

Facing Death

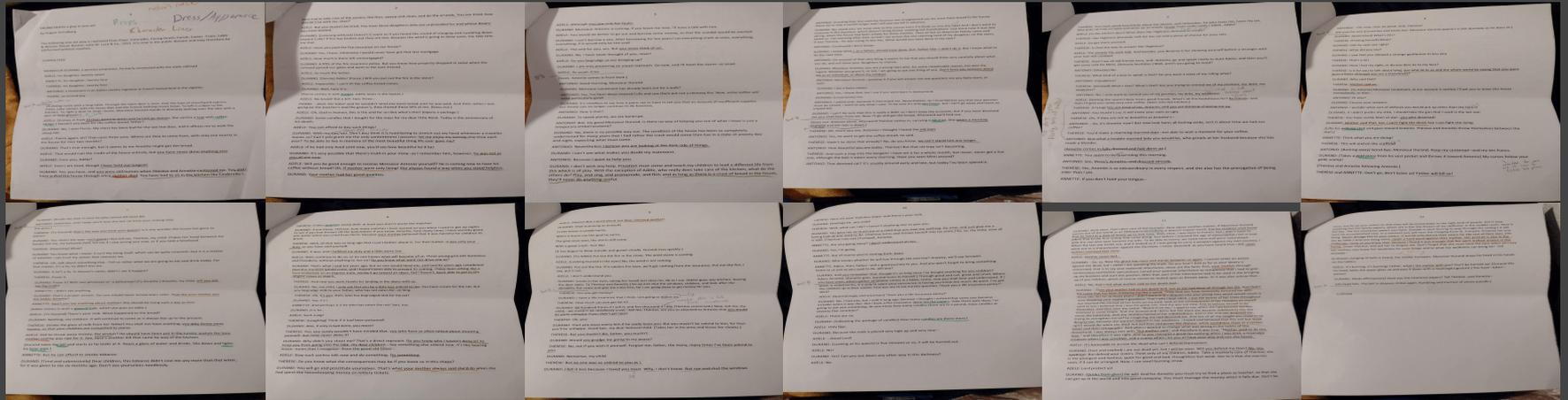


Written by August Strindberg
Directed by Emmalisa Horlacher

Synopsis

Monsieur Durand is troubled by his debts and providing a future for his 3 daughters. He decided to burn down his house in order to collect fire insurance money.

Annotated Script



Subjective Analysis

My initial Reaction to first reading the play

I hated it. It seemed like a tragedy where everyone was stuck in some kind of paradoxical loop of loathing, usually directed towards their father who was trying very hard but to no avail.

I pictured the situations to look a lot like that in the short story “Roman Fever” where two American ladies gossip. It’s a very quaint but intimate scene full of heated and biting subtextual hate yet very pleasant on the front side.

In the last scene I felt like I was sitting down with Adele, watching the truth come out yet not be able to do anything or change anything, all while the house is beginning to be burned down.

Audience Contract

In the memory portion, the play leans heavy on realism with smaller but obvious aspects of presentational. This play does not offer happiness but it does offer feeling of a need to change.

Some questions posed to the audience are, why the stage looks burnt and why is Adele visiting this memory?

My Audience is people who need to learn to move on.

My play will show them that you can't be free till you finally accept for yourself the truth, whatever truth that is.

My play is relevant and appropriate because everyone has something, at some time in their lives that they don't want to admit to themselves. That is the chord at which I am attempting to strike.

Concept

Genre: Tragedy

What defines a Tragedy?

A serious play

Universal theme

Central character of a high social rank

Should ennoble not sadden

What makes this play a Tragedy:

The characters and subject matter will be treated with realism, which in this case, will be seriousness

The theme is that of truth breaking through at last after all be said and done

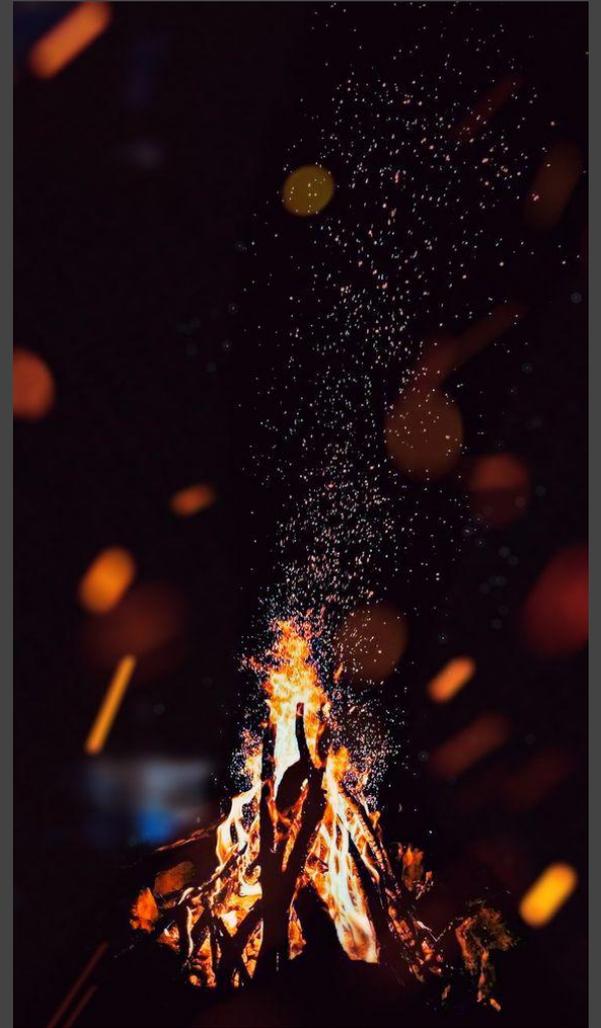
Monsieur Durand has already had his fall from high social rank, if he ever did have one. If anything he hold a high social rank as father and master of the house.

