



The Library of the National Theatre School of Canada invites you to

## **An Exhibition Unlike Any Other**

**Taken from the “Hall of Horrors”  
of its collections.**

**A scenic adaptation of a true story entitled:**

### **“The Dangerous and Intrepid Life of an Innocent Book Trapped in Human Hands”**

**or:**

#### **Prologue**

**Drowned by the Storm  
Blinded by the Stroke of a Pen  
Tortured by Cigarette Burns  
Stigmatized by Steaming Coffee  
Tattooed by a Highlighter  
Ripped by the Jaws of a Hound  
Dishonored by Feline Defecations  
Tormented by a Razor Blade  
Soiled by Paint  
Splattered by Spaghetti Sauce  
Skinned Alive by Scotch Tape**

#### **Epilogue**

A tragic saga that never ends, written by Wolfgang Noethlichs.

Cast:

<b>The executioners:</b>	<b>a sadly high number of NTS library users</b>
<b>The victims:</b>	<b>too many books from said library</b>
<b>The wailing chorus:</b>	<b>our library employees</b>
<b>The losers:</b>	<b>society in general</b>
	<b>our annual budget in particular</b>
	<b>all of the library’s users</b>

## **Scene of the crime**

A small enclave harboring a band of irrepressible optimists fuelled by the desire to put an end to the increasing trend towards neglect, thoughtlessness, and even vandalism on the part of certain of their users, thus imperiling the cultural goods of which they are the custodians.

This haven of peace, right in the heart in the immense and troubled sea of everyday life, this high altar of culture and learning, this healthy, dynamic, and vibrant space, has been named:

### **The National Theatre School of Canada Library**

The action takes place mainly on the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors in a section of a former juvenile court.

#### **Prologue: Why this exhibition?**

The following exhibition was created to show our internal and external users the proper way to treat our library's books and documents. Every year, the library invests large sums of money and a non-negligible amount of manpower to develop and maintain its collections. In order to respond to user demand, the library's employees strive to offer excellent service and endeavor to provide a maximum number of books in good physical condition. Sadly, it has come to our attention that our good intentions are sorely tested by the lack of respect, negligence, and, in some cases, premeditated vandalism inflicted on our books by a growing number of users.

Books are getting more and more costly, and printing runs are getting smaller and smaller; consequently, books are more quickly worn down. Since our budgets have been frozen for the past five years, we are forced to permanently remove books from our collections, due to aggressive treatment at the hands of a user.

---

## **Act I**

### **Rain water**

Water torture is by far the most common abuse perpetrated on most of our books. Not that users share their quick morning shower with their reading material, but rather, it is while on a bicycle, books safely stored in a backpack, with St. Denis Street reflected in the gleam of the rider's eye, that the affliction occurs. Often carried without additional protection in said backpacks that leak like sieves, the books suffer the slings and arrows of our wonderful, temperate climate: rain, hail, sleet, snow, slush...truly a deadly cocktail for any printed work.

Water damage discolors the pages of a book, makes them stick together, crinkles the cardboard, dries and stiffens materials, and ultimately causes the binding to fall apart, making the book unusable.

**Remedy:** Make sure, when transporting books, that you wrap them in extra plastic bags before putting them in your book bags, backpacks, jacket pockets – or before hiding them under your sweater. Ask our employees at the counter for plastic bags.

**Our choice:**

**1) *Je suis une mouette (non ce n'est pas ça)*, by Serge Denoncourt, based on Anton Chekhov.**

**Rain water** dripping down into a backpack loaded with books:

- All pages are ringed and crinkled.
- Certain pages are stuck together.
- **Result:** this book is now unusable and had to be replaced.

**2) *All my sons*, by Arthur Miller.**

**Rain water** dripping down into a backpack loaded with books:

- All pages are crinkled.
- **Result:** this new book is a total loss after only one loan. A loss of about \$13.

