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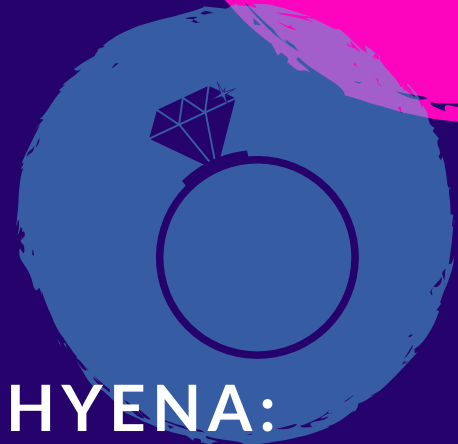
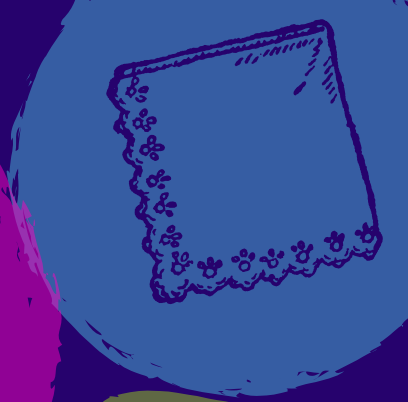
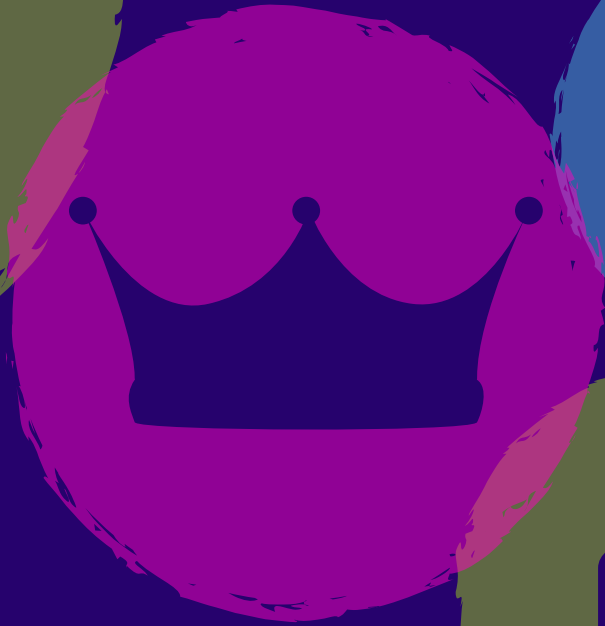
artists breaking limits & expectations

