

Alliance Theatre

institute

Study Guide
Dream Hou\$e

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's Dramaturgy by Students program
By: Joel King's Technical Theater class at North Springs High School
Ricardo Aponte, Teaching Artist
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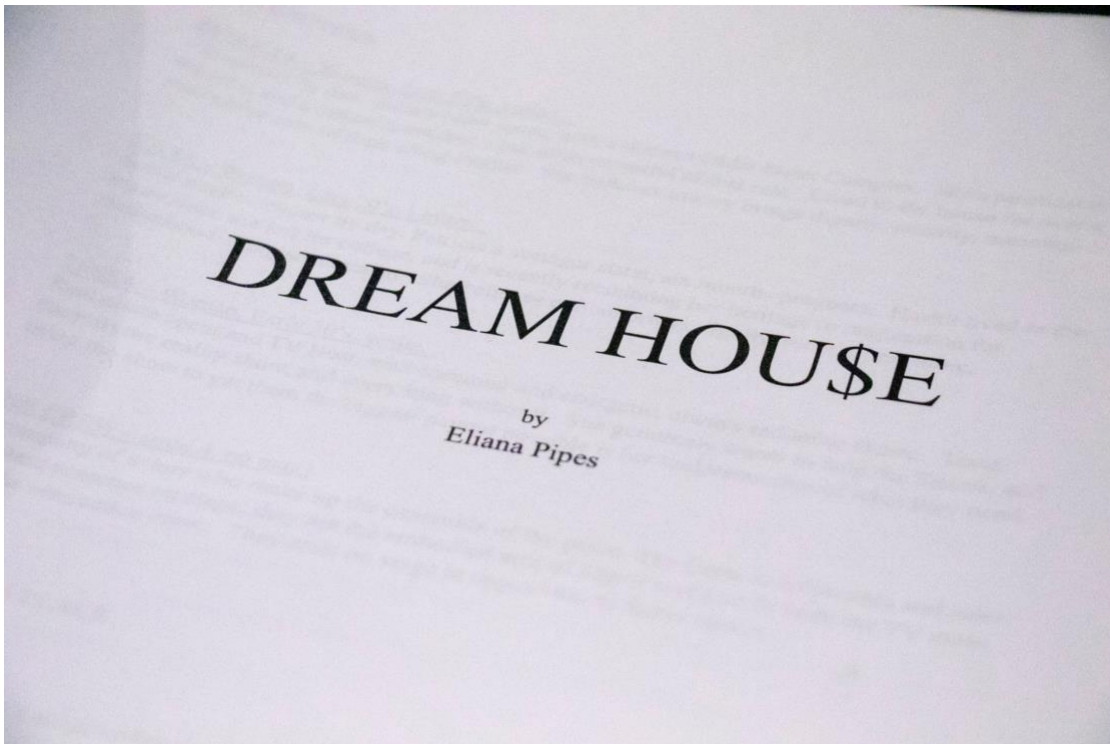
By Eliana Pipes
Directed by Laurie Woolery

January 28 – February 13, 2021
Hertz Stage

Alliance/Kendeda Competition winner
World Premiere Co-Production with Long Wharf Theater and Baltimore Center Stage

Table of Contents

Georgia Standards of Excellence	pg. 3
Playwright Study: Eliana Pipes	pg. 4
Synopsis	pg. 4
Character Analysis	pg. 5
Setting Study	pg. 6
Themes	pgs. 7-8
Literary Allusions	pgs. 9-10
Vocabulary	pgs. 11-13
Home Renovation Television Programs	pg. 14
Sister Space	pg. 15
Gentrification	pg. 16
Code Switching	pg. 17
Surrealism	pg. 17
Pre-Show Questions	pg. 18
Post-Show Questions	pg. 18
Post-Show Extension Activities	pgs. 19-20
Sources	pg. 21



Credit: Aniska Tonge

Georgia Standards of Excellence

Middle School: Grades 7-8; High School: Grades 9-12

English Language Arts

- ELAGSE7RL3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).
- ELAGSE8RL3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- 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.
- 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

World Languages

- MLALL6.INT1.B. Understand some subtleties of meaning, such as intent, humor, and cultural context, in a variety of authentic media in the target language.
- MLDCH7.INT1.D. Identify cultural perspectives represented in the source material.
- MLDCH8.INT1.B. Comprehend and react to historical and cultural events presented through multiple media.
- SNS3.INT1.A. Identify main ideas, supporting details and various elements, such as plot, theme, setting, and characters, from a variety of written texts (both fiction and non-fiction).