By the end, the audience should not be surprised by the house burning but rather should feel a need to visit the moments of uncovered truth in their lives.

Theme and Viz

“Returning to truth will break
curses cast by living memories.”

In this photo, the truth is the logs, the fire is the curse and the sparks is the curse being lifted. Fire itself is constantly moving and changing to adapt and to be the focus. It could be considered living and as such, it is prime to represent living memories. Those cursed flames burn away the truth, trying to hide that it ever existed but once the fire burns, it releases the truth into sparks the air. In essence, the very burning itself is what frees the truth from the curse.



Beat Sheet

| Beat | Name | Lines | Characters |
|------|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Visiting the Memory | Adele enters and exits, no lines | Adele |
| 2 | Adele and Father | "Haven't you been..." - "As usual--h'm!" | Adele, Durand, Pierre |
| 3 | Antonio wants to help | "Good Morning, Monsieur" - "... we'll find out." | Antonio, Durand |
| 4 | Antonio and Therese flirt | "Oh, there you" - "... be good, now Therese!" | Antonio, Therese, Adele, Annette |
| 5 | Kick him out -for the plan | "What's this?" - ".. sinking ship" | Antonio, Therese, Annette, Durand |
| 6 | Hate on Father | "That's the way..." - "...get money for you." | Durand, Adele, Therese, Annette |
| 7 | He can get money | "Can you get..." - "...others gather all." | Therese, Durand, Annette |
| 8 | The truth | "Adele, come, now..." - "...Tell Therese--And Annette--" | Adele, Durand |
| 9 | Leaving the Memory | Adele enters and exits, no lines | Adele |

Beat added that's not in the script:

Beat 1: An older Adele will enter a burned house, as if she is visiting the memory.

Beat 9: The older Adele will leave the scene as if she's leaving the memory.

Beat Sheet

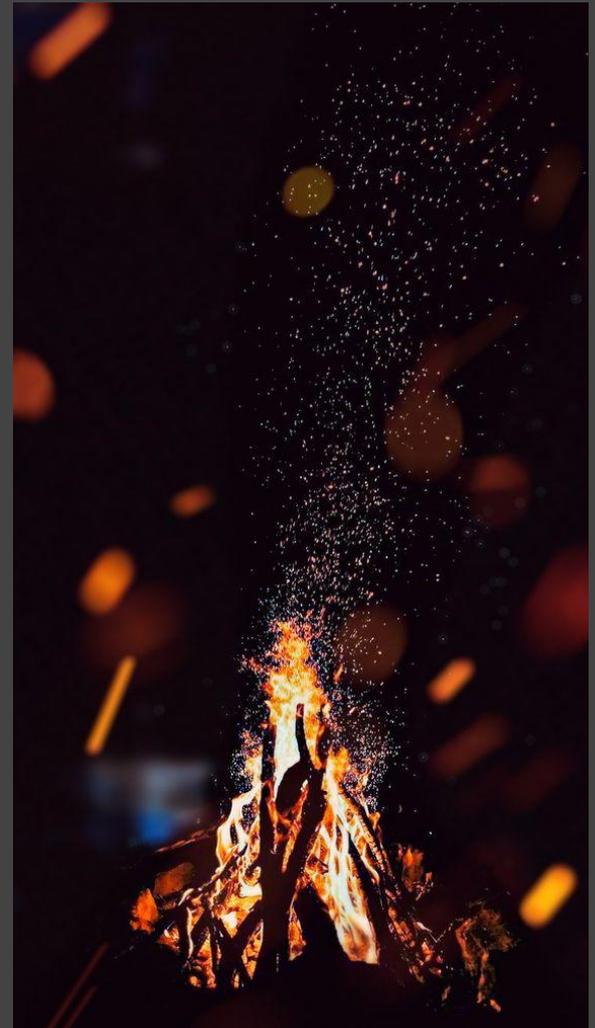
| Beat | Name | Objectives | Winner | Loser |
|------|----------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Visiting the Memory | Adele come to try and move on | Mother | Adele |
| 2 | Adele and Father | Fighting over who is more endures more | Durand | Adele |
| 3 | Antonio wants to help | Antonio wants to help | Antonio | Durand |
| 4 | Antonio and Therese flirt | Therese wants attention from Antonio | Therese | Antonio |
| 5 | Kick him out -for the plan | Does not want Antonio involved in the fire | Durand | Antonio |
| 6 | Hate on Father | To get the girls on his side, to make change | Mother | Durand |
| 7 | He can get money | Stop Therese from treating him unkindly | Durand | Therese |
| 8 | The truth | To break mother's curse | Durand Mother | Mother Adele |
| 9 | Leaving the Memory | Adele can finally allow what her father said to be true and move on | Adele | Mother |

Dramaturgy

Given Circumstances

The Given Circumstances are all things that make the characters who they are and allow for the motives of the characters to have a pathway to be realized.

They are essential because they are the building blocks that make up this world in which the characters live.



Thematic Elements: Attitudes on...

