

Born Yesterday

by Garson Kanin



SHAW THEATRE
FESTIVAL 09 SEASON

CONNECTIONS
Shaw Festival
Study Guide

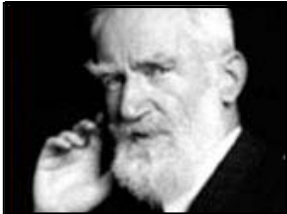
- The Shaw Story 2
- The Players 3
- The Story 4
- Who's Who 5
- The Playwright 6
- Director's Notes 7
- Designer's Notes 8
- Production History 9
- World of the Play 10-14
- Did You Know? 15
- Say What? 16
- Sources 17
- Activities 18—29

THE
Great-West Life
ASSURANCE COMPANY

London
Life

Canada Life

STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER™



WHAT MAKES SHAW SPECIAL



Festival Theatre



Court House Theatre



Royal George Theatre

THE SHAW STORY

MANDATE

The Shaw Festival produces and presents the work of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and playwrights writing anywhere in the world during, or about, the era of Shaw's lifetime.

VALUES

- The Shaw Festival chooses works for presentation that are challenging, provocative and intelligent.
- Productions engage audiences with clever, insightful, and delightful portraits of the human condition.
- The works chosen often resonate with the wit, social commentary, and topical relevance for which G.B. Shaw himself was well known.
- The Shaw Festival is dedicated to excellence, consistency, and integrity in all its creative and administrative practices.
- The Shaw Festival operates within a fiscally responsible and accountable framework.

THE SHAW FESTIVAL ATTRIBUTES ITS SUCCESS TO:

The Ensemble - their talent, continuity, generosity, and collegiality fuel all of the Festival's efforts

The Company - their singular sense of purpose fosters mutual trust, respect, and dedication to the Festival

The Repertory - the alternating schedule of performance serves the audience and inspires the company

The Mandate - 1856-1950 offers a wealth of material to fascinate and delight, liberating the ensemble to explore complex questions from the safety of the not too distant past while encouraging audiences to re-discover themselves through the lens of historical perspective

The Shaw Festival is a crucible of progressive and provocative ideas inspired by the brilliance, bravery, humanity, and humour of George Bernard Shaw.

OUR THEATRES

The Shaw Festival presents plays in three distinctive theatres. The Festival Theatre with 856 seats is The Shaw's flagship theatre; the historic Court House where The Shaw first began performing seats 327; and the Royal George Theatre, modeled after an Edwardian opera house, holds 328.

THE SHAW'S COAT OF ARMS

In 1987, on the occasion of our 25th Anniversary, the Shaw Festival became the second theatre company in the world to be granted a Coat of Arms by the College of Heralds. A large painted sculpture of our Coat of Arms adorns the lobby of the Festival Theatre.



A practical, hands-on resource for the classroom which contains background information for the play, suggested themes for discussion, and Ontario curriculum-based activities. Designed by educators and theatre professionals, the activities and themes for discussion are organized in modules that can be used independently or interdependently according to the class level and time availability.

Born Yesterday is recommended for students in grade 7 and higher.

This guide was written and compiled by Suzanne Merriam and Amanda Tripp. Additional materials were provided by Joanna Falck, Sue LePage and Gina Wilkinson.

Cover: Deborah Hay
Photo by Shin Sugino

Previews May 5
Opens May 23
Closes November 1

THE PLAYERS

Bellhop #3	PRINCE AMPONSAH
Helen	BERYL BAIN
Barber	ANTHONY BEKENN
Mrs Hedges	DONNA BELLEVILLE
Manicurist	IJEOMA EMESOWUM
Ed Devery	PATRICK GALLIGAN
Billie Dawn	DEBORAH HAY
Sen. Norval Hedges	LORNE KENNEDY
Bootblack	AL KOZLIK
Harry Brock	THOM MARRIOTT
Assistant Manager	PETER MILLARD
Eddie Brock	ALI MOMEN
Bellhop #2	CRAIG PIKE
Paul Verrall	GRAY POWELL
Bellhop #1	JONATHAN WIDDIFIELD

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Director	GINA WILKINSON
Designer	SUE LePAGE
Lighting Designer	ALAN BRODIE
Original Music & Sound Designer	KEITH THOMAS

SYNOPSIS

When a nouveau riche garbage king arrives in Washington, he decides his very blonde girlfriend needs an education. But he gets more than he bargained for as she and her tutor prove that knowledge is power, not to mention very attractive!

This classic comedy opened on Broadway in 1946 and still holds the record for the longest run at the Lyceum Theatre.

“A whole trouble because a dame reads a book”

- Harry Brock

The Story

Born Yesterday

By Garson Kanin

Born Yesterday is a classic comedy that continues to endure. From its opening run in 1946, to the 1950 film version that made Judy Holliday a star, to recent productions around the world, the story of a woman who learns the value of knowledge is one that continues to be both relevant and entertaining.

Billie Dawn, the not-so-dumb blonde at the centre of this story, arrives in Washington D.C. with her not-so-nice boyfriend, the garbage king of Cleveland, Harry Brock. Harry is convinced that with his money and zeal for power, he can “run the men who run the country.” His only problem seems to be his girlfriend – she’s just not smart enough. When he invites a Senator and his wife over, their chat with Billie doesn’t go so well:

Senator Hedges: We must show you around. Beautiful city.

Mrs Hedges: Too bad the Supreme Court isn’t in session. You’d love that.

Billie: What is it?

(Mrs Hedges doesn’t know what to make of this. She looks over at the Senator to see if he has any ideas).

Harry realizes that if he’s got any chance of making a name for himself, he’s got to do something about Billie. He hatches a plan to get her a tutor – the young reporter, Paul Verrall, who interviewed him earlier seems smart. When he offers him enough money, Paul agrees to become a tutor and the education of Billie Dawn begins:

Billie: He thinks I’m too stupid, huh?

Paul: Why, no –

Billie: He’s right. I’m stupid and I like it.

Paul: You do?

Billie: Sure. I’m happy. I got everything I want. Two mink coats. Everything. If there’s somethin’ I want, I ask. And if he doesn’t come across – I don’t come across. If you know what I mean.