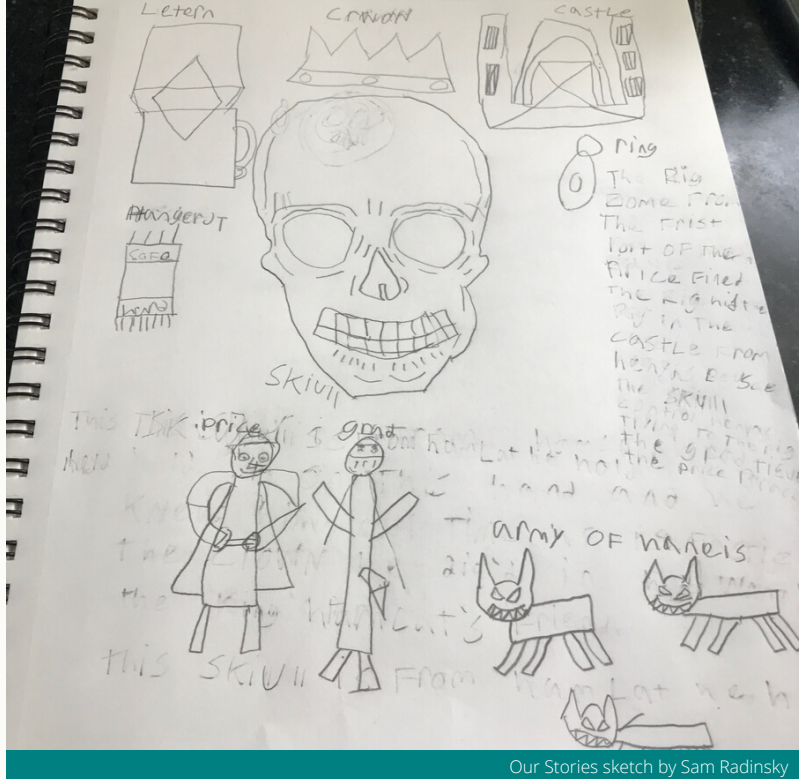
0 FOR A MUSE

original stories inspired by
Shakespeare's famous props

VOLUME 5 OF 5

**ONCE UPON A HYENA:
THE STORY OF THE SKULL**





Our Stories sketch by Sam Radinsky

LET US ON YOUR IMAGINARY FORCES WORK...

What can we make together?

After the success of ***O for a Muse: Part 1*** in the winter of 2019, A.B.L.E.'s adult ensemble was excited to devise a theatrical event inspired by a new batch of iconic Shakespearean props - a crown, a ring, a lantern, a handkerchief, and a skull. The ensemble was 3 weeks into rehearsals when the COVID-19 pandemic up-ended our lives in Chicago, and lives of people around the globe.

We found ourselves in a brave new world, without a rehearsal room, without a theatre, but with a lot of hope. In the weeks since, our entire team has tested our resiliency, learned new ways to work together, and remained determined to share our stories.

When the world feels topsy-turvy, that's when the arts are the most valuable. It can lift your spirits to connect with your community, to know you have something to contribute, and to create something new. That is what A.B.L.E. has always been about. And it's in that spirit that we forged ahead with a new vision for ***O for a Muse***.

Each volume of our short story collection features an original story and illustrations by our ensemble of actors with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. In these pages, you'll also find an opportunity to use your imagination and create something yourself. We believe everyone is A.B.L.E. to connect, to contribute, and to create. And that includes you, dear reader.

Whether onstage or on the page, our stories cannot come to life without an audience. Thank you for reading.

KATIE YOHE

Founder & Executive Artistic Director

O FOR A MUSE

SHORT STORY COLLECTION

VOLUME 5 OF 5

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**For other stories and
exclusive content, visit:**

www.ableensemble.com/muse

ONCE UPON A HYENA: THE STORY OF THE SKULL

Story & Illustrations by The A.B.L.E. Ensemble

Once upon a time there was a very rich man named Justice. He got so rich by being the most famous of graverobbers. Justice robbed many graves and took many incredible treasures like jewels, money, and gold.

But none of this was enough. The real treasure, the best treasure of all, was still out there...



Legend told of an ancient skull from Paris.

The skull was as old as the first Halloween, over a thousand years ago. And, the legend said this skull could give power over people's minds.

It took Justice years. He traveled the entire globe. He crossed oceans and mountains and forests. He visited King Arthur's Castle. He traveled to Iowa. He even went as far away as the Bahamas. He spoke to historians, scientists, a witch and actors in his quest for answers.

And at last, he tracked it down.

THE SKULL



The skull, he learned, was in a castle deep in the woods of China. The woods were dangerous. The trees were grainy. And he was constantly on the lookout for dinosaurs and tigers.

At last he made it to the castle door.



