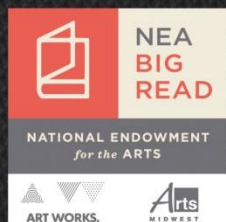


# IN THE TIME OF THE BUTTERFLIES

One tyrannical dictator.  
Four courageous sisters.  
This is their story.



*In the Time of the Butterflies* is being produced as part of the NEA Big Read.

NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

El proyecto NEA Big Read es una iniciativa del National Endowment for the Arts (el Fondo Nacional para las Artes de Estados Unidos) en cooperación con Arts Midwest.



A play by **Caridad Svich**

Based on the novel  
by **Julia Alvarez**

Directed by **Ricardo Vila-Roger**

March 8-17, 2019

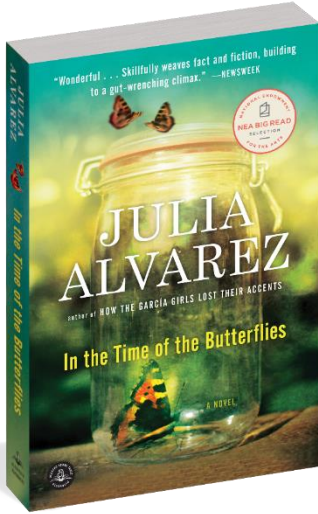


[PrimeStage.com](http://PrimeStage.com)

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre’s 2018-2019,  
*Season of Courage*

*Bringing Literature to Life!*

Dear Educator,



To continue our *Season of Courage*, we are pleased to present to you the production *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez.

All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary Reading Lists and themes that are in the current Pennsylvania curriculum.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide, teacher instruction, historical background, context, classroom activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students’ experience with literature and live theatre. We encourage you to use the theatrical games and creative thinking activities, as well as the Theatre Etiquette suggested activities to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the story *In the Time of the Butterflies*.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in the guide, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you, *and* I welcome your suggestions and comments!

Linda Haston, Education Director & Teaching Artist  
Prime Stage Theatre  
[lhaston@primestage.com](mailto:lhaston@primestage.com)

**The activities/information in this guide are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as you read, and the experience as you watch the literature.**



## OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Literacy In ACTION Program (LACT)  
 Student Matinee Field Trips  
 Global Learning  
 Champion of Life Building  
 Creative Arts Festival  
 Young Women's Collaborative  
 Technical Theatre Interns  
 Professional Development  
 Teen Dating Awareness  
 Summer Camps/Workshops

## OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS

Allegheny Regional Asset District  
 American Eagle Outfitters  
 Jack Buncher Foundation  
 Philip Chosky Charitable Education Fund  
 Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust  
 The Fine Foundation  
 Henry C. Frick Education Fund of the Buhl Foundation  
 The Grable Foundation  
 Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council  
 Heinz Endowments  
 Macy's Corporation  
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 Howard & Nell E. Miller Foundation  
 NEA Big Read / Arts Midwest  
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 PNC Charitable Foundation

## PRIME STAGE THEATRE EDUCATION STAFF

Wayne Brinda, Ed.D <i>Producing Artistic Director</i>	Linda Haston Education Director
Ken Lutz <i>Global Learning Coordinator</i>	Heather Sendera <i>Student Matinee Field Trips</i>
Ryan Pontzloff <i>Education Intern</i>	Tina Cerny <i>Technical Theatre Intern Director</i>



## TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

John Dolphin, Brooke Kosar, Josette Kurney, Mike Perry, Jennifer Wells, Linda Withrow, Sueanne Zoratto



## Featured National Standards:

### English/Language Arts

#### Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
4. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
5. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
6. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

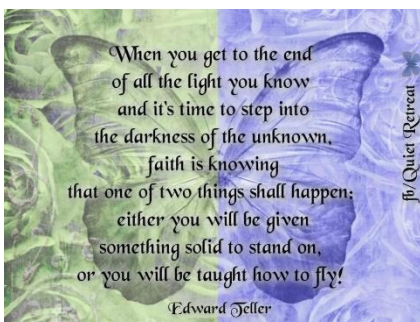
## Theatre

### NA 5-8.3 Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes

Students analyze improvised and scripted scenes for technical requirements.

### NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.



**NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions**

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.

**NA 9-12.3 Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions**

Students analyze a variety of dramatic texts from cultural and historical perspectives to determine production requirements.

**NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices**

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

**NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions**

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.

Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.



**All Prime Stage productions and Resource Guides address the following:**

**Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for *Of Mice and Men*:  
Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking**

**CC.1.3.9-10.A:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CC.1.3.9-10.C:** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

**CC.1.3.9-10.D:** Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

**CC.1.3.9-10.E:** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

**CC.1.3.9-10.F:** Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

**CC.1.3.9-10.G:** Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

**CC.1.3.9-10.H:** Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

**CC.1.3.9-10.K:** Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

**CC.1.5.9-10.A:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grades level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CC.1.5.9-10.G:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 9-10 level and content.

**CC.1.6.11.A:** Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

**CC.1.6.11.C:** Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

**CC.1.6.11.D:** Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.



## *Theatre Etiquette and House Rules*

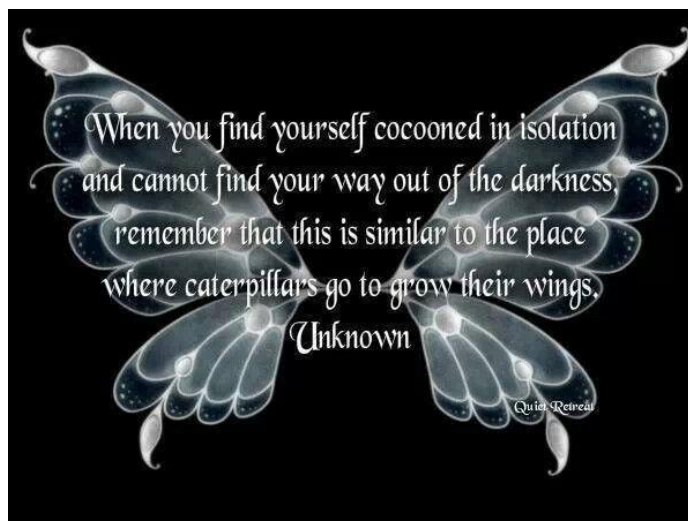
Going to a play is a special experience, one that you will remember for a long time.

Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance. The production team put in many long hours and hard work to mount this performance. If you keep in mind common courtesy for the performers as well as your fellow audience members, everyone's theatre experience will be terrific.

A few reminders for attending the theatre.

- When you arrive, stay with your group at all times, and wait for the ushers to help you find your seat.
- Gum, food, drinks, or candy, are **never** allowed in the theatre.
- Please go to the restroom before seating for performance or at intermission.
- **TURN OFF ALL** cell phones, pagers, beepers, alarms, **anything** that can disturb the production, actors and the audience during the performance.
- Lights will dim just before a performance and then go dark. Show your knowledge by sitting quietly and calmly.
- **Do not talk during the performance.** The actors on stage can hear you which is why you can hear them so well. Laughter is permissible at appropriate times.
- **No** taking of pictures or video recording is allowed.

**Stay in your seat until the cast has taken their curtain call at the end.** Show your appreciation by clapping. The actors love to hear applause. This shows how much you enjoyed the performance





# Interview with Playwright Caridad Svich: “In the Time of the Butterflies”

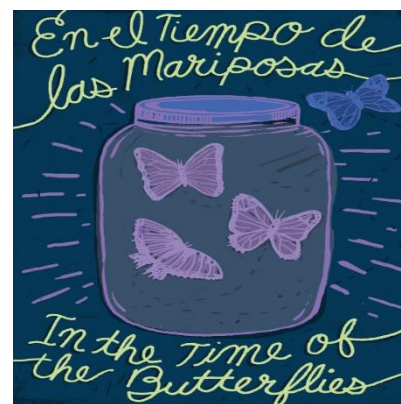
January 15, 2014 by [Alejandra Enciso Guzmán](#)

**An award-winning woman playwright adapts this historical novel by Julia Alvarez about the courage of 4 young women in the Dominican Republic.**

By *Alejandra Enciso Guzmán*

This play, based on the novel by Julia Álvarez, captures part of the lives of the four Mirabal sisters. These women fought against the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, a former president of the Dominican Republic. Their struggle ended with the brutal loss of their lives in 1960.

The adaptation was done by playwright Caridad Svich. She was first commissioned for the task by the Repertorio Español Theater in New York, where *En el tiempo de las mariposas* premiered in 2011. “This novel contains an incredible story and Julia is a very important figure. The idea of taking it to the stage came about due to another adaptation I did, [La casa de los espíritus](#) in which the themes are similar: Women against resistance, oppression and dictatorship” explained Svich in an interview for SDFP. “When we asked Julia for permission to do the play, she accepted, quite nervous, because it is a great responsibility. Also, part of the Mirabal family is still alive. It is an honor for me to be able to represent it on stage. It’s been in New York for three years now with great success and it has also been done in Uruguay.”



**Ms. Svich shares how the play came about.** “The idea was to write a play no more than 90 minutes long without an intermission. The plot starts in the thirties [and continues] all the way to the fifties. The girls are seen as children at first, then we will see them as wives, mothers, until the day of their demise.” Svich read Julia Álvarez’ novel once more in order to capture the voice as well as the rhythm of the writer. “This is a dialogue with the novel. I am not taking the text as is and putting it on stage.”

There is a core male character that will travel through time in order to balance the story. “The novel has a very tender intimacy and I wanted to capture that. Julia has that ability in her process, to go inside the life of each character. To show their dreams, and their fragile moments. It is very subtle, almost impressionist. That is the structure of this play, we will see how it goes.” Svich also shared that this play represents women’s fight against tyranny, injustice and censorship. “It’s a story that unfortunately, is not going to end any time soon because that is the way the world is, not only with women but with men as well.”

Even though this montage is based on actual facts that took place in the fifties, Svich explained that it is something that continues to happen. For me, to bring this story again is to remember that it did happen. That this family is still fighting and that they have a voice. We forget very easily about what happens in our countries. Sometimes we do not even connect. The connection between the Americas is of key importance to me. It belongs to us.”







# Julia Alvarez Biography

**Born: March 27, 1950**  
**New York, New York**  
*American novelist and poet*

Julia Alvarez is a writer whose most notable work is *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, a discussion of her life in the Dominican Republic and in the United States and the hardships members of her family faced as immigrants. Many of her works examine the conflicts and benefits that go along with living as both a Dominican and an American.

## *Background in the Dominican Republic*

Julia Alvarez was born on March 27, 1950, in New York, New York, but she spent her early years in the Dominican Republic. She and her sisters were brought up along with their cousins, and were supervised by her mother, maids, and many aunts. Her father, a doctor who ran a nearby hospital, had met her mother while she was attending school in the United States. Alvarez's family was highly influenced by American attitudes and goods. Alvarez and her sisters attended an American school, and, for a special treat, they ate ice cream from an American ice cream parlor. The entire extended family had respect and admiration for America; to the children, it was a fantasy land.

When Alvarez was ten years old, her father became involved with a plot to overthrow the dictator (military [ruler](#)) of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina. His plans were discovered, however. With the help of an American agent, he was able to get his family out of the country before being arrested or killed. The Alvarez family returned to New York. Describing the scene in *American Scholar* as their plane landed in the United States, Alvarez wrote, "All my childhood I had dressed like an American, eaten American foods, and befriended American children. I had gone to an American school and spent most of the day speaking and reading English. At night, my prayers were full of blond hair and blue eyes and snow.... All my childhood I had longed for this moment of arrival. And here I was, an American girl, coming home at last."

