A Study Guide for

The Shakespeare Stealer

Written by Gary Blackwood & Directed by Tom Ford

Presented by Idaho Theater for Youth, a program of the Idaho Shakespeare Festival
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Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the Idaho Theater for Youth study guide for *The Shakespeare Stealer*! These materials have been designed to expand your students’ engagement with the performance as well as provide some background knowledge on Elizabethan England and early modern theater. This study guide also provides an introduction to William Shakespeare and the influential literature he wrote.

This resource includes a range of information, discussion topics, and activities that can stand on their own or serve as building blocks for a larger unit. The activities are designed to be mixed, matched, and modified to suit the needs of your particular students.

Inside, you’ll find activities to share with your students both **before the show** and **after the show**, indicated by headings at the top of the page. These are designed to help focus your students’ engagement with the performance by giving them specific themes to watch out for, as well as to foster critical thinking and discussion following the performance. During post-show talkbacks, out actors will pull from many of the themes included here to engage your students. Each activity is designed to meet Idaho Standards of Education to foster critical thinking and problem solving skills.

We encourage you and your students to share your thoughts with us! Any of the artwork or activities your students send will be shared with the artists who created *The Shakespeare Stealer*, and any feedback from you will not help to improve our study guides for future audiences, but will aide in ongoing pursuit of grants that make these plays possible! Our mailing address is located on page 19.

Thank you so much!

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**A Very Special Thank You!**

As a part of Idaho Shakespeare Festival’s educational programming, *Idaho Theater for Youth (ITY)* performances have enriched the lives of well over one million students and teachers since 1981 with productions that convey the unique and impactful voice of theater arts. The magic of this art form is brought to schools across the State of Idaho each Winter/Spring semester with assistance from a generous group of underwriters:

- Idaho Commission on the Arts
- US Bancorp Foundation
- Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation
- Idaho Power Foundation
- Kissler Family Foundation
- The Whittenberger Foundation
- Idaho Community Foundation and the following Funds:
  - F.M., Anne G. & Beverly B. Bistline Foundation
  - Children’s Charities of Idaho
  - James A. Pinney Memorial Fund
  - Perc H. Shelton & Gladys A. Pospisil Shelton Foundation
  - Gladys E. Langroise Advised Fund
  - Idaho Community Foundation Youth Trust Fund
About our education programs...

The Idaho Shakespeare Festival has become an integral part of arts education throughout Idaho. The Festival’s annual Shakespeareience tour brings live theater to more than 25,000 high-school students in more than 50 Idaho communities each year. Since it began touring in 1986, Shakespeareience has enriched the lives of nearly 500,000 students.

In 1999, the Festival assumed the operations of Idaho Theater for Youth. This alliance has more than doubled the Festival’s annual educational programming, resulting in the Festival becoming the largest provider of professional, performing arts outreach in the state of Idaho. In addition to the statewide Idaho Theater for Youth school tour, which brings professional productions to nearly 30,000 students in grades K-6 across Idaho, the Festival oversees year-round School of Theater programs. This series of classes in acting, playwriting and production, for students of all ages, enrolls over 300 Treasure Valley students each year, and includes our one-of-a-kind Apprentice Company. Look for upcoming student productions throughout the summer, fall and spring.

For more information on any of the Festival’s educational activities, please contact the Education Manager at the Festival offices or by email at rose@idahoshakespeare.org.

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A Note From the Director...

When I was young boy growing up in Lubbock, Texas, my parents started taking me to the theater. I remember seeing Peter Pan, Annie Get Your Gun and Oliver. There were young people in all of those shows and I remember thinking - “How do you get to do that?” Then, when I was in sixth grade, a friend of mine called and asked if I wanted to go along with him to audition for the Children’s Theater. I was nervous and excited but didn’t hesitate to say “yes!” My first play was The Prince and the Pauper. I THINK I played a guard and I THINK I had one line, but very quickly I knew that I had found a “home.”