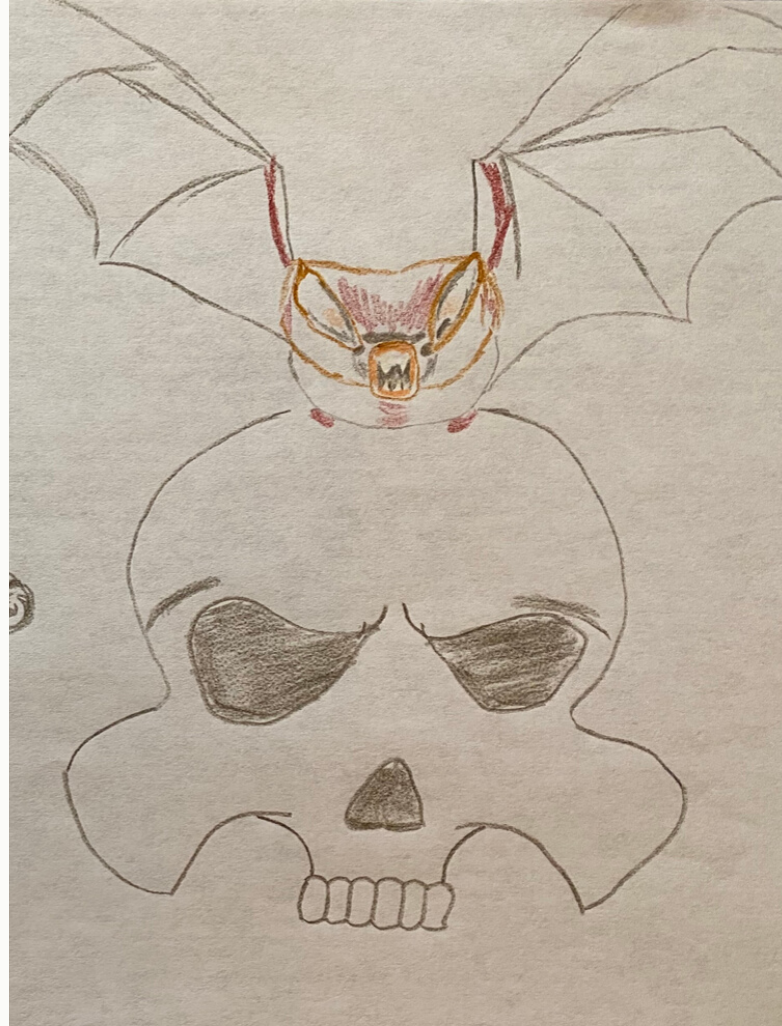
**He pushed open the door,
to discover the castle was
full of bats the size of
eagles.**

They swarmed him. He had
to think quickly. He could
only defeat the bats by
swinging his sword.

Exhausted, he continued
through the dark halls of the
castle. At last he found the
door into the dungeon. The
dungeon door was really big,
massive. It was covered in
drawings of handles and
windows to confuse anyone
who tried to open it.

He pushed the door with all
his might, and at last it burst
open. He found himself in
the dungeon. It was dark. It
smelled like monkeys and the
coronavirus.

