Reading guide/study questions -- *Trojan Barbie*

Like 2017’s [Common Reading](https://commonreading.uoregon.edu/roundhouse/), Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House*, this play has an episode of rape as its mainspring. Please be alert to the [resources](https://safe.uoregon.edu/) available to all students who wish to consult counselors in light of this reading’s disturbing subject matter.

Evans has said, about theater, that a play is “a dream with a hard core of truth inside it,” and that plays stage “the steady traffic between the living and the dead.” Evans wants her plays to address “the ceaseless erosion of conscience” (all quotations are from Robert Scanlan, “Writ of Habeas Corpus: Christine Evans's Trojan Barbie,” *TheatreForum* 35 (Summer/Fall 2009), 26-27).

Very brief outline of *Trojan Barbie*’s 15 scenes

1. Lotte and Polly X, Jorge (pp. 9-12)

2. Hecuba, chorus (Clea, Esme), Cassandra, Helen, Talthybius (pp. 13-22)

3. Silent Lotte (page 23)

4. Polly X, Max, Jorge, tigers (pp. 24-26)

5. Lotte’s reverie, Andromache, rounded up to camp (pp. 27-31)

6. Cassandra and the horse (pp. 32-33)

7. Polly X at the zoo (pp. 34-37)

8. Hecuba, Clea, Esme, Cassandra, Talthybius, Helen, Andromache (pp. 38-45)

9. In the zoo, Jorge’s arm (pp. 46-49)

10. Mica and Helen (Lotte is stuck) (pp.50-53)

11. Andromache announces Polly X’s death, and Talthybius announces the sentence for the Son (pp. 54-58)

12. Helen and Menelaus (pp. 59-61)

13. The sweep-up, the officer in blue (pp. 62-65)

14. Hecuba the bag lady; the play’s finale (pp. 66-69)

Please read the entire play before our first discussion and think about the play’s relation to *Trojan Women* . We have many ways to think about a comparison: the setting and the contrasts between characters, to name two. Why does Evans use the doll motif? Why does Evans resurrect Polyxena in Polly X? Why not name Astyanax? Think about Evans' added character Lotte: is this a cheap trick, or a profound statement? What's changed? What does *TB* do with *TW's* crazy Cassandra? With Talthybius? What about the final scene in each play?