



LOOT

Education Pack

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This education pack was written by **Lixi Chivas** with contributions from **Tom O'Connell Productions Ltd**, **Megan Kerrigan** and **Michael Fentiman**

Production Photographs by Darren Bell.

Introduction

This education pack has been designed to support your experience of seeing *Loot* at The Watermill. The pack is aimed primarily at teachers or students of Drama or English at Secondary School.



This is a digital pack; where you see this arrow there is a link that you can click on to view other material online.

Your feedback is most welcome, please email (heidi@watermill.org.uk) or call us on 01635 570927.

Don't forget that we offer workshops on most aspects of drama, and visit many schools in the surrounding area to work with students and teachers. For a workshop menu, please visit the Outreach pages on our website, or get in touch.

I hope you find the pack useful.

Heidi Bird
Outreach Director

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The Watermill's core Education and Outreach programme is generously supported by The Dr. Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation.

Joe Orton

This production of *Loot* marks the 50th anniversary of Joe Orton's murder at the hands of his lover, Kenneth Halliwell. His brief life may have started rather inconspicuously growing up on an estate in Leicester but Orton's nonconformist lifestyle soon began to define his career and personal life.

Born as John in **1933**, Joe Orton lived with his three siblings in Leicester until he moved to London in **1951** having gained a scholarship to study at RADA. He differed from many of the classically educated students there but found a friend in Kenneth Halliwell who is often credited with nurturing Orton's unruly talent. Though Halliwell and Orton often wrote together it was not until **1964** that Orton's work found any success with the production of his radio play *The Ruffian on the Stair*. This came after several years of financial hardship working first as a stage manager in Ipswich before moving to Cadbury's chocolate factory amongst other things.

Before Orton's writing career took off in **1964** the only particularly eventful episode in his life was his and Halliwell's arrest and six-month imprisonment for the defiling of library books. The pair offered a satirical social commentary on the perceived baseness of various works by lewdly annotating and adding inappropriate images to the covers. This was to be just the beginning of Orton's famed and radical approach to commenting on the attitudes of the time; his plays were to shock many audiences with their allusion to homosexuality, the church and death among other themes. It has been suggested that the harsh sentencing of the pair was due to the homophobia of the time as homosexuality was



Above: Hal (Sam Frenchum) and Truscott (Christopher Fulford). Below: Fay (Sinéad Matthews), Hal (Sam Frenchum) and McLeavy (Ian Redford).

not made legal until two weeks before Orton's death.

1964 was a key year for Orton with plays produced in radio (*The Ruffian on the Stair*), television (*The Good and Faithful Servant*) and theatre (*Entertaining Mr Sloane*). Terrence Rattigan, one of the most established theatrical writers of the time who shared Orton's interest in criticising views towards homosexuality, put up £3,000 to transfer *Entertaining Mr Sloane* to the West End from the New Arts Theatre where it was originally staged. This financial and artistic support helped to establish Orton as an accepted



Hal (Sam Frenchum) and Fay (Sinéad Matthews).

theatrical great whilst his partner Halliwell remained completely obscure and un-produced.

Loot's run began in **1965** and though its first production starring the *Carry On* star Kenneth Williams was unsuccessful, the second re-cast production achieved more success. Some audience members struggled with Orton's macabre sense of humour. The cast was not exempt from this: Orton reportedly suggested using his recently deceased mother's false teeth as a prop in the production.

Orton's star continued to rise and he was soon invited to write a script for a film about the Beatles, though this was never to be written. Orton even beat Harold Pinter to win an Evening

Standard award for *Loot* in **1966**. However, his personal life was a troubled one with his partner Kenneth Halliwell becoming increasingly paranoid and dependant on prescription drugs. As the couple's careers became more disparate, Halliwell was increasingly excluded from the theatrical circles of Orton's friends and his mental health suffered. The last call made to the couple's Islington flat on the night of August 8 was to arrange for Halliwell to start a course of psychiatry but unfortunately this intervention was too late. Kenneth Halliwell murdered Joe Orton as he slept on the morning of August 9 **1967** before overdosing on prescription pills, killing himself. This morbid and controversial writer met a fate reminiscent of the harshness in his plays, though lacking the dark humour he had made his own.

