

pilot theatre

yorktheatre
royal

UNICORN

LOOKING FOR JUJU

by Anne Cassidy

adapted for the stage and
directed by Marcus Romer

*Winner of the 2004
Booktrust Teenage
Book Award*

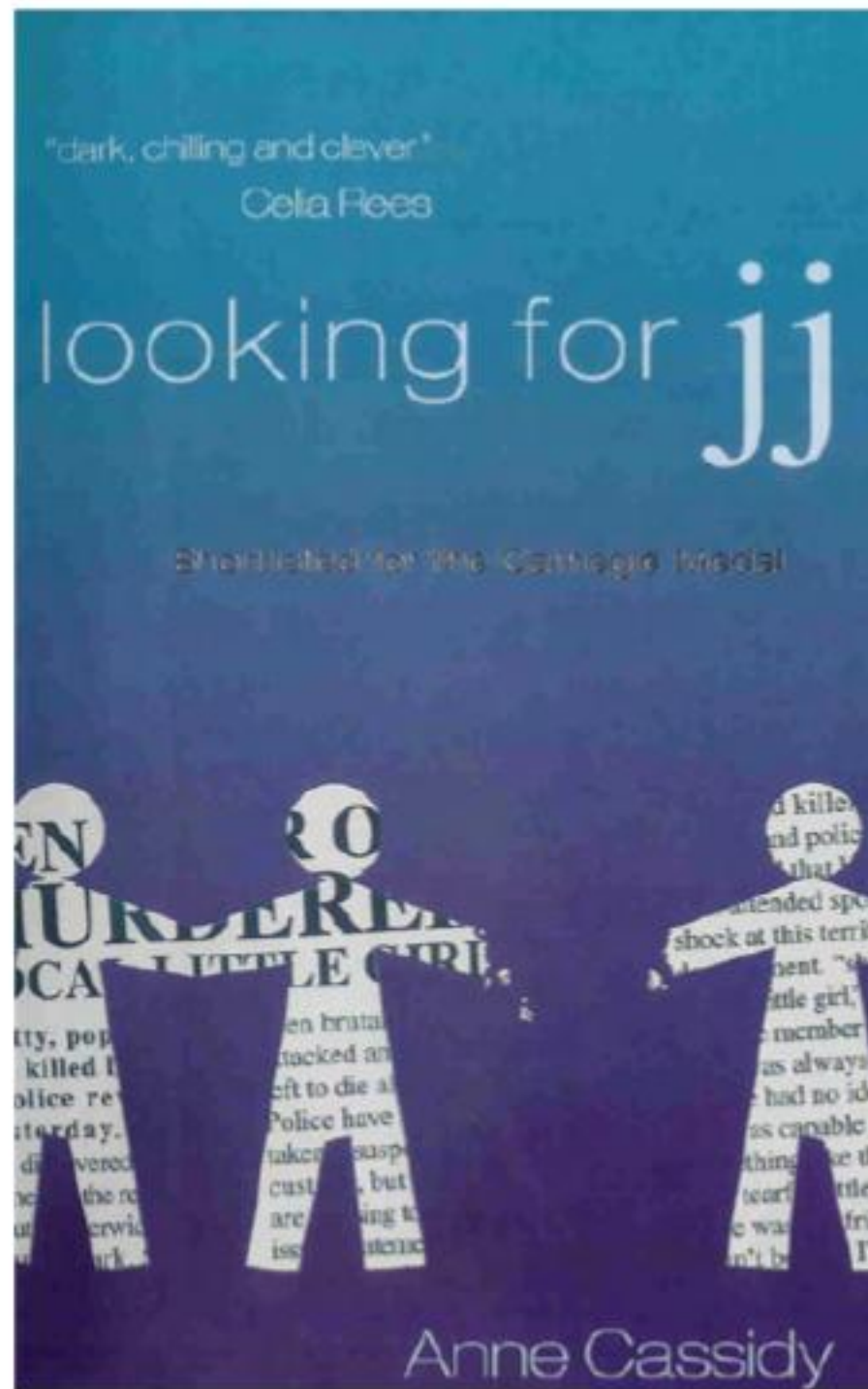


Education Resource Pack

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Introduction



Welcome to the world premiere of Anne Cassidy's brilliant and award winning novel, adapted by Marcus Romer, co-produced by Pilot Theatre in partnership with Unicorn Theatre, London and York Theatre Royal.

Promotional Preview on YouTube

If you would like to see a preview, go to :

<http://tinyurl.com/y55sgp>

Anne Cassidy specialises in crime stories and thrillers for teenage readers. She has written at least forty books. **Looking for JJ** was published in 2004 and won the Booktrust Teenage Prize. It was also shortlisted for the Whitbread Children's Book Award.

“three children walked away from the cottages on the edge of the town...later that day only two of them came back”

Looking for JJ explores the story of a child who commits murder. On her release she is given a new identity and a fresh start, but the past catches up with her and soon everyone is looking for JJ.

Alice Tully tells the story on her blog, and like many teenagers, she's got her own MySpace page at: <http://www.myspace.com/lookingforjj>

You can check out Alice Tully's Blog - which is the script in development - www.lookingforjj.com

This education pack offers resources that give an insight into the production and that explore the themes of the play including responsibility, revenge and the wider context of identity and the transition to adulthood. These pages can be incorporated into your own schemes of work in English and Media Studies, Drama/Performing Arts, PSHE and Citizenship. The show also has a strong ICT base and is an excellent opportunity to explore the internet and new technology through the excitement and spectacle of live theatre.

In order to offer a unique window on the process of creating **Pilot Theatre's** tour of **Looking for JJ**, this pack will be updated during the rehearsal process and new pages will be available in September.

Helen Cadbury
July 2007

ABOUT PILOT

In the Beginning

Pilot Theatre is a national touring theatre company based in Yorkshire. Launched in 1981 by a group of students from Bretton Hall College, the Company worked throughout the 1980s as a devising collective responding reactively to requests for work. The projects that followed ranged from play-scheme activities to workshop sessions to touring issue based work in schools.

In 1994, the company appointed a new Artistic Director, Marcus Romer, and Pilot developed its touring circuit nationally. *Lord of the Flies*, our first mid scale touring project reached an audience of 40,000 on its first tour. The company began a series of important collaborations with nationally significant venues, such as York Theatre Royal and the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith,

Shows

Since then productions have included *Rumble Fish*, *Unsuitable Girls*, *Mirad - A Boy from Bosnia*, *Road*, *Kiss of a Spiderwoman*, *The Tale of Teeka*, *Beautiful Thing*, *a/s/l? age/sex/location*, *Bloodtide*, *Lord of the Flies* and *East is East*. Pilot also became a key member of Magic Net, the European network of theatre makers.

25th Birthday

In 2006, we celebrated our 25th anniversary with a seven month tour of Roy Williams' *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads*, and during this time we also produced Roald Dahl's *The Twits*, and John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*.

Bollywood and Beyond...