As Paul tutors Billie – he gets her to read the newspaper and look up the words she doesn’t understand – she opens up to him about her life and their relationship changes from teacher/student to something richer. And we witness Billie’s empowerment through her education – that knowledge does give her power, as she explains to Harry:

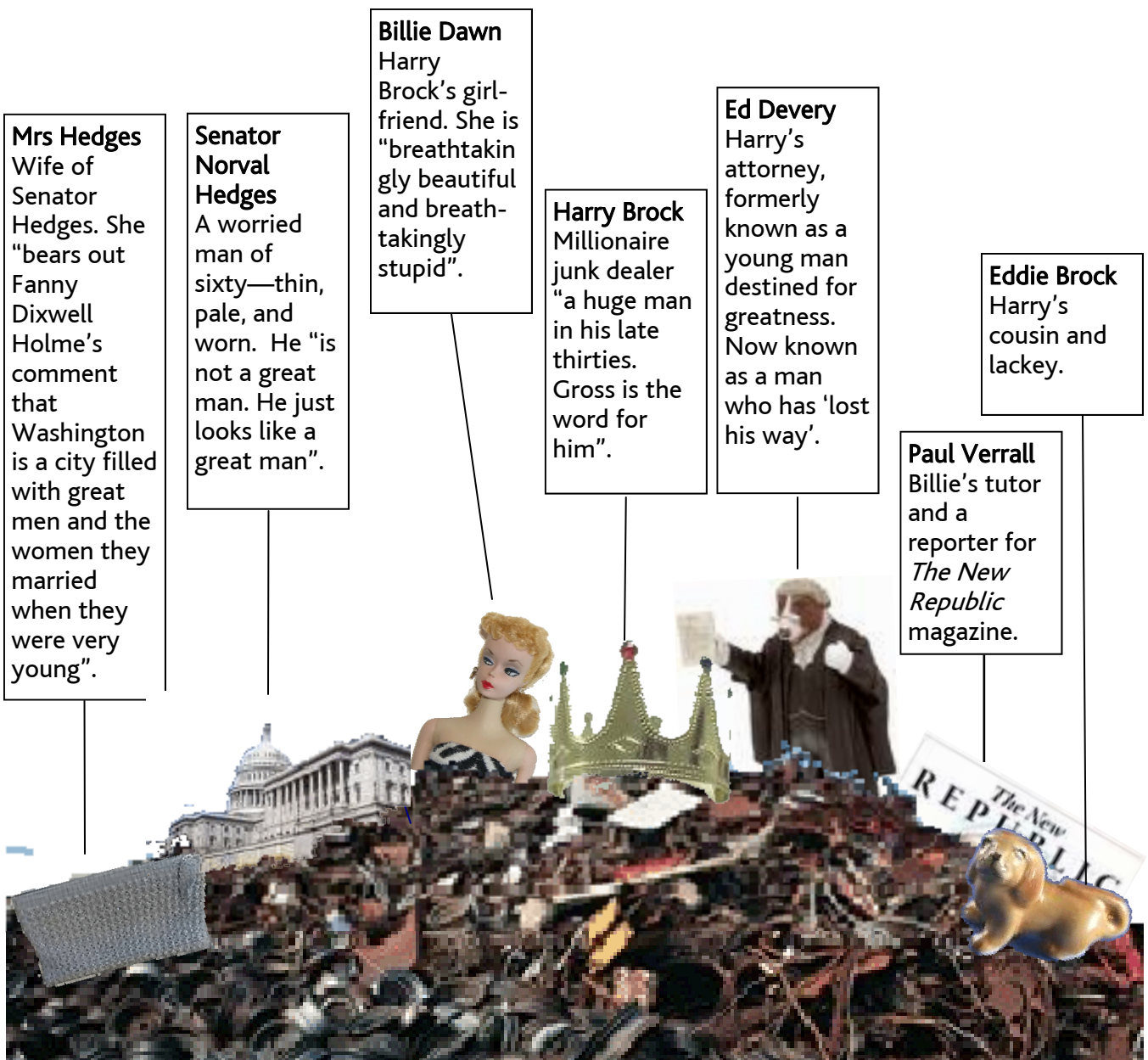
Billie: Well, all this stuff I’ve been reading...I realized what it means. How some people are always giving and some taking. And it’s not fair. So I’m not going to let you any more. Or anybody else.

Born Yesterday’s enduring charm lies not only in Billie Dawn’s awakening, but in the play’s commentary about the manipulations and machinations of power behind the scenes – a theme which has remained pertinent in the 60+ years since this play was written. But its message is one of hope for the future and the celebration of education and empowerment.

Who's Who

Born Yesterday

The following character overviews come directly from Kanin's own descriptions of the characters.



“My idea was to write a serious political exposé. I had no intention of writing a comedy. I wasn’t in a comedy mood.”

The Playwright



GARSON KANIN (1912 – 1999)

“I become physically ill if I don’t work for three days,” he once said. Kanin wrote or directed thirty-two plays, acted in eight, worked on twenty-nine films and wrote more than a dozen books of fiction and nonfiction, as well as hundreds of short stories and articles that were translated into numerous languages.

Born in Rochester, New York, he moved with his family to Detroit and then New York City, making his way onto the stage as an actor after dropping out of high school. He attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and began working for legendary Broadway playwright, director and producer George Abbott. Kanin eventually began directing road companies of Abbott shows and was also made a casting director. The playwright Thornton Wilder also became a mentor to the young and determined Kanin, and was the person who first encouraged him to write, telling him to keep a diary and record all the conversations he heard.

Kanin then went to Hollywood where he began working for Samuel Goldwyn. His dream was to direct and at the age of twenty-five he directed his first movie, *A Man to Remember* (1937). He directed six more movies but his career came to a halt when he was drafted into the army in 1941. Before he left, he handed a script idea over to his brother Michael and with Ring Lardner Jr, they wrote *Woman of the Year* (1942), the first film featuring Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. Kanin and actress Ruth Gordon married in 1942, and together they wrote two more Hepburn and Tracy films, *Adam’s Rib* (1949) and *Pat and Mike* (1952). As a married couple they were extremely close, dining together every day at the Russian Tea Room for almost forty-three years. But professionally they did not get along. Kanin said, “It became apparent that if we didn’t get a professional divorce, we would have to get a real one.”