Several of his plays were produced posthumously including *What the Butler Saw* which satirised homophobia and the view of homosexuality as a mental illness. Due to the content of his plays and the direct way in which Orton discussed homosexuality many see him as a pioneer for normalising homosexuality, especially in popular culture. Though we will never know how his writing would have changed in our more accepting society it is a certainty that Joe Orton's life and works contributed to the sexual awakening of the 60s that has shaped our modern culture ever since.

MEGAN KERRIGAN

My brother, Joe.

By Leonie Orton-Barnett

I'd spoken to Joe about me coming down to London to see his new play *Loot*. I wanted to see the play but I wanted to see him even more. I loved just being near him. He seemed, to me, to possess a self-confidence that I yearned for.

He met me off the train at St Pancras. He was on his own. 'No Kenneth?' I asked. 'No' came the reply.

He didn't offer any explanation and I didn't inquire further. I had him all to myself which I was pleased about. I sat next to him. I watched as the actors on stage manhandled a dummy, supposedly a corpse. I thought the dialogue was odd and seemed obscure to me. 'Bury her naked? My own mum?'. Was he referring to our mam, I wondered. After the play had finished he took me backstage and I was introduced to the cast. Kenneth Cranham is very dishy, I thought. I wished I could be an actress. Later, with Sheila Ballantine he walked me back to St Pancras to catch my train back to Leicester.

The play was still running at the Criterion Theatre when our mother died. Joe attended her funeral on 30th December 1966. He slipped our mother's false teeth into his pocket. Later he took these false teeth with him to the theatre.

Wednesday 4th January 1967.

I'd taken my mother's false teeth down to the theatre. I said to Kenneth Cranham, "Here, I thought you'd like the originals." He said "What?". "Teeth" I said. "Whose?" He said. "My mum's" I said. He looked very sick. "You see" I said, "it's obvious that you're not thinking of the events of the play in terms of reality, if a thing affects you like that." Simon Ward shook like jelly when I gave them to him.

Taken from *The Orton Diaries*.



Love,
Joe

Synopsis of Loot

We meet Mr McLeavy and his late wife's nurse Fay McMahon in Mrs McLeavy's sick room, the family living room, converted. It is the day of the funeral of Mrs McLeavy.

In this production, Mrs McLeavy is played by a live actor, Anah Ruddin! Read about her experience here: [https://](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/sep/07/how-to-play-dead-corpses-view-joe-orton-loot-anah-ruddin)



www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/sep/07/how-to-play-dead-corpses-view-joe-orton-loot-anah-ruddin

Fay is shocked that three days into widowhood McLeavy hasn't started thinking about remarriage. Fay is disparaging about Mrs McLeavy, saying that she was deceitful. Fay wants access to a locked wardrobe.

When the room empties, Mrs McLeavy's son, Hal, sneaks in to check the contents of the locked wardrobe. He leaps away, the picture of innocence as his father and Fay return. While McLeavy is out of the room collecting more gifts of flowers, Fay scolds Hal for his disreputable lifestyle. Hal assures Fay he'll be abroad soon with his childhood friend, Dennis.

McLeavy returns with another wreath and a newspaper reporting a robbery at the bank next door to where Dennis works as an undertaker. We learn that Fay has been widowed seven times. Dennis arrives to move the coffin to the hearse. They all look at Mrs McLeavy once last time. As a consequence of the embalming process, her vital organs have been removed and are in a separate little casket.

With McLeavy and Fay safely out of the room and

the door locked and barricaded, Hal and Dennis brainstorm a plan to hide what must be the money from the bank robbery. They eventually land on swapping the money and Mrs McLeavy. While they work, Dennis reveals he's been having a liaison with Fay and wants to marry her. A police officer called Truscott has already searched Dennis' house, posing as someone from the water board. Hal and Dennis take the coffin out to the car.

Fay and McLeavy return and are joined by Truscott, introducing himself as wishing to inspect the water mains supply, which he believes is in the locked wardrobe. Truscott correctly 'guesses' Fay's past marital history in surprising detail. He asks Fay to sign a blank piece of paper. The most she'll do is sign as Queen Victoria. Truscott leaves, satisfied.

