



# I CAPTURE THE CASTLE

BY DODIE SMITH

a study guide

compiled and arranged  
by the Education Department  
of The Shakespeare Theatre  
of New Jersey

## I Capture the Castle: A Synopsis

The play, like the novel, begins with 17-year-old Cassandra Mortmain writing in her journal while seated “in the kitchen sink.” As Cassandra explains, “sitting in a place where you have never sat before can be very inspiring. I wrote my very best poem while sitting on the hen-house.”

Cassandra is a member of an eccentric, bohemian but impoverished family headed by her widowed father, Thomas Mortmain, a novelist who wrote one acclaimed experimental novel entitled *Jacob Wrestling* many years ago, and has been suffering from writer’s block ever since. Mortmain took his family into seclusion in the countryside, renting a dilapidated house built into the ruins of a crumbling medieval castle.

The rest of the household includes Cassandra’s older sister Rose (perhaps the most practical-minded Mortmain), her younger brother Thomas (a teenage schoolboy), and their stepmother, Topaz, “a famous artists’ model who paints and plays the lute” (and frequently communes with the natural world dressed only in hip boots). Rounding out the family is Stephen Colly, the handsome 18-year-old son of their late cook, who runs errands and does handiwork for the family (and is currently their only breadwinner).

As in *Pride and Prejudice*, the plot really gets underway when wealthy young men appear on this scene. The Cotton brothers, Americans who have inherited the nearby Scoatney manor, including the lands on which the castle sits, and are thus the Mortmains’ new landlords. The brothers, raised separately by their estranged parents, have very different personalities. Scholarly, serious Simon, the older brother, loves the English countryside, while carefree Neil, the younger brother, longs to be back in California running a ranch. When the Cottons’ car breaks down, they seek help at the castle, and meet the Mortmains, much to their initial bewilderment and amusement.

In a short time, however, the Cottons “adopt” their odd tenants and neighbors, and Simon finds himself falling in love with Rose. Meanwhile, Rose has resolved to do anything she can to marry into money to help her struggling family rise out of poverty. She decides that she is smitten with Simon, and (with a little encouragement from Cassandra and Topaz) he proposes to her.

One evening, while everyone else is away, Simon and Cassandra spend the evening at the castle talking and listening to music, and share a spontaneous kiss. Cassandra is thrown into turmoil: on the one hand attracted to Simon, on the other wracked with guilt for apparently betraying her sister. Meanwhile, she is forced to finally reject Stephen, who has long pined for her. Rose heightens Cassandra’s crisis of conscience when she reveals to her sister that she has long since realized that she cannot return Simon’s love, but intends to marry him anyway to ensure the family’s financial security.

Throughout all this romantic upheaval, Cassandra and Thomas scheme to get their father writing again, and initiate a daring plan to “break” his writer’s block. Simon Cotton arranges for his new book (which is now in progress thanks to Cassandra and Thomas) to be published in the United States.

In the meantime, unbeknownst to anyone, Rose and Neil, whom everyone thinks hate each other, have been secretly falling in love. On the eve of Rose’s marriage to Simon, they elope to America, leaving a devastated Simon. As the play ends, Simon realizes that his true affection is for Cassandra, and asks her to marry him, but Cassandra fears that he will never love her as he did Rose, and that he is offering to marry her “just out of kindness.” Although she turns down his offer, Simon promises to return by Christmas, and Cassandra is left alone on stage, writing in her journal once again. “Only the margin to write on now. I love you, I love you, I love you.”



Cassandra Mortmain (Rebecca Mozo) writes in her journal in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s 2010 Main Stage production of *I Capture the Castle*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.



## A Note from the Author

When *I Capture the Castle* was first published, so many people suggested it should be dramatized that I gave the matter considerable thought. I felt sure I should have little trouble with the characters, because I originally planned to write a play, not a novel, about them, so they were all conceived dramatically. And from the first I saw how I could manage with only one set, that of the castle kitchen, giving it variety by occasional glimpses of a bedroom and the interior of a tower. (Apart from the expense of having several sets, I thought my best chance of getting a really effective castle would be to concentrate on one set only.) But I could find no way of telling the story without numerous time lapses, which would mean having a great many scenes and frequently stopping the action by a curtain fall. Also it seemed that the construction would have to be so odd— some of the scenes would need to be long, others could not last more than two or three minutes. Try as I might, I could not give the projected play any satisfactory shape. So at last I shelved the whole idea.

