



Presents

The Hero Twins: Blood Race

By Ramon Esquivel



Graphic Design by Brad Parquette



Spring 2018

Appalachian Young People's Theatre

Who we are and what we do.

"Theatre, the imagined and enacted world of human beings, is one of the primary ways children learn about life - about actions and consequences, about customs and beliefs, about others and themselves."

-National Theatre Standards for Arts Education

The Appalachian Young People's Theatre is committed to bringing high quality, low-cost live theatre experiences to young audiences in North Carolina and the surrounding region. Since 1972, the AYPT touring program has been a part of the Appalachian State University's Department of Theatre and Dance curriculum and community outreach.

The mission of Appalachian Young People's Theatre is to produce a variety of quality plays with educational value including fairy tales, folk tales, audience participation plays, and musicals primarily for elementary school audiences. AYPT's productions are seen by up to 6,500 young people each spring, largely in rural areas. The company consists of dedicated undergraduate students from the Department of Theatre and Dance at Appalachian under the direction of Professor Teresa Lee. If you would like more information or have questions concerning the play or this study guide, please let us know. Also letters and/or pictures and projects made by your students are always welcome and most appreciated!



Contact:

Teresa Lee

Director of Appalachian Young People's Theatre

Appalachian State University

Department of Theatre and Dance

Boone, NC 28608

Phone: (828) 262--6376

Email: leete@appstate.edu

A Note to Educators:

This performance study guide provides background information about the play and our company as well as activities, which can be integrated into your curriculum. These activities are intended to further the



students' appreciation of the play as well as introduce to both the teacher and the student the many ways in which drama can be incorporated into the classroom. We believe that this experience should encourage creativity, nourish an appreciation of live theatre, and allow a further insight into ourselves, resulting in the cultural enrichment of our young people. Since our audiences range in grade levels, we have included a variety of activities. We encourage you to use the information and age-appropriate activities in a way that will best suit the needs of your students. Feel free to photocopy any part of this booklet for educational purposes.

To learn more about the AYPT program, please visit:

<http://theatreanddance.appstate.edu/academics/special-programs/appalachian-young-peoples-theatre>

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This study guide was written and compiled by Kat Butte and Teresa Lee

The Hero Twins: Blood Race

by Ramón Esquivel

World Premiere Production

Play Synopsis

Competing in the ancient Blood Race, a stonecutter named Moth descends into the underworld to free her twin brother, Cricket, who is trapped there. To win the race, Moth must defeat the reigning champion, Jaguar, and overcome deadly obstacles. But the Blood Race is designed to give Jaguar many advantages, so Moth must rely on her intelligence and unconventional skills to defy the odds. When she learns the truth of the Blood Race and the society built upon it, Moth faces a choice: accept the way things are and have always been, or tear it all down and start anew. An original story inspired by classic Mayan mythology, *The Hero Twins: Blood Race* employs parkour, free running, capoeira, and other martial arts and dance forms to weave a tale of determination, discovery, and liberation.



The World of the Hero Twins

The Culture and Civilization

The Maya are an indigenous people of Mexico and Central America who have continuously inhabited the lands comprising modern-day Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco, and Chiapas in Mexico and southward through Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras. The Maya people refer to themselves by ethnicity and language bonds such as Quiche in the south or Yucatec in the north.

PERIODS:

The history of Mesoamerica is usually divided into specific periods which, taken together, reveal the development of culture in the region and, for the purposes of this definition, the emergence and cultivation of the Maya Civilization.



The Archaic Period: 7000-2000 BCE – During this time a hunter-gatherer culture began to cultivate crops such as maize, beans and other vegetables and the domestication of animals (most notably dogs and turkeys) and plants became widely practiced. The first villages of the region were established during this period which included sacred spots and temples dedicated to various gods. The villages excavated thus far are dated from 2000-1500 BCE.

ANCIENT CULTURE:

Mesoamerican cultures intertwined history and religion and saw history and religion as one and the same. In Mayan culture, the Hero Twins are key figures of the Popol Vuh, the ancient historical text. The first reference to the Hero Twins is believed to be in the ancient San Bartolo murals, which were painted around 100 BC. The Dresden codex (shown on the right) is the oldest surviving text from the Maya. The codex provided archaeologists with valuable insights into Mayan life, as it described religious rituals. It also helped with the translation of other Mayan and Mesoamerican texts.

About the Playwright



Ramón Esquivel is a Latino playwright for Theatre for Young Audiences. Esquivel earned a BA in History from Yale University and continued on to earn his MA in Educational Theatre from New York University. Throughout his career, Esquivel's plays have earned recognition within the theatre community. His play, *The Shahrazad Society*, garnered the 2014 Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award from the New England Theatre Conference. Ramon Esquivel currently resides in Ellensburg, Washington, where he serves as a Lecturer in the Theatre Department at Central Washington University and continues to write theatre that inspires empathy, connection, and belonging.