In 1943, while serving in the army, Kanin co-directed the war documentary *The True Glory*, which won him an Academy Award in 1945. While waiting for security clearances for the movie, he used the time to develop a script that became *Born Yesterday*. He first conceived it as a movie, and as a serious expose of Washington. But he realized that the movie industry’s censorship would not allow a movie featuring a man and his mistress, so Kanin decided to make it a play. He wrote and directed the production that opened on Broadway in 1946 and it ran for an historic three years.

He had several more successes on Broadway, including directing *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1955) and *Funny Girl* (1964), though he was replaced before the opening by Jerome Robbins. He then concentrated more on writing, publishing several memoirs of his friendships in Hollywood, (*Tracy and Hepburn* and *Hollywood*) and one of his long friendship with W. Somerset Maugham (*Remembering Mr Maugham*) using notes from his journals. He also became an advocate for the elderly, writing the book *It Takes a Long Time to Become Young* (1978). He believed that no one should retire and in 1985, at the age of 72, he became the president of the Authors League of America and at 76, he remarried.



Gina Wilkinson talks about directing *Born Yesterday*

When a play is blessed with all the qualities of brilliant theatrical writing *and* its subject matter is so timely it could be taken from today's hot-button Twitter topics, you get a phenomenon like this unstoppable play.

Garson Kanin said he started writing *Born Yesterday* before the end of WWII because he was disgusted by what he witnessed in Washington; the lobbyists, "the 'five-percenters' and big dealers of every kind, operating ever more openly and disgracefully, trying to make the biggest possible buck out of the war." A real patriot, Kanin was shocked by the cynicism that viewed bribery as an acceptable way of turning the wheels of that delicate machine called democracy.

Tumble forward to the 1980s and Mr Kanin opens his annual royalty payment. It's a fat cheque, double the amount he's ever received for thousands of productions of his play. Why was this story still connecting so powerfully with its audiences? Kanin said, "The reason was Watergate. When the play was written it was a fable, but after Watergate it became a documentary."

This is an American play, but it's also *North* American, set in an immigrant culture whose system of government promises anyone and everyone the chance to succeed. As Canadians, we're in no position to point fingers south of the border. Remember the Pacific Scandal of Sir John A., skip a few years to Airbus, Shawinigate, the Sponsorship Scandal—we have no problem identifying.

Maybe this play will never be out of date. Certainly its razor-sharp humour, the rat-a-tat tat of its crackling dialogue, its surprising human insights dished out by compelling characters, guarantee continued revivals.

But we *are* living in a momentous time. When this play was written, people of colour weren't even permitted to attend the theatre in Washington—today look who is running the biggest show on earth. The questions this play asks us—can we be born again through education? Do we want to be a dog-eat-dog society, or can we learn to take care of each other? - need to be answered loudly and clearly.

Here's hoping the choices we make will put this play out of business.



Sue LePage talks about designing *Born Yesterday*

Q: Can you describe your vision for this production of *Born Yesterday*?

A: The design is a comment on Washington's architecture and the American Dream. The look is a fairly literal interpretation of what is in the script. The story takes place in an expensive, glamorous suite. The hotel suite is very classic—it could have existed anytime between 1946 and present day. Like the story, what lies behind the glamorous surface is what is really interesting. What lies behind Washington is a place of history, awe, power, and magic. The architecture of Washington, DC is different than the sort of architecture of Canadian government buildings. Canadian government buildings are charming, whimsical, beautiful Victorian gothic buildings, whereas the architecture of Washington, DC is built on Greek classical traditions. They look like temples. And in a way, they are temples to American ideals, or the American dream. The Capitol Building or the Washington Monument, for example, represent idealized visions of what government and society should be. Architecture reflects society's ideals. People in power can also create temples to their own power. The furniture onstage wouldn't have looked out of place in Napoleon's sitting room.

The rotunda echoes the portico for the White House, pillars everywhere.

I drew influence from Hollywood glamour. Much of the American dream is reflected in this idea. The film version of the story is a classic, well-known and loved. I was very aware of expressing and enjoying the Hollywood idea of the American Dream in the design of the set - making people look as glamorous as possible. The idea of glossy packaging seems true to the play.

Q: What do you find most striking about this story?

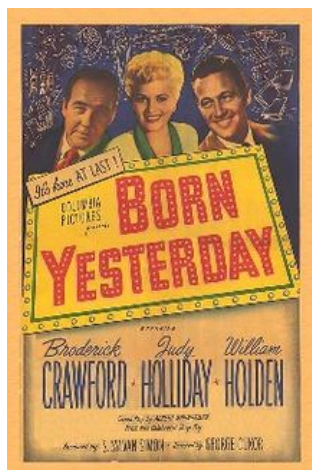
A: I love it. The story works on many levels and there are many contemporary echoes. I was painting the model pieces for the set on the morning of the inauguration. The play is very timely. It feels like a good time to check in on how our attitudes and feelings relate to the play.

Q: What do you want audience members to know about your design?

A: I'm thrilled with the way the set is being used. It really comes alive with people sitting on the floor, furniture and sliding down the banister. I try to design not to create a pretty picture, but to create a space where things can happen. The story and the set are both built to be played. As Gina (the director) says, the story is "unstoppable"!

Top to bottom:
Stills from the original Broadway production of *Born Yesterday*, 1950 movie poster; stills from the current Shaw Festival production.

Production History



Born Yesterday opened on Broadway at the Lyceum Theatre on February 4, 1946, directed by Kanin himself, after tryouts in New Haven, Boston, and Philadelphia, where Judy Holliday, on four days' notice, replaced Jean Arthur, the original Billie Dawn. Paul Douglas played Harry Brock and Gary Merrill played Paul Verrall in the hit production that ran at the Lyceum until November 6, 1948, before moving on November 9, 1948, to Henry Miller's Theatre, where it closed on December 31, 1949, for a total run of 1,642 performances. The only Broadway revival, at the 46th Street Theatre in 1989, was less successful, running for just 153 performances, with Madeline Kahn as Billie, Ed Asner as Harry and Daniel Hugh Kelly as Paul. Among recent revivals was a 2005 production at Arena Stage in Washington DC—the city in which the play is set—with Suli Holum as Billie Dawn.

The British premiere opened in London at the Garrick Theatre on January 23, 1947, directed by Laurence Olivier, with Yolande Donlan as Billie, Hartley Power as Harry, and William Kemp as Paul. It ran for 337 performances. In 1973 Tom Stoppard directed Lynn Redgrave as Billie at the Greenwich Theatre.

