

Laundry girls by bill owen essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The play I have been studying over the last few months is called ‘ Laundry Girls’ by Bill Owen. It is based on four Victorian working class girls and it is all about them talking about their lives. We hear about issues considered unacceptable at this time. The play was written in 1973 and set in 1899. The time it is set in is very important to the story of the play. One of the girls, Alice, gets involved with a man and we find out what people would have thought of Alice if they were to find out about it.

The story then unfolds that Alice’s friend Beattie had history with this ‘ fella’ and wound up pregnant. In the Victorian times it was heavily frowned upon to have a child out of wedlock. There are all different types of characters in ‘ Laundry Girls’ in which I played Gert. From ‘ mad hyper girls’ to ‘ down to earth get stuck into it girls’. The girls live in any big city, i. e. London, they are ordinary working class girls, working in a typical Victorian woman’s job.

The relationship between the characters seems to switch between being friendly towards each other to having a go at each other for getting their wages cut. The characters seem to have tension growing between them, maybe because they are having to work with the same people every day some people don’t pull their weight in the laundry. The play is a realistic piece of drama, it is script work and the lines seem to be aim to throw at the audience. There were more characters than there were Actors so a few of the lines had to be either cut or made to work with other characters.

Another play that I have studied this year is ‘ Gum and Goo’ by Howard Brenton. It differs to ‘ Laundry Girls’ as it is set in the present day and is an abstract piece of drama. It doesn’t require many props, just a ball and three

torches and only three actors are needed. It is about seeing the world through the eyes of a disturbed child. She gets bullied in real life and in her own mind. The play flicks between what is real life at home and at school and then into an imaginary world in which the child meets Gum and Goo, two made up bullies.

Although only three actors are needed, the actors need to double up with a few of the roles. It can get confusing if you don't understand the play, but when performed well it becomes clear that the actors are playing different characters. Out of the two plays I would think ' Gum and Goo' is the hardest play to perform because it is confusing and sometimes you need to be able to understand the play to be able to perform it. ' Laundry Girls' is easier to understand because although things have changed since the late 1800's people can still relate to these issues.

In ' Gum and Goo' unless you have been through or watched someone that is disturbed then you can't particularly come to terms with the fact that this could happen to someone. I found play Gert a little difficult plainly because she is the complete opposite to me. She is very blunt in what she says and uses sarcasm in a lot of what she does. Because I'm not like this I found it hard to be able to say the lines as I should of and to be sharp about saying them. Study this play has taught me a thing about how Victorian women lived and the way they were treated.

They had to be careful with who they went out with and what they got up to. It showed me just how much things have changed in such a short amount of time. The girls were aged 14-18, these days you have to be 16 to just get a

Saturday job, girls had to leave school younger and start work younger. I think that although it isn't a modern day play it appeals to a modern day audience because it has many of the issues dealt with in society today but they are dealt with in a very different way than they would be today.