

LOST AND FOUNDLING FACT SHEET

Artistic Staff:

Director: David Saar
Scenic Designer: Holly Windingstad
Costume Designer: Daniel Hollingshead
Lighting Designer: Rick Paulsen
Sound and Projection Designer: Anthony Runfola
Props Master: Jim Luther
Stage Manager: Samantha Ries
Dramaturge: Donna Blumenfeld (Childsplay); Marge Betley (Geva)

Pryce: Yolanda London
Staci: Debra K. Stevens
Jesse: Jon Gentry
Custodian: Dwayne Hartford
Associates, et. Al: Katie McFadzen
D. Scott Withers

Design notes:

Holly chose a subdued, bland color palette of mostly grays for the set, based on research trips to actual big-box stores like Wal-Mart, Target, and Costco. Rick decided to suspend six large fluorescent lights over the stage – nothing says “giant chain store” like fluorescent lighting! The green light is produced using a green gel over a regular stage light.

Two movable shelving units stocked with product on each side and equipped with changeable aisle signs are manipulated by the actors throughout the show. It was decided during production meetings that the text on the aisle signs would not refer to specific products but say generic things like, “On sale now!” and “30% off!”

For the final scene, two large swinging doors with opaque glass windows open to show a digital projection of a loading dock door rising up to reveal a sunset. This effect is achieved by filming Pryce against a “green screen” which is then digitally replaced with the image of the doors and sunset. The technology we use is similar to what you’d see in a television weather report or in many special effects sequences in film. The actual image of the loading dock door is from our shop, and the sunset was a photo of a British sunset taken from the internet.

Props:

Faced with the gargantuan task of stocking full-size store shelves with generic yet recognizable product packaging, Jim visited the city of Tempe Recycling Center every day and also put out a call for help to the entire company, requesting bottles, boxes and cans for the set. He received hundreds of different containers of all different types to use as the set dressing and props in the play. Many of the containers were painted or covered in paper. Whatever doesn’t get used in the show will go to the recycling center.

Related concepts:

David says he thinks of this story as a parody of an odyssey or mythic journey. Like *Lost and Foundling*, the purpose of these heroic journey stories is often for the characters to explore their own resources and take control of their worlds.

In the book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), Joseph Campbell drew on the works of Freud and Jung to compare the mythical journeys of heroes from different cultures and outline the structures and elements common to most heroic adventures. Campbell's theories have long been incorporated in psychoanalytic practice and in education. "The Hero's Journey" is a set of sequential steps that apply both to mythological stories and personal growth. The hero is called to adventure and embarks, eagerly or reluctantly, into unknown territory. Her friends may try to hold her back. She is assisted by supernatural forces and overcomes obstacles in her path (usually in threes) to be initiated into a new stage of being, either by gaining new knowledge or uncovering powers she didn't know she had. In accomplishing her quest, the hero leaves part of her old self behind. Many heroes return home and become great leaders.

A link about Joseph Campbell:

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

A visual representation of the steps of the Hero's Journey:

<http://ias.berkeley.edu/orias/hero/>

An interactive version of the Hero's Journey from South Mountain Community College's Storytelling Institute:

<http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/smc/journey/>

"What the myths say, is that you have to be the hero of your own life. So, it's-- you're the one who has to take charge of who you are, you're the one who has to take control. And also, you're the one who can bring something to the community." – author Jeanette Winterston

Margaret Atwood says, "[Myths] only remain relevant because people keep retelling them. If nobody ever told them again in any other way, their meaning would become obsolete."

The Wikipedia entry on parody says: 'In contemporary usage, a **parody** is a work that imitates another work in order to ridicule, ironically comment on, or poke affectionate fun at the work itself, the subject of the work, the author or fictional voice of the parody, or another subject. As literary theorist Linda Hutcheon puts it, "parody...is imitation with a critical difference, not always at the expense of the parodied text."

Questions for students:

1. Pryce's trip across the store is a journey of self discovery. What did she learn about herself by the end of her journey?
2. Pryce's friends were afraid of the Slasher and the Demanding Shopper and warned Pryce about them. How did Pryce overcome her fears and solve her problems when she met each character?
3. How is Pryce a hero?
4. Can you think of other stories where the main character takes a journey like Pryce's?

5. A parody uses imitation to poke fun at the thing being imitated. How is *Lost and Foundling* a parody? What is the play making fun of (not Wal-Mart)?
6. Why do her friends try to keep Pryce from leaving?
7. Lost and Found teach Pryce about lost items. What else does she learn from them?
8. Does Pryce have a family even though she was abandoned? Who is her family? What do other families look like today?
9. Can you think of any other stories and myths in which children are abandoned by their parents or are left on their own and have to take care of themselves? (examples: The Jungle Book, The Secret Garden, Lemony Snicket, Finding Nemo, Alice in Wonderland, Hansel and Gretel, Moses, Romulus and Remus) How do the characters in these stories get help from their friends?

Shopping facts

Paco Underhill is the best-selling author of two books (*Why We Shop* and *The Call of the Mall*) and self-styled "shopping anthropologist." His firm, Envirosell, uses market research, anthropological techniques, and videotaping to research the shopping habits of consumers.

Paco Underhill's shopping surveillance findings include:

- 65 per cent of men who try on jeans buy them - 25 per cent of women do
- 86 per cent of women check price tags while shopping - 72 per cent of men do
- two-thirds of supermarket purchases are unplanned
- men are more likely to cave in to kids' pleas for impulse items

What shoppers love

- Touch: most unplanned purchases follow touching, tasting, smelling or hearing something in the store
- Mirrors: women and men
- Discovery: too many signs take the adventure out of shopping

What shoppers hate

- Lineups
- Out of stock merchandise
- Too many mirrors
- Hard to find price tags
- Intimidating service

The above list was culled from *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping* by Paco Underhill. You can find more information at www.envirosell.com.

How big is the Mega Price-Mart?

Look at the picture below to help get a better idea...

“Main street” stores tend to be anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000 square feet. Then there are free-standing drugstores that range in size from 11,000 to 15,000 square feet. Grocery stores tend to be anywhere from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet while home improvement stores range between 60,000 to 140,000 square feet. The biggest of them all are the retail super centers, like Mega Price-Mart, which are anywhere from 180,000 square feet to 250,000 square feet, or between 4.1 and 5.7 acres. Did you know that the parking lot surrounding a retail super center is often several times larger than the store itself? That’s a lot of space!

