MINOTAUR

By Kevin Dyer
Co-World Premiere with Polka Theatre (England) and Clwyd Theatr Cymru Theatre for Young People (Wales)
Directed by Alan Dilworth

Study Guide

WITTEN BY AMBER EBERT
DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY JAN BORKOWSKI | SEASON DESIGN BY KEY GORDON
Theatre is a Two-Way Exchange

We’re so glad you’re coming to visit us here at the theatre. We want you to feel safe and welcome whenever you come to YPT. Whether you’ve come to the theatre before or this is your first time at YPT, this guide will help prepare you for your visit.

DISCUSS WITH YOUR CLASS THE ROLE OF AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

You play a vital part in the success of a theatrical performance. In the way that the actors have a responsibility to the audience, as audience members, you have a responsibility to each other and to the actors on stage.

Actors are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. We want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theatre. At the same time, please remember to be considerate. Talking, whispering and excessive movement during a live performance is distracting for the actors and disruptive for other audience members.

Watching a play can often make you think about things in a new way. The Q&A after the show is the perfect time for you to ask questions you might have. As you watch the play, prepare one question to ask the actors.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER IN THE THEATRE

Within the theatre, electronic devices are not permitted, as they affect our sound system. Photography, audio and video recording during a performance are prohibited by the Canadian Theatre Agreement. This is important, as it ensures the protection of the work of the artists.

We ask that you enjoy any food, drinks, candy and gum before entering the theatre. YPT is a nut-free zone, as many people have severe, life-threatening allergies, so no peanuts or nut products are permitted in the theatre.

THINKING ABOUT THE WHOLE PRODUCTION

During the show, look at different aspects of the production together. Before the show, identify tasks for your class. For instance, have one group focusing on the set, another listening for the music and sound effects, a third watching the lighting and a fourth, the costumes. Compare notes after the show about what you observe. You will be more informed and you’ll be surprised by how much you noticed.

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COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT: STUDENTS TAKE ON MINOTAUR

We’re so glad you’re coming to visit us here at the theatre. We want you to feel safe and welcome whenever you come to YPT. Whether you’ve come to the theatre before or this is your first time at YPT, this guide will help prepare you for your visit.
The Study Guide

THEMATIC OVERVIEW

Just as our 2013/2014 season focuses on the resourcefulness of youth, Minotaur invites young people to consider personal responsibility and sacrifice. The Minotaur explores these in relation to conflict resolution and tactics to use when establishing new behavior patterns with family and community. Created for junior and intermediate students, the exercises in this guide encourage critical thinking about the themes explored in Minotaur and will allow them to evaluate their own notions of destiny, free will, sacrifice and responsibility.

The pre-show unit provides students with resources to help them learn about myth and the importance of myths in ancient civilizations. They will also discuss the concept of time and how the passing of time is depicted in a theatrical setting. The post-show unit uses scenarios from the performance for students to explore the notion of conflict and will encourage students to create strategies for conflict resolution.

Strands and Curriculum Connections

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:
- The Arts
- Language
- Social Sciences
- History

CHARACTER EDUCATION CONNECTIONS:
- Responsibility
- Perseverance
- Kindness and Caring
- Integrity

THEMES:
- Destiny
- Free Will
- Sacrifice and Responsibility

The Company

THE CAST
Mom/Aethra
Raven Dauda
Jakob Ehman
Cyrus Lane
Karen Robinson
Jeffrey Wetsch
Bahareh Yarahgi

Freddie/Theseus
Ogre, Periphites, Pig, Nephew 29, Minotaur, Man Pasiphae

Dad/Aegeus, Sinis, Pig, Minos
Ariadne/Gypsy Queen

CREATIVE TEAM
Playwright
Kevin Dyer
Alan Dilworth
Jung-Hye Kim
Robin Fisher
Kimberly Purtell
Debashis Sinha
Stephen Colella
Thomas Morgan Jones
Simon Fon
Marinda de Beer
Ashley Ireland

Synopsis

Freddie, a 12 year-old boy, receives urgent, cryptic text messages from his soldier Dad. While he attempts to decipher these messages, an Ogre and the Queen of Minos appear in his backyard, dragging him into the past in the role of Theseus, whose destiny was to slay the Minotaur and save his father, King Aegeus. Freddie accepts the quest believing it is the only way he can help his Dad, who is trapped in a foreign war with no way out.

