Eleven Vests

Sarah Ratliff

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Reviewer: Sarah Ratliff  
Reading Level: Intermediate; Young adult;  
Rating: Dependable  
Genre: Contemporary realistic plays; Plays;  
Subject: Drama--Reviews; Delinquency--Juvenile drama; War--Juvenile drama; Responsibility--Juvenile drama;  
Theme: How do we learn responsibility for ourselves and what we do?  
Production Requirements: need a school jacket, and school and military uniforms  
Acts: 7 scenes  
Run Time: approximately 30 mins  
Characters: 7  
Cast: 3 or more actors, adults  
Time Period: present

A young student is accused of vandalizing a book and a school jacket. He is kicked out of school, but returns to kill his headmaster. Years later, as an adult, he is a soldier. While taking prisoners of war, his companion is killed by an enemy soldier. He then kills that soldier.

It's very easy to become distanced from this play. As Americans, we are not familiar with the school system in Britain and this can cause the audience, if American, to be pulled out a little during the action. However, while the settings in the play are unfamiliar to American audiences, the point the play is trying to make is not: we are responsible for our actions. Despite the valid theme, the play still shows weaknesses. The characters could be developed more; it is very hard to empathize with the Student because the audience doesn't really know him. We know his actions, and they are deplorable, but we don't really understand him. Perhaps this was the playwright's intent. We still hope that the Student will change, will become better, but when he doesn't, we then have to look inward to ourselves and begin the questioning process. Edward Bond does a good job of pushing us toward this point. This play would serve as a wonderful way of opening a discussion focused on responsibility.