

# INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



# THE NEST SYNOPSIS

“Sometimes you want to go where  
everybody knows your name.”

– Theme from “Cheers”.

Music, Greg Portnoy, lyrics, Judy Hart Angelo.

Lila and Nick met at their neighborhood bar, The Nest, where they fell in love, got married, and have been running the bar ever since. On a typical night with only a handful of customers, newcomers Ned and Irene create quite a stir. Patrick, the bar philosopher, monopolizes conversations and manages to argue with most everybody, but especially with Margo, the lonely, over-looked office assistant. Barry tries to keep things on an even keel. But Nick is restless and has a plan that could upset the whole apple cart.



**DENVER CENTER** FOR THE  
PERFORMING ARTS  
Theatre Company

## INSIDE OUT

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### WORLD PREMIERE

#### ***The Nest***

By **Theresa Rebeck**

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# THE PLAYWRIGHT—THERESA REBECK

Theresa Rebeck's New York productions include: *Poor Behavior*, *Dead Accounts*, *Seminar*, *The Understudy*, *Mauritius*, *The Scene*, *The Water's Edge*, *Bad Dates*, *The Butterfly Collection*, *Spike Heels*, *Loose Knit*, *The Family of Mann*, *View of the Dome*, and *Omnium Gatherum* (co-written, Pulitzer finalist). Her publications include: *Collected Plays Volumes I, II and III*, *Free Fire Zone*, all with Smith & Kraus, and two novels, *Three Girls and Their Brother* and *Twelve Rooms With a View*, with Random House/Shaye Areheart Books. Her films include: *Harriet the Spy*, *Gossip*, and the independent

features *Sunday on the Rocks* and *Seducing Charlie Barker* (adapted from her play *The Scene*). Awards include the Writer's Guild of America Award for Episodic Drama and a Peabody Award for her work on "NYPD Blue," the National Theatre Conference Award, the William Inge New Voices Playwriting Award, the PEN/Laura Pels Foundation Award, the Athena Film Festival Award, an Alex Award, a Lilly Award and in 2011 she was named one of the 150 Fearless Women in the World by Newsweek. She is the creator of the NBC drama, "Smash."

# THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN BAR

Drinking seems to be a cornerstone of American democracy. Tavern going was an important part of the social fabric of early America just as churchgoing was. Taverns provided a public sphere (a community forum) in colonial America. They were compared to coffee houses in London or the salons of Paris, but these institutions were bourgeois meeting places. In an American tavern people could mix together because the price of drinks was fixed by law so everyone could afford to raise a pint. Bars were places where people left their degrees at the door so that lawyers, university professors, taxi drivers and dishwashers could rub elbows and talk politics.

According to the book *America Walks into a Bar* by Christine Sismondo, many historic events began in taverns. For example, the Green Dragon Tavern along the Freedom Trail in Boston was the favorite haunt of Paul Revere and John Hancock. According to myth, the plans for the invasion of Lexington and Concord were overheard there and prompted Paul Revere's ride in April 1775. At the Fraunces Tavern in New York, George Washington bade farewell to his troops in December 1783. The delegates to the first Continental Congress in 1775 met at the City Tavern in Philadelphia. The Whiskey Rebellion of 1791, a protest against taxes on whiskey by the farmers of southern Pennsylvania, began at the Black Horse Tavern in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania.

Finally, the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, New York, was the birthplace of the gay rights movement in 1969.

The evolution of the bar in America began with the colonial to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century tavern which provided food and lodging to all people. This was followed by the dedicated saloon that served no food. Hotel bars existed on the high end catering to business travelers. During Prohibition, speakeasies attracted customers who purchased liquor illegally.

Television has provided us with some famous bars. Archie Bunker of *All in the Family* fame became part owner of Kelsey's neighborhood bar. In the George Carlin show, everyone gathered at Moyan's Tavern. On *Murphy Brown*, the characters spent time at Phil's. Finally, the *Cheers* regulars—Sam, Diane, Woody, Carla, Norm and Frasier—gathered in a bar that was based on Boston's Bull & Finch Club.

<http://www.history.ac.uk./reviews/126>

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-spirited-history-of-the-american-bar-42912195/ho-ist>

<http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/tv/cheers-more-tv-shows-where-the-neighborhood-bar-was-the-star-1-10600080>

[Boston1775.blogspot.com/208/08/real-green-dragon-tavern.html](http://Boston1775.blogspot.com/208/08/real-green-dragon-tavern.html)

[www.citytavern.com/history2.html](http://www.citytavern.com/history2.html)

[www.stonewallnyc.com/StonewallInn/NYChistory.html](http://www.stonewallnyc.com/StonewallInn/NYChistory.html)

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/duel/peopleevents/pande.22.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/duel/peopleevents/pande.22.html)

# NEIGHBORHOOD BARS

In her memoir, *Drinking with Men*, Rosie Schaap writes that bars are her safe haven, a breathing space. “It seems to me that someone ought to defend the great tradition of the regularhood of passing hours drinking and talking and laughing in bars. And it’s time someone advocated for equal regularhood rights for women everywhere.”<sup>1</sup>

In her epilogue she writes: “Being a woman at home in a bar culture is a way of figuring out who you are.... It’s an assertion of independence.”<sup>2</sup>

A good neighborhood bar will take phone messages for patrons and cash customers’ paychecks because of the friendly “home away from home” ambience. Some of these pubs open as early as 6 A.M. and don’t close until the

wee hours.