The World of the Hero Twins

Vocabulary

Calendar: a visual representation of time, shown in days, weeks, and months

Jade: a precious stone, green in color, used in Mesoamerican art and sculptures

Maize: an ancient form of corn, grown in South America

Memory Stone: a stone with stories, told through still images, carved into it

Mesoamerica: a region of southern Mexico and Central America where civilizations flourished before the Spanish came to America

Popol Vuh: translated as the *Book of the People*, the *Popol Vuh* is the Mayan religious and historical text, where the majority of stories about the Hero Twins are found

Priest: a religious leader, generally seen as a mouthpiece of the Gods

Stone-Cutter: a person who carves stone

Xibalba (shee-BALL-ba): the Mayan spirit realm

Glyph: a sculptured figure or relief drawing usually found from ancient civilizations; often used to tell pictographic stories.



Our Glyphs

For this show, we used traditional Mayan glyphs as inspiration to make our own glyphs!



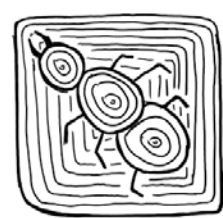
Moth



Cricket



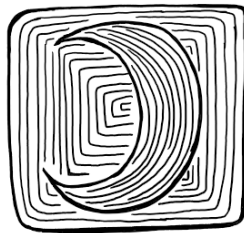
Mosquito



Cutter Ant



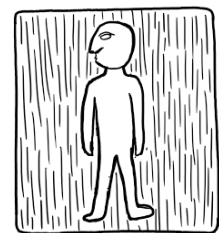
Sun



Moon



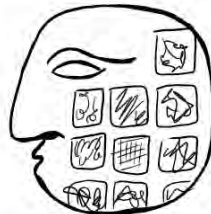
Rada



Kinze



Freed People



Learning



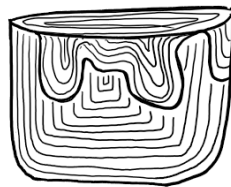
First We People



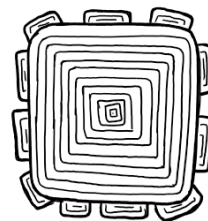
Give Learning



Heal Sun



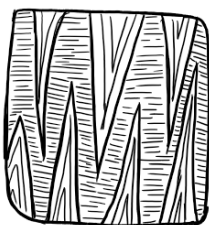
Sacred Blood



Sacred Circle



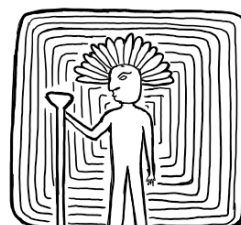
Run Together



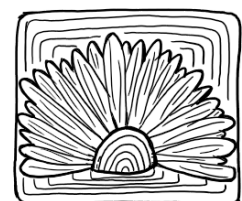
Underworld



Capture



Angry Lord Volta



Blood Crown

Before the Performance...

Theatre Vocabulary

- **Play:** a story portrayed through acting
- **Actor/ Actress:** a person who portrays characters in plays, movies, etc.
- **Character:** a make-believe person portrayed in the play
- **Protagonist:** the main character in a story
- **Antagonist:** a character in opposition of the main character
- **Theme:** the message of the story
- **Prop:** an object used by actors to make the play more realistic
- **Set:** scenery used in the play to convey location
- **Costume:** clothing worn by an actor to convey a character

Discussion Questions

- What is proper theatre etiquette and manners?
- How is watching live theatre different from watching a TV show or movie?
- How is watching live theatre different from reading a book?
- How can stories change when being adapted from myths?

Write

- Have you ever wanted to perform in a play? Write about what you would do if you were in a play. What kind of plays would you be in? What roles would you play?
- Choose an event in your life from this past week and write it as a story. Feel free to add details that would make the story more interesting.
- In the play, Cricket is doubtful that he will win the Blood Race. Write about a time you felt doubt or lacking in confidence about something.
- Moth must use her mind and physical skills to overcome many obstacles to win the race. Write a story about a time you overcame an obstacle to achieve something.

Perform

- Think about a story you know. How could you turn that into a play to show others? What would you need to show the story (actors, costume, set, props)?
- Theatre is another form of storytelling where the characters come to life before your very eyes. Pick your favorite story (or maybe a story written for the “write” section) and act it out for your classmates. To make it extra fun, try to include masks, costumes, props, some sound and specific voices or ways of speaking for each of the characters in your story.