## *American experiences*

Alvarez's homecoming was not what she had expected it to be. Although she was thrilled to be back in America, she would soon face [homesickness](#) and the feeling of not fitting in. She missed her cousins, her family's large home, and the respect her family had in the Dominican Republic. Alvarez, her parents, and her sisters squeezed themselves and their possessions into a tiny apartment in Brooklyn, New York. Alvarez became a devoted reader, spending all of her free time with books and, eventually, writing.

Alvarez went on to college. In 1971 she earned her undergraduate degree at Middlebury College in Vermont, and in 1975 she went on to receive her master's degree in creative writing at Syracuse University. She became an English [professor](#) at Middlebury College and published several collections of poetry, including *Homecoming*, which appeared in 1984. By 1987 she was working on a collection of stories.



## Success arrives

When Alvarez published *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* in 1991, the novel received considerable attention. Rather than a straight narrative, the book is a series of fifteen connected stories told in reverse order detailing the lives of four sisters and their parents. A comparison with Alvarez's article in *American Scholar* suggests that these stories are based on her own experience. Like her family, the Garcia family is Dominican and displaced in America. Like Alvarez and her sisters, the Garcia girls struggle to adapt to their new environment and the American culture. The praise Alvarez received for her first novel outweighed the criticism that a new novelist often encounters. She received grants from the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) and The Ingram Merrill Foundation, in addition to receiving a PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Award for excellence in multicultural literature.

Alvarez's second novel, *In the Time of Butterflies*, was published in 1994. This work recounts the lives of the [Mirabal](#) sisters—Patria, Minerva, and Maria Terese (Mate)—who were [assassinated](#) after visiting their imprisoned husbands during the last days under the Trujillo government in the Dominican Republic. Each sister in turn relates her own part of the narrative, beginning with her childhood and gradually revealing how she came to be involved in the movement against the government. Their story is completed by that of the surviving sister, Dedé, who adds her own tale of suffering to the memory of her sisters. *In the Time of Butterflies* received a favorable reaction from reviewers, some of whom admired Alvarez's ability to express the wide range of feelings brought on by the revolution. The novel was a finalist for the National Book Critics Award in 1994.



A collection of poems entitled *The Other Side/El Otro Lado* was published in 1995. It deals with the similar themes of power of language and having ties to two cultures. In the book's title poem Alvarez is commanded by a spirit [conjurer](#) (a kind of magician or [psychic](#)) to serve her own people in the Dominican Republic. But in the end, she returns "to the shore I've made up on the other side, to a life of choice, a life of words." Her next work, *Yo!*, published in 1997, is based on Yolanda, one of her characters from *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. Each section of the novel is told from the point of view of a different character, all of whom describe

Yolanda as they see her. *Something to Declare*, published in 1998, collects a series of Alvarez's essays about her experiences growing up and finding her voice as a Latin American writer.

Alvarez gave up her teaching position at Middlebury in 1997 in order to devote all of her time to writing. She continues to stay in touch with her roots by visiting the Dominican Republic four or five times a year, partly to check on the coffee bean farm she and her husband own. Profits from the farm will be used to create a learning center for Dominican children. *In the Name of Salome*, which tells the story of Dominican poet Salome Urea and her daughter, Camila, was published in 2000.

*For More Information:* Alvarez, Julia. *Something to Declare*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1998.; Sirias, Silvio. *Julia Alvarez: A Critical Companion*. Westport, CT: [Greenwood](#) Press, 2001.

Read more: <https://www.notablebiographies.com/A-An/Alvarez-Julia.html#ixzz5jQEKNHR>



## DIRECTOR NOTES

Why this story? Why now?

For some time now I've been interested in telling stories that are typically not heard in the American theatre. Storytelling is a way to pass on our stories but it's also a way for us to connect. It gives us a way in... a way to empathize with folks who may have vastly different experiences. This is because storytelling allows us to see the similarities in the human existence.



Ricardo Vila-Roger, Director

Bravery. Resilience. Tenacity. Family. Selflessness. Love. These are among the many themes that are part of this story. They are not unique to Latinx culture. We all recognize them. These are people with whom we feel we might not have much in common but when we hear their story, we can feel a connection. We can witness their bravery first-hand. That is the power of storytelling.

I hope you are as inspired by this story as we are. I hope that it helps you realize the power of family—whether it's the one you were born with or the one you found. I hope it helps you recognize your own power and resilience. I hope it ignites a passion in you that you didn't know you had. I hope it makes you appreciate the blessings in your life. I hope it entertains and moves you.

I am grateful for the incredible artists who created this work—from the playwright to the designers to the actors. Thank you.

***Ricardo Vila Roger, Director***

***Prime Stage production of "In the Time of the Butterflies," March, 2019***



## COSTUME DESIGN NOTES

In the vast landscape that is the history of humankind, the one universal truth is that we live and we die. How we die is generally not something that we control, but how we live- our choices, our reactions, what we embrace or reject – these make each of us unique.

The story of the heroic lives of the Mirabal sisters and their individual approaches to relationships and revolution is symbolic with the connection to their code name of butterflies. Like butterflies, they were beautiful, graceful and elusive. After all, it requires a net or a form of entrapment to catch them and in so doing, usually results in their destruction.



As a child, I chose to “collecting” purposes. a form of “preservation.” character through details

people and the shared discovery process that the director, actors and design team bring to the table. In this script, Dede is the central narrative. She is the literal accountant in the family and she is ultimately responsible for the historical accounting of her sisters’ lives. Patria repeatedly tells Dede to “close that beak” but Dede is the one who lives to speak the story to future generations.

draw butterflies rather than euthanize them for Like drawing, costume design is It captures the essence of a in the script, facts about real



It is through Dede’s preservation – of artifacts like Mate’s hair braid that she cut off in the morgue and Patria’s final bloodstained dress-displayed in the family’s ancestral home/museum- that the sisters remain more real than just a memory.