Fay reveals that Mrs McLeavy changed her will just before she died, leaving everything to Fay. To keep the money in the family, Fay suggests she and McLeavy marry. Hal and Dennis return from fixing a flat tyre on the hearse. Dennis is distraught that Fay wants to marry McLeavy.

Fay and Hal decide not to attend the funeral. While everyone else is gone Fay forces Hal to open the locked wardrobe. They broker a deal: Fay will help Hal strip and dispose of the corpse for a cut of the stolen money. Just as they finish wrapping the body in a sheet, Truscott is back. They hurriedly stash everything, and when Truscott asks to see inside the now-empty wardrobe they oblige willingly. Truscott is called to the front door.



Hal (Sam Frenchum) and Dennis (Calvin Demba)

Alone again, Hal confides that when they moved Mrs McLeavy one of her glass eyes dropped out. Truscott returns and spots the mummified body. Fay explains it is her dressmaking dummy. Truscott interrogates Hal about the night of the robbery. Hal tells the truth but it's so implausible Truscott won't believe him and beats him.

McLeavy returns. The funeral cortege was disrupted by an out-of-control lorry that careered into the hearse, killing Dennis' boss, setting a fire around the coffin, and agitating a passing dog to such a state that it savaged McLeavy. The coffin was not damaged but all the flowers were destroyed so McLeavy goes to fetch a photo of the Pope, accompanied by Truscott.

Dennis returns with the coffin and he, Hal and Fay

hurried try to move the money back to the wardrobe but are interrupted by McLeavy who is shocked to spot the mummified body. Fay gives the same explanation.

Truscott clears the room of everyone except Dennis who he questions about the bank robbery and Dennis' past. When he doesn't get anything from Dennis, he sends Dennis out, ordering him to take the 'dummy' with him. Alone, he spots the glass eye with surprise and horror.

INTERVAL

McLeavy and Fay return. Dennis and Hal burst in with the corpse, on their way back from the garage where a police officer had been about to undress it. Truscott is irritated but allows the

'dummy' to stay.

Truscott reveals that he is not really from the water board but the police. He is investigating the murder of Mrs McLeavy. Unlike McLeavy, Truscott is not satisfied she died of natural causes. Fay confesses Mrs McLeavy's ghost appeared to her and accused McLeavy of murder. On her deathbed, Hal remembered his mother spoke of a book, which Truscott identifies on the shelf: 'The Trial of Phyllis McMahan: nurse accused of murdering her patient'. This was one of Truscott's cases. The pages in the book with photos of the nurse have been ripped out but there is an example of the nurse's handwriting, which Truscott compares to Fay's 'Queen Victoria' signature. Truscott reveals Fay has been connected to fifteen deaths and one disappearance in the last decade. Fay breaks down and confesses to murdering the ailing Mrs McLeavy only because euthanasia is against her religion. McLeavy tells her to pack her bags. Dennis is more in love than ever.

Truscott asks McLeavy for Mrs McLeavy's stomach so he can get proof of poisoning. Her stomach was in the little casket but Dennis explains that in the car accident, the contents of the casket was lost. Fay has got away with murder again but Truscott thinks he can implicate her in the bank robbery as an accessory.

Truscott produces the glass eye and everyone lays claim to it until McLeavy recognises it as Mrs McLeavy's. McLeavy opens the coffin to see what else has happened to her body. He is overwhelmed by the contents. Fay offers to show Truscott the deteriorated corpse, too, but he quickly declines the invitation. Hal begs his father

to keep quiet. McLeavy retracts his assertion that the eye belonged to Mrs McLeavy.

Truscott leaves to organise a full search of the house; he will take the coffin into police custody. A new plan is hatched: to put the body back in the wardrobe and the money in the little casket. Truscott returns and also takes the little casket for forensics. Seeing the empty coffin, Truscott asks where Mrs McLeavy is. Checking the wardrobe, Truscott expresses surprise that Mrs McLeavy asked to be buried nude.

As Truscott goes to leave the little casket springs open and banknotes are scattered everywhere. With the criminals unmasked McLeavy offers to act as a witness for the prosecution. Hal offers a bribe; Truscott accepts. McLeavy storms out to go to the priest.