**There, in the center of the
room was the skull!**

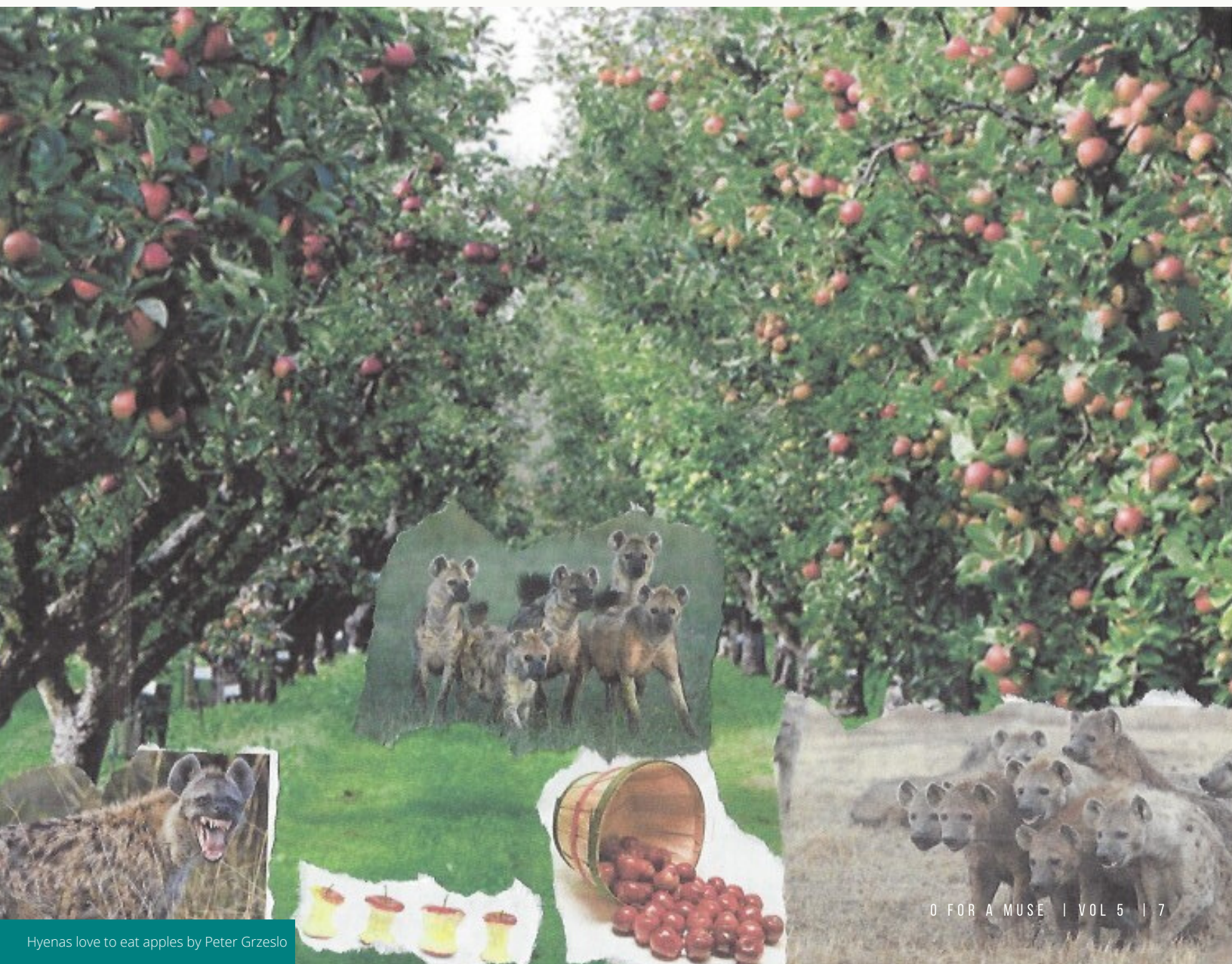


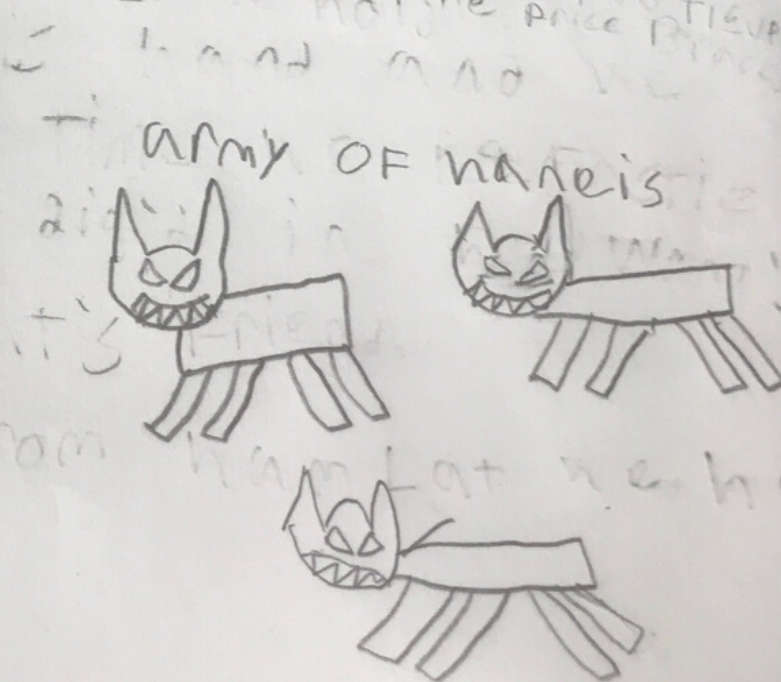
Bat attack by Lawrence Kern (top)
The skull by Andrew Kosnik (bottom)



