



Study Guide 2026

Oregon Shakespeare Festival



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE END OF THE WORLD

KEIKO GREEN

- Born in Georgia, now based in Los Angeles.
- She is a performer, playwright, and screenwriter.
- *Cordially Invited to the End of the World* was workshopped at the Ashland New Plays Festival in Ashland, OR.
- This play was written during the pandemic and was a response to personal as well as global loss.



Before seeing/reading the play

1. What is the existential philosophical movement, and how does it grapple with questions of the meaning and purpose of life? In what ways does it challenge our understanding of reality and existence? These and other websites provide information: <https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-existentialism/> <https://philosophybreak.com/articles/what-is-existentialism-3-core-principles-of-existentialist-philosophy/>
2. What is existential dread? This and other websites provide information: [Existential Dread: Meaning, Symptoms, and How to Cope](#)



3. Terminal illness diagnoses force some people to adjust to their new life, both emotionally and physically. How do some people learn to process the rest of their lives? How do they adapt, learn, and grow from this diagnosis? This and other websites provide information: <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/information/getting-care/terminal-illness-definition> Content - Health Encyclopedia - University of Rochester Medical Center
4. Consider the 5 stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. How do families cope as they navigate the stages of grief? How might grief look different for every person? These and other websites provide information: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/5-stages-of-grief-coping-with-the-loss-of-a-loved-one> https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/related/related_grief_reactions.asp
5. Climate change is a blanket term for the largely negative changes in the Earth's environment caused by humans. What has caused the climate crisis and how does capitalism play a role in it? What could corporations do to decrease global emissions? What could individuals do? These and other websites provide information: <https://www.wri.org/insights/interactive-chart-shows-changes-worlds-top-10-emitters> <https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>

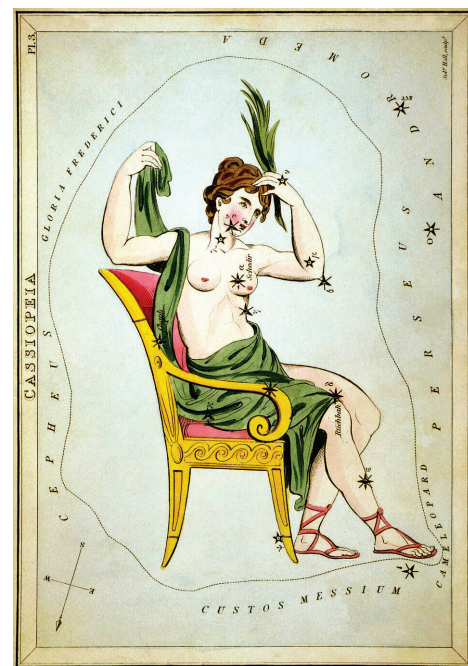
6. Greta Thunberg, a young political climate activist, is a passionate leader in bringing awareness of climate change to people around the world. Given the global attention focused on her work, how does she find the courage to speak up? What about the climate discussion does she find purpose in? These and other websites provide information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itAu7Uwosn8> <https://www.un.org/en/actnow/speakup>



Greta Thunberg. Wikimedia commons.

7. What are Golden Toads and Bramble Cay Melomys? What does their extinction hint for the future? These and other websites provide information: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/environmental-sciences/extinctions-and-climate-change> <https://www.ifaw.org/international/journal/animals-most-impacted-climate-change>
8. Humor is a powerful outlet for grief. Many writers and performers use their artistry to hold onto joy while processing pain. In what ways does comedy become a tool to digest difficult emotions? These and other websites provide information: <https://jedfoundation.org/resource/using-humor-as-a-healthy-coping-mechanism/> <https://www.artsandmindlab.org/can-the-arts-help-us-heal-our-grief/>
9. What is legacy? Why might some people find it important?

10. Research the story and constellation of Cassiopeia. This and other websites provide information: [Cassiopeia Constellation - Features And Facts - The Planets](#)



Cassiopeia, plate 3 in Urania's Mirror, a set of celestial cards by Jehoshaphat Aspin. Wikimedia Commons.