On June 9th 2007, Pilot Theatre created the Opening Sequence at the prestigious International Indian Film Awards Ceremony at Sheffield Arena, with an audience of 15,000 and a Global TV audience of 500 million. You can view it on YouTube. This year we collaborated with Blink Media in an interactive SMS campaign devised to encourage younger audience members to respond to the production and to ask questions of the team behind it. We also have a permanent presence on YouTube, where media clips from present and past productions as well as trailers for future work are available as free downloads.

Over the coming year Pilot's commitment to new writing and new technologies will extend to a number of projects, including *Catcher in Their Eye* by Richard Hurford. Now in script development, sections of the script will be filmed and made available online for comment: feedback will then be incorporated into the further development of the piece thereby giving our audience ownership and a creative input into our work. As the year's programme progresses more video podcasts will be made available to give an insight into life backstage, and Pilot will also reach more school and youth group audiences for in depth discussions via online chat facilities on Pilot's website.

Director's Vision

Interview With Marcus Romer



What is the biggest challenge adapting Anne Cassidy's novel?

The book doesn't give it all away at once so I want to make sure the characters have a

journey. The relationship with the audience is also very important. I had thought of the story being written as a blog and the big question was: who was writing? Is it Kate Rickman or Alice Tully – or is it Kate writing as Alice, who in fact does not exist. The idea of identity was one we explored in Richard Hurford's play *a/s/l?*, which we did four years ago. Again we are looking at internet identity here, but also at new or hidden identities in real life.

Are there other themes in this play that are typical of Pilot's work?

Definitely, I've realised how much of our work touches on loss of childhood innocence and the transition to adulthood. Those themes were right there when I wrote *Out of Their Heads* and *Taken Without Consent* in the 1990s and they are central to *Lord of the Flies*, *Rumblefish*, *Beautiful Thing*, *a/s/l?* and, more recently, Roy Williams' play *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads* which we toured last year.

How will you use projection in this production?

I'm interested in Tracy Emin's monoprint work, she draws on paper in inks, then places another piece of paper on top and pulls it away. The reverse looks like water. I want to get the idea of a stain on the set that won't wash away. I've been talking to our AV designer Arnim, his wife is a consultant child psychiatrist and he is really interested in the

Life is messy, however much we try to control everything, the outside gets in and the mess is always there

way children use visual language, including the simple but evocative drawings which children produce in therapy. We could imagine that JJ has been asked to tell her story in pictures too. We are also interested in the theatricalisation of online space such as MySpace, it's not about having a huge computer screen on stage but more about the landscape of this girl's mind. Her university room is a blank space, other people have been there before her, but she is a new person in that space. She is trying to make sense of it in her blog and that anonymous writing is cathartic – it helps her get something out of her system.

Will anyone see her blog?

In the fictional world of the play? Who knows? I don't think it is important whether she ever sends it or posts it online, for the character it is the act of writing which is important. For me, it has been really exciting developing the script online and posting it as Alice Tully's blog. She has her own page on the real MySpace, which was recently redesigned for us by a fifteen year old, so it feels spot on.

Was it hard to cast the play?

We put the casting breakdown on our website, so actors could see for themselves what we were looking for and could read the script online. I was amazed by the quality of actors we saw and I'm really pleased to have such a talented cast on board.



Pilot welcomes back

Suzann McLean, who was Assistant Director for Pilot's tour of *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads*, in which she played the part of Sharon.

In *LOOKING FOR JJ* she will play Rosie, Alice's social worker, and she will once again take on the role of Assistant Director

Watch This Space

In September, more pages will be added to this pack with news of the rehearsal process

THE CAST



Carol/Jill/Sara
MELANIE ASH



Frankie/Steve/
Mr Cottis
DAVOOD
GAHDAMI



JJ/Alice/Kate
CHRISTINA BAILLY



Michelle
LOUISE
KEMPTON



Lucy
ROCHELLE GADD



Rosie
SUZANN
MCLEAN

PRODUCTION TEAM

Directed by Marcus Romer
Designed by Laura McEwen
Lighting by James Farncombe
Music by Sandy Nuttgens
AV Design by Arnim Friess
Production Manager Mark Beasley
Production Manager
for York Theatre Royal Jude Gloke

PILOT TEAM

Artistic Director Marcus Romer
Administrative Producer Amanda Smith
Administrator Sarah Seddon
Assistant Administrator Katie Fathers