Glossary

All definitions are derived from the Oxford English Dictionary.

Artifact - a simple object (such as a tool or weapon) that was made by people in the past
Conflict - a strong disagreement between people, groups, etc., that result in often angry argument
Destiny - a power that is believed to control what happens in the future
Fear - an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous or likely to cause pain

Free Will - freedom of humans to make choices that are not determined by prior causes or by divine intervention
Myth - a story that was told in an ancient culture to explain a practice, belief, or natural occurrence, an idea or story that is believed by many people but that is not true
Minotaur Study Guide

Director’s Note from Alan Dilworth

“We play at the meaning of life by creating different stories.”
“Myths provide personal identity, ground our sense of community, undergird our moral values, and point to the inscrutable mystery of creation. We cannot outgrow myth because we cannot outgrow our need for stories that offer these.”
- David R. Loy, *The World is Made of Stories*

What is your most important story? Where does it come from? Did you write that story or did someone write it for you? How does that story make you feel? Strong? Weak? Trapped? Free? Scared? Safe? Can a story help us to know who we are? Can you choose your own story? Can you change your story?

How do stories help us grow? When do we need stories the most? At these times what are stories doing for us? Are there stories you have outgrown? What was it like to leave a story behind for a new story?

What makes a story true? Are facts more true than myths? How are myths true? How do we live with both facts and myths?

What do stories tell us about our relationship with other people? What does your most important story tell you about your relationship to other people? Does your most important story make you feel closer or further away from other people? Does your story fill you with love or fear?

What story do you want to be your most important story?

Units Of Study

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

The Arts
In relation to the Arts Curriculum, students will:
- Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on exploring drama structures, key ideas, and pivotal moments in their own stories and stories from diverse communities, times, and places.
- Express personal responses and make connections to characters, themes, and issues presented in their own and others’ drama works.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the element of role by selectively using some other elements of drama (e.g., time and place, relationship) to build belief in a role and establish its dramatic context.

Language
In relation to the Language Curriculum, students will:
- Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning.
- Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;
- Identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.

Social Studies & History
In relation to the Social Studies & History Curriculum, students will:
- Compare key aspects of life in a few early societies (3000 BCE-1500 CE), each from a different region and era and representing a different culture, and describe some key similarities and differences between these early societies and present-day Canadian society.
- Demonstrate an understanding of key aspects of a few early societies (3000 BCE-1500 CE), each from a different region and era and representing a different culture, with reference to their political and social organization, daily life, and relationships with the environment and with each other.
Pre-Show Questions

- What is destiny? Do you believe in destiny?
- What is a myth? Are myths true stories?
- What can we learn from myths?
- How do myths change over time?
- What is a hero? Who can be a hero?

Pre-Show Exercises

PRE-SHOW EXERCISE: #1 INTRO TO THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR MYTH

Objective:
In this exercise, students will learn about the characteristics of myths, specifically focusing on the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Students will come to understand how myths reflect the beliefs of a civilization.

Materials:
- Appendix A: Theseus and the Minotaur & Greek History
- Access to the internet

Directions:
1. As a class, come up with a definition of a myth. What are some myths that they already know? What is the purpose of telling myths? Why do you think myths from ancient Greece are still told today?
2. Ask the class what they know about the Theseus and the Minotaur myth. If there is time, allow students to research the myth.
3. Split the students into small groups and, based on the students research, have them pick 4 main plot points of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur.
4. Next, have the students create 4 tableaus to depict their chosen plot points.

Potential Plot Points:
- Theseus moves the rock.
- Theseus defeats the thieves on the road to Athens.
- Theseus learns about the Minotaur.
- Theseus volunteers to go into the Labyrinth to save the other children.

