

Alliance Theatre

institute

Study Guide
Darlin' Cory

Created as part of the Dramaturgy by Students program
by: Liz Davis, Head of Secondary Curriculum & Partnerships



Book by Phillip DePoy
Music by Kristian Bush
Lyrics by Phillip DePoy and Kristian Bush
Directed by Susan V. Booth

September 8 – October 3, 2021
Coca-Cola Stage

Recommended for Grades 9-12

Content Warning:

Please be advised that DARLIN' CORY addresses potentially triggering topics including sexual assault, domestic violence, and the oppression of women.

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Source:

<https://www.ajc.com/things-to-do/events-in-atlanta/love-loss-murder-and-moonshine-fuel-alliance-theatres-darlin-cory/FTE3FXAPLJBTNH65FJ5CDUWO4E/>

Georgia Standards of Excellence

English Language Arts

- ELAGSE9-10RL3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- ELAGSE9-10RL9: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).
- ELAGSE11-12RL2: Determine two or more themes or central ideas of text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- ELAGSE11-12RL5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Social Studies

- SSSocC3: Analyze social structure and interaction within society.
 - a. Explain the components of social structure, include: status, role and social institutions.
 - d. Analyze the components, varieties, and functions of group dynamics, include: such factors as group size, leadership and authority, and such processes as bystander effect and groupthink.
- SSSocIC1 Analyze forms of social inequality.
 - a. Explain how unequal distribution of power and resources affects the life chances of individuals in that society.
 - b. Analyze the sources and effects of stratification on the basis of social class, race and ethnicity, gender, age, and emotional, mental, and physical disabilities.

Dramatic Arts/Theatre

- TAHSMT.RE.2 Critique various aspects of theatre and other media using appropriate supporting evidence.
 - a. Utilize constructive criticism, appropriate musical theatre terminology, and study of existing performance styles to modify and improve performance choices.
- TAHSTL.CN.1 Connect theatre literature to its dramaturgical contexts and other disciplines.
 - b. Identify and summarize contributions made to the development of theatre literature by different cultures and traditions.
 - c. Research and explain how cultural and historical factors have influenced playwrights and theatre literature.
 - d. Identify the elements, influences, and contributions of other art forms and content areas to theatre literature.

Synopsis

In 1932, a tiny town tucked away in the Appalachian Mountains has no road in – and no road out. This community, a long journey from the nearest town, Lake Hazard, carries secrets. A young woman collides with a pastor deeply committed to preserving the status quo and cracks begin to form in the town's well-constructed façade. A stranger appears with the best moonshine anyone's ever tasted and the secrets of the town threaten to spill.

Author Study



Phillip DePoy (Librettist, Co-Lyricist) is the author of 22 novels (the latest, *SAMMY TWO SHOES*, comes out in October 2021) and 45 plays. An internationally reviewed performance artist, he was writer in residence for the Georgia Council for the Arts and Composer in Residence for the Academy Theatre in the 1980s. In the 1990s he was the Artistic Director of Theatrical Outfit and composed music for 17 Alliance Theatre productions (*Angels in America*, *The Seagull*, *Man for All Seasons*, et al). Since then, he served as the director of several university theatre programs. He was awarded Georgia Author of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015. Notable theatrical

work includes the 1993 New York production of *LAMB ON FIRE*, the 2002 Edgar Award winning mystery play *Easy*, also in New York, and for the Alliance Theatre, the Suzi award-winning *Edward Foote*. His *Appalachian Christmas Homecoming* has been produced over 30 times nationally since 1994. Phillip DePoy also holds an undergraduate degree in English literature and folklore, and a graduate degree in performance art. His greatest achievement, however, is having been married to playwright Lee Nowell for over twenty-two years.