The Canadian premiere was at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre on May 2, 1949, in a touring production directed by Kanin, and starring Jean Parker, who took over the Billie Dawn role from Judy Holliday towards the end of the play's New York run. The first production by a Canadian company was at the Canadian Repertory Theatre in Ottawa in October 1950.

There have been two film adaptations of *Born Yesterday*. Judy Holliday starred as Billie, with Broderick Crawford (Harry) and William Holden (Paul), in a 1950 Columbia Pictures release (screenplay by Albert Mannheimer) directed by George Cukor; and Melanie Griffith played Billie opposite John Goodman's Harry and DonJohnson's Paul in a 1993 Hollywood Pictures version (screenplay by Douglas McGrath) directed by Luis Mandoki.

This is the first production of a Garson Kanin play at the Shaw Festival.

“...What do you think the government is, Harry? A man, a monster, a machine? It’s you and me and a few million more. We’ve got to learn to look after each other

-Paul

DEMOCRACY

We can think of democracy as a system of government with four key elements:

1. A political system of competition for power in which government is chosen and replaced through free and fair elections.

Democracy is a means for the people to choose their leaders and to hold their leaders accountable for their policies and their conduct in office.

Government is based on the consent of the governed.

In a democracy, the people are sovereign—they are the highest form of political authority.

Power flows from the people to the leaders of government, who hold power only temporarily.

Elected representatives at the national and local levels should listen to the people and respond to their needs and suggestions.

2. Active participation is the role of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life.

The key role of citizens in a democracy is to participate in public life.

Citizens have an obligation to become informed about public issues, to watch carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests.

Voting in elections is another important civic duty of all citizens.

Democracy depends on citizen participation that is peaceful, respectful of the law, and tolerant of the different views of other groups and individuals.

3. Protection of the human rights of all citizens.

In a democracy, every citizen has certain basic rights that the state cannot take away from them.

You have the right to have your own beliefs, and to say and write what you think.

No one can tell you what you must think, believe, and say or not say.

You can choose between different sources of news and opinion to read in the newspapers, to hear on the radio, and to watch on television.

You are free to move about the country, and if you wish, to leave the country.

However, everyone has an obligation to exercise these rights peacefully, with respect for the law and for the rights of others.

“This country will soon have to decide if the people are going to run the government or the government is going to run the people.”

-Senator Hedges

The World of the Play

4. A Rule of Law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens

Democracy is a system of rule by laws, not by individuals.

In a democracy, the rule of law protects the rights of citizens, maintains order, and limits the power of government.

All citizens are equal under the law. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, ethnic group, or gender.

No one is above the law, not even a king or an elected president.

The law is fairly, impartially, and consistently enforced, by courts that are independent of the other branches of government.

The rule of law places limits on the power of government. No government official may violate these limits.

No ruler, minister, or political party can tell a judge how to decide a case.

Office holders cannot use their power to enrich themselves. Independent courts and commissions punish corruption, no matter who is guilty.

The Limits and Requirements for Democracy

If democracy is to work, citizens must not only participate and exercise their rights. They must also observe certain principles and rules of democratic conduct.

Every citizen must respect the rights of his or her fellow citizens, and their dignity as human beings.

People should question the decisions of the government, but not reject the government's authority.

When you express your opinions, you should also listen to the views of other people, even people you disagree with. Everyone has a right to be heard.

Democracy requires compromise. Groups with different interests and opinions must be willing to sit down with one another and negotiate.

In a democracy, one group does not always win everything it wants. Different combinations of groups win on different issues. Over time, everyone wins something.

From: <http://www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/iraq/WhalsDemocracy012004.htm>

You've got a chance to be one of the men who runs this country...It takes power. You've got some. It takes money. You've got plenty. Above all, it takes judgment and intelligence. That's why you pay me...
Ed Devery

POWER

What is Power?

Generally speaking, power is the ability to influence the behavior of others in order to get the outcome one wants.

KINDS OF POWER

Hard Power = power to coerce

Hard power resources: military might, muscle and money

Harry Brock represents Hard Power

Aggressive power, compelling or manipulating through the use of threats, intimidation, trickery or some other form of pressure or force in order to get the outcome that one wants. The threat of harm leads to the cooperation of the person being coerced.

We're all familiar with this form of power, it includes economic and military might, physical violence, threats, deception and fear tactics—which often get others to change their position. Hard power involves getting the results you want through the use of threats and payoffs.

Soft Power = power to attract

Soft power resources: attractive personality, physical appearance, admirable values

Billie Dawn represents Soft Power

Power can also come from attraction. Attraction often allows you to get what you want without having to force people to change their behaviour through threats or payments. Soft power uses a different type of currency—not force, not money—to create an environment of cooperation. Exercising power is not a simple matter of issuing commands, it is the ability to shape the preferences of others so they want what you want.

A person who holds soft power may lead by example, inspiring others to act in a particular way based on

- moral authority
- desire to uphold their values
- charismatic personality
- desire for their approval

Soft power is simply the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence.

You keep buying more and more rights for yourself.

Billie Dawn

The World of the Play

MONEY AS POWER

"Harry, you've got a chance to be one of the men who runs this county. Better than that. You can run the men who run it." - Devery

Jim Devery, Brock's attorney, traded his youthful idealism for Brock's money. His job now is to cultivate and enhance Brock's hold on power, using legal manipulation to carry out profitable but unlawful and immoral acts. On Brock's trip to Washington, Devery is responsible for the orchestration of what is known as political "payola."

What is Political Payola?

The difference between a bribe and a private demonstration of good will is that a bribe involves the expectation of a particular action in return for something of value. To offer or provide payment in order to persuade someone with a responsibility to betray that responsibility is known as seeking *undue influence* over that person's actions. When someone with power seeks payment in exchange for certain actions, that person is said to be *peddling influence*. Regardless of who initiates the deal, either party to an act of bribery can be found guilty of the crime independently of the other.

A bribe can consist of immediate cash or personal favours, a promise of later payment, or anything else the recipient views as valuable.

When a public official accepts a bribe, he or she creates a conflict of interest. That is, the official cannot accommodate the interests of another party without compromising the responsibilities of her or his position.