But as Nick and Lila are realizing, the neighborhood landscape is changing. Mom and Pop establishments are being replaced with franchises faster than a Starbucks coffee can be downed. Corporations can afford expensive rents; small business cannot and are being pushed out.

1. Schaap, p. 5.

2. Ibid, p. 269.

Schaap, Rosie. *Drinking with Men*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2013.

[http://www.entrepreneur.com/business\\_ideas/neighborhood\\_bars](http://www.entrepreneur.com/business_ideas/neighborhood_bars)

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/03/22/goodbye-morans-when-a-neighborhood-joint-closes.html>

# DRINKING IN THE UNITED STATES

“Alcohol may be man’s worst enemy, but the Bible says love your enemy.”

- Frank Sinatra.

Alcoholic consumption in the United States varies from region to region. On average, 66% of the population down four alcoholic drinks per week. Beer is the preferred beverage with wine a close second.

A Gallup survey indicates men drink more than women, whites drink more than non-whites, and younger men drink more than older ones. Midwesterners prefer beer, while those in the East and the

Pacific Northwest like wine.

According to a *Wall Street Journal* survey, of the states that consume the most alcohol per capita, Colorado is number 9, while New Hampshire ranks as number one.<sup>1</sup>

1. <http://www.thestreet.com>.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/156770/majority-drink-alcohol-averaging-four-drinks-week.aspx>

<http://www.thestreet.com/story/12119523/1/the-drunkest-states-in-america-2013-vistagehtml>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/list-of-countries-by-alcohol-consumption-per-capita>

# PANDEMICS

A pandemic is an outbreak of global proportions; it happens when a novel virus emerges among humans causing serious illness and is easily transmissible. A pandemic differs from an epidemic or seasonal outbreak. Put simply, a pandemic covers a much wider

geographical area, often worldwide, infecting a huge number of people. The word pandemic comes from the Greek “pandemos” meaning “pertaining to all people”; “pan” means “all” and “demos” means “people”. An epidemic is specific



to one city, one region or one country.

A pandemic is usually caused by a new virus strain or subtype; a virus humans have no immunity against. If immunity is low or non-existent, the virus becomes easily transmissible by humans and is much more likely to spread around the world. Pandemics generally cause much higher death rates than epidemics. The social disruption, economic loss and general hardship caused by a pandemic are much higher than with an epidemic.

Several pandemics have occurred over the centuries. They include: the Black Death of 1300 A.D., Bubonic plague 1855, Influenza 1857-59, Cholera 1873-1875, Spanish flu 1918-1920, HIV/AIDS 1960s to the present and Swine influenza 2003.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/148945.php>

<http://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-a-Pandemic.aspx>

## DOES THE WORLD NEED WAR?

“The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”

—Sun Tzu

In the play Ned says, “War is a natural cleansing....Men need war; it’s built into their nature.... We have to get rid of extra people.”<sup>1</sup> Ned’s words are reinforced by an ancient Chinese military treatise attributed to SunTzu, a high-ranking military general, strategist and tactician. Sun Tzu considered war a necessary evil that must be avoided whenever possible; it should be fought swiftly to avoid economic losses. Ned’s words are also

echoed by Ozodi Osuji in *International Politics*. He proposes that “War could be used as a national policy to prune the human population.”<sup>2</sup> He theorizes that all human matter is decomposable; death is inevitable.

1. Rebeck, p. 6.

2. <http://chatafrik.com>.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The-Art-of-War>

<http://chatafrik.com/articles/internationalpolitics/war-as-a-necessary-means-for-cleansing-the-human-race.VYofuMFTw>

<http://boardgamegeek.com/thread/1026519/war-started-women>.

## MALE MIDLIFE CRISIS

The death of a dream can result in grief and discouragement; old illusions die hard. “Viewing life as a challenging evolving reality that requires parallel personal growth is a perspective that is at odds with many of our simplistic and immature fantasies.”<sup>1</sup> Yet it is a useful perspective on the midlife period. An honest and frank appraisal is useful in assessing a possible course of action.

Thus, whether psychological or biological in origin, many men do

experience age-related concerns that feel like a personal crisis. These crises often denote the onset of a change and the need for a man to reinvent or redefine himself. With patience, help and perseverance, most men regain their sense of purpose, meaning and satisfaction.