Qualities of a Myth:
Myths help explain how a group of people developed a particular social system with its many customs and ways of life. They help us to understand the feelings and values that bind members of society into one group. When we compare myths of various cultures, we discover how these cultures differ and how they resemble one another. Myths help explain why people behave as they do. Most myths express the religious beliefs of a group of people and usually are of unknown origin.

Common Characteristics of Myths:
1. Events were explained in terms of stories about gods, goddesses and heroes. For example: people in ancient Greece had a story to explain evil and trouble, - Pandora’s Box.
2. Religious life and beliefs were explained through myths which were sacred and contained some truths. For example, the story of Ra, the Sun God (Egyptian beliefs).
3. Divinities with supernatural powers were part of the myths. These characters were greater than any human being but were guided by human emotions. For example, stories about Zeus (Greek and Roman beliefs) and his interference in the lives of mortals.

Debriefing Questions:
- Is there anything more that you would like to know about Theseus?
- How do you think this story will be adapted in the Minotaur production that you are going to see at YPT?
- How does the method of telling a story change how we interpret the story? Is it easier to imagine different worlds when we are alone or when we are in a group? Explain why.
**PRE-SHOW EXERCISE #2: A TEST...**

**Objective:**
Students are introduced to the idea of a test of character and will work together to create and perform scenarios that demonstrate tests of character or a quest.

**Materials:**
- Space in which to move

**Directions:**
1. Ask the students to define a test of character. Is a test of character the same as a quest? In what type of stories do we see tests of character?
2. Explain that in the play, Freddie undergoes several tests of character before he makes the ultimate decision to sacrifice himself try to kill the Minotaur.
3. Split the class into groups of two.

**Debriefing Questions:**
- What did you like more: making up the tests or acting out the tests?
- What did it feel like to have someone act out your every suggestion?
- How did you choose your actions when acting out the suggestions?

**PRE-SHOW CULMINATING EXERCISE #1A: EXPLORING TIME & PLACE**

**Objective:**
Students will think about the concept of time and space and ways that time and space are depicted in a play using character, costumes and set.

**Materials:**
- Space in which to move
- Writing utensils
- Large pieces of paper, chalkboard or whiteboard
- Access to the internet or research materials

**Directions:**
1. As a group have students brainstorm about what they know about time. Write the students’ ideas on a large piece of paper.
2. Alternatively, students could work in small groups, writing their ideas on one piece of paper or web chart.
3. Explain and/or remind students of the concepts of Past, Present, and Future in connection with discussing time.
4. Split the students up into three groups (one group for the past, one group for the present, and one group for the future) and have them create tableaus and/or improvised scenes.
PRE-SHOW CULMINATING EXERCISE #1B: EXPLORING TIME & PLACE

1. **Objective:**
   Read the following line of text to the students. Explain that this line was written by *Minotaur* playwright Kevin Dyer and appears as a setting note within the *Minotaur* script:

   "The play takes place now... and a long time ago; in this place... and in that other place."

2. As a class, discuss what this line could mean. How does this sentence affect the student's expectations of the play?
3. As a class, come up with ideas of ways to depict present day as a setting in a play as well as ways to depict 'a long time ago' as a setting in a play. Define what 'a long time ago' could mean (i.e. Ancient Greece).
4. Divide the room into two sides, and have the students pretend there is a giant, glass wall dividing them. Assign students on each side a specific ‘place’ and time (i.e. Ancient Greece, present day Canada).
5. Give the students scenarios and see how the different ‘time periods’ react to it or improvise a scene.

   **Potential Scenarios:**
   - Waking up on your birthday
   - Going to school
   - Playing your game
   - Dinner time

**Debriefing Questions**
- How to we depict time and place in a play?
- How do you think that YPT’s production will use lights, sets and costumes to depict time and place?
- How would you depict time travel on stage?

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**Post-Show Questions**

- What is conflict? What does conflict look like? What does conflict sound like?
- Is all conflict negative?
- Why did Theseus choose to kill the Minotaur?
- What does sacrifice mean?
- What was the Minotaur’s greatest power? How did the Minotaur control the people in the maze?
- How did Ariadne and Theseus’s relationship change history?