After the Performance...

Discussion Questions

- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- What was your favorite scene from the play? Why?
- What are some of the things Moth did to win the race? Discuss the true meaning of working together to achieve something. What did it mean when she read, “We free us?”
- In the play, the ability to read and write is a luxury saved for the Privileged people. How did preventing people from reading and writing keep the Privileged people in charge for so long? How did having this knowledge make Moth stronger?
- In the American Declaration of Independence, the words “all men are created equal” appear. How do the themes in this story relate to that statement? Discuss historical examples of groups of people being treated unfairly. How did we respond as a society?
- Are there any instances you can think of where one person or a small group of people stood up to help make society better? How did they work to achieve their goal?

Write

- Write a letter to AYPT and let us know what you liked best about *The Hero Twins*. We would love to hear from you! Our address is at the beginning of this study guide.
- At the end of the story, Moth has a choice: she could either leave the Underworld and become the queen and lead the people, or she could stay in the Underworld and become the elemental spirit of stone. Why was the decision difficult for her? Write a short story about what you would do if you were in Moth’s position.
- Write a short story about the adventures of Moth and Cricket after they left the Underworld to spread the knowledge. Where did they go? What did they teach people? Did they face any challenges?

Perform

- With a partner, write your own script between two characters in the story. What do they say to each other? Add costumes, masks, props, or anything else to enhance the scene, and perform this script for your classmates.
- Each elemental spirit moves in a way that represents the element. Choose your own element and make a body movement to show that element.

Cross-Curricular Activities

Art:

- For this play, we created our own language of glyphs. Create a glyph that would represent your name.
- If you were an elemental spirit, what would you be the spirit of? Draw yourself as that elemental spirit.
- Imagine the other elemental caverns in the Underworld. Choose an element and design your own cavern.

Social Studies:

- The Maya had completely abandoned their cities by 900 AD, and historians have yet to know why. Research the end of the Mayan civilization. What are the theories? Which theory do you believe is the strongest?
- The Maya considered their history and their religion to be one and the same. Can you think of any other cultures that have an overlap between history and religion?

Science:

- In this play, the moon eclipses the sun for a solar eclipse. What is a solar eclipse? Have you ever seen a solar eclipse?
- The Blood Race takes place in a series of caves. Research actual caves. Find pictures. What is the environment like? What causes caves to be part of the earth's landscape? What living creatures, plants, etc. are found in caves? Are there caves in the area where you live?

Math:

- In the play, Moth makes a calendar for Cricket to count down the days to the Blood Race. Research the ancient Mayan calendar. What system did they use? Make your own calendar to count down to an event you're excited about!

Additional Resources

(Teachers, please review links before sending students to them. Some links may contain advertisements.)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_Hero_Twins

<http://stowawaymag.com/2014/09/01/the-maya-murals-of-san-bartolo/>

<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Le-Me/Mayan-Mythology.html#ixzz54GpdKuv7>

The Hero Twins Word Search

S R P C Q Z M M P P A X S A W G Z D X H P F Z M N
 A O X C M C B R E N Z P C R G X I M S C E X P O I
 D I H D V K I J A S I N F Y X P X H V D R Z E T F
 L R X S S V N U F R O I L I Q A E S L R F Q A H X
 S R Q N I F G P I U Y A R L X C Z U U N N W A I X
 O A J L Q I U T U K V E M W R A I E N P U P I Y K
 Z W E A Q X F R K H B M G E G A A J D I R B T V F
 T G U N D A V I D T D E P U R I M Y E H T I I N A
 E P B S N E Z L H X T S D W V I X Q R K G Q E N S
 P C U G L J S G G X P G K D H I C A W P E F U S L
 U K K C E F H R D W C E D L E X L A O Q C P T R T
 K Q Y M G T U N Q G N W Z G T E R L R J A G U A R
 N K W T C D F D U Y R M D Y E R R U L M K D Y N E
 K O P F L H F K K F H Q J P N S D F D L T E D Y H
 Q M X S A Y W U A M Y V D Q B S P Z S K M Y N E U
 D W V D K C A Y X Z K A R P S D E I D G E I D Z G
 S K J R B T F V T R X J U H T B L W L S D F Q L W
 N N P G B B W I O P H Z N H Y Z W V W C Z Z D A L
 D T K V Q J N W O N G F N C R V P X M W E J F G A
 X Q S O V T D H U M L Z E B B X N D E Y R T S K B
 P Q W P X K S P E W R A R F Z V K V A B H B A D C
 V N O F N L Y X F G G H J B F F A J I B E H H F W
 H E R O Y T E K C I R C C O R C E Y X K E N J M P
 T Q F F R S L K V P G P J V G A D H P W K O V G C
 C Q A I X X K A P Z A V I K E N H P H F K B U E B

Aqili
 Cave
 Cricket
 Eclipse
 Freed
 Hero

Iguana
 Jade
 Jaguar
 Maize
 Mesoamerica
 Moth

Priest
 Privilege
 Runner
 Spirit
 Underworld
 Warrior



Director's Note

First, let me say thank you for bringing the Appalachian Young People's Theatre to your school! Without you, the audience, there would be no live performance. I hope you enjoy our show!

