

Strife

Tarragon Theatre

Fact Sheet

This fact sheet has key information about the show and the theatre that you may find useful and that may help you to fully enjoy your time with us.

Key Information

Location:	Tarragon Theatre Extraspace
Address:	30 Bridgman Ave Toronto ON M5R 1X3
Onstage:	April 7th - April 26th Tues - Sat at 7:30pm and Sat - Sun at 2:00pm
Previews:	Tue April 7th, Wed April 8th at 7:30
Mask Required Performance:	Sat April 11th at 2:00pm
Preshow Tarragon Talk:	Tue April 14th 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Postshow Talk Backs:	Thu April 16th, Sun April 19th, Thu April 23rd
Student Matinées:	Tue April 14th, Wed April 15th, Wed April 22nd at 1:00pm
Performance Length:	approximately 95 minutes
Intermission:	There is no Intermission for this show.
Quiet Room:	There is no Quiet Room for this show.
Late Entry:	Is not permitted for this show (Details on page 3).
Reentry:	Is not permitted for this show (Details on page 3).
House Program:	click for House Program
Venue Guide:	click for Venue Guide
Audience Resource Guide:	click for Audience Resource Guide

General Things to Know

- The performance will be at Tarragon Theatre in the Extraspace.
- Evening performances start at 7:30pm. Afternoon performances start at 2:00pm. Student Matinéés start at 1:00pm.
- Digital tickets are emailed to you when you book them and will be emailed again on the morning of the performance.
- If you arranged to have your ticket printed for pickup, please arrive 30 minutes before the show starts to get it from the Box Office.
- The lobby has benches to sit on and make yourself comfortable on.
- The Bar/Concessions is open for all performances except Student Matinéés.
- Food cannot be eaten in the Extraspace, but can be eaten in the Lobby. Drinks are allowed in the Extraspace. Hot drinks must have a lid.
- Tarragon Theatre only requires masking for certain performances. However, you are welcome to wear one in and around the venue at any time. Please note that some staff may wear masks, but it is not required for staff to be masked.
- The women's washroom is on the ground floor.
- The men's washroom, all gender washroom, and single-stall accessible washroom are on the second floor.
- The second floor can be reached by stairs or elevator.
- This show has assigned seating.
- You can find your seat assignment on your digital or printed ticket.
- The Extraspace will open 30 minutes before the performances, at this time the ushers will start scanning tickets so people can go in and take their seats.

- An Usher will tell you where to find your seat when they scan your ticket.
- Your mobile phone should be set to silent during the performance.
- The Extraspace is air conditioned in warmer weather and may be cold when you first enter. It will quickly heat up once the show begins.
- The lights over the audience will be lowered and it will be dark. Then the performance will start.
- If you need to leave during the performance for any reason, you can. When an usher notices you trying to leave, they will help you exit to the lobby using the doors you entered from.
- Reentry is not permitted for *Strife*. If you leave the theatre during the performance you cannot be reseated. Box Office staff can tell you your options for rescheduling your ticket(s) to see the show in full.
- Late Entry is not permitted for *Strife*. If you arrive after the performance has already started you will not be allowed into the theatre. Box Office staff can help you reschedule your ticket(s) for a future performance, or refund your tickets.

About Strife

Monique, a tough and tenacious oil patch worker, is reeling from the brutal murder of her brother Nathan, an Indigenous climate activist. His violent death leaves Monique at a crossroads.

As she wrestles with her grief, Monique is plagued by a recurring dream in which she reconstructs Nathan's bones from an owl pellet. This enigmatic vision is guided by the Owl, a spectral presence that is both a harbinger of sudden change and a conduit for spirits with unfinished business. Tense, poetic and deeply visceral, *Strife* is a powerful reflection on loss and resilience.

About the Performance

Here are some things about this show you may find interesting or helpful as an audience member:

- This is the World Premier of *Strife*.
- The creative team rehearsed the show in Edmonton, Alberta where the play is set before coming to Toronto to perform it.

Performer and Character Information

Performer: Teneil Whiskeyjack

Character: Monique

Character Info: Monique is a Cree woman in her late 30s. She works in Alberta's oil industry. She is the older sister of Nathan.



Performer: Jesse Gervais

Character: Eddy

Character Info: Eddy is a Métis man in his 40s. He works in Alberta's oil industry. He is Monique's long-time boyfriend.



Performer: Michaela Washburn

Character: Andrea

Character Info: Andrea is a Métis woman in her 50s. She is a grief counsellor who has been assigned to Monique by her employer.



Performer: Valerie Planche

Character: Eleanor

Character Info: Eleanor is a Métis woman in her 60s. She is a university professor and is the mentor of Sarah and Nathan.



Performer: Grace Lamarche

Character: Sarah

Character Info: Sarah is a Cree/Métis woman in her 20s. She is a graduate student and climate justice activist. She is Nathan's girlfriend.



Performer: Tracey Nepinak

Character: Great Grey Owl

Character Info: Great Grey Owl watches over the action of the play and sometimes talks at the other characters. They are Cree.



Production Photos by Jae Yang

Content Advisory

Please note that the Fact Sheet contains spoilers from this point on.

- *Strife* deals with and presents content which may be difficult for some, including: murder, grieving the death of a family member/loved one, climate collapse, Settler Colonial violence, physical violence, carceral systems, alcohol consumption, colourism, 'pretendian' accusations, substance abuse, social workers, suicide, online harassment/hate speech, anti-Quebec sentiment, and sexual innuendo.
- Foul language is used throughout the performance.
- A performer moves into and out of the audience several times during the performance. Each moment is flagged in the **Plot Summary**.
- Alcohol consumption is depicted a few times during the performance.
- Snakes are mentioned but never depicted during the performance.
- Monique mentions having to convince social workers she could take care of her little brother by herself.
- Andrea asks Monique about suicidal thoughts as part of her counselling intake.
- The candles performers hold in one scene are electric. Live flame is not used.
- At the vigil for Nathan, Eleanor mentions that he was thrown off a bridge.
- When Monique tells Andrea about her childhood, she talks about her mother's struggle with substance abuse.
- When Sarah visits the bridge where Nathan was killed, it is implied that she is having suicidal thoughts even though those words are never used.

