

TAG

A short drama by
Laura King

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PREACHER, graffiti artist, experienced, cynical, disappointed.

J.J., graffiti artist, soulful, artistic, principled.

MAGGS, graffiti artist, younger, impressionable yet streetwise.

PRODUCTION NOTE

All characters can be played by either male or female actors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tag premiered at the Sundown Collaborative Theatre's Short Works Festival, Greenspace Arts Collective, Denton, Texas, August 21-30, 2015.

(The rooftop of the city art museum. Sound of sirens. PREACHER, J.J., and MAGGS race in. Maggs is behind the others struggling with a heavy backpack.)

PREACHER: That was awesome!

J.J.: Man, I didn't think we were gonna get away this time.

MAGGS: Help, you guys.

(J.J. and Preacher cross to Maggs. They dump out the contents of the backpack: spray paint cans, markers, and other graffiti supplies.)

PREACHER: Maggs, why didn't you ditch this stuff when the cops came?

MAGGS: No way, man. This is the best stuff money can buy.

PREACHER: You mean the best stuff you can rack.

MAGGS: Tomayto, potahto.

J.J.: Preacher's right. You've got to be careful, Maggs. What if you got caught?

MAGGS: I've been doing this since I was 10 and I haven't been caught yet.

J.J.: It was close this time.

MAGGS: That's what makes it fun. Now, come on, you guys. Let's get to work.

(Maggs tosses spray cans to Preacher and J.J. They all cross to the fourth wall shaking the cans. They aim their spray cans at the audience.)

PREACHER: Ready.

MAGGS: Set.

J.J.: Wait.

PREACHER: What?

J.J.: What are we going to write?

PREACHER: I don't know, J.J. Let's just tag and split.

MAGGS: Throw-up and get out. Don't want the cops coming back.

J.J.: Yeah, okay. I guess you're right.

(They all shake their spray cans and point them at the audience again.)

PREACHER: Ready.

MAGGS: Set.

J.J.: Stop.

MAGGS: Oh, man. What now?

J.J.: Where are we?

MAGGS: Are you all right?

PREACHER: Been huffing fumes?

J.J.: Seriously, you guys. Look around. Don't you know where we are?

PREACHER: How would I know. I ran for the closest roof when I heard those sirens.

MAGGS: A roof is a roof is a roof.

J.J.: Not this roof. We're on top of the Art Institute.

MAGGS: *(Looking around:)* Hey, you're right.

PREACHER: This is awesome! I couldn't have picked a better spot if I planned it.

J.J.: A better spot for what?

PREACHER: To write the gospel according to Preacher for all to see.

(Preacher jumps onto a duct or a higher part of the roof.)

Gather round, children, and let the Preacher tell you what tonight will entail.

J.J.: Here we go.

MAGGS: Preach it.

J.J.: No encouragement is needed.

PREACHER: We have been called to this place by a higher power.

J.J.: Let me guess. The graffiti gods.

PREACHER: The graffiti gods have called us to this mountaintop.

J.J.: That's what I thought.

MAGGS: Shut up, J.J. Preacher is in high form.

J.J.: That would explain it.

PREACHER: This holy place has called us to it. It wants us to share our talents with the world.

MAGGS: Hallelujah.

PREACHER: It's time, children. Reach for a can, and let's slam.

(Maggs and Preacher start to shake their spray cans.)

MAGGS: Come on, J.J. Grab some Krylon.

J.J.: I can't.

MAGGS: What? Why not?

PREACHER: What's wrong, my child?

J.J.: Knock off the revival meeting crap, Preacher.

PREACHER: What's your problem?

J.J.: Look at where we are. This place means something.

PREACHER: It means something, but not to people like us.

J.J.: It means something to me.

PREACHER: Then you're a moron.

J.J.: Drop dead.

MAGGS: Come on, you guys.

J.J.: Maggs, you know what I'm talking about. This is the Art Institute.

PREACHER: That's right. The place where art is institutionalized. Locked away from people like you and me.