**3) *Conversations with Edward Albee*, edited by Philip Kolin.**

**Rain water** dripping down into a backpack loaded with books:

- Certain pages are stuck together or have stains.
- All pages and the book cover are crinkled.
- Mold has started to appear.
- Book feels stiff and looks dirty.
- **Result:** this book had to be withdrawn from the collection and replaced after only 9 loans.

**4) *Fêtes et croyances populaires en Europe*, by Yvonne de Sike.**

**Rain water** dripping down into a backpack loaded with books:

- All of the pages are crinkled and ringed.
- Many of the pages are stuck together, necessitating the long and meticulous process of separating each page without ripping the paper.
- The paper has become dry and stiff; there's a risk of the binding drying up and breaking.
- **Result:** this out-of-print book, worth \$60, is heavily damaged.

**5) *Brecht & Cie*, by John Fuegi.**

**Rain water** dripping down into a backpack loaded with books:

- All of the pages are crinkled and ringed.
- Many of the pages are stuck together, necessitating the long and meticulous process of separating each page without ripping the paper.
- The paper has become dry and stiff; there's a risk of the binding drying up and breaking.
- **Result:** this out-of-print book, worth \$83, is heavily damaged.

**6) *Ingres (Collection «Great Painters»)***

- **Rain water** dripping down into a backpack loaded with books:
- All of the pages are crinkled and ringed.

- Many of the pages are stuck together, necessitating the long and meticulous process of separating each page without ripping the paper.
- The paper has become dry and stiff; there's a risk of the binding drying up and breaking.
- **Result:** almost all pages with illustrations are slightly ripped; the rest of the book has major water marks.

## Act II

### Coffee, wine, and beer stains, burns, etc.

Coffee or beer that is poured onto the pages of a book has more or less the same effect as water does. The visual impact is, however, greatly enhanced by rings of “Brazilian Brown” or “Château Neuf-Du-Pape” or by sticky stains (in the case of a Molson Dry) on otherwise immaculate pages or on beautiful color prints. Admittedly, this can dampen the ardor of serious readers who borrow these desecrated books. Need I point out that I could have easily replaced the coffee or beer imagery by spaghetti sauce, onion soup, or poutine gravy.

**Remedy:** Avoid using your books as a waiter's tray and never put your libations or culinary creations (as appealing as they may be) anywhere on or near our library books.

### Our choice:

#### 7) *Victorian Working Women: Portraits From Life*, by Michael Hiley.

##### **Coffee stains:**

- Same consequences as with water stains, but with, as a bonus, the stain's dirty, brown appearance.
- Some of the pages are crinkled and ringed.
- Some of the pages are stuck together, necessitating the long and meticulous process of separating each page without ripping the paper.
- **Result:** Pages 26 to 30 have holes and brown stains. Because this book is out of print, we must keep this lamentable volume in our collection, as we are unable to repair or replace it.

#### 8) *Directing for the stage: a workshop guide of 42 creative exercises and projects*, by Terry John Converse.

##### **Red wine stains:**

- **Result:** The lower part of the book is stained from the beginning to the end with a pyramidal stain. Ironically, that adds a 9<sup>th</sup> pattern to the pages of whom one bears the title «**Possible Patterns**».

#### 9) *De Goya à Gauguin*, by Maurice Raynal (Éditions Skira)

##### **Coffee stains:**

- **Result:** Coffee has merrily permeated the entire book from the tops of the pages, soiling each and every one (reminiscent of painter Jackson Pollock's “dripping” technique).

10) *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, by Ödön von Horvath.

**Burned by a hot cup:**

- **Result:** A steaming cup of orange-blossom flavoured tisane has voluptuously melted the book's plastic cover, leaving a grooved, round ring. Truly, a vicious circle!
- 

## Act III

### Soiled by Paint

This message is particularly aimed at all of our users who are either accomplished or budding artists, scenic painters, set designers, illustrators, or sketch artists. Our library has put a large number of illustrated books at your disposal whose sole purpose in life is to facilitate your meticulous iconographic research while stimulating your artistic creativity. These books are often precious, rare, and very expensive. Many of them, placed perilously close to your work table or easel, are the victims of "collateral damage" in the form of involuntary assaults by splashes from your watercolor brushes, air-brush sprayers, or your flashes of genius inspired by Yves Klein or Jackson Pollock.

