

GREY

STREAMING FREE ON-DEMAND FROM
MON 31 OCT TIL MIDNIGHT SAT 17 DEC



A STAGE & SCREEN EXPERIMENT PRESENTED BY LIMINAL STAGE PRODUCTIONS
WRITTEN BY LULU RACZKA DIRECTED BY ROBYN WINFIELD-SMITH PRODUCED BY
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LEARNING PACK

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ENGLAND



LIMINAL STAGE

GREY MAN Learning Pack

INTRODUCTION

This pack is aimed at teachers, and at **students studying PSHE from Year 9** and above. It covers the **3 core areas of study as outlined in the PSHE Government Guidance** and **PSHE Association Programme of Study**:

- 1. Relationships**
- 2. Health & Wellbeing**
- 3. Living in the Wider World**

CURRICULUM LINK 1: RELATIONSHIPS

- **Developing and maintaining a variety of relationships, within a range of social and cultural contexts** (e.g. Maya's relationship to her Sister, to her parents; The Sister's relationship to her Friends, and to The Guy)
- **Recognising and managing emotions within relationships** (e. g. Maya's confusion at her Sister's response to her revelation that Grey Man has lead poisoning, Maya's fury at seeing her Sister outside of the coffin room)
- **Responding to risky or negative relationships and asking for help** (e.g. The Sister puts herself in a risky relationship with a much older man, and fights with her parents "all the time"; Maya doesn't know how to talk to her Mum and Dad about it so as to get help for either her or her Sister)
- **Respecting equality and diversity in relationships** (e.g. the children's treatment of 'Grey Man' in the play, the guy's embarrassment at going out with a girl from a different socio-economic background to him, the friends having a go at The Sister for talking "such bullsh*t" when her stories may be a sign of her mental illness)
- **Recognising that our behaviour can affect other people** (e.g. The Sister's illness has an impact on Maya; Older Maya's stormy response to seeing her Sister in the kitchen pushes her Sister towards suicidal behaviour)

- **Identifying special people in our lives and how we should care for each other** (e.g. neither Maya nor her Sister seem to have a close relationship with their parents – not the kind where they could open up and ask for help; when Younger Maya returns to the house to tell this story, she has returned to try and help her Sister through her debilitating mental illness)

CURRICULUM LINK 2: HEALTH & WELLBEING

- **Maintaining mental and emotional health & wellbeing** (e.g. mindfulness, managing emotions, asking for help, maintaining healthy boundaries)
- **Managing risks to mental and emotional health & wellbeing** (e.g. identifying unhealthy relationships like the one between The Sister and The Guy, learning how to process, talk about and manage difficult emotions [such as when Maya can't understand her Sister's harsh response to her act of kindness], seeing things from other people's point of view, understanding different types of risk to mental health)
- **Identifying different influences on health and wellbeing** (e.g. mental illness within the family, being a young carer, social networks, relationships with family members, the guilt and possible grief that Older Maya experiences after the argument with her Sister in the kitchen)
- **Managing change, including puberty and loss** (e.g. Younger and Older Maya both find it hard to understand why her Sister doesn't spend any time with her anymore now that she's become a teenager [i.e. hit puberty] and moved into the cupboard, Older Maya doesn't deal well with the loss of her Sister – she becomes stuck in a cycle of delusion that she can bring her back through the telling of the stories of their childhood)

Making informed choices about health & wellbeing, and where to get help with this (e.g. how to get advice from GPs, CAMHS, online advice services and helplines, how to gather information and make decisions about treatment or different approaches to managing mental illness)

CURRICULUM LINK 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD

- The above topics are designed to stimulate students to consider how they can be a constructive citizen who is able to take personal responsibility, empathise with and be respectful and supportive of others, and build positive relationships with the people around them.

ABOUT GREY MAN THE PLAY

GREY MAN was written in 2016, as a 30-minute one-woman stage play by Young Vic Channel 4 Playwright Lulu Raczka. Divided into 3 acts, this monologue is the fast-paced and wickedly creepy story of two sisters, the older of whom wittily mythologises her own mental illness through a web of urban horror stories about a 'grey man' who stalks the streets of Shoreditch, positioning greyness as a metaphor for mental illness.

Though written in 2016, long before the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, GREY MAN is full of language that makes us think of transmission and infection: people's breaths turn grey, their fingers, the grey gets into their insides, people go into lockdown - or "lock-up", as The Sister calls it...

In its 2016 site-specific workshop production, GREY MAN was praised as **"a gorgeous, haunting monologue"**, with The Stage commenting that "the full-length version should be commissioned at once".