Between him and the skull stood 3 or 4 hungry hyenas.

The hyenas had razor sharp teeth and were known to eat apples and snakes...and humans.



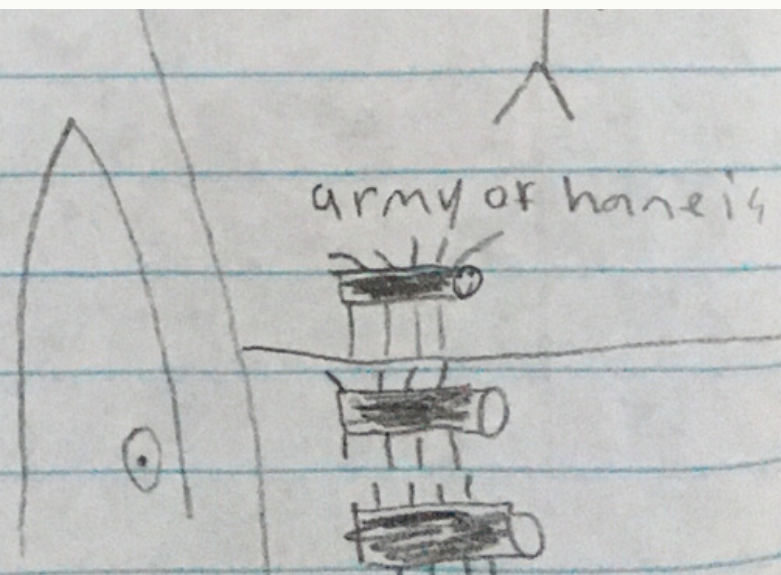


The hyenas
surrounded him.



They laughed, and
they got him dirty.

**But he was
surprised that
they let him
approach the
skull without a
fight.**



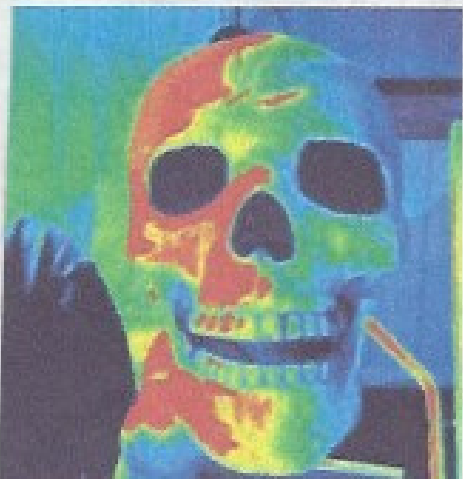
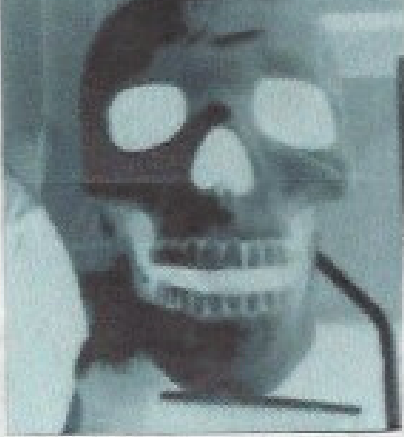
As he got closer to his goal, the graverobber felt hungry and scared. After all these years, the skull was finally within his grasp.