**Remedy:** Buy yourself one or several sheets of plastic or transparent acetates and place them on the open pages of our book. This will preserve our books in their original condition and spare you a tedious lawsuit from the likes of Tiépolo, Velázquez, or Salvador Dali for having altered one of their masterpieces. If you are a fan of charcoal and plan to manipulate one of our books while giving way to your creative impulses, we would deeply appreciate your washing your hands first. This timeless, humble gesture will ensure that your fingerprints will not appear on pages 10, 11, and 12 – and beyond.

### Our choice:

11) *Tanobe*, by Leo Rosshändler.

**Paint stains :**

- **Result:** Roughly 10% of the book is stained or badly stained. Impossible to remove. This book is out-of-print and cannot be replaced.

12) *Leonardo da Vinci*, by C. H. Monk.

**Paint stains:**

- **Result:** Several pages are stained or badly stained. Impossible to remove. This book is out-of-print and cannot be replaced.

13) *The Victorian Parlor: a cut and color book*, by Theodore Menten.

**Paint stains:**

- **Result:** 2 plates are stained by paint when our young painter-apprentice took the title «...color book» as an immediate invitation to color the pages!

**14) *Designing and making stage costumes, by Motley.***

**Paint stains on the cover:**

- **Result:** The book having been used as a base for a glass of water while doing watercolor painting, a beautiful «ZEN» like white closed circle decorates from now on its cover!

---

## Act IV

### Translating, underlining, annotating, and highlighting in our books

Have I ever told you that one of the craziest and most disheartening purchases we have ever had to make is an **electric eraser**? This highly valuable tool is often our last salvation; it helps us remain sane as we hold it like a carrot and slide it over hundreds of lines that have been highlighted, underlined, or annotated by the HB #1 of a user living in their own dreamy world. This is sometimes the only way, as in the case of out-of-print editions, to save some of our books. If this type of assault has been perpetrated by a pen or a permanent marker, the book is given a death sentence and must be removed from the collection.

It is important to remember that all of the documents acquired for the library have been bought with public funds in order to create a highly specialized collection that aspires to maximum longevity.

**Remedy:** Beware of your spontaneity or your habit of tattooing your own books and hide all of your pencils, pens, and other writing instruments when you open one of our books. Sit back in your easy chair and let yourself be transported by the pleasures of reading, and only reading.

### Our choice:

**15) *En pièces détachées, by Michel Tremblay.***

**Annotations, highlighting :**

**Result:** This book, worth \$11.50, has been cleaned (see the photocopy of the page before cleaning) by a library employee. It took about 30 minutes, which increases the book's value by half the employee's hourly salary. This book is still not entirely clean and is unpleasant to read.

**16) *Same time next year, by Bernard Slade.***

**Complete translation of the book, from English to French, with a pencil:**

- **Result:** Notwithstanding the quality of the translation, this book had to be removed from the collection (which obviously requires some work) because it was unreadable. The culprit had to pay \$15 plus an additional \$20 fee for

technical treatment. Here's hoping that the title of this book is not an indication that this abuse will be repeated within the next twelve months.

**17) *Bruegel: étude historique et critique*, by Robert L. Delevoy (Éditions Skira)**

**Annotations and underlining with a ball-pen:**

- **Result:** This book, published in 1959, is annotated and underlined with a ball-pen almost in its entirety by one or more users and therefore marked for life. This little masterpiece of the famous Swiss publishing house is out of print for many years and irreplaceable, a big loss for all those researching this Dutch painter of genius. It is due to the rarity and quality of the publication that we decided to keep it in the collection despite its bad visual condition.

