

FUNTOWN

A one-act drama by
Laura Neill

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

VAL, as in Valerie, the leader, femme or non-binary.

NIC, as in Nicole or Nick, the gatherer, any gender.

JO, as in Jo or Joe, the warrior, any gender.

HAIR, as in Harriet or Harry, the hacker, any gender.

DOC, the scientist, any gender.

THE CLOWN, any gender.

CON, as in Connie, Conrad or Genghis Khan, the contractor, any gender.

LOR, as in Laura or Laurence, the worker, any gender.

Casting Note: At least a few of the best parts should be played by BIPOC actors. Also, please work against colorism and sizeism in your casting. This rehearsal room should be a home for folks who have been marginalized by mainstream society.

SETTING

An abandoned fun park, Funtown, repurposed by the resistance into home. Now.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The script centers on a group of teen runaways who have lost their original homes, and it contains a loud moment of demolition that results in injury. If you use fake blood in your production, please add a content warning for blood.

DEDICATION

The playwright would like to thank the San Antonio Young Women's Leadership Academy UIL One Act Play Company

2022 for being the first to bring this story home to San Antonio and to UIL, and for doing it with such love, skill and community spirit. Additional thanks to SHEM Productions at Rutgers University for creating the first university production of this play.

PROLOGUE
welcome to funtown

(A spot comes up on THE CLOWN, a beat-up old Funtown fixture at the back of the park. The Clown plays a little song.)

CLOWN: WELCOME TO FUNTOWN
WHERE ALL THINGS ARE FUN
YOU'LL BE HAPPY
BY THE TIME THE DAY IS DONE
WELCOME TO FUNTOWN
YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME
ALL HAPPY, NO SAD
ALL SMILE, NO MOAN

(The spot shuts off suddenly. Then lights come up slowly on the whole stage. The Clown is there, but shut off and still.)

SCENE 1
dinner count

(Abandoned kiddie rides litter the ground. This is FUNTOWN, and it used to be FUN. Amidst the old bumper cars, mini kiddie coaster, mini pitcher's mound, etc., HAIR scrolls lazily on a beat-up laptop that is plugged in via an extension cord to some convoluted contraption. DOC measures a plant growing out of one of the kiddie cars.)

HAIR: Did you set the table?

DOC: I'm almost there —

HAIR: Come on, it's your turn to set the table.

DOC: Come on, I'm doing math in my head —

(Hair watches Doc measure the plant.)

HAIR: They're gonna be back soon.

DOC: The odds are approximately eleven percent that this

plant will eventually bear fruit.

HAIR: It's a weed.

DOC: I'd like some strawberries.

HAIR: And I'd like an upgrade to Snow Leopard, but guess what's not gonna happen. Set the table, Doc.

DOC: Strawberries would go well with pizza.

(Doc pauses to let this sink in and then starts to "set the table." They don't have much to set it with, and there is no table – it's a blanket, or maybe a clever plywood thingy over an old kiddie car.)

(VAL enters from the back.)

VAL: Nic and Jo?

DOC: Not back yet.

HAIR: Almost back.

DOC: I have an intriguing discovery to share at dinner count.

HAIR: It's not that intriguing.

DOC: It is very intriguing.

VAL: Hair, be nice.

HAIR: I'm always nice...

VAL: Table's set – nice work, Doc.

HAIR: You know, I have double duties 'cause I always remind Doc to do everything.

VAL: Table's set – nice work, Hair.

(NIC enters from the front carrying two pizza boxes and a couple of pieces of paper.)

NIC: Honey, I'm home!

DOC & HAIR: PIZZA!

VAL: Looks like a nice haul.

NIC: Wait 'til you see inside the boxes.

DOC: Did you get pepperoni?

HAIR: Did they have breadsticks?

NIC: Let's just say it was a surprising trip today.

(Enter JO from the back with three dead squirrels.)

JO: Hey, losers.

DOC & HAIR: SQUIRRELS!

VAL: Three today. Awesome.

JO: Get 'em on the grill.

HAIR: There's kindling – I put it earlier –

DOC: I love squirrels.

(Jo tosses the squirrels to Nic, who starts up a fire in an old trash can and sets the squirrels inside the can.)

VAL: ALL RIGHT. Dinner count.

JO: Jo in.

NIC: Nic in.

DOC: Doc in.

HAIR: Hair in.

VAL: Val in.

(As each calls in, they sit around the back and sides of the makeshift table.)

Prayer:

EVERYONE: Thank you, Hair, for hacking us electricity.
Thank you, Doc, for assessing our risks and gains –

NIC: SCIENCE!