He could see it was even more incredible than he imagined. The skull was made out of human bones. He reached out his hands and lifted it up.

Just then, the eyes of the skull shot out rays the color of brown mud. It terrified the man so much that he began to laugh hysterically, and he slowly turned into a laughing hyena. The hyenas surrounded him and chased him.

And then a loud, scary voice came from the skull. It declared this was its plan all along. It had been luring graverobbers to the castle for centuries to build a hyena army.

And now the skull was one step closer to taking over the world!





CREATE YOUR OWN MADLIBS

How do you think the story should go?

*Work with a friend, or by yourself to write your own version of
The Story of the Skull by filling in the blanks below.*

Once upon a time there was a very rich man named **(Name)** _____.
He got so rich by being the most famous of graverobbers. He robbed many graves and took
incredible treasures like jewels, money, and **(what's another incredible treasure?)**
_____. But none of this was enough.

The real treasure, the best treasure of all, was still out there...Legend told of an ancient skull from
(where in the world did this skull come from?) _____.
The skull was as old as the first Halloween, over a thousand years ago. And, the legend said this
skull could give power over people's minds.

It took the graverobber years. He traveled the entire globe. He crossed oceans and mountains and
forests. He visited **(location #1)** _____, he traveled
to **(location #2)** _____, and even went as far away as
(location #3) _____. He spoke to historians, scientists,
(occupation #1) _____ and **(occupation #2)** _____
in his quest for answers.

And at last, he tracked it down. The skull, he learned, was in a castle deep in the woods of China.
The woods were dangerous. The trees were **(describe the trees in the dangerous
forest)** _____. And he was constantly on the lookout for **(what is a dangerous
animal?)** _____ and **(what is another dangerous animal?)** _____,
but at last he made it to the castle door.

As he pushed open the door he realized the castle was full of bats that were the size of **(how big
are the bats?)** _____. They swarmed him. He had to think quickly.
He could only defeat the bats by **(how does he defeat the bats?)** _____.

Feeling **(how does he feel after fighting with the bats?)** _____, he continued
through the dark halls of the castle. And at last found the door into the dungeon.

The dungeon door was **(how big is the door?)** _____ and covered in drawings of **(what is drawn on the door?)** _____. He pushed the door with all his might, and at last it burst open.

He found himself in the dungeon. It was dark. It smelled like **(smell #1)** _____ and **(smell #2)** _____ and in the center of the room was the skull! But between him and the skull were **(how many?)** _____ hungry hyenas. The Hyenas had razor sharp teeth and were known to eat humans and **(what else do Hyenas eat?)** _____.

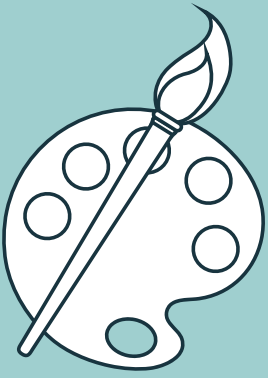
The hyenas surrounded him. They **(what is something hyenas do?)** _____, and they **(what else do hyenas do?)** _____. But he was surprised that they let him approach the skull without a fight.

As he got closer to his goal, the graverobber felt **(how does he feel?)** _____. The skull was within his grasp. And he could see it was even more incredible than he imagined. The skull was made out of **(What material is the skull made of? Bone? Crystal? Something else?)** _____. He reached out his hands and lifted it up.

Just then, the eyes shot out a rays the color of **(What color are the rays?)** _____. It terrified the man so much that he began to laugh hysterically, and he slowly turned into a laughing hyena. The hyenas surrounded him and they all began to **(What do the hyenas do together?)** _____.

Then a **(what does the skull's voice sound like?)** _____ voice came from the skull. It declared this was its plan all along. It had been luring graverobbers to the castle for centuries to turn them into a hyena army.

