

Arcadia

October 3 - November 10, 1996

by Tom Stoppard

Directed by Laird Williamson



Photo by Gary Isaacs

Study Guide

Articles generously contributed by the Goodman Theatre unless otherwise noted.



Catch Us In The Act.

Denver Center Theatre Company

A division of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts / Donovan Marley, Artistic Director

Microsoft



USWEST



NEWS4
KOB-TV

THE DENVER POST

ARCADIA: A SYNOPSIS

"Et in Arcadia ego." ["I am in Arcadia."]

Sir Joshua Reynolds¹

Split between the first years of the 19th Century and the final years of the 20th, *Arcadia* unfolds at a country estate in Derbyshire, England. The estate, Sidley Park, is in the throes of change in 1809 and of historical exploration in the present time.

In 1809 a brilliant rakish young tutor, Septimus Hodge, has long since been outdistanced by his pupil, Thomasina Coverly. She is a 13 year old math prodigy and has discovered a rough algebraic formula that many decades later will be seen as a rudimentary blueprint of concepts in modern physics. Septimus is intrigued by this discovery but is distracted by his lust for various residents and hangers-on at the estate. One of these, Lord Byron, is a friend of Hodge. He is never seen but his impact on the plot is significant.

Thomasina's mother, the acerbic Lady Croom, has engaged a landscape architect, Richard Noakes, to transform the estate's Classical gardens into one of trendier Romantic fashion, complete with unruly forests, fallen obelisks and a hermitage-like hovel. Also visiting the estate are Ezra Chater, a poet of little merit; his unseen, over-sexed wife who has seduced Septimus; and Lady Croom's brother, Captain Brice.

In the 20th century, the estate is owned by Valentine Coverly, a descendant, and occupied by himself, his sister, Chloe, and their mute brother, Gus. Valentine is a mathematician who has discovered Thomasina's notebooks and their disturbing revelation. As Valentine does most of the play's intellectual hard labor, he is joined by a guest, historian Hannah Jarvis, a writer on Byron, who has been invited to Sidley Park to research the landscape changes that have taken place over two centuries. They are joined by Bernard Nightingale, a flamboyant scholar and social climber who is drawn to Sidley Park by rumors of Lord Byron's part in a scandal at the estate.

In the seven scenes that shift between the two periods, we see what actually took place and how the clues are then interpreted by the present-day historians. The results are a comedic and intellectual romp, with everything from English landscape architecture to the chaos theory, being discussed. *Arcadia* spills over with the ecstasy of discovery, the deep yearning to seek order in things and the joy of finding romance and love.

**"The unpredictable and the predetermined
unfold together to make everything the way it is."
~ Valentine in *Arcadia*. Act I, Scene iv.²**

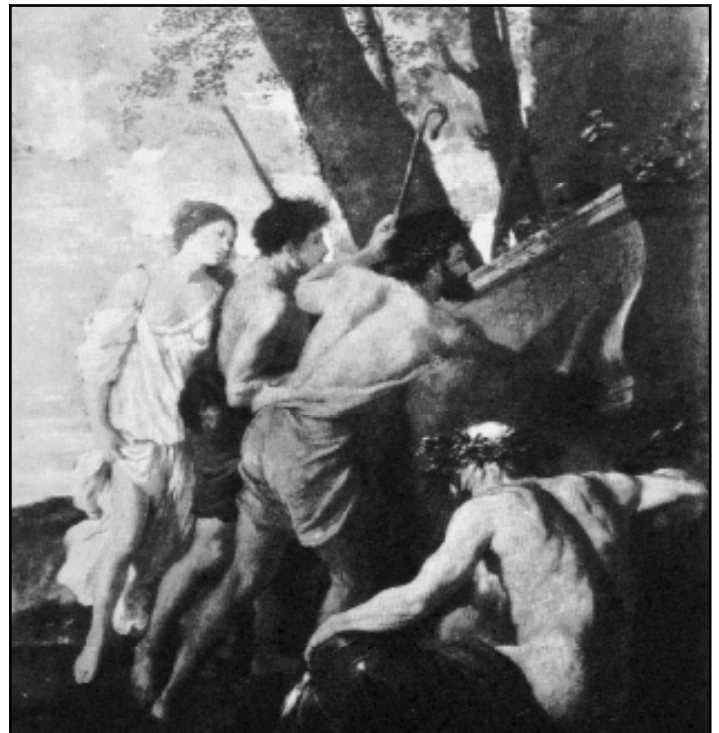
ARCADIA

Arcadia is defined as any region of simple, quiet contentment; ideally rural and rustic. The term comes from ancient Greece where this region in the Peloponnesus (the southern peninsula) is dominated by mountains and fertile valleys.

The real Arcady was the domain of Pan, Greek god of forests and meadows, who could be heard playing his pipes on Mt. Menelaus and its inhabitants were famous for their musical accomplishments and rugged virtue, but they were also known for their utter ignorance and low standard of living. As Samuel Butler wrote:

**"The old Arcadians that could trace
Their pedigree from race to race
Before the moon, were once reputed
Of all the Grecians the most stupid.
Whom nothing in the world could bring
To civil life but fiddling."³**

From a purely physical point of view, one inhabitant describes it as poor, bare, rocky and chilly, devoid of all the amenities of life with barely enough food for a herd of goats. When Greek poets wished to stage pastoral poetry, they went instead to Sicily.⁴



"Et in Arcadia Ego" by Poussin

TOM STOPPARD

"I write plays because dialogue is the most respectable way of contradicting myself."⁶



Stoppard was born Tom Straussler on July 3, 1937 in Zlin, Czechoslovakia. His father worked as a doctor for the internationally famous Bata Shoe Company. When the Germans threatened invasion, the family was transferred to the Singapore branch because one of the parents was half-Jewish. Three years later they were forced to move again when Japanese troops captured

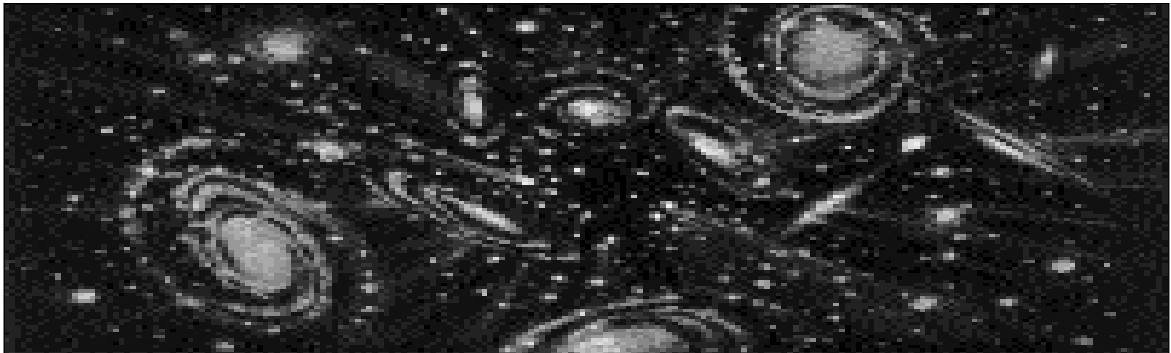
the city. Stoppard's father was killed. With his mother and brother, Tom was evacuated to India where his mother remarried Kenneth Stoppard, an army major. The family moved again to England in 1946.

Tom attended a preparatory school in Nottinghamshire and a boarding grammar school in Yorkshire. In 1954, he began his career as a journalist, working first for the *Western Daily Press* and subsequently, for the *Bristol Evening World*. As a theater reviewer for *Scene Magazine*, he became interested in writing for the stage. In 1960, he resigned his position, and became a free-lance journalist, writing radio plays and

a novel, *Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon*. His overnight success came with his play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, staged at the National Theater in London in 1967. In 1968 *The Real Inspector Hound* debuted, followed by *After Magritte* in 1970. Other successes include *Jumpers*, *Travesties* and *The Real Thing*. He has also written screenplays for *Brazil*, *The Russia House* and *Billy Bathgate*.

At a time when the theater is de-emphasizing language, stressing performance over text, Stoppard believes in the supremacy of words. In the tradition of Shaw and Wilde, Stoppard has made the stage a forum for ideas and a showcase for inventive use of language. However, this dazzling display of ideas, language and style has drawn criticism for the absence of social or political conscience in his dramas. But in 1970, he became personally active in campaigns for human rights in Eastern Europe and he wrote a series of political plays: *Professional Foul*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*, *Dogg's Hamlet* and *Cahoot's Macbeth*. He has also been criticized for not developing his characters emotionally; he silenced this judgement by writing *The Real Thing*, a touching play about marriage and marital infidelities.

"Surprise is what audiences have come to expect from Mr. Stoppard. But what seems to keep them coming back is that they never know exactly what form it will take."⁶



ENTROPY

VALENTINE: You can't run the film backwards. Heat was the first thing which didn't work that way. Not like Newton. A film of a pendulum, or a ball falling; through the air - backwards, it looks the same. But with heat - friction - a ball breaking a window it won't work backwards. You can put back the bits of glass but you can't collect up the heat of the smash. It's gone.
~ *Arcadia*, Act II, Scene iii.

The first great challenge to Newtonian physics came with the concept of entropy, the notion that order inevitably disintegrates into disorder - sensed by Stoppard's Thomasina when she is puzzled by the fact that although she can stir her spoonful of jam into her custard to create a pink mess, she can't stir the two components backwards into separate parts of custard and jam. The stirring can only move in one direction, from order to disorder, from discrete structures to an undistinguishable soup. Historically, scientists began understanding this a few years after the fictional Thomasina's intuition, with studies of the propagation of heat in solids. By

the 1860s, the second law of thermodynamics had been formulated, stating that entropy always increases in any system - the smallest subatomic system or the universe itself. Entropy increases as heat disperses, until the system is all the same temperature, motionless, inert. As Valentine lightly says in *Arcadia*, "We are all doomed? Oh yes, sure - it's called the second law of thermo-dynamics."