They return Mrs McLeavy to her coffin, now dressed again. So that McLeavy doesn't expose the conspiracy, Truscott will arrest him. McLeavy returns, accosted by Meadows, Truscott's deputy. Truscott arrests McLeavy, on a charge to be decided later. Fay asks if an accidental death in prison could be arranged which Truscott assures her is possible. Truscott follows McLeavy and Meadows to the police station.

Hal plans to turn his house into a brothel and offers Fay a job as a nurse, in case of accidents. Hal invites Dennis to come and stay at the house, too. Fay insists that when she and Dennis marry they'll have to move out, to keep up appearances.

LIXI CHIVAS

Censorship

It was until as recently as 1968 that any play seeking a license for public performance had to be approved by the Lord Chamberlain. This position in the royal household was originally given its duties of theatrical censorship by the Prime Minister Robert Warpole in 1737 to prevent public criticism of the government. However, in the 20th Century the focus of the Lord Chamberlain and his team of censors were not just political but also moral, with limiting portrayals of homosexuality deemed to be one of its main roles.

Due to the royal link any play that was approved for production had to be seen to portray views that the crown could support. This political connection has led to many choices that are now seen as morally questionable. During the lead up to the Second World War many plays that were seen to criticise the Nazi regime were banned as authorities did not want to antagonise a foreign power. Sexuality has also been limited; it was not until 1958 when the Lord Chamberlain, Roger Lumley, permitted his team to allow the mention of homosexuality on stage. However, it was highly restricted, only allowing earnest references, permitting nothing humorous, nor seeming to promote homosexuality. These political and sexual sensibilities may seem dated now, but at the time the Lord Chamberlain took a role in managing public morals and foreign diplomacy.

Ancient classics have been scrutinised by the censors with plays such as *Oedipus* being banned to prevent impressionable theatre goers from committing incest. Some modern classics have also been impacted with playwrights such as Ibsen, Arthur Miller and Beckett all struggling to gain approval. Though there are no official forms of

censorship at present, some playwrights still cannot find ways to stage their more politically contentious plays.

Richard Bean, perhaps best known for his comedy *One Man Two Guvvors*, has spoken publically about the obstacles modern playwrights face with self-censorship and sensitive political climates. His 2009 play *English People Very Nice* focusing on immigration and self-consciously populated with racial stereotypes, led to leafleting against the playwright and even protests. His play *Great Britain*, based on the phone hacking scandal, had multiple rewrites due to legal advice. He has also expressed frustration over his one un-produced play, an adaptation of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, in which Bean has the virgins of Islamic heaven go on sex strike to prevent suicide bombers. The playwright has been thus far unsuccessful in finding an artistic director who will produce this adaptation.

The history of theatrical censorship demonstrates shifting concerns of the government and public from political to sexual to racial concerns. Although writers will be free to pen what they want, when creating theatre for audiences, producers have to be sensitive and realistic about how far an audience can be challenged.

MEGAN KERRIGAN

Loot Coverage

- ➔ **London Theatre 1:** <https://www.londontheatre1.com/news/179362/joe-orton-loot-dialogue-first-time-on-uk-stage/>
- ➔ **Broadway World:** <http://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Deleted-Dialogue-from-Joe-Ortons-LOOT-to-Be-Reinstated-for-50th-Anniversary-Production-20170807>
- ➔ **The Stage -** <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2017/joe-ortons-loot-performed-uncensored-first-time/>
- ➔ **Radio 4** An exploration of the life and legacy of Joe Orton: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08zzly6>
- ➔ **The Guardian** https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/aug/06/joe-orton-play-loot-staged-uncut-50-years-after-being-censored?dm_t=0,0,0,0
- ➔ **The Sunday Times –** https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/loot-to-be-staged-uncut-for-first-time-50-years-after-ortons-murder-gfbjgb63v?dm_t=0,0,0,0
- ➔ **Boyz:** <http://boyz.co.uk/loot-at-the-park-theatre/>
- ➔ **Evening Standard** <https://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/theatre/joe-ortons-loot-will-be-performed-uncensored-for-the-first-time-marking-50-years-since-his-murder-a3607986.html>



Hal (Sam Frenchum), Fay (Sinéad Matthews) and Dennis (Calvin Demba).

