

# ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY

THE STATE THEATRE



## DADDY LONG LEGS

Play Guide

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It is Arizona Theatre Company's goal to share the enriching experience of live theatre. This play guide is intended to help you prepare for your visit to Arizona Theatre Company. Should you have comments or suggestions regarding the play guide, or if you need more information about scheduling trips to see an ATC production, please feel free to contact us:

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# ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY: WHO WE ARE

## Thousands of people make our work at ATC possible!

Arizona Theatre Company is a professional, not-for-profit theatre company. This means all of our artists, administrators and production staff are paid professionals, and the income we receive from ticket sales and contributions goes right back into our budget to create our work, rather than to any particular person as a profit.



Herberger Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona

Each season, ATC employs hundreds of actors, directors and designers from all over the country to create the work you see on stage. In addition, ATC currently employs about 100 staff members in our production shops and administrative offices in Tucson and Phoenix during our season. Among these people are carpenters, painters, marketing professionals, fundraisers, stage directors, computer specialists, sound and light board operators, tailors, costume designers, box office agents, stage crew -the list is endless- representing an amazing range of talents and skills.

We are also supported by a Board of Trustees, a group of business and community leaders who volunteer their time and expertise to assist the theatre in financial and legal matters, advise in marketing and fundraising, and help represent the theatre in our community.

Roughly 150,000 people attend our shows every year, and several thousands of those people support us with charitable contributions in addition to purchasing their tickets. Businesses large and small, private foundations and the city and state governments also support our work financially.

All of this is in support of our mission: to create professional theatre that continually strives to reach new levels of artistic excellence and that resonates locally, in the state of Arizona and throughout the nation. In order to fulfill its mission, the theatre produces a broad repertoire ranging from classics to new works, engages artists of the highest caliber, and is committed to assuring access to the broadest spectrum of citizens.



Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, Arizona

# DADDY LONG LEGS

Music and Lyrics by Paul Gordon

Book by John Caird

Based on the Novel by Jean Webster

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY

From the Tony Award-winning director of *Les Misérables* and *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, and the creators of the Tony Award-nominated *Jane Eyre*, comes a heartwarming new musical based on a book beloved for generations. *Daddy Long Legs* tells of a young girl's Cinderella journey into womanhood, as well as a confirmed bachelor's awakening into love. Told through a series of letters between Jerusha Abbott, the oldest orphan at the John Grier Home, and Jervis Pendleton, her mysterious benefactor, *Daddy Long Legs* is a testament to the power of the written word and its ability to touch our hearts. An elegant and inventive romance, this award-winning musical love story has been lauded for its innocence, its sheer beauty, and its depth of emotion, not to mention its magnificent musical score. Winner of three prestigious Ovation Awards including Best Book, Best Score and Lead Actress in an Original Musical.



Megan McGinnis and Robert Adelman Hancock in *Daddy Long Legs*

## SYNOPSIS



Megan McGinnis in *Daddy Long Legs*

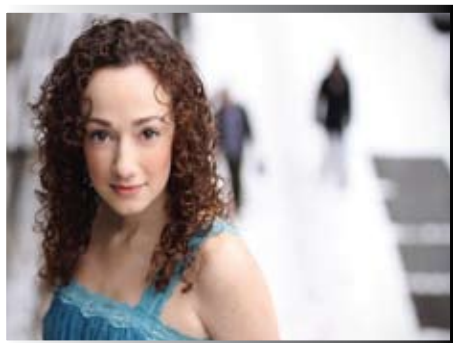
In the early twentieth century, Jerusha Abbott faces an uncertain future. Raised in an orphanage, she has little chance that her future will be bright, until a generous benefactor handpicks her from the orphanage because of the skill she has shown in writing. Jerusha is to be sent to college courtesy of her benefactor, who she nicknames "Daddy Long Legs," with a monthly allowance and a brand new start in life. The mysterious benefactor asks only one thing: once a month Jerusha must write him a letter telling him of her life. He will never respond and she will never know him. As Jerusha makes her

way through her college days, she charms everyone around her with her wit, drive and humor. Through her letters even Daddy Long Legs comes to adore the young woman. But Daddy Long Legs turns out to be quite unlike the grey-headed and grandfatherly picture Jerusha forms in her head and romance blossoms in the place where Jerusha least suspects,

Jerusha's \$35 a month allowance translates to just over \$850 today.

CHARACTERS

## THE CHARACTERS



Actor Megan McGinnis who plays Jerusha Abbott.

**Jerusha Abbott:** An orphan.

**Jervis Pendleton:** A philanthropist.



Actor Robert Adelman Hancock who plays Jervis Pendleton.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### Act One

1. The Oldest Orphan in the John Grier Home ..... Jerusha
2. Who Is This Man? ..... Jerusha
3. Mr. Girl Hater ..... Jerusha/Jervis
4. She Thinks I'm Old ..... Jervis
5. Like Other Girls ..... Jerusha/Jervis
6. Freshman Year Studies ..... Jerusha/Jervis
7. Things I Didn't Know ..... Jerusha/Jervis
8. I'm A Beast ..... Jerusha
9. How Shall We Meet? ..... Jervis
10. The Colour of Your Eyes ..... Jerusha/Jervis
11. Like Other Girls (Reprise) ..... Jervis
12. Lock Willow ..... Jerusha/Jervis
13. The Secret of Happiness ..... Jerusha
14. What Does She Mean by Love? ..... Jervis/Jerusha



Megan McGinnis and Robert Adelman Hancock in *Daddy Long Legs*.

MUSIC



Megan McGinnis in *Daddy Long Legs*.

## Act Two

1. Sophomore Year Studies ..... Jerusha/Jervis
2. Girl in the Window Display ..... Jerusha/Jervis
3. I Couldn't Know Someone Less..... Jerusha
4. The Man I'll Never Be..... Jervis
5. The Secret of Happiness (Reprise) ..... Jervis/Jerusha
6. Humble Pie ..... Jervis
7. Graduation Day..... Jervis
8. Charity ..... Jerusha/Jervis
9. I'm a Beast (Reprise) ..... Jervis
10. All This Time..... Jerusha/Jervis

## JEAN WEBSTER



Author of *Daddy Long Legs* the novel,  
Jean Webster

Alice Jane Chandler Webster was born on July 24, 1876 in Fredonia, New York, to parents Charles Luther Webster and Annie Moffet Webster. Charles was a publisher and a business partner of Annie's famous literary uncle Samuel Clemens, more commonly known as author Mark Twain. Webster attended three educational institutions throughout her life. First, she attended the Fredonia Normal School, from which she graduated in 1894. From there, Webster went to the Lady Jane Grey Finishing School; it was at this school Alice adopted her new name. While attending Lady Jane Grey, Webster had a roommate who shared her first name. In an effort to make things easier, Webster decided to adopt a more modern variation of her middle name to differentiate the two. From her days at Lady Jane Grey Finishing School forward, Webster was known as Jean. Next, Webster enrolled in Vassar College at the age of twenty-one. At the time of her enrollment, Vassar was still an all-women's institution (which it remained until 1969) but was known as a successful and esteemed sister institution to the Ivy League male counterparts. At Vassar, Webster declared her concentration in English and began to write for the college journal, *Vassar Miscellany*. She also edited and illustrated the yearbook *Vassarion* and started compiling her own books and plays. Webster became close friends with Adelaide Crapsey, who would go on to be a successful poet. Crapsey inspired Webster and the two joined together in numerous creative endeavors.

