



Denver Center  
Theatre Company

# Inside

# Out

A STUDY GUIDE

PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

OCTOBER 1998

## Travels With My Aunt

*"I've had a few adventures in my life, like everyone else. Each one has lasted quite a long time, and I've stayed on excellent terms afterwards."*

—Graham Greene. *The Other Man*, p. 169.

**H**enry Pulling is a bachelor bank clerk of 30 uneventful years' tenure whose only pleasure is the cultivation of his garden of dahlias. In 1969, at the age of 55, he is reunited with his 75-year-old Aunt Augusta at his mother's cremation. Henry is immediately sent reeling when Augusta informs him that the deceased is really his stepmother and that his lethargic long-dead father was really something of a "hound." Aunt Augusta is aghast that Henry is retired at such an early age; she is further mortified when she learns he plans to spend the rest of his life raising dahlias, so she whisks him off on a series of journeys across Europe, from Brighton, England to Paris, France to Istanbul, Turkey and, ultimately, to Paraguay in South America.

Among the people who figure significantly in their travels are Augusta's intimate African valet, Wordsworth; her long-lost shady Italian love, Mr. Visconti; Miss Keene, a spinster who ends up in South Africa but holds the possibility of a proposal from Henry nearly to the end; a stoned American girl named Tooley, following her boyfriend to Nepal; her father, O'Toole, who may or may not be a CIA agent, and a host of other zanies, including an Irish wolf-hound. All of these characters are played by four men, who also take turns playing the same character



with just the tiniest of variations.

This is a comedy to be sure, but underneath is a layer of intrigue and a catalog of moral concerns. When Henry Pulling smugly decrees "All's right with the world," we know it is anything but that. ■

*"I've lived a life that's full, I traveled each and ev'ry highway, And more, much more than this, I did it my way."*

—Paul Anka, *My Way*, 1969

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# GRAHAM GREENE

***“There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.”***

—Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*, Chapter 1. (1940)

**G**raham Greene was born in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England in 1904. Being a headmaster’s son was probably what pushed him toward a literary career, but perhaps the push was a little too hard. While at Oxford University in his late teens, he suffered a nervous breakdown and came close to committing suicide.

After college, Greene spent three years writing for the *London Times*. In 1926, he converted to Catholicism in preparation to marry Vivienne Dayrell-Browning in 1927. They never divorced despite Greene’s many infidelities. Greene became a freelance writer in 1930. In 1935, he landed the position of the house film critic for the British newspaper *The Spectator* and was promoted to literary editor in 1940.

In 1941, he became a regular officer in the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and was sent to West Africa where his spying activities as agent 59200 were uneventful but resulted in the novel *The Heart of the Matter*. In 1943, he returned to England where he achieved a position in Section V, a counter-intelligence operation. His immediate supervisor was Kim Philby, the notorious “mole” who later defected to the Soviet Union in 1963. His association with Philby was the basis for the screenplay *The Third Man* and led to speculation that Greene was involved in Philby’s work as a Soviet spy. Greene left the SIS in 1944. He kept in touch with Philby even after his defection and wrote the introduction to Philby’s book *My Silent War*, a fact which ruffled his former SIS colleagues.

**G**reene’s earliest novels were *The Man Within* (1929), *The Name of the Action* (1930) and *Rumour at Nightfall* (1930), but his pop-

ularity was sealed with the publishing in 1932 of *Stamboul Train*, otherwise known as the Orient Express. He characterized his early works as “entertainments,” and his later works concentrated on the struggle between good and evil within man. These works were filled with moral, religious and social themes and were inspired, no doubt, by his earlier conversion to Roman



***“I’m the last person who can say what the truth is about me.”***

—Graham Greene,  
*The Other Man*, p. 24.

Catholicism. He termed these works his “novels” and they were filled with exotic locales, vivid imagery and a detached portrayal of characters that would become his trademark.

**G**reene seemed to be obsessed with evil; indeed, some of his novels added a strange mix of moral doubt and psychological conflict, which enhanced the terror of the works. Whether these elements were present in his personal life has been open to speculation for quite sometime. Greene has also been accused of “divided loyalties” and disloyalty. He traveled in nearly every part of the world and he created a vast body of work that glorifies subversiveness as a virtue. Greene defended himself in a speech called “The Virtue of Disloyalty”; in it he says the writer’s duty is to make trouble for any dominant power, its authorities and followers. He feels disloyalty is necessary against everything that is a part of the establishment—churches, universities, businesses, social and cultural groups. He feels that if these institutions are truly deserving, they can withstand the criticism directed against them. Surely, the character of Aunt Augusta is a manifestation of this subversive ideal.