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**Post-Show Exercises**

**POST SHOW EXERCISE #1: MAZE (A VARIATION OF STREETS AND ALLEYS)**

**Objective:**
This warm up game is a physical exercise which will get the students moving, while engaging in team work and imaginative play.

**Materials:**
- Large space in which to move

**Directions:**
1. Ask for two volunteers, ‘a runner’ and ‘a chaser.’
2. Ask the rest of the students to stand in parallel lines of six to eight students, an arm’s length apart. Arrange the lines one behind the other to try to make a square.
3. Tell the students to hold the hands or wrist of the students beside them. This will leave aisles between the rows, creating the first position of the maze.
4. The runner and the chaser will start at opposite ends of the maze, and may only run through the aisles. The object of the game is for the chaser to tag the runner on the shoulder.
5. Explain to the students who are making the walls of the maze that when you indicate (either by clapping or ringing a bell) they need to quickly turn on the spot a quarter turn to their right. This will create aisles running the opposite direction from the original maze. This brings about a change of direction in the aisles and requires a change of direction in the course of the two who are running.
6. Once a runner is caught, they become the chaser and a new student steps in as the runner.
7. Play a few rounds of tag until the students feel confident with the rules and movements of the game.
8. Now talk to the students about how the maze was portrayed in the production. How was the maze created on stage? What was the atmosphere of the maze? What did the Minotaur make people see in the maze? How did the Minotaur use the maze to make people afraid?
9. Ask the students how they can work together to create an atmosphere for their maze. See what type of maze the class can make together (i.e. scary, silly, sad, crazy).
10. Once the class picks an atmosphere for the maze, create characters for ‘the runner’ and ‘the chaser’. (i.e. if students choose to create a silly maze, who would a person running through a silly maze be? Who would be the chaser in a silly maze?).
11. Play this exercise through a few times, creating a different atmosphere.
POST-SHOW EXERCISE #2: DEFINING CONFLICT

Objective:
Students will learn about the nature of conflict by examining, identifying and defining various types of conflict.

Materials:
• Appendix B: Types of Conflict

Directions:
1. As a class, discuss what conflict is. Ask students to use some examples of conflict that they saw in Minotaur. Based upon the answers from the students, the class attempts to formulate some kind of working definition of conflict.

   Teacher Prompt:
   • Why does conflict happen?
   • Are all conflicts bad or harmful?
   • Are all conflicts the same?
   • What are the different types of conflict?

2. Divide students into seven groups.
3. Using Appendix B: Types of Conflict, assign a type of conflict (Argument, Debate, Protest, Strike, Riot, Rebellion, War) to each group.
4. Ask the groups to define their word. If there is time, allow students to use resources to obtain an official definition.
5. Tell the groups to create a scenario using all of the members of the group to demonstrate their word to the entire class.

   Teacher Prompt:
   Remind students that conflicts have varying degrees of intensity and appear in a variety of form (i.e. verbal, intimidation strategies, physical)
   Ask students to think about integrating different forms of conflict into their scenario.

Debriefing Questions:
• How does conflict affect change? What are some changes that we saw in Minotaur?
• How does a conflict escalate (i.e. an argument escalating into riot)?
• Why do we engage or become involved in a conflict?
• How do conflicts end?

POST-SHOW CULMINATING EXERCISE: ONE STORY, TWO SIDES

Objective:
Using scenarios from Minotaur, students will engage in the opposing sides of a conflict.

Materials:
• Notebook or journal
• Writing utensils

Minos: Murder is the seed that lives a thousand years. One killing grows into a forest of revenge

Ariadane: I was taught to hate you from the day that I was born.

Ariadane: There is a wall a thousand years high and a thousand miles thick between us. But when you had the chance to hit me and you didn’t, you took one stone out of the wall. When you came here to save another man’s son, you removed another.

