

Upon the first read of *Gloria*, it was incredibly easy to focus on the final moment of act one. It is the most dramatic conflict within the work, and today's media bombards audiences with similar events. Upon the second read, I recognized that the incident in the play distracts you from the humanity of the characters. The playwright purposefully writes in a way that the incident overshadows the lives, reflecting real world mass media.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins intimately reflects the mundane, showing the world as we live it. The characters live in reality, one deeply rooted in our own. They echo our own sense of ambition, for something greater. They work unglamorous careers in hopes of one day achieving their own sense of glory, and that is intrinsically human.

The incident of the play disrupts the mundane world of the play, upsetting its routine. The characters are suddenly elevated in position and now have a deeply tragic story, subsequently gaining value in society. Paraded by various mass media outlets and wrestling with self-image, *Gloria* shows just how twisted one's own self-worth becomes when they are boiled down to just their trauma. Instead of battling each other for a promotion, the characters now battle each other to have the most viral version of their shared tragedy in media, print or digital.

*Gloria* offers up the event as a reason for each character's life to have meaning, subsequently stripped of any other value. Forced to relive their most harrowing experience, delivered up on a platter, the characters are never allowed to reconcile with their own trauma, as it no longer belongs to them. This play reinforces that surviving is its own glory. However, in offering up your suffering, you no longer control how that suffering is resolved.

*Gloria* is a story of how society values trauma more than the lives it affects. It scrutinizes how audiences crave violence with complete disregard of the humans who lived it. It demonstrates just how far one will let their pain be capitalized to climb the ladder of their choosing. And, in doing so, *Gloria* presents just how inhuman one becomes when their ambition consumes them.