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GRAND THEATRE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, RACHEL PEAKE



A CO-PRODUCTION WITH
HAROLD GREEN JEWISH
THEATRE COMPANY

*a comedy
about
death.*



STUDY GUIDE

GRANDTHEATRE

SPRIET STAGE, FEBRUARY 13 TO MARCH 2, 2024

OPENING NIGHT FEBRUARY 16

IN SEVEN DAYS

BY JORDI MAND

CAST

SHELLEY	MAIRI BABB
SAM	RON LEA
DARREN	BRENDAN McMURTRY-HOWLETT
RACHEL	SHAINA SILVER-BAIRD
ELI	RALPH SMALL

CREATIVE TEAM

DIRECTOR	PHILIP AKIN
SET & COSTUME DESIGN	SEAN MULCHAHY*
LIGHTING DESIGN	SIOBHÁN SLEATH*
SOUND DESIGN	LYON SMITH
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	AMANDA NICHOLLS
RELIGIOUS CONSULTANT	RABBI DEBRA DRESSLER
STAGE MANAGER	SUZANNE MCARTHUR
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	KELSEY RAE
APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER	SYDNEY STOBO
STAGE MANAGEMENT STUDENT	LARA CAMPBELL

In Seven Days is performed by arrangement with Ian Arnold, Catalyst TCM Inc.

*** Appears with Permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association*

**Indicated designers are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.*



The Grand Theatre is an active members of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA), professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

HAROLD GREEN

JEWISH THEATRE COMPANY

Co-Artistic Director	AVERY SALTZMAN
Co-Artistic Director	DAVID EISNER
General Manager	MATT BIRNBAUM
Graphic Design	COSMIC ADVERTISING & GRAPHIC
Online Marketing	DESIGN UPONLINE EMARKETING
Season Printer	INCREDIBLE PRINTING
Box Office Manager	LIZ BRAGG

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HAROLD GREEN



All the world's a stage and all of us want to be players. Each of us shapes a unique role in the scripts we write for ourselves. As for Harold, his role was in building safe, family-friendly havens. In addition, his interest in Talmud as well as Shakespeare led him to making the world a better place in many ways. Whether it was the time and expertise he devoted to Mount Sinai Hospital, to the Jewish Community Centre or to the labourers who worked in his industry, he was fully engaged in improving lives. He enjoyed going to the theatre and we suspect that he would have liked to have been on a stage. Vicariously, he is now on one. He would want you to enjoy his legacy.

— *The Harold Green Family*

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GRANDTHEATRE

IN SEVEN DAYS - STUDY GUIDE

Content Advisory: This production contains strong language and mature themes including medically-assisted death and loss of a parent.

Age Recommendation: 16+

Creation of In Seven Days

In Seven Days is a new play written by Canadian playwright Jordi Mand. A world premiere co-production with the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, this play is a part of the Grand's [COMPASS New Play Development Program](#).

About the Playwright

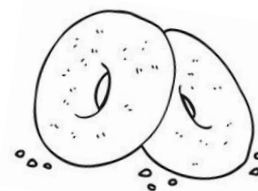
Award-winning writer Jordi Mand is known for her work in theatre, film, and television. Her work has received global acclaim with translated and published plays like *Between the Sheets*, *Caught*, *This Will Be Excellent*, *Brontë: The World Without*, and a new stage adaptation of the literary classic, *Little Women*. Mand was also a writer on the hit CTV drama, *Cardinal*, and has been a member of countless development rooms for Canadian television shows. Upcoming: new projects with the Stratford Festival and the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company and an original TV series with Neshama Entertainment.

Curriculum Connections

- **Canadian and World Studies** (Gr. 11 Politics in Action: Making Change; Gr. 12 Canadian and International Politics; Gr. 11 Understanding Canadian Law; Gr. 12 Legal Studies)
- **Social Science and Humanities** (Gr. 12 Families in Canada, Gr. 11 World Religions and Belief Traditions: Perspectives, Issues, and Challenges; Gr. 11 Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology; Gr. 12 Philosophy: Questions and Theories; Gr. 11 Philosophy: The Big Questions)
- **The Arts** (Gr. 11 & 12 Drama)
- **English** (Gr. 11 & 12 English; Gr. 12 The Writer's Craft)

Themes

- ★ COPING WITH GRIEF & LOSS
- ★ FAMILY STRENGTH
- ★ MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAID), FAITH, & ETHICS
- ★ HONOURING END OF LIFE DECISIONS



THE CHARACTERS

- Rachel** (In her mid-thirties) Is the daughter of Sam, and a lawyer in the city.
- Sam** (In his late sixties) Is the father of Rachel, and previously practiced law.
- Barbara** Rachel's mother and Sam's wife, who passed away.
- Shelley** (In her late forties) Is Sam's partner.
- Darren** (In his mid-forties) Had been dating Rachel for several years, until their recent break-up. Is a DJ.
- Eli** (In his late sixties) is a reform Rabbi and childhood friend of Sam's.