Notes from the Director

By Michael Fentiman

When approaching any production of *Loot* the question that repeatedly comes up - not least when looking at the play 50 years after the death of its author - is “Does it still shock?” In parts, yes, of course it does. Interfering with human remains may, one day, be struck off the taboo list, but we are not quite there yet. Society still shudders at the notion of corpses being meddled with. Admittedly, some social mores have shifted since Joe’s death in 1967. We are now accustomed to attacks upon the church (Monty Python and the like pushed through that breaking point) and the image of the dodgy copper has become more familiar, both in art and unfortunately in life, over the last 50 years.

But what is more particular to the play, and what sustains its relevance beyond the confines of its period, is the notion that shock and outrage are societal impulses that oppress the individual: those which operate outside of the confines of accepted moral and political norms. Orton clearly found the hypocritical din of moral outrage hysterical: how people cast themselves as fools, getting in a tizz by anything that challenges the very fabric of, as Orton put it, “that old whore society”. But outrage can be a dark force in Orton, and it is not just the grounds for laughter.

Anyone who believes that Joe and his lover Kenneth Halliwell served a six-month prison sentence for the defacing of library books would have to force themselves to live under the illusion that in the early 60’s the Establishment’s outrage for the “*Gorilla in the Roses*” was in no way influenced by the knowledge that said defacers were also two homosexual men. Not just book defacers, but gay book defacers. Nerves were in shreds at the very thought of it.

Joe’s very way of life was in direct contrast to the

accepted norms of established British society, from a legal and a moral perspective, in the eyes of the Church and the Law. As a writer, his every word was controlled by the Chamberlain’s attempts to protect the British people from shock and moral corruption. So of course, to Joe, the very mechanisms for which society expressed its outrage worked hand in hand with an act of oppression, a challenge to his freedom of speech and his way of life. No wonder his plays fixate on the hypocrisy of such reactions. He is able to laugh at it, but there is the stain of frustration and cynicism carried with it. The need to speak in code to evade attack, while still managing to express a subtext of rebellion, is a key characteristic of Joe’s work.



Truscott (Christopher Fulford).

So for me, what we get ourselves shocked about may have changed somewhat, but outrage – and the moral crusades that come with it – still create challenges to personal freedoms or at the very least make the expression of those freedoms more difficult.

I would argue that Orton’s plays expose offence as being so relative, both morally and culturally, that it’s almost ridiculous to become consumed by it. But of course we do. Of course we have values we protect and wish to uphold – if not what would we stand for? But we may forget to guard ourselves from the surety and pomposity, the sense of moral and intellectual superiority, that was so ruthlessly mocked by Orton.

It would also be impossible to talk about *Loot* and not talk about how progressive the play was at the time of its debut, and how it still struggles to be constrained by genre.

Orton’s influences were vast. He was an extremely well-read playwright who was influenced by Shakespeare, Sheridan, Synge, Middleton, Vaudeville and Pinter... and the shadows of all of those influences live in the fabric of *Loot*; a play both modern and in the classical mode, poetic prose epigrams put alongside linguistic confusion routines, Wildean wit springs from working class, Pinteresque bullies... It’s a real cocktail of styles working together, something only possible from an artist who was at once a true classicist and modernist.

Joe uses farcical plot devices but doesn’t present a farce in its traditional sense, and to reduce the play to that definition only serves to deceive us from understanding the complexity of his style. The plotting is farcical of course, but the objective is not always humour and its dynamic build descends into something more chilling than madcap. Joe uses farcical plotting and its devices whilst still subverting the form – borrowing from farce without entirely becoming one. Subversion of form, language and moral code is the

playground of Joe Orton, which makes any attempt to pin him down reductive.

The chance of a moral alternative, which you often find in even the most sordid of farce, is absent. This is humanity on the take, exposed with its trousers down, like some of the great city comedies of old. No redemption here, only the exposure of hard truth. It’s a rat race and anything is sacrificed in order to stay afloat.

Like Shakespeare, Orton understood that the definitions of comedy, history and tragedy, merely serve to market a play and give a rough indication of outcome. There is always the broadness of scope for great tragedy in comedy and comedy in tragedy. Joe’s work supports the idea that plays are broader than their definitions and can be flattened by singularity. Much like how *Twelfth Night* is lessened without its melancholy and sadness, *Loot* is lessened when its discomfort, its cruelty and its menace are pushed aside in the name of comfortable laughter.

