

lifeline



T H E A T R E

Big Stories, Up Close

Spring 2009

Dear Educators,

Thank you for bringing your students to our third and final KidSeries production of 2009-10, *The Blue Shadow!* We are delighted you have chosen Lifeline Theatre, and we hope your experience here will be fun, entertaining, and educationally rewarding.

This year we have been offering a new-and-improved version of our Study Guide this year, here enclosed. Additions and changes include a thorough play synopsis, cast bios, writing and drama activities, and a number of easy-to-copy worksheets for your class, which are best used **after** your field trip as a way to bring the learning back to the classroom. The cover of the guide also includes suggestions for preparing your class for the performance and discussion questions to lead a critical review with your class. On the whole, we hope you will find the packet beneficial towards enhancing your Lifeline experience and allow you to integrate the play's themes with your classroom teaching

Last but not least, towards the back there is a teacher comment form and student review sheet, ready for copies. **We ask that you PLEASE send back your teacher comment form, once completed!** Your feedback is invaluable to helping improve our materials. If you would like the form electronically, just email me at lea@lifelinetheatre.com and I'll send it to you. We'd also love to receive your student reviews, as we take to heart their response to the show.

Right beside the study guide, we have enclosed a few materials about other education programs we offer here, including in-school theatre residencies with professional theatre artists. If you are interested in learning more about these programs, do not hesitate to call me or send an email. We aim to meet your goals. Thank you again for your support of Lifeline Theatre, and we'll see you at the show!

Sincerely,

Lea Pinsky, *Education Director*
lea@lifelinetheatre.com
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a closer look at The Blue Shadow



A new musical based on world folktales by Nambi E. Kelley
★ Music and Lyrics by Joe Plummer ★ Directed by Ilesa Duncan

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PLAY SYNOPSIS

The play opens to a classroom in Field Elementary School in Rogers Park, Chicago. The school bell rings and four students- Wei, Roksana, Zuri, and Ernesto- enter the classroom singing about what they are going to learn that day. At the end of the song, a fifth student enters, Shadow- a new student who looks different from the other kids in fashion and behavior. The lesson for the day is “world cultures”, and all the students are asked to talk about where they are from. Wei is Chinese, Roksana is Russian, Zuri is Nigerian, and Ernesto is Mayan--- but Shadow doesn’t know where she is from. She tells her teacher she doesn’t know her cultural heritage, and the teacher tells her she should “travel around the world” and then she will know. She should listen to stories from her classmates homelands and bring something back from each story—that will help her know where she is from herself. She takes her backpack and goes to meet Wei first.

Wei sees that Shadow is upset, tells her not to cry, like the woodsman in “The Tale of the Trustworthy Tiger.” In the story, a woodman was walking in the forest and fell into a pit where lived a mean and scary tiger. The woodsman knew that kindness would soften the tiger and so he befriended him, and they became close. Eventually they had to go their separate ways but promised to meet up in a year. Dangerously, the tiger arrived too early at the meeting spot and was captured and taken to the zoo! The woodsman finds him there and saves him, proving their friendship to the zoo-master by performing a dance they learned together. After the story ends, Shadow tries to fit the tiger ears on her head, but they don’t fit—she is not Chinese/Asian! Where to next?

Roksana approaches Shadow to tell her the Russian folktale of “Vasilisa the Beautiful.” In this story, Vasilisa lives with her father and mean stepmother and stepsisters, who make her do all the chores. They send her to the evil witch BabaYaga one day to get light, knowing that she may not survive the mission. But Vasilisa is kind to BabaYaga and gets the light without a hitch. When she returns to her family, she shows them the light, which softens their angry faces, and heals the family. At the end of the story, Roksana gives Shadow her light, which goes out as soon as it lands in Shadow’s hands—meaning she is not Russian! She continues on her journey to find out where she is from.

Zuri enters to tell Shadow the African folk tale of “King Lion’s Gifts.” We meet a lion who is a king (and a bad joke teller!) who likes to host parties. He invites all the animals from the kingdom a party and has gifts to share. He gives each of the animals the specific attributes that make that animal unique: stripes for zebra, a trunk for elephant, long neck for giraffe. The animals, who at first didn’t feel warm to the odd lion, were grateful for the gifts and made him a good friend forever. Shadow tries to fit on Zuri’s African cape at the close of the story, to no avail. She is not African.