You can read more about Lulu Raczka's time as the Young Vic Channel 4 Playwright at <https://www.youngvic.org/blog/meet-our-channel-4-playwright-lulu-raczka> and more about the work of Director Robyn Winfield-Smith at <https://www.robynwinfieldsmith.com>.

ABOUT GREY MAN AS A STAGE AND SCREEN EXPERIMENT

Streaming free and on-demand at <https://www.liminalstage.com/greyman> from Halloween Mon 31 October until Sat 17 Dec 2022

*He could see it
Grey
His breath
It had gone grey*

★★★★
"Gorgeous, haunting"
The Stage

First, it's your breath, then your fingers, your insides. Then you go into lockdown...

Maya's teenage older sister is always telling stories. Like the one about the woman who turns people grey. Any people. Men, women, young old. When Maya's sister ups and moves into the cupboard one day, she thinks she knows why. But what if her sister's stories are concealing more difficult truths?

In this pioneering digital production, two parallel versions of the same character each tell their own story, in a chilling exploration of mental illness and the power of storytelling to haunt us or heal us.

Grey Man is followed by a behind-the-scenes interview with director Robyn Winfield-Smith, plus a short mindfulness workshop led by Mindfulness Coach Kate Delaney. In-person and online talks and drama workshops are available on request (including after the Nov/Dec 2022 digital run of the show) from digital@liminalstage.com.

ABOUT GREY MAN AS A STAGE AND SCREEN EXPERIMENT

This digital production of GREY MAN, directed by Liminal Stage Artistic Director, Robyn Winfield-Smith, sees the lead character played by two different women to raise questions about the identity of the storytelling protagonist, and to subtly highlight how our mental outlook - our perspective - can influence the events of our lives...



Above: Actors Kate O'Flynn & Kristin Hutchinson | Below: Director Robyn Winfield-Smith with the GREY MAN grip & camera teams



POST-SHOW LESSON 1: EXPLORING THE THEME OF RELATIONSHIPS

30-minute drama-based activity:

Identifying the differences between positive relationships and negative relationships

OPENING ACTIVITY

(5-10 mins)

- In pairs, discuss The Sister's relationship to each of the characters listed below
- Are these relationships positive or negative? In what ways? Do the relationships change over time? In what ways? What causes these relationships to change?

	Younger Maya
	Older Maya
	Mum
The Sister	Dad
	Friends
	The Guy
	The Woman
	Grey Man

MAIN ACTIVITY

(15-20 mins)

- Choose one of these relationships to focus on
- One of you plays one character, one of you plays the other
- Roleplay a snapshot of this relationship – you can take a moment from within the stories described in the play or a moment that you imagine took place between them, based on what you know of the characters

Take a couple of minutes to do this.

- After 2 minutes of role playing, take 10 seconds to freeze into an image – or tableau – that represents the essence of that relationship
- Spotlight (i.e. focus in on) 2 or 3 tableaux from the group that depict a negative relationship

Take around 5-10 minutes to discuss the below as a group:

- What makes this relationship unhealthy? (Refer to what the characters are doing in the image, and what this tells us about their treatment of each other as people.)
- What would make this a more positive relationship? How could these characters act differently towards each other? What difference would that make, on each side?
- Ask one of the spotlighted groups to replay their role play, but this time as two people with a positive relationship

CLOSING ACTIVITY

(5 mins)

- **As a group:** what is the difference between a positive relationship and a negative relationship?
- **Individually:** make two lists using the instructions below.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

Think of someone that you think you have a positive relationship with.
What traits do they have which make the relationship positive?
How do you maintain your positive relationship with them?

NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP

Think of someone that you don't get on with very well.
What traits do they have which make the relationship negative or difficult?
What could be the reasons why you don't get on well?

HOMEWORK

Younger Maya returns home to help repair her relationship with The Sister. She begins by telling the stories of their childhood in her bedroom, so that her Sister can hear her through the wall. Write or record (audio or video) what you imagine Maya really wants to say to her Sister to help bring them closer together and encourage her Sister to come out of her room.



POST-SHOW LESSON 2: DIFFERENT TYPES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

30-minute drama-based activity:

Understanding different types of mental illness

Read the below extract from an interview with the Director of GREY MAN, Robyn Winfield-Smith:

"One of the thrills of Lulu's script is that it invites so many interpretations. On the one hand, it is simply a story of two sisters, the younger of whom tells us about her childhood growing up with an older sister who used a warped web of urban horror stories about a grey man - and a woman who had turned him grey - to make sense of and cope with her own mental illness..."