But I found myself taking it off the shelf every six months or so, and eventually— during the four days' train journey from New York to Los Angeles— I had what seemed to me a brainwave. It occurred to me that the cinema had accustomed audiences to a technique of dissolves and fade-outs, and the radio had accustomed audiences to disembodied voices which bridge from scene to scene. Both screen and radio have borrowed much from the theatre. Why should I not borrow from screen and radio and, by so doing, carry my plan on swiftly and variedly? The use of scene-endings similar to dissolves and fade-outs would enable me to have short scenes or long ones, just as I needed them. The use of radio narrative technique would avoid dead stops between scenes. Also narrative between scenes would keep the *Journal* form of my novel alive and make a reasonably artistic shape of the whole play. I might even achieve a slightly new form of play and one in which the necessities of the subject had originated the form, rather than a determined

effort to be original— it being my firm belief that efforts to be original just for the sake of being original usually end in stuntiness and lack of dramatic tension.

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I gave some thought to idea of letting *Cassandra's Journal* come to the audience by means of a previously recorded sound-track, while the actress playing the part remained silent, but I am convinced this would not be satisfactory. Apart from technical difficulties (sound-tracks cannot assess audience reactions, wait for variable laughs, etc.) it would deprive the actress of many good chances. I feel the best way of speaking the *Journal* is a matter for experiment... And an extra advantage I hope to reap from the *Journal* is that I believe it will help audiences to accept straightforward soliloquy. Many playwrights have for some time felt that the soliloquy should be revived and various attempts have been made to revive it, but few seem to have been very satisfactory. I believe audiences will readily accept *Cassandra's Journal*; and once it is accepted, *Cassandra* can slide into her soliloquies without their standing out unnaturally.

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All my plays have been packed with detail and *I Capture the Castle* is more fully packed than any of them. I have found my detail acts well, but cannot be easily assimilated in script form. Again and again I have been told that one reading gives no clear picture of how my script will play. I therefore suggest that, however favourable or unfavourable a first impression may be, this play should be read twice, and as imaginatively as possible. It has taken even me a long time to become really familiar with it. And yet I am quite sure it will, in actual presentation to an audience, appear to be perfectly simple.



Stephen (Pressly Coker) confesses his love to his childhood friend Cassandra (Rebecca Mozo) in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2010 Main Stage production of *I Capture the Castle*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

## About the Playwright: Dodie Smith

Dorothy Gladys “Dodie” Smith was born on May 3, 1896 in the county of Lancashire in northwest England. Her father died when she was not quite two years old, and she and her mother moved in with her maternal grandparents, William and Margaret Furber, who lived in the city of Manchester along with two of Dodie’s aunts and three of her uncles. Dodie was a small girl in a house full of adults with lively minds and artistic ambitions. Her grandfather, an avid theatregoer, read Shakespeare to her, while her Uncle Harold, an amateur actor, introduced her to contemporary theatre. By age 10, Dodie had written her first play, and by 13 she had joined Harold’s theatre group, the Manchester Athenaeum Dramatic Society, playing boys’ parts on the stage.

In 1910, Dodie’s mother remarried, and she and the now 14-year-old Dodie moved to London, where her mother continued to encourage Dodie to pursue a career in theatre. Upon graduating from high school, Dodie enrolled in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA). Shortly thereafter, her mother died after a battle with cancer, and the teenage Dodie was left to make her own way in London.

She became discouraged by her attempts to build a career as an actress, describing herself as “too short” (she was just five feet tall) “and not attractive enough.” In 1923, she took a job at Heal and Son, a London department store where she became the toy buyer. She maintained her connection to theatre, however, by beginning to write plays during her time off. In 1931, Smith had her first play produced, *Autumn Crocus*, under the pseudonym “C.L. Anthony.” The play was a box-office success, and journalists became curious to discover the identity of its elusive playwright. The discovery that “Anthony” was a young woman working in a department store inspired even more curiosity (as well as the headline “Shopgirl Writes Play”). Much to the disappointment of newspaper photographers who flocked to the store, Smith was behind a desk as a department head, not working a cash register.

As she gained a modest degree of fame, Smith continued to produce new scripts. Over a seven-year period, she had five successful plays produced in London’s West End, and was able to purchase a country cottage as well as maintaining a townhouse in London. In 1939 she married Alec Beesley, a co-worker from her days at Heal’s as well as her longtime friend and business manager. Beesley was a pacifist and conscientious objector, and as England went to war with Germany, he and Smith realized that they might face difficulties with his political stance if they remained in London.