CHAOS THEORY

“What else, when Chaos draws all forces inward to shape a single leaf.” ~ Conrad Aiken

VALENTINE: It's an iterated algorithm.

HANNAH: What's that?

VALENTINE: Well, it's ... Jesus...it's an algorithm that's been...iterated. How'm I supposed to...?

~ *Arcadia*, Act I, Scene iv.

Stoppard never mentions chaos theory in *Arcadia*, but Valentine's studies of variations in the Sidley Park grouse populations and the “iterated algorithms” Valentine mentions all relate to study of dynamic, nonpredictable systems, the new science of chaos.

Newton described a supremely orderly universe, governed by three simple rules of motion. Its elegance seemed a glimpse into the mind of God, the supreme clockmaker, who set the universe ticking. Newton's theory worked well on a macro scale, in dealing with the motions of the planets or describing the arc of a cannonball. But as dynamic systems become more complicated, Newtonian physics become harder to apply. Theoretically there should be Newtonian equations to describe the meanderings of a river or the shape of a cloud, but the complexity of these were beyond our brains in 1809 or even, later, beyond our computers. The only recourse was to explain, as Septimus does in *Arcadia* that only “[God] has mastery of equations which lead into infinities where we cannot follow.”

Newtonian mechanics assumed that the world or universe operated according to a fixed set of physical laws. Any uncertainties were merely the result of a lack of informa-

tion or an imprecise understanding of the physical laws. Chaos theory recognizes that the universe is inherently unpredictable. The whole idea is that you can have the laws right and complete information and still not be able to make accurate predictions. Sensitivity to a small change in initial conditions has unpredictable long-term consequences. For example, the meteorologist Edward Lorenz discovered that a simple model of heat convection possesses intrinsic unpredictability, a circumstance he called the “butterfly effect,” suggesting that the mere flapping of a butterfly's wings can change the weather.

Believers in chaos - and they sometimes call themselves believers, or converts or evangelists - speculate about determinism and free will, about evolution, about the nature of conscious intelligence. They feel that they are turning back a trend in science toward reductionism, the analysis of systems in terms of their constituent parts: quarks, chromosomes, or neurons. They believe that they are looking for the whole. [James Gleick from *Chaos: Making of a New Science*.]

Valentine: It makes me so happy. To be at the beginning again, knowing almost nothing...A door like this has cracked open five or six times since we got up on our hind legs. It's the best possible time to be alive, when almost everything you knew is wrong.

~ *Arcadia*, Act I Scene iv

The Butterfly Effect acquired a technical name: sensitive dependence on initial conditions. And sensitive dependence on initial conditions was not an altogether new notion. It had a place in folklore:

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of a horse, the rider was lost;
For want of a rider, the battle was lost;
For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost!

CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM

by Sally R. Gass

“The work of the 18th Century is sound and good. The Encyclopedists—the physiocrats—the philosophers—the utopists—: these are sacred legions. To them the immense advance of humanity towards the light is due.” Victor Hugo: *Les Misérables*. VII iii

When Tom Stoppard read James Gleick’s book *Chaos*, he saw that it might serve as a metaphor for a play about the antithesis between the Classical and Romantic periods. Though the change didn’t happen overnight, the years between 1730-1830 saw great differences in philosophy, literature and the arts.

Classicism denotes the ideas and styles of ancient Greece and Rome as embodied primarily in their arts and as interpreted by later generations. Almost universally, these ideals and styles have been translated into the aesthetic notions of simplicity, harmony, restraint, proportion and reason. This belief that reason, or rational human understanding, would provide a basis for beneficial changes affecting every life brought about an intellectual movement called the Enlightenment.

In the 18th Century, all the philosophers saw themselves as continuing the work of the 17th Century pioneers—Francis Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Isaac Newton, John Locke—who had developed methods of rational inquiry that demonstrated the possibility of a world remade by the application of knowledge for human betterment. The philosophers believed that science could reveal nature as it truly is and how it could be controlled and manipulated. This belief provided an incentive to extend scientific methods into every field of inquiry, thus laying the groundwork for the development of the social sciences. Understanding human nature would emphasize the right of self-expression and self-fulfillment, the right to think freely and express one’s views publicly. Writer/philosophers such as Voltaire, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau urged individuals to do just that, but the general populace was frustrated by ignorance and repression. Thus, the enlightened literati became interested in popular education and sought to educate their contemporaries. The publication of dictionaries,

handbooks and encyclopedias produced by the enlightened were written to popularize, simplify and promote a more reasonable view of life among people of their time.

But a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing and freedom of expression must allow for discussion, debate, disagreement and, taken to its most extreme form, debacle. This debacle or upheaval was the French Revolution (1789) and the Napoleonic era (1789-1815) which questioned the belief that intelligent answers could be found to every question asked by people who wanted to be free and happy. This kind of thinking opened the door to Romanticism.

Romanticism may be thought of as anti-reason and pro-emotion. Where Enlightenment thinkers and artists assumed that humankind is essentially similar across all ages and geographic origins (hence the emphasis on the best of the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome), Romanticists believed in the uniqueness of individual imagination and expression and the interconnectedness of humanity, nature and divinity.

In England, Romantic art is found in landscape painting that conveyed nature with a feeling of immediacy and the power of individual perception. The works of John Constable and J. M. W. Turner are representative of this idea. In literature, the lyrical ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge led to the liberal, lush poetry of Byron, Shelley and Keats; fiction was dominated by Sir Walter Scott, Jane Austen and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley whose *Frankenstein* was the foreshadowing of science fiction—and perhaps the metaphor of upheaval when science attempts to alter nature.

“The wallpaper with which the men of science have covered the world of reality is falling to tatters.”



THE GENIUS OF THE GARDEN: FROM CLASSICAL TO CHAOS IN ENGLISH LANDSCAPING

~ Henry Miller. *Tropic of Cancer*.

Britons were farmers long before 43 A.D., but it was conquering Romans who introduced gardening to England. Remains of early Roman gardens in England have been dated to 75 A.D. and indicate the presence of such characteristic features as trenches, terraces and box hedges. By the 5th Century, these gardens had all but disappeared along with the Romans, and what few gardens continued to exist tended to be small and scattered. Beyond being merely “*amenui loci*” (“pleasing places”), English gardens during the Middle Ages acquired practical value. Trees and hedges defined and protected property lines. Flowers and herbs were used and sold for medicinal purposes. Lumbering

and bee-keeping also became revenue-producing adjuncts of gardening. Similarly, ponds and forest-rimmed parks provided a ready source of fish and game.

Formal gardening did not re-emerge in England until the 16th Century, largely coinciding with the Renaissance and the reigns of the Tudors and Stuarts. English gardens of this period were styled after classical models borrowed from Italy via France and they were botanical testaments to renewed interest in the paired classical ideals of emotional restraint and intellectual rigor. Enclosed recesses, terraces and tree-lined pathways were laid out with geometric precision on x/y axes and carefully punctuated with ornamental



statues, fountains, turf mazes and topiary. As epitomized by the gardens of Versailles in France, gardens in the classical style were typically architectural extensions of the home, decorative outdoor spaces for public entertaining.

The concept and practice of gardening in England altered dramatically during the course of the 18th century, as England began to redefine its place in the political and social universe and, in particular, to disassociate itself from France. Not surprisingly, English poets and painters were infected with the spirit of change and their works encouraged others to follow suit. For professional gardeners, this meant rejecting the rigid aesthetics of the classical style and taking irregular unpredictable Nature herself as their guide. Inspiration came from such sources as the poetry of Milton, Spenser and Pope, popular translation of Virgil and Horace, and paintings by Poussin and Claude — all of which presented an idyllic, Arcadian vision of nature. Similarly influential was philosopher John Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding," which advocated experiencing nature firsthand as the best means of acquiring knowledge.

The most renowned practitioner of the new style of landscape (or "landskip") gardening was Lancelot "Capability" Brown, so-called because of his talent for recognizing the natural capabilities of any given piece of property and then realizing its full potential in his designs — sometimes referred to as fulfilling "the genius of the place." Brown owed much to his immediate predecessors, especially Charles Bridgeman, who excelled at orchestrating grand vistas, and William Kent, who replaced the hedge with the "ha-ha" or "sunken wall." Among Brown's most significant contributions to the new style were lawns which swept right up to the

front door; grand and sensuous lakes and streams, and the elimination of statues, buildings and terraces that would otherwise interrupt one's view of the open landscape.

As Stoppard's play opens in 1809, it is Brown's distinctive and sublime Arcadian vision, which is about to be plowed under by Richard Noakes and his newfangled steam engine, the instruments of yet another new style of gardening — the "picturesque" style, an extreme variation of landscape gardening popularized by Humphrey Repton. Heavily inspired by the painting of Salvator Rosa, as well as by the imagery of Gothic poetry and romance novels, the picturesque style was a direct challenge to what was perceived as "dullness" in Brown's designs. Arguing that Brown had effectively erased all evidence of the artist's hand at work, Repton and his followers responded by transforming gently flowing brooks into wild cascades, shallow dells into craggy grottos and airy stands of trees into gloomy forests. With the further addition of toppled statues, artificial ruins and even hermits to live in them, gardens in the picturesque style became invitations to unbridled imagination and feeling — true freedom according to some, "cheap thrills" according to Hannah Jarvis of Stoppard's *Arcadia*. With the aid of water-color sketch books showing detailed "before" and "after" views of his garden plans, Repton was usually able to allay any fears his clients might have. Nonetheless, owing to the difficulty of finding landscapes suitable for the kind of drastic excavation which it required, gardening in the picturesque style was relatively short-lived in England.