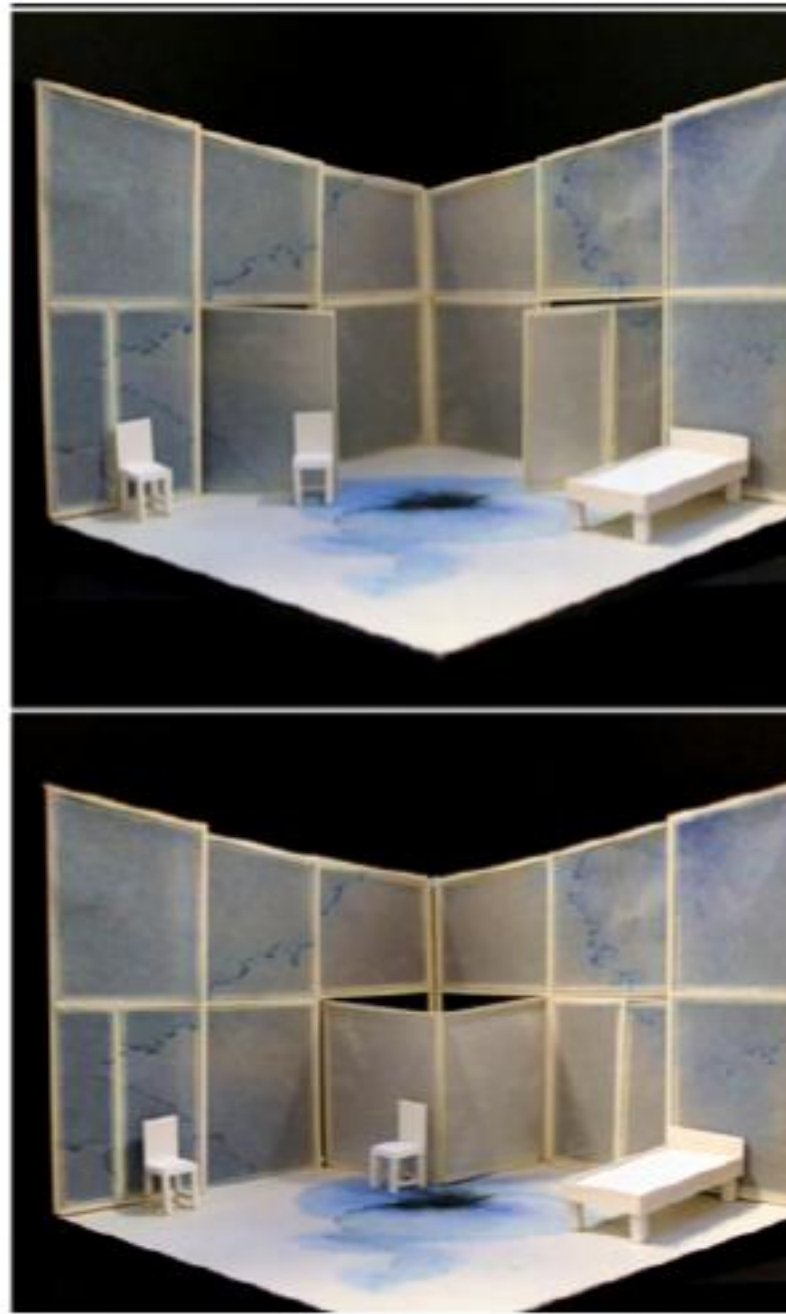
Design Concept

Laura McEwen

The idea is to create a white space; it is nowhere specific, an empty room or somewhere in cyberspace. It is a box containing Alice, but it also has the ability to open up or for areas to be closed off. Across the stage there is a blue stain, suggesting the stain of the crime that cannot be washed away. It is always there. We hope to use lighting to emphasise it and show it spreading as the past is revealed, like a flower opening. There are various configurations of the book flats on each side of the stage with doors for entrances and exits. They can open out or close up the space like a cube. They are covered with gauze so that images can be projected on to them or someone standing behind can be revealed by lighting changes. At different points in the story



The set opens out to show the cyclorama and the dark muddy edge of Berwick Water



The model shows different configurations of the side flats and the blue stain across the floor

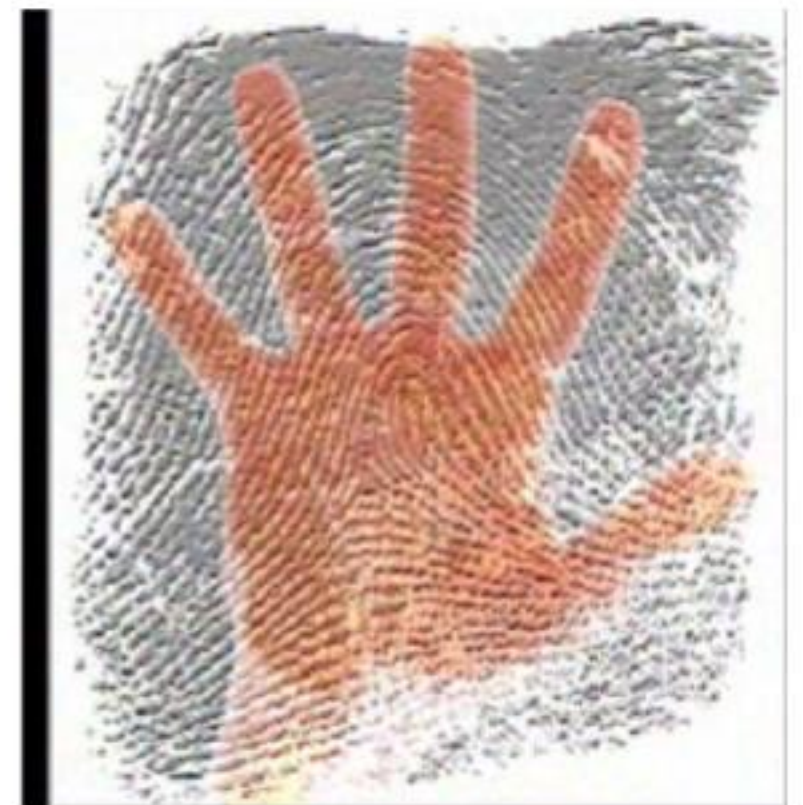
we can create the woods by projecting trees or emphasise the pressure Alice is under by projecting words from the newspaper reports. I'm working closely with Arnim, our AV designer on these details.

The cyclorama will also have the effect of water playing across it; we'll experiment with lighting or projection and decide which works best. When we see the place where the murder took place the whole back area opens out and instead of the clean white space, we see a muddy, wet unclean world. There is the idea that horrible things can happen in beautiful places. Muddy handprints are very evocative and if possible I would like real water and mud, but we'll have to see what is practical!

I really like the work of the children's illustrator, Dave McKean, who did *The Wolves in the Walls* and *The Day I*

Swapped My Dad For Two Goldfish. He uses inky lines and washes of colour to very good effect. It reminded me of the idea of child's drawings. Marcus and I have talked about the way we see images of the events in Alice's life. We didn't think it would be right to show photographic images of Carol in glamour wear but we can see it as a child might have drawn it. We can also create a quality of image that is consistent whether it is a photograph, drawing or lighting effect; they can all equally have that colour wash effect.

The design process is a really close collaboration between Marcus, Arnim, James the lighting designer and me. Practical and creative considerations have to go hand in hand.



Technical Challenges fly on the wall at a production meeting



As Laura explains her design ideas and how the set will be used, James considers the lighting design and Mark works out what will be physically possible in each venue. Arnim Friess, who is designing the video projections, is in another city, but he has shared ideas with Marcus and Laura before the meeting and is online to answer any questions. The big challenge for James is how to light a mainly white set without creating too many shadows. Normally he would light from the side, but the set is closed in with flats. The lighting has to be very carefully balanced with the projection, one can easily dominate the other, either making the lighting effects indistinct or bleaching out the projection image, especially where the lighting might bounce off the white floor onto the screens. The other question is where to site the projector. Hanging it front of house, possibly from the circle, will put it at a different distance from the stage in each venue. Arnim suggests putting two projectors placed high downstage left and right. He will liaise closely with composer Sandy Nuttgens to make sure the music and the projections work together.

Q: When you watch the show, can you see how the team solved their technical challenges?

production meeting (above) with:
(right to left)
Laura McEwen
Mark Beasley
Marcus Romer
James Farncombe

Draft of Arnim's AV cue sheet (below)

page	what	no #
3	intro collection of images open sequence KATE, wakes up at the end over talking, pictures of her things, actor Frankie boyfriend	1-5 continues flow imagery, music
4	Mike, body parts, hands in camera, blurred doesn't like photo taken,	
4	pictures of Frankie myspace style	
	images of Gale close ups, helps in place	
5	Frankie bleed through in actor	
5	scene proper, projection as backdrop blend with fx	
7	back in time - jag back through last: w/pe (run into run backwards) into bedroom - project practical door or venetian blinds - earbuds - rosie entry real	trans music readm
8	headlines jennifer jones, real person voice through news graphic	
9-10	Man as AV, close ups of mouth, coffee cup, hands making notes, grubby, fly on wall	
10	with Frankie cut in indoors	trans music readm
	than scene	
11	handwritten names, doodles, white table - crash cutlery slowmo	
12	low backdropping room	
13	Interior secure unit, clean, efficient, clinical	sound altcen controlled environment
14	Rosie home, same as page 5	

COSTUME



Who's Who?

In our production of Looking for JJ we have six actors playing twelve parts.

The costume designs have to make it very clear who is who. There are also points in the script which demand very quick changes.

Above you can see Laura McEwen's costume drawings. These will be given to the wardrobe department, who will find or make clothes to fit each actor, following Laura's designs.

In rehearsal, as the characters develop, Marcus or the actors may suggest changes and adaptations to these original ideas.

Q: Can you match the character to their costume?

Which characters do you think might be doubled?