The couple, along with their beloved Dalmatian dogs, moved to the United States, settling first in Doylestown, PA, not far from Philadelphia. Smith’s homesickness for her native England helped inspire her to begin her first novel, *I Capture the Castle*, which she completed as an “exile” in America. The book was very successful when it appeared, and has gained classic status in the U.K.

Eventually the couple moved to California, and became friends with a circle of writers and artists that included other English expatriates such as Christopher Isherwood and John Van Druten. Smith recalled that Beesley played a pivotal role in encouraging Isherwood to allow his story “Goodbye to Berlin” to be adapted into a play (which eventually became the musical *Cabaret*).

Once World War II had ended, Smith returned to England, followed by Beesley and their dogs once they passed the six-month quarantine which England imposed on domestic animals. She continued to write plays and novels, most notably *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956). This novel, Smith’s first for children, was inspired by a friend’s off-hand comment that her Dalmatians would make a lovely fur coat. A much less well-known sequel, *The Starlight Barking*, appeared in 1967. None of the movies based on *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* have ever referenced material from *The Starlight Barking*, which features a visit from the extraterrestrial “Sirius, Lord of the Dog Star,” and is a commentary, to some extent, on the threat of nuclear war. Smith continued to write through the 1980s, when she also completed four volumes of memoirs.

In 1990, Smith died at the age of 94, having named novelist Julian Barnes as her literary executor. Barnes recalls Smith telling him that the job wouldn’t be much work, as interest in even her most famous works (*I Capture the Castle* and *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*) had waned. With her death, however, came renewed interest in her writings. Barnes labored for the release of the film rights to *Castle*, which had been held since 1949 by Disney, and in 2003 a film version appeared at last, starring Romola Garai, Rose Byrne and Bill Nighy. The novel was also reissued in the United States after being out of print for many years, and a Dodie Smith revival was underway.



Sisters Cassandra (Rebecca Mozo) and Rose (Nisi Sturgis) dream of love and romance in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s 2010 Main Stage production of *I Capture the Castle*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

## England Between the World Wars

*I Capture the Castle* takes place against the backdrop of England between the two World Wars, a time of rapid social change and economic crisis. This historical backdrop provides context to many of the events of the play.

During World War I, the British Empire in whole mobilized almost 9 million men, of whom nearly a million lost their lives in battle. Millions more were wounded (some of them rendered permanently unable to work by disabling injuries). Still more, we now know, suffered the lingering debilitating effects of what has come to be called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from the extreme trauma of trench warfare.

This demographic shift alone created a wave of social change. For a generation, British women would significantly outnumber British men, and would thus be catapulted into the workforce in much greater numbers. Numerous families came to rely on wives and daughters as breadwinners. Women's enhanced economic clout undoubtedly influenced the full enfranchisement of British women in 1928.

Like other Western nations (and indeed nations throughout the world), England suffered massive economic disruption in the wake of the war, which was followed barely a decade later by the collapse of the U.S. stock market. With industries and the workforce already devastated by the war, England had even fewer resources for responding to the worldwide economic crisis. While the Roosevelt government experimented with the unorthodox economic theories of John Maynard Keynes in its New Deal policy, the British governments of the 1930s stuck to the strategies of classical economics: draconian cuts in public spending and wages combined with some increases in taxation. While economists continue to hotly debate the long-term merits of the two approaches, there is little doubt that the short-term effects of the English approach were decreased purchasing power and even higher unemployment. England seemed to be a power in decline even as America was continuing to grow, albeit painfully.

One final aspect of England between the wars was a widespread erosion of traditional values and ideals. More socially permissive attitudes were able to take hold in many areas because World War I seemed to have effectively demolished the Victorian world-view. As historian Samuel Hynes puts it:

A generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them. They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past and from their cultural inheritance.

## The Epistolary Novel

Dodie Smith's original novel belongs to a genre with a long history in literature—albeit a genre which may be somewhat less familiar to modern readers—the epistolary novel.