The Shakespeare Stealer, both the play that we will present for you and the novel on which it was based, is about a young man, Widge, who is an orphan apprentice in Elizabethan England. Widge is caught up in a scheme to steal Hamlet from William Shakespeare’s company but quickly discovers how hard this will be, especially considering that he has made new friends and found a new home within this theater company.

The Shakespeare Stealer addresses many topics, like morality and friendship, but the one that resonates for me most as a director is the idea of a second “home.” In the play, this home is the theater and the people who work there, but there are many places that young people can call home. Do you love reading? Then the library might feel like home. Are you a great football player? Then the football field might feel like home. Do you play an instrument? Love doing math problems? Do you help your parents set up their new computers? Are you good at science? Know all the historical facts? I encourage you to think about the different “homes” you have in your own life and how they help you stay grounded and feeling safe.

My wish for the audiences that see this play is that they come away with the knowledge that whatever they have a passion for can become their emotional “home” - no matter how unbelievable it seems at first. Trust me!

Enjoy the show!
-Tom Ford, Director
The Shakespeare Stealer Cast

Patrick Kiernan as Widge

Chad Ethan Shohet as Sander

Ben Kemper as Falconer/Simon Bass, Pope

Katie Proulx as Libby, Nick, Shakespeare

Jaime Nebeker as Dr. Bright, Julian

Robert Tombari as Armin, Queen Elizabeth

meet the artists!
The Shakespeare Stealer Summary

Set against the backdrop of Elizabethan London in 1601, The Shakespeare Stealer follows Widge, a fourteen year-old who has been raised in a Yorkshire orphanage. Widge is apprenticed to Dr. Bright, a minister who teaches Widge his cipher system of "charactery" (or shorthand) in order to use the boy’s writing skills to help to steal other ministers' sermons. Before long, Bright sells his young apprentice for ten pounds to Simon Bass, a London theater manager. Bass plans to use the boy’s shorthand skills to have him steal William Shakespeare's new play, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, so that Bass’s own theater can produce it first.

Widge is not far along with his transcript when he is found hiding in a balcony by the actors of the Globe Theatre; thinking only to save himself, Widge pretends to be stage-struck and is ultimately hired as an acting apprentice for Shakespeare’s acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

At first Widge sticks to the plan and tries to use his new position to steal the Globe's own copy of the play, but the new world he’s thrown into makes him question the ethics of his efforts. Instead, Widge practices lines, learns the arts of stagecraft and sword fighting, and works to evade Bass’s brutal henchman.

Step back in time and enter a swashbuckling world where men duel with swords if their honor is questioned, where females disguise themselves as males if they want a life on the theater stage, and where servants do not question the word of their masters.

theme to follow

Home: In the play, Widge never thought that he would find himself in a theater, let alone acting. It became something he enjoyed and worked to protect. The theater and his new friends became a home and family that he never had before.

- Can you think of anywhere special you call “home”? Is it a favorite place? Or is it when you’re doing an activity you love?
- Widge didn’t think he’d ever be able to leave his previous mean master, but eventually finds himself working with people who love and appreciate him. Have you ever overcome something you thought you could never do and ended up in a better situation?
- Once Widge discovers how much he enjoys acting, he wants to pursue it and stay with his new family. Are there any talents you have that you would like to turn into a profession?

About the Author: Gary Blackwood

Gary L. Blackwood (pictured right) was a book-lover from a very young age and always wanted to write, but did not know how to turn his passion into making a living and career.

Blackwood grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania and attended school in a one room schoolhouse. He graduated with an English degree from Grove City College in Pennsylvania, and while a college student, Blackwood published his first short story, Cliffs of Gold, in Twelve/ Fifteen magazine. Blackwood’s first book was The Lion and the Unicorn, which he published when he was nineteen.