And now the skull was one step closer to taking over the world!

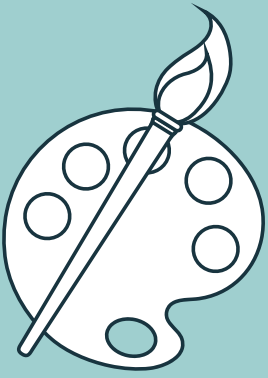


CREATE YOUR OWN ILLUSTRATIONS

What is your favorite moment from this story?

Grab some crayons, colored pencils, or markers and use these blank spaces to put your imagination on paper.

A large, empty white rectangular area intended for drawing or writing.



Need some inspiration?

Here are some ideas from our ensemble

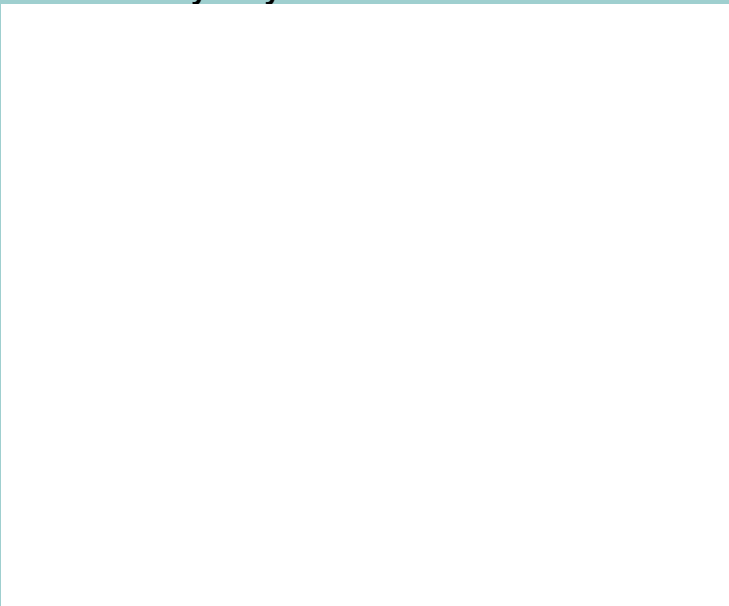
Draw: the graverobber robbing a grave



Draw: the castle in the forest



Draw: the army of hyenas



Draw: the skull



We want to see what you've created!

Snap a photo of your artwork or your madlibs
and share on social media using the hashtag #ableensemble and #oforamuse



MAKING OUR STORIES

A look at A.B.L.E.'s devising process



IN PERSON

Before Chicago's shelter-in-place order went into effect, A.B.L.E.'s adult ensemble had 3 in person rehearsals at The Menomonee Club Drucker Center. You can see photos from our time together on pages 17 and 18.

In Week 1, actors focused on **ensemble building**, and basic **improvisational skills**. As with all A.B.L.E. sessions, the group developed teamwork, listening, and creativity.

In Week 2, actors **devised** the basics stories for our 5 Shakespearean objects. Objects were spread around the studio with a facilitator and a big piece of paper at each station.

Actors broke into pairs or trios and rotated around the room, with each group answering a different question about each object (*see next page*). Each actor had a chance to answer one question about each object, so these stories truly belong to everyone.

In Week 3, actors dug deeper into the stories by creating **tableaux** of the primary locations and improvising short interactions between **characters**. They also played with **scenes** from some Shakespeare plays including *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*.

ONLINE

A.B.L.E. shifted to **weekly online rehearsals** via Zoom on March 17th. Zoom rehearsals keep the same format as in-person rehearsals, with a **dance party, warm up, and ample time for ensemble games**.

With the basic structure of each story in place, actors played **madlibs** (*see pages 11-12*) to add details and life to each story. The ensemble worked on 2 stories each week, and used the time between classes to draw pictures of their favorite moments.