EVERYONE: Thank you, Nic, for finding us food.
Thank you, Jo, for killing us food.
Thank you, Val, for keeping us all on track.

VAL: Amen, let's eat.

NIC: First course: pizza à la carte.

(Nic throws open the boxes with a flourish. The pizza is grungy and gross, like it's been picked out of a dumpster. Because it's been picked out of a dumpster. But some of it looks okay. They look at it hungrily.)

HAIR: Ooooh, black olives.

JO: Not sure those are olives.

HAIR: I choose to believe.

DOC: There is a seventy-four percent chance that consuming this pizza will make one of us sick.

NIC: Hey, that's lower than yesterday.

DOC: This one doesn't have any green on the edges.

VAL: A good sign. All right, folks — before we eat. What did you learn today?

NIC: I—

DOC: Oooh! Oooh! Me first!

NIC: Okay.

VAL: Doc, you have the mic.

DOC: I discovered a plant that has an eleven percent chance of bearing fruit. It could be a strawberry plant. And then we could put strawberries on our pizza. If the eleven percent chance bears out, the plant should come to fruition within approximately two months.

VAL: Thank you, Doc.

JO: I learned that if I shoot at the tail instead of the paws, there's less blood.

VAL: Thank you, Jo. I learned that there was a truck parked outside from about one p.m. to three p.m. today. White.

NIC: Thank you, Val. I learned that—well, I'm not sure what I learned, but—I think I should show you these.

JO: Come on, let's eat, I'm hungryyyyyy —

(Nic brings the papers forward.)

NIC: Okay, but—these were posted on the front fence. I don't get much of it, but I know it says "FUNTOWN" and then—

HAIR: Demolition.

DOC & JO: Demolition?

NIC: Yeah.

(Val takes the permits suddenly and reads them.)

VAL: The white truck.

(Val re-closes the pizza boxes and puts the papers on top of them to study.)

"The establishment formerly known as FUNTOWN, owned by NEWTOWN PROPERTIES, INC., is permitted for demolition by BLACK STAR CONTRACTORS, effective August 25th." And the other one is a construction permit...for condos...

JO: Owned?

HAIR: Condos?

NIC: What's today?

HAIR: August 24th.

JO: How do they own Funtown? We've never seen them before!

DOC: You don't need to see something for it to exist.

JO: How helpful.

VAL: Demolition.

HAIR: Demolition.

NIC: Demolition.

(Then everyone talks at once for about five seconds.)

ALL: *(Overlapping:)* How can they just come in here and demolish —

Who are these people?

Are they going to tear down Funtown?

Should we fight them?

(JO:) Let's fight them!

What is even *happening* —

Val's been here nine YEARS!

Where are we gonna GO?

JO: LET'S FIGHT THEM!

(Everyone stops talking.)

Stop acting like a bunch of wimps, all of you. We need a plan of attack.

NIC: Attack? How about defense?

JO: Sometimes it's the same thing.

VAL: Jo, hang on. Let's consider our options.

JO: Do you see a lot of options on that sheet?

HAIR: Well, if they posted a permit, then they needed a permit.

JO: So?

HAIR: Then I can revoke it.

JO: On your computer.

HAIR: Yes.

VAL: That's a great idea.

JO: Of course it's a great idea. Of course it's a great idea because *my* ideas are never great ideas, but they're coming TOMORROW and I know how to throw and what if I just scared them off.

NIC: They'd come back.

DOC: The odds are ninety-four percent certain that they also have access to bigger weapons than rocks.

JO: Rocks are pretty effective.

NIC: They'd just come back and arrest us.

JO: Arrest us? What are you, a scaredy-cat?
They don't know our names.

We don't have IDs.

We are OFF THE GRID,

and this is our HOME – ARE WE GOING TO FIGHT FOR IT?

VAL: No.

(A moment.)

JO: You're just deciding that.

VAL: No. We'll put it to a vote.

I'd like to say a few words first –

JO: Of course you would.

VAL: You had your turn.

Violence is not the answer.

If we fight, they'll know we're here, and they'll come after us, just like Nic and Doc said.

They're bigger than us, Jo.

And they think they own this place.

They're not going to give it up easily if they're challenged.

JO: They might. You don't know –

NIC: Hair should hack their permit. Then they can't come in.

HAIR: Then they won't be able to demolish anything.

We're not big.

But the permit office is.

And we can use that against them.

I can start work on it right now.

JO: And how long is that going to take?

HAIR: A day. Less than a day, maybe.

JO: They'll be here in ten hours.

VAL: We vote.

JO: Doc, think of the odds –

VAL: We VOTE.