Since then he has become a prolific author of novels for both young adults and middle-grade readers, in addition to penning plays and nonfiction.
In *The Shakespeare Stealer*, not only does our main character, Widge, set out to steal a copy of William Shakespeare’s new play *Hamlet*, but he ends up working with the Bard himself! One of the most famous writer’s in history, we’re able to imagine another side of him in our play. Read on to learn more about him below!

**The Life and Times of William Shakespeare**

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Due to poor record-keeping in small towns, his exact day of birth is unknown; it is traditionally celebrated on April 23rd. When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway (who was 26 at the time). The couple had three children, one of whom died of the plague in childhood.

Most of Shakespeare’s working life was spent in London. He enjoyed success not only as a playwright, but also as an actor and shareholder in the acting company, Lord Chamberlain’s Men (later known as the King’s Men). In his lifetime, he wrote 37 plays, many of which were based on English history as well as several comedies and tragedies, and at least 154 sonnets!

In 1599, Lord Chamberlain’s Men built a theater for themselves across the river from London, naming it “The Globe”. Many of Shakespeare’s plays were performed at court (both for Queen Elizabeth I and her successor King James I), some were presented at the Inns of Court (the residencies of London’s legal societies), and many others were performed in various towns, at area universities, and at great houses when the acting company went on tour.

It was during a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 that The Globe theater caught fire and burned to the ground. Shakespeare also retired from the stage around that same time, and no longer acting or writing, he returned to his family in Stratford; he died there on April 23rd, 1616.

Until the 18th Century, Shakespeare was generally thought to have been no more than a simple, rough, and untutored genius. Theories were advanced that his plays were actually written by someone more educated, like statesman and philosopher Sir Francis Bacon or the Earl of Southampton, who was Shakespeare’s primary patron. However, he was honored in his own time by fellow English writer Ben Johnson and others who saw in him a long-lasting brilliance. Since the 19th century, Shakespeare’s achievements have been more consistently recognized, and throughout the Western world he has come to be regarded as the greatest dramatist ever.
Setting the Scene

Below is a diagram of the inside of The Globe Theater, labeled with the various parts of the playhouse. The Globe was large, round, and open to the air. Only the seating area was covered so the theater looked like a giant donut from above!

Get familiar with some basic theater terms before the play!

- **patron**: someone who supported an artist or theater by giving money to the company
- **tiring room**: same as a dressing room, or **green room**, where actors would put on their costume or attire for the show
- **box office**: located in the backstage area, this is where theater staff took admission money they had collected from the audience
- **call**: the time an actor was expected to arrive at the theater to begin work for the day
- **improvisation** or **improv**: acting without any script or preparation
- **understudy**: an actor who prepares for another actor’s role incase the lead actor is unable to perform

Fun Fact: The Globe could fit up to 3,000 audience members!
William Shakespeare lived during a remarkably unique period in England’s history. The Elizabethan Age—named so for the then-ruling monarch, Queen Elizabeth I—began when the queen ascended the throne in 1558 and continued through her 45-year reign and well into the 1600’s. During her rule, England saw immense growth in commerce as well as culture, despite a long history of religious unrest and foreign military threats.

A determined ruler, Queen Elizabeth I managed to quell religious fighting between Catholics and Protestants, defeat the infamous Spanish Armada, and commissioned exploration of the New World. In addition to these social, political, and economic feats, Queen Elizabeth also recognized the importance of the arts—both in its positive influence on the individual and in its ability to create another kind of legacy for her nation. Fond of the theater and plays herself, the queen supported many young artists who proved prolific during this period, including Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare. For the first time in England, professional playhouses and theaters were commissioned and brought in around 15,000 patrons every week (keep in mind, the population of London was about 150—200,000!).

Also called the “Golden Age” of literature, this period saw an influx of not only writers, but of theater companies and acting troupes as well. The potential of having the patronage of the queen only added more fuel to the artistic fire and also spurred rivalries between the various theater companies—much like you’ll see in the play!

**Did you know:**

In Elizabethan England, even though they had a female ruler, women were forbidden by law from acting on the stage! It was believed at the time in England that the stage would corrupt a woman, so all female characters were played by young men who imitated a woman’s voice.