**To build, to plant, whatever
you intend,
To rear the column, or the
Arch to bend,
To swell the Terras, or to sink
the Grot;
In all, let Nature never be
forgot.
Consult the Genius of the
Place in all,
That tells the Waters or to
rise, or fall,
Or helps th'ambitious
Hill the Heav'ns to scale,
Or scoops in circling Theatres
the Vale,
Calls in the Country, catches
opening Glades,
Joins willing Woods, and
varies Shades from
Shades,
Now breaks or now directs,
th'intending Lines:
Paints as you plant, and as
you work, Designs.**

~ Alexander Pope,
On the art of landscaping, 1731

BYRON

**"Lord Byron was an Englishman
A poet I believe,
His first works in old England
Were poorly received.
Perhaps it was Lord Byron's fault
And perhaps it was not.
His life was full of misfortune
Ah, strange was his lot."**

~ Julia A. Moore: *Sketch of Lord Byron's Life*.

Although never seen onstage, the poet George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) figures prominently in *Arcadia* - as Septimus's good friend and as an object of desire for both Lady Croom and her daughter. And questions about the poet's whereabouts and activities at Sidley Park in 1809 are raised throughout the play by Bernard and Hannah, Stoppard's present-day literary sleuths.



Lord Byron became an extraordinarily popular figure shortly after the 1809 episodes referred to in the play, owing not only to his passionate, insightful poetry, but also to his personal magnetism and air of mystery. Educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, Byron had already published two books of poetry by the age of 19. The second of these, *Hours of Idleness*, was severely criticized in the *Edinburgh Review*, prompting the young poet's earliest notable work, the satiric *English*

Bards and Scotch Reviewers.

While writing *English Bards* in 1808, Byron began planning a journey abroad for the spring of 1809, his 21st year. As the journey approached and Byron sank further and further into debt, he became more and more anxious to depart, writing: "there are circumstances which render [my leaving England] absolutely indispensable, and quit the country I must imme-

diately." But as his biographer Leslie Marchand writes: "The manner in which [Byron] speaks of the urgency suggests some personal impasse more serious than the opportunities of his creditors." Later, while in Greece Byron wrote a friend that it was not fear of the reaction to his satire *English Bards* which caused his departure, "but I will never live in England if I can avoid it. Why - must remain a secret." In *Arcadia*, Stoppard's academic detectives try their hand at cracking Lord Byron's secret.

After visiting the southern provinces of Spain and the shores of the Mediterranean with a friend, Byron returned to England in 1812 to publish the first two books of his most famous work, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The work was an immediate success and Byron "awoke one morning and found [himself] famous." By the time of his death in 1824 at the age of 36, Byron had completed all five books of *Childe Harold* and numerous other works including *The Prisoner of Chillon*; *Manfred, a tragedy*; *Don Juan*; and *Cain: a Mystery*.

In 1812, after Lord Byron had returned from his grand tour and become a celebrity for *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, he became involved romantically with Lady Caroline Lamb. Married to Sir William Lamb, who later as Lord Melbourne was Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister, Lady Caroline carried on a passionate love affair with Byron. Such affairs were quite common in society, but she shocked her contemporaries by publicly proclaiming her love and pursuing him relentlessly, in the most indiscreet and scandalous manner. When Byron tired of her and the affair ended, Lady Caroline gave her account of the romance in her book, *Glenarvon*, published anonymously. It was an immense success, but its authorship was transparent and the events and major characters were immediately recognized. As a result, Lady Caroline completely destroyed her place in society, while Byron went on to greater glory and numerous lovers.

**"Lord Byron is only great as a poet;
as soon as he reflects, he is a child."**

~ Goethe: *Conversations with Eckermann*,
January 18, 1825.

NOTES

1. Panofsky, p. 295
2. Delaney, p. 49
3. Panofsky, p. 298
4. Delaney, p. 266
5. Delaney, p. 260
6. Butler, p. 470

SOURCES

Butler, Samuel. *Satires and Miscellaneous Poetry and Prose*. Cambridge, England: R. Lamar. 1929.
Delaney, Paul. *Tom Stoppard in Conversation*. Ann Arbor:

University of Michigan Press, 1994.
Grolier Encyclopedia. "Classicism and Romanticism".
Panofsky, Erwin. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955.
"Pierre de Fermat". *World Book Encyclopedia* Vol. 7. Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corp., 1972.
Rusinko, Susan. *Tom Stoppard*. Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1986.
Scott-Kilvert, Ian. *British Writers*. Supplement I. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1987.
Stoppard, Tom. *Arcadia*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993.
Strickland, Margot. *The Byron Women*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974.

TEACHER'S SECTION

A NOTE TO TEACHERS

Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* presents a number of challenges to both readers and audiences. His play contains ideas and concepts that your students may not be familiar with, such as **chaos theory** and **Newtonian physics**. Please do not be put off by these concepts. The study guide helps make these topics interesting and accessible.

The *Activity Package* places the students into the roles of modern-day detectives, like the characters of Bernard Nightingale and Hannah Jarvis. As detectives, they must uncover and discover the past. Your knowledge, along with the materials we have provided in the study guide, will help guide their exploration of *Arcadia*!

**"... Ignorance should be like an empty vessel
waiting to be filled at the well of truth —
not a cabinet of vulgar curios."
~ Lady Croom, *Arcadia***

THE ACTIVITIES

READING THE PLAY

The Activity Package suggests that your students read only three scenes of the play, all taking place in the present day. These scenes will place them in situations that parallel the situations of the characters of Bernard and Hannah who are trying to find clues to uncover the mysteries of the play.

The fourth present-day scene and all of the scenes from the past, which are not assigned to be read before the performance, are definitely worthy of study. We encourage you and your students to read the entire play after seeing the show. By doing so, your students will have a chance to return to the text and, with the knowledge they have gained from their preparation and from the performance, more fully understand the mysteries of *Arcadia*.

WHO'S WHO

All characters in *Arcadia* have very specific objectives; each one furthers the play's action. Ask the students to use the *Who's Who* section provided to document all facts, clues and suspicions detected concerning the characters in their reading. Certain characters, such as Lord Byron, are never seen on stage, but they are essential to the play. The better your students understand the characters and their motives, the better they will understand the play and its secrets. The *Who's Who* pages should be used during the first reading stage so that the students may follow along and document the characters as they appear.

THE DETECTIVE'S LOGS

The questions in the *Detective's Logs* are there to guide the students through the present-day scenes, searching for the clues that will lead them to speculate about the occurrences of the past. During the second reading of a scene, ask the students to search the text in order to answer the questions. When this is complete, ask the students to meet with their small group and discuss their discoveries after reading the scene aloud once more. If other questions arise, encourage the students to explore them with their group after the third reading and then address the questions in an entire class discussion.

The answers to the logs may be shared, but encourage the students to develop their own theories. This will stimulate debate in the class discussions. Try not to treat this process as a competition; no one is right or wrong so long as each theory is inferred from the information provided in the scene.

ACTIVITIES TIED TO THE TEXT

The first activities the students encounter after the "Teamwork" sections, such as "Creating a Connection," "You Are the Scientist" and "Penning the Past" are taken from topics the characters in the play encounter and dwell upon. The activities themselves will broaden the students' understanding of the literary figures, the scientific theories and the connection between the past and the present. The articles to which these sections refer are either in the study guide or activity package.

SEEING THE PERFORMANCE

Once the students have formulated their theories, it is time to attend the performance. The exploration of the complex topics before seeing the play will allow the students to watch and enjoy the true elements of the show—the love story and the mystery. Many surprises will be unveiled as they watch the play unfold.

AFTER THE SHOW

When the production of *Arcadia* is over, the exploration of the play continues. The performance reveals issues that were not addressed in studying the present-day scenes. Take these new questions back to the classroom and discuss them as a group. Read the entire play, using the text as your guide as you rediscover the mysteries within *Arcadia*. This play can be read and viewed over and over again, finding new surprises each time.

POST SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the theatrical elements of the production (i.e. costumes, set, lighting accents) add or detract from your experience of the play?

2. Compare your theories with what really happened in the past. Was anyone correct? Did anyone guess that Ezra Chater was both the poet and the botanist? Do you believe Septimus was the hermit? Why or why not? Take the findings a step further. What do you believe happened to the present and past characters after the play ended?

3. Why did Stoppard choose to set the “Romantic” scenes between 1809 and 1812? Why did he call the play *Arcadia*? (Look it up in the dictionary.)

4. In Act II Scene i, Valentine and Bernard argue whether the importance of a discovery lies in who makes the discovery or the process of discovery itself. With whom do you agree? Why? In response to this argument, Hannah states in Act II, Scene iii, “It’s all trivial — your grouse, my hermit, Bernard’s Byron. Comparing what we’re looking for misses the point. It’s wanting to know that makes us matter.” What does she mean? Do you agree? Why or why not?

5. Each of the characters in this play has a true passion, whether it is writing, love, mathematics, etc. As a class, list the characters and their passions. Do you have a similar passion as one of these characters? If so, what? Do you have other passions or goals? How do you plan to pursue these passions or reach these goals? According to Valentine, there is “too much noise” for him to complete his research. What “noise”, if any, will stand in your way? How can you overcome this “noise”?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Love stories appear in literature all of the time, as does the theme of unrequited love. Chloe makes the statement in Act II, Scene iii, “...the only thing going wrong is people fancying people who aren’t supposed to be in that part of the plan.” Draw a chart, using all of the characters that connects them to the other characters with whom they are in love or having an affair. What are the similarities between the love affairs of the past with those of the present? What is the significance of the parallel dances in the final scene?

