



- NRK



Aftenposten jr.

THE DARK FOOTPRINTS

by Frode Gjerløw and Håkon Dalsbø

SHOW PACK



A MAJOR EVENT IN NORWEGIAN THEATRE



- Periskop

NOT AN OFFICIAL MINECRAFT EXPERIENCE



“ It *is* possible to make theatre that marries gaming and acting.
“The Dark Fortress is most likely this springs’ most impactful and most
thrilling theatrical adventure.”

- NRK



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do not hesitate to contact

Songbird Agency

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INTRODUCTION

The Dark Fortress is an irreverent and spectacular family show for tweens, where the story is played out in a live theatre, and live in Minecraft. In a playful, thrilling and innovative way, it speaks of friendship, family and how opening up about difficult things can help you grow more resilient.

12-year old Minecraft gamer, Alfie, discovers a dark fortress in a Minecraft realm. In the fortress, friends become enemies, and it's up to Alfie and his new friend Marah to figure out exactly who is building the fortress and how to lift its curse.

After winning a biannual pitch competition at Riksteatret (The National Touring Theatre of Norway), the idea for the show was commissioned as a co-production between three Norwegian theatres: Riksteatret, Teatret Vårt and Hålogaland Teater.

Press night on February 23rd, 2024, launched its 75-show tour around the southern half of Norway. In the spring of '25, it tours the northern regions of Norway.

Upon its opening the show garnered great reviews from Norway's leading theatre critics. (all review quotes in this show pack are from nationwide, edited publications.) Most importantly: tween audiences are riveted, and parents and children are bonding on whole new level, as their worlds collide and merge in their shared experience of this brand new play.

We hope this show pack is an inspiring taster of the action, heart and thrill of this ambitious project.

From the creators

We wanted to write a family show for those who don't normally go to the theatre. In Norway, tweens are a very difficult audience to reach. They are constantly busy, they spend most of their free time online, and they're "in the age of not believing."

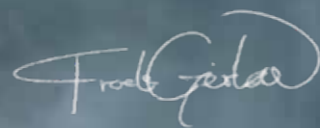
We asked ourselves: how can we as theatre makers, make the leap to where *they* are?

We knew that tweens have a lot of shared life experience within Minecraft, and decided to explore the game for ourselves. Neither of us are gamers, but we were instantly hooked. Minecraft is a truly beautiful game, literally unlike any other. Less game and more platform for creativity - where you create your own adventure. So we decided to use this platform as our stage.

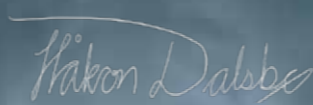
We are incredibly proud to present this unusual production. Seeing the faces of kids between 6-13 (!) at the edge of their seats the whole way through the show, reminds us of all the reasons why we started making theatre in the first place.

We hope to hear from you and welcome any questions you may have. We are keen to collaborate and see this show reach its full artistic potential wherever it plays.

Thank you!



Frode Gjerløw



Håkon Dalsbø



“Thematically, the show is spot-on for 10-12 year-olds, and it is central that the struggles in “Minecraft” take place live, played by children during the performance. This adds a layer to what the gaming world represents, and shows respect for the importance of what children are actually interested in.”

- NRK

“It’s fascinating how the playwrights handle the two layers. The narrative is not that Alfie needs to cut down on his gaming to face his real life challenges. On the contrary: what happens in the game is intrinsically linked to his reality.”

- Periskop



“the show gives adults in the audience food for thought: in order to truly reach children, we have to share in their interests.”

Here, it is not the care workers but his peers and Minecraft that helps the main character move on in life in a constructive way.

- Vårt Land

STORY

"The Dark Fortress - a Minecraft Adventure" tells the story of 12-year old Minecraft gamer, Alfie. This summer he is staying with his 20 year old brother, Chris. Child services have helped arrange the move, as their mother is psychologically abusive, absent and neglectful.

At the local fairground he encounters a girl called Marah. Staying at a summer camp nearby, she grants him access to their Minecraft realm, but when he tries to build his house in their village, Alfie falls out with the other kids.

When he runs away, he stumbles upon an enormous fortress, unlike anything he's seen before.

"The Dark Fortress - Where friends become foes."

Inside the fortress are mazes, caverns and most importantly: chests that contain his worst memories - all the things he keeps hidden from the light of day.

When he tells Marah about the fortress, she is keen to find out who builds it and why *friends become foes*. She brings the others along on a raid. "Maybe there are chests in there!" Alfie follows them inside, but they turn on him, trying to kill him! When they start opening chests around the fortress, Alfie sends an army of monsters to stop them.

He then discovers a great hall, where the other children are trapped in mysterious glass fixtures.

Marah visits Alfie at home, to say goodbye. They almost part on bad terms, when Alfie accuses her of lying about what happened in the fortress. Just when she is about to leave, Alfie manages to find a way to speak to her and they both open up about things that trouble them.

