



Oregon  
Shakespeare  
Festival.

# 2024 Study Guide



## LEGENDS & CRYPTOZOOLOGY

- Cryptozoology is “the study and search for animals and especially legendary animals usually in order to evaluate the possibility of their existence” (Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary)
- Part of this play is about the legends and mythology of place. In the play, there is a story of a dragon that emerged from the erupting Mount St. Helens.
- However, an actual legend says that a creature known as “Batsquatch”—part bat, part Sasquatch—emerged from the 1980 Mount St. Helens eruption.
- Other famous cryptozoological creatures include Bigfoot, Sasquatch, the Loch Ness Monster, and the chupacabra.
- The International Cryptozoology Museum is located in Portland, Maine: <https://cryptozoologymuseum.com/>



## Lizard Boy

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Justin Huertas



## MEET JUSTIN HUERTAS & LEARN HIS ORIGIN STORY:

- He is a Seattle-based, Filipino-American playwright, composer, lyricist, actor, and musician.
- He was born in Tacoma, Washington, and grew up in Mukilteo, Washington. Four of his musicals are set in Seattle.
- Huertas was commissioned by Seattle Repertory Theatre to write *Lizard Boy* in 2011. SRT also produced the play’s World Premiere in 2015. As a performer, Huertas originated the role of Trevor. Comics influenced the creation of *Lizard Boy*.
- Huertas says his mission is “to create hero stories that put historically marginalized humans at the center of the narrative.”

WHAT ARE COMICS & WHAT IS THEIR ORIGIN STORY? (FROM UNDERSTANDING COMICS BY SCOTT MCCLLOUD)



\* In *Understanding Comics*, author Scott McCloud describes two important defining characteristics of “comics”:

- 1) that they consist of pictures and/or images that are 2) put in an intentional sequence.
- McCloud describes the sequential paintings found in the stone-cut tomb of an Egyptian Scribe Menna [circa 1400 BC] and a pre-Columbian screenfold painted-picture manuscript of the story of 8-Deer “Tiger’s Claw” [“discovered” in 1519 by Cortés] (page 10) as early examples of comics.
  - 19th Century Swiss author Rodolphe Töpffer is considered to be the father of modern comics. His satirical, cartoon stories were the first to utilize words and pictures interdependently in Europe.