- Alice - 18 (also at 11)
- Rosie - social worker
- Michelle - 11
- Lucy - 10
- Frankie (m) - 19, Alice's boyfriend
- Sophie - 10, Frankie's sister
- Carol - model, Alice's mum, 20s to late 30s
- Jill - probation officer
- Sara - a teacher
- Mr Cottis - sleazy amateur film maker
- Steve - Lucy's tough brother
- Lindsay- university student

Word Stimulus Improvisation preparatory workshop

DRAMA ENGLISH

Objective

To introduce the atmosphere of the play by enabling the students to engage creatively with the text. By creating their own work, they will have points of identification with the story when they see it. If students have read the book, they will have an idea of the story, in which case the focus of their improvisations will be on how to adapt the story for the stage, what techniques do they know to bring it to life? (e.g. direct address, voice over, flashback.)

Resources

- Words from the script (below). Cut them out and put them in a hat (or similar lucky dip vessel). There are enough for 8 groups.
- Interactive whiteboard and internet connection.

What to Do

In groups of four or five, students should plan, prepare and perform their own short, improvised scene with the following instructions:

- **Characters:** in the scene there are three friends, (they can also invent additional characters but no extra friends).
- **Words:** each group picks three words out of the hat, they must include these words in their scene, at the beginning, middle and end.
- **Setting:** all groups have the same setting: read this out to them before they begin and display it on a whiteboard/flipchart as a reminder -

On the edge of a small town, ...three children walk away from a row of cottages, towards a man-made lake...

Perform

When everyone has performed their scenes and compared the different stories they have created, watch the promotional video for **Looking For JJ** which you will find at <http://tinyurl.com/y55sgp>. Discuss the similarities and differences with their own scenes. What does the promotional video make them think/feel about the production they are going to see?

ENLARGE
these words on a photocopier before cutting them out

get away from her	pink trainer	ginger hair	reservoir	sorry
splashing	scary eyes	wet	suitcase at the bottom of the stairs	missing
water rippling	laptop	innocence	the door ajar	inside my head
party dress with trainers	Macy fashion doll	photographs	mud	normal
model	newspapers	no threat	wrapped up in a duvet	things happen

Forgiveness or Revenge

follow up discussion

CITIZENSHIP DRAMA RE HISTORY

“Like any other offender Jennifer Jones has been carefully vetted. It was the considered opinion of all concerned that she poses no threat to children and accordingly she was released under license and is currently living in a safe environment. Any talk of revenge or vigilante action is wholly inappropriate and will be dealt with in the most rigorous manner” Looking for JJ

“I’d written lots of books where there were murders and examined the grief of those left behind. This time I looked at it the other way round and I was disturbed by the conclusions I came to. Is it possible to forgive? Could I do that if the victim had been in my own family?” Anne Cassidy

Questions for Discussion or Writing

- What is a vigilante?
- Why is it important that Jennifer’s identity and whereabouts are kept secret?
- Do you think Jennifer Jones can be forgiven?
- Are there any crimes which you think are unforgivable?

Drama Activity

1. Opinion Line. The whole group lines up across the room to show whether they think JJ could be forgiven: if you strongly agree, stand on the left, if you strongly disagree, stand on the right, all variations or degrees of uncertainty should stand in between and spokespeople from each side should try to persuade the ones in the middle to join their end of the line.
2. Put yourself in Frankie’s shoes. How would you feel if you hadn’t been told the truth about the past of someone you love? Create a scene where you find out their secret. You could play this as Frankie or invent a different character with their own story. How does your scene end? Is your character able to forgive?

Extension Activity

Research the life of one of the three people below. Present back to the class and have a whole class discussion about: what they have in common; what are the different circumstances of their lives; how did they influence others?

1. The American writer and poet, **Maya Angelou**, was neglected by her mother and this led to her mother’s boyfriend sexually abusing her. Year later, when her mother died she was asked if she forgave her. She said: “Yes, I can forgive her. That does not mean I condone the way she behaved but I understand the situation she was in, that is forgiveness.”
2. In 1995 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in South Africa to enable the victims and perpetrators of apartheid to seek both justice and amnesty. It was established by **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, who saw the need for forgiveness and reconciliation so that the country could move forward without bloodshed.
3. **Gordon Wilson** campaigned for Peace in Northern Ireland, after he and his daughter Marie were caught by an IRA bomb at the Remembrance Day Parade at Enniskillen. Wilson described his last conversation with his dying daughter, in the rubble of the bomb blast. “She held my hand tightly, and gripped me as hard as she could. She said, ‘Daddy, I love you very much.’ Those were her exact words to me, and those were the last words I ever heard her say.” Wilson went on to add, “But I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life... She’s dead. She’s in heaven and we shall meet again. I will pray for these men tonight and every night.”

Looking for JJ My Space Page

www.myspace.com/lookingforjj Page 1 of 1


Recommended Links

- [Johnny Depp Posters](#)
Shop Online At Play.com Free Delivery Order Now!
www.play.com
- [La Traviata Theatre Tix](#)
La Traviata theatre tickets sale UK. Buy/let tickets safely! Guaranteed
www.staggo.co.uk
- [Johnny Depp Naked](#)
New Photos of Johnny Depp! New info about Johnny Depp
www.entertainmentmag.com
- [Dream Theater](#)
Tickets available now for all dates and venues. buy securely
www.londontokeshop.co.uk

MySpace

Home | Browse | Search | Invite | Film | Mail | Blog | Favourites | Forum | Groups | Events | Videos | Music | Comedy | Classifieds

Alice Tully - Pilot Theatre



"You can't change what happened...no matter how much you think of it or cry..."

Female
18 years old
East
United Kingdom

Last Login:
01/07/2007

[View My: Pics | Videos](#)

Contacting Alice Tully - Pilot Theatre

- [Send Message](#)
- [Convert to Friend](#)
- [Add to Friends](#)
- [Add to Favorites](#)
- [Instant Message](#)
- [Block User](#)
- [Add to Group](#)
- [Rank User](#)

MySpace URL:
<http://www.myspace.com/lookingforjj>

Monster Hospital
MSTRKRFT RMXS +add+
+view+

Alice Tully - Pilot Theatre's Interests

General
I still treasure my Macy - she was there to take my through the hard times, and help me survive. If ever there was a friend indeed, it's macy - who helps those in need. I also enjoy a spot of sport - ping pong anyone? It's where it's at. Le ping pong! I'm interested in music, and films, and hot chocolate with marshmallows, while watching a good chick flick (on my new laptop) curled up in bed - like any normal girl right?!! Macy xxxxxx

Music
Sometimes I wish I could give my legacy a good remix - but you can't do that can you? You can't take your life and add in some mellow bits and some ravin action like you can a killer canadian tune. Listen to this - a sound and a half, if ever there was one. I like tuning into radio 1 in the

Alice Tully - Pilot Theatre is in your extended network

Alice Tully - Pilot Theatre's Latest Blog Entry [[Subscribe to this Blog](#)]

First draft final copy ([view more](#))

final section ([view more](#))

confession time ([view more](#))

the phone call ([view more](#))

coming together ([view more](#))


[[View All Blog Entries](#)]

Alice Tully - Pilot Theatre's Blurbs

About me:

You are **Hulk**

Hulk	80%	You are a wanderer with amazing strength.
Batman	70%	
Robin	69%	
Spider-Man	60%	
Green Lantern	60%	
Supergirl	60%	
Iron Man	55%	
The Flash	55%	
Wonder Woman	50%	
Superman	40%	
Catwoman	20%	



*** This is the Pilot Theatre site for our production of Looking For JJ. We are co-producing this with York Theatre Royal and Unicorn Theatre. The novel is by Anne Cassidy and it is being adapted for the stage by Marcus Romer, Artistic Director of Pilot Theatre. It is written by the fictional character of Alice Tully. The blog contains script extracts and will grow as the project proceeds! There are links to Pilot Theatre and Anne Cassidy below where you can find out more information! *** Well you found me or have you? Alice Tully is the name. This is my own space where I can make sense of all the craziness that has gone on. As for Sara well she just did it for me. As I can't see Rosie anymore!! So well thanks xx But hey I ave a new laptop so that's really awesome :D AND I can do MYspace in MYroom in MYtime!!!! lol So check out my page and please leave me a msg or send me a pic before you go!! That would be cool as. It is going to grow and get more info so here goes...looking fwd to speakin to ya! Hey, check out Nev's song here called 'Jennifer Jones'. How wild is that???? Eh eh? Hey for news check out www.lookingforjj.com or www.annecassidy.com.

For the script and its progress go straight to the Pilot Theatre site which is www.pilot-theatre.com and leave your comments on the new [Script Page](#)

Rights and Responsibilities follow up discussion

PSHE CITIZENSHIP IT

In Anne Cassidy's novel, and in the play, JJ knows she has done a terrible thing and she takes responsibility for her actions. But who was responsible for JJ?

In a group read the script extract on the following page and then look at the questions below. Write or discuss your answers.

Q : In what ways did Carol put JJ at risk?

Q: Do you think Carol's behaviour could be described as child abuse?

Q: What could Carol have done differently?

If you want more information about definitions of abuse or neglect and what rights a child has, go to:

www.childline.org.uk

After watching the play, write down the names of the other characters who let JJ down. Compare your list with a partner.

What about the other children, Lucy and Michelle? Who was responsible for them?

“Children have the right to LIFE and the best chance to develop fully”

Article 6 of the UN Convention

CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

At what age are you considered responsible for committing a crime?

After what age does the law consider you fully responsible for your actions in the same way as an adult?

At what age would you serve a sentence in an adult prison?

Answers on the Further Resources page of this pack.

ROLE PLAY

Re-create the case conference which would have considered JJ's release. Include the following:

- JJ's social worker
- A solicitor representing Michelle's family
- A probation officer
- A teacher who knows JJ
- A police officer



If you are concerned that a child or young person may be at risk or want to talk to someone about a situation you are in, both the numbers below are staffed 24 hours a day

ChildLine:
Freephone:
0800 1111

NSPCC
Freephone:
0808 800 5000

TEXT RESOURCE

The Rights of a Child

Voice Did your mum abuse you?

Alice No

Carol Just need to get some more modelling work, you know

Voice Did she hit you?

Alice No

Carol All I need is to get my foot back in the door

Voice Did she hurt you?

Alice No...well not on the outside

Voice What about all the men she knew?

Voice Did any of them touch you?

Alice No

Carol Just for a while

Alice I don't want you to go

Carol Well you'll need to stay here

Alice On my own

Carol You're a big girl now aren't you?

Alice Am I allowed to watch a video?

Carol Now don't touch anything you shouldn't. OK? Look I'll have to run

Alice Just those days she went got longer

Carol I'll be back in the morning...

Alice ... she simply deserted her...

The Power of the Press

English Media Studies Drama

1. The Smile

Themes

Identity, representation, newspapers.

Objective

To explore how words affect the way we look at pictures.

Resources

On the following page are 3 pairs of cards showing identical pictures with different headlines. Reproduce as many cards as you need, one per small group

What to do

1. Give each small group one picture card.
2. Ask them to create a character profile for this person: name, age, likes, dislikes, favourite music.
3. Then ask them to create a story about what has happened to this person leading up to having their picture in the paper (either written or improvised.)
4. Display the pictures and their profiles. Compare the matching pictures and their opposite profiles.
5. Share the stories either by peer reading or performance.
6. Discuss: What message is in the picture and what message is in the words? What do you see in a smile?

“See the grainy picture..see the headline, it's all about me. In the papers”
Alice

2. Tabloids and Broadsheets

Objective

To compare different newspaper styles and readerships.

Resources

Several front pages of newspapers. Half the class should have tabloids, half broadsheets.