**Discuss and Share:** Are there many jobs or roles today that are limited to just men or just women? Why is this? Do you think it’s fair to have limits like this? Why or why not? Has there ever been a time when you were kept from doing something because of a rule like this?

**Forward Thinking!**

Think about the positive and long-lasting influences Queen Elizabeth I had on the growth of England. Now imagine: If you were the ruler of your country, what things would you want to improve or change? What steps would you take to make that change happen? Are these long- or short-term plans? On another piece of paper, list three things you would do and how they would improve your world.
“I’ve always thought that whatever benefits you is Right, and whatever does you dare is Wrong.”

First in the orphanage and then as an apprentice, Widge has been treated as a slave, a person required to do his master’s bidding, no matter what. Widge has had no ethical upbringing and no positive role models to teach him what is right and what is wrong. He gets by on his own ability to consider and assess a situation and to act accordingly—which is what eventually saves him from his life of servitude.

Who is a positive role model in your life? What have you learned from them?

Not all apprentices had it as bad as Widge! Usually, those in an apprenticeship were pretty well taken care of—they had shelter, food, a job, and were sometimes paid for their work.

For a long time, an apprenticeship was one of the few ways to ensure a job in life, especially for families of lower social ranking. Often starting at a young age and lasting through their teen years, young boys could serve as an apprentice in a variety of fields—from blacksmith to lawyer. Typically, their parents (or a previous master in Widge’s case) would be given a sum of money and the boy would then live with and learn from their new master, working for them while they mastered the trade.

If you were to be an apprentice today, what type of work would you want to be learning? Do you have any talents that would make you a good apprentice in a certain job? Do you think this is a good way for people to learn a job?

theme to follow

Right vs. Wrong and the different ways this is interpreted is a very important theme in The Shakespeare Stealer. Discuss the varying morals present—and not present—in the play and the character struggling with doing the “right” thing.

• How much do you think Widge’s upbringing impacted the decisions he made? Do all people know that stealing is wrong? Are there any traits or morals that all people view the same?

• If Widge had done as he was told, and given the copied version of Hamlet to Mr. Bass, would he still have been doing the “right” thing?

• If Widge had given Hamlet to Mr. Bass, do you think he would have still learned his lesson eventually? Think about the potential future in store for Widge in that time period.

• Was there a time that you struggled with doing the right thing? How did you decide it was the best choice?

Who is a positive role model in your life? What have you learned from them?

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________
cipher: noun — a coded message of writing using numbers or symbols in place of letters

drivell: verb — childish, silly, meaningless talk or thinking; nonsense

illiterate: adjective — not able to read or write, or not having any knowledge in a field

apprentice: noun, verb — a person who works for another in order to learn a trade

garret: noun — an attic, usually small and of poor quality

rustic: adjective, noun — relating to living in or being from the country or rural area; an unsophisticated country person

wight: noun — a human being, usually of supernatural quality, like a witch or elf

botch: verb, noun — to spoil or ruin by poor or clumsy work; a disorderly mess

hobble: verb — to walk with a limp

clamor: noun, verb — a loud uproar or noise; to cry out loudly and make a lot of noise

indulgence: noun — a catering to someone’s mood to make them happy

disreputable: adjective — having a bad reputation or being dishonorable
Find the list of characters, places, and vocabulary words in the word search!

APPRENTICE
BOTCH
CIPHER
CLAMOR
COMPANY
COSTUME
DISREPUTABLE
DRIVEL
ELIZABETHAN
GARRET
GLOBE
HAMLET
HOBBLE
ILLITERATE
INDULGENCE
JULIAN
LEICESTER
LONDON
RUSTIC
SANDER
SHAKESPEARE
THEATER
WIDGE
WIGHT
YORKSHIRE
The main reason Simon Bass enlists Widge to steal Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is because he is one of the best at quickly writing or copying text by using a cipher. A cipher allows for you to disguise your message by writing in code, making passing on secret information much easier.