Theatre

- TA6.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.
 - b. Identify and analyze ways in which theatre influences and reflects the culture of a society.
 - d. Examine the relevance of cultural and historical context.
- TA7.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.
 - c. Utilize multi-disciplinary research skills to obtain cultural and historical information to justify artistic choices (e.g. costuming, make-up, setting of a time period in relation to the play).
- TA8.RE.1 Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
 - b. Articulate why the relationships between the audience and performers is critical to the success of theatre productions.
- TAHSA.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.
 - Examine and apply theatrical theories, performances, and conventions from a variety of theatrical literature, historical periods, and cultures.
- TAHSTL.RE.1 Evaluate various aspects of dramatic arts literature using appropriate supporting evidence.
 - b. Develop and apply a set of comprehensive criteria for theatre text analysis.
 - d. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone.)

Playwright Study:

Eliana Pipes



Credit: Eliana Pipes

Eliana’s **plays** include *DREAM HOUSE* (world premiere co-production with the Alliance Theatre, Long Wharf Theater, and Baltimore Center Stage), *Unf***withable* (Drama League DirectorFest), *Cowboy and the Moon* (Dramatists Guild Foundation Fellowship, NNPN MFA Playwright’s Workshop), *Lorena: a Tabloid Epic* (The Playwright’s Realm Scratchpad Series, UCSB LaunchPad), *Stand and Wait* (The Fire This Time Festival) and more. Her **writing awards** include the Alliance Keneda Prize, KCACTF Harold & Mimi Steinberg Award and Ken Ludwig Scholarship, Leah Ryan Fund Prize for Emerging Women Writers, National Latinx Playwright Award, Dr. Floyd Gaffney National Playwriting Prize, and a two-time finalist status for the Eugene O’Neill National Playwriting Conference. She made her professional debut as a **performer** in The Actor’s Gang Theater’s summer Shakespeare in the Park shows when she was 11 years old. More recently, she performed at the Samuel French Off Off Broadway Festival, TDF Performateria, and starred in the web-series *Meet Me @ The Clinic* which she also wrote and directed. As a **filmmaker**, she was awarded the Academy Gold Fellowship for Women through the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the inaugural WAVE Grant through Wavelength Productions to support the production of her upcoming animated short film *iNails!*. As a **screenwriter**, she recently completed a romantic comedy feature screenplay for Foton Pictures and Naim Media Group. She’s a **board member** for YoungStorytellers, and a proud 4th grade alum of the YoungStorytellers Script to Stage Program. BA Columbia University, MFA Playwriting Boston University.

Synopsis

Dream Hou\$e follows two Latina sisters on an HGTV-style reality show who are selling their family home, hoping to capitalize on the gentrification in their “changing neighborhood.” As they perform for the camera, one sister grapples with turmoil in the family’s ancestral past while the other learns how much she’s willing to sacrifice for the family’s future. What is the cultural cost of progress in America — and is cashing in always selling out?

Character Analysis

PATRICIA – Woman. Latinx.

Accountant by day. Julia’s older sister, with a distinct Older Sister Complex. She's practical to the core, and a natural caretaker – but often resentful of that role. Lived in the house for over a year taking care of their ailing mother. She believes money brings dignity, security, meaning.

JULIA – Woman. Latinx.

Elementary school history teacher by day. Patricia’s younger sister, six months pregnant. Hasn’t lived in the house since she left for college, and is recently reclaiming her heritage in preparation for motherhood. Very sentimental. She believes culture brings dignity, security, meaning.

TESSA – Woman. White.

Real Estate agent and TV Host. A bubblegum pink pep-princess. Blonde. Very genial and well-meaning, dreams of making documentaries. Controls the reality show, and everything within it. She genuinely wants to help the Sisters, and using the show to get them the biggest payout possible is her understanding of what they need.



Darilyn Castillo (Julia), Jacqueline Correa (Patricia), and Marianna McClellan (Tessa)

Credit: Greg Mooney

Setting Study

Present Day.