Coupled with historical research (the Dictator is always in uniform, the “chacabana” shirt worn by the deejay, the period correct party dresses) and the interpretation of butterfly colors (Blue for Patria, Green for Dede, Orange for Minerva and Red for Mate), it is my intention that the Mirabal sisters come to life in a way that resonates with audiences. Thus, they remain vibrant and their story inspires continued action against injustice.



**Kim Brown, Costume Designer**  
**Prime Stage production of “In the Time of the Butterflies,” March, 2019**



## SCENIC DESIGN

### SET MODEL

The set design for *In the Time of the Butterflies* is a courtyard garden space for the characters and video projection to bring to life the story of the Mirabal sisters.

The set design allows for the video projections to enrich the environment into the magnificent garden which is the story of the sisters.

The design hopes to support the story of the sisters through its simplicity and ability to shift into several different locations and scenarios via the support of video projections, light, sound, and the actors.



### ACTUAL SET



***Britton Mauk, Scenic Designer***

***Prime Stage production of  
"In the Time of the Butterflies"  
March, 2019***



## LIGHTING DESIGN



Telling stories is an act of transformation - just like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly or a seed into a flower. The lighting design for this production mirrors that idea. Each of the Mirabal sisters has a color, inspired by the native butterflies of the Dominican Republic, that is present in the lighting when they are onstage. Their spirit literally transforms the stage the same way their story transforms us. The result is a beautiful garden of light and texture as rich as the lives of the women who inspire us.

***J.R. Shaw, Lighting Designer***  
***Prime Stage production of "In the Time of the Butterflies," March, 2019***



## IN THE TIME OF THE BUTTERFLIES PLOT SUMMARY

The novel takes place in the Dominican Republic, both in 1994 and under the [Trujillo](#) regime. In 1994, [Dedé Mirabal](#) lives in the house where her three sisters used to live. The dead sisters are known as the



“butterflies,” and they are martyrs and national heroes. In 1994 Dedé talks to an [interviewer](#) about her sisters, and her narrative is interrupted with memories.

The story shifts between the four sisters from 1943 to their deaths in 1960: Dedé’s memories, [Minerva](#)’s point of view, [Patria](#)’s point of view, and entries from María Teresa’s diaries. Minerva convinces [Papá](#) to allow them to go to a Catholic school, and there she meets [Sinita](#), a girl whose family was killed by Trujillo. Minerva watches Trujillo seduce and abandon a girl at her school, [Lina Lovatón](#).

Patria is the most religious sister, Dedé becomes infatuated with [Virgilio Morales](#), a young Communist

**(Clockwise) Frances Tirado, Vanessa Vivas, Evelyn Hernandez, Krystal Rivera**

intel  
lect  
ual,

but Virgilio and Minerva end up dating instead.

Dedé settles for marrying her cousin Jaimito, and Virgilio is driven by the Trujillo regime into exile.

One day Minerva discovers that Papá gets invited to a party thrown by Trujillo, and there Trujillo tries to seduce Minerva, while she tries to manipulate him into letting her go to law school. She slaps him, and the Mirabal’s leave. The next day Papá is arrested and taken in for questioning. Minerva is asked to have a “private conference” with Trujillo, but she refuses. Papá is eventually released, and Minerva meets Trujillo again for another battle of wills.

Patria remains uninvolved until her son Nelson wants to join Minerva’s revolutionaries. The church is neutral regarding Trujillo, but while on a religious retreat in the mountains Patria sees Trujillo’s soldiers



massacring some young revolutionaries. She is traumatized by this, and she and her priest join Minerva’s underground group, together forming the “Fourteenth of June Movement.” Minerva, María Teresa, and Patria are now known as the “Butterflies.” The group uses Patria’s house to stockpile weapons.

The sisters ask Dedé to join their movement, but her courage fails her and she submits to Jaimito’s demands that she refuse. Then the SIM (Trujillo’s secret police force) arrest Pedrito, Nelson, Manolo, and Leandro, and then Minerva and Mate as well.

Patria stays at Mamá’s house, and watches as the church finally speaks out against Trujillo.



She eventually gets Trujillo to pardon Nelson. He offers Minerva and Mate a pardon, but they refuse. Mate keeps a diary from prison, where Minerva remains brave and strong but Mate starts to break down. The SIM torture Mate to get Leandro to talk. The Organization of American States comes to investigate the regime, and the sisters are released into house arrest.

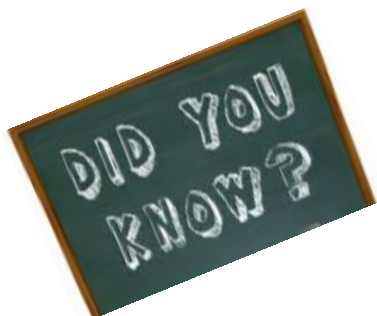
By now the “butterflies” are national symbols of the resistance. A friendly driver named [Rufino](#) takes them to visit their husbands in prison. On their fourth trip, the sisters are ambushed as they drive down a lonely mountain road. Minerva’s account ends, but Dedé explains what happened – the sisters and Rufino are each killed and then put back into their car, so it looks like an accident. Everyone knows that Trujillo killed them, however, and they become martyrs.



In 1994, Dedé remembers Trujillo’s overthrow a year or so after the murder of the Mirabals, and the bloody revolutions that followed. She now lives with her niece [Minou](#), Minerva’s daughter, and has become a kind of “oracle” for the sisters, telling their story to the world.