Support Resources



Bereaved Families of Ontario

Provides a safe, non-judgmental environment for you to discuss your experiences and learn about grief with others who have been there.

✉ cheryl@bfosw.ca

☎ (519)-686-1573



Providing peer support to those with a loved one who is receiving/has had Medical Assistance in Dying.

✉ info@maidfamilysupport.ca

📖 [Connect with Us](#)



A Network of Peer-to-Peer Connections and Community Supports Through All Stages of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

✉ info@bridgec14.org

📖 [Connect with Us](#)



If you support someone in need and feel anxious and overwhelmed with your caregiving responsibilities, you're not alone.

✉ info@ontariocaregiver.ca

📖 [Connect with Us](#)



Reach Out is a free, 24/7, confidential mental health and addictions support and services line for people living in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford and London.

☎ CALL: 1-866-933-2023

💻 [Web Chat](#)

☎ CALL or TEXT: (519)-433-2023

✉ [Email Form](#)

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Day 1:

Rachel returns to her family home in London, Ontario, to visit her dad (Sam) and his partner (Shelley) for the weekend. When Rachel arrives, she's greeted by Shelley who begins to question her recent breakup, and the six-dozen poppy seed bagels that she brought with her [***Strong Language***]. In the middle of their heated debate, Sam shuffles into the room and greets his daughter Rachel. As Rachel and Sam catch up, Shelley begins to make comments that suggest something is going on [***Strong Language***]. Urging Rachel to sit, Sam reveals that the cancer he once had, is now in his prostate and spreading. Tired from the pain, and not wanting to go through chemo again, Sam has made the decision to end his life through medical assistance in dying (MAID), which will happen in seven days. Devastated and confused by what her father is telling her, Rachel refuses to believe that (MAID) is the only option.

Day 2:

After staying up all night researching doctors and new procedures for her father, Rachel ends up falling asleep at the kitchen table. She's abruptly woken up from her slumber by Shelley banging a pot over her head. As Shelley and Rachel begin to bicker, Rachel receives a phone call from her now ex-boyfriend Darren who tells her of a new Facebook post her father created. Rachel is horrified as she reads the online post- it publicly announces her father's assisted passing. Suddenly the phone's in the house begin to ring incessantly from people at Temple wanting answers. Overwhelmed by what is happening around her, Rachel unplugs the landline phone. She begins to tell her father of an oncologist in Buffalo, called the "Resurrector", but Sam has made up his mind. In the middle of their discussion, Rachel is struck by a wave of nausea and dizziness.

Day 3:

Rachel has Sam's Rabbi and childhood friend, Eli, come over to the house to talk her father out of medical assistance in dying. When she leaves her father and Eli to talk, they reminisce about the past and the end of life decision Sam has made. Eli, as a Reform Rabbi and good friend, is having a hard time supporting Sam when (MAID) goes against their Jewish faith. Because of this, Eli is unable to accept Sam's request to be present and give a blessing when Sam passes. During Eli and Sam's conversation, Shelley spots a little box in Sam's hand. As she begins to ask what it is, Sam proposes to her. Eli agrees to another favour Sam asks of him, which is to officiate his wedding...that's happening in two days.

Day 4:

While Rachel tries on a variety of pink coloured dresses for the wedding, Shelley and Rachel get into a heated discussion [***Strong Language***]. Rachel doesn't want Shelley to marry her father, and is sceptical of their relationship because of their age difference [***Strong Language***]. In the middle of this discussion, the doorbell to the house rings and at the door is Darren. Later that evening, Sam goes into the kitchen to grab some ice cream and is startled when he finds Darren sitting at the kitchen table. Knowing that Sam has never liked him, Darren is determined to resolve their differences, once and for all. After they talk, they both have a greater understanding for each other.

Day 5:

The main floor of the house is decorated in beautiful floral arrangements for Sam and Shelley's wedding ceremony. Rachel is the maid of honour, Darren plays the guitar, and Eli is the officiant for this monumental day. As the ceremony finishes, and the newlyweds walk down the aisle, Sam begins to sway and passes out on the floor.