Jean Webster was reported to be a very creative speller. When teachers would approach her about her misspellings she would say that she got them from “Webster,” using her name as a pun for the famous dictionary.

In 1901, Webster graduated from Vassar College and focused her attention on her career as an independent writer. She garnered a series of published works including *When Patty Went to College* (1903), *Wheat Princess* (1905), *Jerry Junior* (1907) *Four-Pools Mystery* (1908), *Much Ado About Peter* (1909) and *Just Patty* (1911). She also toured the world including trips to Italy, Egypt, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Hong Kong, China and Japan. In 1912, her greatest success came with the publication of *Daddy Long Legs*. The novel is epistolary in form and tells the story of Jerusha Abbott, an orphan who is educated by a mysterious benefactor she names “Daddy Long Legs.” Over her four years of college, Jerusha writes Daddy Long Legs a monthly letter, informing him of her educational, emotional, and social journey through her schooling. Webster’s protagonist is certainly of her era, and yet, just a year shy of a century after *Daddy Long Legs’* publication, Jerusha still leaps off the page as an opinionated, witty and self-possessed character, who easily charms modern readers with her boisterous spirit and natural curiosity.

Aside from her interest in writing, Webster held passionate views about what she believed to be necessary reforms in the country’s prison and orphanage systems (her feelings about the orphanage situation in the United States at the time are made apparent by *Daddy Long Legs* heroine Jerusha’s attitudes toward her situation growing up in an orphanage). She believed reform was also long overdue for the patriarchal society of the United States evidenced by her ardent support of the women’s suffrage movement. In *Daddy Long Legs*, her main character Jerusha mirrors Webster’s own opinions when she writes, “Don’t you think I’d make an admirable voter if I had my rights? . . . This is an awfully wasteful country to throw away such an honest, educated, conscientious, intelligent citizen as I would be.” Webster also struggled with the economic disparity in the United States and the disenfranchised in society. Although she could not vote, she rallied for the socialist party in the 1900 election, promoting the socialist candidate Eugene V. Debbs. In *Daddy Long Legs*, Jerusha also dabbles in socialism, though the references are fleeting.



A 19th century depiction of Vassar College, where Jean Webster went to college

After the publication of *Daddy Long Legs*, Daddy Long Legs dolls were manufactured and sold to generate money to go towards placing orphans in suitable families.

Three years after the publication of *Daddy Long Legs*, Webster was able to marry her long-time love interest Glenn Ford McKinney. Webster met McKinney through his sister and her good friend and travel companion Ethelyn McKinney. Glenn's involvement in an unhappy marriage with a mentally unstable wife, coupled with the comparative difficulty of obtaining a divorce in the early part of the century, caused the couple to remain unmarried initially. However, after McKinney finally obtained a divorce, he and Webster married in 1915. The previous year, Webster's theatrical adaptation of *Daddy Long Legs* opened in New York and continued production through the year of the couple's marriage. That same year, Webster's sequel to *Daddy Long Legs* entitled *Dear Enemy* was published to acclaim. Webster was at the peak of her career and her personal life, and friends said they had never seen her happier. However, in 1916, Webster's life came to an abrupt and tragic halt. That year, Webster became pregnant with her first child at the age of 39. She delivered a baby girl on June 10, 1916 who was named Jean. Webster died the next day, most likely due to "childbirth fever" also known as Puerperal Fever. It's a cruel irony that this reform-minded woman died of a disease spread by unsanitary conditions at hospitals. Though her life was cut short, Jean Webster has lived on in the generations of people who have experienced the charm of her characters through reading her published works firsthand, or seeing the adaptations for stage and film that have followed.

--written by Faith Glendenning, dramaturgical intern

## JOHN CAIRD

Bookwriter and director of *Daddy Long Legs*, John Caird is a freelance director and writer working in theatre, opera and musical theatre. Recent work in England includes *Macbeth* at the Almeida Theatre and *Hamlet* at the National Theatre, both with Simon Russell Beale. In Stockholm, John has recently directed productions of Strindberg's *Dance of Death* and Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest*, all at the Royal Dramatic Theatre where he is Principal Guest Director. In Japan, he has recently directed *Jane Eyre* at the Nissay Theatre, his own adaptation of Teru Miyamoto's novel *Kinshu* at the Galaxy Theatre, and his own version of Bernstein's *Candide* at the Imperial Theatre.



Director and Bookwriter John Caird

Other productions at London's National Theatre include *Candide*, J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, *The Seagull* with Judi Dench, Pam Gems' *Stanley* with Anthony Sher, and *Humbleboy* by Charlotte Jones with Diana Rigg and Simon Russell Beale. John is an Honorary Associate Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), where he has directed over twenty classic and new plays. His RSC productions of *Les Misérables* and *Nicholas Nickleby* have won numerous awards around the world, including the Olivier and Tony Awards. Other work includes Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance* at the Palace Theatre and the *Siegfried and Roy Spectacular* in Las Vegas. Television work includes *Nicholas Nickleby*, *As You Like It* and his own adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* for the BBC. In opera, John has directed Verdi's *Don Carlos* and *Aida* at Welsh National Opera, Puccini's *Tosca* at Houston Grand Opera and *Brief Encounter*, a new opera by André Previn, for which John also wrote the libretto. *Brief Encounter* had its World Premiere at Houston Grand Opera in March, 2009, and has recently been released by Deutsche Grammophon. Published work as a librettist and lyricist includes a new version of John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* with the composer Ilona Sekacz, first performed at the RSC; a new adaptation of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* which played at the RSC and National Theatre; *Children of Eden* with composer Stephen Schwartz; *Jane Eyre* with Paul Gordon; a new version of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* with specially commissioned new lyrics by Richard Wilbur and Stephen Sondheim; and *Brief Encounter* with music by André Previn. *Theatre Craft*, John's new book on directing, was published by Faber & Faber in London and New York in March, 2010. [www.johncaird.com](http://www.johncaird.com)

## THE MANY FACES OF DADDY LONG LEGS

*Daddy Long Legs* was first published by Jean Webster in 1912. It was a romantic story aimed at a readership of young women, or "college girls." The story of Jerusha Abbott, the young girl who gets the chance to go to college due to the generosity of a mysterious benefactor, Jervis Pendleton, with whom she eventually falls in love, proved to be a popular story in the past century and raw material for a variety of stage, film and television adaptations. Following is a list of the various incarnations of this endearing, and enduring, story.

### 1919

Mary Pickford starred in a silent film adaptation which seems to be more melodramatic than the original novel (beginning with the discovery of baby Jerusha in a trash can). Plot points are added to her young life in the orphanage where she rebels against both the matron and the trustees. As a college student, Jerusha writes a novel, the income from which allows her to re-pay her benefactor; no such plot point exists in the original story.

### 1931

Janet Gaynor portrayed Jerusha, the plucky young woman, in an adaptation which stuck fairly closely to the original story. Among the adaptors of this version was Broadway playwright and popular Hollywood screenwriter S.N. Behrman.