- Culture: You do not disrespect the dead
 - Said with biting sarcasm, “It’s honorable to accuse the dead who can’t defend themselves!”
-Adele
 - The memory of mother is the enemy that Durand has been fighting with since his wife died
- Race: Swiss born are supreme
 - Color of skin will not matter as much as origin of skin.
 - Antonio asks Durand if he is Swiss born. This is a big deal within the context of this play because that defines the type of breeding Therese (the woman Antonio is interested in)
- Class: The Bankrupt and the Wealthy
 - “I want to help you” -Antonio
 - The good wealthy want to help the poor
 - “Don’t form any opinions about me... or my conduct” -Durand
 - Poor yet still making demands as if he were of the same economic status as Antonio
 - Must keep up pride

Thematic Elements: Attitudes continued...

- Gender: While men preside, women rein supreme (almost tyrannical)
 - “You and I have pulled this house through since mother died” -Durand
 - Mother was not there and Durand has presided over the house, doing what he could
 - “But when I wanted to change what was wrong in the habits of this household, I was always met with, ‘but mother said,’ and therefore it was true” -Durand
 - If he tried to instigate a change for the better, as a good leader should, he was met by a larger opposing force that demanded his submission
 - “She taught you children to despise me... I hoped and believed that this evil but weak spirit would die when she died; but evil lives and grows like disease...” - Durand
 - Here is the claim to tyranny that kept the woman in demanding submission from their father. Here is the curse

Context Words/Phrases Defined

The Lake: A family-used term to symbolize hell essentially

Draughts: the game like that of checkers (which means Durand is telling his kids to go up and play checkers.)

The Scaffold: A gallow or somewhere someone is hanged

Incendiary: the cause of fire

Conscription: enrollment into the armed forces

Spook: a ghost

Overall Given Circumstances

Recurring aspects

- The War
 - French-German War
 - Visitors to the Inn
 - Wealthy Americans, French, Europeans
 - Coffee bread customs
 - Eaten every the morning with coffee
-

Insurance Given Circumstances

The reason for actions taken

- Insurance
 - An ancient concept that has taken on many forms over all of time as a type of risk-management
 - A Lie: Life Insurance
 - Six hundred francs if sold
 - five thousand if die
 - (Durand possibly could have been talking about how much his fire insurance was and claiming it was a life insurance)
 - Fire Insurance
 - In the 1800s specialist insurance companies were commonplace
-

Adele

Given Circumstances

The Eldest

The Presented Protagonist.

This play will be a symbol of reliving her memories.

Spine: “Even I am tired, though I have held out the longest!” -Adele

“You and I have pulled this house through since mother died.” -Durand

Super Objective: To relive a memory so that she can finally let it go

Monsieur Durand Given Circumstances

The Father

Motives: “Do you know know what want can drive one to do?”

Super Objective: To break his wife’s curse

Spine Line: “And to you I became a good-for-nothing when I was kind, a miserable creature when I was sensitive, and a scampi when I let you all have your way and ruin the house.” -Durand

In this interpretation, his last monologue is complete truth being told

Annette

Given Circumstances

The Middle Child

Spine:

“And you won't forget to bring something home to us just as you used to do, will you?” -Annette

Motive and Super Objective:

To get something for herself out of others

Therese Given Circumstances

The Youngest

Spine:

“None so unkind to you as I.”

-Therese

Motive:

She shows the least affection to those she cares the most about

Super Objective:

She hides who she is so she can never be hurt, not realizing how deeply she hurts others

Antonio/Pierre Given Circumstances

The Young Men

Spine: “Because I want to help you.”
-Antonio

Antonio kindly offers to help but then gets thrown out by Durand.

Motives: Durand didn’t want Antonio helping because of his plan to burn down the house. He pretended he was mad about Antonio’s relationship with Therese to stop Antonio from helping

Super Objective: To marry Therese

Pierre is straightforward. Just wants to get paid

Mother Given Circumstances

Character of Contradictions

“Mother never lied” -Adele

“Then your mother lied on her death-bed, just as she had done all through her life. And **that’s the curse** that has been following me like a spook.”

Super Objective: A force that wants to keep things the same and unchanging

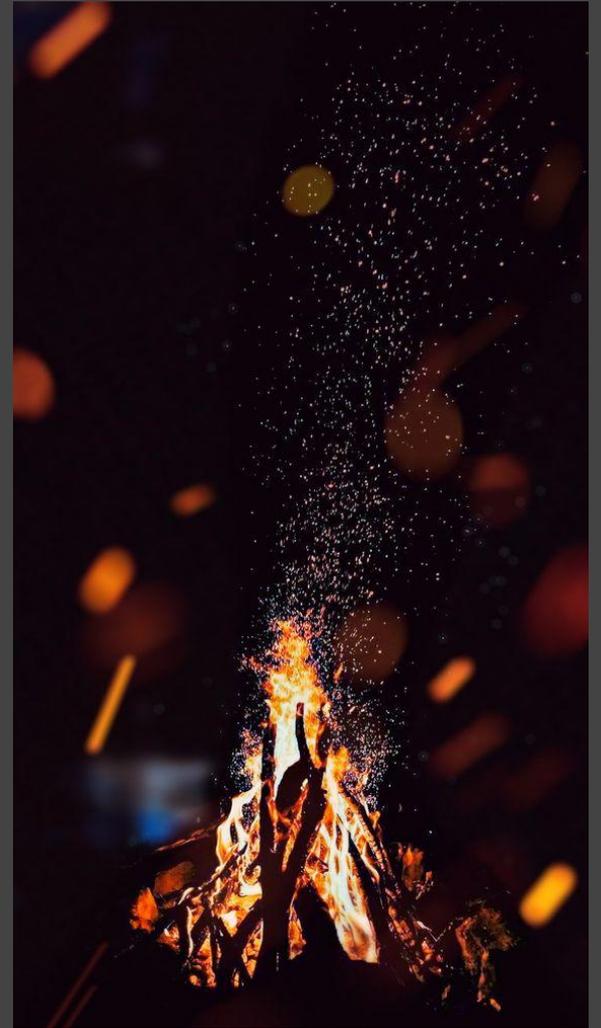
Connecting it Back

“Returning to truth will break curses
cast by living memories.”