ACTIVITY 1

(15-20 mins)

In pairs, use the YoungMinds website (<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/mental-health-conditions/>) to look up what the symptoms of **depression** and **psychosis** are.

Now read Extract 1 from GREY MAN, where Maya explains why her Sister said she moved into her 'coffin room'.

*"That woman - the one who turned grey man
She wanted my sister too
One day she sees my sister walking home from school
And she sends out grey man to get her [...]
And over the next few days she can feel it
The grey [...]
And she'd walk home
And she'd see her grey breath out in front of her
And she knew - she had to stop it [...]
And she thought maybe - maybe if I can pretend that I'm dead - that I'm not worth it
Maybe I can stop it?
But how could she do that? How could she pretend she was dead?
And one time she's cleaning the house [...]
And she sees the closet
Full of cleaning supplies
And she thinks
This isn't like a closet
This is a coffin
And so she waits until we're all out one day
And she moves in there - her little coffin room
To trick the woman"*

What evidence can you find that the sister is experiencing the symptoms of depression or psychosis?

When The Sister tells the story of her break-up with The Guy and says that The Woman confronted her in the bar, it seems as though her friends may have seen through her fantastical stories and realised the truth:

*"You know what was nice?
Is that her friends let her get away with it.
That they let her just tell this stupid story about 'That Woman' that she used to tell
stories about as kids - they let her have this.
They were always going on at her - shut up - that's such shit - you talk such bullshit!
But with this. They let her have it
Let her believe it.
I always thought that was nice of them."*

What do you think Maya means when she says "her friends let her get away with it"?

Was it really The Sister who broke up with The Guy? Or do you think she has told this story to hide the fact that he broke up with her?

What do you think The Sister's stories are helping her to do, as she tries to deal with her mental illness?



Now read another extract from an interview with the Director of GREY MAN, Robyn Winfield-Smith:

*"On the other hand, throughout the piece, we are led to question whether Maya - our only source of information about any of the characters in the story - is telling the truth. Is **she** The Sister? Is she projecting her own story on to an imagined Sister? And, if so, is that imagined sister played by the older character? Or is that older character in fact The Woman? The questions around identity are endless..."*



Maya claims that it was always her Sister who could "tell the stories", and yet she herself seems to be a very accomplished storyteller. She also tells us that her Sister is in the next room ("she's still in there now"), although we never get to meet her.

What evidence is there that Maya really is telling the truth about her childhood?

What evidence is there that Maya is in fact The Sister?

Who do you think the older character is in Liminal's production of GREY MAN? What reasons do you have for your answer?

BACKGROUND TO ACTIVITY 2

*"One of the things we explored in this experimental version of GREY MAN is how our attitude to - or outlook on - the things that happen the world around us can influence the outcomes in our lives. We can't necessarily control the things that happen to us, but we **can** change the way we respond to them..."* (Director Robyn Winfield-Smith)

Here's an example of how people's mindset - and their reactions to a specific event - can have an influence on the next events in their lives:

A and B are both driving to a meeting, and are slightly late.

Another motorist, who is speeding, forces both A and B to brake suddenly to avoid a collision.

A is furious, because they are already late, and this bad driving from another motorist is slowing them down further. In their anger at the motorist, they get distracted from the road and cause an accident further along the motorway.

Needless to say, they are late to their meeting!

B is annoyed at having to brake. But B stays in the present moment, keeping focused on the road ahead. B arrives a little late to the meeting, but nobody minds because they arrive calm and professional.

Another example, over a longer time-period, could be:

A, B and C fail their mock exams.

A goes into an emotional tailspin and decides to give up on school. A fails their exams in the Summer.

B similarly gets upset, and gets so anxious about not understanding things that other people in the class seem to understand that they spend more time worrying than revising. B is off sick during the Summer exams.

C also gets upset by the results. But C decides to spend extra time working on the topics they struggle the most with. C passes their exams in the Summer.

In each example, we're over-simplifying the situation, but you get the gist...