Poster for *Daddy Long Legs* starring Mary Pickford

### 1935

The story of *Daddy Long Legs* became the basis of a musical vehicle for Shirley Temple in the enormously popular *Curly Top* (the film was one of the top box office draws of the year). The score featured the now classic tune "Animal Crackers in My Soup." That song, along with another from the show, "When I Grow Up," became major hits and sold thousands of copies of the sheet music. The story renames Jerusha Abbott with the more patrician name of Elizabeth Blair. Because Shirley Temple was much younger than the main character of Jean Webster's original story, an older sister, Mary Blair, was added so that there would be a romantic plotline. Instead of sending the young orphan to college, the mysterious benefactor (now named Edward Morgan) invites the sisters to live with him, where after a series of miscommunications, he declares his love for Mary and all live happily ever after.

### 1938

The story moved to The Netherlands in the fourth film adaptation, where Jerusha Abbott became Judy Aalders and Jervis Pendleton was translated to Albert van Woudenberg, or as the Dutch title called him, *Vadertje Laangbeen*.

### 1952

The first musical adaptation for the stage appears under the title *Love from Judy*. While this adaptation sticks to the basic plot, it adds two other pairs of lovers, plus an older, and oft-married confidante, not to mention an African American character named Claudette whose function in the story was to add color (pun not intended). The music was written by Hugh Martin, who also composed *Best Foot Forward*, *High Spirits* and the film *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

### 1955

Perhaps the most famous of the adaptations is the film musical starring Fred Astaire and Leslie Caron, with music and lyrics by Johnn Mercer. This version, however, takes a lot of liberties with the original story. The setting is moved to an orphanage in Paris. Astaire, as the mysterious Jervis Pendleton, has a chance encounter with orphan Julie Andre and decides to send her to school in New England. As in the original, Julie is required to write letters to her as yet unknown benefactor. When he visits her at school, the two eventually fall in love--despite a thirty year age difference. Sadly, Fred Astaire's wife died of lung cancer during the filming of this movie. After planning to scrap the project, he changed his mind and finished the film.

**1990**

The story of *Daddy Long Legs* crossed the ocean to become a Japanese anime television series. Again, it sticks relatively closely to the original story, covering three years of Judy (Jerusha) Abbot's life over 40 episodes. The series was awarded the Excellent Movie Award for Television by the Japanese Agency of Cultural Affairs for Children in 1990.

**2005**

The most recent adaptation (besides the new musical playing at ATC) is a Korean film, which uses the basic premise but changes much of the structure of the original story. It sticks with the idea of a young woman helped through school by an unknown benefactor. It folds in some athletic twists, however, when the orphan discovers that her patron is the young librarian at the television station where she works. He had been in love with her at university but lost his memory from a fatal disease. The two fall in love again and spend as much time together as possible before his ultimate demise.



Robert Adelman Hancock in *Daddy Long Legs*

## WOMEN IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY IN THE UNITED STATES

Don't you think I'd make an admirable voter if I had my rights?  
– Jerusha Abbott, *Daddy Long Legs*

The first decade of the 20th century was a formative one for women in the United States. In the vibrant chaos of the Industrial Revolution, women began working outside the home in large numbers for the first time. As industrial innovation continued, workers' rights began to become included as an issue relevant to the American woman. Women were often prohibited membership in the newly evolving trade unions, and thus The National Women's Trade Union League was formed in 1903 to help women organize and protect their rights as workers and as women. High numbers of women



1908 Labor Day Parade, float of Women's Trade Union League, New York



Firefighters attempt to halt the blaze at the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in 1911

in textile and garment shops particularly known for poor working conditions led to strikes in New York and Chicago in 1909 and 1910.

The New York Shirtwaist Strike of 1909, also known as the Uprising of the 20,000, was the first and largest successful uprising of female workers in America. It began primarily as a movement by Jewish shirtwaist workers in New York at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, and spread to a general strike of the entire New York garment industry. The strike began in November 1909 and was settled with improvements to working conditions, wages, and hours. However, there were still great strides of improvement to make: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory became a beacon of workers' rights a year later when a devastating fire broke out in 1911, killing 146 garment workers, the vast majority of them women. The fire remained the deadliest industrial disaster in NYC until the destruction of the World Trade Center nearly a century later.

The U.S. women's suffrage movement was also gaining momentum in the early part of the 20th century. In 1900, only four states allowed women the right to vote: Idaho, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. The National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA), founded by Susan B. Anthony in 1890, passed its leadership to Carrie Chapman Catt in 1900. Catt first voiced the political agenda known as the "Winning Plan," the goal of which was a constitutional amendment to grant female suffrage. The organization became a major pressure group as it progressed into the 1900s. Through street rallies, parades, and alliances with labor unions, celebrities, and wealthy donors, they advertised the women's suffrage movement and began to collect the political power to pass the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920, finally allowing women the right to vote in the United States.

-written by Katherine Monberg, Artistic Intern



In 1917, suffragettes march down 5th Avenue in New York City with the signatures of 1,000,000 women demanding the right to vote.

## A Timeline of Important Events for Women's Rights in the 20th Century

**1900** By now, every state has passed legislation modeled after New York's Married Women's Property Act (1848), granting married women some control over their property and earnings.

**1904** Helen Keller graduates from Radcliffe College (In 1904, women made up 2.8% of the college population.)

**1916** Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first American woman elected to the United States Congress.



Helen Keller in 1904, the year of her graduation from Radcliffe College.



Margaret Sanger

**1916** Margaret Sanger tests the validity of New York's anti-contraception law by establishing a clinic in Brooklyn. The most well-known of birth control advocates, she is one of hundreds arrested over a 40-year period for working to establish women's right to control their own bodies.

**1920** The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified. It declares: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

**1921** Margaret Sanger founds the American Birth Control League.

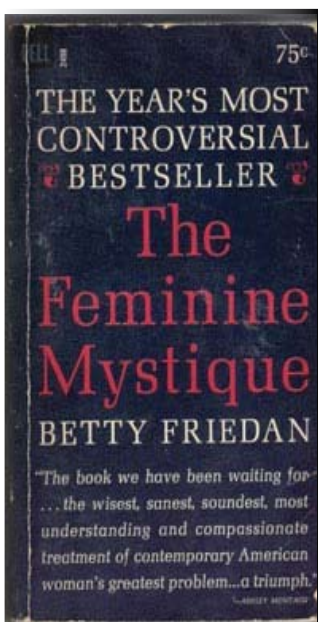
**1923** National Woman's Party proposes Constitutional amendment: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

**1932** Amelia Earhart's solo Atlantic flight.

**1932** The National Recovery Act forbids more than one family member from holding a government job, resulting in many women losing their jobs.



Amelia Earhart



**1938** The Fair Labor Standards Act establishes minimum wage without regard to sex.

**1943** Agnes de Mille choreographs *Oklahoma!*

**1955** Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama.

**1963** Betty Friedman's *The Feminine Mystique* is published.

**1968** Executive Order 11246 prohibits sex discrimination by government contractors and requires affirmative action plans for hiring women.

**1970** Anna Mae McCabe Hays becomes the first woman general in the U.S. Army.

**1971** *Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corporation*, 400 U.S. 542 (1971): The U.S. Supreme Court outlaws the practice of private employers refusing to hire women with pre-school children.