In 1966, Greene left London for Antibes, France where he wrote lighter works such as *Travels With My Aunt*, *The Honorary Consul* and *Monsignor Quixote*. He died in 1991, but his last work wasn’t published until 1994. Called *A World of My Own: A Dream Diary*, it was culled from more than 800 pages of diaries and journals he kept over a 24-year span and was a partly fictitious, partly autobiographical accounting of his life and travels. ■

## COMMENTARY

***“What happens to Henry Pulling (as his name suggests) is that he changes from a cold egg to a quaint chicken and finally is transmogrified into a rooster of sorts.”***<sup>1</sup>

**T***ravels with My Aunt* is picaresque in structure, celebrating the infamous and indiscreet of society. It is an episodic series of adventures that Henry has with his Aunt Augusta, as well as her narratives of the past. Along the way, the conflicting, contrasting qualities between them is discovered. Henry, the retired bank teller, wants the security of his pension and feels himself completed and self-contained with his garden of dahlias. Augusta, on the other hand, courts insecurity with her travels, lovers, exaggerations and extravagances. Indeed, she and her lover, Visconti, thrive on the edge of precariousness.

**W**hile reasonable Henry lives in a kind of prison, first his teller's cage and then his claustrophobic cottage in Southwood, Aunt Augusta's world seems to be characterized by the image of freedom and mobility—everything involved in the idea of “traveling.” And yet when Henry reaches Paraguay, the motifs of imprisonment and silence appear again. Henry is briefly jailed; Visconti's house is like his father's tomb and the exotic world of Paraguay is described as an “ancient world of silence.”<sup>2</sup> If Paraguay is a prison, it is more intense and colorful than the pallid one in Southwood.

Finally, Henry, in his desire for a safe, regulated life and a weakness for funerals, is a life-denier. Augusta is presented as a life-embracer. Her knowledge of human experience is as full as his is empty. “She cultivates a streak of anarchy, vulgarity, devilry, and risk-taking. ...She extols incessant travel as a way of prolonging the good life and expresses a desire to die on her travels.”<sup>3</sup> Her trips and stories add up to a successful education in how to break out of a world dominated by arbitrary power, deep skepticism and meaningless death. “They also show, if one has sufficient imagination, he/she can transform life into a comedy where the authority is the buffoon, the skeptic is the fool, and death is a state of mind.”<sup>4</sup>

*Travels With My Aunt* is a departure from Greene's usual fiction. The work is a self-parody in which Greene jokes about all the things he used to brood about—cremation, crime, death, religion, sex and sin. There are also allusions to the author's personal life. For example, Aunt Augusta embodies the perfect antithesis

***“Traveling, not sitting still, is to be enjoyed; and the enjoyment of life sustains the desire to prolong it.”***

—Graham Greene, p. 55.

of all the staid attributes to be found in establishment Britain, especially the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), of which Greene's brother Hugh was Director-General. It was known universally as “Auntie.” Augusta is also based upon Dottoressa Moor, a friend of Greene's in Capri, whose memoirs, *An Impossible Woman*, he edited in 1975.

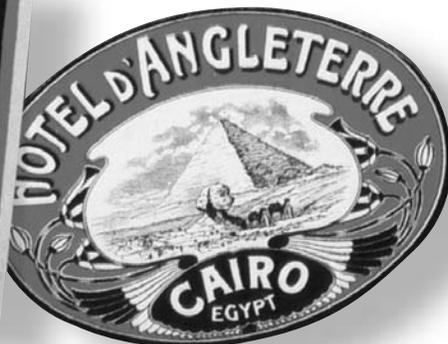
Mr. Visconti is called the “viper” after Marjorie Bowen's character in *The Viper of Milan*, a book Greene loved as a boy. Some of the bitterest satirical attacks are aimed



at the CIA, which is introduced through Tooley, the stoned girl Henry meets on the Orient Express. Later, Henry meets her father, O'Toole, in Paraguay where the agent philosophizes at length on the amount of time a man spends urinating. Sparrow, the English detective who pursues Wordsworth, was named after John Sparrow, Warden of All Souls, Oxford. The introduction of Nazi war criminals came from Greene's visit to Israel in 1967.