Hack or fight.

JO: ...Jo fight.

NIC: Nic hack.

HAIR: Hair hack.

DOC: Doc...abstains.

VAL: Val hack.

Hacking has it.

(A moment.)

DOC: The squirrels are burning.

(Jo storms over to the grill and pulls out the food. It is definitely burned. She shows this to the others as evidence, somehow, that she is right.)

JO: You'd all die without me.

VAL: No one's dying.

Let's get some rest.

Word in the morning is hide.

HIDE.

Do not engage with the contractors.

JO: The *invaders*.

VAL: Do not engage with the invaders.

(Val, Nic and Doc each retreat to their "beds" or the back. Maybe they each take a slice of pizza, maybe not.)

(Jo sits brooding. Hair goes to the computer and starts hacking – or pretends to.)

HAIR: It's gonna be okay, Jo.

(Jo snorts.)

(Softly:) You can't just throw rocks at everything.

(Jo picks up a rock and throws it at a car, hitting the target perfectly. Then Jo exits. Lights fade on Hair on the computer. Deep night.)

INTERLUDE 1

(The Clown comes to life again and sings.)

CLOWN: WELCOME TO FUNTOWN
 WHERE EVERYTHING IS FUN
 YOU'LL BE HAPPY
 BY THE TIME THE DAY IS DONE
 WELCOME TO FUNTOWN
 WHERE NOTHING GOES WRONG
 EVERYTHING IS BRIGHT
 LIKE THE SONG

SCENE 2

meeting the enemy

(Light shifts from night to dawn. The stage is empty except for Doc, measuring the strawberry plant again. Nic gestures to Doc from the side.)

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NIC: Doc. *Doc*. It's almost eight.

DOC: I'm almost done.

NIC: Doc, get back here.

DOC: The odds are forty-three percent that I will be able to finish my analysis before the contractors arrive.

People are usually late by approximately three and a half minutes at least.

Forty-three percent is less than fifty percent, so I'm probably safe.

NIC: Forty-three is a high percentage.

DOC: Why are you whispering? There's no one here.

VAL: (*Popping up from hiding:*) We're whispering because the contractors are about to show up.

HAIR: (*Popping up from hiding:*) Come on, Doc!

DOC: I would complete my analysis more quickly if given time to think.

NIC: You can do that later!

HAIR: Just get back here!

DOC: Where's Jo?

VAL: Doc, get back behind the—

DOC: But where is Jo?

NIC: Sulking, probably.

DOC: Maybe I should go look for Jo.

(The noise of a truck pulling into the parking lot. Val dives out to grab Doc and retreats with them back into the hiding place.)

I wasn't finished.

VAL, NIC & HAIR: Shhhhh!

(The truck door slams. Footsteps. CON enters, looking vaguely bored, followed by LOR, who carries a clipboard.)

CON: Wow, this place is grungy.

LOR: It's pretty old.

CON: Did anyone ever like this place?

LOR: I think I came here when I was little.

CON: Little Lor. That explains a lot.

LOR: It was kinda fun.

CON: In the last century.

LOR: ...Sure.

(Lor takes notes on the clipboard as Con talks.)

CON: All right. We've got the metal cars...those'll get dragged out. That clown wall will come down easy with a wrecking ball...and those stalls, that's easy...we'll prolly have to drag out that generator thing...dunno what that was used for. Looks kinda gnarly for kids to be around. And...that little coaster we can probably break down for scrap after everything else is out or in pieces. All right. We can probably tell them two days and do it in one.

(Someone rustles in alarm in their hiding place. Con snaps to attention.)

What was that?

LOR: I don't know.

CON: Did anyone check for dogs?

LOR: Dogs?

CON: Dogs, Dobermans, pit bulls, strays, things that'll bite your leg off.

LOR: Um. We might be the check for dogs.

CON: Come on. This was supposed to be easy.
You got your crowbar?

LOR: In the truck.

CON: Go get it.

(Another rustle.)

I'll get my shovel. And my cell. Maybe we need to get animal control in here.

(Con and Lor exit hurriedly to get their weapons.)

(Doc's head pops up.)

DOC: The odds are approximately seventy-eight percent that they will discover us.

NIC: The odds are like a million percent that they're gonna tear up Funtown. In two days or less.

VAL: Hey, stay DOWN.

HAIR: What do we do?

DOC: The hacking plan no longer seems effective.

NIC: We could run to behind Lil Caesars. Usually no one looks too closely back there—

HAIR: But what if they come while we're gone?

DOC: They could tear it all down, and we wouldn't know.