Ernesto is the last classmate to tell a story from his heritage, in hopes of finding a home for Shadow. He tells the Mayan myth from Popol Vuh, the Magical Hero Twins. The twins loved to play and make magic tricks. Their grandma was frustrated that they played so much and worked so little--- and ate so much while playing! So the twins decided to make their own food, by magic. They conjured a whole field of corn overnight, but all the ears disappeared! They discovered that animals were rescuing the corn at night, and caught one of the rats to find out why. The rats told them they shouldn’t be pretending to be farmers- they should play like boys as they are. The boys used their powers to make a huge mud ball and went to play ball, understanding they should be themselves, not try to be anyone else. Shadow tries to catch the ball but fails, which tells he she is not Meso-American!

As Shadow takes the mud off her feet, she remembers a story that an old man told her long ago called “The Muddy Foot”, about a Native American named Hawkeye who was shoeless until he stepped in mud one day, went to take a nap, and woke to find shoes of mud. He tried to share his excitement with his other shoeless family members, but the mud kept cracking and no one believed he could cover his feet securely. An elder finally gives him buffalo hide, which he ties with strings to make the first moccasins—and proves his family wrong! Shadow tries on these moccasins as this story ends, discovering that she is, indeed, Native American! She celebrates with her class, finally understanding her cultural heritage.

MEET THE CAST AND CREW

(in order of appearance)



Ben Chang (Wei) is thrilled to work with Lifeline for the first time. In Chicago, Ben has appeared in an outreach production for Shaw Chicago, an episode of Television Reruns with ARFTCo, and will be performing the title role in *The Man Who Turned Into a Stick* for Geopolis Theatre this spring. Other credits include touring as Romeo for North Carolina Shakespeare Festival; and in Santa Barbara, California: *The Paper Dragon* for Ensemble Theatre, *Twelve Angry Men* for DIJO, and *Red Herring* for Circle Bar B Dinner Theatre. Ben is a graduate of Stanford University.



Susaan Jamshidi (Shadow) was most recently part of the Goodman Theatre's New Stages Series as Yasmina in *Yasmina's Necklace* by Rohina Malik, directed by Henry Godinez. This summer she played *Sympathy for the Learned* in Mary Zimmerman's *The Arabian Nights* at Lookingglass. Other Chicago credits include *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*, *Terman Vox Machina*, *Skin in Flames*, and the World Premiere of Mia McCullough's *Spare Change*. Susaan received her MFA in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University.



Mallory Nees (Roksana) is a recent graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. Some favorite roles include Pennywise in *Urinetown* (dir. Dexter Bullard), Florina in *Mad Forest* (dir. Carlos Murillo) and Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Before coming to Chicago, Mallory performed at various venues in her home state of Wisconsin as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Gilda in *Design for Living*, and Sarah in *Spinning Into Butter*. Since graduation, she's been blessed to have worked on FIVE shows with Lifeline Theatre! You may have seen her earlier this season in the KidSeries productions of *Dooby Dooby Moo* and *The Last of the Dragons*.



Miguel Nunez (Ernesto) is making his first appearance in a Lifeline production. Some of his latest Chicago credits include the stage reading of *Salt* for Teatro Luna; *Lorca In a Green Dress* and *Heads for Halcyon Theatre*; *12 Hungry Men* for Chicago Fusion Theatre; *Four Boxes* for Epic Players. He has worked for Salsation! Theatre Company; Redmoon Theatre and many more. He was an ensemble member with New World Players in Indiana where he was seen in *Cloud Tectonics*; *Carthaginians*; *Sadomasochism* and more. Miguel studied at the National Theatre University in Caracas, Venezuela, and is currently a student at Black Box Acting Studio.



Dawn Pryor (Zuri) is native to Miami Florida with a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Central Florida. This marks her first appearance with Lifeline. Chicago credits include *Dear President Obama* and *The Day Santa Cancelled Christmas* (Studio One Productions), *A Devil in God's House* (Tiny Production), *Milk* (MPAACT), *This Far by Faith* (ETA), *Sarafina! The Music of Liberation* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre), and other local theatre/performance groups such as Black Ensemble Theatre and Chocolate Chips Theatre. Other credits include *Once upon a Mattress*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Once on this Island*, *Lysistrata*, and *Good Woman of Setzuan*.