Ciphers can use symbols or shapes in place of words and letters, or it can even use numbers that stand for specific letters (i.e. 1=A, 2=B, 3=C...). Some cipher just switch letters around, like changing “A” into “Z”, “B” into “Y” and so on—only with a code can someone translate the hidden message. Create your own shorthand language with a classmate and use it to send a message to each other!

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Did you notice that many of our actors played more than one character? In Elizabethan theater (as well as in many modern-day theaters), actors often had to play many roles. Not only could they be cast as multiple characters, but they often doubled as costume designers, fight choreographers, or directors. Nowadays, there are even more roles available and necessary in creating a successful play, many of which are listed below. Circle the ones that sound most interesting to you, and then look up some of the different duties and tasks of that position.

- Director
- Writer
- Actor
- Musical Director
- Choreographer
- Lighting Designer
- Sound Designer
- Costume Designer
- Dialect Coach
- Hair/Make-up Designer
- Set Designer
- Set Painter
- Builder/Carpenter
- Fight Choreographer
- Stage Manager

activity

create a company!

Now that you are more familiar with some of the various roles involved in making a successful theater company...

What would your role in the company be?
- Would you be an actor? The playwright?
- What about a sound or costume designer?

List what role (or roles!) you would like to play in your company as well as your skills or interests that make this the position for you!

-expanding the activity-

Once students have picked their preferred spot in their company, have them divide into groups—or their “companies.” Each company should try to have as diverse range of roles represented as possible!

Ask the groups to create a name for their acting company, as well as any distinguishing details. Do they perform a certain type of play as their specialty? Where are they located?

Next, the companies can create their own short scene either by writing their own, re-creating one from *The Shakespeare Stealer*, or from the “15-Minute Play” version of *Hamlet* included on pages 20-23.

Once each company has had enough time to rehearse, they can perform their skits for the rest of the class!
Nick: “It’s not as if I’m stealing the Crown Jewels. It’s nothing but a lot of words!”

Widge: “Nay. It’s more than that. Don’t you see? It’s another person’s ideas, another person’s labor.”

Throughout the play, Widge goes from stealing sermons just because he’s told to do so, to realizing that copying another person’s thoughts and words is just like stealing a physical object from them. Did you know there are laws that protect words, music, and even invention ideas? Things that come from the mind—like books, theories, and art—can be considered “Intellectual Property.” Stealing another person’s words is also called “plagiarism.” What could be the possible problems of using another person’s words or ideas?

Have you ever had anything you wanted to invent? Or what about an idea for a story or song?

Describe and draw your idea in the space below. Maybe one day, your idea could become famous!
Pick two characters from the play (they can be your favorite players or total opposites) and use the venn-diagram below to describe their different traits, morals, and actions to show how they are different, as well as how they are similar.
This play introduced you to a variety of different characters. Some were good, some bad; some were characters who played other characters (in more ways than one). Create a character for yourself to fit in with *The Shakespeare Stealer*. Would you be one of the actors or artists in the theater company? Visiting royalty? A spy or a famous swordsman?

Draw your character or defining attributes—make it as unique as possible!

Once everyone has created a character, introduce yourselves as those personas!

**Identify which characters from the play said the lines below!**

1. “There are worse places than this, and far worse masters than me.”

2. “But not ‘prentices. Our fates are decided for us.”

3. “To be or not to be—that is the question…”

4. “He’s as full of lies as an egg is full of meat.”

5. “Who wants to hear actors spouting ordinary speech?”

6. “The devil take your lying tongue! The truth, now!”

7. “If the Queen gets wind of it, we’re all in the soup.”

8. “Plays are a good deal more than words, just as a theatre is a good deal more than a playhouse and clutch of actors.”

**Theme to follow**

**Friendship** is a very important theme in *The Shakespeare Stealer*. Discuss the times we see friendship in the play and how it affects each the characters differently.