**1974** Housing discrimination on the basis of sex and credit discrimination against women are outlawed by Congress.

**1978** The Pregnancy Discrimination Act bans employment discrimination against pregnant women.

**1981** Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court.

**1987** *Johnson v. Santa Clara County*, 480 U.S. 616 (1987): The U.S. Supreme Court rules that it is permissible to take sex and race into account in employment decisions even where there is no proven history of discrimination but when evidence of a manifest imbalance exists in the number of women or minorities holding the position in question.

**1992** Mae Jemison becomes the first woman of color to go into space.

**1993** The Family and Medical Leave Act goes into effect. The act deals with various protections, including job protection for individuals who must take a period of unpaid time off of work to care for a family member (such as the birth of a child or a spouse's or child's illness).



Sandra Day O'Connor

**1994** Congress adopts the Gender Equity in Education Act to train teachers in gender equity, promote math and science learning by girls, counsel pregnant teens, and prevent sexual harassment.

**1996** *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515 (1996), affirms that the male-only admissions policy of the state-supported Virginia Military Institute violates the Fourteenth Amendment.

**1997** Elaborating on Title IX, the Supreme Court rules that college athletics programs must actively involve roughly equal numbers of men and women to qualify for federal support.

**2009** Harvard University names Drew Gilpin Faust its first woman president in the school's 371-year history. (By 2009, women made up 55% of the entire college population).

--reprinted with permission from Cleveland Play House's Student Guide for *Daddy Long Legs*



Drew Gilpin Faust

## ORPHANAGES IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

"You know, Daddy, it isn't the work that is going to be hard in college. It's the play. Half the time I don't know what the girls are talking about. Their jokes seem to relate to a past that everyone but me has shared. It's a miserable feeling. I've had it all my life." – Jerusha Abbot, *Daddy Long Legs*

Jerusha Abbott of *Daddy Long Legs* is a young woman growing up in an orphanage in the early part of the twentieth century. Cultures throughout history have had different ways of dealing with situations in which a child or children find themselves without parents, either through abandonment or death. Greek in origin, the word "orphan" has several definitions in modern society; some definitions include a child who has lost one parent either through death or by abandonment as an orphan, while others require that a child has lost both biological parents before being considered an orphan. Today, the term is also sometimes used for adults, where historically its use only applied to children.



Megan McGinnis in *Daddy Long Legs*.



Nelson Mandela

### Famous Orphans Throughout History:

- Muhammad, central figure in Islam, orphaned at age 6.
- Alexander Hamilton, U.S. founding father, orphaned at age 13.
- Benito Juarez, Mexican President, orphaned at age 3.
- Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa, raised as a ward.
- Eleanor Roosevelt, U.S. First Lady, civil-rights activist, orphaned at age 10.
- Joseph F. Smith, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, orphaned at age 13.
- Tecumseh, Native American leader, orphaned as a child.
- Malcolm X, political and civil rights activist, raised in an orphanage and foster care.
- Edward Albee, playwright, adopted as an infant.
- Edgar Allan Poe, author, orphaned in childhood.
- J. R. R. Tolkien, author, orphaned at age 12.
- Leo Tolstoy, author, orphaned at age 9.
- Louis Armstrong, musician, raised in an orphanage and by his grandmother.
- Ray Charles, singer, orphaned at age 15.
- John Lennon, musician, raised by his aunt and uncle.
- Trent Reznor, musician, orphaned when parents abandoned him at age 5 and raised by grandparents.
- Ice-T, actor, rapper, orphaned at age 9.
- George Lopez, comedian, raised by a grandmother.
- Frances McDormand, best actress Academy Award winner, adopted as an infant.
- Marilyn Monroe, entertainer, raised in foster care.
- Babe Ruth, baseball star, raised in an orphanage.
- George Washington Carver, scientist, inventor, orphaned while a slave.
- Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Computer, adopted as an infant.
- Dave Thomas, founder of Wendy's restaurants, adopted as an infant, adoption advocate.



Marilyn Monroe

--List adapted from wikipedia

## ORPHANS

When Jean Webster created Jerusha Abbott, the orphanage system in the United States was a firmly entrenched part of society. As opposed to today, where United States society prefers to put abandoned children into homes through foster care, historians estimate that in 1900 there were approximately 1,000 orphanages across the country, providing for 100,000 children. The institutions were often associated with religious organizations of various faiths including Protestant, Catholic and Jewish orphanages. There were secular orphanages as well, generally provided by socially active groups. Life in an early twentieth century orphanage often came with many difficulties. Such institutions were often modeled on a belief that isolating “problem” people from the general public was beneficial to the individual in question, as well as a way to “protect” society. Children without parents who could, or would, care for them were often grouped into this definition. Much like the expansion of asylums for “mentally undesirable” individuals continued throughout the 19th century, so did the proliferation of orphanages. However, it should be noted that during this period, some of the children in orphanages were not true orphans in any sense of the word: their parents were very much alive, but often suffered from a variety of poverty or sanitation-related issues that wreaked havoc on the lives of many people in the lower social strata of the day. Entrenchment in poverty or tuberculosis and other contagious diseases sometimes compelled parents to face a horrible choice: life on the streets with their children, sending their children to a workhouse or hoping for the best with an orphanage. Once placed in an orphanage, many children faced a regimented lifestyle that could include marching drills, strict discipline and rigorous chores and responsibilities.



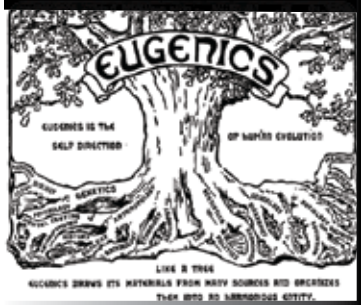
Thomas Kennington's painting  
*Orphans* (1885)

“Julia Pendleton dropped in this evening to pay a social call, and stayed a solid hour. She got started on the subject of family, and I COULDN'T switch her off. She wanted to know what my mother's maiden name was--did you ever hear such an impertinent question to ask of a person from a foundling asylum? I didn't have the courage to say I didn't know, so I just miserably plumped on the first name I could think of, and that was Montgomery. Then she wanted to know whether I belonged to the Massachusetts Montgomerys or the Virginia Montgomerys.” – Jerusha Abbott, *Daddy Long Legs*

Throughout *Daddy Long Legs*, Jerusha expresses concern over her status as an orphan and keeps secret from her classmates that she was raised in an orphanage. During the time period in which *Daddy Long Legs* was written, a strident movement called the Eugenics Movement was taking place, which had a profound effect on the perception of orphans. The word eugenics derives from the Greek words *eu* (well) and *genēs* (born) and was first coined in 1883. Many respected people and even scientists of the day believed that orphans were more likely to suffer from “bad blood” than other children. They reasoned that under normal circumstances, any parent who had a child would be compelled to raise that child; the fact that a child had become an orphan could indicate that the parents either did not possess the natural instinct for caretaking, and thus did not care

about their offspring, or they had died from a disease that could well be genetic. In either case, parents of such a child, and thus the child by default, were viewed negatively in many social circles. Influential individuals of the day cautioned would-be adoptive parents from considering a child whose parentage was either unknown or in some way "defective." Such social crusaders created a situation where children in orphanages faced a difficult task of finding a permanent home. The strikes against them were based solely on the fact that they were in an orphanage in the first place.

From a 1928 letter from parents to the U.S. Children's Bureau inquiring about adoption: "We are very anxious to adopt a baby but would like to get one that we know about its parentage. Are there any homes or orphanages where a person can find out whether there is insanity, fits, or other hereditary diseases in its ancestors? We would like to have one from Christian parentage."