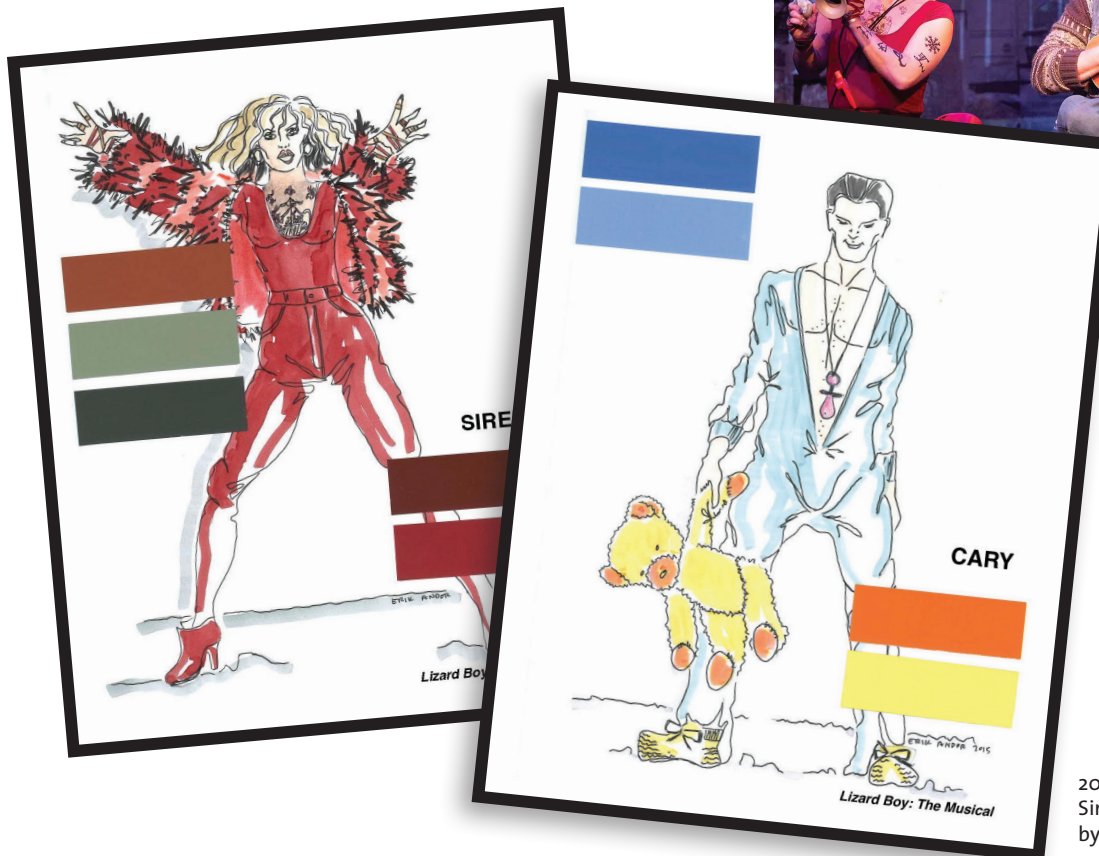
## AFTER SEEING/READING THE PLAY

1. At the beginning of the play, how long has it been since Trevor has left his room? What are the factors that have kept him shut in from the outside world? Why does he fear he won't be accepted by others?
2. When the play's action begins, what sparks Trevor's curiosity with the outside world again? How does he decide to engage with communicating with someone outside of his bubble? What are the benefits to engaging with others in the digital world rather than in person? Why does he ultimately decide to risk meeting Cary in person?

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MONSTER AND A SUPERHERO

3. After Trevor and Cary's initial meeting and misunderstanding, how does Cary re-engage Trevor and convince him to stay? What are some points of connection in their relationship? How important is having things in common to begin a new relationship?
4. What draws Trevor to Siren? What potential points of connection does he see in meeting her?
5. What does Siren believe is going to happen at sunrise? Where did this belief come from? What is the origin of the dragon apocalypse conspiracy theory? How is this story connected to Trevor?

6. In the play, what is the Mount St. Helens Monster? How is the monster connected to Trevor? What physical effect did the monster's death have on Trevor? What emotional effect could it have had on Trevor as a kindergartener?
7. How does Cary view the actions of the dragon in a new and different way than Trevor understood them? What is the difference between a monster and a superhero? Can a monster be a hero? Why or why not?
8. How does Monster Fest make Trevor feel normal? What might his lizard skin be a metaphor for? What are ways that a person's body can make them feel (or be treated as) "other?" What events like Monster Fest exist in the real world that give people a sense of belonging they might not feel in their day-to-day life?
9. In the play, a similarity between Halloween and Monster Fest is mentioned. How does putting on a costume, like a superhero, allow someone to live out a fantasy version of themselves?
10. Trevor says, "If there's one thing I've learned growing up, rock stars don't look like me." What does he mean by this? Why would representation be so important to Trevor? How is representation an important and meaningful experience to marginalized groups?

