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This critically acclaimed play by Luis Valdez opens the performance of Chicanos on stage, challenging the audience to revisit a troubled moment in our nation's history. From the moment the myth-infused character El Pachuco burst onto the stage, cutting his way through the fall curtain with a switching blade, Luis Valdez spurred a revolution in the Chicano theatre. Focusing on the events surrounding the sleepy lagoon murder trial of 1942 and the soot-fighting riots that followed that turned Los Angeles into a bloody war zone, it is a gritty and vivid depiction of the horrific violence and racism suffered by young Mexican Americans on the home front during World War II. Valdez's group of young urban characters is grappling with the stereotypes and generalizations of the dominant American culture, issues of assimilation and patriotism, and the desire to rebel against the prevailing pressures that threaten to annihilate them. Experimenting with narrative saracenic forms, wartime pop culture, and complex characterizations, this quintessential exploration of the Mexican-American experience in the United States during the 1940s was the first, and only, chicano play to open on Broadway. This collection contains three of the most important and recognized pieces by playwright and screenwriter Luis Valdez: Zoot Suit, Bandido! and I don't have to show you any stinky badges. The anthology also includes an introduction by renowned theatre critic Jorge Huerta of the University of California, San Diego. Luis Valdez, the most recognized and famous Hispanic playwright of our time, is the director of the famous agricultural workers' theatre, El Teatro Campesino. Zoot Suit has been named on The Basics: 100 Fiction Titles You Should Stock List Valdez is the Pachuco of Broadway, the social media bandit and the brilliant student who will change the face of Hollywood representations of his people. —Jorge Huerta ATOS Level of Interest: Top Grades Category: Adult LEXILE: 1240L Zoot Suit1979 Broadway PlaybillMusicDaniel Valdez and Lalo GuerreroLyricsLalo GuerreroBookLuis ValdezBasisThe murder trial of Sleepy LagoonProductions1979 Broadway 1981 film Zoot Suit is a play written by Luis Valdez , with stage music by Daniel Valdez and Lalo Guerrero. Zoot Suit is based on the murder trial of Sleepy Lagoon and the zoot riots follows. Beginning in 1979, Zoot Suit was Chicano's first Broadway play. In 1981, Luis Valdez also directed a film version of the play, combining stage and film techniques. Plot Zoot Suit tells the story of Henry Reyna and the 38th street gang, who were tried for Sleepy Lagoon murder in Los Angeles during World War II. After a run-in with a nearby gang at the alley of local lovers, Sleepy Lagoon, the 38th Street Gang fights at a party, where a young man is murdered. Discriminated for wearing zoot zoot costume 22 members of the 38th street gang are on trial for the murder, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in San Quentin. Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, Henry's brother, Rudy, is beaten and stripped of his zoot costume during the zoot costume riots. Thanks to the efforts of George and other lawyers, as well as activist-reporter Alice, with whom Henry has a brief romantic encounter, the boys win their appeal in court and are released. The play ends with a Reyna family reunion as Henry returns home and Rudy is about to leave to join the Marines. The scene suggests that this is not the happy ending we expect, however, as multiple ends of Henry's story are suggested: that he returned to prison and drug abuse, died in the Korean war and received the Medal of Honor posthumously, or married Della and had five children. [1] El Pachuco characters: an allegorical character of the Chicano subculture of the same name. Henry Reyna: leader of the 38th Gang of St. Enrique Reyna: Henry Father Dolores Reyna: Henry Mother Lupe Reyna: Henry Sister Rudy Reyna: Henry Brother George Shearer: Henry's lawyer and the boys of 38th Street Alice Bloomfield: journalist and activist for Henry's case, as well as a brief love interest of Henry's Della Barrios: 38th Street Gang member and Henry's girlfriend The 38th Street Gang : includes Smiley Torres, Joey Castro, Tommy Roberts, Elena Torres and Bertha Villarreal Rafas: leader of the Downey gang, 38th Street Downey Gang's rival: include Ragman, Hobo, Cholo, Zooter, Guera, Hoba, Blondie, and Little Blue Lieutenant Edwards and Sergeant Smith: Detectives Members of the Press: Includes The Press (which doubles as the prosecution), Cub Reporter, and Newsboy The Court: includes Judge F. W. Charles and bailiff prison guard military men : Include Bosun's Mate, Sailors, Marine, Swabbie, Manchuka, and Shore Patrolman Extras: Girls, Pimp, Cholo[1] Historical Background The Sleepy Lagoon Murder Zoot Suit is based on the Sleepy Lagoon Murder of 1942 and the Zoot Riots follows from 1943 in Los Angeles, California. On August 1, 1942, José Daaz was at a birthday party at the Williams Ranch. A disturbance occurred around 11:00 p.m.m when a group of about 20 white men from the suburbs of Downey arrived unassed, complaining of a lack of beer. The Downey Gang group was kicked out of the party after demanding more beer. Meanwhile, a group of men and women from 39th Street drove their cars to the nearby swimming hole and the lovers' lane, nicknamed Sleepy Lagoon, also on Williams Ranch. Among the group were Henry Leyvas and his girlfriend Dora Baca, whose characters Henry Reyna and Della are artificial. Also with them was friend Bobby Telles. While the group is socializing, men entered and began to shout insults, also met the words of Leyvas. All three are gone. The 38th Street group walked around until they parked cars, where Leyvas and Baca stayed. A group of about sixteen men from the Downey gang beat Leyvas and Baca, prompting members of the 38th Street group to defend their friends. After the Downey group left, the 38th Street Gang group left to round up more of their group, before returning to Williams Ranch. The group arrived at Sleepy Lagoon around 1:00 a.m..m the morning of the 2nd, only to find anyone, so someone suggested that the Downey gang had moved to the party at the dormitory near Williams Ranch. At the party, the Downey gang wasn't supposed to be found. Yet a fight broke out between the revelers and the 38th street gang. The fight was brief, ending when someone shouted that the police were coming. In the aftermath of the brawl, the revelers, the Delgadillos, discovered the body of José Daaz along the road, who had left the party shortly before the arrival of the 38th street group. His pockets were returned inside. He was rushed to hospital where he died an hour and a half after being admitted, with a concussion and two stab wounds. The circumstances surrounding Daaz's death remain undetermined. In the end, Henry dies in a bar The People v. Zammorea et al. Hundreds of young men and women from the L.A. region were taken to the police as part of the investigation into the murder of José Daaz. Several of the suspects arrested were beaten during interrogation, including Henry Leyvas, Lupe Leyvas, Benny Alvarez and Eugene Carpio, and Manuel Reyes. Twenty-two men were tried in groups, under the defence of seven lawyers in People v. Zammorea et al. George Shibley later joined as a lawyer in the case, winning the favor of the defendants and their families