J.J.: It's valuable. They've got to protect it.

PREACHER: From what? From the people? Art shouldn't be jailed. It should be free.

J.J.: That's why you want to tag this place? To prove some kind of point?

PREACHER: To show them they can't keep art locked up. It'll find a way to break loose. And that way is us.

MAGGS: That's what I'm talking about. Let's do this.

(Maggs picks up a spray paint can.)

J.J.: Wait.

PREACHER: You in or out?

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About the Author

Laura King is a member of the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University. She has had 10-minute plays produced across the country, including her youth plays *The Disappointments*, *The Dodo Pact*, *The Crackling Rainbow Comet*, *How Penny Got Her Pep Back*, *The Piggy Pit*, and *Tag*. She is the author of the full-length plays *Independence Day at Happy Meadows*, *The Harmony Baptist Church Ladies Auxiliary Christmas Jubilee*, *Fallout*, and *Blood Will Out*.

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About YouthPLAYS

YouthPLAYS (www.youthplays.com) is a publisher of award-winning professional dramatists and talented new discoveries, each with an original theatrical voice, and all dedicated to expanding the vocabulary of theatre for young actors and audiences. On our website you'll find one-act and full-length plays and musicals for teen and pre-teen (and even college) actors, as well as duets and monologues for competition. Many of our authors' works have been widely produced at high schools and middle schools, youth theatres and other TYA companies, both amateur and professional, as well as at elementary schools, camps, churches and other institutions serving young audiences and/or actors worldwide. Most are intended for performance by young people, while some are intended for adult actors performing for young audiences.

YouthPLAYS was co-founded by professional playwrights Jonathan Dorf and Ed Shockley. It began merely as an additional outlet to market their own works, which included a substantial body of award-winning published and unpublished plays and musicals. Those interested in their published plays were directed to the respective publishers' websites, and unpublished plays were made available in electronic form. But when they saw the desperate need for material for young actors and audiences—coupled with their experience that numerous quality plays for young people weren't finding a home—they made the decision to represent the work of other playwrights as well. Dozens and dozens of authors are now members of the YouthPLAYS family, with scripts available both electronically and in traditional acting editions. We continue to grow as we look for exciting and challenging plays and musicals for young actors and audiences.

About ProduceaPlay.com

Let's put up a play! Great idea! But producing a play takes time, energy and knowledge. While finding the necessary time and energy is up to you, ProduceaPlay.com is a website designed to assist you with that third element: knowledge.

Created by YouthPLAYS' co-founders, Jonathan Dorf and Ed Shockley, ProduceaPlay.com serves as a resource for producers at all levels as it addresses the many facets of production. As Dorf and Shockley speak from their years of experience (as playwrights, producers, directors and more), they are joined by a group of award-winning theatre professionals and experienced teachers from the world of academic theatre, all making their expertise available for free in the hope of helping this and future generations of producers, whether it's at the school or university level, or in community or professional theatres.

The site is organized into a series of major topics, each of which has its own page that delves into the subject in detail, offering suggestions and links for further information. For example, Publicity covers everything from Publicizing Auditions to How to Use Social Media to Posters to whether it's worth hiring a publicist. Casting details Where to Find the Actors, How to Evaluate a Resume, Callbacks and even Dealing with Problem Actors. You'll find guidance on your Production Timeline, The Theater Space, Picking a Play, Budget, Contracts, Rehearsing the Play, The Program, House Management, Backstage, and many other important subjects.

The site is constantly under construction, so visit often for the latest insights on play producing, and let it help make your play production dreams a reality.

More from YouthPLAYS

Great Expectations: Eight short plays about teens under pressure by Nicole B. Adkins, Will Coleman, Anne G'Fellers-Mason, Laura King, Wendy-Marie Martin, Marshall N. Opie, Jeri Weiss and Ricky Young-Howze

Play Collection. 65-75 minutes (flexible). 4-18 females, 4-9 males (8-27 performers possible).