An old house in a neighborhood called Hilo Villa, in the process of becoming Hi-Vill.

The house represents several emotional connections to the sisters:

- Family history
- Latinx Culture
- Where Patricia and Julia grew up
- The place where Patricia and Julia's mom passed away

By the beginning of the renovation process, the sisters fear losing the house's history and Latin roots connected to their self-identification. Julia and Patricia are faced with reevaluating their identity. Is it just connected to the house?



*Scenic Design: Stephanie Osin Cohen
Photo Credit: Aniska Tonge*

Themes

Compiled by Ava S. and Dafina R.




Themes are main ideas or underlying meanings a writer explores in a literary work. The theme of a story can be conveyed using characters, setting, dialogue, plot, or a combination of all of these elements.



Theme	Evidence (i.e. line of dialogue in script)	Analysis
Unresolved Family Grief	PATRICIA Fine – fine, you want a gift from our ancestors PATRICIA Mom’s feeding tube! JULIA / AH - TESSA Oh woah woah woah - PATRICIA She needed it for the last six months of her life, you visited twice in that stretch, and left before dinner both times – JULIA What are you doing?! The cameras –	There seems to be resentment from Patricia that her sister did not help out with mom in her last days. Julia had a tough time processing her mom’s sickness, so it became easier for Julia to stay away.
Code Switching	PATRICIA: Okay come on- what are you doing? JULIA: What? I’m telling a story; can I get back to it? PATRICIA: That voice- why do you keep doing that? (a Julia impression) “Oh you know, in our [BARRIO], [JOSELITO] and his [ABUELITA]” JULIA: It’s not a voice. PATRICIA: You don’t talk like that! Ever- you called [Joselito] Joey since the day you met him! JULIA: Maybe this place just brings It out of me. PATRICIA: You sure it isn’t for the cameras? JULIA: Wh- no! How come you’re acting like it’s a shameful way to talk?	Code switching is alternating between multiple languages in conversation. It can also mean adjusting one’s speech, appearance, behavior, and expression to be treated more fairly or to make others more comfortable. Patricia expresses to Julia that she should try to act herself whether they are by themselves or being filmed. See page 17 for more information on code switching.

<p>Supernatural</p>	<p>PATRICIA What? JULIA If the house is worth so much, I mean. Shouldn't we stay? PATRICIA [Julia], you're not thinking clearly. JULIA I'm serious! We haven't agreed yet, not really – PATRICIA There's a camera crew in the house! – JULIA I know I just – seeing all this again? It's getting to me. This place is something special, and I don't like thinking that the baby won't remember our family home.</p>	<p>While Patricia and Julia experience “Sister Space,” time stops, which allows them to speak comfortably and share their vulnerability.</p> <p>See page 15 for more information on “Sister Space.”</p>
<p>Gentrification</p>	<p>JULIA This town is at a midpoint between the urban industrial center and the agricultural areas in the valley – so the men would go south to farm the wool, and the women would go north to process and sew it. So, [Hilo Villa]. PATRICIA He'll have a new family home! And this will be worth a million dollars. Maybe more, even, who knows!</p>	<p>Due to time, and renovations, Hilo Villa transformed from an affordable middle-class area, to a ritzy, gentrified neighborhood (Hi-Vill).</p> <p>See page 16 for more information on gentrification.</p>

Literary Allusions

A **literary allusion** is a reference to a person, event, thing, or other text within a literary work.

Allusion	In Context	Description	Image
The Gold Rush	<p>JULIA Mhm! Our great-great-grandfather built this house with his own two hands. They came into some money after the Gold Rush.</p>	<p>The Gold Rush began on January 24, 1848, when gold was found by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. The news of gold brought approximately 300,000 people to California from the rest of the United States and abroad. The sudden influx of gold into the money supply reinvigorated the American economy, and the sudden population increase allowed California to go rapidly to statehood, in the Compromise of 1850. The Gold Rush had severe effects on Native Californians and accelerated the Native American population's decline from disease, starvation and the California genocide.</p>	
Vivaldi	<p>JULIA Oh yeah? "Oh yes there are some lovely little BOUTIQUES, the craftsmanship is wonderful, yes, this VIVALDI is DIVINE"</p>	<p>Born in Venice, the capital of the Venetian Republic, Vivaldi is regarded as one of the greatest Baroque composers. Vivaldi composed many instrumental concertos, for the violin and a variety of other musical instruments, as well as sacred choral works and more than fifty operas. His best-known work is a series of violin concertos known as <i>the Four Seasons</i>.</p>	
Settlers in the Southwest	<p>JULIA Do you know how settlers took over the Southwest? They'd just move in. They were squatters; they'd build on the land and say, "I live</p>	<p>The first explorers and settlers of the Southwest were American Indians; they gave the vast area much of its distinctive culture and learned how to live in its climate and geography. Some of the</p>	