It’s a real honour to mark 50 years since Joe’s death with this production and I would like to personally thank Leonie Orton and the Orton Estate for their guidance and continued support.

Meet Dennis and Hal

With **Calvin Demba** and **Sam Frenchum**

The story of *Loot* revolves around Dennis and Hal, two old friends in hot water. Can you describe your characters?

Calvin: Dennis is a ducker and diver in the purest sense. He is always on the take. But he gets himself in in too deep this time and wildly scrambles to dig himself out of trouble.

Sam: The only thing Hal cares about is money and who is knocking off next – preferably his best mate Dennis.



Calvin Demba and Sam Frenchum

In this production, what is the relationship between them?

Sam: Two best mates who have been knocking about together since they were born. They are dreaming of a better life.

Calvin: They think they are the Kray twins, but they are, as someone once said of Orton, “lamb in rams clothing”.

Sam: There is a problem in the fact that Dennis likes girls as well as boys and dreams of one day getting married – and maybe Hal wants more than that – so there is tension between them.

***Loot* is most definitely a play of dubious morals, is that fun to play?**

Calvin: The writing is so fun to play; like a different language. It’s great getting the chance to play someone that comes out with the perfect witty answer to every situation.

Sam: I love the fact the play doesn’t worry about these characters being likeable. These people do what they like and don’t seek approval and there is something really liberating about that.

Funny Money: *Loot* then and now

Paul McCartney once told Joe Orton that he got nothing from theatre but ‘a sore arse.’ *Loot* was different: ‘the only play he hadn’t wanted to leave before the end.’ Many people did walk out before the end, however, not bored but outraged at what they deemed a ‘disgusting’ play. Writing in the midst of the ‘Swinging Sixties’, working-class Orton was part of an irreverent new counterculture that rebelled against the Establishment. His outlandish black comedy lampoons bourgeois ideals of decency and respectability with its breezy brutality and farcical mishandling of an undressed female corpse, whose glass eye and false teeth are passed around ‘like nuts at Christmas’. The controversy caused by Orton’s ‘comedy of horrors’ prompted one of the most memorable Times headlines of all time: ‘Bournemouth Old Ladies Shocked.’

Dubbed ‘the Oscar Wilde of Welfare State gentility’, Orton satirises social aspiration and the acquisitiveness of the postwar Age of Affluence. The play’s title alludes to money stolen from a bank by two cheerfully amoral young men, Hal and Dennis. Their loot is coveted by Fay, a mercenary nurse who marries then murders men for the inheritance. It is also pursued by the brutal police inspector Truscott, who demands a share of the ill-gotten gains in return for allowing Hal and Dennis to evade arrest. The vicious,

avaricious characters affect propriety and respectability, masking their depravity with elevated language and superficial social niceties to create an amusing discrepancy between words and deeds.

As the plot suggests, two central concerns of the play are criminality and corruption. When sent to prison for six months for stealing and playfully defacing library books in 1962, Orton attributed the harshness of the sentence to indirect punishment for his homosexuality. Subsequently, *Loot* questions the distinction between those who break and uphold the law. Orton directs the anger underlying his humour at institutions that outlawed, demonised and pathologised same-sex desire: the law, the church, the medical establishment. When the sexually ambiguous Hal (who cannot lie) conceals his loot in the cupboard or ‘closet’ (rather than hiding his affection for Dennis); Orton presents his pursuit of money rather than men as illicit. Although same-sex desire positions Hal as a criminal before July 1967, the play implies that greed, not homosexuality, is his real crime. At the same time, Orton celebrates sexual freedom by invoking the spirit of Dionysus: ‘Dennis’ is derived from ‘Dionysus’, the Greek god of wine and revelry who represents liberation from sexual inhibition and social mores.