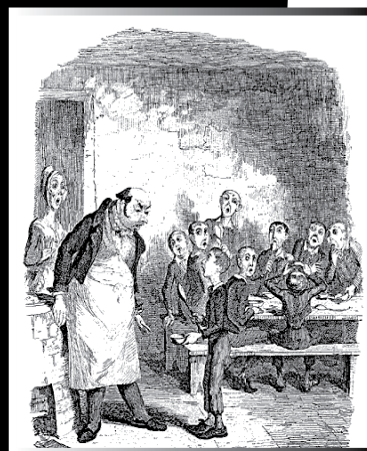
Logo of the Second International Congress of Eugenics, 1921.

In the days in which Jean Webster wrote of Jerusha Abbott's transition from orphanage to college, she was involved in a movement for orphanage reform. Progressives of the age encountered many social ills with which they took issue, but abandoned children proved the most emotional rallying call. Children's stories were told in magazines and the movement focused extensively on removing children from "cold institutional" care to providing them with a more nurturing environment. In 1908, President Theodore

Roosevelt called for a conference on the care of "dependent children." He also announced his belief that homes were the best place to raise children. Orphanages, already out of favor, continued to decline in status, as society moved more and more away from the idea of the institutional raising of children to home-based solutions. However, the social stigma of being an orphan was far from past. The eugenics movement's heyday was the 1920s and 1930s and did not fall out of favor in the United States until after World War II, when Americans linked eugenics with the policies created by and exterminations carried out by the Nazis in the name of "racial purity." Therefore, even orphans who found homes in which to become a part of a permanent family still faced prejudice because of perceived flaws in their genetics.

## Famous Orphans in Literature & Popular Culture:\*

- Little Orphan Annie, rescued from orphanage by a wealthy capitalist
- Anne of Green Gables
- Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson (*Batman and Robin*), parents' murders turned them to fighting crime
- Baudelaire siblings of the *A Series of Unfortunate Events* books
- Clark Kent (Superman), sent to earth from his doomed home planet
- David Copperfield
- Harry Potter, parents killed by evil wizard Lord Voldemort (also an orphan)
- Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights*
- Heidi, raised by an aunt, then her reclusive grandfather
- James Bond
- Jane Eyre
- Mowgli of *The Jungle Book*, lost by his parents and raised by wolves
- Natty Bumppo, a.k.a. "Hawkeye"
- Oliver Twist, his single mother died in childbirth
- Pip of *Great Expectations*
- Pollyanna
- Punky Brewster
- Sarah Crewe in *A Little Princess*
- Sookie Stackhouse
- Spider-Man
- Tom Jones
- Tom Sawyer, raised by his aunt along with his half-brother and cousin
- Tarzan, raised by apes after deaths of parents
- Wolverine of X-Men



Oliver Twist

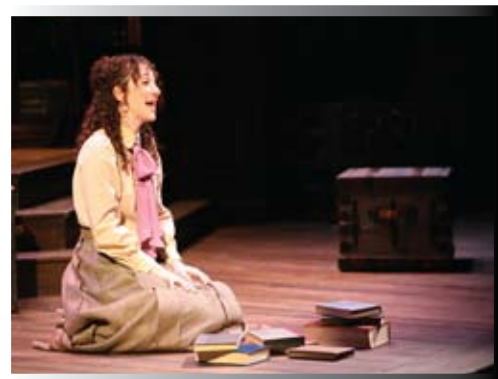
\* List adapted from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

# DOMESTICITY AND EDUCATION IN WOMEN'S LITERATURE

"I love college and I love you for sending me. I never dreamed there was such a place in the world. I'm feeling sorry for everybody who isn't a girl and who can't be here." – Jerusha Abbott, *Daddy Long Legs*

In the nineteenth century, a book with a female protagonist would commonly follow a simple scenario. The story would begin with an ordinary girl. However, this girl is set apart from many others because she has resolved to take her future into her own hands. Instead of fulfilling the domestic expectations laid out for her, she has decided to pursue a college education. As the story continues it becomes apparent that this girl is second-guessing her decision to enter a predominantly male sphere and she is growing more and more unhappy. So, instead of pursuing the dream she has set out for herself, she decides to revert back to the role she was attempting to escape. She drops out of school, marries one of her colleagues, and finds happiness in domestic life as a housewife.

In the beginning, the nineteenth century was a time that appeared to advance the role of women due to their newly established dominion over their household and servants. However, it soon became apparent that by being confined to the private sphere of the home, women's growth was stunted in public. Domesticity was on the rise in the nineteenth century and women were being increasingly restricted to the private sphere of the home while men were taking over the career-based public sphere. Literature for women fit scenarios such as the one outlined above or else related to books based on promoting better domestic skills. As the nineteenth century drew to a close and the world was ready to usher in the twentieth century, women began to campaign for increased public rights. As this shift was taking place, literary changes were also in the making. Intellectuals such as Jean Webster began to write "college girl" books. More women were allowed the opportunity to go to college so they began to draw from their experience to formulate and enhance their plots.



Megan McGinnis in *Daddy Long Legs*

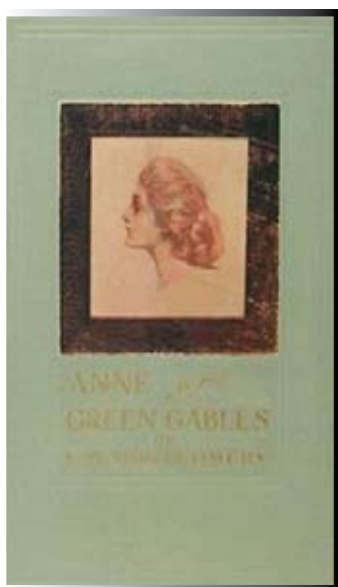
This trend can be seen in various works from other famous writers. Before Webster, Louisa May Alcott wrote the famed story *Little Women* that was published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869. This story followed the account of the March sisters. The novel displayed similar characteristics to the introductory scenario. This is because Jo, one of the sisters, was convinced that she would not succumb to the domestic expectations such as marriage and daily house chores. Eventually, as Jo grew up she changed her mind on the subject of marriage and becomes a domestic herself. However, with her new husband, Jo assists in running a boys home, so her situation is not purely that of running a house. Instead, she adds the duties of, with her husband, running a home for others outside of her immediate family, which is more closely related to a job.



First edition of *Little Women*

In 1908, a few short years before the publication of *Daddy Long Legs*, another “college girl” type story was written by the Canadian author L.M. Montgomery. The title of this story was *Anne of Green Gables*. The plot follows the story of a young orphan girl by the name of Anne Shirley. Anne is a whimsical and creative girl who channels her talent through writing. She comes to live with the middle aged Cuthbert siblings by mistake (they requested a boy orphan, not a girl), but soon proves to be a colorful addition to the aged siblings’ lives. Anne also proves to be intellectually advanced. Anne wins a scholarship to attend college, but cannot go because of circumstances within her adoptive family. Anne becomes a teacher and eventually marries her school rival, Gilbert Blythe. The story of Anne is covered through a series of books that Montgomery wrote, including *Anne of Avonlea* through *Rilla of Ingleside*.