## Important Facts About “Butterflies”



# Rafael Trujillo

- ▣ **Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina**
- ▣ October 24, 1891 – May 30, 1961
- ▣ Nicknamed **El Jefe** (*The Chief* or *The Boss*)
- ▣ Ruled as a dictator of the Dominican republic from 1930 until his assassination in 1961.
- ▣ Served as president from 1930 to 1938 and 1942 to 1952
- ▣ Otherwise ruling as an unelected military strongman
- ▣ 30 years in power - the Trujillo Era
- ▣ One of the bloodiest eras ever in the Americas
- ▣ A time of a classic personality cult when monuments to Trujillo were in abundance
- ▣ Responsible for the death of more than 50,000 people, including 20,000 to 30,000 in the infamous Parsley Massacre



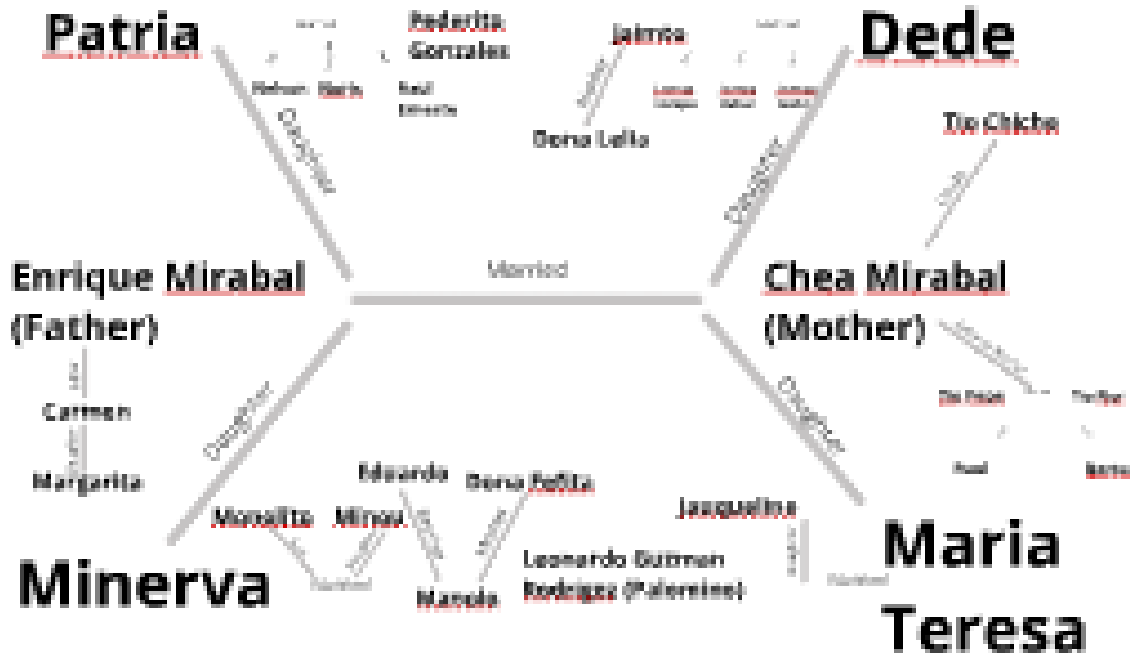
## • Trujillo

• Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, the dictator of the Dominican Republic from 1930 until his assassination in 1961. As described by Sinita to Minerva, "Trujillo became president in a sneaky way. First, he was in the army, and all the people who were above him kept disappearing until he was the one right below the head of the whole armed forces."



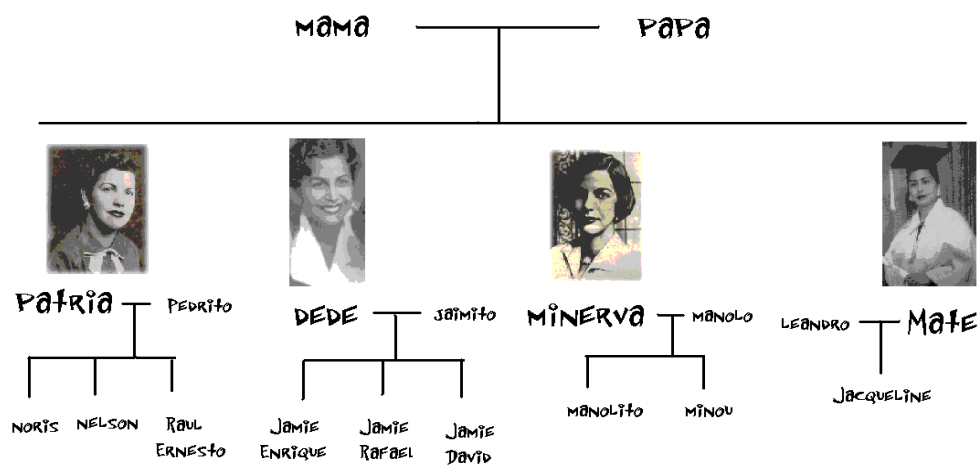


IN THE TIME OF BUTTERFLIES CHARACTER MAP & FAMILY TREE



FAMILY

TREE



## The “Era of Trujillo”

- 1891** Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina is born.
- 1924** Patria Mirabal is born.
- 1925** Bèlgica Adela “Dedé” Mirabal is born.
- 1926** Minerva Mirabal is born.



**1927** Trujillo is elected General to the Dominican Army.

**1930** Trujillo is elected President after eliminating most of his political rivals. **Younger Dede**

**1934** Trujillo is re-elected as President. He is later re-elected in 1942 and 1947.

**1935** Antonia Maria Teresa “Mate” Mirabal is born.

**1936** At Trujillo’s bequest, the Dominican Republic Congress changes the name of the capital city from Santo Domingo to Ciudad Trujillo (Trujillo City).

**1937** Trujillo promotes himself to the highest military rank (*Generalissimo*). He also orders the massacre of an estimated 20,000-30,000 Haitians (known as the “Parsley Massacre”).

**1952** Trujillo declines re-nomination and cedes the presidency to his brother, Héctor, but retains control in all but name.