Fire: The Mother’s Lies

Wood: The Father’s Confession

Sparks: The Truth Coming Free



Story Structure

Protagonist and Antagonist

Protagonist is Adele as this shall be a frame story memory play with some added blocking and scene changes at the beginning and end. While she is not in every beat in the play, she will have heard about it from her sisters and remembers what the relationships she had watched felt like.

Major Dramatic Question: How do you move on?

The Antagonist is Adele's Mother and while Adele is not the main one fighting it at this time, this memory is her accepting that her mother was wrong and her father was right. So within the frame, the father would be protagonist as he is fighting to forcibly break his children out of their mother's curse.

Main Exposition

First we set up the frame. It's been about 3+ years since the fire and Adele walks in from traveling far,. Se is returning to this abandoned, burnt down building. She goes into the kitchen and then the scene transitions to beat 2 when the script really starts. We are in Adele's memories at that point and the action starts.

Next we set up the story within the frame. We set up the exposition to the candles and their meaning. Then

Main Inciting Incident

The inciting incident starts as soon as flashback begins. From here the story takes on a separate plot structure which at times parallels the framed plot structure (while differs at other points.)

Framed Exposition

Now we set up the story within the frame. Exposition is given throughout the play. This involves a lot of random events occurring so as to set up future action.. Here are some of the tidbits that make up the exposition at different points within the play:

- The family is desperate for money
- Mother memory haunts the atmosphere
- Adele is the homemaker, keeping the family together, barely
- Therese and Antonio are in love

Framed Inciting Incident

In a way the inciting incident introduces the conflict of cursed living memories with the line,

“Yes, you have, and you were still human when Therese and Annette cautioned me. **You and I have pulled this house through since mother died.** You have had to sit in the kitchen like Cinderella; I have had to... You are tired; how should it be with me, then?”
-Durand

This line shows that they have not been thriving, only surviving since mother's passing. There has not been happiness, only painful endurance. This is the introduction of the true conflict; that mother's memory keeps them all locked in a state of unrest.

Main and Framed Rising Action

- Durand kicks Antonio out
- Therese, Annette, and Adele all torment their father and talk about him dying
- Durand promises his daughters to get money

It really starts building at “Adele, come, now you shall hear and understand.” -Durand

Main and Frame Climax

“But I have a fire insurance. Here are the papers. Hide them well... In five minutes or so, it will be burned out.” -Durand

In these lines, Durand explains that he has set a plan to burn down the house. This is the major turning point within the story. Here we learn why the set looks burned.

It is here we break away from the main and frame stories paralleling themselves because Adele within the frame does not believe her father and therefore the curse is still active. However, the main Adele is finally allowing her father's story to reach her ears and she is ready to accept the truth and move on.

Frame Falling Action

Durand completely tells his entire story to Adele, words he had never expressed. He is being completely honest to his understand. In this way, he finally breaks the curse set upon him by his wife.

At this point we come back to the theme, “Returning to truth will break curses cast by living memories” and we see that Durand has returned to truth and is now free.

However, at this point, Adele has an extremely difficult time believing him and her journey is not finished.

Main Falling Action

As the inner story ends we return to the main story with Adele walking into the burned building. She walks out of the kitchen. It is like she is remembering every word her father said. She is accepting it into herself. Then she leaves.

Set

For Beats 1 and 9

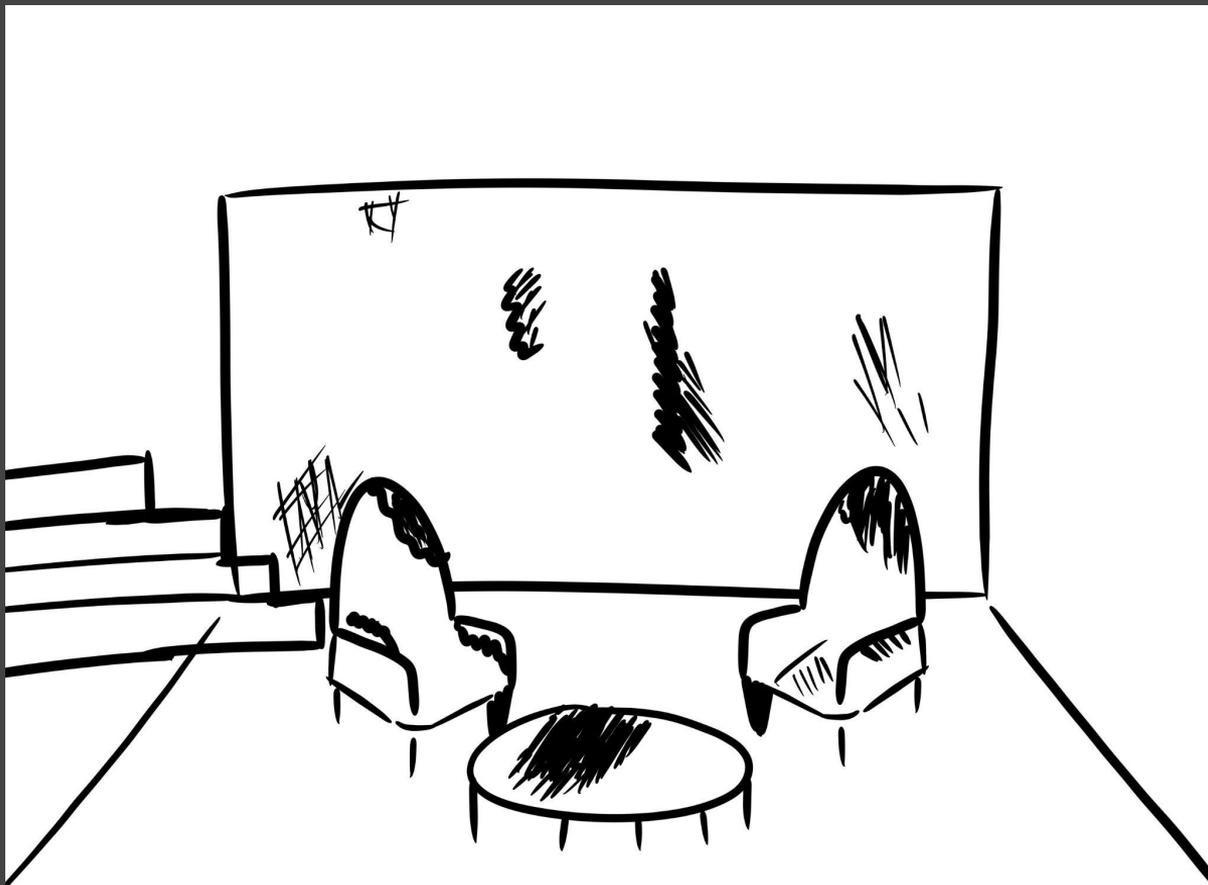
This scene would be performed in the Nelke theatre.