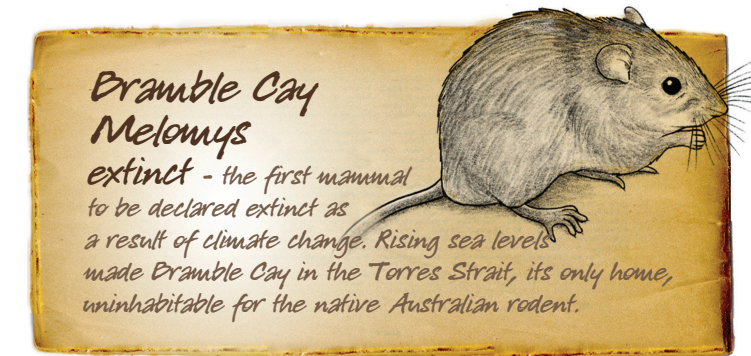
After seeing/reading the play

1. What is the meaning of the title of the play, *You Are Cordially Invited to the End of the World!*?
2. At the beginning of the play, M tells us that they are there to "tell you about how the world died..." What world or worlds is M talking about? How does the world die?
3. The stage directions of the play describe the space in this way: "The stage is blanketed in stars, constellations, the Milky Way." How do human beings feel in relationship to stars, constellations, and the Milky Way? How do those feelings affect Greg? Viv? M? The audience?
4. Reference your research on the stages of grief. How are comedy and drama balanced in the play? How do Viv and Greg initially cope with the news of Greg's diagnosis? How does M react to their parents' laughter, and why? How is laughter used throughout the play?
5. Refer to your research on climate change. What about the climate crisis ignites Greg and gives him purpose? Why does he see Greta Thunberg, and what does she represent to him? How does concern about the climate give Greg focus?
6. How is Greg's relationship to M and Viv impacted by his illness? How does the family come together? What makes them separate at times? How do their perspectives about their lives together change during the play?



Costume design for M by Lux Haac.

7. M talks about Greg ignoring things he did not like in the past. How does that change during the play? What is the effect on his family? On Will? How does the cancer diagnosis help the family get to know each other? How does it get in the way?
8. Refer to your research on climate change. How does Will challenge Greg's view of climate change and who is responsible? What is M's view of climate change and change in general? Discuss personal impact, corporate impact, and inevitable change in relationship to climate change.



9. Why does Viv want to control information about Greg's illness? What happens to the information once it is shared? How do others respond to the news of the illness? Lila? Will?
10. Why does Greg think he is the Earth? What does that mean to him?
11. Why does M hide that they are doing a show? What is the significance of the drag name Cassie-O-Peia? Why does M finally invite Greg to come to the bar? Why doesn't Greg go? How is M affected by his absence?
12. How does Greg's behavior reflect the acceleration of his cancer? Why does the Army Guy show up? Why does Greg cut the tubing of the lawn mowers? What does he learn from the Extinction Support Group? What does Greg need from all of these occurrences?
13. What does Viv learn from seeing Janet's journey? What comforts and perspectives does Janet offer about losing a partner?
14. Refer to your research on existential dread. What is existential dread? When does Greg feel it? How is it driving him toward the end of his life? What other characters experience existential dread? How do they manage it?
15. How are M, Viv, and Greg able to forgive each other? How do they all connect toward the end? What is M able to understand about their father? What is Viv able to understand about her husband? What does Greg learn about them both? What are the gifts from going through the process of Greg dying?

16. M bookends the play with questions about the earth dying. How do M's feelings about dying change by the end of the play? How does it change for the audience?
17. How is Greg's legacy shaped? In what ways does he leave the impact he wanted to? In what ways does his life leave an impact on the world?
18. As narrator of the play, why does M build such an expansive story? What are their conclusions about this particular story? How do they reimagine their existence, and what do they accept by the end of the play?
19. As our narrator, M uses drag to tell this story. What does drag mean to M, and how do they take advantage of the art form? How does drag help M navigate their pain? How does drag influence the nature of this play?
20. What is the magic that is left after Greg's death? What is the magic that is shared with the audience at the end of the play?
21. Playwright Keiko Green said this play became a play about significance. She asks: "What does it mean to live a significant life? Can we make actions that are significant? Can we remember people and make them significant?" Discuss these questions in relationship to the play.
22. If you are seeing *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, or *Henry IV, Part One*, compare the parent-child relationships. How well do the parents and children know each other at the beginning of the play? At the end? What causes change in their relationships?