An epistolary novel (from the Greek *epistole*, letter) is a novel which is presented as a series of documents, originally (and most frequently) letters. The original epistolary novel is usually considered to be the 1485 *Prison of Love* (Cárcel de amor) by Spanish author Diego de San Pedro, but many other novels had already appeared in which collections of letters made up the bulk of the text. The genre truly caught in the 18th century, when writers such as Samuel Richardson turned epistolary novels into runaway best-sellers like *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1749).

A large part of the appeal of these novels (and perhaps of epistolary novels generally) comes from the reader's experience of seeming to snoop into someone's private correspondence. Almost everyone enjoys sneaking a surreptitious peek at someone else's diary or private messages. Richardson's novels heightened this sensation by telling racy stories of seduction and misbehavior in high society.

So many epistolary novels came out in the 18th century that there was an inevitable backlash, which began almost immediately with Henry Fielding's 1741 *Shamela*. Fielding reduced Richardson's concept to nonsense by having his own heroine carry her diary into the most unlikely of circumstances, scribbling entries in the midst of bedroom encounters. By the end of the century, it was seen as a somewhat awkward and old-fashioned style. Jane Austen may have begun *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) as an epistolary novel (and long letters between characters make up part of the finished work) but she seems to have swiftly moved away from the structure to create her own unique narrative voice.

Still, writers continued to explore the genre's possibilities, creating complex structures of interlocking, overlapping and sometimes unreliable letters and documents. Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868) is an epistolary detective novel in which documents written by one character contradict the documents presented by another character, and the reader must choose who to believe. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is told in a variety of documents, from letters and diary entries to newspaper clippings and even a brand-new technology, the dictation disc.

Contemporary authors continue to use the epistolary format as a means of giving their audience intensely personal and intimate access to a character's thoughts and feelings.

## Additional Topics for Discussion

### About the Play

1. *I Capture the Castle* is, among other things, a coming-of-age story, a work of fiction in which the protagonist matures in some way from childhood to adulthood. Discuss how Cassandra changes over the course of the play. Although the events of the play take place over the course of just six months, does she undergo meaningful “growing-up” by the end of the story? In what ways?

2. Family is another major theme of the play, which brings together the lives of two very different families, the Mortmains and the Cottons. How are these families different in their customs, their rituals, and their relationships? In what ways are they actually similar? What are the circumstances (geographic, economic, social, cultural) which connect them despite their differences? How is each family like or unlike your own?

3. The characters of *I Capture the Castle* experience and discuss many types of love: adolescent, familial, paternal, sisterly and so on. Identify and discuss the many different instances and varieties of love in the play. Be sure to consider some of the secondary relationships, such as Ivy’s infatuation with Stephen, or the odd marriage of Leda and Aubrey Fox-Cotton. What do these relationships tell you about the author’s perspective on love? What kinds of love are most valued in the play?

4. Especially in the original novel on which the play was based, Cassandra reflects with amusement on the differences between American and British English, and some of the comical misunderstandings they create between her family and the Cottons. How is “culture clash” a theme of the play? Discuss your own personal experiences with culture clash.

5. As the title suggests, setting is a critically important element in *I Capture the Castle*. Cassandra is deeply connected to the landscape of her childhood home, just as Neil (for instance) longs for the landscape of California. What unique properties do these places possess that affect the characters so deeply? Go outside and see if you can observe the natural world in as deep and personal way as Cassandra does.

### About this Production

1. The crumbling castle in which the Mortmains live is so important that it might almost be the play’s “fifteenth character.” How did the design team for this production suggest a vast, medieval castle inside a modern and relatively small theatre?

2. In this production, a group of unrelated American actors play both British and American characters, many of whom share close family ties. Did the actors succeed in making their characters and relationships believable? What acting choices did they make which helped you suspend your disbelief?

## Follow-up Activities

1. *Review* Write a review for *I Capture the Castle*. Be sure to include specific information about the production, such as the set, lights, costumes and sound, as well as the actors and the text itself. Include your own reaction to the play. How did you respond to each of the characters? Which aspects of the production did you find effective or ineffective? Which themes jumped out at you in particular? When you are finished, submit your review to the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s Education department, or see if you can print it in your school newspaper.

2. “*Dear Diary...*” Dodie Smith’s original novel is presented in the form of diary entries from Cassandra Mortmain’s journal—elements of which Smith also incorporated into her stage adaptation. Craft your own piece of fiction using the first-person perspective of either one of the characters from *I Capture the Castle* or an original character of your own. What are the challenges of writing in a diary format?