The set has the look and feel of a burned abandoned building. The chairs and table have burn marks on them and the back wall especially has burn marks.

Stage right is the main entrance to the house.

Stage left is the kitchen.

The stairs in the back of stage right is the personal rooms.

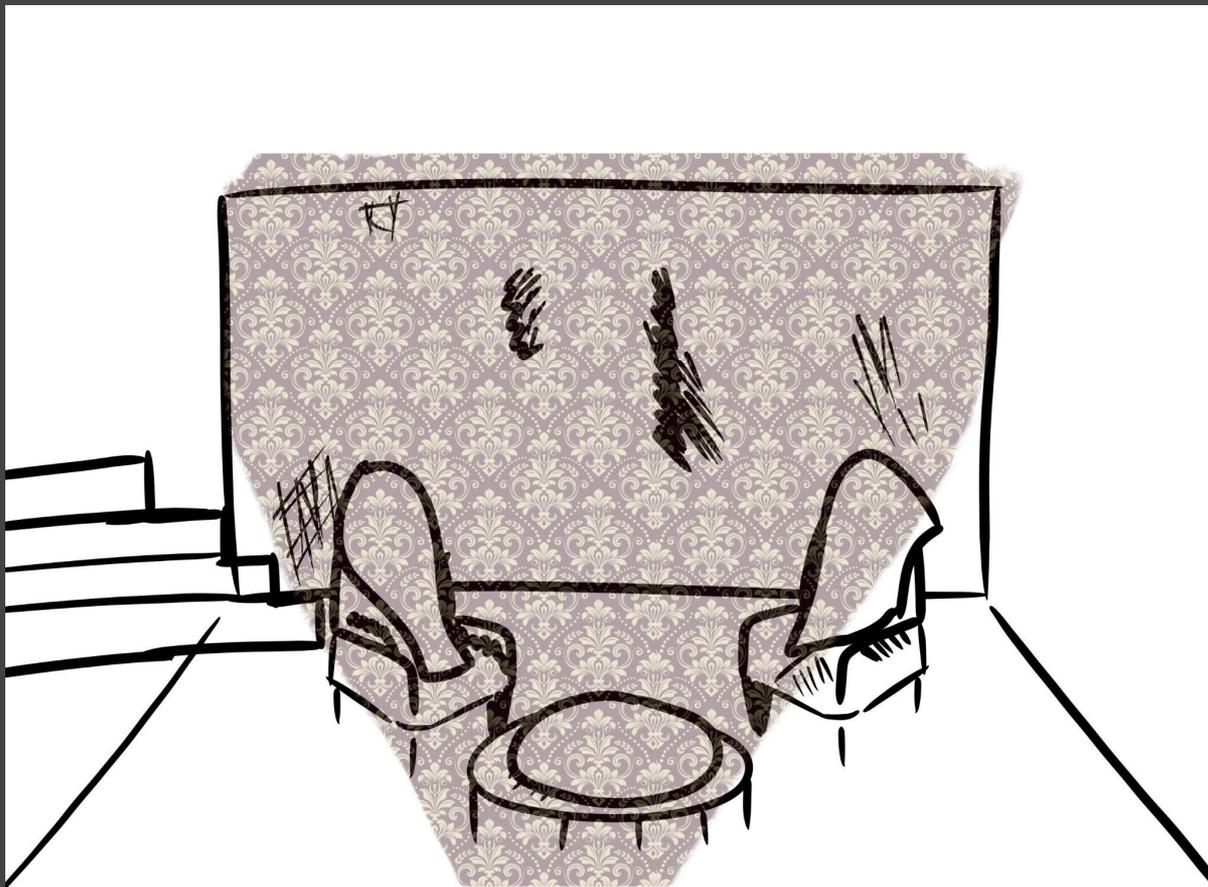


For Beat 2 through 8

This is the “memory” portion of the play.

A projector will be used to display a wallpaper on the back wall to help hide and cover up the burn marks.

Blankets and a tablecloth will be used to cover up the chairs and table so that the burn marks are hidden.



Moving Set Pieces

A projection of this wallpaper will be used to help hide and cover up the burn marks on the back wall.

