



A Centaur Theatre Study Guide/Workbook  
For  
*King Dave*

By Alexandre Goyette  
Adapted in collaboration with Anglesh Major  
Translated by Patrick Emmanuel Abellard  
Directed by Christian Fortin

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Show Synopsis .....                                   | page 3      |
| About the Playwright and Collaborator .....           | pages 3-5   |
| About the Translator and Actor .....                  | pages 5-6   |
| Play Summary .....                                    | page 6      |
| A Note about Vocabulary and Language .....            | page 6      |
| Character .....                                       | page 7      |
| Themes .....  | page 7      |
| Research Activities .....                             | pages 7-8   |
| Discussion Questions and/or Writing Assignments ..... | pages 8-10  |
| Classroom Activities .....                            | pages 10-11 |

## SHOW SYNOPSIS:

The play focuses on an impressionable young Haitian man living in Montreal North who falls prey to the toxic culture surrounding him. Originally performed in French, the play opened at Théâtre Duceppe to rave reviews in 2021. Centaur Theatre presents the English-language premiere featuring the brilliant Patrick Emmanuel Abellard who also translated the play. As Dave, Abellard brings a charged story to the stage that confronts clichés, gun violence, and revenge head-on within a Montreal landscape.

Originally created in 2005 by Quebecois actor Alexandre Goyette (*Mommy* and *Laurence Anyways*), *King Dave* was revived in 2021 by Anglesh Major, who adapted and performed the French script with much success at Théâtre Duceppe. The role was then taken on by Patrick Emmanuel Abellard who toured the show all over Quebec.

Source: <https://centaurtheatre.com/shows/king-dave/>

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT AND COLLABORATOR:



PHOTO: Justine Latour

Alexandre Goyette is one of the most popular actors of his generation. As producer, author, and actor of the "one-man show" *King Dave*, he won the prizes for best performer and best original text at the *Gala des Masques* in 2005. Most recently, he played Marco in *Le Déclin de l'Empire Américain*, the theatrical adaptation of the famous film by Denys Arcand, at the Espace Go Theater, under the direction of Martine Beaulne, and performed at the TNM in *Coriolan*, under the direction of Robert Lepage.

On the small screen, he has played various roles in series such as *C.A., 19-2*, *La Théorie du K.O.*, *Le Siège*, *District 31*, *L'Échappée*, and *Faits Divers 2*. In

the cinema, he has acted in *La Dernière Fugue* by Léa Pool, *Les 7 Jours du Talion* by Podz, *Le Sens de l'Humour* by Émile Gaudreault, and in *Laurence Anyways* and *Mommy* by Xavier Dolan. In 2016, he was in *King Dave*, a feature film in sequence that was adapted from his play by the same name and directed by Podz. In the same year, he was also in Guillaume Lambert's *Les Scènes Fortuites*. In 2021, he was in *Le Guide de la Famille Parfaite* by Ricardo Trogi and, in 2022, in the film *Les Tricheurs* by Louis Godbout.

Source: <https://duceppe.com/profils/alexandre-goyette/>



PHOTO: Félix Renaud

Anglesh Major graduated with a bachelor's degree in drama from UQÀM's École Supérieure de Théâtre in 2017. He navigates between theatre, television, and music.

He has acted in *Les Amoureux* and *La Société des Poètes Disparus* at the Théâtre Denise Pelletier. He was also in *L'Énéide*, under the direction of Olivier Kemeid, at the Théâtre Quat'Sous and in *Titus Andronicus* at the Théâtre Prospero, in a staging by Edith Patenaude. On the small screen, he has acted in *Toute La Vie*, *Cérébrum*, *Une Autre Histoire*, *Jérémie*, *District 31*, and *L'Âge Adulte 2*. In the cinema, he was cast in the film *Matthias & Maxime* by Xavier Dolan.

As a musician, he has collaborated with many artists such as Souldia, Imposs, Shah Frank, Zach Zoya, DJ Manifest, David Campana, and Shotto Guapo. In 2021, Major released *Ephemere*, his very first EP via 7th Heaven Records.