1. <http://psychcentral.com>

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/the-male-midlife-crisis/2/>

# VELVEETA CHEESE

Velveeta is the brand name of a processed cheese product having a taste that is identified as a type of American cheese, but with a softer and smoother texture than cheese. As a result, when heated/melted, Velveeta maintains a fully integrated, even, clump-free liquid texture—the opposite of what happens when cheese is melted or cooked at a high heat. It was invented in 1918 by Emil Frey of the Monroe Cheese Company in Monroe, New York. In 1923, the Velveeta Cheese Company was incorporated as a separate company, and was sold to Kraft Foods in 1927. The product was advertised at the time as a nutritious

health food and gained the American Medical Association's seal of approval. It was reformulated in 1953 as a cheese spread and labeled in the United States as a "Pasteurized Recipe Cheese Product." The name "Velveeta" is intended to connote a velvety smooth, edible product. Smoothness and melting ability are promoted as its properties that result by reincorporating the whey with the curd. The brand has also been successfully spun off into a varied, Velveeta-based product line.

<http://en.wikipedia/wiki/Velveeta>

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# STUDY QUESTIONS

## Pre-Performance Questions

- 1) What is the definition of a family heirloom? How does one determine the financial value of such an heirloom? What could be the motivations of buyers purchasing objects once held as heirlooms but are now on the open market? Does nostalgia and/or sentimentality play a role?
- 2) What happens when we realize that our lives are not following the path that we had hoped?
- 3) What do people hope to find when frequenting the same restaurant and what might they hope to find by doing so?
- 4) What is your opinion about the fate of small businesses in our country when faced with large corporate businesses and their resources?

## Post-Performance Questions

- 1) How do the set, costumes and other technical elements help to tell the story?
- 2) How would you describe the relationship between Ned and Irene? What surprised you about their initial conversation? What was Ned trying to convey?
- 3) How did the different characters respond to, and reframe or retell, the conversation between Ned and Irene?
- 4) How would you describe the marriage between Nick and Lila? How do they balance their marriage and their working relationship?
- 5) How would you describe Patrick's emotional investment to the bar?
- 6) What is the significance of the restaurant's physical bar to each of the play's characters?
- 7) How does Margo serve the play's plot? Why do she and Patrick go at it?
- 8) How are gender roles defined in this play? In what ways do the play's characters comment on, or serve as examples of, specific gender roles?
- 9) What do you think happens at The Nest the following day?

# UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

## Insider Perspectives

Get an exclusive insider's perspective of each play when you join us for a professionally-moderated discussion with our creative team. Held at The Jones at Speer & Arapahoe. Free.  
Jan 22 | 6pm

## Theatre & Theology Talkbacks

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod to examine each show through a theological lens directly after select performances. Free.  
Jan 26 | Post-Show

## Talkback with the Higher Education Advisory Council

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community held directly after select performances. Free.  
Jan 31 | Post-Show

## Talkbacks with the Cast

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors directly after select performances. Free.  
Feb 7 | Post-Show



# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

## The Denver Public Library recommends:

### Read!

*Drinking with Men: A Memoir* by Rosie Schaap

Follow bar aficionado Rosie Schaap on the hunt for the perfect local haunt in this NPR “Best Books of 2013” winner. If you enjoyed the comradery and no holds barred conversation among the patrons of *The Nest*, Schaap’s stories may also strike a chord, which start from her experience as a young person hanging around a bar car of a regional railroad to her job as a bartender in Brooklyn to dives in Dublin, Los Angeles and Tribeca.

### Watch!

*The Good Heart* (Magnolia Home Entertainment 2010)

Bars help unexpected, unlikely connections happen in ways like no other place — in this film, a young homeless man in New York City, Lucas, finds himself taken in by a curmudgeonly old bartender, Jacques, at a gritty local dive bar home to an assortment of characters. While Jacques continues to drink and smoke himself to death, Lucas takes a more hopeful approach to life. Will the two of them be able to work out their differences before Jacques destroys himself?

### Listen!

*Last Night at the Lobster* by Stewart O’Nan

Manny DeLeon has put his heart and soul into trying to make the Red Lobster at the New Britain Mall the best it can be, but corporate has decided they just aren’t making their numbers and they’ve been told they will be shut down — five days before Christmas. So now Manny is spending this last day trying to rally his employees to go out with a bang and a helping of heartfelt service. Manny is also torn between his old girlfriend, the waitress Jacquie, and his current girlfriend Deena, pregnant with his child, this broken-heart scenario is paralleled by his unwavering loyalty to a faceless corporate chain which doesn’t appreciate Manny. Sometimes the things you love only fill you with grief, much like in *The Nest*.

### Download!

*Ghost Map: the story of London’s Most Terrifying Epidemic* by Steven Johnson

This fascinating short read documents the discovery of the epidemiology that led to a cholera outbreak in Victorian London and how the removal of one tap saved the lives of hundreds of people. Johnson applies his consilient mind to the deadly Broadstreet cholera outbreak of 1854, navigating the efforts of Henry Whitehead and Dr. John Snow as they traced the outbreak to its origin and discovered for the first time how cholera epidemics spread. I think Ned would find this a fascinating read!



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