Suddenly, Child Services are at the door. It's Alfie's birthday, and they had agreed that his mother would be allowed one visit - that day. Marah leaves. Alfie feels pressured - he can see his mother through the window and is not convinced she is ready to care for him. He runs away.

He runs to the fairground to hide. In this lonely moment he enters the Minecraft realm and lets Marah out of her glass cage.

As they explore the fortress further, they find every house Alfie has ever lived in. Memories from his past emerge, and he shares a secret - it was him who reported his mother to the Child Services.

Alfie realises that it is in fact himself who is building the fortress, and alongside Marah he confronts A*L/F/I^E, a menacing avatar that has been chasing Alfie in his dreams throughout the play.

To avoid the curse, Marah leads the other children through the underworld, Nether, and help Alfie defeat his inner demon once and for all.

Once his nemesis is destroyed, Alfie finally feels ready to talk to his mother. A new peace is found, and a new future is dawning for our Alfie.

The Dark Fortress is a rare plant in the Norwegian theatre flora... it achieves something monumental – to talk about feelings on the childrens' own server.

– Periskop





HOW IT WORKS

On stage, four actors inhabit the characters of the real-life story. On stage with them, six “stage gamers” aged 11-13, play the characters in Minecraft. (Their gamemaster is faintly visible in this photo.) They are welcomed to the theatre 90 minutes prior to the show, and the gamemaster takes them through a LAN workshop where they learn about the story and practice their commands.

The person who plays the main character, Alfie, is actually the only person that never plays Minecraft in the show. When he’s not in dialogue or doing parkour around the set, he pretends to play while watching the Minecraft action on a monitor tablet. The three other actors take turns playing Minecraft on two computers on the side stage during the action.

The Minecraft players are lit and visible throughout the show. This, along with an announcement at the very beginning, serves to remind audiences that nothing they see during the show is pre-recorded. Everything is live.

Otherwise it wouldn’t be theatre!



On stage: The framed picture of the two brothers bounces off the shelf by itself and shatters on the floor!

On screen: Alfie approaches a new chest, opens it the same way he did the last one.

*V.O. MUM:
What's wrong with you, Alfie? Do you know what? When you get angry, you look just like your dad.*

On stage: The Child Care file is thrust to the floor, and the sheets go everywhere. Alfie throws away his tablet in disbelief.

Enter Chris.

CHRIS
Woah - what happened here?

ALFIE
Nothing. I didn't do anything.

Chris picks up their broken picture.

CHRIS
You clearly did, though. What's wrong with you?

Alfie gets out of bed and paces around the room.

ALFIE
You sound just like mum.

CHRIS
I do not. You're not allowed to say that. Take it back.

ALFIE
You don't get to tell me what to do!

Alfie starts punching Chris, and they wrestle each other until Chris manages to hold Alfie still.

CHRIS
I have to tell you what to do, Alfie! I have to! Cause I'm the one who looks after you! I don't want to! I really don't! But I have to! Cause no one else will.

SCENE 7

(excerpt)

Original Production Credits

Written by: Frode Gjerløw & Håkon Dalsbø

Directed by: Frode Gjerløw

Co-director: Håkon Dalsbø

Dramaturge: Mariken Lauvstad

Set and costume: Gjermund Andresen

Light design: Elisabeth Nilsson

Music: Raymond Enoksen

Sound design: Morten H. Serigstad

Original cast

Arjan Nilsen

Jonas Lihaug Fredriksen

Albertine Lundgren

Siren Jørgensen

Minecraft builds by:

Skogliv.no

Co-produced by:

Riksteatret (National Touring Theatre of Norway)

Teatret Vårt (Molde)

Hålogaland Teater (Tromsø)

Producer: Wenche Viktorsdatter Paulsen

From Skogliv

When Frode Gjerløw and Håkon Dalsbø contacted us, with three years until opening night, and said that it was kind of urgent, we had no idea what to expect other than something out of the ordinary. So we had to say yes. We are happy we did, because the result is extraordinary.

For those who don't know who we are: Skogliv.no is Norway's biggest Minecraft community. Since 2018, over 50.000 players have visited in addition to those who have helped build on major projects.

We are committed to creating and holding a safe space online for social inclusion, creativity and play, with a zero tolerance for discrimination or ill intent.

In addition to monitoring and maintaining the server itself, our creative team has worked with the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, with NRK (Norwegian BBC) and several major production companies for commercial content. But we've never done anything at the level of ambition and creativity that this show requires.

Our builders have spent more than 4 months working thousands of hours to construct the architecture described in the script. The act of building is a fundamental element to the creativity that people unleash in the game, so we appreciate how buildings themselves are being used to tell the story and reveal (and conceal) information about the main character.