	<p>here now,” and the [Hispanos] who’d been there for generations would say, “What? No, you don’t,” and the settlers would say, but “I have this contract, where’s yours?”</p>	<p>earliest and most expensive attempts at colonizing were actually made by the Spanish.</p>	
<p>Prohibition</p>	<p>TESSA Fascinating story though, right? And the kids – well, that one, Luis? During Prohibition, he ran a bootleg liquor operation. And died in a bar fight when he was just 15 years old!</p>	<p>The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—which banned the manufacture, transportation and sale of intoxicating liquors—ushered in a period in American history known as Prohibition. Prohibition was ratified by the states on January 16, 1919 and officially went into effect on January 17, 1920, with the passage of the Volstead Act.</p>	
<p>Montezuma</p>	<p>JULIA Should I go further back? Montezuma? Or should I be calling out some Spaniard’s name.</p>	<p>Montezuma II, or Moctezuma, was the ninth Aztec emperor of Mexico, famous for his dramatic confrontation with the Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés.</p>	

Vocabulary

Compiled by Hannah B., Lizbeth G., Kelsey L.

Word (Part of Speech)	Definition	In Context
Abuelita (noun)	Grandma in Spanish.	JULIA And I had this friend, we called him [Joselito], him and his [manos] would walk all through the [barrio] selling dresses their [Abuelita] had made, and one day –
Ambiance (noun)	The character and atmosphere of a place or background noise added to a musical recording to give the impression that it was recorded live.	TESSA The song? Oh, I thought it might have some nice ambiance! To complement your story, you know?
Articulate (adj)	Having or showing the ability to speak fluently and coherently.	PATRICIA It's just sitting in the room with me every time I open my mouth. Blood just seeps through my teeth, it runs down my chin, and when it does, it sounds 'articulate.'
Barrio (noun)	Neighborhood in Spanish	JULIA And I had this friend, we called him [Joselito], him and his [manos] would walk all through the [barrio] selling dresses their [Abuelita] had made, and one day –
Botanicas (noun)	A religious goods store that deals in herbs and charms	JULIA Taro powder! I've been getting into [Botánicas] lately.
Bruja (adj)	Witch in Spanish.	PATRICIA So how's [Santi] adjusting now that you're gonna be a [bruja] bride?
Commission (noun)	A payment given to employees based on the sales they make.	PATRICIA Alright, say the house goes for 2.3 million – after commission and expenses, call it an even 2, split between the two of us – You'd have one million dollars. One million dollars to start your life. Let's go with that.

Crass (adj)	Lacking sensitivity, refinement, or intelligence	TESSA Sorry! I didn't mean to be crass – it's just – it's good TV.
El Salvador (noun)	Country in Central America.	JULIA He's pitching in a little and coming to the doctor's appointments, but I don't know how much I can really count on. Everything changed. [Santi] was gonna teach the baby Spanish, we were going to go to [El Salvador] .
Expenses (noun)	The cost required for something; the money spent on something.	PATRICIA Alright, say the house goes for 2.3 million –after commission and expenses , call it an even 2, split between the two of us – You'd have one million dollars. One million dollars to start your life. Let's go with that.
Immersion Therapy (noun)	A psychological technique that allows a patient to overcome fears by putting them in the situation that they're afraid of.	TESSA And I gotta say, I really do think you'll feel better! Once you just, go for it. Confront it! It's like, letting go actively instead of just waiting to feel better. It's like immersion therapy , where if you're afraid of snakes they put you in a pit of snakes! Or, you know what, maybe that's a bad example –
Interdisciplinary (adj)	Relating to more than one branch of knowledge.	JULIA Kind of! It's sort of an interdisciplinary blend; there's some history, some geography....
Jalisco (noun)	A western Mexican state. The state is known for mariachi music and tequila, both of which reportedly originated here.	JULIA Oh! I remember, when I was growing up, there were these stands on the side of the road where women would sell handmade [Jalisco] dresses. And everyone knew how to sew, I mean everyone –
Macho (adj)	Showing aggressive pride in one's masculinity or a man who is aggressively proud of his masculinity.	JULIA Yes! So! [Joselito] and his brothers used to make me so nervous, because they were like these big, tall [macho] boys and I was in like the seventh grade –
Manos (noun)	Hands in Spanish.	JULIA And I had this friend, we called him [Joselito], him and his [manos] would walk all through the [barrio]