Kristian Bush (Music, Co-Lyricist) is a multi-platinum-selling, two-time Grammy winner most known for being half of the record-breaking country music duo Sugarland. The Sevierville, Tenn., native launched his professional music career in 1994 with the folk-rock duo Billy Pilgrim. Within the decade, Kristian moved on to form Sugarland with Jennifer Nettles. The duo released "Baby Girl," its debut song, in 2004. The seminal coming-of-age anthem paved the way for Sugarland to become the most influential country duo of its generation. Kristian released his critically acclaimed solo debut "Southern Gravity" in 2015. Its follow-up, the soundtrack to Bush's first musical

"*Troubadour*," came out in August of 2021. Bush made a foray into television theme songs in 2016 with "Forever Now (Say Yes)," which he penned and performed for TLC's popular "Say Yes to the Dress." He's a founding member of rock jam band Dark Water alongside his brother Brandon Bush and Benji Shanks. He co-wrote a song for the Atlanta staging of Stephen Schwartz's "Working: A Musical." "Me Before You" is Bush's third full length musical that is opening in February of 2022 at the GABLESTAGE in Miami, FL.

Learn more:

- Phillip DePoy: <https://www.phillipdepoy.com/>
- Kristian Bush: <https://kristianbush.com/#!/>

Vocabulary

The stage directions in *Darlin' Cory* contain rich, specific vocabulary that illustrates the playwright's vision for certain lines and moments in the play. A list of advanced vocabulary terms used throughout the stage directions in the play is provided below, in order of appearance.

Word	Used in Context	Definition
<i>Indeterminate</i> (adjective)	CASS and ALEX CROW, of indeterminate gender and age (page 1)	Not definitely or precisely fixed; vague.
<i>Apprehensively</i> (adverb)	HONOR looks around only a little apprehensively and rushes to BRODY (page 8)	Anxiously; fearfully.
<i>Perpetually</i> (adverb)	DOUG is an older man, perpetually confused (page 16)	Constantly.
<i>Chiding</i> (verb)	BAILEY (chiding) He ain't work on a Sunday, now (page 30)	To harass.
<i>Unnerved</i> (verb)	BAILEY is clearly unnerved by the CROWS for a moment (page 41)	To lose courage or confidence.
<i>Disdain</i> (noun)	CASS (disdain) Time. It ain't been but six months (page 47)	Distaste; dislike; disgust.
<i>Reminiscence</i> (noun)	MAMA (a bit fuzzy in reminiscence, but telling an oft-told tale) (page 52)	Enjoyable recall of the past.
<i>Progenitors</i> (noun)	We see the CROWS appear in a misty shadow, the progenitors of the rhythm (page 58)	Creator; parent.
<i>Confidentially</i> (adverb)	TUCKER (more confidentially) That's the other reason I'd hire you (page 64)	Secretly; privately.
<i>Wince</i> (verb)	GAITHER DOUG and BRODY wince or shake their heads (page 73)	To grimace or shrink in anticipation of pain.
<i>Furtively</i> (adverb)	TRUEGOOD (interrupting CORY, furtively) You hush, now, boy! (page 73)	Secretly; in a way that attempts to avoid attention.
<i>Defiantly</i> (adverb)	HONOR struggles not to cry, and stares at her mother defiantly (page 74)	Openly resistant or disobedient.
<i>Ire</i> (noun)	TRUEGOOD (taking her ire out on CORY) You listen at me! (page 75)	Rage; fury.
<i>Wistfully</i> (adverb)	TUCKER (a little more wistfully) ...I been live in this damn town twenty-seven year and I still ain't on the inside of things some of these times (page 82)	With a feeling of vague or regretful longing.
<i>Snarling</i> (verb)	BAILEY (snarling, low) Seen and not heard, Truegood. What'd I tell you? (page 98)	To say something in an angry, bad-tempered voice.
<i>Exacerbated</i> (verb)	All the while the noise of whispering, like bees coming into the room or the rush of harsh wind, exacerbated by noises that the CROWS are making (page 104)	To make a problem worse.
<i>Faltering</i> (verb)	CORY ...I'm Clara Bledsoe! (faltering) Or...reckon I don't know who I am now (page 108)	To lose strength or momentum.

**Source Text:
An Ancient Folk Song**

A source text is an original text that inspires a new idea or work. *Darlin' Cory* (also "Darling Corey" or "Darling Cora") is a well-known American folk song. Although the song itself does not appear in Phillip DePoy's script, the ballad animated DePoy's vision and creative process from the beginning.