It has been a joy and an honour to work on this production. We are proud of this heartfelt coming-of-age story told through live Minecraft gameplay AND live theatre and we are excited for its future.

Tarjei Mo Batalden

SCENE 16

(excerpt)

MUM

Is that why you called them?

ALFIE

Yes. Did you know about that?

MUM

I got there in the end. You were always more keen to live at your brother's.

ALFIE

I wasn't "keen". I had to.

MUM

What are you keen on then?

ALFIE

No surprises. Just change.

MUM

I'm afraid that's a promise I wouldn't be able to keep. I don't think you fully realise what I'm dealing with.

ALFIE

And you don't realise what I'm dealing with either.

CHRIS

Are you working it out then?

ALFIE

No.

MUM

A little.

MARAH

Are you able to look her straight in the eye and tell her exactly what's on your mind?

ALFIE

Yes. I am now. Almost.

MARAH

Does it help?

ALFIE

She's brought a present.

MARAH

Don't you want to open it?

ALFIE

I don't know what she's after.

MUM

Just want to give you this.

ALFIE

What is it?

MARAH

It's just... I'm gonna miss you.

ALFIE

Can't you come back next year?

MUM

But that's ages away, Alfie. I was hoping we could try and start over, like, now. This autumn.

ALFIE

This autumn?

CHRIS

Yes. I'm going to uni, remember?

ALFIE

I'm gonna miss you.

MUM

Open it, silly.

MARAH

Tell me what it is, before I go.

Alfie removes the wrapping, uncovering an avocado plant.

ALFIE

An avocado-plant! It takes 60 days for an avocado plant to grow this big. It's only if you really care for it that it will grow this tall and strong.

MARAH

People can change.

CHRIS

You've changed.

MUM

I'm trying to change.

CHRIS

Everything changes. All the time.

THE END

TECH SPECS

3 systems for gaming

Pre-show workshop rack (in separate room)

1 x computer with a good graphics card.
This is a backup computer for audience POV (Alfie)
This computer also runs the Minecraft server in workshop mode.
Requires a good keyboard and mouse.
1 x router.
Teltonika RUT 951, which provides the wifi for the workshop tablets.
This is used to connect the system to the internet and to activate the game.
6 x android tablets (additional to the ones on stage), connected to wifi.
These are used pre-show by the stage gamers.
Logged in with the same xbox accounts in Minecraft and can be used as backup-units in case of technical problems mid-show.

Actor's system (off-stage, in the wings)

1 x computer with a good graphics card.
This controls the POV of Vegard which is what the audience sees.
Requires a good keyboard and mouse.
1x computer (basic), capable of running Java Minecraft.
This controls the AALLFFIIEE avatar that we see in the game (ask for the script for more details)
Requires a good keyboard and mouse.
1 x HDMI to SDI converter.
3 x SDIs: small monitor for gamemaster, fake tablet (monitor for actor) onstage, and a qlab-computer.
1 x network router.
We used Teltonika EUT951, with 4G, wifi and 4 ethernet ports.
To activate the game, this brings our system online.
1 x network cable.
This connects the actor's rack and the gamemaster system.

Gamemaster's system (upstage)

1 x Box on floor containing charger for tablets, and 1 x ethernet switch.
1 x laptop for gamemaster (runs the Minecraft server, and controls Marah's avatar.)
1 x Streamdeck for simplified work flow.
6 x android tablets, connected to ethernet and power via adapter. These are used by the stage gamers.
Stage gamers are logged in with the same xbox Minecraft accounts for both the performance and the workshop.

RIGHTS

Artistic

The script, its title and all its contents are the intellectual property of Håkon Dalsbø and Frode Gjerløw. Rights to perform it are available upon agreement. The stageing, music and design of the original production are also available for replica use upon agreement. This can be arranged in dialogue with the agency and the creative team upon request.

Minecraft Copyright

Most importantly, The Dark Fortress story is not *about* Minecraft. It does not purport to be a part of the Minecraft franchise, neither does the story extrapolate on the Minecraft universe.

We do however, display Minecraft gameplay in the show, and the action takes place both in Minecraft and on stage. All buildings in Minecraft are original artworks created for this specific show, and we have written no lore based on the existing Minecraft lore.

We have made sure to stay well within the guidelines on Mojangs website (last read 17/03/2024), including our clearly stating - on all marketing material: "not an official Minecraft performance". When in contact with Mojang we have simply been referred to their copyright guidelines.

The show is not a licensed Minecraft project. Any of our concerns about copyright have been cleared by our legal advisors, and we welcome any dialogue with Mojang in the future.

Anyone producing this or any other show that takes place in Minecraft can familiarize themselves with Mojang guidelines here:

<https://www.minecraft.net/en-us/usage-guidelines>



Commissioned and originally produced by

TE
ATRE
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TEATER

original idea developed in residence at

UNGEVIKENTEATER

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