ACTIVITY 2

(15-20 mins)

- In groups of 4 or 5, think of a scenario that you can divide into two parallel versions, in the same way as the examples we've discussed
- Select three 'snapshots' from your chosen scenario, with or without dialogue, that make the story clear (if you include dialogue, keep it to no more than 30 seconds)
- Make sure you think about what kinds of emotions your different parallel characters are expressing (or bottling up) and what kinds of physical gestures, movements, facial expressions or sounds they might use to make their emotions clear (or to hide them)
- Perform your parallel scenarios back to the class
- People who were playing 'negative' versions in the scenarios, what did the emotions and physical/vocal performance make you feel?
- People who were playing 'positive' versions, how does your experience differ?
- The emotions we feel can create physical sensations and tensions in our body, which can then feed into the emotions we feel - creating a cycle

HOMEWORK

Think of an event in your life that has caused you irritation or that has made you angry, something small but significant - something that you might give a Level 5 on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is something that irritated you a little and 10 is something that made you really lose your temper or get upset.

In hindsight, how could you have responded differently in that moment?

Write an account of what happens in your imagined alternative version of the event. Or, if you prefer, write this as a piece of dialogue between you and the other person or people in the scene.

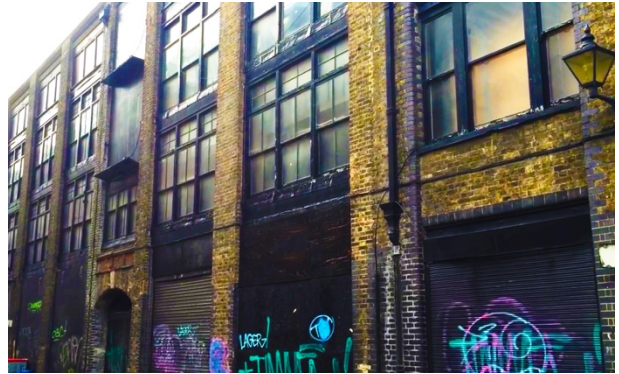


POST-SHOW LESSON 3: EXPLORING HOW WE TREAT OTHERS

30-minute drama-based activity:

Who is grey man and what does he represent?

Lulu Raczka, the writer of GREY MAN, was commissioned to write a half-hour play by the 2016 **site-specific** Shakespeare In Shoreditch Festival. She responded to the creative theme of 'Tempests' and to a now-destroyed 1880s warehouse on Blossom Street, Norton Folgate, in London. All that remains of the building is the iconic fascia of the old warehouse.



Lulu was interested in the way that the local people of Shoreditch, the immigrant workers trying to make a living, the working-class Londoners in council estates and run-down properties, were being 'priced out' of the area because of **gentrification** - the influx of wealthy new residents into the now-trendy part of town. Local independent shops and market sellers - British, Polish, Turkish, Indian - were being pushed out by franchises and bars - Prêt, Planet Organic, expensive cocktail bars and clubs.

Caliban is a character in Shakespeare's THE TEMPEST. He is portrayed as a monster on the island that the magician Prospero has taken over, even though the island once belonged to Caliban's mother, the witch Sycorax. Prospero enslaves Caliban, taking over the island that was once Caliban's home and forcing Caliban to live in a cave.

Lulu saw Grey Man as a modern-day Caliban, being forced into hard labour and ill health by the wealthier class moving into his neighbourhood. People like The Woman, whose house magically turns white again after Grey Man has worked so hard to paint it grey.

OPENING ACTIVITY

(10-15 mins)

- Get into groups of 4 or 5.
- As a group share any 'urban legend characters' that you may have around your local area.

A member of the GREY MAN creative team gave an example of such a character:

"When we were growing up, we used to have '50p Lady', who would always follow you in the street and ask for 50p."

- Choose one of these characters you've been discussing as a group

- Nominate someone to become a 'statue' of that person, paying attention to whether they would stand or sit, take up a lot of space with their posture, or be closed inward, etc
- Now imagine that the 'statue' is in the street, and will come to life whenever anyone walks past
- The rest of the group, you're going to take it in turns to be people walking past:
- As you walk past the 'statue', you can make one single response to seeing them – you might turn away because you don't want to look at them, you might say something mean to them, you might laugh at them... Make your response, and then carry on past
- Statue, you're allowed to make one physical and vocal response to what the person walking past you has said or done. Once you've had your response, the next person in the 'street' will walk past you, and you can then have a response to them.

POST-ACTIVITY DISCUSSION

What kind of behaviour (good, bad or indifferent) do people show towards 'urban legend characters' like 'grey man' or '50p lady'?

Often, people like 'grey man' or '50p lady' are homeless, and/or in mental distress. Why do you think people turn these sorts of 'characters' into legends or monsters?

How does the way they're treated by other people affect the behaviour of such characters?



