

ROSEBUD SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Course: THR 489- Final Project Performance of a Role - *'Night Mother*
Term: Fall 2025
Instructor: Nathan Schmidt
Student: Hayley Rosenau

What a big tough story Hayley took on for her final project, digging deep into a human experience that is really difficult. Good for her. Hayley did a great job with Jessie. It was a compelling production and both Hayley and Kelsey were up to the task of it.

I found Jessie's decisiveness both believable and troubling. However, it is a trick for the actor to play such a decisive motivation while still keeping an audience onboard with their humanity. We need to see something of the hopelessness that is underpinning the decision. Is there anything in here that is hard to say? Even if there is no doubt about the final decision, where are the cracks that reveal the difficulty of what will happen to those left behind? I guess I found Jessie to be so determined and resolute that I struggled to feel compassion for her life leading up to this point. It is a troubling play to evaluate because I have to reckon with my own feelings about Jessie's decision and whether or not I support it determines what I would like to see in the performance. For me, I would have felt her loss and decision more deeply had I seen some deeper textures of humanity and its frailty. I wanted to see the pot boil a bit more and some steam sneak out.

The other note I would make is that the actor has to motivate the movement of the show. I found Hayley to be crossing the stage at times, and it felt as though it was what the director had said to do, rather than the life of the person that lived in that house. There is a forward knowledge that we have when we move through our space. Even if we're pacing, it is the place in the house we always pace. I know Hayley can struggle at times to embody her work. Remember that everything you do radiates from the centre of you out into the space. Nothing is ever functional.

I was so sad for Thelma and Jessie and their seemingly small lives. Such a tough hand was dealt to these two and it was so sad that all they had was each other. "I'm what became of your child". What a crushing line. Thelma "how could I know you were so alone?" so helpless. This play really does respond to that thing we say after a suicide "why did they do it?" I guess we may not always be satisfied to know the answer.

Congratulations Hayley on a powerful and successful show!