There is not always consensus over what counts as a bribe. For instance, in many states and at the federal level, certain gifts and campaign contributions are not considered bribes and do not draw prosecution unless they can be linked to evidence of undue influence. In this regard, negative public perception of private contributions to elected officials as payola has caused most states to establish legislative ethics committees to review the public-private relationships of house and senate members. Furthermore, both houses of the U.S. Congress passed legislation in 1994 restricting gifts to no more than \$20 in value.

bribery n. the crime of giving or taking money or some other valuable item in order to influence a public official (any governmental employee) in the performance of his/her duties. Bribery includes paying to get government contracts (cutting the roads commissioner in for a secret percentage of the profit), giving a gift to a building inspector to ignore a violation or grant a permit, or selling stock to a Congressman at a cut-rate price. Example: Governor (later Vice President) Spiro T. Agnew received five cents from the concessionaire for each pack of cigarettes sold in the Maryland capitol building. The definition has been expanded to include bribes given to corporate officials to obtain contracts or other advantages which are against company policy.

From: <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Payola+scandal>

“It’s a new world, Harry—force and reason change places. Knowledge is power.”

Paul Verrall

KNOWLEDGE AS POWER

Educating Billie Dawn

When Paul Verrall, a reporter for the *New Republic*, is hired by Harry Brock to tutor Billie and smooth out her rough edges, Paul selects the following works as essential to Billie’s education:

Magazine

The New Republic

The first issue of this liberal and progressive magazine was published in 1914. Originally a leftist publication, known for its strong intellectual bent, *The New Republic* is still in publication, but today occupies a more centrist political position.

Music

Concerto in D Minor for Violin and Orchestra, op.47

Composed by Finnish composer, Jan Sibelius, in 1903 and recorded by Jascha Heifetz—the “violinist of the century”.

Books

David Copperfield

A novel by Charles Dickens about a poor orphan boy who makes good with help from some virtuous well-placed wealthy people.

The Age of Reason (1794), The Rights of Man (1791)

Controversial books written by Tom Paine in which he attacks the British monarchical government and the truth of Christianity.

After Visiting the Tomb of Napoleon

A document, written by Robert Ingersoll, an American political leader (1833-1899) who was noted for his radical views on religion, slavery, and women’s suffrage.

Twenty Years at Hull House (1910)

Written by Jane Addams, famous for her social work and her international efforts for world peace.

Quotes

“The proper study of mankind is man” - Alexander Pope (*An Essay on Criticism*, 1711)

“A little learning is a dangerous thing” - Alexander Pope (*An Essay on Man*, 1733)

“This country with its institutions belong to the people who inhabit it” - Abraham Lincoln (Inaugural address, 1861)

“Knowledge is power” - Francis Bacon (*Holy Meditations*, 1597)

“How can I be smart if nobody ever tells me anything?”

- Billie Dawn

Did You Know?



"You have to be *smart* to play a dumb *blonde* over and over again and keep the audience's attention without extraordinary physical equipment."

- Judy Holliday

Judy Holliday: Smart Dumb Blonde

She won an Oscar for her portrayal of Billie Dawn in the film version of *Born Yesterday*

Almost one year after winning the Academy Award, Judy Holliday was summoned to Washington, DC to answer questions about her alleged Communist ties.

She played dumb during her testimony before the Senate in order to avoid naming Communists.

"I guess you saw the papers," she said to Heywood Hale Broun. "Maybe you're ashamed of me because I played Billie Dawn. But I'll tell you something. It scares ... you when you walk into that hearing room with all those lights and all those microphones and all those Senators looking at you. I'm not proud of the defense, but I'm not ashamed either. I didn't name one single name. That much I preserved."

Judy Holliday re-defined the stereotype of the dumb blonde as the smart dumb blonde.

She was a ferocious Scrabble player and crossword-puzzle demon, reportedly having the IQ of a genius!

She was offered the role of Billie Dawn three days before the play's opening!! She created one of the most memorable characterizations in the history of theatrical comedy—and became a Broadway star—with just 3 days to rehearse the part!

Other notable smart dumb blondes:

Marilyn Monroe • Lady Godiva • Rita in *Educating Rita* • Mae West • Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde* • Lucille Ball (a blonde smart enough to dye her hair red)



Say What?

GLOSSARY

Bethlehem Steel

a leading producer of steel and other metals

cartel

a combination of independent commercial or industrial enterprises designed to limit competition or fix prices

Capehart

a classy record player

crabbing

to find fault with; complain about

couth

An obsolete word that meant 'familiar or cosy' - used incorrectly as the opposite of 'uncouth'

daffy

silly; foolish; crazy

drips

unattractive, boring, or colourless people

fascist

a reactionary or dictatorial person

menace

a threat; a source of danger

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

an American legal philosopher, wit, and jurist most famous for his advocacy for freedom of expression

racket

a dishonest business or practice, especially one that obtains money through fraud or extortion

resolution

a formal statement of a decision, or expression of opinion put before or adopted by an assembly such as the U.S. Congress

Teapot Dome Scandal

a famous scandal in Washington involving oil companies bribing government senators

truculent

disposed to fight

vice versa

the reverse of the previous statement, with the main items transposed. Derived from Latin, the translation being 'the other way round' or 'the position being reversed'

BOOKS & ARTICLES

Sullivan Baity, Linda. *Born Yesterday Playgoer's Guide*. South Coast Repertory, 2005.

WEBSITES

Democracy

<http://www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/iraq/WhalsDemocracy012004.htm>

Judy Holliday

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>

res=9904EEDA133EF936A1575BC0A9609C8B63

<http://www.wtv-zone.com/lumina/FBI/testimonybs.html>

<http://www.wtv-zone.com/lumina/articles/ms.html>

Political Payola

<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Payola+scandal>

<http://www.bard.org/Education/studyguides/bornyesterday/bornyesterdaywel.html>

Power

<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html>

http://www.beyondintractability.org/user_guides/third_side/equalizers_what-is-power.jsp

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_in_international_relations

Born Yesterday Pre- and Post-Show Activities

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TABLE OF CONTENTS

Theme 1: Exploring Character	Page
Pre-Show	
Teacher Background & Preparation	19
Warm-Up Activity: Power Stance	19
Main Activity: Weak and Strong Characters	20
Extension Activities	20
Post-Show	
Teacher Background & Preparation	21
Class Discussion	21
Warm-Up Activity: Power and Powerless	22
Main Activity: Subtext	22 - 23
Extension Activities	23
Theme 2: Staging a Play	
Pre-Show	
Teacher Background & Preparation	24
Main Activity: Director	24
Main Activity: Set Designer	25
Post-Show	
Class Discussion	25
Black Line Masters #1 - 2	26 - 29