Nambi E. Kelley (Playwright): projects include plays for the Steppenwolf and Goodman Theatre in Chicago and Lincoln Center in New York. Recent awards/nominations: The Friends Fellowship (Ragdale Foundation), the 3 Arts Fellowship, TCG Candidate for Playwriting: Goodman Theatre, the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference nomination and honors at the Black Ensemble Theatre for playwriting. Kelley guest lectures at Lake Forest College. An accomplished award-winning stage actress whose work has entertained nationally and internationally, Ms. Kelley holds a B.F.A. from The Theatre School at DePaul University and is currently an M.F.A. candidate at Goddard College in Vermont.

Xavier Kelley (Writer/Adaptor, The Muddy Foot) is a 3rd grader at Decatur Classical Elementary School. He likes Pokemon, Transformers, chess, and lives with his family on the North Side.

Joe Plummer (Composer & Sound Designer) is also a playwright and an actor. He was a Jeff nominee and a BTA Award nominee for his portrayal of Louis Armstrong in Apple Tree's production of Jammin' With Pops and a Jeff nominee and a BTA Award winner for Best New Writing of a Play and a Jeff nominee for Choreography for Get Ready at Victory Gardens. Other sound design credits include The State of Mississippi vs. Emmett Till (Pegasus Players); Black Nativity (Congo Square), for which he won a BTA award both times for best sound design; BTA award nominee for Stick Fly (Congo Square); Layla's Dream and Seven Guitars, also for Congo Square; Heat and Hove VI (Chicago Dramatists).

Ilesa Duncan (Director) has worked for such theatres as Victory Gardens, Chicago Dramatists, Writer's Theatre, Pegasus Players, Rivendell, Prop Theater, Black Ensemble, ETA, Chicago Theater Company, and the Goodman. Some Chicago credits include the Jeff Nominated The Shape of a Girl and Tick Tick Boom! for Pegasus Players, Hope Six for Chicago Dramatists (written by Nambi Kelley), Waiting to be Invited at Victory Gardens, Aloha Say The Pretty Girls and F**king A for the Theatre School/DePaul. She also directed Red Rain for Lincoln Center Theatre's Director's Lab/HERE, and the hit dark comedy Love Child at Chicago Theater Co., Theatre on the Lake and Live Bait Theater. Additional regional credits: Crowns, Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill and A Raisin in the Sun (CATCO), and Shakin' The Mess Outta Misery (Indianapolis' Phoenix Theatre). A member of Lincoln Center Theatre's Director's Lab, Ilesa is a NEA/TCG directing fellow and an Associate Artist at Chicago Dramatists.

Jennifer Aparicio (Stage Manager) is excited to be back at Lifeline where she just finished stage-managing The Last of the Dragons. She also stage-managed their 2008 production of Snowflake Tim's Big Holiday Adventure. She has worked with The Second City, etc., Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, New World Repertory Theater and 16th Street Theater. She graduated from Columbia College with a BA in Theater.