(Jo's voice echoes through the stage. Maybe she's up in a tree hanging over the fence, or maybe on top of the stalls. At a good vantage point. She does not reveal herself to the others.)

JO: Reconsidering the plan?

VAL: Jo. Where are you?

JO: Hiding. For now.

DOC: Jo, are you all right?

JO: You all just sit tight.
Or run if you want.
I've got you covered.

VAL: Jo, what does that mean?
Jo!

NIC: We could still run—

(But Con and Lor come back in. Everyone hides.)

CON: You think they'd have animal control check it before sending us in here.
Assessment doesn't mean getting eaten.

LOR: Maybe it's just squirrels.

CON: Sounds bigger than squirrels.

(Doc shifts. Con and Lor see Doc's form.)

LOR: That looked bigger than a dog.
Um.

CON: Someone there?
Hey, this is Newtown property, and you're trespassing.
Force is authorized against trespassers.

LOR: Con—

CON: You're trespassing on our property, and you better come out hands up.

(Con moves toward Doc's location threateningly. Jo rains down rocks on Con. At least one of them hits.)

OW!

(Con and Lor retreat out of range of the rocks. Con puts a hand to a temple, and it comes back bloody.)

So that's how we're gonna play.

LOR: Con, we should go.

CON: GO? I ain't going nowhere.

LOR: Con, that was a person –

CON: A person? Lor, you're seeing things.

LOR: Someone just threw a rock at you. Come on –

CON: No, no, Lor, that wasn't a person. That was a raccoon.

LOR: Someone threw a rock. Raccoons can't throw rocks –

CON: Sure they can.

See, Lor, if there were any *human* trespassers here, which there aren't, we'd have to call it in and have the cops clear the area and blah blah blah, and that would mean this would take three days instead of one, and I've got a quota to make.

But if it's raccoons...well, no one cares if a few raccoons get hurt, do they?

A couple dead raccoons hit with the wrecking ball, everything's all right.

Humans are trouble, and raccoons are...expendable.

You see?

LOR: Are you insane?

CON: No one saw anything.

LOR: Con, you definitely have a concussion. We need to get you to a hospital –

CON: I'm thinking very clearly. Make everybody's life simpler. It's raccoons.

LOR: No. No. You've got like road rage or something because of your head –

CON: Yeah, these idiot *raccoons* drew blood first.
...Think of it this way. You need your job?

(A moment.)

LOR: ...Raccoons.

CON: Yup.

LOR: All right.

CON: (*Raising their voice:*) And if any raccoons are LISTENING, they heard what I said.

There's a wrecking ball coming through here, and ain't nobody gonna care about a little blood, seeing as some already got spilled.

So clear out...raccoons.

Or your fluffy little lives are gonna get real short.

(Con and Lor leave. Slowly, cautiously, the Funtown residents emerge.)

(Hair goes directly to the computer and keeps hacking. Nic bursts into tears. Val moves to give Nic a hug. Doc sits in shock. Jo comes down from their tree.)

JO: They were gonna hurt Doc.

DOC: There was a ninety-six percent chance that they would have discovered my location.

NIC: There aren't any chances anymore.

They're destroying Funtown.

Where are we gonna go?

(Hair is typing away.)

Hair, stop it.

STOP IT.

You're not doing anything.

You heard that maniac.

They're gonna kill us if we stay.

HAIR: I'm almost there.

NIC: They're gonna kill us —

HAIR: I WILL GET THE PERMIT.

TRUST ME.

(A moment. Maybe someone is listening.)

Okay, so I saw somebody today –
I thought I saw two somebodies –
and I thought the somebodies I saw didn't have fur...
if you know what I'm saying.
And all I'm saying is that if a somebody or two somebodies
needed somewhere to go...
Because those somebodies I saw looked pretty young.
I'm just saying, I have a daughter who's –
who looks about that young –
and she thinks she's really smart but she's still pretty stupid,
and I just don't want any somebodies to do something stupid.
Like, maybe you think you know everything, but maybe you
don't –
like, maybe you're underestimating the situation.
So if you need help.
I'm gonna leave my phone number here –
and you don't have to call it –
I don't know if you're even listening –
but if you want,
you can call it,
and I can help you find somewhere to go.
Okay?
'Cause I don't like killing raccoons,
and I really don't like killing – um – you know –
so if you could just call that number or at least just clear out,
that would be –
Con is serious.
You don't know Con, but Con is serious.
And I don't want anybody to get...hurt.