3. *The Sequel* At the end of the play (and novel), many possibilities are left open-ended: Will Rose and Neil have a happy marriage? Will Cassandra’s love for Simon ever be fully requited? Will Mr. Mortmain regain his confidence and continue his career as a novelist? Will Stephen succeed in his career as an actor and model? Write a short story, playscript, or plot summary which continues the story of *I Capture the Castle*, staying true to the tone, style and facts of Dodie Smith’s text.

4. *Boxed Characters* Most playwrights suggest the use of certain props in their stage directions as a means of (among other things) adding dimension to their characters through those objects’ symbolism. Select one of the characters in this play and fill a shoebox with small objects that might reflect his or her personality. Be as creative and imaginative as possible. Follow up with an oral presentation or a display.

### Teachers:

*Do you have activities or exercises to suggest for this play? We are always looking for new ideas to inspire students (and teachers). Send your suggestions to [info@ShakespeareNJ.org](mailto:info@ShakespeareNJ.org), and we will share them with other teachers, or maybe even include them in future study guides.*





## Meeting the Common Core Standards

Recently, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards, joining many other states that are attempting to create a more cohesive framework for K-12 education nationwide. We were delighted to see that, among other things, the Common Core explicitly specifies that Shakespeare is an indispensable component of English Language Arts curricula. The reading standards' Note on Range and Content of Student Reading is particularly applicable to our own educational mission:

“To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements.”

Each year, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey produces exciting stage productions of several classic texts “from diverse cultures and different time periods,” each of which presents students with the opportunity to experience and negotiate rich and challenging text through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey remains committed to supporting teachers as they transition to these new standards. Viewing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, participating in the post-performance discussion, and completing activities in this study guide can serve as a powerful springboard for higher-order thinking. On these pages you will find some suggestions for ways to align your study of our production to each standard. Given the clarity of these standards, many will likely be self-evident, but we invite you to contact us for further help.

### ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: READING

**STANDARD 1:** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**STANDARD 2:** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**STANDARD 3:** Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

**STANDARD 4:** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

**STANDARD 5:** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole.

**STANDARD 6:** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

**STANDARD 7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. *Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the stage performance of the text; compare and contrast the printed and staged version.*

**STANDARD 8:** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the variety of reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

**STANDARD 9:** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. *Compare and contrast the playtext with another text adapted from it or based upon it; compare and contrast the playtext's fictional portrayal of a past time/place with historical accounts of the same period.*

**STANDARD 10:** Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: WRITING

**STANDARD 1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**STANDARD 2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

**STANDARD 3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. *Write a new ending or sequel for the play; write letters in the voice/s of character/s from the play*

**STANDARD 4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. *Write a review of the performance which is geared to a certain audience (peers, younger students, etc.); create teaching materials which can be used by future classes (summaries, character webs, etc.)*

**STANDARD 5:** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. *Create and workshop poems using vocabulary and/or themes drawn from the playtext*

**STANDARD 6:** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. *Create a webinar on the playtext for younger students at the local middle or elementary school; design a website to collect student reflection and analysis of the play.*

**STANDARD 7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under

investigation. *Research the production history or the historical circumstances of the play.*

**STANDARD 8:** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. *Use the sources cited in the study guide to write new explanatory or narrative text.*

**STANDARD 9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**STANDARD 10:** Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: SPEAKING AND LISTENING

**STANDARD 1:** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. *Participate in a postshow discussion; stage a classroom debate between the characters of the play.*

**STANDARD 2:** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. *View, compare, and contrast stage and film versions of the playtext.*

**STANDARD 3:** Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

**STANDARD 4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**STANDARD 5:** Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

**STANDARD 6:** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS: LANGUAGE

**STANDARD 1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking .

**STANDARD 2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.

**STANDARD 3:** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

**STANDARD 4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

**STANDARD 5:** Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

**STANDARD 6:** Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Cassandra Mortmain (Rebecca Mozo) talks with the young wealthy American, Simon Cotton (Tony Roach) about his impending marriage to her sister Rose in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2010 Main Stage production of *I Capture the Castle*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.