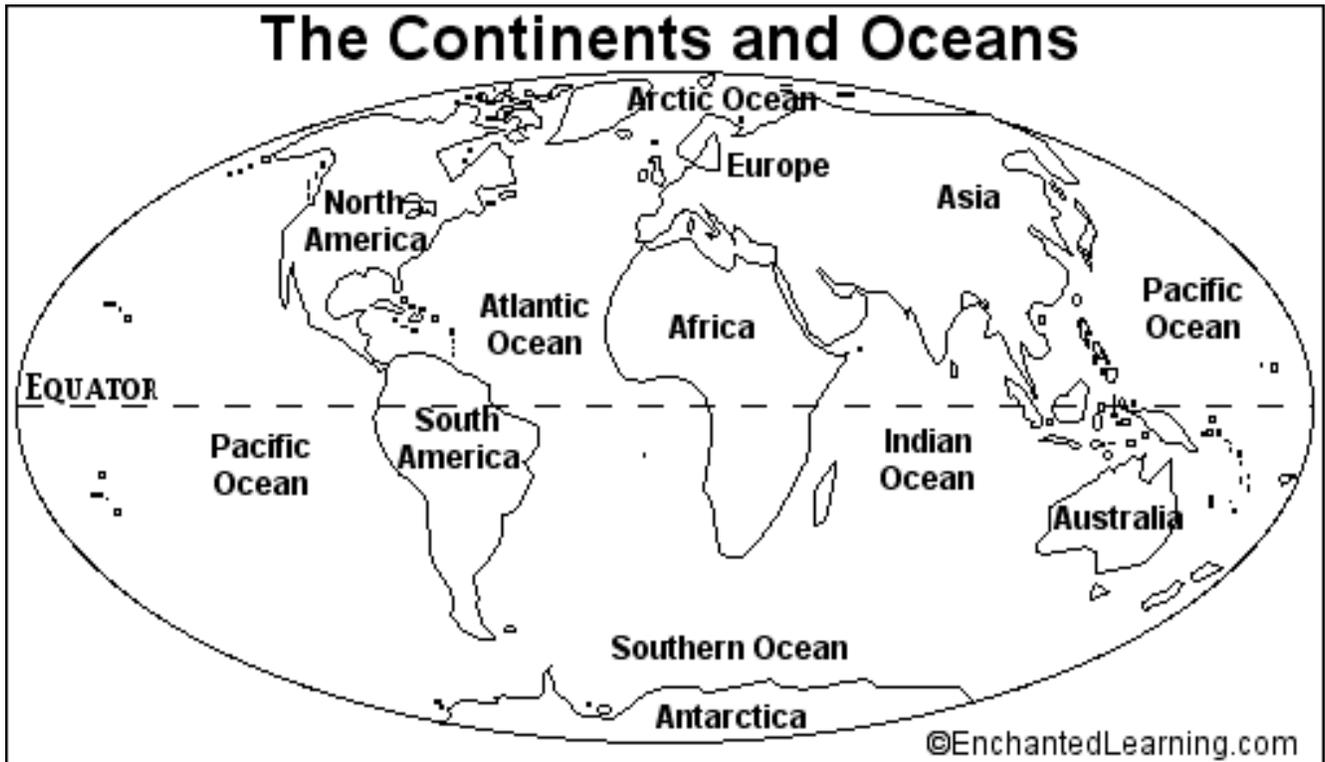
Sarah Hughey (Lighting Designer) is returning to Lifeline for a second KidSeries production this season, because she had so much fun on The Last of the Dragons. She also designed lights for Mariette in Ecstasy on Lifeline's MainStage last season. Recent Chicago credits include Wilson Wants It All (House Theatre of Chicago), Dancing at Lughnasa and Mojo Mickybo (Seanachai Theatre Co.), Girls vs. Boys (House Theatre of Chicago with American Musical Theatre Project/Northwestern University), Little Brother and On the Shore of the Wide World (Griffin Theatre), and Parlour Song (Steeple Theatre). Sarah earned her MFA from Northwestern University.

Joanna Iwanicka (Puppet Designer) is thrilled to be back at Lifeline, where she first exhibited her passion for puppets in The True Story of 3 Little Pigs. She recently graduated from The Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland with a MA degree in Scenic Design. Upon returning to the United States, she showcased some of her acquired skills in Lifeline's recent production of Dooby Dooby Moo (talent show judges) and The Last of the Dragons (dragon puppet). Joanna has also designed sets for Congo Square Company, Chopin Theatre, The Library Theatre, Vintage Theatre Collective and Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, worked for Santa Fe Opera, Denver Center Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Des Moines Metro Opera, and most recently Redmoon Theatre.