---

## Act V

### Cigarette and match burns, etc.

Fire, the great gift that Prometheus gave us some years ago, is a source of heat much appreciated by all, as long as its use is controlled and well aimed. It is a known fact that paper and cardboard are efficient fuels. And it is regarding this very useful fact that I wish to express certain concerns regarding the use of our books as ashtrays.

**Remedy:** Put out your cigarettes and matches using a quick, simple, and direct gesture right into the ashtray on the table to your right, thus sparing our immortal idols such as Goldoni, Picasso, Palladio, and many others, the painful torture of fire. There are many books within our walls and the potential excuse: "...a tiny cigarette burn is no big deal, there are plenty of other books in their library...!" is unacceptable. Cigarettes, matches, and ashes simply have no place on or in our books.

### Our choice:

**18) *Victorian and Edwardian Country-House life*, by Anthony Lambert.**

**Burns on the cover:**

- **Result:** Two holes on the cover or, sometimes, even on the inside pages. We sometimes see signs of a real little fireplace in a book, caused by a lit cigarette that has either fallen onto a page or been forgotten there.

**19) *Kiki's Paris: artists and lovers 1900-1930*, by Billy Clüver.**

**Burns on the cover:**

- **Result:** The hole burned by a cigarette goes down several layers deep onto the cardboard of the cover.

---

## Act VI

## Scotch tape, Post-its, and other marking devices...

Most of these temporary markers, such as masking tape or transparent scotch tape, are absolutely deadly for paper and should therefore never be used. They cause tears and even holes on the pages. Post-its, albeit lesser offenders, should never remain on a page for more than three or four days, otherwise they start to stick, causing the same damage as their stronger cousins.

By the way, *please*, never turn down the corner of a page to mark your place: sooner or later, this will inevitably cause the corner to drop off the page.

**Remedy:** If you use post-its, remove them regularly from their usual spots – particularly before returning your books to the library. To discourage this habit, we have created a series of ten different and magnificent bookmarks. You will find them throughout the library. Do not hesitate to avail yourself of them to mark your pages and chapters.

### Our choice:

20) *Design du monde : Îles Pacifiques*, by Herbert Ypma.

#### **Masking tape in the book:**

- **Result:** Masking tape has lifted the printing right off the page, in two places. A lovely colour photograph has been damaged (p.152-153).

## Act VII

### Dogs and cats...et cetera!

As the examples in this category reveal, torturing books is not the sole domain of humans. Some dogs seem to be particularly adept at defacing musicals, tearing up the photographs in “Masques de la Commedia Dell’Arte,” or chewing on a Greek temple when it strikes their fancy. Needless to say, all of these books are returned to us with sincere contrition on the part of Fido’s master or mistress. Meanwhile, Fido proudly basks in the glory of his actions, having shown the whole world that he can play by himself without disturbing a soul.

For their part, cats operate quite differently. They prefer to work in their own, and no less efficient, symbolic way. They show their disdain (or love?) for certain authors by discreetly – but oh so effectively – leaving a few (or many) drops of their urine behind. Thus marked, the poor book will undoubtedly remain alone on its shelf for at least another century, serving out its “olfactory sentence.”



**Remedy:** If you are the proud owner or friend of a fine, furry pal, I beg you not to leave your books lying around on the floor or anywhere else that your little darling might consider to be its own turf. My vast repertoire of various true events leads me to give you this piece of advice: with the exception of goldfish and houseflies, do not be fooled by your pet, especially the soft purring of your cherished Tabby or the innocent eyes of your beloved Fido. They have unsuspected dark and devious plans for that tempting book left on the floor!

**Our choice:**

**21) *The Great Circus Street Parade in pictures*, by Charles Philip Fox.**

**Masking tape on a page:**

- **Result:** masking tape damages paper.

**22) *La Commedia dell'Arte nelle maschere dei Sartori*, text by Roberto Bacci (Exhibition catalogue).**

**Manhandled by a dog**

- **Result:** This book has been removed from the collection due to its sudden and irrevocable death.