In pairs, read the below extract from the play:

*When all this was going on something happened with grey man
I was a teenager at this point
And my friend
She saw grey man in a shop when she was with her boyfriend
And they tried to take a picture of him
And he lost it
You kids -
You people -
And he told them he had lead poisoning
That's why he's grey
And she told me all about it
And it went round the school
And then everyone thought they were gonna get lead poisoning off him or
something
And they still pointed
And they still all laughed
And whenever you saw him
You ran
But for me I wasn't scared anymore
Cause for me lead poisoning made him like a person
Not like a
You know
There was no more grey breath*

What evidence can you find in this speech that grey man has been turned into a 'monster' by the local community? Highlight the lines.

Can you think of times that rumours or misinformation has gone 'round the school' and got out of control?

What causes facts to get turned into misinformation or scare-mongering? (e.g. *And then everyone thought they were gonna get lead poisoning off him or something*)

Maya says:

*But for me I wasn't scared anymore
Cause for me lead poisoning made him like a person
Not like a
You know
There was no more grey breath*

What do you think Maya means by this?

Why do you think she rushes back to tell her sister that grey man *wasn't* turned grey by The Woman?

What might this fact mean for The Sister, who is currently hiding in her coffin room to escape The Woman?

The Sister's only response to Maya's revelation that she no longer needs to stay in her coffin room is:

*Who's grey man [...]
I don't know what you're talking about*

Why does this hurt Maya so much?

Why do you think The Sister is so dismissive of what Maya has to say? What could be causing her to behave like this?

- In your pairs, nominate one of you to play the role of Maya, and one of you to play the role of a good Friend
- Improvise a conversation between the two of you where you each want to get some information:
 - The FRIEND wants to find out why Maya seems a bit quiet these days, and whether there is anything they can do to help
 - MAYA wants to find out what her Friend thinks she should say to get her sister to come out of her room
- Back in the main group, share some of the pieces of advice that the Friend gave to Maya, to help her with the situation involving her Sister

HOMEWORK

The Sister uses her stories about Grey Man and The Woman to help her cope with some of the challenging things that happen to her, including her relationship with The Guy, who is much older than her, and her mental illness, which compels her to stay in her self-enforced lockdown in the cleaning cupboard.

Lots of people had a very challenging time during the lockdowns of 2020. Choose an imaginary experience from lockdown to focus on – or choose something from your own life, if you feel confident to do so – and invent a character who is going to go through that experience. Now write a short monologue or story that explores that experience from the perspective of a brother, sister or friend.

If you have been affected by any of the themes or issues in GREY MAN, here are some sources of support that you may find useful:

Chat Health

Young people aged 11-19 can text a Chat Health nurse FREE for confidential advice and support on physical and emotional health needs. Nurses are available to chat on a range of issues such as illness, bullying, self-harm, emotional health, sexual health, contraception, alcohol, smoking, drugs. **Simply text Chat Health on 07507 332 150.** School nurses aim to respond to text messages within 24 hours. The service is available Monday to Friday (except bank holidays), 9am-5pm.

Carers Hub - Young Adult Carers

If you are a young adult aged 15-21 who cares for a family member, friend, partner or neighbour, then that means you are also a carer. There are lots of ways that Carers Hub Lambeth can help you.

Contact: Carers Hub Lambeth 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA
Telephone: 020 7501 8970 Lines open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm
Email: connect@carershub.org.uk | Web: www.carershub.org.uk
Facebook: @Carershub Twitter: @Carershub Twitter: @LambethYCP

Kooth

This free online counselling and emotional well-being platform supports children and young people aged 10-25 with anonymous online counselling sessions with a qualified practitioner. There are no referrals or waiting lists to use this service and it is open 7 days per week. Simply visit <https://www.kooth.com> or email mjames@xenzone.com

Mosaic Clubhouse

Mosaic Clubhouse supports people living with a mental health condition by providing volunteering opportunities, access to education and employment, and crisis support and information for people aged 16-30. Mosaic Clubhouse offers social events, support to access education and employment opportunities, Young Adults Committee (which meets weekly), and opportunities for Young Adults to work alongside other Young Adults who have shared similar experiences.

Contact: Mosaic Clubhouse 65 Effra Road, Brixton London SW2 1BZ
Telephone: 020 7924 9657 | Email: infohub@mosaic-clubhouse.org
Twitter: @MosaicClubhouse | Facebook: Mosaic Clubhouse

This resource pack was created by Liminal Stage Productions with support from Lambeth Living Well Network Alliance and Children's Integrated Commissioning.

www.liminalstage.com
Twitter: @Liminal_Stage Insta: @liminalstage #GreyManOnscreen
<https://lambethtogether.net/living-well-network-alliance>

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