Freddie: And so it goes on forever? You kill us - so our people kill you - and then your people kill our people - and our people come back for them, forever and ever till the end of the world. Someone has to stop.
Directions:
1. Ask the class to define the original conflict in the play. Who was involved in this conflict (i.e. Aegeus, Minos, the people of Athens)?
2. What changed after this conflict? Who was the most affected by the changes?
3. Have the students write a short monologue/diary entry from the perspective of a character of their choice - Theseus, Aegeus, Minos, Pasiphae, or Ariadne about the original conflict of the production.
4. Ask the students to write-in-role how their character feels about the situation they are in. Are they for or against what is happening?
5. Ask students to explain how the conflict escalated.
6. If they could go back to change history, what moment would they change?
7. Read out loud, compare similar arguments and discuss.

Debrief questions:
Did you learn anything new about the characters in the play?
Was their any ideas/opinions expressed by fellow students that surprised you?
How did Freddie’s actions in the play that ultimately made the cycle of conflict end?

Reviewing a Play
JON KAPLAN’S INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT REVIEWERS

Theatre is, for me, an art form that tells me something about myself or gets me thinking about the world in which I live.

Whether going to the theatre as a reviewer or simply an audience member, I think that watching a play is an emotional experience and not just an intellectual one. I always let a show wash over me, letting it touch my feelings, and only later, after the show, do I try to analyze those feelings.

That’s when I start to think about some of the basic questions you ask when you’re writing a review - what did I see (story, characters, themes); how did I respond to what I saw; what parts of the production (script, performances, direction, design and possibly other elements) made me feel and think what I did; why was I supposed to respond in that fashion?

When you go to the theatre to review, take a few notes during a show if you feel comfortable doing so, but don’t spend your time writing the review during the show; you’ll miss what’s happening onstage.

Writing a review doesn’t mean providing a plot summary. That’s only part of the job; you have to discuss your reaction to what you saw and try to explore some of the reasons for that reaction.

I don’t believe that there’s any such thing as a totally objective piece of criticism. We are all individuals, bringing our own backgrounds, experiences and beliefs to a production. In some fashion, every one of us sitting in the theatre is a critic, no matter whether we’re writing a review or not; we all react to and form judgments about what we see on the stage.

When I go to a production, I always keep in mind that the people involved in putting it on have worked long and hard - weeks, months, sometimes years - getting it onto the stage. Even if I have problems with the result, it’s important to respect the efforts that went into the show.

Jon Kaplan is senior theatre writer at NOW Magazine, where he’s worked for the past 33 years.
Minotaur by Kevin Dyer is based on an ancient Greek Myth. The myth of Theseus defeating the Minotaur has been around for centuries. Since ancient Greek myths were passed down through oral tradition, many variations of this and other myths exist. According to an Athenian version of the legend, Minos, King of Crete, attacked Athens after his son was killed there. The Athenians asked for terms as a way to stop the attack. The agreement that was made between King Minos and King Aegeus required the people of Athens to sacrifice seven young men and seven maidens every seven or nine years to the Minotaur. One year, the sacrificial party included Theseus, the son of King Aegeus, who volunteered to come and kill the Minotaur. Ariadne fell in love with Theseus at first sight. She helped Theseus by giving him a sword to kill the Minotaur and a ball of thread, so that he could find his way out of the labyrinth. On returning to Athens, Theseus forgot to replace the ship’s black sail, signaling defeat with a white one signaling his victory, and Aegeus threw himself from the Acropolis of Athens in grief.

Theseus is considered a hero of ancient Greek legends. Along with slaying the Minotaur, there are many stories that tell of his bravery and strength.

**Appendix B**

**TYPES OF CONFLICT**

**Argument**
A heated discussion in which opposing viewpoints are expressed; a struggle to express one’s personal opinion

**Debate**
A verbal dispute about an issue; an organized contest in which two opposing teams discuss opposing sides of an issue

**Protest**
A public display of disapproval, a formal declaration of disapproval by a group or organization

**Strike**
Temporary work stoppage to protest working conditions

**Riot**
A wild, sometimes violent public disorder caused by group or crowd of persons in protest against another group or government

**Rebellion**
An organized and armed resistance to the established government or rule; an attempt to change the balance of power; an uprising

**War**
A conflict carried on by forces of arms; a series of battles; prolonged fighting
Sources & Resources

THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY RECOMMENDS...