## Sources for this study guide (and other resources):

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I CAPTURE THE CASTLE (stage adaptation), by Dodie Smith, Samuel French (1952)

DEAR DODIE: THE LIFE OF DODIE SMITH, by Valerie Grove, Pimlico (1996)

A WAR IMAGINED: THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND ENGLISH CULTURE, by Samuel Lynn Hynes, Atheneum (1991)

St. Martin's Green teachers' guide for *I Capture the Castle*, [www.media.us.macmillan.com/teachersguides/9780312201654TG.pdf](http://www.media.us.macmillan.com/teachersguides/9780312201654TG.pdf)

Barnes and Noble: Meet the Writers, [www.barnesandnoble.com/writers/writerdetails.asp?cid=703366](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/writers/writerdetails.asp?cid=703366)

The Spink & Newall Family Trees, [www.bryanspink.talktalk.net](http://www.bryanspink.talktalk.net)

Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)



## About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

The acclaimed Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (formerly called “New Jersey Shakespeare Festival”) is one of the leading Shakespeare theatres in the nation. Serving nearly 100,000 adults and children annually, it is New Jersey’s only professional theatre company dedicated to Shakespeare’s canon and other classic masterworks. Through its distinguished productions and education programs, the company strives to illuminate the universal and lasting relevance of the classics for contemporary audiences. The longest-running Shakespeare theatre on the east coast, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey marks its 48th season in 2010.

In addition to producing and presenting classic theatre, the Theatre’s mission places an equal focus on education—both for young artists and audiences of all ages. The Theatre nurtures emerging new talent for the American stage and cultivates future audiences by providing extensive student outreach opportunities. Through our work, we endeavor to promote literacy, civilization, community, cultural awareness, the theatrical tradition, and a more enlightened view of the world in which we live and the people with whom we share it.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of 20 professional theatres in the state of New Jersey. The company’s dedication to the classics and commitment to excellence sets critical standards for the field. Nationwide, the Theatre has emerged as one of the most exciting “new” theatres under the leadership of Artistic Director Bonnie J. Monte since 1990. It is one of only a handful of Shakespeare Theatres on the east coast, and in recent years has drawn larger and larger audiences and unprecedented critical acclaim. The opening of the intimate, 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre in 1998, provided the Theatre with a state-of-the-art venue with excellent sightlines, and increased access for patrons and artists with disabilities.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a member of ArtPride, The Shakespeare Theatre Association of America, Theatre Communications Group, and is a founding member of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

Cassandra Mortmain (Rebecca Mozo) comforts her stepmother Topaz (Erika Rolfsrud) in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s 2010 Main Stage production of *I Capture the Castle*. Photo © Gerry Goodstein.

## Other Opportunities for Students... and Teachers

### **SHAKESPEARE LIVE! EDUCATIONAL TOURING COMPANY**

*Shakespeare LIVE!* is the educational touring company of The Shakespeare Theatre. This dynamic troupe of actors brings exciting, artistically-exceptional abridged productions of Shakespeare's plays and other world classics directly into schools each spring.

### **THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR CORPS**

Two- and three-week summer acting intensives, geared for students in grades 6 through 12, these programs offer professional-caliber instruction and performance opportunities for young people who have developed a serious interest in theatre. Admission to this program is through audition and/or interview.

### **SUMMER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM**

For graduating high school seniors and university students, the 11-week Summer Professional Training Program offers acting apprenticeships and professional internships, providing academic training and hands-on experience in acting, technical, artistic and arts management areas.

### **SHAKEFEST: SUMMER SHAKESPEARE INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS**

Designed for elementary and secondary teachers of Shakespeare, *ShakeFest* is a weeklong professional development intensive filled with myriad practical ways to conquer "ShakesFear" and excite students about the Bard. In hands-on sessions, experienced teaching artists model active and exciting performance-oriented techniques to get students on their feet and "speaking the speech."

### **SHAKESPERIENCE: NJ STUDENT SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**

This annual spring festival, developed in partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Rider University, gives middle and high school classes the opportunity to spend a day at the Theatre experiencing Shakespeare together as both actors and audience. The *Shakespeare: NJ* Festival celebrates the power of performance as a teaching tool on a statewide scale.

### **PAGES TO PLAYERS: IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES**

*Pages to Players* places the Theatre's skilled teaching artists in an English classroom for an extended period, using the performance-based study of Shakespeare to develop students' skills in reading comprehension, vocabulary and critical thinking while also evoking collaboration, self-confidence and creativity.

For more information about these and other educational programs  
at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey,  
log onto our website,  
**[www.ShakespeareNJ.org](http://www.ShakespeareNJ.org)**  
or call (973) 408-3278

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is an independent, professional theatre located on the Drew University campus.

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