**T**here he was caught up in the aftermath of fighting the Six Day War and became sympathetic to the Israeli cause. He knew of the government's search for World War II criminals and wrote an article about it for the *Daily Telegraph*. There are also references to Greene's (and his father's) favorite authors that gives a 19th-century literary anthology: Blake, Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. Finally, there are the literary references to Greene's own works. Without knowing it, Henry reconstructs and recapitulates certain features of the worlds of *Stamboul Train* (Orient Express) *Brighton Rock* and *A Burnt Out Case* (espionage).

Greene once made the comment that *Travels With My Aunt* “was a sad book about death that turned out to be funny.”<sup>5</sup> The author does not desert the subject of facing death; what does happen is that the story begins with a vision of death, but then moves incessantly to a conclusion which amounts to an exultant celebration of life. ■



**AUGUSTA:** *It's absurd of them to treat Mr. Visconti like a common war criminal. ...[He] was always very kind to Jews.*

—*Travels With My Aunt*, p. 74.

**A**t the end of World War II, when the horrors of the Holocaust were revealed to the world, there was a general feeling among the Allies and United Nations that something must be done to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. From this notion came the Nuremberg Trials that were designed to show the world that those who committed atrocities must pay for their crimes.

Unfortunately, many concentration camp guards and other minor war criminals, either aided by friends and family or through Allied forces' error or because of the chaos caused by the number of displaced persons, slipped the net and escaped to the West. They found safe haven in such places as Canada, England, Australia, United States and, like Mr. Visconti, South America. Though Mr. Visconti is a very minor player in crime, more notorious criminals like Adolf Eichmann, Josef Mengele, Franz Stangl and Walter Kutschmann found refuge there.

Argentina was a protective place for some Nazis because the regime of Juan and Evita Peron was sympathetic to Germany. There is evidence that several suspected war criminals did not even change their identities while living in Argentina. These included Eduard Roschmann, head of the Riga Concentration Camp, and Gerhard Bohne, accused of killing handicapped and elderly people in Berlin. Another example was Adolf Eichmann, who was seized by Israeli agents in 1960 and later tried and executed.

In 1997 President Menem of Argentina set up a commission to investigate its role as a haven for Nazi war criminals, including reports that gold stolen from Holocaust victims was hidden in the country.

Mr. Visconti is forced to leave Argentina and go to Paraguay. Like Dr. Josef Mengele, the "Angel of Death" at Auschwitz, he found refuge in Paraguay under the presidency of General Alfredo Stroessner. Mengele was able to travel the continent, for he died in a drowning accident near Sao Paulo, Brazil and was buried in a cemetery in Embu.

The search for Nazi war criminals continues with the establishment of special war crimes units in the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and Great Britain. ■

*"I know quite clearly that not every Nazi alive will be brought to justice, nor will every criminal be indicted. That battle was lost long ago. At the same time, however, I believe that very few Nazis can be certain today that their whereabouts will never be exposed, and that they will never have to pay for their crimes."*<sup>6</sup>

# NAZI ART THEFT IN WORLD WAR II

**O'TOOLE:** *During the last war you were employed in Italy by the Germans to acquire Italian art treasures for the Third Reich. In 1945, you collected from Prince Lampedusa a drawing of great value.*

**VISCONTI:** *The Prince gave it to me quite voluntarily to present to Field Marshal Goering.*

*Travels with My Aunt*, p. 83.

**A**s suggested by the above quotation, the Germans in World War II were avid in their quest for art. Indeed, if Hitler and Goering had not been interested in the arts, Nazi art looting would not have been the war priority it was.

Hitler was a frustrated artist. He tried twice, without success, to pass the admission examination to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna; he was also rejected at the School of Architecture. Even after becoming a professional politician, Hitler continued to draw and design while planning his own museum. He desired the Dutch masters such as Rembrandt and Vermeer, the classical forms of Michelangelo and Correggio's sensual paintings like "Leda and the Swan." The museum's collection would be constituted through massive acquisitions but also through the seizure of paintings from public and private collections in the occupied countries.