23. Refer to your discussion of legacy. Legacy is a theme in *Henry IV, Part One*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Come From Away*, *King Hedley II*, *Smote This...*, *You Are Cordially Invited...*, *Emma*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. If you are seeing more than one of these plays, what similarities and differences are there in each play's depiction of legacy?

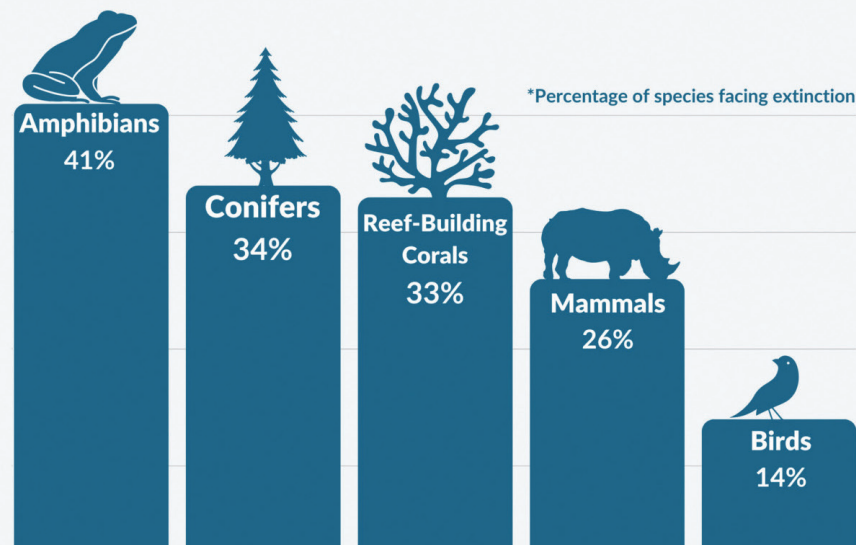


The Facts of Wildlife Extinction

Wildlife and plants are increasingly going extinct due to human-caused threats such as climate change and deforestation. Endangered species provide key ecosystem services that humans rely on. As concern grows over the rapid decline of species, states are stepping up protections of wildlife within their borders.

There are around  **1 million species** that currently face extinction.

 Since 1970, the average species population size has **declined 68%**.



Protester at a rally against climate change. Ivan Radic, Creative Commons.

DON'T BE A DRAG ... BE AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUEEN!

The lights dim. You lean forward and look to the curtain as you anticipate the magical entrance of your favorite queen/king. Clutching your drink and dollar bills to tip, you are reminded of the importance of queer joy... and environmental activism? Wait, what? What does science have to do with drag?

While these two worlds may seem distant from each other, climate activist performers are bringing together drag performance and scientific research. Many artists and scientists are pairing the joy and expression of drag to advocate for environmental reform, and it's changing the world, literally.

Many drag performers embrace comedy in their performances, which may be why it's gained its mainstream popularity. However, drag performers have historically embraced meaning beyond the joy of performance and visibility. They've shown up in activist spaces, demanding LGBTQ+ rights, health access and equality, marriage rights, and more. Given those roots, it's not so surprising to find scientists who blend entertainment and education to inspire audience members to take climate action, in both an accessible and fabulous way.

Many drag artists today are redefining what it means to be environmentally literate and conscious. A leading example of this is *Science Is a Drag*, an award-winning not-for-profit whose mission is to elevate science through the art of drag. They take a queer perspective on science, fabulize it through drag, and perform an informational lecture on the piece. Kwaga Musselle, a drag artist who has performed with *Science Is a Drag*, states that "performing in drag and also sharing my PhD and walking up to 'AMAFILIPINA' and, like, wearing these pearls and... It's kind of amazing that everyone is seeing, like, all of me. That's what I'm feeling.