During Beat 8 when Durand is giving his monologues the projector will slowly fade off to reveal the burned walls.

The blankets that cover the chairs will be added for beat 2 and removed for beat 9.

Similar to the blankets, the table cloth will be added for beat 2 and removed for beat 9.



Sound Effects

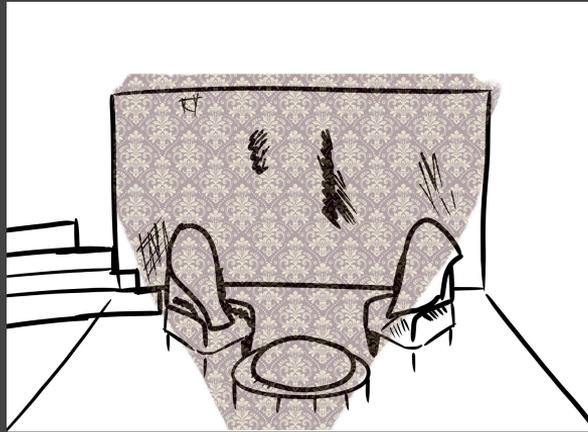
Sticking to Realism

- No pre recorded sound except that of fire used in beat 8 transition to beat 9.
- The fire sound. It will start in beat 8, very quiet and then proceed to as loud as it can be. Then it will end just as beat 9 starts.
 - https://duckduckgo.com/?q=sound+of+fire+growing&atb=v315-1&iax=videos&ia=videos&iai=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Df7qH7a_p9Qo
- Characters will make all other sounds needed including the people yelling about the fire at the house
- There will be no doorbells but characters can knock before entering the house

Lighting

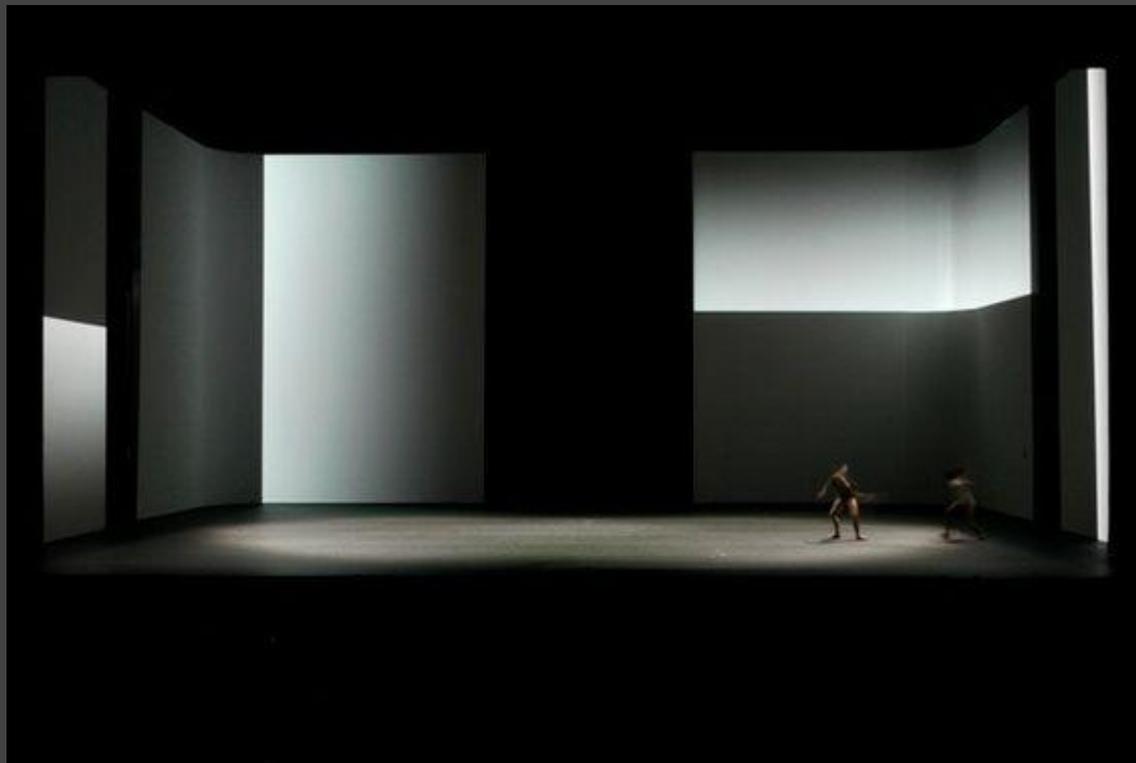
Projector Lighting

Because of the projector it might cause the characters to appear flat with the background. To counteract this effect I would like a constant intense backlight focused on the actors to help them pop from the stage.