What to do

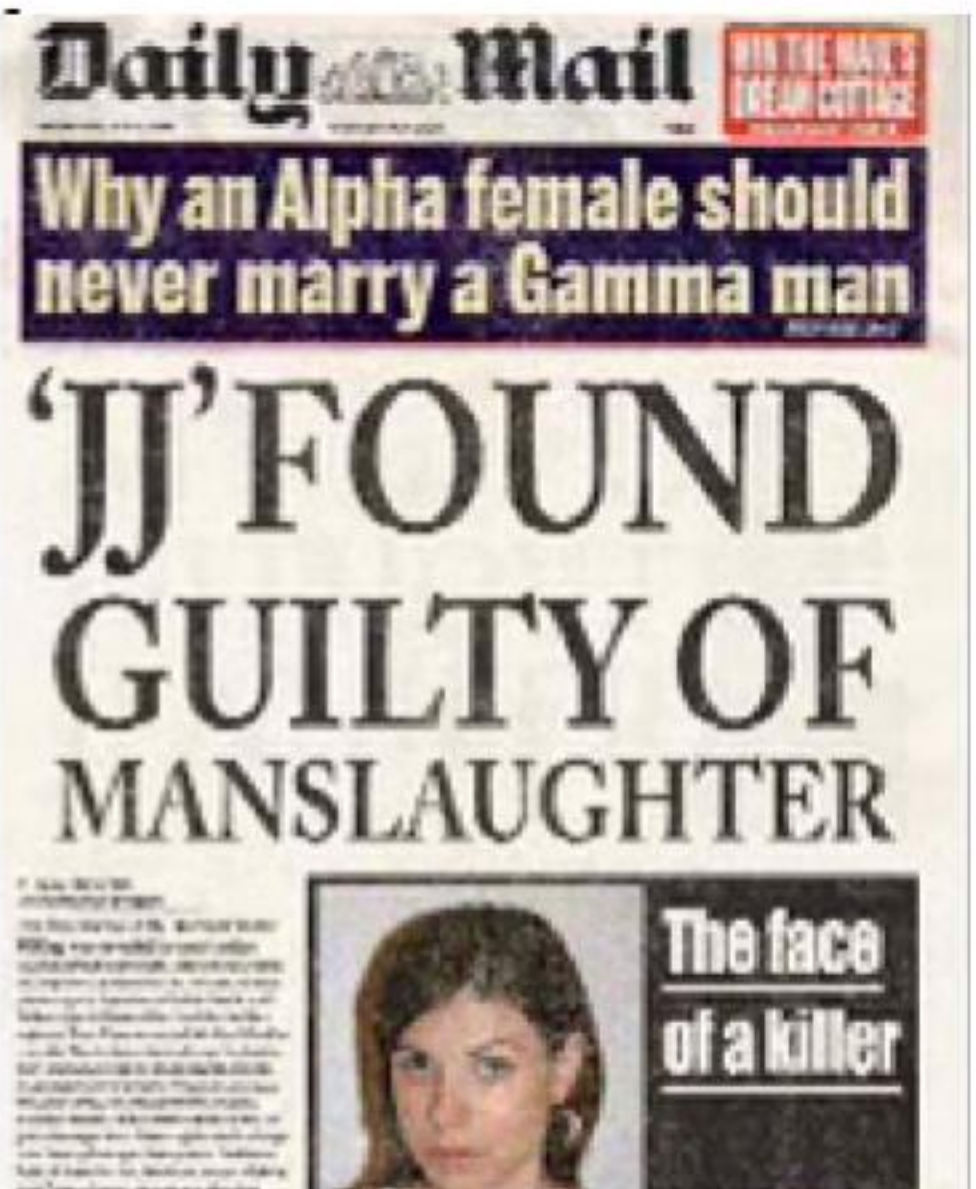
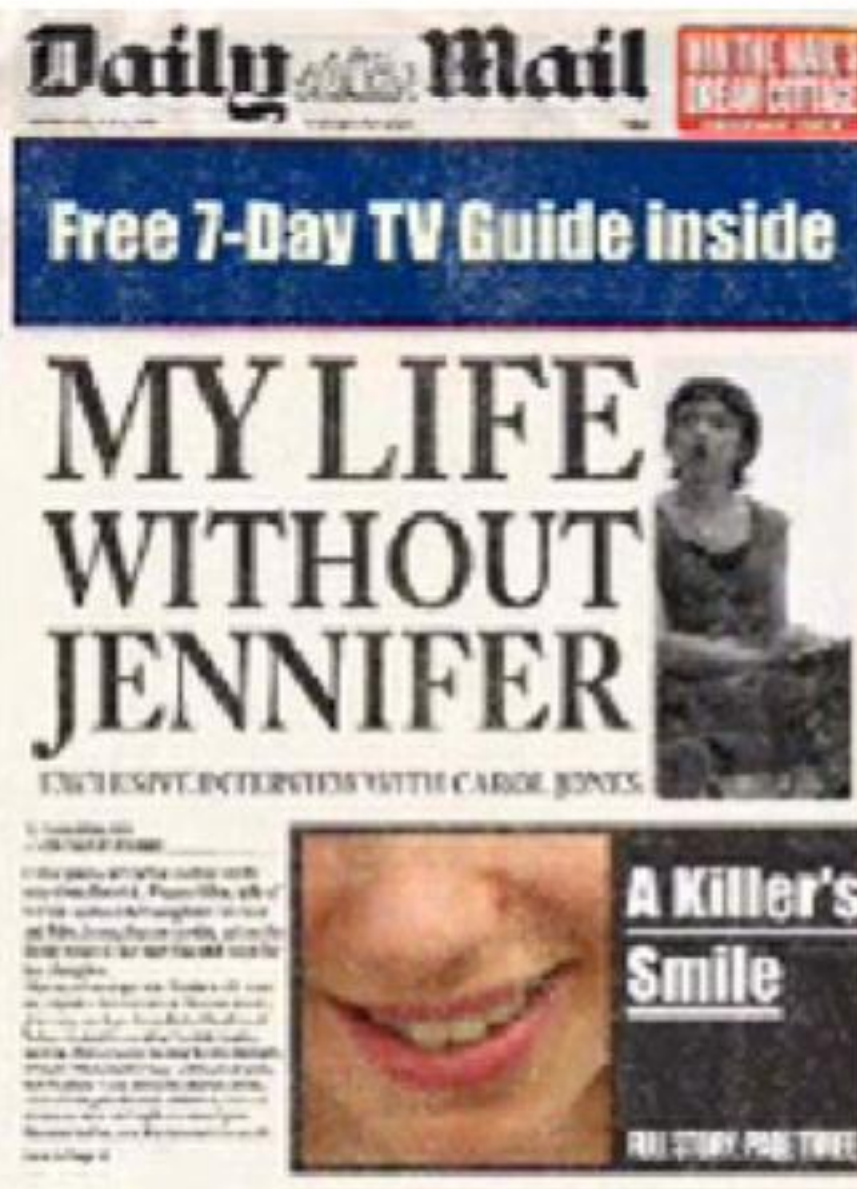
Identify the following parts of the front page, perhaps circling them in pencil:

- main news story
- masthead (block with paper's name)
- second news story
- plugs (information about what's inside)
- advertisements

Then measure to see how much space each takes up. What is the size of the lettering? What is the size of the pictures? How long does it take to read the news stories?

In pairs, compare one tabloid and one broadsheet. What do your results tell you about the newspaper and its intended readers?

Images of newspaper mock-ups from the promotional video for Looking for JJ on YouTube



The Smile: Resources

THE DAILY SHOCK

SMILE OF A KILLER



THE DAILY SHOCK

SMILE OF A KILLER



THE DAILY SHOCK

SMILE OF AN ANGEL



THE DAILY SHOCK

SMILE OF AN ANGEL



THE DAILY SHOCK

SMILE OF AN ANGEL



THE DAILY SHOCK

SMILE OF A KILLER



FURTHER RESOURCES

Books

Looking For JJ by Anne Cassidy
published by Scholastic Books,
(paperback 2005)

You by Sandra Glover, (Corgi
2005) a story about a girl who kills

*The Day I Swapped My Dad For
Two Goldfish* by Neil Gaiman and
Dave McKean
(hardcover, Bloomsbury, 2004)

The Wolves in the Walls by Neil
Gaiman and Dave McKean
(paperback, Bloomsbury 2004)

Other titles by Anne Cassidy include:
Love Letters, Missing Judy, Tough Love

Internet Resources

To find out more about Anne Cassidy -
www.annecassidy.com
www.contemporarywriters.com
www.scholastic.co.uk/authors_a-cassidy

Pilot Theatre Company
www.pilot-theatre.com

Childline
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC
www.nspcc.org.uk

Information on young people's rights and
criminal responsibility:
www.youthinformation.com

Answers to questions on page 14
ten, fourteen, eighteen.

SEE PILOT THEATRE'S
PRODUCTION OF LOOKING FOR JJ
AT:

York Theatre Royal
28 September -6 October
01904 623568
www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk

Palace Theatre Southend
9 - 13 October
01702 351135
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EDUCATION EXTRA

October 2007



Update to the Education Pack
rehearsal shots, actor interview,
meet the writer and much, much
more...

EDUCATION EXTRA

Interview with Suzann McLean



Suzanne plays the part of Rosie in *Looking For JJ*.