		selling dresses their [Abuelita] had made, and one day –
Prohibition (noun)	The prevention by law of the manufacture and sale of alcohol, especially in the United States between 1920 and 1933.	TESSA Fascinating story though, right? And the kids – well, that one, Luis? During Prohibition , he ran a bootleg liquor operation. And died in a bar fight when he was just 15 years old!
Rustic (adj)	Relating to the countryside; rural.	TESSA We find run-down rustic homes in promising neighborhoods...
Squatters (noun)	A person who unlawfully occupies an uninhabited building or unused land.	JULIA Do you know how settlers took over the Southwest? They'd just move in. They were squatters , they'd build on the land and say "I live here now," and the [Hispanos] who'd been there for generations would say, "What? No, you don't," and the settlers would say, "But I have this contract, where's yours?"
Tarnished (Verb)	Lose or cause to lose luster, especially as a result of exposure to air or moisture.	PATRICIA It's dirty. It's all tarnished and gray.
Unfounded (Adj)	Having no foundation or basis in fact.	TESSA Now I know you might have heard some questionable things about the area, but those concerns are completely unfounded .

Home Renovation Television Programs

Compiled by Christopher A. and Tobias W..

Home Renovation: The process of renovating or adding additional elements to a home to upgrade interior or exterior aspects.

A typical home renovation television show uses properties valued below \$200,000, and the homeowners must have at least \$30,000 available for renovation budget.

Other Facts:

- These shows often dramatize pre-known issues of the house for TV drama.
- Homeowners pay all renovation costs.
- The renovation increases the overall property value of the house, plus the neighborhood.
- Popular Shows: *Fixer Upper*, *Love It or List it*, *Property Brothers*, *Flip or Flop*.



Credit: HGTV



Actors Blake Lowe, Marianna McClellan, and Kenneth C. Lewis in *Dream House*

Credit: Greg Mooney

Sister Space

Compiled by Christopher Y., Jakobe B., and Kent G.

Sister Space is a parallel universe between the two sisters where the two are connected in their own personal space and time. The sisters seem to go into Sister Space when they feel intense emotions. This provides them with a safe space for the two to work out their problems and issues.

Examples of Sister Space:

- The two sisters are reminiscing about their neighborhood and its past. When the two disagree about this, they enter Sister Space and discuss their emotions.
- The two sisters have begun the demolition process and have begun to rethink and take in the weight of it.



Darilyn Castillo (Julia) and Jacqueline Correa (Patricia) in "Sister Space"

Credit: Greg Mooney

Gentrification

Compiled by Jakobe B., Loriam V., and Jeliam W..

Overview:

Gentrification is the process when wealthier people arrive in an existing urban district, improve housing, and attract new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.

Examples of Gentrification in Atlanta, Georgia:

Demographics of East Atlanta Village

- 2022 - Black or African American 54.3%, white 34.35%, Asian 6.7%.
- 2015 - Black of African American 69.8%, white 19.4%, Asian 2.1%.

Cost of Living in DeKalb County

- 2022 - Median home cost about \$300,000
- 2015 - Median home cost about \$170,000

Cost of living in Kirkwood neighborhood

In the 1970s, Kirkwood, a predominantly Black neighborhood, was known for its high crime rate.

- 1990 - Average house price was \$61,500
- 2012 - House price climbed to \$173,000; White residents increased from 1% to 14%.
- 2021 - Average house price is \$676,000; White residents are the majority race group in the neighborhood.

How does gentrification affect a community?

Gentrification is a housing, economic, and health issue that affects a community's history and culture and reduces the social capital. It often shifts a neighborhood's characteristics by adding new store resources in previously run-down neighborhoods.