2. Now that you understand the problems of deducing history through bits of information, research a historical period. What “facts” did you find? Do you believe them to be true? Why or why not? How could these facts have been distorted to reach the conclusions that you found in your research? What else could have happened? Now write a short story, tracing the life of a fictional character whose life would have been affected through this period. How did his/her life change from the beginning to the end of this period? Where does he/she go after this period has ended?

3. Each student should read an excerpt of a Byron poem (*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* perhaps) aloud and analyze its connection and relevance to *Arcadia*. (You may want to use this as an exercise in performance.) Why does Lord Byron, the famous romantic poet, never appear on stage? What is his purpose in this play? How does he serve the main story of *Arcadia*?

4. Stoppard has an astonishing command of the English language, and many of his words and phrases have double meaning, both to the audience and to the characters. How many meanings can you get out of a phrase such as Thomasina did with carnal embrace? Skim the text, finding three places where Stoppard uses this play on words. How do each of the characters interpret these phrases? How do these various interpretations influence the communication between the characters? What do you think Stoppard is trying to say about language and communication in general?

ANNOTATED PAPER TRAIL

This is an easy reference tool for all of the documents that may be mentioned in both the past and the present.

MATHEMATICS PRIMER

Annotation: Thomasina's algebra primer, a slim volume dating from 1809, which is preserved as part of the Croom papers. Hannah finds Septimus' name inscribed in the primer. She also finds Thomasina's marginal note – "I, Thomasina Coverly, have found...the New Geometry of Irregular Forms" – written there in 1812, the same year Thomasina completed her "rabbit equation" (see **Lesson Book**).

References: I.1.1 (1809); I.4.60/62/65/71 (present); II.3.56/57 (1812).

"THE COUCH OF EROS"

Annotation: Ezra Chater's 2nd verse narrative, a substantial quarto written in 1809. Publication fee paid by Captain Brice, Lady Croom's brother and Charity Chater's lover. Copy presumably sent to Septimus by his brother, editor of the *Piccadilly Recreation*, inscribed by Chater to Septimus with Thomasina's pen on April 10, 1809. Borrowed by Lady Croom on April 11, with three Chater notes inserted, to show to Byron for possible reference in his 2nd edition of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Becomes part of Byron's private collection. Later sold in Lot 74A to pay Byron's debts. Purchased in 1816 by bookseller/publisher John Nightingale, but left in country house cellar until house sold to make way for Channel Tunnel work. Subsequently, property of the firm of Nightingale and Matlock. Obtained by Bernard from Nightingale, his cousin. Bernard misinterprets Chater's inscription to Septimus. He also attributes underlined passages, which appear in the *Piccadilly Recreation* review to Byron and mistakenly assumes that the Chater letters were written to Byron and inserted after book borrowed from Septimus. The principal basis for Bernard's theory that Byron killed Chater in a duel on April 10, 1809 and left England immediately after.

References: I.1.2/11/12 (1809); I.2.29/30/42/43/44 (present); I.3.56/57 (1809); II.1.4/5 (present).

PORTFOLIO WITH TIES

Annotation: Septimus' portfolio, dating from 1809 and preserved as part of the Croom papers. Found by Bernard in a top cupboard of the Croom library. Contains loose papers, along with Thomasina's primer, lesson book and diagram of heat exchange, which Septimus presumably saved and kept in his portfolio.

References: I.1.1 (1809); I.4.60/62/71 (present); II.3.3,34 (present); II.3.35/36/39/47(1812); II.3.64 (present).

EZRA CHATER NOTE #1 TO SEPTIMUS

Annotation: Chater's challenge to Septimus — "Sir, we have a matter to settle. I wait on you in the gun room. E. Chater. Esq." Delivered to Septimus by Jellaby on April 10, 1809. Inserted by Septimus into "The Couch of Eros," where it remains when Lady Croom borrows the book. Found by Bernard, who mistakes it as a note to Byron.

References: I.1.5/6 (1809); I.2.43 (present); I.3.57 (1809).

NEWTON'S LAW OF MOTION (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Sir Isaac Newton, English mathematician and natural philosopher (i.e., physicist) proposed three laws of motion in his 1687 text *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Newton sought to reveal the true mechanics of nature through his study of the motion of bodies in orbit. In 1809, Thomasina contemplates the limitations of Newtonian law, which is deterministic and reductionist (i.e., anti-chaotic). In 1812, Septimus presents Thomasina with an essay from the Scientific Academy of Paris, which contradicts Newtonian law as it pertains to the propagation of heat in a solid body (see **Prize Essay on Heat Exchange**). This knowledge inspires Thomasina's diagram and essay on heat exchange, the culmination of her long fascination with the behavior of "bodies in heat."

References: I.1.7 (1809); II.1.12 (present); II.3.30 (present); II.3.41/45 (1812); II.3.59/60 (present).

ARITHMETICA (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Mathematics text written by Pierre de Fermat. Septimus points out to Thomasina that Fermat wrote in his book margin that he had discovered a proof for his "last theorem" but lacked sufficient space to write it out. Thomasina concludes that Fermat was joking and this "joke" inspires the note that Thomasina writes in the margin of her mathematics primer in 1812 (see **Mathematics Primer**).

References: I.1.8 (1809).

CHARITY CHATER NOTE #1 TO SEPTIMUS

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Note from Mrs. Chater asking Septimus to meet her in the Sidley Park gazebo. Probably delivered to Septimus on April 9, 1809, the day before they meet. Septimus later mentions the note to Ezra Chater.

References: I.1.9 (1809).

"THE MAID OF TURKEY" (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Ezra Chater's 1st verse narrative, written in 1808 and critically reviewed in the *Piccadilly Recreation*. Septimus tells Chater that he keeps a copy by his bedside (a joke). Thomasina tells Septimus that Byron greatly admires his article about the book (*PR* review?). Bernard mistakenly assumes that the *PR* review was written by Byron and prompted Chater's challenge to a duel (see **Ezra Chater Note #3**).

References: I.1.10 (1809); I.2.29/30 (present); I.3.51 (1809); II.1.6/7 (present).

PICCADILLY RECREATION (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Thrice-weekly folio sheet edited by Septimus' older brother (a connection of which Bernard seems unaware). Bernard has photocopies of "The Maid of Turkey" and "The Couch of Eros" reviews, which appeared in 1808/1809 issues of the *PR* (see **Photocopies of PR Reviews**).

References: I.1.10 (1809); I.2.30 (present); II.1.6/7 (present).

GARDEN PLANS

Annotation: Rolled-up plans for transforming the Sidley Park gardens. Carried by the landscape architect, Richard Noakes.

References: I.1,12 (1809).

LEATHER SKETCH BOOK

Annotation: Contains Noakes' before/after watercolors of the Sidley Park gardens. Placed on the reading stand by Captain Brice. Preserved as part of the Croom papers and studied by Hannah. Contains Thomasina's ink drawing of the Sidley Park hermit (see **Drawing of the Sidley Park Hermit**).

References: I. 1,3 (1809); I.2,20 (present).

GAME BOOKS

Annotation: Including Lord Croom's game books, 200 years of continuous data recording Sidley Park game populations. Preserved as part of the Croom papers and stored by Chloe in the commode. The basis of Valentine's computer study (the Coverly set), by which he is attempting to derive an algorithmic equation from graphs of annual grouse populations. Valentine recalls an 1809 entry about Byron shooting a hare. Confirmed by Bernard's citation of an entry on April 10, 1809 — "fourteen pigeon, one hare (Lord B.)."

References: I.1,18 (1809); I.2,41 (present); I.4,64/70 (present); II.1,3 (present).

DRAWING OF THE SIDLEY PARK HERMIT

Annotation: Thomasina's ink impression of the Sidley Park hermit, fashioned after John the Baptist in the wilderness. Drawn in Noakes' leather sketch book and preserved as part of the Croom papers (see **Leather Sketch Book**). Mistaken by Hannah as a likeness of the hermit drawn by Noakes before the hermitage was built.

References: I.1,18/19 (1809); I.2,35/36 (present).

CHARITY CHATER NOTE #2 TO SEPTIMUS

Annotation: Warning note from Charity delivered to Septimus by Thomasina on April 10, 1809 — "My husband has sent for pistols." Inserted by Septimus into "The Couch of Eros," where it remains when Lady Croom borrows the book. Found by Bernard, who mistakes it as a note to Byron.

References: I.1,19 (1809); I.2,43 (present).

GARDEN BOOKS

Annotation: Pocket-sized journals kept by Lady Croom and preserved as part of the Croom papers. Studied by Hannah in preparation for her new book on the Sidley Park hermit. Hannah finds an October 1, 1810 entry, which describes a dwarf dahlia named for Charity Chater; this entry also includes a reference to Ezra Chater, thus discrediting Bernard's theory that Chater was killed in a duel with Byron in 1809.

References: I.2,20 (present); II.3,44/52/53 (present).

THE GENIUS OF THE PLACE (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Hannah's new book, a history of the Sidley Park gardens and hermitage from 1750-1834 which will be based

upon her Croom papers research.

References: I.2,22/26/35 (present).

CARO (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Suggested title of Hannah's best-selling book about Lady Caroline Lamb, Byron's lover. Panned by Bernard in the *Observer* but admired by Lady Croom for its account of Lady Caroline's garden at Brocket Hall.

References: I.2,22/28/31/33 (present); II.1,10 (present).

BERNARD'S LETTER TO LORD CROOM

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Typewritten letter of inquiry mailed to Lord Croom. Receiving no response, Bernard telephones the house and speaks with Valentine about meeting with "Ms. Jarvis" regarding access to the Croom papers.

References: I.2.24/25 (present).