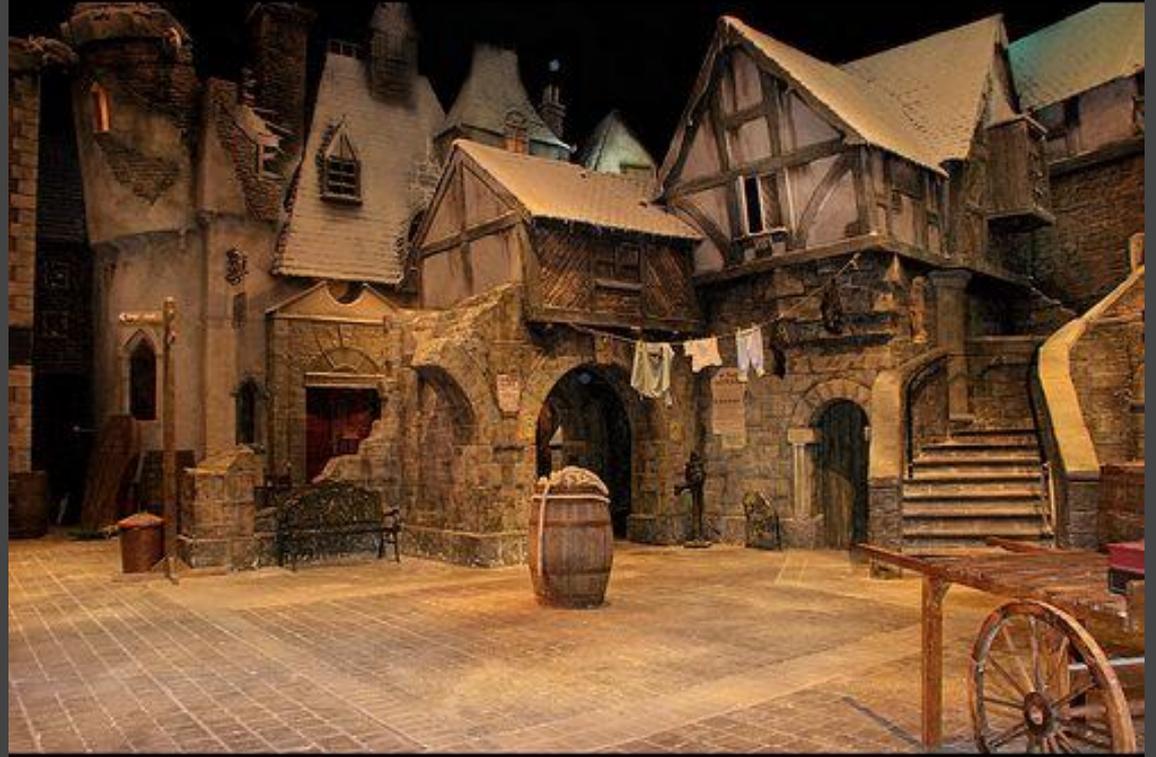
Beat 1 and 9

Subtle, ambient lighting



Beat 2-3, 5-6

Medium Lighting where shadows are cast and prevalent but still has lots of lights over everything



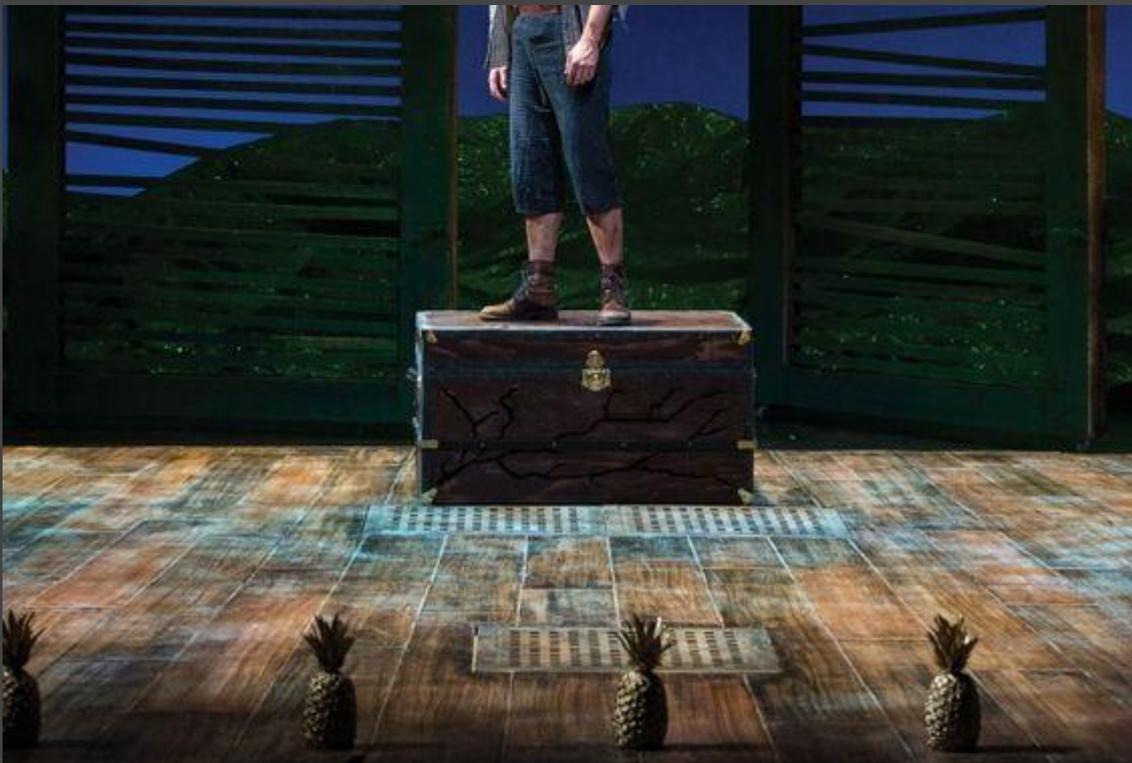
Beat 4

The brightest stage,
everything is lit and you can
see everything



Beat 7

The lighting from beat 6 but starting to incorporate mixed colors signifying the lies.



