**English 10 – Stiles *Almost, Maine* by John Cariani**

**Speaking and Listening Outcomes:**

*2.1 – Students will participate in a range of speaking situations, demonstrating an understanding of the difference between formal and informal speech.*

*2.4 – Students will recognize that oral communication involves physical qualities and language choices, depending on the situation, audience, and purpose.*

**Reading Outcomes:**

*4.1 – Students will read from a wide-variety of print texts, which include drama.*

*7.1 – Students will examine the different aspects of texts (language, style, graphics, tone, etc.) that contribute to meaning and effect.*

*7.5 – Students will discuss the language, ideas, and other significant characteristics of a variety of texts and genres.*

Do you believe in the idea of a soulmate? Is your true love just waiting for you to stumble into their life? For this assignment you and a partner(s) (no more than three), will present a vignette from the play *Almost, Maine.* You will be assessed on your clarity of voice, pronunciation, movement, and overall understanding of how the characteristics of this play support the magical realism sub-genre.

**Presentation Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Criteria for Success:**

* My pitch and tone are consistently appropriate to the character I portray.
* I pay careful attention to punctuation by pausing, slowing down, and speeding up my speech, as needed.
* I have rehearsed the proper pronunciation of all words.
* I have considered how my movement will draw attention to, or take attention away, from my character.
* I have memorized a minimum of 15 lines at some point in the vignette.
* I “act through” all parts of the vignette (including non-speaking parts).
* I have included my reflection in my classroom journal (post-presentation).

**Post-Presentation Reflection (to be added into your classroom journal):**

1. Do you believe in such a thing as a “soulmate”? Do you think there is somebody out there for everyone? Why or why not? (3)

2. Why do you think Cariani made up a town for the play? Why not set it in a real city? Do you think that there is any significance in the name “*Almost”*? (3)

3. The vignettes are supposed to take place at the exact time underneath the northern lights. Why do you think Cariani chose to do this? What is the significance of the northern lights? (2)

4. Explain how the title of any two scenes relate to the content in the scenes. (6)

5. This play fits into the magical realism sub-genre. Find three pieces of proof that explain how this play fits into this genre. Provide evidence from the text by identifying characters involved in that scene. (6)

**Components of Magical Realism**

Setting: Perhaps the most essential part of the setting in this genre is the *atmosphere* and *small-town feel*. It needs that feeling of community where everyone knows everyone else. Stories with magical realism can reasonably take place in any real-world locale.

Characters: Ordinary, average, every-day characters are used in magical realistic stories (these are the people you pass on the street as you make your way to the bus stop, or the folks you encounter at the grocery store as you do your weekly grocery shopping). They are just people, plain and simple.

Fantastical Elements: It seems almost unnecessary to say that magical realism incorporates fantastic elements in the story, whether through time or place or in the characters themselves, but it should still be mentioned, as it is one of the key components. Without this, a story would be realistic, sans magic, and both are necessary for it to be magical realism.

Plot: The key to magically realistic stories is that they depict everyday events in which extraordinary things happen. That’s not the same as big events, such as a momentous discovery or historical event that later shaped the world. If there is a special event, it’s more of a quieter happening that comes along regularly in the lives of your average person, like a town fair or community play.

Time and Coincidence: Time tends to be more fluid in magical realism. It doesn’t have to be linear, or necessarily flow in one direction. In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s short story *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, time flows backward for the main character as he ages opposite the rest of humanity—he is born an old man and dies a baby. In magical realism, there isn’t such a thing as coincidence; it’s all tied together in an intricate pattern that comes full circle by the end of the story. Everything is interconnected. Even the small, insignificant details have meaning as part of the greater whole. It’s essentially the main thread that winds throughout a story, that ties all actors and events together in one continuous line. Events from the past influence the present and future, and sometimes, actions in the present or future can affect the past. (Retrieved from: <http://michellewittebooks.com/2015/09/elements-of-magical-realism/>)

**Speaking and Listening Rubric**

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Character Portrayed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Vignette:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 5 | 3-4 | 1-2 |
| **Fluency and Pronunciation** | The student delivers their lines by carefully attending to punctuation. Pronunciation is strong. | The student delivers their lines by often attending to punctuation. Pronunciation is fine. | The student pronounces many words  Incorrectly. More rehearsals are needed. |
| **Volume** | The student properly modulates their voice to mimic the character’s tone. | The student typically modulates their voice to mimic the character’s tone. | The student shows little evidence of modulating voice for impact and/or mumbles. |
| **Expression** | The student consistently reads with emotion  and expression appropriate to the situation. | The student usually reads with emotion and  expression appropriate to  the situation. | Reads with little or no emotion or  expression, or adds emotion or  expression inappropriate  to the situation. |
| **Movement** | The student follows stage directions, interprets the reading to incorporate creative movement, and responds to other characters’ movements. | The student follows stage directions. There is evidence of the student responding to other characters’ movements. | The student’s movement is static. |
| **Design Notes** | The student has skillfully chosen one prop to symbolize an idea/theme from the vignette. The student has chosen a song that captures the message/mood of the vignette. Costuming is present. | The student has chosen one prop to symbolize an idea/theme from the vignette. The student has chosen a song that captures the message/mood of the vignette. Costuming is present. | One of the design elements is missing. |
| **Memorized Lines** | The student has chosen a varied and challenging passage, perfectly reciting a minimum of 15 lines of text. | The student has chosen a passage, reciting a minimum of 15 lines of text. There are a few errors in memorization and/or the passage chosen is less varied and challenging. | The student requires more rehearsals reciting the minimum requirement of 15 lines. |

**Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/30**

**Student Sign-Up – Period 2**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Scene | Characters | Students |
| Prologue | Pete and Ginette: Two people who have been dating for awhile |  |
| 1: Her Heart | East: A repairman  Glory: A hiker |  |
| 2: Sad and Glad | Jimmy: A heating and cooling guy  Sandrine: His ex-girlfriend  Waitress: A no-nonsense waitress |  |
| 3: This Hurts | Marvalyn: A woman who is very good at protecting herself  Steve: An open, kind fellow whose brother protects him |  |
| 4: Getting It Back | Gayle and Lendall: Long-time couple |  |
| 5: They Fell | Randy: County boy  Chad: County boy |  |
| 6: Where It Went | Phil: A working man  Marci: his hard-working wife |  |
| 7: Story of Hope | Hope: A woman who has traveled the world  Daniel: A man who has not |  |
| 8: Seeing the Thing | Rhonda: A tough woman  Dave: A not-so-tough man who loves her |  |

**Student Sign-Up – Period 3**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Scene | Characters | Students |
| Prologue | Pete and Ginette: Two people who have been dating for awhile |  |
| 1: Her Heart | East: A repairman  Glory: A hiker |  |
| 2: Sad and Glad | Jimmy: A heating and cooling guy  Sandrine: His ex-girlfriend  Waitress: A no-nonsense waitress |  |
| 3: This Hurts | Marvalyn: A woman who is very good at protecting herself  Steve: An open, kind fellow whose brother protects him |  |
| 4: Getting It Back | Gayle and Lendall: Long-time couple |  |
| 5: They Fell | Randy: County boy  Chad: County boy |  |
| 6: Where It Went | Phil: A working man  Marci: his hard-working wife |  |
| 7: Story of Hope | Hope: A woman who has traveled the world  Daniel: A man who has not |  |
| 8: Seeing the Thing | Rhonda: A tough woman  Dave: A not-so-tough man who loves her |  |

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**Grade 10 English Speaking and Listening Rubric – *Almost, Maine* Ms. Stiles**

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