Sensory Advisory

- There are no strobe lights during the performance.
- Sweetgrass is burned to smudge the Extraspace before each performance. The scent may linger when you take your seat.
- Characters yell and raise their voices during the performance. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.
- Fog and haze are used throughout the performance, including preshow while audience members enter.
- When all performers begin yelling Monique's name over and over, the loud sound of trucks driving and honking is played until Monique starts talking. If something is ever too loud you can cover your ears with your hands or put on sound dampening headphones if you brought them. The Box Office can provide earplugs upon request.

Set Description and Photos

The set is designed to look like the underpass of a railway bridge.

Above the back and sides of the stage are the metal bars of a Truss bridge as if seen from far below. In the centre of the bridge is the Cree name for the land Edmonton was built on spelled in Cree script. Immediately right of that is the silhouette of a train car crossing the bridge. On the wall behind the train is a full moon whose colour shifts to red on the bottom half. On the right edge of the stage there is a rusty metal support column which connects the bridge above it to the ground.

Centre stage there are three (3) wooden tables of different sizes. The smaller ones are nested underneath the larger ones. Painted on the floor is a circle divided into three segments. Each segment is covered in repeated symbols of Cree script. The left segment spells the Cree word for bear; the middle segment the word for buffalo; and the right segment the word for beaver.



In the audience, a section of chairs in the middle of the right side have been removed. At this gap in the audience carpets have been laid down to cover the ground. Performers use this area during the performance.



Set Design by Jackie Chau

Plot Summary

- Eleanor gives a lecture about the symbolism of owls and the colonial history of the area, which Great Grey Owl gives more context on.
- From the gap in the audience, Eddy talks about the relationship between the local Indigenous communities and the oil industry.
- Sarah gives a speech at a protest about climate justice.
- Eddy leaves the audience gap and walks onstage.
- The sound of trucks gets louder and louder as everyone starts yelling Monique's name.
- Andrea tells Monique how her grief counseling will work.
- Monique talks about her family. Especially her brother Nathan who has recently been killed.

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- Sarah talks about her relationship to Nathan and about the activism they did together.
 - Sarah talks to Monique about the day Nathan's body was found.
 - Eddy walks offstage and into the audience gap.
 - Monique visits Eleanor at the university.
 - Eleanor tries to convince Monique to speak at one of the vigils she holds for Nathan.
 - Eddy leaves the audience gap and walks onstage.
 - Eddy talks to Monique about his worry that Eleanor is using Nathan's death for publicity.
 - Monique attends the next vigil Eleanor and Sarah hold for Nathan.
 - Monique tries to give a speech but cannot do it, so Eleanor gives one.

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- Monique has a counseling session with Andrea.
 - Monique talks about how Nathan's activism and idealism were slowly driving a wedge between them because she and Eddy work in the oil industry.
 - Monique tells Andrea about the moment she learned her brother died.
 - Eddy again tells Monique about his worry that Eleanor is politicizing Nathan's death for her academic career.
 - Eleanore gives a lecture about the history of Settler-Colonial greed.
 - Eddy walks offstage and into the audience gap.
 - Monique tells Andrea about when she realized she needed to be a parental figure for Nathan.
 - Eddy leaves the audience gap and walks onstage.
 - Monique tells Andrea how she and Eddy met.

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- Eddy tries to tell Sarah his concerns about Eleanor.
 - Eddy walks offstage and into the audience gap.
 - Monique tells Andrea that Nathan called her the night he was killed, but she did not answer the phone because their estrangement had grown.
 - Eddy leaves the audience gap and walks onstage.
 - Eddy confronts Eleanor about the actions she has taken in the wake of Nathan's death.
 - Eleanor and Eddy argue about the advantages and obstacles faced by Indigenous folks who can pass as white.

- Eddy tells Monique about his confrontation with Eleanor. He tries to convince her that Eleanor's actions are preventing Monique from processing her grief.
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- Monique goes to Eleanor to apologize for what Eddy said to her.
 - Monique tells Andrea her misgivings over how Eleanor characterizes Eddy's behaviour as harmful. She also points out certain ways Eleanor uses her reputation as an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper to evade criticism.
 - Monique talks to Sarah about how Eleanor took advantage of the power she had as Sarah and Nathan's professor and they argue.
 - Monique confronts Eleanor and tells her to stop all of her projects relating to Nathan.
 - Eddy apologizes to Monique for how he has treated her recently.
 - Monique tells Eddy that she has realized that processing her grief is something she has to do alone.
 - Sarah apologizes to Monique for their argument about Eleanor.
 - Monique helps Sarah let go of the guilt she has felt around Nathan's death so she can also start processing her grief.
 - Andrea gives a summation of her findings to Monique and says she will approve her return to work.
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- Eddy and Sarah reminisce about Nathan.
- Sarah tells him that she doesn't work with Eleanor anymore.
- Monique is getting ready to dance at a pow-wow when she notices Eleanor is there too.

- They each tell a story about coming to this pow-wow with Nathan to the other, then part ways.

THE END

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this Fact Sheet or planning a visit to Tarragon Theatre please reach out.

We love feedback on our accessible programming, if there is anything you would like to share please send us an email or give us a call.

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