Christine Pascual (Costume Designer): Regional Credits include Joe Turner's Come and Gone (Centerstage Baltimore); The House on Mango Street, Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue (Steppenwolf Theatre); The Piano Lesson, The First Breeze of Summer, Flyin' West (Court Theatre); The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity - world premiere, Relatively Close, The Romance of Magno Rubio, Symmetry (Victory Gardens Theatre); Sanctified, St. James Infirmiry, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Seven Guitars, Black Nativity, The Talented Tenth, Stickfly - world premiere (Congo Square Theatre); Our Lady of the Underpass - world premiere, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner, Another Part of the House, Living Out (Teatro Vista); Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat (Silk Road Theatre Project); Ten Cent Night - world premiere (Chicago Dramatists); Capriccio Barocco (Yale Baroque Opera Project); Defiance, Fabulation (Next Theatre); Topdog Underdog, True West (American Theater Company). She is an artistic associate of Teatro Vista. Upcoming projects: Welcome to Arroyo's at ATC, The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity at Second Stage in NYC, and Sizwe Bansi is Dead at the Court Theatre.

KNOW YOUR WORLD GEOGRAPHY

In *The Blue Shadow*, the main character Shadow learns about the continents that her classmates are from. Use this coloring worksheet to better learn where the continents and oceans are located in the world.



1. What are the five oceans on Earth? _____,
_____, _____,
_____, and _____.

2. What are the seven continents on Earth? _____,
_____, _____,
_____, _____,
_____, and _____.

3. Color the oceans and seas blue.

4. Color the continents green.

5. Draw a red line along the equator.

MORE QUESTIONS (optional for older students)

What ocean lies south of Asia? _____ Ocean.

What continent borders the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean on its north shore? _____

What continent lies directly west of Europe? _____

What continent is almost completely covered with ice?

What ocean lies between South America and Africa?
_____ Ocean.

What ocean lies near the north pole? _____ Ocean.

What continent borders the Pacific Ocean on its eastern coast and the Arctic Ocean on its northern coast? _____

What continent may have once been a part of Africa's west coast?

What continent is directly south of Europe? _____

What continent appears to be a part of Asia? _____

What ocean lies off the west coast of North America?
_____ Ocean

What ocean surrounds Antarctica? _____ Ocean

Match The Animal Traits

In *The Blue Shadow*, Zuri tells a story about a lion who gives the animals in his kingdom the traits that make them unique. Here are some more animals below. Using the animals in the box below, write out the name that connects that animal to the traits that make it different from the others, or unique.

DOLPHIN	OSTRICH	MONKEY
SPIDER	FROG	TURTLE
SHARK	KANGAROO	OWL

Swings from trees, has “opposable” thumbs like people _____

Has a hard shell to hide in for protection, moves very slowly _____

Lives both in water and on land; usually moves by jumping _____

Lives in water but is a mammal, not a fish; one of the smartest animals _____

Lives in salt water mostly, has big teeth, has existed from before the dinosaur era _____

A bird that is awake a night (nocturnal), hunts other birds _____

Moves by hopping, has a pouch tucked into its belly to carry its young _____

Has eight legs and fangs, makes its home and food trap from a web it spins _____

Largest bird known, does not fly, can run up to 45 miles per hour _____

Where In the World Would You Go?

If you could take a trip anywhere you have never been before, where would you go? Write where you would go and why, color in the figure and draw a background for the picture that looks like the place you would travel to. Have fun!



If I could go anywhere, I would travel to _____ because

HOW IT CAME TO BE: a writing exercise

Like the story of "The Lion's Gifts", African history consists of cultures and traditions rich in folklore, with beautiful stories told over generations related to everyday experiences, animals, environment, and more. These folktales were traditionally used to provide meaning to occurrences or beings that were not understood, such as why the moon rose at night, or why particular animals looked and acted the way they did.

Your students can also take part in creating and telling such a story, using one of the animals from the "Animal Traits" exercise or from a favorite member in the animal kingdom. Your students' conceptual and artistic strengths will come into play as they write the story, then design and assemble their folktale storybooks.

What You Need:

- Construction paper, possibly old magazines (National Geographic is good)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers, crayons, or paints
- Lined paper
- Pencil or pen
- Stapler

What to Do:

To jog your students' creativity, use the Animal Traits worksheet to begin a discussion about what makes animals unique, and re-visit the story of "The Lion's Gifts" to explain how folktales use the imagination to make sense of the world. Invite your students to think of an interesting or favorite animal that he would like to write about, or choose one from the worksheet. Suggest that they choose with an animal with unique physical traits or odd behavior that would be entertaining to write and read about.