*(A rock gently lands at Lor's feet. It wasn't aimed at Lor. It means
someone was listening. Lor tucks the phone number under the
rock. Lor exits.)*

*(A shady figure comes out of hiding and takes the phone number.
It is Doc.)*

INTERLUDE 3

(The Clown comes to life again, still skipping.)

CLOWN: WE'RE ALL JUST HAPPY – HAPPY – HAPPY –
WE'RE ALL JUST HAPPY –
H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-H-HERE

(Doc kicks the Clown, and it sinks into stillness.)

SCENE 4
abandon ship

*(Doc looks at the phone number, looks at the "strawberry" plant,
then goes and starts to dig the plant out of the car.)*

(Nic steps onto the darkened stage.)

NIC: What are you doing?

(Doc jumps.)

DOC: I'm measuring the plant.

NIC: That doesn't look like measuring.

DOC: I'm-I'm measuring the plant.

NIC: No, you're not.

(A moment.)

I was listening. To that worker.

I was listening, too.

(Doc does not respond.)

Jo's sleeping in the forest – fell asleep at target practice.

Val's exhausted – she's snoring in the back.

Hair's eyes wore out staring at that screen...

It's just us.

(Doc keeps digging at the plant and grabs a nearby soda cup to put the plant in.)

I thought there was an eleven percent chance that plant would have strawberries in two months.

DOC: There are no chances anymore.

You said —

NIC: I didn't mean it.

DOC: It's not "meaning it" or "not meaning it." Funtown is over.

NIC: Doc —

DOC: The plant might have strawberries in two months, but not if I leave it here.

Because here is getting destroyed.

NIC: But —

DOC: It's over. We got lucky for a minute —

I got lucky I found someplace where people didn't think I was an idiot.

I'm not an idiot, I'm smart,
and I can see what's happening here,
and the odds are bad.

The odds are very, very bad, okay, Nic,
we stopped being lucky,
so stop pretending we're all gonna go live somewhere else.
Because there is no somewhere else.

The other somewhere elses, there are already people there,
and they're not nice,

I've-I've been to those other places,
and they don't like groups,
and they don't like me,
and so we'll probably all be better off
on our own.

NIC: You're really leaving.

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DOC: Yes, I'm leaving – we're all leaving –

NIC: Not Funtown. You're leaving us.
You're leaving me.

DOC: We're all leaving.

NIC: Yes, but you're leaving US.

DOC: Hair isn't gonna get the permit,
and Jo's gonna try to throw more rocks,
and Val's gonna sigh and not know what to do –
Val tries but Val doesn't always know what to do –
and you're gonna cry and get us caught.

That's it.

If I'm on my own I can be quiet,
and smart.

NIC: You're giving up.

DOC: Yes.

Yes, I do that when the odds are bad.
You should, too.

(Doc holds out the phone number to Nic.)

You should be the one to call.
You're the weakest.

NIC: No.

I thought I was,
but it looks like I'm not.

(A moment.)

I'm not gonna call that number, Doc.
I have my people.
Whether we have Funtown or not, I have my people,
and I'm not leaving them because the odds are bad.

DOC: Very, very bad.

The odds are very, very bad.

(Doc takes the plant and the phone number and starts to exit.)

NIC: Coward.

DOC: Yes.

(Doc exits.)

NIC: Coward!

You're just a stupid coward!

I hate you!

I hate you I hate you I hate you!

Doc, you hear me? I HATE YOU!

(No response.)

I love you.

(Lights fade.)

INTERLUDE 4

(The Clown looks like it's going to start up, but it doesn't. Maybe it twitches once or twice. There's no song.)

SCENE 5 wrecking ball

(It's morning. Early. Hair, screaming from the computer, wakes everybody up.)

HAIR: I GOT IT I GOT IT I GOT IT!

EUREKA!

ABRACADABRA!

WOWZA SUPERCAGIFRALISTICEXPAWHATEVER!

IIIIII GOTTTTTT ITTTTTTTTT!

(Val, Nic and Jo emerge sleepily as Hair continues.)

It's five fifty-eight a.m.,

and I REVOKED THEIR PERMIT,

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which means they can't come in at eight –
they can't come in – they can't kill anyone –
'cause THEY DON'T HAVE A PERMIT –
and if they come, the police will stop them,
or something, idk, the website isn't clear.
But it says in big red letters, it says,
NO CONSTRUCTION OR DEMOLITION WITHOUT A
PERMIT,
AND I TOOK THEIR PERMIT AWAY!
Aren't you glad you have a hacker?
Aren't you glad I exist?
I'm glad I exist.
I'm glad we all exist.
I'm glad this day exists.
THIS IS A GOOD DAY!

(A moment, and then everyone else talks all at once.)

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