* At the beginning of the play, it’s easy to see that Widge has no true friends. Why is this? How does the way you are raised impact your relationships with others?

* What clear friendships do we see throughout the play? How do you think these friendships developed? What do these characters have in common that helps their relationship?

* What does the relationship between Widge, Sander, and Julian suggest about making and having friends?

* Think about your friendships—Have you always been friends with these people? Was there a specific moment that helped you become friends?

* At play’s end, Widge has not only found friends, but a family as well. Do you know anyone who isn’t related to you but who you still call “family”?

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“all the world’s a stage…”
Below is an image of the Globe Theater’s stage, where Shakespeare’s men would have performed! Draw in your own set pieces, costumes, actors, and/or audience members to complete a scene from the book.
The Fifteen-Minute Play is a plot summary intermingled with quotations from the play. It is typically used to introduce students to the play or prepare them to see a production. Try to keep the summary reading to fifteen minutes...

Bonus: You can also utilize this format for future summaries, altering as you see fit or having students create their own Fifteen-Minute Plays!

- Create cards for the quotations with the corresponding numbers, shown on the next two pages, in bold. The cards should be large enough for three to five people to read simultaneously.
- Divide the class into groups and distribute the cards. Each group may have multiple cards.
- Give the groups five to ten minutes to prepare dramatic renditions of their line(s). They can read the line(s) as a chorus, individually, or in sub-groups, but everyone must speak part of the text.
- Encourage students to physicalize/dramatize the line(s) in some way. Using props is acceptable, but not necessary.
- When the rehearsal period is over, ask everyone to stand in a circle. The leader (you, or a student) stand in the circle as well, and reads aloud the script of the story (on the next page) calling out the numbers of quotations where indicated and pausing for the group responsible for that quotation to step quickly into the center and perform it.
- The leader should keep a quick, steady pace and those with lines to share should pay attention — the activity is much more fun when it moves right along!
The Fifteen-Minute Summary Script

Read the following three pages aloud, only pausing for those with the corresponding quotation card to interject their phrase where it belongs.

“(1. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.) A group of night watchmen and the scholar Horatio are on patrol when they are visited by a ghost of the late King Hamlet. Horatio demands, (2. Stay! Speak! Speak! I charge thee, speak!)

Hamlet is still angry with his mother (3. Frailty, thy name is woman!), who married his uncle within a month after Hamlet’s father’s death. As Hamlet is brooding over the fate of his father, Horatio arrives and tells Hamlet about the ghost. (4. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.) Hamlet, excited by this information, vows (5. I’ll speak to it).

The court advisor, Polonius, advises his son, Laertes, on many things (6. This above all, to thine own self be true) as Laertes leaves for France. Laertes has already had words with his sister, Ophelia, about Hamlet’s attention to her (7. fear it, dear sister).

Horatio leads Hamlet to the Ghost, who motions for Hamlet to go away with it. Once they’re alone, the ghost tells Hamlet, (8 The serpent that did sting thy father’s life Now wears his crown.), meaning that Hamlet’s uncle murdered his father. The Ghost asks Hamlet to (9. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!) and disappears.

Hamlet begins acting strangely towards everyone in the castle. Polonius believes (10. this is madness, yet there is method in ’t) Claudius and Polonius plot to spy on Hamlet in discussion with Ophelia.

As Hamlet contemplates life and death (11. To be or not to be—that is the question), Ophelia arrives. Their conversation is bitter, and Hamlet tells her, (12. Get thee to a nunnery.)"
Claudius and Gertrude have sent for Hamlet’s old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find out what’s wrong. Hamlet suspects correctly that his friends have been sent to spy on him. But he is delighted by the arrival of a troupe of actors. He schemes, *(13. I’ll have these players play something like the murder of my father Before mine uncle.)* Hamlet plans to observe the King’s reaction to the play in order to confirm his guilt.