In addition to focusing on the tales, actors also practiced **on-camera acting skills** by filming Shakespeare monologues and group activities. You can see these film projects across A.B.L.E.'s social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.



DEVisING QUESTIONS



WHO does this object belong to?



WHERE did this object come from and **WHERE** does our story take place?



WHEN was this object made and **WHEN** does our story take place?

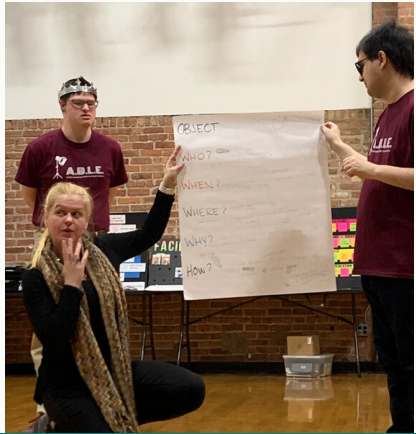


WHY is this object special?



HOW does our story end?

OUR TIME TOGETHER



DEVISING AND IMPROVISING



MEET THE ENSEMBLE



photo by Mariana Gongora

A.B.L.E.'s adult ensemble meets every Tuesday afternoon.

Supported by a team of teaching artists and volunteer facilitators, ensemble members work together to create theatre and film projects while strengthening lifelong skills including communication, confidence, and cooperation.



BEN

My catchphrase is,,,
"What the heaven?!"



MARTY

I would like to go...
To Los Angeles to be a famous actor. I will have a house with a swimming pool.



MATT D.

My catchphrase is,,,
"Seriously?"



PETER

I would like to learn...
how to play an instrument.



ANDREW

My catchphrase is...
"Are you ready?"



EMILY K.

Something special to me...
pictures of me with my family and my sister Anna.



MATT L.

I would like to go...
To the future to see myself and know that it's going to turn out okay.



EMILY L.

I would like to learn...
How to talk to animals.



MADDI

Something special to me...
I have a statue of the Eiffel Tower from my trip to Paris.



JUSTICE

Something special to me...
A statue of a mother and baby elephant. I love elephants and my mom.



SAM

I would like to learn...
to speak fluent sign language.



JAKE

I would like to go...
to the movies, diners, shopping and entertainment when we get back to normal.



A.B.L.E.

artists breaking limits & expectations

A.B.L.E. - Artists Breaking Limits & Expectations - is a Chicago-based nonprofit that creates theatre and film for, with, and by individuals with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. A.B.L.E.'s mission is to provide performing arts opportunities through which individuals with these disabilities can share who they are and all they are A.B.L.E. to do. Through its core teen and adult ensembles, specialized workshops, and outreach programming, A.B.L.E.'s actors strengthen lifelong skills including communication, focus, creativity, and teamwork. A.B.L.E.'s ensembles have staged 20 plays ranging from original works to classics from Shakespeare, Dickens, and Gilbert & Sullivan, and have premiered 2 feature films which have been recognized by several local and international festivals. By promoting practices that place participants with disabilities in the spotlight, and giving them ownership over their experiences, A.B.L.E.'s work strives to shift societal preconceptions, and build more inclusive, empathetic communities.

CONNECT WITH A.B.L.E.

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O FOR A MUSE: VOLUME 5

ONCE UPON A HYENA - THE STORY OF THE SKULL

RELEASED JUNE 19, 2020

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CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER
KATIE MANN AND 4TH WALL THEATRE COMPANY
THE MEMOMONEE CLUB DRUCKER CENTER

OTHER VOLUMES IN THIS COLLECTION

THE ABUNDANT CROWN PRINCE
THE RING AND THE MERMAID IN LOVE
THE LANTERN: GOOD DEFEATS RIDDLE
JUSTICE FOR GREASY KING LEAR

We believe everyone is A.B.L.E.
to connect, to contribute, and to create.
Help us bring more projects to life.
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