Left: Hal (Sam Frenchum) and Truscott (Christopher Fulford). Right: McLeavy (Ian Redford)

With *Loot*, Orton honed his signature style, a blend of the comic and the macabre, and confirmed his reputation as a major writer: on 11 January 1967 he collected the prestigious *Evening Standard* Award. Fifty years on, *Loot* is an A Level set text and has been judged one of the 100 best plays of the twentieth century by the National Theatre. Its central themes continue to resonate in the contemporary world. A recent report by the Serious Organised Crime Agency shows that police corruption has risen sharply in Britain over the last five years. Many religions preach homophobia and the Church of England still opposes gay marriage. Statistics published by Stonewall show that homophobia results in LGBT people suffering disproportionately from school bullying, mental health problems, eating

disorders, and homelessness. Further afield, Mike Pence, U.S. Vice-President, supports conversion therapy; Chechnya, a region of Russia, is currently conducting a state-sponsored campaign of abduction, detention and murder of gay men. Homosexuality remains illegal in more than seventy countries and punishable by death in ten. In this context, fifty years after Orton's tragic and untimely death, which occurred just a few days after the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, *Loot* remains an invaluable play for today.

**Dr Emma Parker Associate Professor of English,
 University of Leicester**

@JoeOrtonWriter



Fay (Sinéad Matthews), McLeavy (Ian Redford), Hal (Sam Frenchum) and Mrs McLeavy (Anah Ruddin)

Glossary of Terms

LOOT

1. goods usually of considerable value taken in war
2. a: something appropriated illegally often by force or violence
 b: illicit gains by public officials
3. the action of looting.

SOCIETY organisation, presumably Catholic, that supervises nursing assignments.

BENEDICTINE MONK member of the monastic order established by St. Benedict.

ANNULMENT a judicial pronouncement declaring a marriage invalid.

EMBALM to treat (a dead body) so as to protect from decay.

PAPAL DISPENSATION authorisation by the Pope which provides exemption from a rule of church law.

BEQUEST to give or leave by will – used especially of personal property.

W.V.S. Women's Voluntary Service, a charitable organization initially founded in 1938 to help with the war effort in England, and continuing to facilitate volunteer efforts at the local level.

PAPAL NUNCIO the Vatican's diplomatic representative.

FREUDIAN relating to the psychoanalytic theories or practices of Freud – the founder of psychoanalysis who developed theories based on repressed memories, examined infantile sexuality and dreams, and developed concepts of id, ego, superego.

BIRD a mildly offensive term for a woman.

BORSTAL a well-known reformatory for juvenile delinquents.

COBBLERS testicles.

'STREWTH God's truth.

BEREAVEMENT the loss of a loved one by death.

MOTHER'S UNION a worldwide organization founded in England in 1876, committed to Christian family life.

FAIT ACCOMPLI a thing accomplished and presumably irreversible.

EFFING AND BLINDING colloquialism for swearing.

COATEE a short coat.

BURKE AND HARE two notorious 19th century grave robbers and murderers who sold corpses to Edinburgh medical schools.

'BY APPOINTMENT.' **LIKE JAM** products (like jam) that receive royal patronage are marked with the monarch's seal of approval. ('By Appointment to her Majesty the Queen').

KIP sleep.

CONSUMMATUM EST Latin for "It is finished." Christ's last words.

M.P. Member of Parliament.

PUT THEM IN THE CLUB make them pregnant.

ON SUS on suspicion of.

HOLLOWAY prison for women in north London.

EUTHANASIA the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy.

MUEZZIN Muslim official who issues the call to prayer.

Credits

Tom O'Connell, James Seabright and The Watermill Theatre in association with King's Head Theatre and Park Theatre

Loot

By Joe Orton

Director Michael Fentiman
Set and Costume Designer Gabriella Slade
Lighting Designer Elliot Griggs
Sound Director Max Pappenheim
Casting Director Stephen Moore CDG
Fight Director Bret Yount
Movement Director Matt Crosby
Assistant Director James Callàs Ball
Production Photography Darren Bell

Meadows Raphael Bar
Dennis Calvin Demba
Hal Sam Frenchum
Truscott Christopher Fulford
Fay Sinéad Matthews
McLeavy Ian Redford
Mrs McLeavy Anah Ruddin

For The Watermill

Production Manager Lawrence T Doyle
Company Stage Manager Kerrie Driscoll
Assistant Production Manager Harry Armytage
Deputy Stage Manager Elaine Yeung
Wardrobe Amanda Dooley and Louise Patey