Hermann Goering's taste for art came from his wealthy Swedish wife, Baroness Carin von Fock, and his exile in Italy where he fled after the failed Munich beer-hall revolt in 1923. In 1931, Carin died of tuberculosis. Goering had her buried at his large hunting lodge situated south of Berlin. He renamed it "Carinhall," and his ambition was to fill it with a world-class collection of paintings and art works which would come from the spoils of war.

Between 1939 and 1944, the Nazis systematically confiscated, stole or bought works from a number of European collec-

tions, or from private collections belonging to wealthy Jewish families, Freemasons and political opponents. Three separate agencies were charged with the methodical collecting: the Kunstschutz, the German embassy in Paris and the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die Besetzten Gebiete, known as the ERR, and surreptitiously controlled by Goering. In the end, hundreds of thousands of paintings, sculptures and drawings were taken from across Europe. These were the spoils of war. Holland and Belgium were heavily hit by this plundering, but it was France that suffered the most.

When the Nazis arrived in Paris, works by Van Eyck, Vermeer, Rembrandt, Goya, Velasquez, Degas, Monet, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse and Braque were confiscated and sent to the Jeu de Paume, a pavilion in the gardens in front of the Louvre, to be cataloged, photographed and shipped by train to Germany. There the works were to become part of Hitler's, Goering's, or some high Nazi official's collection.

The consequences of those four years of looting, massive transfer and destruction of art are still being felt today. Some confiscated paintings have reappeared elsewhere in other museums or private collections; some hang neglected and unclaimed in French museums and some have disappeared altogether.

***"It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, for our consideration and application of these things, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process."***

Henry James, letter to H. G. Wells (July 16, 1915).



## NOTES

1. Gaston, p.103.
2. Greene, p.264.
3. Kunkel, p.194.
4. Gaston, p.104.
5. Gaston, p.115.
6. Zuroff, p. xvii.

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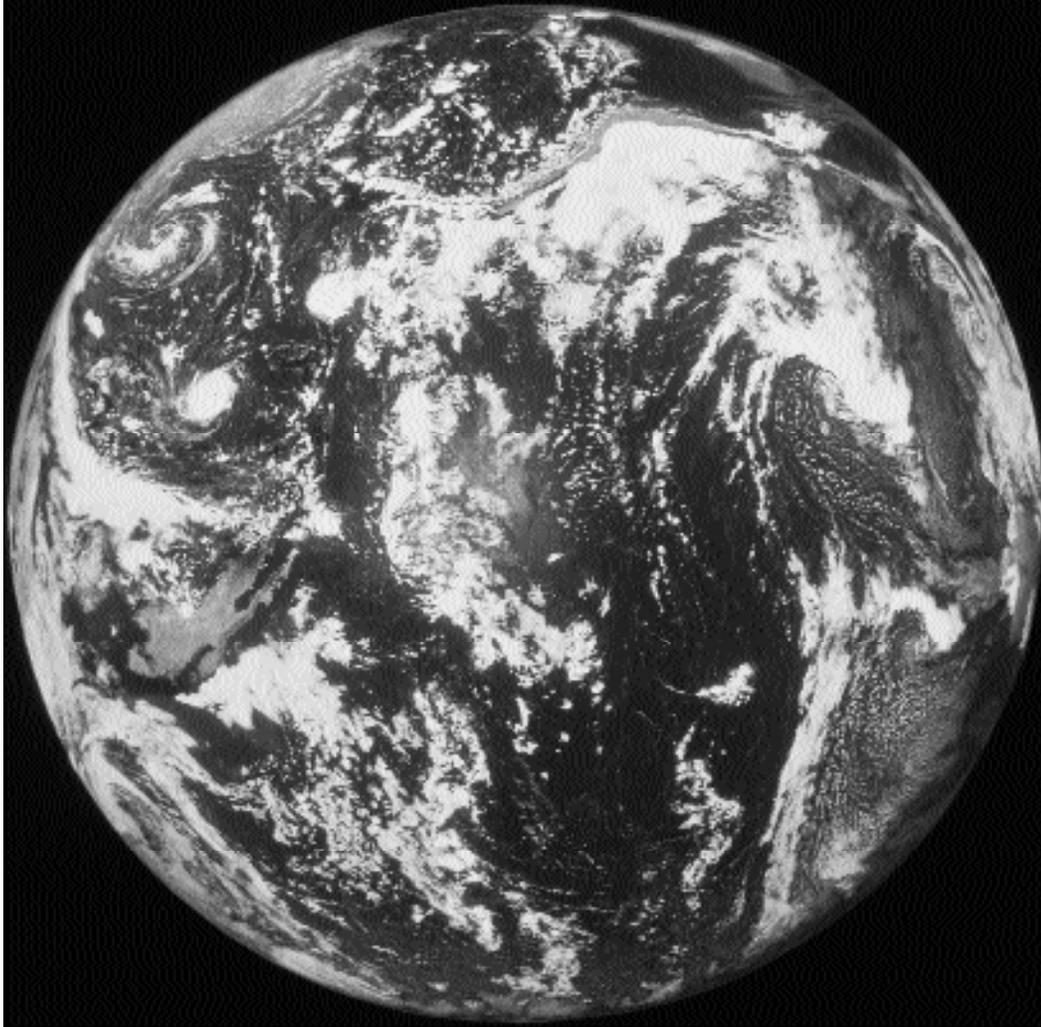
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# Activities