Today's teens grow up under pressure. While often it comes from peers, it comes just as frequently from the parents and other adults in their lives. The teens in ***Great Expectations*** navigate these pressures as they sneak in and sleep out, and as they overcome divorce, siblings with long shadows, and loss—but also discover joy in the magic of fairies, dancing and their imaginations.

A Midsummer Night's Nap by David J. LeMaster
Comedy. 30-37 minutes. 4-13 males, 4-13 females (7-17 performers possible).

The Bard's classic tale of fairies, lovers and rude mechanicals in only 35 minutes? Three comic narrators help to speed things along, yet still cover most of the action from the original, including the famed Pyramus and Thisbe play within a play, which survives with jokes intact.

Warriors by Hayley Lawson-Smith
Drama. 40-50 minutes. 4 females, 1 male.

Not every hero gets a song or the crowd's cheers—or even acknowledgement. In Zordana's land, a hero fights bravely in the open field, destroying monsters and dark magic. In Amy's world, her hero is the sister who takes care of her. Maddie's hero is her brother, who may tease her mercilessly but loves her dearly. As tragedy threatens to consume their separate worlds, only in coming together can they battle back the dark.

Prime by Ellen Margolis

Comedy. 80-85 minutes. 6 females, 6 males, 6 either.

Princess Dar and Prince Dion, young royals from neighboring kingdoms, are destined for each other through an arranged marriage. On the eve of the wedding, however, they decide to run away and discover their own futures. Escaping to a nearby valley, they cross paths with disoriented lovers, hot-headed party animals, desperate draft dodgers, and a number-obsessed hermit. Identities are investigated, resources stretched, and every kind of love put to the test.

The Locker Next 2 Mine by Jonathan Dorf

Dramedy. 80-85 minutes. 5-12+ males, 8-16+ females (14-40 performers possible).

Alisa arrives at a new high school in the middle of the year to find her locker next to a shrine for a popular lacrosse player who's died in an auto accident, but as she digs deeper, she discovers another death that no one talks about, even as it's left many of the school's students trying to pick up their own pieces. A play about teen suicide and dealing with loss.

The Ghost Moments by Randy Wyatt

Drama. 45-70 minutes. 1-10 females, 1-5 males (2-15 performers total).

We all have ghosts that haunt us. Some are literal: Matty tries to rid his sister's apartment of a spirit that may or may not be there, Zachary prepares his bunker for the zombie apocalypse. Others are metaphorical: Marianne's absent father, Caroline's memories of water, Carver's secret powers. As we witness hauntings and exorcisms through a series of monologues, this group of characters and their loves, longings, joy and pain, will haunt us long after the curtain falls.

Prince Ugly by Matt Buchanan

Musical. About 105 minutes. 4+ males, 3+ female (20-50 performers possible).

Prince William Xavier Hopkirk the Third is under an evil curse. He is the ugliest child in the entire Kingdom—so ugly that children run from his face. There is only one way he can break the spell: he must make one true friend. But how do you make a *real* friend when most children run from you and the rest only stay because the King has offered a reward? Can Prince Ugly, as even his parents call him sometimes, learn the true meaning of friendship?

screens by Jessica McGettrick

Dramedy. 35-45 minutes. 3 males, 7 females, 30 either (10-40 performers possible).

In ***screens***, we see the world through the eyes of a gamer, a lonely person looking for love, a music fan, a blogger, a bully's target and many others as they discover the perils and pleasures of creating an online persona that is different from their offline reality. What would you say if no one could see you behind the computer screen? Who would you become?

The Exceptional Childhood Center by Dylan Schifrin

Comedy. 25-35 minutes. 2-4 females, 2-3 males (5-6 performers possible).

Reggie Watson has been accepted into the right preschool. He's set for life...as long as he can make it through the one-day trial period. But when desperation breeds disaster and his future hangs in the balance, Reggie and his band of quirky classmates may just discover things about themselves that school could never teach them.