



# THE NORTH POOL

BY **RAJIV JOSEPH**



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



THE NORTH POOL  
Copyright © 2013, Rajiv Joseph

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of THE NORTH POOL is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for THE NORTH POOL are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to The Gersh Agency, 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010. Attn: Seth Glewen.

**SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce THE NORTH POOL is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author. The following acknowledgments must appear on the title page in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

THE NORTH POOL was produced by the Vineyard Theatre  
(Douglas Aibel, Artistic Director; Jennifer Garvey-Blackwell, Executive Producer)  
New York City, 2013.

THE NORTH POOL was originally produced by TheatreWorks, Palo Alto, CA,  
(Robert Kelley, Artistic Director; Phil Santora, Managing Director).

Subsequently produced by Barrington Stage Company  
(Julianne Boyd, Artistic Director).

*For Giovanna Sardelli*

THE NORTH POOL had its world premiere at TheatreWorks (Silicon Valley) (Robert Kelley, Artistic Director; Phil Santora, Managing Director) in Palo Alto, California, on March 13, 2011. It was directed by Giovanna Sardelli; the scenic design was by Erik Flatmo; the costume design was by Tanya Finkelstein; the lighting design was by York Kennedy; the sound design was by Daniel Kluger; and the dramaturge was Vickie Rozell. The cast was as follows:

DR. DANIELSON ..... Remi Sandri  
KHADIM ASMAAN ..... Adam Poss

THE NORTH POOL was presented by the Vineyard Theatre (Douglas Aibel, Artistic Director; Jennifer Garvey-Blackwell, Executive Producer; Sarah Stern, Co-Artistic Director; Michael Page, General Manager) in New York City, opening on March 6, 2013. It was directed by Giovanna Sardelli; the set design was by Donyale Werle; the costume design was by Paloma Young; the lighting design was by David Lander; the sound design was by Daniel Kluger; and the production stage manager was Megan Smith. The cast was as follows:

DR. DANIELSON ..... Stephen Barker Turner  
KHADIM ASMAAN ..... Babak Tafti

## **CHARACTERS**

DR. DANIELSON, male, middle-aged, white.

KHADIM ASMAAN, male, 18, Middle Eastern.

## **TIME**

2007. Just before Spring Break.

## **PLACE**

A public high school in America.

# THE NORTH POOL

*The office of a vice-principal at a public high school. Modest and simple. A map of the world hangs on the wall. A desk with a chair behind it and a smaller one in front of it.*

*Behind the desk, a large cardboard box.*

*Three muted tones are heard. The voice of Vice-Principal Danielson comes over the public address system.*

DANIELSON. (*Voiceover.*) Good afternoon, students and faculty, this is Vice-Principal Danielson with the afternoon announcements for today, April 13, 2007. We'd like to wish you all a safe and happy spring break. Be advised that school grounds close by 4:00. Please vacate the premises by then. Join me in wishing good luck to our Lady Tigers as the girls' volleyball team travels to the regional semi-finals over the break. Go Lady Tigers; be super. (*As the announcement continues, Khadim enters wearing a backpack.*) Also, special congratulations to the Speech and Debate Team, who placed fourth overall in the City Forensics Tournament this past weekend. Way to go, team. Remember: School Pride is Self-Pride. Have a great spring break, people. Be Safe. Safety comes first. (*A moment later, Dr. Danielson enters. Khadim's back is to Danielson. Danielson stares at Khadim for a long moment.*) Can I help you? (*Khadim turns and looks at Danielson.*) Can I help you with something?

KHADIM. They told me to come in here.

DANIELSON. Who did?

KHADIM. They told me you wanted to see me.

DANIELSON. Name?

KHADIM. Khadim.

DANIELSON. Khadim. Right. Khadim. Sorry about that. The

mind. When you're my age? The mind just ... *whsssp*. Khadim.  
Khadim ...  
KHADIM. Asmaan.  
DANIELSON. Khadim Asmaan. Righto. There he is. How we  
doing?  
KHADIM. Fine.  
DANIELSON. Afternoon announcements.  
KHADIM. Yes, I heard.  
DANIELSON. It's part of the job. Afternoon announcements.  
The voice from above. Epilogue to the school day. A re-cap. A "stay  
tuned for another edition" type thing. Part of the job.  
KHADIM. Yeah.  
DANIELSON. So here you are. Thanks for coming in like this.  
KHADIM. I kind of have to, right?  
DANIELSON. (*Smiles.*) I suppose you do, don't you? How's every-  
thing? How are classes?  
KHADIM. Good.  
DANIELSON. Good?  
KHADIM. Yeah, you know. The same old same old.  
DANIELSON. Same old same old.  
KHADIM. Yeah.  
DANIELSON. Yeah. (*Beat.*) How are you liking Sheffield High?  
KHADIM. It's cool.  
DANIELSON. I know that it can be difficult coming in in the  
middle of an academic year. (*Beat.*) How are your folks?  
KHADIM. My folks?  
DANIELSON. Your parents.  
KHADIM. What about them?  
DANIELSON. I'm just asking how they are.  
KHADIM. I don't know. Why do you want to know?  
DANIELSON. Oh, I'm just asking. To be polite.  
KHADIM. They're fine.  
DANIELSON. Good! Listen, you're probably wondering why  
I've asked you to come in here this afternoon. (*Khadim shrugs.*) Of  
course. Natural that you'd be wondering that. (*The school bell rings.*)  
There's the bell. Happy spring break.  
KHADIM. What?  
DANIELSON. It's officially spring break! (*Beat.*) So, again, that  
begs the question: Why are you sitting in the vice-principal's office  
when you should be going home and having fun with your friends?