BRITISH LIBRARY DATABASE (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Contains reference to a death notice for Ezra Chater, botanist killed in Martinique in 1810 by a monkey bite. Reference found by Bernard but dismissed as a different Ezra Chater. Lady Croom conversation with Septimus and garden book entry found by Hannah (see **Garden Books**) confirm that Ezra Chater, botanist, was also Ezra Chater, poet.

References: I.2,30 (present).

BRITISH LIBRARY PERIODICAL INDEX

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Cites reviews of "The Maid of Turkey" and "The Couch of Eros," but includes no personal details about Ezra Chater. Found by Bernard.

References: I.2,30 (present).

REVIEW OF CARO (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Bernard's critical review of Hannah's book written for the observer. (See **Caro**.)

References: I.2,31 (present).

PAY BOOK

Annotation: Includes an entry regarding Septimus' allowance for wine and candles. Preserved as part of the Croom papers and studied by Hannah.

References: I.2,34 (present).

SEPTIMUS' LETTER OF SELF-RECOMMENDATION

Annotation: Septimus' letter of application for the position of Sidley Park tutor to Thomasina and Augustus. Includes Septimus' date of birth — 1787. Preserved as part of the Croom papers and studied by Hannah.

References: I.2,34 (present); II.1,19 (present).

CROOM LIBRARY CATALOG

Annotation: Compiled in the 1880s and preserved as part of the Croom papers. Studied by Hannah, who tells Bernard that it contains no references to Ezra Chater.

References: I.2,34 (present).

UNSPECIFIED CROOM LETTERS

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Preserved as part of the Croom papers and studied by Hannah, who tells Bernard that they contain no references to Chater or Byron.

References: I.2,34/35 (present).

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK LETTER

Annotation: Peacock's account of his visit to Sidley Park in the 1830s, which includes a description of the hermit of Sidley Park as a "sage of lunacy." Hannah first finds an excerpt of the letter in an 1862 article on hermits and anchorites published in the *Cornhill Magazine* (see **Cornhill Magazine**) and she mistakenly assumes that the hermit's madness was a result of the "Romantic sham." Working from Bernard's hunch that Peacock's letter was written to William Thackeray — editor of the *CM* in 1862, and whose father and Peacock had both worked for the East India Company — Hannah obtains a complete holographic copy of the original letter from the India Office Library in which she discovers that the hermit died in 1834 at age 34. Based on this information, Hannah concludes that Septimus was the hermit of Sidley Park.

References: I.2,36-38 (present); II.1,1/2/4/17-19 (present).

CORNHILL MAGAZINE

Annotation: Literary magazine edited by English novelist William Thackeray from 1860 to 1863. Hannah has an 1862 issue of the magazine, which includes an article citing Thomas Peacock's letter about his trip to Sidley Park (see **Thomas Love Peacock Letter**).

References: I.2,36/37; I.4.72 (present).

HERMIT'S PAPERS (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Stacks of papers found in the hermitage after the hermit's death in 1834 and burned. Cited in Hannah's research materials. Mistaken as the ramblings of a mad genius, but actually Septimus' proofs of the end of the world derived from Thomasina's diagram and essay on heat exchange.

References: I.2,38/40 (present).

ENGRAVING OF SIDLEY PARK

Annotation: Engraving done in 1730 and preserved as part of the Croom papers. Studied by Hannah.

References: I.2,38 (present).

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Romance verse narrative written by Lord Byron. Its hero is admired by Thomasina as "the most poetical and pathetic and bravest . . . and the most modern and the handsomest" in any book she ever read. Hannah tells Bernard that a copy of the first edition, which she found in the Croom library, contains no inscription by Byron.

References: I.2,40 (present); II.3,38 (1812).

ENGLISH LORDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS

Annotation: Satire written by Byron and first published in March, 1809. Thomasina tells Septimus that she saw and heard Byron reading excerpts to Lady Croom in the Sidley Park gazebo. A first edition copy is found by Hannah in the Croom library and Bernard discovers a pencilled inscription in this copy, which alludes to Ezra Chater and "The Couch of Eros." Bernard attributes the inscription to Byron.

References: I.2,40/44 (present); I.3,51 (1809); I.4,66/67 (present); II.1,16 (present).

PHOTOCOPIES OF PR REVIEWS

Annotation: Bernard presents photocopies as evidence for his theory that Byron wrote the negative reviews of "The Maid of Turkey" and "The Couch of Eros," which were the direct motive for Ezra Chater's demand for satisfaction.

References: I.2,43 (present).

BYRON'S REVIEW OF WORDSWORTH

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Cited by Bernard as point of reference for attributing *PR* reviews of "The Maid of Turkey" and "The Couch of Eros" to Byron. Valentine disputes this stylistic connection.

References: I.2,43 (present); II.1,11 (present).

EZRA CHATER NOTE #2 TO SEPTIMUS

Annotation: "Sir — I am become undeceived . . . I await satisfaction as a man and a poet, L. Chater. Esq." Note delivered to Septimus by Jellaby on April 11, 1809. Inserted by Septimus into "The Couch of Eros," where it remains when Lady Croom borrows the book. Found by Bernard, who mistakes it as a note to Byron.

References: I.2,44 (present); I.3,49/56 (1809).

SEPTIMUS' UNSPECIFIED PAPERS

Annotation: Presumably, Septimus' review of the "Couch of Eros," which he first folds into a letter and puts in his pocket, then later covers and seals with wax. Septimus tells Jellaby that he will have a letter to post.

References: I.3,49/52/53 (1809).

LATIN UNSEEN LESSON

Annotation: Excerpt from Domitius Enobarbus' speech in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (II.2.196-204), which Septimus has assigned to Thomasina to translate from Latin into English. Thomasina accuses Septimus of "cheating" when she realizes that the passage is from Shakespeare, and that Septimus has only pretended that its source is more obscure and difficult.

References: I.3,49-55 (1809).

LESSON BOOK

Annotation: Book in which Thomasina writes out her homework, presumably saved by Septimus and kept in his portfolio. Preserved as part of the Croom papers. Includes Thomasina's 1809 discovery/fancy about the limitations of algebraic equations (given a grade of A- by Septimus), as

well as her “rabbit equation” numerous facing pages of sequentially ordered equations and scaled graphs, first conceived in 1809 as the “apple leaf equation.” Completed in 1812, and recognized by Valentine as an iterated algorithm (basis of chaos theory). Valentine studies the rabbit equation as he works on his Coverly set computer program.

References: I.3,52/53 (1809); I.4.60/61/71 (present); II.3,33/34 (present); II.3,36 (1812).

DIAGRAM OF HEAT EXCHANGE

Annotation: Thomasina’s drawing with math notations, scrawled on a piece of paper torn from her drawing book (see **Drawing Book 1**) and given to Septimus on the eve of her 17th birthday, the night she dies. Kept by Septimus in his portfolio and preserved as part of the Croom papers. Studied by Hannah and Valentine, who finally recognizes its conceptual significance as a refutation of Newtonian law.

References: I.4,60/62 (present); II.3,47/49 (1812); II.3,58-60 (present).

LADY CROOM LETTER TO LORD CROOM

Annotation: Letter written from London in 1810, which reports the marriage of Charity Chater and Captain Brice. Preserved as part of the Croom papers. Hannah shows the letter to Bernard who mistakenly assumes that it serves to support his theory about Ezra Chater’s death.

References: I.4,68 (present).

BERNARD’S NOTES

Annotation: Written draft of Bernard’s theory that Byron killed Ezra Chater in a duel at Sidley Park and left England immediately after, thus accounting for his whereabouts on April 10-12, 1809.

References: II.1,1-9 (present).

BYRON’S LETTERS

LETTER TO SOLICITOR (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Letter dated April 16, 1809 in which Byron states that he must “quit the country...immediately.” Cited by Bernard in notes which he reads to Hannah and Valentine.

References: II.1,1 (present).

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Cited by Hannah as evidence that none of Byron’s preserved letters includes references to the reviews of “The Maid of Turkey” and “The Couch of Eros”

References: II.1.6 (present).

FEBRUARY LETTER (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Letter written in February, 1809 and cited by Hannah as evidence that Byron’s departure from England was neither impulsive nor hasty.

References: II.1,9 (present).

LOST LETTER TO SEPTIMUS (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Letter which Bernard asserts that Byron must have written to Septimus following duel with Ezra Chater, with instructions to burn it after it’s been read.

References: II.1,7 (present)

ACTUAL LETTER TO SEPTIMUS

Annotation: Letter delivered to Septimus by Jellaby on April 12, 1809. Septimus puts it in his pocket unopened and later burns it in front of Lady Croom.

References: II.2,25/26 (1819).

“SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY” (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Romance poem by Lord Byron. Bernard asserts that it was written after Byron returned home from a party.

References: II.1,13 (present).

“BYRON AND LADY CAROLINE LAMB AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY” (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Ink study by Henry Fuseli, which appears on the jacket of Hannah’s book, *Caro*. Bernard disputes its authenticity, citing a recent journal article, which asserts that the study was done no earlier than 1820 (see **Byron Society Journal**). Its authenticity is supported by Septimus and Lady Croom’s account to Thomasina of having observed Fuseli sketching Byron and his “companion” at the Royal Academy in 1812.

References: II.1,14 (present); II.3,46 (1812).

BYRON SOCIETY JOURNAL

Annotation: Literary journal sent to Bernard by the Byron Society, which contains an article disputing the authenticity of Fuseli’s ink study of Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb. Bernard gives the journal to Hannah.

References: II.1,14 (present).

PEAKS TRAVELLER AND GAZETTEER

Annotation: Unillustrated book written by James Godolphin in 1832. Bernard shows Hannah pages, which describe the Sidley Park hermit and his pet tortoise.

References: II.1,17 (present).

SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS

(MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Scientific law which states that during any process the entropy of a system and its surroundings — i.e. the capacity to undergo spontaneous thermodynamic change — is either zero or positive, and thus the entropy of the universe as a whole tends toward a maximum. Valentine and Hannah discuss the possibility that Thomasina may have discovered this law independently.

References: II.1,18/19 (present).

SEPTIMUS’ LETTER TO LADY CROOM

Annotation: A love letter left in Septimus’ room to be read “in the event of my death.” Found and read by Lady Croom, then burned by Septimus.

References: II.2,23/28 (1809).

SEPTIMUS’ LETTER TO THOMASINA

Annotation: Letter left by Septimus in his room to be read “in

the event of my death,” which alludes to the rice pudding conversation. Found and read by Lady Croom, then burned by Septimus.

References: II.2,23/28 (1809).

“EVEN IN ARCADIA — SEX, LITERATURE AND DEATH AT SIDLEY PARK”

Annotation: Published account of Bernard’s theory, which Chloe reads to Valentine and Gus from the Saturday newspaper.

References: II.3,29 (present).

“BYRON BANGS WIFE. SHOTS HUBBY”

Annotation: Published account of Bernard’s theory which Hannah reads to Chloe, Valentine and Gus from a tabloid newspaper.

References: II.3,30 (present).

PRIZE ESSAY ON HEAT EXCHANGE

Annotation: Essay published in French by the Scientific Academy of Paris, which asserts that Newtonian law is contradicted by the action of bodies in heat (see **Newton’s Law of Motion**). Septimus gives Thomasina the book in which the essay appears, then retrieves it when she has finished reading.

References: II.3,35/41 (1812).

DRAWING BOOK I

Annotation: Book in which Thomasina practices drawing geometric solids. Her diagram of heat exchange and her picture of Septimus and Plautus are also drawn here and later torn out.

References: II.3,36 (1812).

DRAWING BOOK II

Annotation: Book in which Gus practices drawing geometric solids.

References: II.3,37 (1812).

“DARKNESS” (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Poem written by Byron, which Hannah recites to Valentine.

References: II.3,38 (present).

BOOK OF WALTZES (MENTIONED, BUT NEVER SEEN)

Annotation: Brought to Sidley Park by Lady Croom; she plays duets from them with Count Zelinsky within earshot of Septimus and Thomasina.

References: II.3,41 (1809).

HANNAH’S GARDEN BOOK NOTES

Annotation: Notes for Hannah’s new book on the Sidley Park hermit (see ***The Genius of the Place***).

References: I.3,44 (present).

DRAWING OF SEPTIMUS AND PLAUTUS

Annotation: Ink drawing completed by Thomasina for Septimus on the eve of her 17th birthday (see **Drawing Book I**). With Septimus’ permission, Augustus takes the drawing to keep. Gus finds the drawing in an old folio and gives it to Hannah.

References: II.3,50 (1812); II,3,52 (present).

THOMASINA’S ESSAY ON HEAT EXCHANGE

Annotation: Essay composed by Thomasina in 1812 to explicate her diagram on heat exchange. Read by Septimus, then left beside the candlestick while Septimus and Thomasina waltz. Presumably, destroyed in the fire that kills Thomasina.

References: II.3,56/58 (1812).

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND HISTORICAL FIGURES

ANCHORITE: Synonymous with hermit — a person retired to a solitary place for religious seclusion.

ALBEMARLE STREET/CLARENDON HOUSE: Many references in Byron's life. Clarendon House, located at no. 50 Albemarle Street, has since 1812 been the home of John Murray, the publishers, among others, of Byron and Jane Austen. The great literary salon of the Regency period, Clarendon House was the site of the burning of Byron's memoirs.

ARCADIA: Mountainous region of the central Peloponnesus of ancient Greece. The pastoral character of Arcadian life together with its isolation partially explains why it was represented as a paradise in Greek and Roman bucolic poetry and in the literature of the Renaissance. In ancient times, Arcadia was bounded on the north by Actaea, on the south by Messenia and Laconia, on the east by Argolis, and on the west by Elis. It was thus cut off from the coast on all sides. In Roman times, Arcadia fell into decay. It was a scene of conflict during the War of Greek Independence (1821-29), in which Byron was a key player.

BEATERS AND BUTTS: Men from villages who walk through the woods and heather to scare/flush birds into the air. "Butts" are presumably herders of the birds working alongside the "beaters."

BEAU BRUMMEL (1778-1840): The archetype of the English dandy or man of fashion. The grandson of a valet and the son of the secretary of Lord Liverpool, he was educated at Oxford and became the close companion of the Prince of Wales. His excruciating wit, exquisite manners and flamboyant style of dress—including his famous cravat—made him the arbiter of elegance in all things for British society for most of the first two decades of the 19th century.

BRIGAND: One who lives by plunder, usually as a member of a band.

CANARD: A false or unfounded report or story.

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO (1765): The first gothic novel in the English language; written by Horace Walpole, an 18th century member of Parliament and writer renowned for his taste for bizarre gothic architecture. Emulated in the genre, *The Castle of Otranto* is credited with being one of the most influential novels ever written.

CORSICA: The fourth largest island in the Mediterranean. In 1769, the year of Napoleon's birth, Corsica became a province of France.

CORNHILL MAGAZINE: A British literary magazine first pub-

lished in 1859, which printed the works of, among others, William Thackeray, Leigh Hunt, Mrs. Gaskell and the Brontës; Thackeray was its editor.

CURIO: Something considered novel, rare or bizarre.

DON: A senior member of a college at a British university, especially at Oxford or Cambridge. This is not the title of a position, as is professor, and no one is appointed the "don" of a college. The term apparently arose satirically after the Restoration, used to compare the independence and pigheadedness of the academic to the stereotypical don, and thus is still rather a generic term for someone with a stuffy or particularly academic turn of mind.

FERMAT, PIERRE DE (1601-65): French Mathematician, famous for developing two theorems. The first states that if n is any whole number and p is any prime number, then $(n$ to the power of $p)-n$ is divisible by p . The second, known as Fermat's Last Theorem, holds (according to Fermat) that "it is impossible to separate a cube into two cubes, a fourth power into two fourth powers, or, generally, any power above the second into two powers of the same degree." Fermat claimed to have for this last theorem "a remarkable proof which the margin is too small to contain." Mathematicians sought the proof for more than 350 years, until Princeton mathematician Andrew Wiles solved it in 1993 after seven years of concentrated effort. The final proof, which was accepted by the academic community earlier this year, occupies the entire May 1995 issue of *Annals of Mathematics*. Wiles told *Science Magazine* that the experience of working on the proof was like entering a darkened mansion. You enter a room, and you stumble for months, even years, bumping into the furniture. Slowly you learn where all the pieces of furniture are, and you're looking for the light switch. You turn it on, and the whole room is illuminated. Then you go on to the next room and repeat the process. The equation Thomasina was trying to solve was Fermat's Last Theorem. Thomasina is well on her way to the solution in her lesson book, but time cuts her short, and her work is left unfinished and in disorder.

GALLIC WARS: The campaigns from 58 to 51 B.C. by which Julius Caesar conquered Gaul (approximately the area of modern France) for Rome.

GIBE: To jeer, scoff. A taunting or sarcastic remark.

GROUSE: A bird similar to the partridge, somewhat larger but less rotund and mostly dirty brown in color, found primarily in the heather of northern England and Scotland.

British gentlemen shoot thousands of these each autumn for no known reason. The shoots, particularly in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, were massive social affairs.

HARROW: Exclusive English boy's school founded in 1572. Among its many famous alumni is Lord Byron. Its grounds include a nine-hole golf course and a lake designed by Capability Brown in 1767.

HERMIONE: In Greek mythology, the only daughter of Helen and Menelaus. When Helen eloped with Paris, Hermione was abandoned to the care of Clytemnestra. She later married Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles.

HERMIT: One who lives in solitude, especially for ascetic [austere] motives. Hermits are known in many cultures. In the East, the hermit, or eremitical [reclusive], life was widely held to be the more perfect form of monasticism [celibacy] and was open only to those who had first passed years in a monastic community. The hermit or anchorite of the ancient Christian church lived in the desert, commonly walled up in a cell with only a window. Hermits were popular fixtures in "picturesque" English gardens. Many hermitage owners installed hired hermits or found suitable volunteers willing to stay on in exchange for free cell and board. In one case, a hermit was reportedly engaged to live underground invisible, silent, unshaven, and unclipped for seven years, in a comfortable room with books, an organ, delicious food and a pension for life of £50 a year; he lasted four years. Another hermit, reportedly engaged by a Mr. Hamilton at Pain's Hill, was hired under similar conditions (but for £700 pounds, a few additional physical amenities, and the privilege of walking the grounds); he was caught at the end of just three weeks going down to the pub. And the editor of a British magazine was reported to have been a hermit on the estate of Lord Hill at the turn of the 20th century; a Miss Cynthia Adburgham remembers that when she was a child, visitors paid to tour the grounds and the hotel employed a hermit who sat in the cave fondling a skull.

LINNEAN SOCIETY: The first scientific society founded after the Royal Society. Organized in 1788 for the promotion of the study of natural history. It was at a meeting of the Linnean Society in 1858 that Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace first made known their views on the origin of species by natural selection.

LUDDITE: A member of the organized band of 19th century English handicraftsmen who rioted for the destruction of the textile machinery that was displacing them. The movement began in the vicinity of Nottingham toward the end of 1811 and the next year spread. Similar rioting in 1816 was caused by the depression following the Napoleonic wars, but the movement was soon ended by vigorous repression and the return of prosperity.

MILTON, JOHN (1608-74): One of the greatest poets of the English language, best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667). Also renowned for his political activism, which resulted in his incarceration under Charles II as a "noted defender of the Commonwealth."