Credit: The New York Times

Code Switching

Compiled by Kent G., Lizbeth G., and Ava S.

Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation.

Linguistic code-switching is mostly used within bilingual and multilingual communities, and there are many reasons to use this method, such as the need to fit in with a group, as a force of habit, or to convey thoughts and concepts that might be easier to explain in a specific language.

The second definition of code-switching comes from a sociolinguistic perspective, where the term is much broader. Under this umbrella, code-switching describes the use of different dialects, accents, language combinations, and mannerisms within social groups in order to project a particular identity. With this definition, code-switching is used by everyone as they change their language style based on who they're talking to, what they're talking about, where they are, and much more.

Surrealism

Compiled by Oby S., Loriame V., and Jelja W..

Surrealism is a 20th-century avant-garde movement in art and literature which sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind; for example, by the irrational juxtaposition of images.

Example of Surrealism in the Dream Hou\$e:

An example of surrealism is the scene where Patricia had her teeth falling out and the blood was gushing out. It paints an image in the audience's mind, and it expresses how she's feeling without having to explain it.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about home renovation television programs? What are some of their stereotypes?
2. Share a time that you disagreed with a sibling or other relative about a family matter. What happened? How was the disagreement resolved?
3. What are your favorite memories in your home? Do you think leaving/selling your home would make you forget those memories? Why or why not?
4. What is gentrification? Do you have an example of gentrification happening in your community?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

Engage in a discussion as a class or use these questions as journal prompts.

1. What is “Sister Space?” How did the production let the audience know that Patricia and Julia were in “Sister Space?” (i.e. lighting, set, etc.)
2. Why was Patricia eager to sell the family home, and why was Julia hesitant?
3. Describe moments in the production that were influenced by surrealism. What technical aspects told the audience that it was a surrealist scene?
4. Why did the sisters switch between different Spanish pronunciations when speaking with Tessa? Have you had an experience when you have had to change part of your identity to fit in with others?
5. What is the cultural cost of progress in America?
6. Is cashing in always selling out?



Darilyn Castillo (Julia) and Marianna McClellan (Tessa)

Credit: Greg Mooney

Post-Show Extension Activities

Monologue Writing

A *monologue* is a speech given by one character.

Monologues provide us insight into a character's deepest thoughts and feelings and allow us to better understand the reason for their actions.

- Select a character from the play to develop through a monologue.
- Determine a setting (a specific place and time) for your monologue.
 - o The setting includes the indoor or outdoor location and the character's position (sitting, standing, lying down).
 - o The time specifies the date, season, day of the week, and time of day.
 - o The setting may also include context (i.e. a café on a busy street in downtown Atlanta) and mood (i.e. overcast, with clouds gathering overhead).
- Determine how your character might grow or change over the course of your monologue. For example, a character might tell a story, come to a decision, share a revelation, figure something out, or express a strong emotion.
- Determine whether your character is speaking to another character, and if so, whom, or to himself, and, by extension, the audience (technically, a soliloquy).
- When writing your monologue, include stage directions and details indicating the characters' actions or emotions as they speak.

Examples:

- Imagine that you are Julia, trying to convince Patricia to not sell the house. How do you feel? How can you persuade her to change her mind? Write a monologue from Julia's point of view.
- Imagine you are a construction worker on "Flip It or List It." What do you think about renovating the house and finding the small tobacco pipe in the wall?

Alternate Endings

Choose an important scene from the play, and in a small group, brainstorm other directions the scene could have taken. Create a script, and reenact the scene.

Examples:

- Tessa says that she can list the house for \$2.3 million dollars, and both sisters are disappointed with the price. They wish it could have been higher. Does that change their opinion of whether or not to sell?

Journal Prompt

- The sisters had different opinions on whether or not to sell the house. If you were in their shoes, would you have sold the house? Why or why not?
- A theme of the play is sacrificing for the benefit of the family's future. Do you think that a family must make tough decisions to better themselves in the long run, even if there will be short-term disappointment? Why or why not?
- The play ends with an offer of \$3 million dollars, the sisters looking at each other, and a blackout. What do you think happens after the blackout? Do the sisters sell or keep the house?



Director Laurie Woolery and the cast of Dream Hou\$e in rehearsal

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