**Pro Trujillo Rally**

**1957** Héctor is re-elected as President and Joaquín Balaguer, hand-picked by Trujillo, is chosen as Vice President. Trujillo retains control despite ceding the presidency.

**1959** On June 14<sup>th</sup>, troops from the Dominican Liberation Movement attempt to assassinate Trujillo and topple the dictatorship. Many were killed by Trujillo’s army and air force in response. This massacre only serves to further incite rebellion from those who oppose Trujillo. The resistance is revitalized under a new name: the “Fourteenth of June Movement.”

**1960** Trujillo orders the arrests of Minerva and Mate Mirabal, as well as their husbands, for their work with the anti-Trujillo movement. November 25<sup>th</sup>, men working for Trujillo murder Patria, Minerva, and Mate Mirabal, along with their driver, Rufino de la Cruz.

**1961** On May 30<sup>th</sup>, Trujillo is assassinated. His son, Ramfis, takes over the presidency and has the conspirators executed. Ramfis and Balaguer fight over the presidency, with Ramfis fleeing the Dominican Republic shortly thereafter. Balaguer serves three non-consecutive terms as president—the last of which ends in 1996. In an effort to distance himself from Trujillo’s dictatorship, Balaguer gives Ciudad Trujillo its previous name, Santo Domingo.



Trujillo's car after his assassination

# MAP DURING THE PERIOD OF TRUJILLO RULE



# Courage “In the Time of the Butterflies”

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/courage-time-butterflies>

**Essential Question** - How did the Mirabal sisters exhibit courage in their words and actions?

On occasions which bring us together like today, it is a consolation to me that when my mother would hear warnings about how dangerous it was to stand up to Trujillo, she would always reply with the same words. ...  
 “If they kill me, I shall reach my arms out of the grave and I shall be stronger ...”

— Minou Tavárez Mirabal

Set in the Dominican Republic during the rule of Rafael Trujillo, *In the Time of the Butterflies* fictionalizes historical figures (four Mirabal sisters, their parents, Trujillo himself, and his subordinates) in order to dramatize the Dominican people’s heroic efforts to overthrow this dictator’s brutal regime. The sisters are distinctive personalities, each engaged in the struggle for independence. With unique structure of time frames and alternating voices, Julia Alvarez has written a complex coming-of-age novel that provides a context for students to look at the struggles of women to secure their human, civil, and economic rights in countries around the world today.

In this lesson, students undertake a careful analysis of the main characters to see how each individually demonstrates courage in the course of her family’s turbulent life events. Students additionally analyze a speech delivered in 2006 by a daughter of one of the sisters to understand better the historical legacy of these extraordinary women.

## Discussion starters

- Write the word COURAGE on the board and explain that many cultures over thousands of years have considered this to be an essential human virtue;
- Discuss different kinds of courage. List different types on the board and ask students to give examples of each one;

### A few types of courage are defined:

- **Physical courage** is courage shown in the face of danger, injury, hardship, even death. Students will be able to give many examples from films and books;
- **Moral courage** is shown when someone takes a stand against violence or injustice, even at the risk of being embarrassed or shamed. Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a good example;
- **Intellectual courage** is the willingness to examine new ideas, challenge one’s own preconceptions, and risk making mistakes in a search for truth. For example, considering opposite viewpoints rather than jumping to an easy conclusion would show intellectual courage.

*“I asked Minerva why she was doing such a dangerous thing. And then, she said the strangest thing. She wanted me to grow up in a free country.” (1.3.100)*



## Activity

Have students analyze the actions of the Mirabal sisters to evaluate how the main characters respond to situations that demand courage. Divide students into four groups, one for each of the Mirabal sisters.

- Using the example as a model, distribute a copy of “Finding Evidence in the Text” to each student;
- Tell each group to review the chapters under their assigned sister’s name with special care, but not to rule out information they remember from other chapters;
- Have students work in groups to complete the worksheet and then synthesize what they have learned into a general statement about each sister’s character in order to answer the two questions at the end of the handout.
- Have student groups present their findings to the class, citing any textual evidence they have found to support their answers. Encourage students to take notes on other groups’ work and allow time for them to do so.

**Courage “In the Time of the Butterflies”: A Common Core Exemplar**

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### Worksheet 2.1: Finding Evidence from the Text Suggested Answers

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: These are some possible answers, but students may find other, equally valid ones. Instead of page numbers, this answer sheet provides only chapters, since there are several editions of the novel. You may wish to fill in the page number for the edition you are using to facilitate discussion. The student evaluation section is not provided, since answers may vary.

Name of Character: <b>PATRIA</b>		
<b>Time period:</b> 1946	<b>Chapter:</b> Four	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Description of situation:</b> She has a miscarriage, is very depressed. She sees that her husband Pedrito is depressed, also.		
<b>Type of courage needed:</b> Emotional, social		
<b>How the character responds:</b> “I put aside my own grief to rescue him from his.” Students may note that she suppresses her own feelings for the sake of her husband and family, and may debate whether this is emotional cowardice or generosity.		
<b>Time period:</b> 1959	<b>Chapter:</b> Eight	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Description of situation:</b> Patria’s son Nelson is joining the revolutionaries.		
<b>Type of courage needed:</b> Emotional, social		
<b>How the character responded:</b> She seeks advice from her priest and her faith; finally resigns herself, although she still worries. “I got braver like a crab going sideways. I inched toward courage the best way I could, helping out with the little things.”		
<b>Time period:</b> 1959	<b>Chapter:</b> Eight	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Description of situation:</b> Patria attends a retreat in the mountains and the area is bombed by Trujillo. She witnesses the death of a young revolutionary about the same age as her daughter.		
<b>Type of courage needed:</b> Physical, emotional		
<b>How the character responded:</b> She resolves to join the revolutionaries to fight the Trujillo regime and to work with a church group to help the peasants understand that the revolutionaries are on their side. She invites Minerva and Manolo’s cell to hold their meetings in her home. She is willing to risk even her home and family to join the fight.		
<b>Time period:</b> 1960	<b>Chapter:</b> Ten	<b>Page:</b>
<b>Description of situation:</b> Patria must pull herself together to take care of her mother and children while her husband and son are in jail.		
<b>Type of courage needed:</b> Emotional		
<b>How the character responded:</b> She works on the vanity of Captain Pena and she offers her own life as a sacrifice to God in exchange for Nelson. Finally she succeeds in having her son released.		