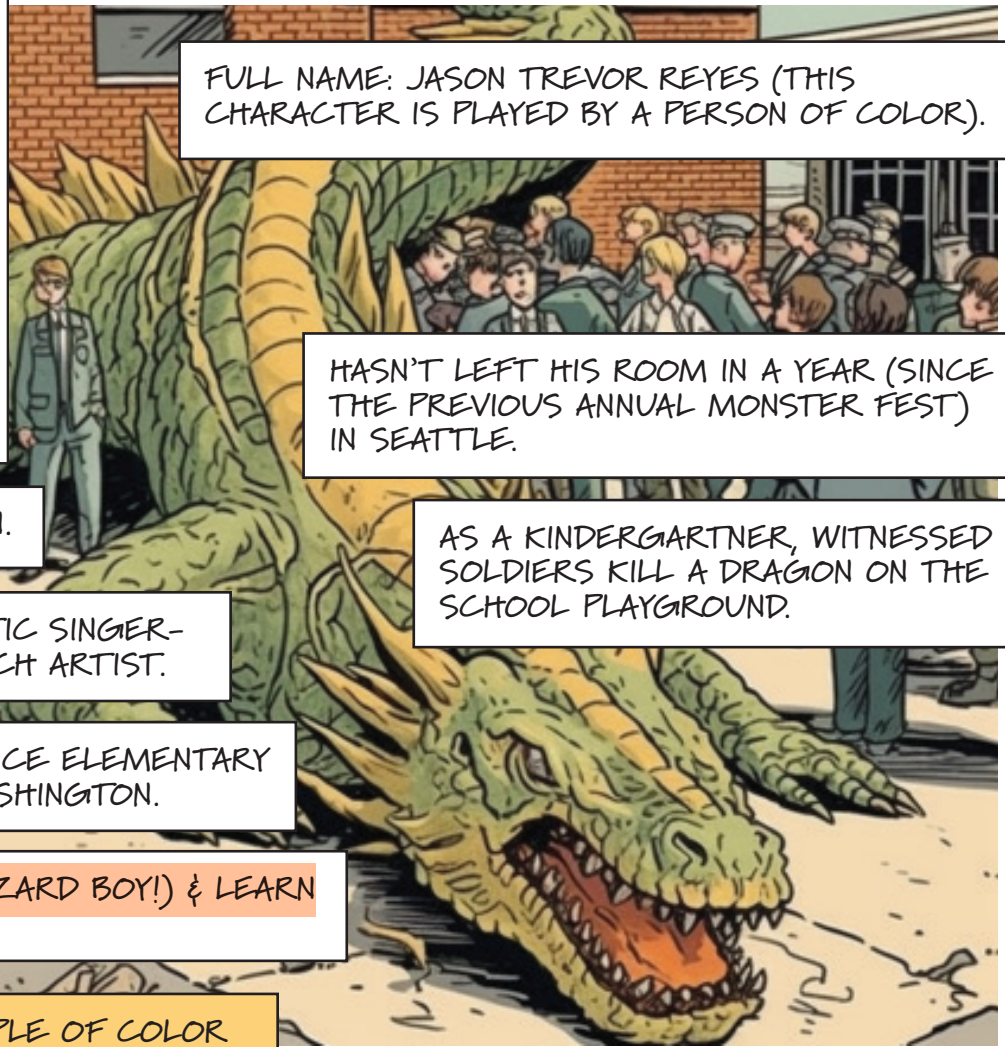


2024 production of *Lizard Boy* with Kiki deLohr, Justin Huertas, William A. Williams. Photo by Jenny Graham

2024 costumes designed for Siren and Cary in *Lizard Boy*, by Erik Andor.



FULL NAME: JASON TREVOR REYES (THIS CHARACTER IS PLAYED BY A PERSON OF COLOR).



HASN'T LEFT HIS ROOM IN A YEAR (SINCE THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MONSTER FEST) IN SEATTLE.

HAS GREEN LIZARD SKIN.

RECLUSIVE AND NEUROTIC SINGER-SONGWRITER AND SKETCH ARTIST.

ATTENDED POINT DEFIANCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON.

MEET TREVOR (A.K.A. LIZARD BOY!) & LEARN HIS ORIGIN STORY:

IN WHAT WAYS ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR MARGINALIZED WITHIN THE INDIE ROCK/FOLK/DIY SCENE?

HOW DOES A MUSICAL LIKE LIZARD BOY CHALLENGE THE NORM WITHIN THAT FIELD?

AS A KINDERGARTNER, WITNESSED SOLDIERS KILL A DRAGON ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND.

### Music Journalist and Critic

<https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/710-the-unbearable-whiteness-of-indie/>

\*"Once I entered the established indie music industry, I was shocked to see that the ethnic makeup didn't reflect the wide range of people I encountered while working on my zine. As I got older, my excitement for indie music and the promise it offered began to wane as it became more apparent that so much of the community discreetly functions to serve white people almost exclusively...Even if the ideals of independent music are relevant to Black listeners, it can be hard for them to make the leap into participating in the scene if they don't see themselves represented in it."

- Matthew James-Wilson,

### Music Editor, Photographer, and Writer

<https://pitchfork.com/features/article/what-its-like-to-be-black-in-indie-music/>

\*"Indie rock has long been defined, in part, by introspection, which makes it uniquely tied to identity...But if you've been listening to music built on personal experience and largely created by straight, white men for years, seeing more women, queer folks, and people of color at the forefront of the genre only broadens its scope. Little by little, the scene feels more open."