The Toronto Public Library created these supplemental reading lists to help our audience connect with and explore more deeply the themes and ideas found within each of our 2013-2014 season productions. Click on the titles below to link to the Toronto Public Library website. Happy reading!

Island of the Minotaur: Greek Myths of Ancient Crete
Sheeldon Oberman

Rick Riordan

Percy Jackson & the Olympians: the Lightning Thief= Percy Jackson et les Olympiens: le voleur de foudre.
20th C. Fox, c. 2010. DVD. (118 min.)

Off to War: Voices of Soldiers’ Children
Deborah Ellis
Groundwood, c. 2008.

The Odyssey: A Graphic Novel
Gareth Hinds
Candlewick, c. 2010.

The Unfinished Angel
Sharon Creech

RESOURCES

10 facts about the Ancient Greeks
http://www.nskids.co.uk/did-you-know/10-facts-about-the-Ancient-Greeks

Activity Village: Ancient Greece
http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/ancient-greece

BBC- Primary History: Ancient Greece
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/ancient_greeks/

Conflict and Change Curriculum Connected Exercises
http://orgs.educ.queensu.ca/curr/Conflict.pdf

Polka Theatre
http://www.polka theatre.com/

Theseus and the Minotaur Myth
http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/theseus/a/102110-Theseus-And-The-Minotaur.htm

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT: STUDENTS TAKE ON MINOTAUR

“In this place... and in that other place.”
– Kevin Dyer, Minotaur

YPT and Polka Theatre are fostering collaborative research between two sets of young people, here in Toronto and there in Wimbledon, in connection with the co-world premiere of this new play. At YPT, we are working with the Grade 5/6 class at Down-town Alternative School, one of our most engaged Member Schools. At Polka, they are working with the Young Voices Panel - a diverse group of young people ages 8-13 who meet regularly to share their views and opinions on theatre and, in particular, on how Polka Theatre is run.

These students have each undertaken their own projects of inquiry, based on these respective productions. Through tours of the theatre, in-class research, rehearsal visits and interviews with members of staff - and with Minotaur as their case study - they examine and share their findings on the process of theatre-making.

You can follow their international research adventure here as they explore everything from how a director prepares for rehearsal to how costumes help to tell the story to the reasons why the playwright decided to adapt this ancient myth in the first place.

For more information the Member Schools program please contact:
Lois Adamson, Educational Services Coordinator
ladamson@youngpeoplestheatre.ca
YOUNG PEOPLE’S THEATRE

(YPT) is the oldest continuously operating theatre company in Toronto and is a national producer and presenter of theatre for young audiences. Over the past 48 years many of the important pieces that form the canon of plays for young audiences in Canada have appeared on our stages. We continue to develop new work and create partnerships with theatre companies across the country and around the world.

Learning is at the centre of everything we do. When young people come to our theatre, we hope that they will be entertained – but not just by a pleasant, fleeting distraction. We want them to be imprinted with so powerful an experience that it expands their capacity to learn. When young people are immersed in the imaginary world of a play, the experience isn’t less important to them because it isn’t real. Children make imagined experience real experience.

Through the professional theatrical work produced on our stages, and through the enriched learning experiences we offer with our Education & Participation programs, YPT provides young people with ways to develop their whole being. This is central to YPT’s artistic policy. We want to have a positive and lasting impact on the emotional, social, and intellectual development of young people – in order for them to grow into the unique and wonderful people they were born to be.

Allen MacInnis
Artistic Director
Subsidized Programs for Schools

YPT offers subsidized tickets to qualifying schools through our Community Connections programming. It is only with the generous support of our donors that this program is made possible.

Thank you!

YPT is grateful for the outstanding and generous support provided by our government partners who collectively contribute over $1.1 million annually, representing 34% of YPT’s annual revenues.

MAJOR PARTNERS

The Slaight Family
Supporting YPT’s creative excellence through the Resident Artist Educators Program and ensuring equal access to YPT programs for all children and youth throughout the GTA.

Industrial Alliance & IA Clarington Investments
Lead Program Partner Accessibility

Tippet Foundation
Lead Partner Scarborough Youth Initiative

Industrial Alliance & IA Clarington Investments
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