LGBTQ+ activist and environmentalist and Drag Queen - Patti Gonia

Everybody is seeing all of me." (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAwoLFMMqR8> 5:24). Performers like Musselle prove that drag doesn't have to be just a night out with drinks and a show, but it's a political statement and an opportunity to say something. It is taking every identity you have and dramatizing them to understand who you are and challenge others to step up. Drag isn't a mask, but instead it's an opportunity to expand yourself.

Drag artist Pattie Gonia, an LGBTQ+ activist and environmentalist, has performed in sold-out climate drag shows like *Climatechella* and *Save Her! An Environmental Drag Show*. She is also a big proponent of "up-cycling" and finding sustainable ways to dress to impress. Pattie Gonia stated in a Ted Talk in October of 2024: "The problem in the climate movement isn't just the abundance of carbon, it's the lack of joy. The scientific facts, the doom and gloom, they scare people, they wake them up. But joy is what will get people out of bed every day to take more action. And if there's one thing I have learned from the art form of drag, it's that you can take fighting for something seriously without taking yourself too seriously." (www.ted.com/talks/pattie_gonia_why_joy_is_a_serious_way_to_take_action 7:01). By directly connecting the energy and appeal of drag and the stakes of climate change, Pattie Gonia has discovered a digestible way to access environmental activism. She teaches us that joy can be a powerful catalyst in fighting the climate crisis.

Environmental activism and drag don't have to be two siloed concepts; rather, drag continues to be a bridge to advocating for the world we live in and the people who inhabit it. By honoring their identity and wielding the power of drag, these fearless queer scholars and environmentalists are finding inclusive solutions to end climate change. Now it is up to us to listen, learn, and to fight for a better tomorrow.



ashland
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Empowering Community Climate Action

We encourage people to do what we can about climate pollution — right here in Ashland.

Together, our actions can protect our town for future generations. Let's focus on the big moves that make a big difference!

The BIG moves

- Clean up our transportation
- Clean up our home energy
- Clean up our landscaping tools
- Compost food waste
- Conserve water in our yards
- Adapt our homes and yards to wildfire
- Join a climate club
- Sign up for our monthly newsletters at ashlandclimate.org/signup for more!



Feeling Inspired?

Support climate action in your community or learn more about how Ashland is taking action.



www.AshlandClimate.org



The Ashland Climate Collaborative is a 501(c)3 organization and hub for community collaboration to reduce our climate impact and build a more equitable and resilient Ashland.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES AFTER A TERMINAL ILLNESS DIAGNOSIS

A terminal illness is difficult to process for both the individual affected and the people around them. It impacts people, relationships, families, and communities. While supporting a loved one during this transition is important, it may become difficult to care for yourself. Below are ways you can support someone newly diagnosed and yourself.

Supporting a loved one:

- Don't assume how they feel. Terminal illnesses affect everyone differently. Some people may be ready to be social, or some may want to be alone.
- You are not responsible for fixing their grief. Allow your loved one to feel their emotions at their own pace.
- Offer practical support. Running errands, picking up food, or performing any daily chores are one less task for them to worry about.
- Be present. Show up for them. Remind them that they are loved, cared for, and not alone.

Supporting yourself:

- Lean on your community. Whether they are peers, social groups, or faith-based organizations, lean on people you trust to support you.
- Be OK with complex feelings and emotions. Allow yourself to process your pain, thoughts, and feelings.
- Be mindful of your finances. Supporting someone may take an economic toll on your own life. Make sure you set realistic boundaries so you can contribute without financially straining yourself.
- Having nothing to say is OK. You may feel shocked or confused, but it is important that you remain present and not feel pressure to have any answers.

References:

- <https://integrishealth.org/resources/on-your-health/2023/april/how-to-support-someone-with-a-terminal-illness>
- <https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/7-ways-to-support-a-loved-one-with-terminal-cancer.hoo-159623379.html>
- <https://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/cancer-information/advanced-cancer/grief/how-to-help-someone-who-is-grieving/>
- <https://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/cancer-information/advanced-cancer/grief/how-to-help-someone-who-is-grieving/ways-to-help-someone-with-grief/>

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