Her previous theatre credits include *Beauty and the Beast* (Jackson's Lane Theatre), *Sing Yer Heart Out For The Lads* (Pilot Theatre), *I Have Before Me a Remarkable Document* (Drew Ackroyd), *Vengeance* (Hackney Empire), *Measure For Measure* (Royal National Theatre), *Things Change* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East) and many others. She has also appeared on television in *Casualty*, *Grange Hill*, *Little Miss Jocelyn* (all BBC) and *To Strike a Chord* (Central TV). Suzann is also a director and her directing credits include *The Underworld* (Peacock Theatre), *Gospel Glory* (Luton), *Going Local* (Stratford Circus), and *Songs of the Century* (London Palladium.)

We caught up with Suzann in a brief break in rehearsals to find out some more about the life of an actor and director.

Is this the first time you've worked with Pilot?

No. I did *Sing Yer Heart Out For The Lads* last year, in which I played the part of Sharon and I was Assistant Director.

How does *Looking For JJ* differ from *Sing Yer Heart Out For The Lads* in terms of the rehearsal process?

It's a much smaller cast, only five women and one man, whereas *Sing Yer Heart Out...* had twelve men and one woman, so the dynamics are very different. *Sing Yer Heart Out...* was also very naturalistic, the pub was there as a setting as it would be for real. That naturalistic quality also means you are working on the emotions of the characters to drive the story through. In *Looking For JJ* on the other hand, it's more abstract because you are inside her head. That's nice because there's a freedom in terms of how you want to direct the story, there are no parameters, there so it is a one hundred per cent creative journey.

What's the best thing about taking a play on tour?

I enjoy seeing different places around the country and being in different theatres. As an actor it is really exciting to experience different responses, as every audience is unique and people in one town will not react the same as people in another.

Are there any similarities between you and your character, Rosie?

Rosie is a social worker and although I'm not, I've done a lot of work with Pupil Referral Units and Youth Offending Teams. In that work I use drama to release the tensions and anxieties that build up

within the young people and there is certainly that quality in Rosie. The character of JJ is definitely a personality type that I have met before in those settings.



Suzann and Louise in rehearsal

Did you always know you wanted to work in theatre?

Well, when I was young I did Youth Theatre and dancing and then when it was time to chose options in terms of universities, someone suggested that I should go to drama school. At that point I had only heard of one school, which was Italia Conti. I applied, auditioned and got accepted.

What would be your ideal job?

As an actor it would be the lead role in a feature film about a real life story of a great heroine. If I got back into shape, I would love to play Kelly Holmes! My ideal directing job would be on the Olivier stage at The National Theatre, it would be a powerful human story, I'm not sure it's been written yet.

Thank you Suzann!

EDUCATION EXTRA

Looking for JJ Education Extra October

Looking For JJ in rehearsal

Against the bare white walls of the rehearsal room, the play begins to take shape. The frame and the raked stage are built, but the actors still have to imagine the screens, where the images will be projected.



At last the screens are in place and the actors are off their scripts.

Davoud builds Frankie's relationship with Alice, while also trying to create the physical and vocal differences between Frankie, Mr Cottis and Stevie.



To make sure that the friendship between the three girls is believable, they get to go out in character and play!

When each actor tries on his or her costume for the first time, everyone in the rehearsal room is amazed. Melanie is completely transformed by her wig and grey suit, into Jill and then just as dramatically into Sara.

In the first week of rehearsal, Chris juggles her script and Kate's laptop as she develops her character, works out where to sit and how to move and gets to grips with learning her lines.



Arnim films the video footage, then the costumes are put away again until the dress rehearsal. In the final week, the set is put up in York Theatre Royal. The technical rehearsals bring together the video, lighting and music and the jigsaw pieces begin to make a whole picture...

How's your mum?

Right: The actors work out the dynamic of Stevie's relationship with the three girls, as he threatens to expose Carol's real source of income.

Looks perfect!

Far right: Designer, Laura McEwen transforms Rochelle into a very youthful Sophie.



EDUCATION EXTRA

Meet the Writer Anne Cassidy

Why did you choose to write the story of a child who has killed?

I was horrified and at the same time fascinated by media accounts of recent murders by young children. I kept trying to imagine what would make a ten year old commit such a terrible act. I saw them in the street, in school playgrounds, on bikes, playing with footballs. They seemed so small. Some of them still sucked their thumbs; they cried at the drop of a hat; they cuddled their toys. How could any of these children be capable of such a crime? I wanted to examine the circumstances of one child and see what led her to do this dreadful thing that would end a life and change her own life forever.

How did you build a character around the issue?

I never start with an issue in my books. I start with a character. I pictured a girl of seventeen who had just been released from prison. I imagined that she'd live with some sort of carer. I saw her as physically small, childlike. She liked to look ordinary so that she could fit in and not be noticed. Although she was trying to build a new life the old life – the murder – is at the heart of her everything she does. She can never forget no matter how hard she tries. Other than this she was just a regular teenager. She had a part time job, a boyfriend, a place in university. She's like every teenager I've ever written about except she has this big secret. It's because she is so *ordinary* that the murder is so shocking.

Was there anything you wanted to avoid in your portrayal?

I didn't want Jennifer Jones to be a victim of physical abuse. I didn't want her story to be that she was beaten and so she took it out on someone else. It was more complicated than that. I wanted Jennifer to have, at heart, a sense of loss. The mother she loved so much did not have the same passion for her. Jennifer was lonely and that's why her friendships were so important. The reasons for her actions were a mix; long term insecurity; a sudden increase in distress caused by mother's willingness to 'sell' her; chance – if she'd stayed at home that day it would never have happened.

How do you feel about seeing Looking for JJ adapted for the stage?

When I first heard about the play I couldn't imagine how it could be done. The story spans the life of JJ from a small child to a teenager. Although there is action in the story it is also a psychological journey and I was interested to see how this could be done on stage.

So, is there anything that you think can/not be achieved on stage that can/not be conveyed in a novel?

The two forms are so different in every way. A novel is a solitary experience that you can enjoy as quickly as slowly as you like. The story speaks to you alone and you interpret it by yourself. A play is a social event. You watch it with others and respond individually but also as a group. There is nothing that cannot be achieved by either form. I have cried at plays and novels. And laughed at both. They just do it differently.

CONTINUED....

EDUCATION EXTRA

Meet the Writer Anne Cassidy continued...

What do you feel are the responsibilities of adults to young people?

As adults we hold a very great responsibility for our children. We should love them and guard them. As a society we have a responsibility for all children. Sometimes though it's not possible to intervene and change things. JJ's mother disregarded her, so did her grandmother. No foster homes or social workers could have made this right for JJ. Later when she is released from prison Alice Tully is cared for by society, loved even. But the media wants her so she loses everything again.

The subject matter of 'Looking for JJ' is absolutely right for young people. They are at the cusp of adulthood and are intellectually hungry. This is why they study Shakespeare. They should have a chance to grapple with Big Subjects in contemporary fiction as well. Alice Tully is just like them. But she did a terrible thing. Should we forgive her? This is the question.

What were the effects on you of writing this novel?