- Jill Mapes, Culture Writer and Editor <https://pitchfork.com/features/oped/the-year-indie-rock-meant-something-different/>





WELCOME TO SEATTLE—THE HOMETOWN OF LIZARD BOY!  
 LET’S TAKE A TOUR AND GET TO KNOW THE CITY WHERE OUR LOCAL SUPERHERO LIVES AND THIS STORY UNFOLDS...  
 AFTER SEEING/READING THE PLAY

**BELLTOWN**

A NEIGHBORHOOD WHICH, LIKE MUCH OF SEATTLE, HAS UNDERGONE A WAVE OF GENTRIFICATION IN THE PAST DECADE. NESTLED IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD IS ONE SITE OF OUR STORY:

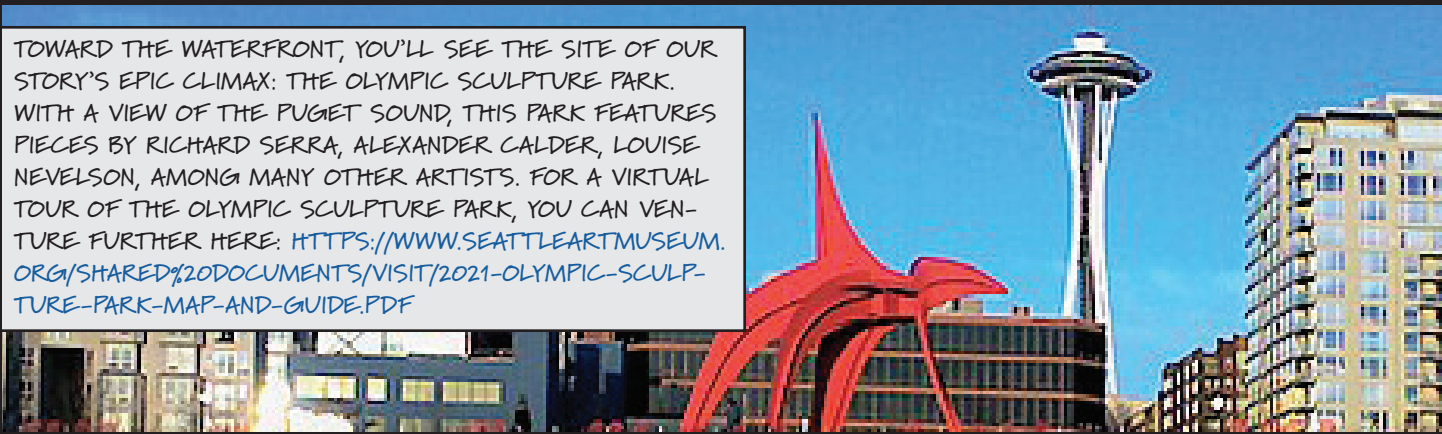


JUST NORTH OF BELLTOWN, IN QUEEN ANNE, IS THE LOCAL SPOT WHERE TREVOR AND CARY MEET UP FOR BURGERS: DICK’S DRIVE-IN  
[HTTPS://WWW.DDIR.COM/ABOUT/](https://www.ddir.com/about/)



**DOWNTOWN**  
 IN THE PLAY, “MONSTER FEST” IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO DRESS UP LIKE THEIR FAVORITE MONSTERS AND SUPERHERO CHARACTERS. WHILE THIS FESTIVAL IS A FICTION OF OUR STORY, MANY PEOPLE DO DRESS UP IN THE CITY FOR EVENTS LIKE THE ANNUAL EMERALD CITY COMIC-CON, SAKURA CON, AND SANTA CON: [HTTPS://SEATTLECONVENTIONCENTER.COM/](https://seattleconventioncenter.com/)

TOWARD THE WATERFRONT, YOU’LL SEE THE SITE OF OUR STORY’S EPIC CLIMAX: THE OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK. WITH A VIEW OF THE PUGET SOUND, THIS PARK FEATURES PIECES BY RICHARD SERRA, ALEXANDER CALDER, LOUISE NEVELSON, AMONG MANY OTHER ARTISTS. FOR A VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK, YOU CAN VENTURE FURTHER HERE: [HTTPS://WWW.SEATTLEARTMUSEUM.ORG/SHARED%20DOCUMENTS/VISIT/2021-OLYMPIC-SCULPTURE-PARK-MAP-AND-GUIDE.PDF](https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/shared%20documents/visit/2021-olympic-sculpture-park-map-and-guide.pdf)



Members of Oregon Shakespeare Festival Education and Engagement created the 2024 Study Guide for *Lizard Boy*. These suggestions were designed for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages. They may be used without restriction for educational purposes. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival is not responsible for the content of any website listed above.

© Oregon Shakespeare Festival. No part of the 2024 Study Guide for *Lizard Boy* may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or recording, or by an information storage and retrieval system, for professional or commercial purposes without permission in writing from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Education.