green, softly spiky capsule containing a nut-like seed called a conker or horse-chestnut. In Britain and Ireland, the nuts are used for the popular children's game Conkers. In suggesting that Nibbles might eat horse-chestnuts, Veronica is presumably unaware that the nuts, especially those that are young and fresh, are slightly poisonous; consumed by horses, they can cause tremors and lack of coordination. Perhaps she is thinking of buckeyes, a related but different species with which horse-chestnuts are often confused.

73 **omnivorous**
Omnivores (from Latin: *omni*, meaning "all, everything"; *vorare*, "to devour") are species that eat both plants and animal material as their primary food source.