Born Yesterday - Pre-Show

Theme 1: Exploring Character

Grades 7-12

Pedagogical Intent: The following exercises and activities look at the physical, emotional, and societal aspects of characters who exhibit strong and/or weak traits. Beginning with physically exploring the various body levels associated with both strong and weak personalities students then apply the sub-textual motivating factors associated with hard and soft 'power' to selected lines from *Born Yesterday*.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Drama, English, Creative Movement, Physical Education

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of methods of developing roles that express a range of feelings, attitudes, and beliefs
- demonstrate an understanding of how role is communicated through language and gesture
- demonstrate an understanding of how roles may be developed
- describe how movement and non-verbal communication can be used to portray character, define relationships among characters, and to communicate dramatic tension

Materials: drum, photocopies of Black Line Master #1, photocopies of scripts Black Line Master #2

Warm-up Activity - Power Stance

The purpose of this activity is to allow students to physically explore gestures and postures of power and powerlessness.

Instruct: Students stand in a neutral position, expressing no emotion, gesture, or facial expression. Label this position #4.

Instruct: Students get into smallest position close to the floor without lifting their feet. Label this position #1.

Instruct: To a drumbeat, students move their bodies from #1 to #4 positions. Students then explore body positions at #2 and #3 levels. On a drumbeat, students move through the various postures, ending in #4.

Ask: What emotions might a person be feeling if they were feeling like a #1?

Instruct: Standing in a #4 position, students demonstrate with their bodies and faces, the emotions of a #1.

Instruct: Students begin in #4 or neutral position. To a drumbeat, students move their bodies as large as possible. Label this position #7. Students explore all postures from #4 to #5 to #6 to #7.

Ask: What emotions might a person be feeling if they were feeling like a #7?

Instruct: In a #4 position, students demonstrate with body and face expressions, the emotions of a #7.

Instruct: To a regular drumbeat, students walk around room practicing moving their bodies in the #4, #1, and #7 positions.

Instruct: Students imagine they are on a hot and crowded street, and they have lost their wallets and money. Students select a power stance - either #1, #4, or #7. Without using voice, students search for their lost items demonstrating their chosen power stance. On a signal from the teacher, everyone's power stance changes abruptly as they continue to look for their money. They change once more. Everyone freezes on a final position.

Instruct: Divide class into two groups. Repeat the above scenario with one group acting as audience. Switch.

Discuss: Were the various power stances easy to recognize? Why or why not? What distinguished the various power stances?

Born Yesterday - Pre-Show

Theme 1: Exploring Character

Grades 7-12

Main Activity: Weak and Strong Characters

Explain: In the play *Born Yesterday*, playwright Garson Kanin has created characters who employ both hard and soft power characteristics and ploys (refer to page 12). The following exercises provide students opportunities to explore various characteristics and mannerisms of both strong and weak characters, and the power levels that are motivating factors and form the basis for in-depth character study.

Instruct: Based on the warm-up activity, create two lists:

1. adjectives describing a person who is a #7
2. adjectives describing a person who is a #1

Instruct: In pairs, students choose who is 'A' and 'B'. Refer to Black Line Master #1 containing list of lines. Assign the same line to each pair. Student 'A' delivers the line as a #7 character. Student 'B' delivers the line as a #1 character. Refer to list of adjectives.

Instruct: Students choose a setting for each of their characters. The setting can be the same or different for both characters. Each character must enter the scene, deliver their line, then exit. Allow time for each pair to rehearse. Students present their lines, in-role as their characters.

Discuss: Were you able to distinguish who was a #7 character and who was a #1 character? How?

Expand: Repeat exercise with either same or assign different lines.

Instruct: Student 'A' delivers line as a character who exhibits hard power tactics (see p. 12). Student 'B' delivers line as a character with soft power ploys as their underlying motivation. Allow time for students to rehearse and present.

Ask: Were the characters who exhibited hard power tactics strong or weak characters? Would it be possible for a character who displayed hard power tactics to be a weak character?

Ask: Were the characters who exhibited soft power tactics strong or weak characters? In what circumstances might you discover a person who utilized soft power techniques but displayed a strong character.

Extension: Distribute two-person script excerpts from *Born Yesterday* (see Black Line Master #2) to each partner.

Instruct: Students select either character 'A' or 'B' and read through scripts a few times together.

Instruct: After having discussed a possible setting for the scene, students decide which character will be portrayed incorporating soft or hard power personality traits. Remind students to choose either a #1 or #7 physicality to denote a strong and/or weak character.

Allow time for students to rehearse and present their scenes. It is not necessary for students to memorize the lines. The focus should be on developing characters that exhibit either strong or weak characteristics and exploring how the motivating factor of soft and hard power tactics influences the development of a character.

Discuss: Following each presentation, discuss how strong or weak characters were distinguished and which characters demonstrated soft or hard power motivating tactics.

Discuss: Following the presentation of the scenes, discuss the various ways in which the body and voice help to create characters for the stage.

Born Yesterday - Post-Show

Theme 1: Exploring Character

Grades 7-12

Pedagogical Intent: The post-show activities and exercises are designed to allow students to explore the idea of subtext. In understanding more about innuendo or subtext, students will be provided the tools towards creating more meaningful and insightful characters.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Music, Drama, Dance, Social Studies, and Language Arts

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- describe the process of creating a character
- create the inner and outer life of a character, using a variety of strategies, e.g., textual analysis
- reinterpret roles, demonstrating commitment and insight into character
- demonstrate an understanding of how roles may be developed
- demonstrate an understanding of how role is communicated through language, gesture and symbol
- analyse various roles to gain a deeper understanding of the personal and social beliefs inherent in a drama

Materials: blank cards, photocopies of two-person scenes from *Born Yesterday* - (Black Line Master #2),

Class Discussion

Discuss: *Born Yesterday* has a cast of characters who could be described as strong and weak characters. At the beginning of the play who, of the following list of characters, might you label as a strong or weak character:

Eddie Brock • Harry Brock • Ed Devery • Billie Dawn
Paul Verrall • Senator Norvall Hedges • Mrs Hedges • Helen

Discuss: At the end of the play, do any of the characters change from either weak to strong, or strong to weak? How did that transition occur?