## LACT LESSON PLANS FOR *BUTTERFLIES*

### WORKSHOP I

#### Theatrical Warm-up and Get students engaged!

**Objective:** Students will develop physical awareness as it relates to self-expression and vocal production. Stretching limbers, the muscles and connective tissues so that they can move with the demands of any dramatic situation.

#### Procedure:

- Begin with movement/vocal warm-up

Start with head/neck roles

The Puppet –

1. Stand in a circle with some room around you to move.
2. Imagine a string is attached to each of your shoulders. Let the string pull your shoulders up to the ceiling. Try and touch the ceiling with your shoulders. Really try.
3. Now imagine the string is attached to your elbows. Let it lift your elbows to the ceiling. Try and touch the ceiling with your elbows.
4. Now imagine the string is attached to your wrists. Try and touch the ceiling with your wrists.
5. Now imagine the string is attached to your fingertips. Try and touch the ceiling with your fingertips. Stretch and reach to the ceiling.
6. Release your spine from the waist with a big “uhhh” sound. Hang bent over at the waist like a rag doll, relaxing everything in your body but those few muscles required to keep you on your feet.
7. Breathe a big sigh and let out any tension remaining.
8. Now roll up your spine, stacking one vertebra atop the other. Leave your head, shoulders and arms released until the very last minute when your head will float into place above the spine.
9. Breathe another big sigh and release the tension.
10. Repeat the entire exercise double time.

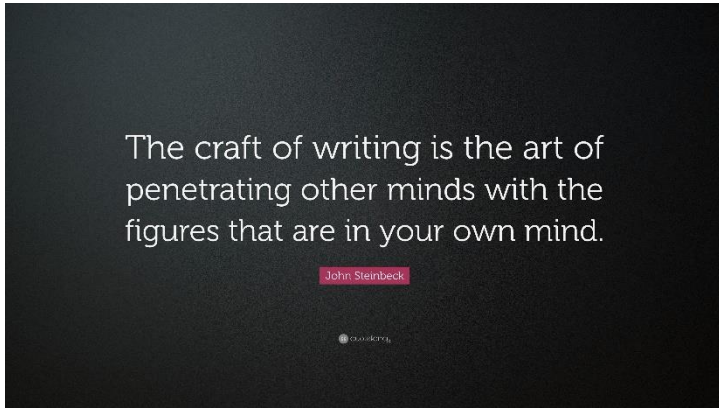
**6-8 minutes**      -----





## VOCABULARY – READING AND RESPONDING TO TEXT

**Objective:** Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading and writing. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus. It allows for **audibility:** projecting your voice so your audience can hear and understand you; **pronunciation:** recognizing words before you say them and pronounce all sounds correctly; **articulation:** using your tongue, mouth and lips to pronounce all the sounds correctly; **vocal variety/expression:** using appropriate pitch, volume and flow.



**Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking**  
**The following standards are addressed in this lesson plan:**

**1.6.11.A:** Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

**1.6.11.C:** Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking

presentations.

**1.6.11.D:** Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion

### Vocabulary

**Objective:** Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading of *In the Time of Butterflies*. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus.

Divide class into teams. Use vocabulary cards and distribute copies to the students for example:

desolation  
 delegation  
 anonymity  
 impertinent  
 veritable  
 laden  
 inevitably  
 commemorative  
 emblazon  
 tribute  
 distressing

Ask students to refer to the definitions they wrote on their vocabulary cards to answer each question below. The questions require them to apply the meaning of the words to their own experiences.



1. What is an experience that makes you feel **distressed**?
2. When have you seen something **emblazoned**?
3. Describe a **distressing** character from a movie.
4. Tell about a **commemorative** event from the news.
5. What would you describe with the word **desolation**?

**20 minutes**

**Objective:** Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus.

- **Comprehension Focus**

### Analyze Theme

#### Community vs Individual

*In the Time of the Butterflies* teaches a lesson about the nature of human existence. Set in the Dominican Republic during the rule of Rafael Trujillo, *In the Time of the Butterflies* fictionalizes historical figures (four Mirabal sisters, their parents, Trujillo himself, and his subordinates) in order to dramatize the Dominican people’s heroic efforts to overthrow this dictator’s brutal regime. The sisters are distinctive personalities, each engaged in the struggle for independence. With unique structure of time frames and alternating voices, Julia Alvarez has written a complex coming-of-age novel that provides a context for students to look at the struggles of women to secure their human, civil, and economic rights in countries around the world today.

Divide students into teams

1. Using some of the characters in *In the Time of the Butterflies* distribute “Character” cards to the teams.
2. Allow them to discuss amongst themselves (along with instructor) for 4 minutes how the characters contribute to the theme and movement of the play.



**Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa Mirabal**





## WORKSHOP II

**Objective:** Students will develop physical awareness as it relates to self-expression and vocal production. Stretching limbers, the muscles and connective tissues so that they can move with the demands of any dramatic situation.

**Procedure:**

- Begin with movement/vocal warm-up from Workshop I

**6-8 minutes**

### Theatre Game: Observing Change

This exercise focuses entirely on your power of observation. It becomes more difficult for your partner as your attention to detail improves. This exercise will all also discipline the student to focus and observe the performance for comprehension and clarity.