Later on in the twentieth century the young female orphan theme continued in popular culture. However, one of the most popular appeared in an unconventional medium and through the lens of a man’s perspective. On August 5, 1924, the comic strip *Little Orphan Annie* by Harold Gray was introduced to American newspapers. Today, this story is best remembered by its musical stage and film adaptations. It follows the story of a little orphan girl, her dog Sandy and her benefactor who she calls Daddy Warbucks.



The “college girl” theme during Webster’s time was generally a new convention. Women were not allowed to go to school with men, so Webster’s account of her days at an all-female college provided a uniquely female perspective. However, *Daddy Long Legs* can be contextualized within the genre that preceded its release and continued after Jerusha Abbott became a popular icon.

-written by Faith Glendenning, Dramaturgical Intern

## “THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW”

In *Daddy Long Legs*, Jerusha and Jervis sing a song titled “Things I Didn't Know” in which Jerusha explains to Daddy Long Legs some of the things she has learned since beginning her college education. Included in the lyrics are many allusions (references) to works of literature and culture. How many of these allusions do you know?

**“A lady with a lamp I see...”:** From Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem about Florence Nightingale called “Santa Filomena.” Wadsworth coined the term “a lady with the lamp.” Saint Philomena is a patron saint of the sick.



Alexander the Great

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (commonly shortened to *Alice in Wonderland*) in 1865. The story of little Alice and her adventures entered the common lexicon and has been continually adapted for children and adults alike, including Disney's famous cartoon.

**Brandenburg Concerto:** A series of six works presented by Johann Sebastian Bach to Christian Ludwig, the Brandenburg Concertos are still immensely popular and considered to be some of the finest compositions of the Baroque era.

**Chopin Polonaises:** A Polonaise is a slow dance of Polish origin (the name derives from the French word for Polish). Therefore, “Chopin's Polonaises” are musical pieces of the style written by Frédéric Chopin, his first appearing in 1817 (when Chopin was seven).

**“Dover Beach”:** A short, lyric poem by Matthew Arnold first published in 1867.



Megan McGinnis and Robert Adelman Hancock in *Daddy Long Legs*

**“A man's reach...”:** “Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?” from “Andrea del Sarto (called “The Faultless Painter”)” by Robert Browning, first published in 1855.

**Alexander the Great:** A king of Macedon, a state in northern Greece, Alexander the Great ruled one of the largest empires in history by the age of thirty (he lived from 356 –323 BCE). The area he controlled stretched from the Ionian Sea to the Himalayas.

**Alice in Wonderland:** Lewis Carroll (pen name of

**Euripedes' *Electra*:** Euripedes was an ancient Greek playwright who wrote a play based on the story of Electra that was written sometime in the mid 410s BCE. Electra plots against her mother and step-father because of their murder of her father.

**Florence Nightingale:** The world's most famous nurse, Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) was British by birth and pioneered many influential nursing techniques.



Mary Anne (Marian) Evans  
AKA George Eliot

**George Eliot:** George Eliot was the pen name of Mary Anne (sometimes listed as Mary Ann and other times as Marian) Evans (1819 –1880). Her famous works include *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner* and *Middlemarch*.

***Great Expectations*:** A novel by Charles Dickens published in serial editions from 1860-1861.

**Henry VIII:** Henry VIII was a Tudor family king of England. He is best known for the fact that he was married six times and had two of his wives beheaded under the charge of adultery, which, when married to the king, constituted treason. He also was the architect behind the transformation of England from a Catholic nation to a Protestant one.

**Lillian Russell:** Lillian Russell (1861 –1922) was a famous American actress and singer.

**Michelangelo:** Michelangelo is the shortened version of Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti (1475 –1564). Along with fellow Italian Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo stands as one of the most famous Renaissance men in history, exerting an influence on art, architecture, poetry and engineering through his innovations in the mediums.

**“Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy”:** The sister characters from Louisa May Alcott's classic novel *Little Women*, published in two installments in 1868 and 1869.

**Monet:** Claude Monet (1840 – 1926) ranks as one of the most famous artists in history for his role in helping to found the French Impressionist movement.



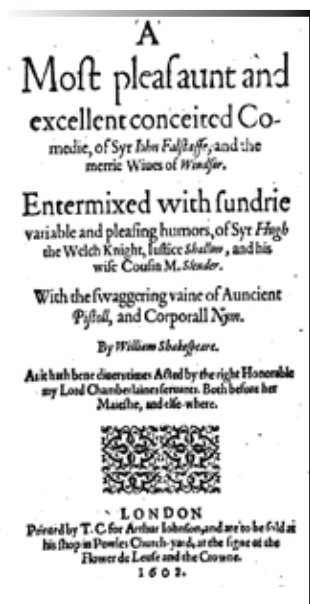
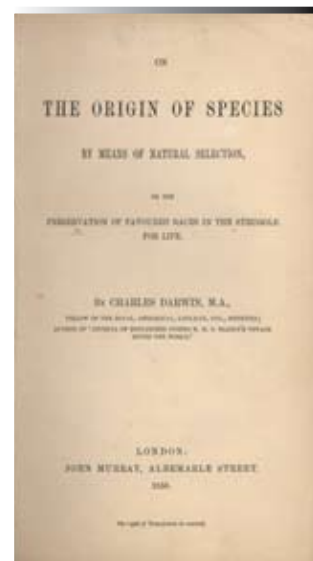
Henry VIII

**“Moonlight Sonata”:** Ludwig van Beethoven’s “The Piano Sonata No. 14 in C♯ minor “Quasi una fantasia”, Op. 27, No. 2”, commonly referred to as “Moonlight Sonata.” It is one of the most famous pieces ever composed by Beethoven.

**“O Captain! My Captain!”:** The title and part of the opening line of Walt Whitman’s 1865 poem concerning the death of Abraham Lincoln. The phrase is used as a refrain throughout the poem.

**“People came from monkeys”:** A reference to the theory of evolution put forward by Charles Darwin in *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859.

**Shelley:** Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 –1822) was an English Romantic poet associated with John Keats and Lord Byron. Famous works include “Ozymandias,” “Ode to the West Wind,” “To a Skylark,” “The Cloud” and “The Masque of Anarchy.” He was married to *Frankenstein* author Mary Shelley at the time of his death which occurred prior to his thirtieth birthday.



The title page from the first quarto edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

***Summer on the Lakes:*** A book by Margaret Fuller published in 1844 detailing her experiences traveling in the United States and interactions with numerous Native American groups.

***The Idiot:*** A novel by Fyodor Dostoyevsky published in Russian in the 19th century.

***The Merry Wives of Windsor:*** William Shakespeare’s play *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was first published in 1602, though probably first performed in the late 16th century.

***The Two Noble Kinsmen:*** A tragicomedy written by John Fletcher and William Shakespeare (that these two men are the co-authors is generally now accepted, though the authorship had been somewhat disputed). It was first published in 1634 and is based on Chaucer’s “The Knight’s Tale” from *The Canterbury Tales*.

***The Toilers of the Sea:*** A novel written by Victor Hugo and published in 1866. In French, the title is *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*.

***Vanity Fair:*** *Vanity Fair* is a shortened version of William Makepeace Thackeray’s novel’s full title *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero* published 1847–48.