Discuss: In a well-crafted play, each character has something they are trying to attain. Using the same list of characters above, discuss the soft and hard power traits displayed by each character to get what they want.

Ask: Are they successful in achieving what they want using either soft or hard power ploys? What supports or prohibits them from gaining what they desire?

Ask: Can you find instances in present-day society in which people use soft or hard power tactics to obtain what they desire?

Discuss: In your opinion, what type of power tactic (soft or hard) is most effective in achieving a desired result? Provide examples.

Ask: How did you feel at the end of the play? Did you connect with the play? In what way? In your opinion, what were Kanin's ideas and attitudes towards power and the manipulation of power? Why does this play still have relevance today?

Born Yesterday - Post-Show

Theme 1: Exploring Character

Grades 7-12

Warm-up Activity - Images of Power and Powerless

As a class, discuss various images that one might associate with both 'power' and 'powerless'.

On a blank card each student writes a specific gesture or action that suggests to them the idea of 'power'. The teacher collects the cards and redistributes them randomly among the class. Individually and simultaneously, the students practice whatever action they have received on the card.

In groups of 4-5, students share with each other their actions. Group members decide on the most effective order for the actions to be presented to the class. Allow all groups to present. Based on the actions, each group now creates a tableau (frozen picture). Students create the tableau one figure at a time.

Instruct students to begin in neutral position, no facial or physical expression. Following the order the students have decided, the figures come to life, one-by-one. The first student creates his/her frozen action, and then freezes. The second student creates his/her action, and then freezes in some way that connects him/her to the first student. Continue until all students in each group are frozen. Do not share with rest of class yet.

Distribute a second card to each student and instruct them to write a gesture or action that suggests to them the idea of 'powerless'. Redistribute cards randomly and students practice their actions individually and simultaneously. Back in groups, students demonstrate their actions and, as a group, decide on the order the actions will be presented to create a tableau.

Instruct students to re-create their 'power' tableaux and one-by-one they move out of the 'power' tableaux to create the 'powerless' tableaux.

Allow time for students to practice the sequence; beginning in neutral, moving one-by-one to create a tableau of 'power' then moving to create a tableau of 'powerless'. As students practice, teacher introduces music in the background.

Students share their work with class and discuss the images that were presented.

Extension: Repeat exercise using the terms: strong/weak; selfish/selfless; courage/fear

Main Activity - Subtext

Instruct: Teacher distributes selected scenes from *Born Yesterday* (see Black Line Master #2) to student partners. Student partners choose either character 'A' or 'B' and read through the scene together.

Instruct: Have a few partner volunteers read their scripts out loud.

Ask: Is there a sense of age and gender of the two characters? Is the audience aware of setting? Time of day?

Instruct: Working with their partner, students choose the gender and age of both characters, and the setting (where the scene takes place), including the time of day. Students read through their scene again implementing their choices. Ask for volunteers to read their scripts out loud.

Discuss: How did the scenes change through adding the choice of character and setting?

Born Yesterday - Post-Show

Theme 1: Exploring Character

Grades 7-12

Main Activity - cont'd.

Instruct: With their partners, students answer the following questions:

- Where are the characters when the conversation occurs?
- Why are they there?
- Who might be the other characters mentioned in the scene? What is your relationship to the other characters?
- What has happened just before the conversation?
- What does each character want?
- What is standing in their way of getting what they want?
- What does each character want from the other character?

Instruct: Once the above questions have been answered, and students have had time to practice, invite volunteers to read their scenes out loud to the rest of the class. Have students incorporate blocking allowing for entrances and exits.

Ask: In what ways have the scenes changed?

Extension

Instruct: Students compose a subtext script for each of their character lines to indicate what their character is thinking and/or feeling at that exact moment. Have students form groups of four with two students reading lines for characters 'A' and 'B' and two students reading the subtext lines.

Instruct: On a large piece of paper, students draw a silhouette of their character. Draw a line extending from the outside of the silhouette and write words describing what the character looks like. Draw a line extending to the inside of the silhouette and write words describing the inner qualities of the character. Draw a line extending around the outside of the silhouette and write words describing the outside factors that have influenced the character to become who he/she is today.

Instruct: Students block the script, using their positioning and movements to reveal the characters' relationship and subtexts. Allow time for students to rehearse their scenes several times, communicating relationships and subtext through vocal tone, timing, eye focus, and rhythm.

Instruct: Allow time for student pairs to perform their scene for the class. Audience discusses the characters' relationships and what might be the subtext of each character.

Class Discussion

Garson Kanin wrote *Born Yesterday* on the premise that one person has the power to facilitate change. Do you agree that this is possible? Discuss.

Provide examples from history and present-day in which the power of one person has effected change.

Kanin intended on writing a serious exposé of Washington but realized that "if I could define what is for me the ideal accomplishment, it is to treat a serious subject lightly." Do you feel Kanin has succeeded in fulfilling his goal? How?

Born Yesterday - Pre-Show

Theme 2: Staging the Play

Grades 7-12

Pedagogical Intent: Through these activities, students will learn that many artists are involved towards staging a theatre production. Scenic designers work alongside directors and their combined input and influence are integral to the theatre experience for actors and audience.

Grade: Grades 7 - 12

Subjects: Drama, History, Visual Arts

Objectives and Competencies: In these activities, students will:

- defend the artistic choices made in productions (e.g., by actors, designers, or directors)
- describe the steps of the design process
- explain how compositions are altered by a change in design principles
- produce a survey of a particular subject or medium through a period of time
- demonstrate an understanding of the tasks and interrelated responsibilities of individuals in the production of theatre
- interpret and present a dramatic text from the turn of the twentieth century

Materials: pencils and paper, access to computers, access to the library

Main Activity - Director

The main action in *Born Yesterday* is set in a suite of a luxury hotel in Washington, D.C. The play is full of characters who either have power, want power, or are trying to maintain power and high status. Directors often use various staging techniques to indicate the power and status level of a character's position in society. Some of these techniques include:

- 1. Levels:** power and status can be indicated by placing the most important character(s) on higher levels than other characters.
- 2. Stage Positioning:** Power and status can be indicated by placing the most important character(s) at centre stage directly facing the audience.
- 3. Reinforcement:** Power and status can be indicated by reinforcing or surrounding important characters with people (servants, maids), objects (luxurious items), and/or set pieces (large furniture, grand doorways, etc.).