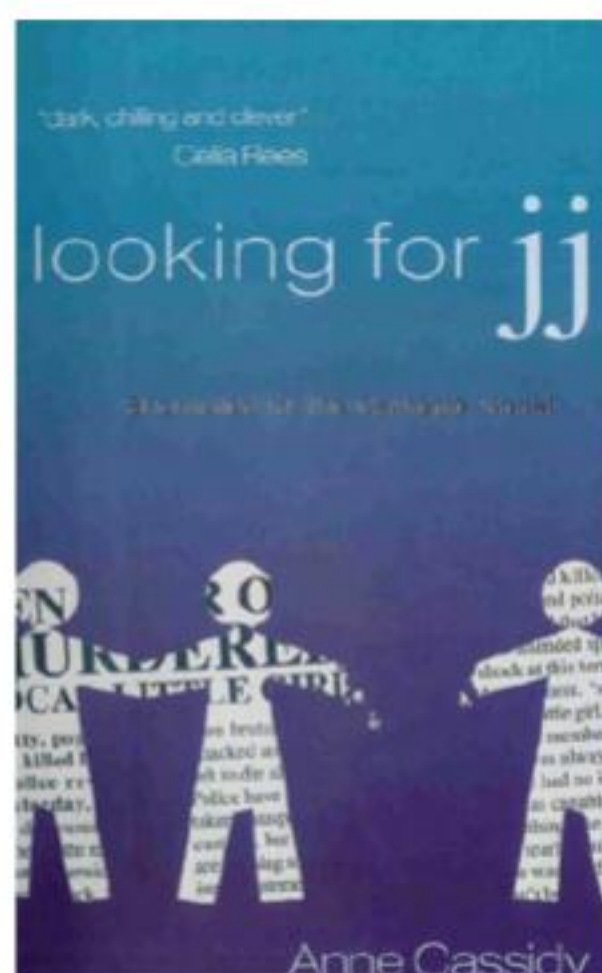
I'd written lots of books where there were murders and examined the grief of those left behind. This time I looked at it the other way round and I was disturbed by the conclusions I came to. It is possible to forgive. Could I do it if the victim had been in own family? I honestly can't answer that.

What are your favourite plays/productions?

Hamlet is my favourite play and over the years I've seen many productions. Many years ago I saw *Rozencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and I was bowled over by the idea that you could take minor characters and have the same play from their point of view. I also saw, for the first time, how very slightly *silly* Hamlet seemed.

Have you any advice for young writers?

Write little and often. Share your work with friends and family. Collect together a portfolio (like artists do). Always be on the lookout for a good story. *A woman sits alone in a room. The phone rings. She starts to cry and shake her head but doesn't answer it. What's happening? What will happen next?*



Looking for JJ

Murder they wrote

There are few crimes as disturbing, and unfathomable, as a child killing another child. Yet the law continues to shroud the perpetrators in anonymity. **Sara O'Reilly** finds some answers in a new play and a recently published kids' book that shed light on the motivation of young murderers

Mary Bell, James Bulger, Rhys Jones, Damilola Taylor, Robert Thompson, Jon Venables... Many people would instinctively separate these children's names into two lists but, to others, their haunting resonance is inextricably shared. They are the names of children who have been murdered, and those who have themselves taken another life. What we find most difficult to understand is how one child could kill another. It happens only rarely but, when it does, the instinctive, urgent question is: why?

Marcus Romer, artistic director of Pilot Theatre, a national touring company based in York, thinks theatre for young people has a valuable part to play in the debate. He has adapted 'Looking for JJ', Anne Cassidy's award-winning novel on the subject, for the stage. JJ is an 18-year-old who killed her best friend when they were both ten. With her release date approaching, JJ's case is making headlines again and the more predatory elements of the media are desperate to discover where she is. What they don't realise is that JJ was released six months ago. She's Alice Tully now, working in a coffee shop in Croydon. She's got a boyfriend and a place at university and she's living with Rosie, a social worker, and one of just two people who know JJ's new identity.

The law wraps children involved in crime (those who perform criminal acts, as well as the victims) in a protective cloak of anonymity; we rarely get the opportunity to hear directly from the people that it would be most illuminating to question. What makes 'Looking for JJ' so unusual is the fact that its perspective is that of the perpetrator.

'I was interested because it's a book about a female perspective,' Romer says, when we speak on the phone as rehearsals for the production get under way (the director's work also includes a touring adaptation of William Golding's book 'Lord of the Flies', which addresses the acts young boys are capable of in extreme situations). 'It redresses the knee-jerk tabloid reaction. We want JJ to have a new life but as the story progresses, we find out what she's done and it raises difficult questions. It's a brave book.'



Life on the outside A scene from 'Looking for JJ'

'Nine is the age at which children become aware of world events. Anything that encourages dialogue is a good thing'

The play follows Cassidy's text closely and Romer is sensitive to fact that the victim and her parents are not given a voice. 'Nine is the documented age at which children become aware of world events,' he tells me, pointing out that news stories such as those concerning Madeleine McCann and Rhys Jones can make children feel very anxious and it can be difficult for parents and teachers to discuss such issues. 'Anything that encourages dialogue and stimulates debate is a good thing.'

Tellingly, performance poet Benjamin Zephaniah also turns his attention to children who kill in his new novel for young people. Published in September, 'Teacher's Dead' is the story of a 15-year-old schoolboy who is a witness when one of his teachers is stabbed by a fellow pupil. Declining the counselling he's offered, the boy embarks on what he describes as his own, personalised therapy, which involves adopting

the persona of an amateur detective in order to try to understand what motivated his classmate.

'Teacher's Dead' and 'Looking for JJ' avoid any suggestion that there is a simplistic panacea to be found. Zephaniah's book features three boys with absent fathers, but they don't all turn out the same way. In answer to her social worker's questions, JJ insists that her mother never hit her and the men helping her mother restart her 'modelling career' did not abuse her. It is the accumulation of neglect and painful experiences, in collision with a combination of circumstances, that triggers JJ's devastating act of violence.

Cassidy's preferred genre is the whodunnit and 'Looking for JJ', which was published in 2004, was unputdownable, but it wasn't an

obvious candidate for a stage adaptation. Romer's approach was to make the technology that his audience thrives on an integral part of the process. He created a MySpace page for 'Looking for JJ' and wrote the script on it, incorporating the responses of posters. It meant that actors were able to read the play in advance and Romer had the advantage of knowing that those who auditioned were committed to exploring its themes. The rehearsal period involved an intensive process of improvisation during which the actors explored their characters' back stories – and their potential futures.

The resulting production has a feeling of authenticity. At its start we meet an engaging 18-year-old just starting at university, updating her MySpace page. Ninety minutes later, we understand why the anonymity of cyberspace is so appealing to her; we've glimpsed a childhood none of us would choose, and contemplated the prospect of a life few of us could handle, lived in the shadow of regret for what has passed and the nerve-wracking anticipation of being identified. We want things to work out for JJ. Because – in the words of JJ's social worker, which are, says Romer, pivotal – if they don't, 'it's two lives wasted'.

'Looking for JJ' is at the Unicorn Theatre (020 7645 0560/news@unicorntheatre.com) Oct 23-Nov 25. 'Teacher's Dead' by Benjamin Zephaniah is published by Bloomsbury at £5.99.