

A MIDSUMMER LITERACY + ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA



EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SETTING WITH A BIT OF A SWITCHEROO

Overview:

A story's "setting" is one of its core elements. Yet because it largely operates in the background, readers do not often realize just how much of an impact a setting can have on a story. This drama game is a fun way to explore its power by showing us what happens to a scene when we shift its setting—often in a fun and zany way!

Activity:

1. One participant volunteers to get in front of the rest of the group.
2. They select a scene from a story—perhaps one they are reading or have just read—and tell the rest of the group a little about it.
3. The rest of the group comes up with some strange setting (e.g. outer space; a deserted island; an ancient landscape with dinosaurs roaming around; a fairy palace).
4. The volunteer acts out some major piece of action from their selected scene, yet alters it as needed for it to "fit" the setting that the group has come up with.
5. Expanding: If more participants know the story and scene at hand, others can join the initial volunteer in the acting. For instance, if there are three characters in the selected scene, there can be three actors to portray it. That way more of the scene can be brought to life in the strange setting, rather than just one piece of action. Another approach is for everyone in the group to read a scene and then do this activity together.
6. Unpack the experience together afterwards, paying attention to how the alternative setting(s) impacted the scene(s). Explore how this impact played out for different story elements. For example, how did the action change because of the setting? How about the tone/feeling of the scene, or the ways characters were portrayed?