Lyrics

Darling Corey

Source: <https://www.bluegrasslyrics.com/song/darling-corey/>

*Wake up wake up darling Corey
What makes you sleep so sound
The revenue officers are coming
They're gonna tear your still house down*

*Well the first time I seen darling Corey
She was sitting on the banks of the sea
Had a forty-four around her body
And a banjo on her knee*

*Go away go away darling Corey
Quit hanging around my bed
Your liquor has ruined my body
Pretty women gone to my head*

*Dig a hole dig a hole in the meadow
Dig a hole in the cold cold ground
Dig a hole dig a hole in the meadow
Gonna lay darling Corey down*

*Can't you hear those bluebirds a singing
Don't you hear that mournful sound
They're preaching darling Corey's funeral
In some lonesome graveyard ground*

*Wake up wake up Darlin Corey
And go get me my gun
I ain't no man for fightin'
But I'll die before I run*






Famous Adaptations & Renditions

Source: <https://secondhandsongs.com/work/112710/all>

- Buell Kazee (1927) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZsQss7TnY0>
- Burl Ives (1941) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nINrWJ2Ckl>
- Bill Monroe (1964) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMOTHnCq0yA>

Allusions

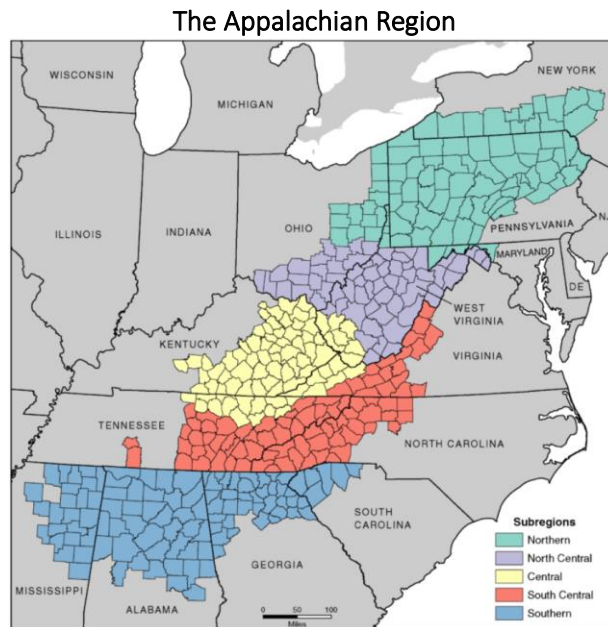
A literary allusion is a reference to a person, event, thing, or other text within a literary work. Pick one allusion that appears in *Darlin' Cory* from the list below and research it using the link provided, as well as other reliable sources of your choice. Then, examine how (and why) authors Phillip DePoy and Kristian Bush draw on that specific source material to create a significant moment in the play.

Allusion	Learn More	Image
The Bible (Judeo-Christian tradition)		
<i>Adam and Eve</i> - "a woman and a man and an apple" (page 3)	Britannica.com: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adam-and-Eve-biblical-literary-figures	 Adam and Eve Albrecht Dürer, 1504 Source: metmuseum.org
<i>The 10 Commandments</i> - "the Lord spoke to Moses and he put it in a stone" (page 12)	Britannica.com: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ten-Commandments	
<i>Song of Solomon</i> - "that part says, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth'" (page 26)	Britannica.com: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Song-of-Solomon	
Nursery Rhyme		
<i>One for sorrow and two for joy. Three for a girl and four for boy. Five for silver and six for gold. And last for the secret that's never been told.</i> (page 29)	rte.ie: https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/12/10/1183545-magpies-nursery-rhyme-superstitions/	 Source: rte.ie
Dolly Parton's Coat of Many Colors		
They are both dressed in their Sunday best, but it's a poor variation of what everyone else is wearing. (Think of Dolly Parton's COAT OF MANY COLORS). (page 31)	imdb.com: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4767274/	 Source: imdb.com
Literature		
<i>The Call of the Wild</i> by Jack London (page 87)	Britannica.com: https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Call-of-the-Wild	 Source: target.com
<i>A Room of One's Own</i> by Virginia Woolf (page 90)	Britannica.com: https://www.britannica.com/topic/A-Room-of-Ones-Own	 Source: amazon.com

Setting

Place and Time

Darlin' Cory begins in: "October 1932. BLUE MOUNTAIN GEORGIA, on the boarder of South Carolina." This is a "tiny mountain town with no road in – and no road out." Appalachian geography, history, and culture serve as the backdrop of this piece.