THE OBSERVER: The oldest Sunday newspaper and one of unchallengeable probity [integrity, honesty] and detail. It originally appealed to liberals, as opposed to the conservative *Sunday Times*.

ONAN: The second son of Judah in *Genesis*. 38: 1-10, who was ordered to take his brother's widow in marriage. Resenting that the children she bore would be his brother's, he was considered to have wasted his seed, spilling it upon the ground. Onanism is otherwise known as "pulling out."

PARTERRE: An ornamental garden with paths between the beds; from the French, meaning on (or pertaining to) the ground.

PLACEMAN: In Britain, a person appointed to a position, especially in the government, as a reward for political support of an elected official.

POUSSIN, NICOLAS (1584-1665): French painter, generally regarded as the initiator of French classical painting, who composed the famous painting *Et in Arcadia Ego*.

RADCLIFFE, ANN (1764-1823): English gothic novelist famous for her ability to infuse scenes of terror and suspense with an aura of romantic sensibility. Her fourth novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), made her the most popular novelist in England.

RATIONALISM: In philosophy, a method of inquiry that regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge and, in contrast to empiricism, tends to discount sensory experience. The inspiration of rationalism has always been mathematics and rationalists have stressed the superiority of the deductive over all other methods. According to the extreme rationalist doctrine, all the truths of physical science and even history could in principle be discovered by pure thinking and set forth as the consequences of self-evident premises. This view is opposed to the various systems which regard the mind as a tabula rasa (blank tablet) in which the outside world, as it were, imprints itself through the senses.

REGENCY STYLE: The style of decorative arts produced during the regency of George, Prince of Wales, and the opening years of the 19th century, as well as his entire reign as King George IV of England, ending in 1830. The primary source of inspiration for Regency taste was found in Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as Egyptian motifs.

ROMANTIC: A term in art often used as the antithesis [opposite] of classical; admirably defined by Roger Fry as that kind of art that depends for its artistic appeal upon the associations it arouses in the minds of the viewers. Specifically, the term is applied to the Romantic Movement, a movement in European art from about 1800 to 1850, which developed out of an awakening sensibility to aspects of nature hitherto unconsidered or condemned—the elements of nature that suggest power, struggle, fear, anguish, horror, frustration and other forms of intense emotional excitement.

ROOK: The British version of the crow: black, noisy and feeding on crops as well as insects.

ROSA, SALVATOR (1615-73): A noted Italian painter, poet, actor and musician, best known for his landscapes, which supposedly inspired the picturesque movement in English landscape design.

ROTA: A round or rotation of duties, a period of work or duty taken in rotation with others.

SAVANT: A person of profound or extraordinary learning, a scholar.

SNIPE: Although generations of American boys have been convinced after being lured into “snipe hunts” that no such bird exists, the snipe is extremely common in Britain. It is a small brown bird, which lives primarily in marshlands or along streams. Snipes also once frequented urban areas, feeding from open gutters as if they were marsh streams and thus were often called “gutter snipes,” from which we receive the term for a street urchin.

SOD: A basic British expletive and insult. The expletive comes from “Sodomite” (and has nothing to with the soil). Hence all common usages—such as “Sod it!” or “Sod off!” or “sodding mess”—are about the same as when formed with “bugger.” “Sod all” is nothing or none. “Sod’s Law” is the British equivalent of the American “Murphy’s Law.”

THEODOLITE: A 16th century surveyor’s instrument for

measuring horizontal and vertical angles.

TOPIARY: A garden containing plants clipped into fantastic shapes; an artificial landscape.

TORY: One of the two primary English political parties, which appeared in the late 17th century; supporters of James II. The name first appeared as an insult, from a term for Irish highwaymen. The party was primarily the party of the landed gentry and was a strong supporter of monarchical rights, which left it out of power during the constitutional monarchies of the early 18th century. It eventually became the dominant party and enjoyed uninterrupted control of the country from about 1780 to 1830, during which it set the standard for reactionary, corrupt and self-interested politics. The Reform Bill of 1832 so destroyed the Tory party’s bases of parliamentary power that it collapsed, only to reappear in significantly modified guise [appearance] as the Conservative party. Members of that party are still called Tories today.

TRINITY: The college of Cambridge University attended by the fictitious Septimus Hodge and the actual Lord Byron.

WHIG: From the late 18th century, one of the two primary English political parties. Sometimes said to stand for “We Hope In God,” the name was originally applied as an insult by a group of peasant Scottish rebels to those who opposed putting James II on the throne. In the early days the party came to be associated with a mild form of anti-monarchism and what passed for liberalism (meaning support for large landholders and wealthy merchants), rather than absolute monarchical rights. By the late 18th century, it was primarily the party of those who were “out” or who disliked William Pitt, who controlled the Tory party. As outsiders, Whigs supported reforms, and in a brief period of power instituted the Great Reform Bill of 1832. They shortly afterward came to be called the Liberal party.

Waterloo: The site of the final and decisive engagement of Napoleon’s military career in 1815, which ended his “one-hundred-day” rule of France and led to his ultimate surrender and exile.

STUDENT SECTION

APPROACHING ARCADIA

Brace yourself for an adventure into the past through the eyes of those in the present. The unpredictability of love, the nature of time, the need for order in the midst of chaos...all these themes converge in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*. Get ready to embark on a tale of love that will keep you on the edge of your seat!

Arcadia, a love story infused with mystery and intrigue, dances back and forth between two centuries. Two sets of characters (one in the past, the other in the present) occupy the same English country house. The modern-day characters attempt to solve the mysteries of the past. Did the poet Lord Byron actually visit this home in 1809? If so, was he involved in a duel, forcing him to hastily flee the country? The answers to these questions and many more are hidden within the play. Stoppard takes you on a literary and theatrical journey, which may inspire more conversation and controversy than answers. Your purpose, as the reader, is to fit together the pieces of this theatrical puzzle about literary detection and scientific

discovery!

"Et in Arcadia ego!"
"Here I am in Arcadia."
~ Lady Croom, *Arcadia*

This study guide takes a new approach to preparing you to see the production. Instead of using the entire script, you will read only three scenes from it, all taking place in the present.



"Et in Arcadia Ego" by Poussin

1

**YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT IS TO
PICTURE YOURSELF AS A DETECTIVE.**



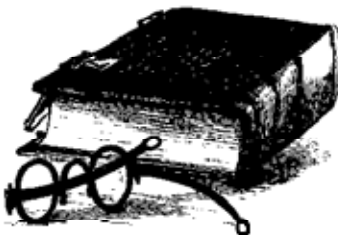
You must collect the clues from the present to discover what has happened in the past. From this point forward, treat everything you read as a clue to help you solve the mysteries of *Arcadia*.

You will need the following materials at your disposal:

1. **The script:** Read the assigned scenes carefully. Do not jump to conclusions.
2. **The *Who's Who* and the *Detective's Logs*:** These sections provide space to document your findings and questions to guide you along our path.

Read!

Reading the play can provide you with many valuable clues for solving the mysteries of *Arcadia*. The three scenes you will read take place in the present. To thoroughly investigate the scenes three readings are necessary.



**[*Arcadia*] is about literary detection...
people speculating about what happens.**
~ Tom Stoppard

Reading #1

Read Act I, Scene ii to yourself. Find out what is taking place. Using your *Who's Who* on the following pages, record your discoveries about the characters. Note that some characters might only be mentioned. The better you understand their motivations and relationships, the easier it will be for you to unravel the mysteries.

Then . . .

Turn to your *Detective's Log* on the pages following your *Who's Who*. Find possible clues to help you begin to answer these questions. Do not rule out any information that may help you later in your investigation.

Finally . . .

Break into groups of five. Cast yourselves as the four main characters (Chloe, Bernard, Valentine and Hannah) along with one person who will read the stage directions. Read the scene aloud. This reading not only allows you to revisit the scene, uncovering clues that you may have overlooked, but it also allows you to get a deeper understanding of the relationships that are developed within the play. The more energy you put into your reading, the more you will be able to discover.

Who's Who

For any good story, you must know the characters involved to truly understand what the author is trying to tell you. Tom Stoppard is a master craftsman of characters. He borrows characters from other dramatic works, discovers them in history, parodies well-known stereotypes or models them loosely on contemporary individuals.

Your job is to document all the characters you meet or hear about in *Arcadia*. Fill out the following biographies. As you read each scene, more information about these characters will be revealed. These mini-biographies will help you to get to know all the players involved and how each interacts with and relates to another. Do not consider any one character too minor to document. All the characters in Stoppard's plays are important, whether it is for their talent in writing, their ability to master history or their need to solve some unknown truth about humanity.

MINI-BIOGRAPHIES

CHLOE COVERLY Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why she is at Sidley Park: _____

BERNARD NIGHTINGALE: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

VALENTINE COVERLY Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

HANNAH JARVIS: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why she is at Sidley Park: _____

GUS COVERLY: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

LORD BYRON: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

EZRA CHATER: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

SEPTIMUS HODGE: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

RICHARD NOAKES: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

LORD CROOM: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why he is at Sidley Park: _____

LADY CROOM: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why she is at Sidley Park: _____

THOMASINA COVERLY: Age: _____
Profession: _____
Related to: _____
Why she is at Sidley Park: _____

DETECTIVE'S LOG



Act I, Scene ii

What conflicts do Bernard and Hannah have with each other? _____

Why is Bernard interested in Ezra Chater? _____

What do you know about the Hermit? _____

At this point, whom do you believe was at Sidley Park in April, 1809? _____

What are the connections between Septimus Hodge, Ezra Chater and Lord Byron? _____

Who wrote each of the three letters Bernard found in "The Couch of Eros?" _____

Who was having an affair with whom in 1809? _____

In the space below, list any additional evidence that you feel may be important. _____

TEAM WORK

After you have finished your third reading of Act I, Scene ii, discuss the questions in the *Detective's Log* with your small group. Share your answers with one another. The more information you have, the better you will be able to develop a theory of what happened in the past. After you have shared your answers in your small group, come together as a whole class. What have the other groups found? Document all the new clues in your *Who's Who* and *Detective's Log*.