Before the play is over, the King stands up in a rage and orders everyone out. *(14. Give me some light. Away!)* and Hamlet suspicions are confirmed. Consumed by guilt, Claudius kneels to pray. Hamlet almost kills him then but decides against it, afraid that killing Claudius mid-prayer would *(15. this same villain send to heaven.)*

When Polonius spies an argument between Hamlet and Gertrude from behind a curtain, Hamlet mistakes him for Claudius and stabs Polonius, killing him *(16. Oh, I am slain!)*

Hamlet is sent away to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Fearful, Claudius secretly sends word to England ordering *(17. The present death of Hamlet)* Hamlet learns of the plot and replaces the King’s orders with a new request that the death sentence be carried out on his two friends. Thus, *(18. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.)* Hamlet then returns to Denmark.
Back at the castle, Ophelia has gone mad over the death of her father. *(19. O, this is the poison of deep grief.)* Laertes returns, angry about his father Polonius’ death and grieved about his sister Ophelia’s insanity. Laertes vows, *(20. Let come what comes, only I’ll be revenged Most thoroughly).*

As Claudius and Laertes plot that Laertes will kill Hamlet in a duel, Gertrude arrives and announces *(21. Your sister’s drowned, Laertes.)* As the royal family mourns, *(22. Sweets to the sweet, farewell!)* Hamlet accepts the challenge to duel Laertes. Laertes mortally wounds Hamlet, but Hamlet manages to grab the poisoned sword and strike Laertes as well. Laertes admits, *(23. I am justly killed with mine own treachery).*

After taking a drink from a cup of poisoned wine meant for Hamlet, the Queen dies. *(24. The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.)* The dying Laertes explains *(25. The King, the King’s to blame),* and Hamlet kills Claudius, both stabbing him and forcing him to drink the poisoned wine. Hamlet dies soon after, and Horatio mourns. *(26. Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.)*

Want to continue exploring Shakespeare’s works in an easy, concise format? Check out more 15-Minute Plays via the Folger Shakespeare Library at www.folger.edu
Think like a critic!

This is your students’ opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions about the performance of *The Shakespeare Stealer* that they just saw! Invite them to think about their experience and answer the following questions:

1. What is the name of your school?
2. Have you ever seen a play before?
3. Would you recommend this play to your friends?
4. Do you think it is important for people to see plays? Why or why not?
5. Was the story of *The Shakespeare Stealer* clear to you?
6. Did you learn something from this play that you did not expect to learn?
7. What was your favorite part of the performance? What did you like about it?
8. Did you have a least favorite part of the performance? Why?
9. Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you (i.e. music, costumes, jokes, etc.)? What did you like most about those aspects of the show?
10. Would you like for *ITY* to perform at your school again next year?

Mail your reviews to the Education Department at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival!

Idaho Shakespeare Festival
Attn: Education Department
P.O. Box 9365
Boise, ID 83707

expanding the activity

Have your students pretend that they are reviewers for a major newspaper. They can name the newspaper, format their article, add headlines and “photographs,” and display their publications around the classroom!
additional materials

Suggested reading for students who enjoyed *The Shakespeare Stealer*

Continue reading about Widge’s adventures in

**The Shakespeare Stealer Trilogy**

sources

http://www.bardweb.net/england.html
http://www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org/
http://shakespeareinform.weebly.com/history-of-era.html
http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/WordSearchSetupForm.asp
http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/resources/shakespeares-theatres/shakespeare-globe-facts/
http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-theatre-facts.htm
http://www.folger.edu/teach-learn

**Historical Fiction, Adventure, and Friendship**

(from left to right) *Magic Tree House* series, including *The Knight at Dawn* and *Night of the Ninjas* by Mary Pope Osborne; *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson; *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan; *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes; *King of Shadows* by Susan Cooper
“And now our humble show as reached an end. We thank you for your kind indulgence, friends. But one more word, I pray, before you go. No story ever really ends, you know. Though this our stage is bare, the actors done, Somewhere the play, with other players, goes on.”

the end