Close Reading: The Woods

Act 1, scene 1 opens in the woods. Closely read the description of this setting below, pausing to highlight significant words and phrases that either foreshadow an event in the story or set a specific tone.

Fog in deep woods. Bird sounds, forest sounds, faint ambient MUSIC.

In odd shadows we see a young girl, JENNY, enter humming something like a lullaby, with a baby in her arms.

In deeper shadow, mostly hidden by leaves, we barely see CASS and ALEX CROW, of indeterminate gender and age, disheveled, dressed in black.

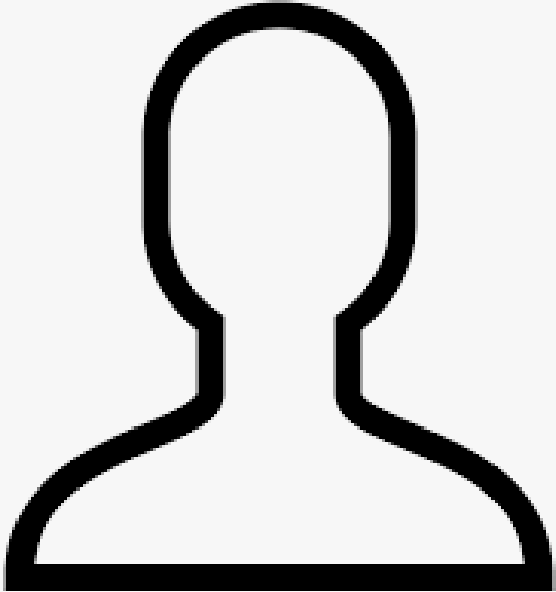
We hear distant thunder and wind in the trees. The sounds coalesce into a kind of music, odd voices, strange instruments, and rhythmic clapping. This sound crescendos and turns into the INTRO MUSIC for the song "Way Back."

A sudden flash of lightning reveals CASS CROW just long enough for her to sing...


Character Analysis

Darlin' Cory is comprised of multiple complex characters, including: Pastor Bailey, Truegood (his wife), Honor (his daughter); Brody Martin (Honor's suitor); Tucker (a store owner), Doug (his employee); Mama Grace and Clara Bledsoe; Alex and Cass Crow. Analyze one of those characters, below.

Character Name: _____

 <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">Source: https://www.visualpharm.com/free- icons/gender%20neutral%20user-595b40b85ba036ed117dd34c</p>	<p>Motivation <i>Describe the character's multiple or conflicting motivations – what do they want?</i></p>
	<p>Development <i>How does the character grow or change throughout the play?</i></p>
	<p>Relationships <i>How does the character interact with other characters?</i></p>
	<p>Plot or Theme <i>How does the character advance the plot or develop a specific theme?</i></p>

Reflection: TALK ABOUT IT

 <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-top: 5px;">Source: teepublic.com</p>	<p>Re-visit the lyrics of the song “Talk About It,” which takes place at the top of Act 2 (pages 58-59). Cast under a “spell” set by the Crows, several characters openly reveal a deeply held secret in this number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we learn about each of these characters through this song? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider: Truegood, Tucker, Honor, Brody, Doug, Ivy, and Gaither. • How is Pastor Bailey different from the others here? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you think he is able to resist the spell? ○ What do you think he is hiding?
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**Appalachian Music:
*Research, Listen, Reflect***

Research: Learn more about the genre of Appalachian music from the Library of Congress:
<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200152683/>

✓ **Check for Understanding:**

- Why is Appalachian Music difficult to define?
- What is “ballad-hunting” or “song-catching”?
- Which cultures influenced the evolution of Appalachian music?
- What sounds and instruments are most common in Appalachian music?
 - Listen - Mountain Dulcimer: [“Angel Band” played by Stephen Seifert](#)
 - Listen - Mandolin: [3 Easy Rhythms for Mandolin](#)

Listen: Next, preview (4) songs from *Darlin’ Cory* via Spotify at:
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4wDIPeCmtUjmNT51BCVXyG>

As you listen, keep track of the musical elements (e.g. rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics), lyrics, and/or sounds that you find most interesting, striking, or effective in each song.