# GLOSSARY

**Abstract:** Lacking concrete form or reality.

**Abyss:** A deep (perhaps unfathomable) space or span.

**Adirondacks:** A mountain range in New York which is part of the Appalachians.

**Affiliate:** To be in connection with or part of something.

**Ambuscade:** Ambush.

**Apropos:** Appropriate, fitting or at the right time.

**Asylum:** An institution dedicated to the care of a specific group.

**Benefactor:** One who has given help, often through financial assistance.

**Blasphemous:** Profane (usually related to being displeasing to God in some manner).

**Conducive:** Likely to produce an effect.

**Complacent:** Possessing the quality of self-satisfaction.

**Contravention:** Action in violation to something else.

**Conniving:** Underhanded or collaborating secretly.

**Conscientious:** Careful or thorough.

**Cotillion:** Various dances related to the quadrille (used often in southern society for a specific party).

**Crème de la crème:** Literally translated from the French, it means “cream of the cream.” In usage, it means the very best.

**Daft:** Foolish.



Robert Adelman Hancock in  
*Daddy Long Legs*

**Deportment:** Demeanor, or in older usage, behavior in school as graded by the teacher.

**Discreet:** Thoughtful with respect to speech and behavior, especially in relationship to information pertaining to other people's lives or issues that require delicacy or secrecy.

**Duplicity:** Behaving in two fashions, particularly in regards to speaking in one way and behaving in another.

**Eccentric:** Lack of conforming to perceived norms.

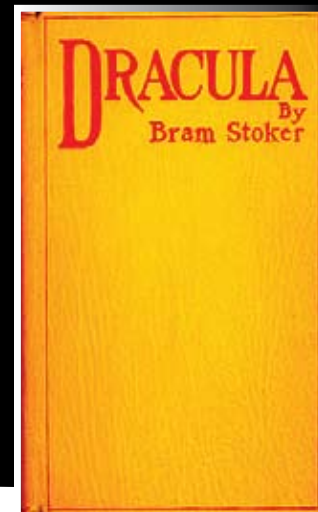
**Enthrall:** Captivate.

**Etiquette:** Conventional rules (spoken and unspoken) that govern behavioral practices in certain instances or places in a specific community.

The novel *Daddy Long Legs* is an epistolary novel. This term describes a piece of literature that takes the form of letters, journal entries, or similar. Other famous epistolary novels include:

*Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782)  
*Poor Folk* by Fyodor Dostoevsky (1846)  
*Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897)  
*Dear Mr. Henshaw* by Beverly Cleary (1983)  
*Address Unknown* by Kathrine Taylor (1938)  
*The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis (1942)  
*Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes (1966)  
*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (1983)

Also, Eminem's song "Stan" is an epistolary song.



**Fabian:** Similar in characteristics to Roman leader Fabius Maximus, who defeated his enemy by avoidance of decision-making rather than skill or leadership.

**Fraternal:** Related to brothers.

**Freudian:** One who adheres to the theories of Sigmund Freud.

**Fritter:** Squander or waste.

**Impertinent:** Rude or uncivil.

**Infirmary:** A place specifically dedicated to the care of the sick.

**Intrigue:** Use of underhanded techniques.

**Irrevocable:** Unable to be taken back or changed.

**Lade(n):** To bear a burden.

**Lavish:** Give something in generous quantities.

**Literati:** Intellectuals particularly of literary achievements.

**Ludicrous:** Ridiculous.

**Millinery:** Women's hats or other items made by milliners.

**Misconceit:** An obsolete way of saying a misconception (no longer in common usage).

**Obscure:** Not clear or plain; ambiguous.

**Peruse:** Either to consider with care or to casually look over (depending on the context).

**Pretentious:** An exaggerated outward show, particularly of self-importance.

**Proletariat:** Those who work for a living by labor (often used in relationship to Marxist theory).

**Promptitude:** Promptness.

**Protocol:** The customs and rules that govern etiquette or interactions, especially in regards to diplomacy.

**Quaint:** Often used in terms of old-fashioned or odd appeal.

**Quixotic:** Derives from Cervantes' Don Quixote meaning Don-Quixote-like, either in rash decision making or overly exaggerated chivalry.

**Sackcloth:** Sack is a type of coarse material and sackcloth together means a garment made of such material. Such a garment can be worn as a sign of penance for wrongdoing.

**Saffron:** A yellow-orange color (also a spice from which the color takes its name).

**Semblance:** A small trace or appearance.



Robert Adelman Hancock and Megan McGinnis in *Daddy Long Legs*

**Sequester:** To remove something or someone away from other things.

**Specimen:** An individual example taken to possess qualities of a group as a whole.

**Stout:** Strong or heavily built.

**Suffice:** Enough to be adequate.

**Surmise:** Guess.

**Telegraph:** To send a message via telegraph (an old-fashioned machine that sent messages via signals down wires).

**Tenacious:** Holding strongly or persistent.

**Trepidation:** A fearful state; anxious or quivering.

**Trustee:** A person (usually part of a larger group) who helps oversee the issues faced by an institution, charitable or otherwise.

**Tuition:** The fee paid to an institution (in common usage a school) to attend and receive instruction.

**Unconventional:** Lacking in convention, defined as adherence to the ordinary or accepted.

**Utilitarian:** Focus on usefulness rather than appearance.

**Valedictorian:** Though technically related to a goodbye speech, in common usage, Valedictorian is the highest ranking academic student in a class.

**Venture:** An undertaking usually involving risk of some sort.

**Veranda:** A porch.

**Withering:** Shriveling, or specifically in relationship to people, wrinkle and age.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

## DISCUSSION

1. Theatrical musicals are often thought of as grand spectacles with a large cast of performers, complicated sets, lavish costumes, and elaborate special effects. How is this musical different? What does this show rely on to capture an audience?
2. What are some of the characteristics of Jerusha that “Mr. Smith” finds endearing?
3. How would you feel if what happens to Jerusha in the beginning of the show happened to you? What sort of obligations would you feel towards your benefactor?
4. One idea that is explored by this musical could be described as “Charitable gift giving is not completely charitable.” What does this mean? Do you agree with this statement? Can you think of some situations in which you were charitable but perhaps not completely charitable? What were you hoping for in return?
5. “Jerusha is moved from one situation in her life to the next without any say whatsoever about what happens to her.” Would you agree or disagree with this statement? Is this statement true for the entire play? What examples from the show can you provide to back up your opinion?
6. How does Jerusha change as the musical progresses? What events cause those changes? In your opinion, are her changes positive or less than so? Why?
7. How do you feel about the gift Jervis bestows upon Jerusha? Describe Jervis’s initial motives for giving this gift. How do those motives change throughout the play?
8. Standing in Jerusha’s shoes, how would you feel if you found out that you had been in some ways deceived by Jervis, as concerns the letters between them? What do you think of the way Jerusha handles this revelation? How would you handle a situation like that similarly or differently from Jerusha?
9. Standing in Jervis’s shoes, how would you feel waiting all of that time to finally tell Jerusha that the correspondences came from you? What prevents Jervis from telling Jerusha earlier in the show? Can you relate to the things that prevent him?
10. Does Jerusha owe Jervis anything? If so, what has she already given him in return for his gift? If not, why?
11. What were the expectations and views that society had of women in the time of this play? How have those expectations and views changed today?