The following activities may be used for middle school and high school students.

**I**ntroduction: Aunt Augusta whisks her nephew, Henry away from Brighton, England to Paris, France, Switzerland, Venice, Italy and on to Istanbul, Turkey. On the way, they meet Tooley who is going to meet her boyfriend in Katmandu, Nepal; and later to Goa on the coast of India. A Miss Keene ends up near Koffiefontein, South Africa. Later in the play Henry

and his Aunt travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina and on to Asuncion, Paraguay.

## Geography

You are the travel agent and you will be given a large bonus if you are able to generate travel plans for the following. You must either plan trips for sev-

eral clients going to each of these destinations or one client going to all. Koffiefontein, South Africa; Katmandu, Nepal; Paris, France; Istanbul, Turkey; Brighton, England; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Corrientes, Argentina; Asuncion, Paraguay.

### *Identify:*

The continents where the destinations are located  
The longitude and latitude of each destination and its zone, i.e., tropical, temperate, etc. What are the country's seasons? What is the best time for the year for travel?

Plot a flight to each or all of these coordinates from Brighton, England and calculate the distances and direction that you are traveling.

*Divide students into groups and ask them to:*

*Pick one of the destinations and research the following:*

### *History:*

Create a timeline of significant 20<sup>th</sup> century events of the country that you have chosen.

Now create a more general timeline of events before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

What is the structure of the current government?

What rights do the people of this country have?

What kind of relationship does this country have with the United States?

What kinds of laws does this country have?

How safe is this country for Americans?

Does it have an American Consulate?

What ancient civilizations did the people of this country evolve from?

Is the country mostly agricultural or industrial?

What contributions has this country

given to the world?  
What is the relationship this country has with other countries? What countries lie on its border?  
Is this country considered wealthy or poor?  
What is the dominant religion?

#### Science:

Identify the major physical features of the place, i.e., mountains, rivers, plains, hills, oceans, plateaus, volcanoes, lakes, swamps.  
What are the general characteristics of the weather?  
What unique animals naturally exist in this habitat, why do you think that this is so?  
What is the temperature range, and precipitation during the seasons, when are they, and what are they like? example: If it is Winter in Colorado what season is it in the chosen country?  
What time zones are they in. If it is noon in Brighton, England what time is it in each of these places?  
What is the dominant mode of transportation in the region to be visited?  
Identify common diseases of the country, example malaria.

#### Reading:

What is the language of the country?  
Find a phrase book that helps with simple questions.  
Find a legend, fable, or folklore of this place.  
Find other authors from the region and read some of their work.

#### Math:

Compute the distance from Brighton, England to each of the destinations.  
Compare the size of each of the destination to its population. Is it densely populated?  
Use a table, pie chart, or graph to chart the ethnic differences in the population and differences in religion.  
Look up the currency of the region and using the exchange rate found in the paper everyday convert \$1,000.00 into the foreign currency.

*Create an Information Sheet for Your Clients, include:*

Why should they visit this destination?  
Include: weather, beaches, mountains,

ancient ruins, museums, parks, architecture, history, food, etc.  
The best season in which to travel.  
What kind clothes and shoes to pack for the weather and for the terrain of the country.  
Do you need a passport or visa? What immunizations would you need?  
What kind of language dictionaries would you need to bring?  
What are the religions and customs of these places? Is there any special behavior necessary?  
Are there any dangerous political conflicts in the country that you should be aware of?  
What kinds of transportation are available at each of these locations?  
Does the country have an American Consulate?  
What unique holidays does this country celebrate?  
Dangers a traveler needs to be aware of.