Song	Notes
<i>Way Back</i>	
<i>Ain’t You Got a Daughter</i>	
<i>Misty Mountain</i>	
<i>After the Ashes</i> *View video: DARLIN' CORY // After the Ashes	

Reflect:

- How do these songs align with your understanding of Appalachian Music?
- In your opinion, which musical elements, lyrics, or sounds were most effective in each song?
- Which song did you enjoy most – and why?
- What performance choices did you observe in Kristian Bush’s performance of “After the Ashes”?

Pre-Show Discussion Questions & Journal Prompt

Discussion Questions:

1. A social institution is a group of people that come together for a common purpose.
 - Brainstorm a list of social institutions. Do you play a role in any of those groups?
 - Ultimately, do you think social institutions have a positive or negative impact on society?
2. What is a “bystander”?
 - Describe a situation in which you encountered a bystander.
 - Why do you think someone would choose not to take part in an event or incident?
3. What is “groupthink”?
 - Describe a situation in which you encountered groupthink.
 - How did that situation make you feel?
4. How is “leadership” different from “authority”?
5. Preview the dialogue between Brody and Honor, below (page 10).
 - What does this passage reveal about the unequal distribution of power between men and women in the play?
 - Put yourself in Honor’s shoes. How would you respond to Brody in this moment?

BRODY

(interrupting)

It ain’t no reason for you to go down to Lake Hazard for a dress when Mr. Tucker’s got him a whole stock right here.

HONOR

(glancing back at the store)

Tucker’s store? A whole stock? He ain’t got but three dresses in there, Brody.

BRODY

That’s what I say. *Three* to choose from. And *two* different colors. What else you want?

HONOR looks hard at BRODY. Then she shifts.

HONOR

I don’t know, Brody. I don’t know what I want.

BRODY

(laughs)

Well *that’s* a girl for you. Don’t never know what they want. Do you at least know what you might bring to the Sunday Supper?

Journal Prompt:



Source:
nytimes.com

Read the article [Love, loss, murder and moonshine fuel Alliance Theatre’s ‘Darlin’ Cory’](#) (Bo Emerson, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, August 30, 2021).

Then, freely respond to the prompts below:

1. Which cultural and historical factors influenced the creation of this show?
2. Imagine you are a playwright. What old song or story would inspire you to create a new work?

Post-Show Discussion Questions and Journal Prompt

Discussion Questions

1. How is alcohol (moonshine) depicted and discussed in this story?
2. How is war depicted and discussed in this story?
3. How – and why – does Pastor Bailey weaponize religion?
 - Consider the excerpt below (page 34) in forming your response.

BAILEY
 MY *SERMON* TODAY IS ON EVE'S GREAT SIN.
 SHE WAS NOT TO TASTE OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE,
 AND WHEN SHE DID
 ADAM WAS CAST FROM HIS HOME IN EDEN,
 AND FORCED TO TOIL ALL OF HIS DAYS.
 AND SO A WOMAN'S LUST FOR KNOWLEDGE
 HAS SOILED US ALL IN SO MANY WAYS.
 AND IT IS FOR THAT REASON I SAY YOU MUST KEEP
 YOUR WIVES AND DAUGHTERS,
 AWAY FROM THE FRUIT OF THAT TREE.

4. How do the following themes develop, interact, and build on one another throughout the play?
 - Consider the excerpt below (page 15) in forming your response.

Central Themes		
Isolation	Fear of Others	Being an Outsider


BAILEY
 (fatherly)
 That's right, boy. Some folks ain't like the idea of...a road is not just a road, Gaither.

GAITHER
 It ain't?

BAILEY
 (shifting a bit into his preacher mode)
 A road is a way in. A way in for every wicked thing. Proverbs 4:14 Enter *not* into the path of the wicked and go *not* in the way of the evil man. The road is wide for the downhill sinner, room for all manner of evil deeds. The road to heaven is a steep and narrow mountain path. Proverbs 12:28 In the road of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

Beat.

Journal Prompt:

 <p style="font-size: small;">Source: nytimes.com</p>	<p>Analyze Phillip DePoy's choices concerning the structure of this play.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the story begin with Jenny and Grey? • How are important secrets revealed throughout the play? • What role do the Crows play in advancing the plot? • How did the story end, particularly for Clara and Pastor Bailey?
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