Have your students brainstorm a story about their animal of choice, solo or in small groups. Remind them that he will be explaining either a certain action that the animal engages in or discussing how it came to look the way it does. Then supply everyone with some scratch paper and ask them to begin writing their imaginative tale.

Once everyone has finished writing the folktale, have them assemble illustrated books. Students can then rewrite his story on the construction paper or cut and paste the story from the scratch paper onto the bottom of each page. For illustrations, have them either draw in each scene with markers, crayons, or paints, or cut out images that correspond to the story from magazines. They can create a collage or use a combination of hand drawings and cut-out images.

Once each page is complete with illustrations, have them create a front cover with a title, author, and images. Finally, have your students present their books and stories to the class; then send the books home for kids to read to their parents at bedtime!

FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES

THEATRE GAMES AND DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Round Robin

Ages: 2nd grade and up

Goals: Storytelling, imagination, listening

HOW TO PLAY: Everyone sits comfortably in a circle, with the teacher / leader. The leader or a selected student will begin to tell a story. If the leader wishes, she may offer a prompt or a setting or something to anchor the story. The first person in the circle begins to tell the story. After a few sentences, the leader snaps her fingers and points to the next student, who must pick up the story **EXACTLY** where the last student left off. The new student continues the story until the leader snaps again and advances to the next person. Students have to listen very carefully. The leader can shorten the length of each student's input, down to just one word a student, at any time, then build it back up. This game can be played more "competitively" with an elimination element for any student who doesn't follow exactly or who repeats words, doesn't make sense, etc. After the story ends, the leader can facilitate improvising dialogue or scenes with students in the center of the circle.

Curricular Connection: This game can be used to retell stories and literature learned in class, or it can be used as a warm up for a creative writing exercise. The teacher uses the story created in the group as the prompt for students to tell the next chapter of the story, or make a different ending, or write dialogue of the characters in one of the scenes.

Going to Tahiti

Ages: All ages

Goals: Warm Up, Imagination, Curricular Connections

HOW TO PLAY: Group stands in a circle, and one by one each student begins by saying the phrase, "Hi, my name is _____, and I'm going to Tahiti, and I'm taking with me _____". The leader then tells them whether or not they can go to Tahiti or not. Individuals can only go if they take items that begin with the letter that their first name begins with. Many variations can be played on this game.

Curricular Connection: The object(s) that the student names can be tied to something being studied in class (ex: a mammal, type of bird, color in the rainbow, capital of a US state, etc) to test knowledge retention.

Pass The Pulse

Ages: All Ages

Goals: Cool Down, Focus, Ensemble

HOW TO PLAY: A Cool Down game and team building/focus exercise. Students sit in a circle and hold hands. A student who has gotten into place quickly and quietly is chosen to begin. When everyone in the circle is quiet, the student **GENTLY** squeezes the hand of the person next to them. That person then squeezes the hand of the person next to them, passing the pulse around the circle. The goal is for everyone to silently watch the pulse being passed around the circle, staying alert and ready for their turn. In time you may increase the difficulty by going as fast as possible, (timing the revolutions is always an incentive) changing direction or adding an additional pulse going the opposite direction.

Student Review of
The Blue Shadow

By: _____

I give this play (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was _____

because _____

_____ .

My favorite character was _____

because _____

_____ .

If I had choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story the songs the costumes the scenery

I think other people should go see this play because _____

_____ .

KidSeries Teacher Comment Form

Please fill out as much of this comment form as you can, then either: 1) mail it to Lea Pinsky, Education Director, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626; or 2) fax it to 773-761-4582. If your students have completed their review sheets, please mail them or drop them off with this form. Thank you for your time!

School: _____ Grade Level: _____ Number of Students: _____

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), how would you rate the **performance** of *The Blue Shadow*? _____

2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the best), how would you rate the **study guide** for *The Blue Shadow*? _____

3. What were some words your students used to describe the play?

4. Which activities in the study guide were most beneficial to your students?

5. How did your students benefit from these activities? (If possible, please give specific examples.)

6. What could we do to improve the **study guide** or **our productions**?

7. Are there any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt?