**23) *Jeux de massacre (The killing game)* by Maxim Gorky.**

**Chewed by a dog**

- **Result:** As its title so eloquently puts it, this book's existence was tragically cut short, due to marks and various stains caused by a charming pup's incisors during a vicious oral attack.

**24) *Le menton du chat*, by Véra Feder.**

**Stigmatized by the flow of cat pee**

- **Result:** For reasons of public safety, and the comfort of our dear visitors, we have decided not to display this "object of shame." We had to remove this book from the collection (Please see the photocopy of the cover) and physically annihilate it so as not to lose our loyal customers.
-

## Act VIII

### “The cutting edge”: razor blades and scissors

The last section of our exhibition illustrates the changes observed in the relationship between man and book, a relationship that sometimes resembles “The Dangerous Liasons.”

Razor blades, Xacto knives, cleavers – all is fair in love and libraries when it comes to obtaining that coveted illustration, photo, or painting reproduction found in our books, whose final destination may be a bathroom wall or fridge door. Are they too lazy or too cheap to use our photocopier – who knows?! Anonymous vandals handle their scalpels with ease and help themselves to one-of-a-kind pages, leaving the book’s next user with nothing more than a tattered “war amp.” As for the library’s employees, we must deal with this carnage and the frustration of reassembling the patient and the inherent prohibitive costs.

**Remedy:** Do not waste your time undertaking a complicated and delicate amputation when we can offer you a much better solution: if you are short of cash or just plain lazy, please come and see us at the counter before doing anything rash. We will happily offer you a free photocopy in exchange for your scalpel.

### Our choice:

#### 25) *Heraldic design: a handbook for students*, by Heather Child.

##### **Tormented by a razor blade**

- **Result:** The “surgeon” worked on several pages at once. Admire the skillful way the operation was completed. A master stroke! This book has become unreadable and had to be removed from the collection. Since it was a rare and out-of-print volume, it is irreplaceable and lost for good.

#### 26) *Animal drawing: anatomy and action for artists*, by Charles Knight.

##### **Tormented by a razor blade**

- **Result:** Because the amputation was merely partial, with “only” one third of the page removed, we decided to leave it in the collection in its mutilated form.

#### 27) *Meubles et ensembles de la Renaissance espagnole*, by Monique de Fayet.

##### **Tormented by a razor blade**

- **Result:** EXITUS!

# Epilogue

## **Book and Man: a small object with a big impact**

Since the dawn of man and right up until the 15th century, books were only made in one single copy. If a second copy was made, it was equally unique, since it would be written and drawn by hand. This long process, lasting months and even years, was undertaken by artisans with enthusiasm and assiduity, respect and humility.

All this took place during a period when time had a much different impact on mankind's daily existence than it does today. Back then, life was ruled by the rhythms of nature, the unfolding of seasons, the movement of the stars. Human activities were still controlled by the length of the days, from the early rays of the sun to the late falling shadows.

The invention of the movable letter printing press in 1434 meant that printing a larger quantity of the same book finally become a reality. This great moment marked the true beginning of the democratization of knowledge, allowing the Bible and other works by the greatest minds of past eras to be published. This ancient medium, which had suddenly become relatively low-cost, now offered everyone access to written concepts dealing with spiritual, scientific, philosophical, and historical matters. Up until that point, this information had only been transmitted orally and was generally inaccessible to most people. Printing also gave way to the birth of more structured education throughout the world and is the basis for contemporary civilization's systems of education.

**The book:** an object without which humanity would probably not deserve its name, without which our long winter evenings and short summer holidays would not be the same, without which our studies, individual interests, and professional lives would unfold far differently, and without which you would not be a member of our library – which, obviously, would not exist either.

I urge you to give books the place they deserve and give them your utmost respect and friendship because, after all, they are what make us human!

**Let us treat books as our friends.**

Thank you for your cooperation with this timeless project.

Your library team.