12. How do you correspond with your friends or family these days? When was the last time you wrote a letter? How have our methods of keeping in contact changed over the years?
13. The fact that Jerusha doesn't know who her parents were or where she comes from is a point of embarrassment to her. Why do you think this is? How do you think you would you feel if you were in the same situation?
14. Family history and wealth seemed very important in the setting of the play. Have things changed since then? If so, how? What is important to our society today?
15. Though only two characters are ever seen on stage we get a very clear idea of other people in their world. How does the playwright accomplish this? Give examples.

**Activities:**

- Write a research paper about three different foundations that grant scholarships to underprivileged youth. Include in the paper details about each foundation's mission, the origins of each foundation, and how the foundation has grown since its beginning.
- Choose a leader of the women's suffrage movement and write a research paper that includes details of how this person became involved in the movement, what obstacles this person faced being a part of the movement, and what tactics and personal characteristics were vital in helping that person overcome those obstacles.
- Write a research paper on the neurological, physiological, sociological, or evolutionary reasons for giving. That is, choose either to discuss what parts of the brain are affected by giving, what happens in the body when we choose to give, how giving contributes to society, or how giving has contributed to the evolution of the human species.
- Write an essay that compares and contrasts three aspects of the characters Jerusha and Jervis.

- Did you ever have a pen pal when you were younger? What did you imagine about them as you read their letters, and how did this differ from the person you actually met?
  1. Read an article in a magazine. What do you think the author looks like? How old is he or she? Does he/she have children? Pets? Give as much detail as you can think of.
  2. Each day write a letter to an imaginary benefactor telling them about the little details of your day.
  3. At the end of the week look back at all your letters. Have they changed over the week and if so, how? Has the tone changed? Do you go into more details as the week progressed? Are there parts of your week that you had already forgotten about but are in your letters? Was this a therapeutic exercise for you?
- The play spanned a long period of time and took us to many different places. In a short essay examine how time and place were indicated through technical aspects; light, sound, set, costume. Please give examples.
- In a musical, song is used to express feelings that cannot be released in any other way. Do you think this was true in Daddy Long Legs? What did the songs reveal that we would not otherwise have known? Write a brief essay on the use of song in this play, giving examples.

### **Improvisation and Dramatic Writing – Adapting Scenes for the Stage**

While these activities are designed to go together, you may choose to use one or the other depending on the needs of your students and the time frame you can dedicate to the lesson(s).

Students will need to have read the same novel, be familiar with the characters, and be familiar enough with the story that they can choose scenes to dramatize. The first activity is designed to be done using a short scene that you have pre-selected so that all of the groups are working with the same scene. Student ownership and engagement can be enhanced during the second activity by allowing each group to select their own scenes. Group size should not exceed four or five people for either of the activities.

When choosing scenes for adaptation, consider the following:

- Action – Scenes are always more interesting when something is happening in them, as opposed to when people are just sitting around talking.
- Number of characters – Select a scene that contains a reasonable number of characters based on the four to five person group size. No one should play more than one role. Characters may be combined where appropriate.
- Setting – Does this scene lend itself to action, or is everyone sitting? Movement and body language are always part of the action and storytelling of a scene.
- Story – Is the scene that you have selected essential to understanding the novel as a whole? When considering which parts of a novel to adapt for a play, this is an important question.

Students will begin by exploring a scene through improvisation, and this will segue into writing scenes down into a performable script.

#### Activity #1 - Improvisation

- Explain that there are always many ways to adapt a story into a play – in fact, there are stage versions of many books; *The Grapes of Wrath*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Color Purple*, *Les Misérables*.
- While some plays use a narrator, in this case the students should focus on telling the story through dialogue and stage direction.
- Part of the job of the playwright is to decide what needs to be kept in order to effectively tell the story, and what can be let go.
  - It is up to the person adapting the story to decide what to keep and what to cut, and that is sometimes a tough thing to do.
- Begin by dividing the class into groups or allowing them to choose their own groups. Explain that for this exercise, they will all be working on the same scene. Explain how you selected the scene, and tell them that this time around they are going to work fast and improvisationally, and they will not write anything down.
- Ask the students to look for the following as they read through their scene:
  - What is this story about? What aspects of the story need to remain, and what can they let go of?
  - Which characters are present? Are all of them required to tell the story? Can they combine characters? Does doing that compromise the story?
  - How can they tell this story without a narrator? Encourage them to think specifically about what can be told through dialogue and action. Tell them to make the most of their stage space... their job as an actor is to tell the audience where things are through their actions.

- Have each group read through the text from the novel and discuss what stays and what goes.
- Groups will have 15 minutes to create their improvised scene – as always, encourage the students to get on their feet EARLY in the process.
- Once the students have prepared their scenes, have each group perform their adaptation for the class. Once all of the groups have performed, discuss what was different among the adaptations, which parts of the scenes were clear and successful, which parts were less successful, etc.

### **Debriefing Questions for Students**

- What did you learn from that activity?
- Was adapting something that was written easier or harder to do than you thought it would be?
- What did you learn about telling stories clearly for an audience?
- Was there anything that your group chose to do that seemed very clear to you, but was difficult for the audience to understand?
- Was it easy or hard to improvise the scene? Explain your thoughts.

### **Activity 2 – Adapting Scenes into Script Form**

- Decide whether you want to regroup the students or leave them in their current groups.
- Explain that the students are now going to add to this activity by choosing a different scene from the book and adapting it into a script for performance.
- Since the students are going to be writing, tell them that you expect that these scenes will be more developed and that they will put more thought into how to put them together.

o Students will need to pay attention to the same things that they did during the improvisation activity, but this time they will be able to think more about how things should be said and how they want to portray them.

- Give the students time to choose a scene from the book. Remind them of the action, number of characters, story, and setting criteria that you used to choose the scene that they all worked on (found above). If desired, limit the length of the scene to a certain number of pages. The longer the scene in the book, the more time it will take the students to adapt it.
- Instruct the students to include stage directions, character names, and any other pertinent information that the audience needs. That way someone can read stage directions and the listeners will know all the important things about the scene.

- The scripts will be read aloud in class, and you may decide to have the students act them out depending on your goals for the lesson.
- As each group reads through their scene, instruct them to look for the following:
  - What is this story about? What aspects of the story need to remain, and what can they let go of?
  - Which characters are present? Are all of them required to tell the story? Can they combine characters? Does doing that compromise the story?
  - How can they tell this story without a narrator? Encourage them to think specifically about what can be told through dialogue and action. Tell them to make the most of their stage space...their job as an actor is to tell the audience where things are through their actions.
- Give the students at least 30 to 45 minutes to write out their scene. If possible, have one student type the scene out on a laptop so that multiple copies can be made. If handwritten, make sure that the person writing has legible handwriting.
- Prior to presentation, make enough copies of each group's scene for each student in the group to have one.
- Presentation of Scenes
  - Evaluate each scene for content, story clarity, and character development.
- If desired, have the groups rewrite their scenes, incorporating the feedback of their classmates. Have each group present their scene again and discuss the changes that were made.

#### Debriefing Questions for Students

- What did you learn through this process?
- Had any of you done any playwriting before?
- Was it difficult to write in a group? Were you able to make compromises if you disagreed?
- Were you pleased with the result of your adaptation? What could you have done differently to strengthen your scene?
- How about your process?

#### Works Consulted Include:

"Women Working: 1800-1930". Harvard University Library Open Collections Program. <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/www/nwtul.html>

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<http://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/archive/StonemanAIC.htm>

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[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) (including images)

[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

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