It was after seeing Anglesh Major in *Les Amoureux* at the Théâtre Denise Pelletier that Alexandre Goyette, very impressed by the talent of the young actor, thought of him as a good choice to play the titular character of *King Dave*. Together, they adapted the 2005 text, infusing it with Major's

personal experiences, cultural references, language, and vocabulary. *King Dave* marked Major's first appearance at Duceppe.

Source: <https://duceppe.com/profils/anglesh-major/>

#### ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR AND ACTOR:



PHOTO: Jeremy Cabrera

Patrick Emmanuel Abellard is a bilingual artist who graduated from the professional theater program of Dawson College in 2015. Since then, some of his stage credits include *Paradise Lost* (Centaur Theatre), *Choir Boy* (Centaur Theatre), *Héritage* (Théâtre Duceppe), *Urban Tales* (Centaur Theatre), *Fight On* (Infinithéâtre), and *Race* (Montreal Theatre Ensemble). On the small screen, he has played recurring characters in *Bellevue*, *The Detectives* (CBC), *District 31*, *Faits Divers 2*, and *Unité 9* on Radio-Canada. He made his big screen debut in Xavier Dolan's *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*. He can also be seen in Denys Arcand's *La Chute de l'Empire Américain* released in 2018 and *Tales from the Hood 3* released in 2020. Also interested in writing and directing, he created two shows in 2015, *Evolution of Oppression* and *Brain People*.

Source: <https://www.osm.ca/en/biography/patrick-emmanuel-abellard/>

**PLAY SUMMARY:**

The play starts with Dave recounting the events that transpire at a party he attends, where he meets a few “fresh guys,” members of a street gang. He ends up being recruited to steal car radios by a given deadline, an event that indirectly leads to his breakup with his girlfriend, Nathalie, a betrayal from his close friend Andrès (Paco), and beatings by various street gang members. These events spark fear, rage, and missions of revenge, which lead Dave towards a downhill path of self-destruction. Throughout his recounting of events and experiences, Dave also mentions past incidents of fear, violence, rage, and racism, incidents that have marked him and that continue to influence the way he is and how he wants to be seen. In the end, Dave tries to make right what he has done wrong, but he faces only negative consequences that result from his actions and the choices he has made.

**A NOTE ABOUT VOCABULARY AND LANGUAGE:**

The play is a monologue that includes Haitian Creole words and expressions. For more information on Haitian Creole and its history as a language, please consult the following link:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian\\_Creole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Creole)

Please be warned that strong language is used throughout the play.

**CHARACTER:**

**Dave:** A young Haitian man living in Montreal North who is influenced by his peers. He recounts the various “downhill” events he experiences after attending a party where he meets a few “shady” people. His full name is David Joseph.

**THEMES:**

Relationships (with peers, romantic partners, and family) · Loss · Gangs · Trauma and fear · Violence · Crime · Revenge · Rage · Fate and choices · Humiliation · Appearances versus reality · Racism

**RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:**

1. The play's title alludes to King David, an important Biblical figure. Research King David. What facts about him and his life relate to the character in the play? What makes Dave a similar and/or different "version" of King David? Is knowledge of King David's life essential in understanding the play and the play's character? How and why?
2. The play includes acts of crime that affect the main character in many ways. Research acts of crime within communities in Montreal. Why is it important to reflect on these acts within the context of the play? How does crime figure as an important aspect in the play? Why does Dave choose to mention various criminal acts? What does this issue, as well as the fear that results, add to the complexity of the play?
3. In the play, Dave says: "God's Plan. God's Plan." This quote alludes to/refers to Drake's song "God's Plan." Research Drake's song and find the lyrics. What aspects of the song apply to the play? What does Dave's mention of the lyrics reveal about him and his current state of mind and place in life?
4. Research ways to overcome and deal with loss, anxiety, and/or fears. What ways are applicable to Dave? What can help Dave heal and move forward?
5. The play includes many examples of racism, revealing how it is systemic. Research what systemic racism is and explain what this play reveals about systemic racism.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND/OR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. The play is titled *King Dave*. What does the title evoke when first heard or read? How does the title relate to the themes developed in the play? How does the title indirectly reveal what transpires throughout the play?
2. *King Dave* revolves around many significant and contemporary themes. Viewers are exposed to a “one-man show”, with a specific setting and important staging elements. What does the setting and staging reveal about these themes? What is the effect of a “one-man show” on an audience? Does the fact that only one character speaks and reveals all to the audience affect the way the themes and the character are developed? Why and in what way(s)?
3. The play’s action is set in Montreal North, in Laval, and in RDP (Rivière-des-Prairies). Why do you think the playwright chose these settings? What atmosphere is created because of that choice?
4. In the play, Dave states that he is “like a chameleon. Fluid.” Why do you think this is the case? What does Dave’s description of himself reveal about him?
5. As the play progresses, some discrepancies are uncovered between what the character is like on the outside (how he is perceived to be) and what he is like on the inside (the reality of who he is and what he feels). Discuss Dave in terms of what he projects externally and who he is internally. What do those differences reveal about the character? How do those differences relate to the play’s themes? For instance, what do they expose about the topic of appearance versus reality or public versus private self?
6. What does the choice of naming Dave “Dave” and not “David” symbolically reveal? How does the character’s name relate to the themes developed in the play? For instance, Dave’s full name is

- David Joseph, and he states: “David cries, while Dave prepares vengeance.” What is the significance of that statement?
7. Throughout the play, memories of the past are presented through a monologue. Why are memories of the past revealed in this way? What effect is created with the use of a monologue? What effect does Dave’s recounting of what other people say or do have on the audience?
  8. Many people believe that the only way to get over one’s fears is by facing them. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Do you think Dave faces his fears? Does he overcome his fears? In what way(s)?
  9. At the end of the play, Dave faces the biggest consequence of his actions and the choices he has made; the play ends with the implication that he will be arrested by the police. Do you believe life is predominantly decided, as in fated, or is one’s life purely the result of one’s choices? Why?
  10. The play ends with the statement that “no one would think that. No one to see that. No one.”
    - a) What is your opinion on the ending of this play?
    - b) What is symbolically revealed in Dave’s final comments?
    - c) How does the ending support the main themes of the play?
    - d) Would you have changed the conclusion of this play? How and why?

#### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**

1. Students can be separated into groups, with each group assigned a different theme developed in the play. The groups prepare a character analysis of Dave, listing all the physical, psychological, and sociological characteristics of the character. Students then discuss how Dave’s character development contributes to their assigned theme. Groups can compare and/or contrast their findings.

2. Students can prepare a brief presentation on a significant or traumatic loss encountered. They can present the main characteristics of their situation and what impact this situation has had on them. Alternatively, they can prepare a brief presentation on one of the other themes developed in the play by relating the theme of their choice to their own life experience and/or personal interests.
3. Students can present a moment in their life when they felt too many bad things were occurring at the same time or a moment when they had to make amends for something wrong that they had done. They can discuss how they dealt with and overcame these trials and tribulations and were able to move forward positively.
4. Students can be asked to analyze the play by relating one of its themes to current events, to social issues within their community, or to their own personal experiences. For example, Dave says “[he] could have left; [he] could have hid, but, no, [he] confront[s].” He seems to make one bad decision after another, which leads him to great difficulties in life. Students can analyze this theme and relate it to their own personal experiences.
5. Students can rewrite the ending of the play or add a scene reflecting what they think will happen to Dave in the future.
6. Students can write a scene or song that reflects their thoughts and point of view on the issue of crime and the impact of crime on individuals and society. Students can perform or share their creation and explain the comment they are making through their creative endeavor.
7. Students can reflect on systemic racism and its many examples as mentioned in the play by creating and performing a dance, song, poem, story, play, or artwork related to this issue (as faced by them or seen around them). Students can then analyze the message of their work and its performance/exhibit.