Instruct: Imagine you are the director of *Born Yesterday*. Using the three techniques listed above, create a stage picture for the following scenarios:

The setting is a hotel suite in a luxury hotel in Washington, D. C. Included in the stage pictures are:

Scene One

- (a) a lawyer
- (b) a maid
- (c) two bellhops
- (d) an uncouth tycoon
- (e) his mistress

Scene Two

- (a) an uncouth tycoon
- (b) his mistress
- (c) a newspaper reporter
- (d) a senator
- (e) wife of the senator

Born Yesterday

Theme 2: Staging a Play

Grades 7-12

Main Activity - Set Designer

Explain: Playwright, Garson Kanin, includes the following set description in his play *Born Yesterday*.

This happens in a sitting room of Suite 67D, a large part of the best hotel in Washington, D. C. 67D is so called because it is a duplex apartment on the sixth and seventh floors of the hotel. It is a masterpiece of offensive good taste, colourful and lush and rich. When the curtain rises a bell is ringing. A maid comes down the staircase which leads from the bedrooms, carrying a large vase of yellow roses.

Instruct: Imagine that you have been hired by the Shaw Festival to design the set for *Born Yesterday*.

Instruct: List factual information you need to research before creating your set design.

Instruct: Define the words from Kanin's description: lush, rich, duplex, suite

Instruct: Establish the time period (you can choose any time period in which you wish to set the play), then research the time period with regard to style of furniture, popular colour, window style, etc.

Instruct: What would be visible through the windows of the hotel suite? What impression of the surrounding environment do you wish to convey?

Instruct: Create an initial drawing of the set.

Instruct: Students share their set design drawings and share what they have discovered in their research.

Born Yesterday - Post-Show

Theme 2: Staging a Play

Grades 7-12

Class Discussion

Ask: Referring to Sue LePage's description of her set design and vision for *Born Yesterday* (see p. 8) do you feel she achieved her vision?

Ask: In what ways has the set design influenced the story of the play?

Discuss: How has the director staged the play so the audience is aware of both powerful and weak characters?

Discuss: What were some strong aspects of the direction of the play? What do you feel could be improved upon?

Discuss: How did other theatre factors, such as lighting, costumes, wigs, etc. help to stage the story of the play?

Black Line Master #1

Lines for Strong/Weak Character Exploration

1. Well hi! I didn't know you were coming to the party.
2. I wish she'd invite me just once.
3. Get out of here...and don't come back, do you hear me.
4. I told you to go to your room. Now will you do as you are told.
5. Who is it? Who's there? Don't come near me...don't. Don't.
6. What's this about? What's she up to anyway? I don't understand.
7. Be quiet. I don't think they can hear us, but we'd better be sure.
8. You mean it's my turn now.
9. I didn't mean to do it. She's my best friend.
10. I won. I won. First prize....I won.
11. I just love dancing with you. Really I do.
12. We're going to get caught, I tell you. Let's get out of here.
13. Yes, I did eat her candy. I admit it.
14. You know what I think.
15. What did you say.
16. I can't believe you said such a thing.
17. You mean you were fired – just for missing one day.
18. You mean you let that kid talk back to you, and did nothing about it.

Black Line Master #2
Scenes from *Born Yesterday* by Garson Kanin

Scene 1

A: Send her home.

B: No.

A: Why not?

B: I'm nuts about her.

A: Can't have your cake and eat it.

B: What?

A: Just a saying.

B: It don't make sense.

A: All right.

(Pause)

B: What's cakes got to do with it?

A: Nothing.

Scene 2

A: I'll tell you what I *would* like.

B: Yes?

A: I'd like to learn how to talk good.

B: All right.

A: Is it hard to learn?

B: I don't think so.

A: What do I have to do?

B: Well, I might give you a few books to start with. Then if you don't mind, I'll correct you now and then.

A: Go ahead.

B: When / know, that is. I don't – talk so good myself.

A: You'll do.

B: Fine.

A: I never say "ain't". Did you notice that? Never.

B: I do.

A: Well, I'll correct *you* then.

B: Do that.

Black Line Master #2 - Cont'd

Scene 3

A: - my book lying there, and she said, "Oh, I've been meaning to read that again for years!"

B: What was it?

A: *David Copperfield*.

B: Oh, yes.

A: So then we got to talking about it and you want to know something?

B: What?

A: She's never read it at all.

B: How do you know?

A: I could tell from the way we were talking.

B: Does that surprise you?

A: Well, why should she make out like she did? It's no crime if she didn't.

Scene 4

A: It's perfectly all right. Don't worry.

B: You sure?

A: Ask Harry.

B: All right.

A: He won't like it.

B: Why not?

A: He just won't, that's all. He doesn't like people butting in.

B: I'm not people.

A: Listen to me. Be smart.

B: How can I be smart if nobody ever tells me anything?

A: I'm telling you something.

B: What?

A: Sign the stuff and don't start up with him.

B: Tomorrow.

A: Tomorrow?

Black Line Master #2 - Cont'd.

Scene 5

A: All set?

B: Certainly all set. What'd you think – I'm gonna let a broad talk back?

A: Where is she?

B: I told her to take a walk. If there's one thing I can't stand it's a crier.

A: What's she crying about?

B: What do I know?

A: She's becoming a strange girl.

B: She's all right. All this book stuff's got her nervous, that's all.

A: "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

B: What?

A: Nothing. Looks like your passion for educating her was a mistake.

Scene 6

A: Hello.

B: Where you been?

A: I took a walk like you told me.

B: That took you till now?

A: What's the matter? You miss me?

B: I decided somethin' to tell you. Somethin' good. I don't like to wait when I get an idea.

A: Yuh, I know.

B: Now I see you, I don't know if I should tell you it.

A: Why not?

B: Runnin' out, talkin' fresh, slammin' doors. I knew you'd be back, though.

A: You did, huh?

B: I told Ed, even. He was worried. Not me.

A: Not yet.

B: What took you so long?

A: I had a lot to think.

B: For instance?

A: Just where I stand around here.

B: That's what I'm tryin' to tell you.

A: What?

B: Where you stand.