1. Sit on the classroom floor across from a partner.
2. Spend two minutes observing everything about your partner in as much detail as possible.
3. Turn away. Your partner will then change three small things about his or her appearance.
4. Turn back when your partner is ready.
5. Try and guess the three changes.
6. Switch roles.

This exercise can be done with four students at a time so that the class can observe changes.

**20 minutes**

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**Objective:** Training students on how to be an “audience” member.

### Theatre Etiquette

1. Bring in a playbill – explain the importance of reading the contents of the Playbill.
2. Bring in picture of the set – explain the importance of observing the set and how important it is to the movement and tone of the play.

Explain how important it is to respect performers on stage by being quiet and listening to the performance. Students will learn the proper way to attend a theatrical performance by being observant and focused on the playbill, the set the language and will thus have an enjoyable experience and be able to ask intelligent questions at the Q&A after the performance.

**20 minutes**

## END Workshop II





## WORKSHOP III

### AFTER THE PRODUCTION

#### Evaluation, Reflection and Comprehension

**Objective:** To evaluate the learning experience of the play and comprehension quality of the experience. Reflections on student experience.

**Procedure:** Initiate and participate with students in collaborative discussion on various aspects of the play. A Q&A period on paper and/or verbally for the entire session.

To properly evaluate the learning experience for the students, the Instructor can pose questions on paper from Workshops I and II and the theatre experience. **40 minutes**



*On occasions which bring us together like today, it is a consolation to me that when my mother would hear warnings about how dangerous it was to stand up to Trujillo, she would always reply with the same words. ... "If they kill me, I shall reach my arms out of the grave and I shall be stronger ..."*

— Minou Tavárez Mirabal (daughter of Minerva Mirabal)



## Last Surviving Mirabal Sister, Doña Dede, at 88

02/03/2014 06:03 pm ET



(Doña Dede with niece Dominican Congresswoman Minou Mirabal)

Bélgica Adela Mirabal, better known in her native Dominican Republic as Doña Dede, died Saturday, February, 1, 2014 of pulmonary complications at a hospital in Santo Domingo. She was 88. Doña Dede was the last surviving of four sisters known as the butterflies that fought to overthrow one of the most blood-thrust dictators in Latin America. On November 25, 1960, three of the four Mirabal sisters were killed by the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, setting up an uproar in the country that ultimately led to the assassination of the dictator in May 30, 1961.

The story of the Mirabal sisters has been told numerous times. Notable American-Dominican author Julia Álvarez told their story in her 1994 best-selling novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*. This novel was the basis for the 2001 film of the same name, starring Salma Hayek, Edward James Olmos, and

Marc Anthony. In 2010, Michelle Rodriguez starred in *Tropico de Sangre*, another film depicting the lives of the Dominican heroines. In 2009, Chilean film maker Cecilia Domeyko also produced a documentary of the Mirabal Sisters. In the documentary, [Code Name: Butterflies](#), filmmaker Domeyko interviews family, personalities and friends that give a recount of the lives of the deceased sisters and their movement to restore democracy in the Dominican Republic. In 1999, the sisters received recognition by the United Nations General Assembly, who designated November 25, the day the sisters were killed, as the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#). The province of Salcedo in the Dominican Republic, where the sisters were born and lived until they died, has been renamed Hermanas Mirabal, in honor of the sisters.

Born on February 29, 1925 to a middle-class family in the small province of Salcedo, in the Dominican Republic, Doña Dede was the second child of four sisters. Unlike her sisters, she never attended college, and took instead a more traditional homemaker role, including helping to run the family business in agriculture and cattle. She married and had three children, one of which, Jaime David Fernandez, is the current Minister for Environment and Natural Resources and former vice president of the Dominican Republic.



After the death of her sisters, Doña Dede devoted her life to the legacy of her sisters. She became mother to her sisters' six children and has traveled the world telling her sisters' story. In 1992, she founded the Mirabal Sisters Foundation and subsequently the Mirabal Sisters Museum in 1994, in her native city of Salcedo. The museum is now a major tourist attraction. For a long time, she was known as the last surviving Mirabal sister. A title that many times sparked the obvious question of how she was able to survive, to which she would often reply, "so I could tell their story!"



***IN THE TIME OF THE BUTTERFLIES***  
**AGREE/DISAGREE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Before seeing the production, *In the Time of the Butterflies*, respond as to whether you agree or disagree with each statement by providing a check (✓) if you agree or an X if you disagree.

After seeing the play, examine your answers in the before column and respond again in the after column. Have any of your answers changed?

**Before**

**After**

	<b>I now have more of an appreciation of live theatre.</b>	
	<b>Does the novel/play change how you view “revolution”?</b>	
	<b>Does this story remind you of other stories about courage?</b>	
	<b>People are respected for having the kind courage as shared in the novel/play.</b>	
	<b>I would have the courage to do what the Mirabal sisters did.</b>	
	<b>Courage is something we can all have and give to others.</b>	
	<b>Life experience provides better education than reading books.</b>	
	<b>The Dominican Republic is a place I would like to visit.</b>	
	<b>Adapting a play from a novel is a very creative and important activity.</b>	



**The house in which the Mirabal sisters lived for the last ten months of their lives is now a museum in Salcedo, Dominican Republic**



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### THE RESOURCE GUIDE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_

What part/parts of this story did you enjoy when you were seeing the play?

What part/parts of this play confused you while reading or watching the play?

What part/parts of the stage version helped you understand the book?

What did you learn from reading or seeing this play?

Which character would you like to play?





Please go to our website: [www.primestage.com](http://www.primestage.com) to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

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Prime Stage constantly assesses the work provided by our education department. Your feedback is vital to our ongoing need for funding for this program. Please fill out the following forms and mail or email them to the address given below. Thank you.

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Which part(s) of the play and experience you find most helpful for you and your students?

Was the guide useful to you?

Which part(s) did you find most helpful?

How can we improve the theatrical for the future?