Reading #2

Now, read Act I, Scene iv in the same way that you read Act I, Scene ii. The *Detective's Log* for this scene follows. Remember to return to your *Who's Who* pages and the previous *Detective's Log* to add any new information you find.

DETECTIVE'S LOG

Act I, Scene iv

You are $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way through your reading and the plot thickens. Below are more questions to unlocking *Arcadia*!

In your own words, explain Thomasina's mathematical discovery. _____

Why is Valentine surprised by Thomasina's discovery? _____

What does the quote found in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* prove? _____

What is the importance of the letter Hannah finds? _____

Who does Bernard think fought in the duel? _____

Valentine speaks about the game books. What do they prove? _____

What is the significance of Gus playing the piano throughout the scene? _____

Why is there a pistol shot at the end of the scene? What could it symbolize? _____

TEAMWORK

Now regroup and share your new thoughts with each other. What new discoveries have you made? Remember that this is not a contest. Help one another out, so that each of you can come to your own conclusions.

Reading #3

Act II, Scene i is the final scene you will read. Within the scene, Bernard presents his theory of what happened at Sidley Park while Hannah and Valentine present arguments to disprove it. Read carefully. Continue using the process of three readings. The *Detective's Log* for this scene follows.

DETECTIVE'S LOG

Act II, Scene i

This is your final *Detective's Log*. You need to piece together what happened at Sidley Park in 1809. Remember to review the evidence you have gathered in your previous *Detective's Logs* before drawing any conclusions.

What are the major pieces of evidence upon which Bernard bases his theory? _____

What are Hannah and Valentine's arguments that try to disprove Bernard's theory? _____

What new information do you learn about the Hermit in this scene? _____

TEAMWORK

This is your final chance to find out what your classmates have discovered. Share information with one another so you each can develop your own theory.

Your Investigation is complete! Congratulations! Now it is your turn to formulate your own theory. Using the information you have gathered make educated guesses for the following questions:

1. Who was at Sidley Park in April of 1809? _____

2. Who wrote each of the letters that Bernard and Hannah found? _____

3. Who was having an affair with whom in Sidley Park in 1809? _____

4. Was there a duel in 1809? If so, who fought in it? Who won? _____

5. Who was the Hermit of Sidley Park? _____

6. Do you agree with Bernard's theory of what happened at Sidley Park? Why or why not? _____

2

CREATING A CONNECTION

Hannah Jarvis' fictitious book, *Caro*, compares the writings of Lord Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb. **Research these two writers.** Use your script, *Study Guide* and library materials plus any other resources your teacher may provide or suggest. Who are these two writers? What relationship do they have to one another? What, besides writing, do they have in common? If possible, find some of their works and read excerpts from them. Which writer do you like best? Why?

Read the article on The Genius of the Garden provided by your teacher. Pay close attention to how the gardens changed from century to century.

Design the Garden of Sidley Park

1. Design a classical garden of the 16th century, labeling all of the elements (i.e. statues, fountains, turf mazes, topiary) that you place into your garden.
2. Now redesign this garden into a "landskip" garden of the 18th century. Eliminate any elements of the 16th century that do not belong.
3. Finally, redesign your garden into a "picturesque" garden of the 19th century. Remember to label the elements (i.e. cascades, grottos, artificial ruins) that you choose to place into your garden.

After completing all three designs, write an explanation on the process of changing the garden of the 16th century into the garden of 19th century. How might this evolution have affected landscape gardening today?

3

PREDICTIONS



"A method whereby all the forms of nature must give up their numerical secrets and draw themselves through numbers alone."
~ Thomasina Coverly, *Arcadia*.

The equations Thomasina is working on are the same kind of equations Valentine is using for his grouse predictions, except that she is doing them backwards, according to him. Valentine explains that his equations are to predict the number of grouse as it changes each year. What kind of variables, according to Valentine, change the number of grouse from year to year? What other variables might he have overlooked? On your own, read the article, "Chaos Theory," in the study guide section and do one of the following activities. When you are finished, re-group and share your ideas.

ENTROPY

Based on this article, how could the second law of thermodynamics affect the earth, our solar system and the universe? Write one page stating your ideas on what will happen in the next 2,000 years. Be creative!

CHAOS THEORY

Choose a topic that is unpredictable (i.e. the precise amount of time it takes to travel from Chicago to New York, the weather on your trip to Hawaii, choosing the Super Bowl champs during pre-season). How difficult would it be to make an accurate prediction? Write all of the possible factors, that could influence the outcome.

4

YOU ARE THE SCIENTIST!



Hannah is intrigued by Thomasina Coverly's math primer. Thomasina appears to have stumbled onto some theories which were not "discovered" until many years after her time. Conduct the following experiments at home. Then write in your own words what **you have discovered**.

ENERGY EXPERIMENTS

1. Measure the temperature of a cup of hot water with a food thermometer. Stir the cup of water with a spoon for three minutes and then measure the temperature again. What has happened to the water? Why?
2. Gather two sticks. Do they feel hot or cold? Rub the sticks together for three minutes. What can you conclude about the areas that have been rubbed together?

2. Gather two sticks. Do they feel hot or cold? Rub the sticks together for three minutes. What can you conclude about the areas that have been rubbed together?

CREATING DISORDER

1. Tear a sheet of paper into six pieces (any size or shape). Re-create the original piece of paper without placing the pieces in their original location. Were you successful? Explain your findings.

2. Drop a spoonful of jam into a bowl of oatmeal. Stir the jam clockwise until the jam and oatmeal are completely mixed together. Now try to separate the jam and oatmeal by stirring the mixture counter-clockwise. Did it work? Why or why not?

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

1. Find a die. Make a prediction about how many times the number six will come up if the die is rolled ten times. Roll the die. How accurate was your prediction?
2. Look outside. Write down your prediction of tomorrow's weather at the time of your class period. Check your prediction the next day. How accurate was your prediction?

2. Look outside. Write down your prediction of tomorrow's weather at the time of your class period. Check your prediction the next day. How accurate was your prediction?

5

PENNING THE PA



Hannah mentions Septimus Hodge's letter of application to Lord Croom for the position as tutor to the Lord's daughter. Using information you have gathered about Septimus from the scenes you have read, construct the letter as it might have read in 1809. Include all important information for obtaining this position.

[illegible]

History and facts are merely anecdotes—things people choose to pass along. Your teacher will now choose a quote from part of the study guide. She will whisper it to one of you only once. You must whisper that phrase to your neighbor until this quote has made it around the room. The last person to hear it must say it aloud. Has the quote changed? If so, how? What does this exercise say about how communication affects history?

[illegible]

6

WHAT HAPPENED?

READ THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE:

Arcadia is a kind of dialogue between the past and present, between the 1809 and the present occupants of Sidley Park. We can ask questions of the past and some are answered, but there are few follow-up questions. And the past is only involved reluctantly. As we learn about the people of Sidley Park, we may come to feel close to certain of them, identify with them just as we do when we read a good biography or history. But we cannot know all. And the question arises: who is generating this story, them or us? This is a question for all the characters in present day Sidley Park, most importantly for Bernard Nightingale.

How do we find out what happened in the past? Historians, using personal accounts, books articles, statistics and whatever else they can get their hands on, try to find out what happened at a particular time or with a particular person. Even with all these resources, the historian can run into problems. Sometimes historians think they have found out what has really happened, and then another historian publishes a contrary account - so who is right?

Ever since people began to record history, they have been looking for better and better ways to find out what really happened. Some have thought that by gathering all of the facts, they would be able to draw all the conclusions they needed - *the positivists*. Some believed that history always repeats itself, and that events can even be predicted using the theory - *the cyclical theorists*. Others said that looking at history was not enough; one had to look at history in conjunction with sociology, economics, psychology and every other social science in order to learn what really happened - *the totalists*.

Different ways of thinking about history lead to different ways of looking at it and this produces different accounts of the same events and people. But aren't they looking at the same facts? Most of the time they are, but the results are

still different. This is the phenomenon of bias. These biases exist in the historian who gathers the facts, in the persons who originally recorded the facts and in the first-hand observers of the event. Bias is like a filter that changes perception - and it occurs at every step of the process of recording history.

With the varied methods of looking at history, and with the biases that saturate the process at every step, how do we find out what really happened? It is not an easy task. History is subjective rather than objective. When one tries to find out what really happened, many preliminary questions must be asked and answers found: What were the biases of the sources? Of the original recorders of the facts? Most importantly, what is the bias of the historian, what does he or she want to prove? In *Arcadia*, Bernard desperately wants to discover the facts, but only so long as they agree with the story of 1809 Sidley Park that he has already created in his mind.

1. **Write brief descriptions** defining a positivist, a cyclical theorist and a totalist. What are the differences/similarities in their approaches to history?

2. **Take a period in history** (i.e., the Civil War, the Elizabethan Age, World War I). Write down how each of the historians mentioned above would study that period of time. What might be some of their possible conclusions?

YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED YOUR PREPARATION FOR SEEING *ARCADIA*.

YOUR NEXT STEP IS TO SEE THE PERFORMANCE.

THE PERFORMANCE MIGHT ANSWER SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS.

**BUT THEN AGAIN, IT MIGHT RAISE NEW,
UNEXPECTED QUESTIONS AND CONTROVERSIES ABOUT THE PLAY.
WHO KNOWS WHAT LIES IN THE FUTURE...**