Beat 8

Spotlight focusing on Adel
and Durand

25° Beam Angle



Hair and Makeup

Adele Hair and Makeup



A face cuffed with dirt, as if she had been traveling on dirt paths or working in a kitchen all day with a fire

As she comes on and off the stage she will interact with things that have charcoal on them getting more and more dirty

Hair done in a functional bun

Monsieur Durand Hair and Makeup



Normal stage makeup with with slight hints of sweat and grime added

Hair looks somewhat long and unkept

During his monologues he will be getting more charcoled on himself

Therese Hair and Makeup



“You deserve it for showing yourself before a stranger with your hair not combed.” -Adele

She'll just have the most basic makeup, as if she just woke up

Hair loose and crazy wavy as if she just awoke

Annette Hair and Makeup



“See, there's Annette, and dressed already.” -Antonio

“How like your mother you are today, Annette!” -Durand

Going with the idea that the the mother is “carelessness and foolish” with money, as if she would spend it on frivolous things, Annette will be the most gaude up with makeup (though still not overly major).

Pale, rosy cheeks, and a slight lip rouge

Hair done up in a perfect updo

Antonio/Pierre Hair and Makeup



Antonio: Normal stage makeup with a clean look about him, clean shaven, short tidy hair

Pierre: Normal stage makeup

Costume

Adele Costume

Traveling cloak to hide the cloths
Blue dress, white apron scuffed up
by charcoal



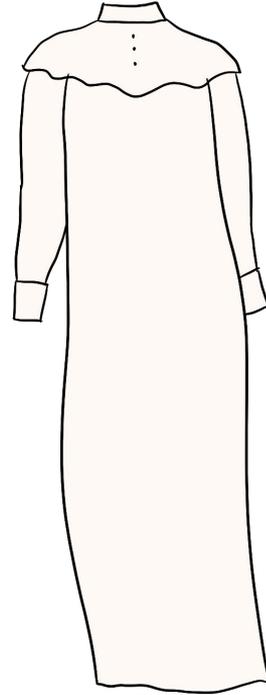
Monsieur Durand Costume

Less fancy fancy person's cloths.
Blue shirt. Slightly scuffed up by
dirt/charcoal



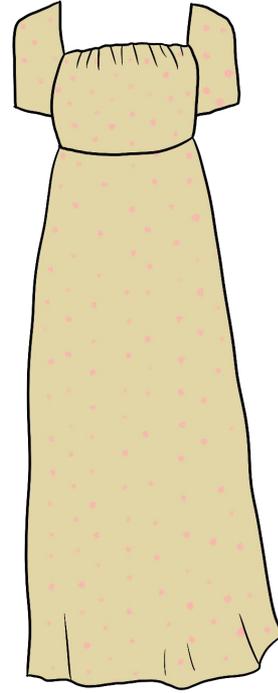
Therese Costume

Morning Neglige, slightly off
colored nightgown



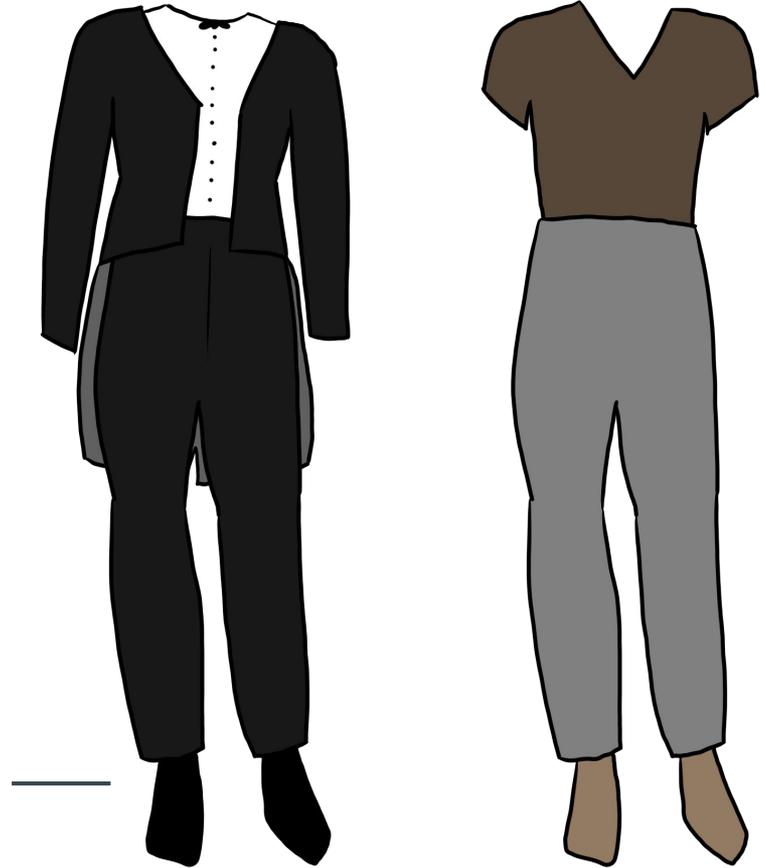
Annette Costume

Simple dress, simple design,
beautiful but elegant



Antonio/Pierre Costume

Antonio is in normal fancy fashion
Pierre is in errand boy cloths



Props

The List of Things

Things on coffee table

Tray with coffee things

Basket

Walking Cane

Mail/Bills

6 piece Package with 5 mass candles inside

Matches

Picture of water

Glass cup full of milk

Saucer for a cat

A gold piece

Rat-trap

Tobacco Pipe

Charcoal

Glass cup

Clutter

I want the style of these items, someone them look burnt. Or one half of them is burnt and you only see that side at certain times in the play.

I'll also need a spoke machine and test it's look/effect on stage.

Sources

- https://www.swissre.com/dam/jcr:e8613a56-8c89-4500-9b1a-34031b904817/150Y_Markt_Broschuere_UK_EN.pdf
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_Insurance_Association
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZc71zDfuZs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snFjkU85EqI>