This year we are particularly delighted to bring to you a WORLD PREMIERE production of one of the oldest stories ever told. Depictions of the Ancient Mayan myth of The Hero Twins can be found dating back to 200-900 AD.

The playwright, Ramon Esquivel, sets *The Hero Twins: Blood Race* in ancient times but blends contemporary themes of race and gender equality, the value of family and moral character of leadership. The play's protagonist, Moth, is literally caught between worlds. In her struggle to win the race for her people, she calls on strengths within herself she didn't know she had. Hers is a Hero's Journey—a coming of age story that all young people can identify with. For these and many other reasons, I was drawn to this new play and embarked on my own journey to produce it for AYPT audiences.

Esquivel's play speaks to what it means to transcend class barriers and the station of your birth to become your best self, in spite of the stories others may tell you about what you "should" be. Born to a Mexican mother and an American father of Spanish and Yaqui Indian heritage, Esquivel knows what it means to live between worlds. He writes in his artist statement, "My stories are about the search for belonging. They are about vulnerability. Most of all, my stories are about conflict between people who love each other. I hope my stories inspire empathy, connection, and wisdom—and that they make audiences laugh along the way."

I am both proud and humbled to bring *The Hero Twins: Blood Race* to life for audiences for the first time. Traditional fairy and folk tales spark the imagination and help us make meaning of our lives, but in myths we find heroism, challenges, acts of bravery and sacrifice. It is exciting to bring such an ancient story to life through the voice of a contemporary Latino playwright, if for no other reason, to remind us that we need all voices and stories from many different backgrounds. But more importantly, for the inspiration the play leaves us with. When we work together and rely on each other, we discover that we are not "privileged people" or "freed people," only "we people."

Thank you for joining us on our hero's adventure! And again, thank you for keeping theatre alive in our schools!

Teresa Lee
Director, AYPT

March is Theatre In Our Schools Month!

The American Alliance for Theatre and Education's Theatre In Our Schools (TIOS) campaign is designed to help promote theatre for youth at all levels all across America. Public Relations, advertising and publicity are used in every aspect of life to promote ideas and to impact people. The Theatre In Our Schools campaign is meant to use all of these means to positively affect Theatre In Our Schools by making the various publics aware of the positive impact that theatre has in our schools. Visit AATE online at: <http://www.aate.com/>



10 Simple Ways to Incorporate Theatre into Your Classroom

Integrating theatre into your classroom can be a great way to get your students more engaged in the curriculum and build teamwork and community in your classroom. If the idea seems a bit daunting, remember that theatre doesn't have to mean putting on a play; here are some activities you can use to bring elements of theatre into your classroom and even into other subject areas! Click on the items below for more detailed explanations and to help determine which activities are most appropriate for your class. Don't forget to make use of the many resources available to help you provide quality drama experiences to your students.

1. Encourage Creative Project Options.
2. Play Classroom Charades.
3. Read a relevant play.
4. Give oral reports in character.
5. Remember that drama isn't just acting – use sound, lighting, or costumes in your classroom.
6. Assign letter or journal writing from the perspective of a character or historical figure.
7. Use non-verbal teamwork activities to form project groups or as part of a lesson.
8. Plan an Immersion Day when students can dress and act like they are immersed in a specified story, place, time or event.
9. Create a "tableau" or human sculpture of an important event or moment in literature or history.
10. Create and perform a Movie Preview about a topic or event.



Presents

The Hero Twins: Blood Race

By Ramón Esquivel

Spring 2018

CAST

Moth.....Emma Harkins
Cricket/Aqili.....Daniel Herman
Jaguar.....Cameron Underwood
Iguana.....Mary Sass
Priest/Razor Warrior.....Elizabeth Mason Moore
Maqab.....Marissa Plondke
Musician.....Ian Lee

Directed by

Teresa Lee

Assistant Director: Eileen Dixon

Stage Manager: Maddie Coggin

Tour Manager: Kat Butte

Choreographer: Sherone Price

Costumes Designed by Jennifer Ackland

Produced by Special Arrangement with

Ramon Esquivel

Special thanks to Elaine Hartley, Sherone Price, Matt Tyson, Mike Helms