*Now create an attractive marketing flyer*

### Locate the following places mentioned in the play on a map

Freetown  
Katmandu  
Chelsea  
Brighton  
Buenos Aires  
Trieste  
Venice

### Check out a favorite writer of Henry's and share his work with the class

Sir Walter Scott  
James Makepeace Thackeray  
Lord Alfred Tennyson  
William Wordsworth  
Robert Browning

### Questions

Do these poets have anything in common? Example: time period, style, subject matter, etc.  
Does their poetry tell you anything about Henry Pulling?

## Games for *Travels with my Aunt*

### Murder

1) Sit in a circle. Have all students close their eyes.  
Select the murderer by tapping one student on the head. Have the students open their eyes. The murderer can kill with a wink. Once a student receives a wink, he/she must look into 3 more eyes and then die a dramatic, horrible death and lay flat on the floor.  
If a student can figure out who the murderer is, he/she should cover their eyes and raise their hands. Have the student then stand and whisper the suspect's name to you. If they are wrong, they must then die a horrible (noisy) death. The game continues until all are dead or the murderer is found out.

Variation: Select more than one murderer.

### Ten-minute play

In our production of *Travels with My Aunt*, four men play all of the roles. Divide the class into groups smaller than the cast of a selected play or book. Either the class reads the same play or book or each group has a different play or book. The students must condense the play or book into a ten minute performance and play all the roles. They may only use lines from the play or book. All characters must appear in the performance. Students will have to play more than one character. The student should use only unit set pieces or what is in the room. Costumes may be brought from home, but discourage anything more than one costume piece per character. Anything more will detract from the character development.

Variation. Select a play or book with fewer characters than students in the group. All students must perform. ■

# PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS in *TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT*

- Fabians** a group of Socialists in Victorian England which included Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, among others
- Dr. Havelock Ellis** British author and psychologist
- Ramsay MacDonald** the first leader of Britain's Labor Party
- Tatting** making handmade lace by looping and knotting a strand of thread on a shuttle
- Tunis** capital of Tunisia
- Sir Walter Scott** Scottish Romantic novelist of 19th century
- Alfred Lord Tennyson** 19th century English poet
- William Wordsworth** 19th century English Romantic poet
- Brighton** seaside resort about 100 miles from London
- knackers** testicles
- courette** train compartment
- Orient Express** train from Paris to Istanbul
- Wilbur Wright** with his brother, Orville, invented the early airplane
- palazzo, castello** small palace or castle
- Visconti** early ruling family of Milan; name of Aunt Augusta's lover
- Heathrow** major London airport
- douanier** customs official
- pound** British currency
- Punch** British humor magazine
- Place Vendome** a square in Paris
- Blue Mosque** Islamic mosque of great beauty in Istanbul
- Santa Sophia** built first as a Christian cathedral, then used as a mosque, now a museum in Istanbul
- Topkapi museum** palace where pasha (ruler) of Turkey resided
- Rue de Provence** street in Paris
- Gare de Lyon** railroad station in Lyon where trains depart toward the south
- Katmandu** city in Nepal
- Thomas Hardy** late 18th century English novelist
- Gulhane** hotel in Istanbul
- Botticelli** Italian Renaissance painter
- Piero della Francesca** Italian Renaissance painter
- partisans** underground fighters in World War II
- Doges** rulers of Venice in the Renaissance
- Rob Roy** novel by Sir Walter Scott
- Boulogne** city in France
- Brownie** one of the early original Kodak cameras
- Calais** French city on English Channel
- Freetown Harbour** port in West Africa
- Interpol** International Police Force
- Plata, Parana** rivers in Argentina
- Asuncion** city in Paraguay
- Martin Bormann** Hitler's deputy whose bones were found in Berlin and identified positively by DNA in 1998
- Dr. Mengele** the Nazi physician who performed barbarous experiments on the Jews at Auschwitz
- Field Marshall Goering** chief of the German Air Force in World War II
- Goa** Portuguese colony off India
- Guarani** native Indian language of Paraguay ■

*Inside Out* is intended for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages.



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

Sally Gass, Contributing Writer  
Danny Tamez, Activities  
Linda Eller, Editor  
Melanie Simonet, Designer

The Student Matinee program  
is sponsored by