Day 6:

After staying up with the paramedics the night before, Rachel ends up falling asleep on the couch. In the morning, Darren gently wakes Rachel up and is concerned that she isn't feeling well. Rachel admits to vomiting most of the night, and reveals six pregnancy tests that confirm she is pregnant. Later that night, Sam and Eli sit together in the living room. Eli and Sam continue their discussion from a couple days ago, about the conflicts of faith and MAID. Eli agrees to be present when Sam passes, and will give the Jewish prayer of death as a blessing. When Eli leaves, Sam talks to Shelley and Rachel about documents that he has made for them – helping them with everything that will happen after he passes.

Day 7:

Rachel, Shelly and Eli are all gathered around Sam's bed, as Darren calls the doctor into the room. Eli begins singing the Shema, and then says the El Maleh Rahamim prayer.

Later that day, Rachel sits alone in the living room, processing everything that has happened. While lost in her thoughts, her phone suddenly pings from an email that has a voice file attached to it...

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)

The following information is taken from the [Fourth Annual Report](#) on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada.

Total (MAID) Deaths in Canada by Jurisdiction: 2016-2022

MAID	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	YT	NT	NU	Canada
2016	-	-	24	9	494	191	24	11	63	194	-	-	-	1,018
2017	-	-	62	49	853	839	63	57	205	677	-	-	-	2,838
2018	23	8	126	92	1,249	1,500	138	85	307	951	12	-	-	4,493
2019	20	20	147	141	1,604	1,788	177	97	377	1,280	13	-	-	5,665
2020	49	37	190	160	2,278	2,378	214	160	555	1,572	13	-	-	7,611
2021	65	41	245	205	3,299	3,102	245	247	594	2,030	16	-	-	10,092
2022	90	44	274	247	4,801	3,934	223	257	836	2,515	16	-	-	13,241
TOTAL 2016-2022	267	156	1,068	903	14,578	13,732	1,084	914	2,937	9,219	84	-	-	44,958

In 2022, the majority of people (around 63%) receiving MAID had cancer as the main underlying condition.

7.2%	Were recorded as having prostate cancer
73.8%	Were between the ages of 65-70
66%	Were male



From the knowledge you have just learned, consider the character of Sam and the factors which led to his decision of MAID.

Are there factors not provided in the chart that explain his decision? If so, what are they?



SAM

AGE:	Late sixties
GENDER:	Male
CONDITION:	Prostate cancer
MEDICAL HISTORY:	Previous cancer

Questions to Consider:

- What was your initial reaction to the data presented in the Fourth Annual Report? Were you surprised by any specific facts/numbers? Why did you react a certain way?
- Do you think all countries have legalized MAID? When do you think MAID was legalized in Canada?
- Do major events (such as the COVID Pandemic) have an influence on MAID deaths? Why or why not?

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between unexpected loss and expected loss? Will someone go through a different process of grief depending on the type of loss? Why is it hard to let someone go?
2. Think about your own family dynamic, and who you consider to be family. What do those relationships look like? Who are you close with? Who pushes your buttons?
3. Someone you know has decided to pursue Medical Assistance in Dying. You are shocked by this news, and try to talk them out of it. Would you define your actions as being a type of selfish love or selfless love? What are the differences and similarities between selfish love and selfless love? Provide your own example of a situation where selfish and selfless love are used.

Post-Show Discussion Questions

1. How do you honour someone's end of life decision if you don't agree with them?
2. Is Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) murder; is it suicide? Why or why not?
3. What motivated Sam to propose to Shelley? What are your thoughts and them getting married so soon to Sam's assistance in dying?

Post-Show Classroom Activities

1. Sometimes when someone close to us passes away, we feel like there's still so many things we want to say to them. Read about Lee Mingwei's "Letter Writing Project" on his website:
<https://www.leemingwei.com/>.

As a class discuss the following questions:

- What is the purpose of writing letters to those who have passed away?
- Does writing letters help someone process their grief? If yes, how?
- At the end of *In Seven Days*, Rachel receives an email with a voice file created by her father. Would you consider this act as being Sam's final "letter" to his daughter? Why or why not? Will the voice file help Rachel to process her grief? If yes, how?

Is there anyone in your life who has passed away that you wish you could talk to again? Is there someone currently alive that you have never told how much you appreciate them?

Write a letter to someone in your life who has passed away, or who is currently alive.

Consider the following questions for your letter: how you feel, what you miss/love about them, what you want them to know, how you will remember them, how they will stay/how they are a part of you, special things they did/do.