KHADIM. Yeah. I mean, Dr. Danielson, is there a problem?

DANIELSON. Have you made friends since you've come to Sheffield High?

KHADIM. Friends?

DANIELSON. Yeah, you know. Have you been able to make friends? You seem like a popular guy, although what do I know? I'm just the vice-principal. But it's important: High school is more than just books and classes. It's a social construct.

KHADIM. Yeah.

DANIELSON. Yeah?

KHADIM. Yes, sir.

DANIELSON. No, I mean, yeah, it's a social construct or yeah, you have friends?

KHADIM. What?

DANIELSON. I'm not trying to be a tough guy, Khadim. You certainly don't need to call me "sir." That's my dad's name, you know what I mean? So: You've made friends here.

KHADIM. I have some friends.

DANIELSON. Good. I know it's hard to be a new kid. And it can be difficult when you have a different background.

KHADIM. You mean coming from private school?

DANIELSON. Has that been different?

KHADIM. Than the private school? Than Eagleton Academy?

DANIELSON. Yes.

KHADIM. Yeah. Much.

DANIELSON. Is that right?

KHADIM. There's three thousand kids here.

DANIELSON. Three thousand four hundred seventy-eight to be exact.

KHADIM. And at Eagleton there were like a hundred.

DANIELSON. One hundred seventeen to be exact.

KHADIM. Wow, Dr. Danielson. You know your facts.

DANIELSON. I'm a numbers guy, Khadim. I can't help it. When I was in high school I was embarrassed by it. Sometimes I'd pretend I didn't know the answer when I knew it. Sometimes it feels so awkward to be smart, to be precise. I can't believe I acted that way, but when we're younger, sometimes the pressures of everyone around us compel us to act outside of our character.

KHADIM. Dr. Danielson, why am I here?

DANIELSON. Right. I just get chatty. You'll have to excuse



me. Why are you here. Why is Khadim sitting here in the vice-principal's office.

KHADIM. Yeah.

DANIELSON. Well, let's think for a moment. Maybe you could tell me.

KHADIM. Tell you what?

DANIELSON. What do you think? Considering there *should be* a reason. Have you done anything lately that would warrant me calling you in here for a chat?

KHADIM. No. I don't think so. (*Beat.*) No! What? (*Danielson refers to some papers.*)

DANIELSON. Well, how about eighth period this past Tuesday.

KHADIM. Yeah?

DANIELSON. You have French with Madame Friedman.

KHADIM. Yeah.

DANIELSON. But this past Tuesday you weren't in her class. You have an unexcused absence.

KHADIM. This past Tuesday?

DANIELSON. I understand that eighth period is the last class of the day and that sometimes it can be tempting to break work early, but that doesn't make it right. We may be a big public school, but we keep our records straight.

KHADIM. *This* past Tuesday?

DANIELSON. That's right. There was a fire drill near the end of eighth period. It says here: You were present in class before the fire drill, but not there afterwards.

KHADIM. There was a fire drill ...

DANIELSON. Yes, there was.

KHADIM. Everyone left school for the fire drill! I just went home. It was the last class of the day.

DANIELSON. I'm not here to debate the rationale of your absence, although if your parents want to excuse you from this class, then that's fine. Can you get your parents to call in for you right now?

KHADIM. No. But ...

DANIELSON. Khadim, I just want to make something clear: I'm not here to harass you. It's tough being a student, especially a new student to a big public school like Sheffield. But, with a big school, there are strict rules that always apply. It's how we keep order.

KHADIM. So that is it? What do I get? Detention?

DANIELSON. Yes, you get detention. (*Khadim stands up to leave.*)

KHADIM. Okay. I understand. I will do detention. When do I do it?

DANIELSON. Well how about right now? Detention is usually ninety minutes, but being that it's spring break what about you hang here for an hour and you and I can get to know each other?

KHADIM. Um ... okay.

DANIELSON. Terrific. (*Khadim awkwardly takes off his backpack and sits down.*)

KHADIM. Do *you* want to stay here an hour after school?

DANIELSON. Of course I don't *want* to, but I do my job. I do what's asked of me. It's pride of work. Pride of work is pride of self. That's what I always say. (*Awkward beat. Danielson looks at some papers on his desk. Khadim looks around the room.*)

KHADIM. Can I ask you something, Dr. Danielson?

DANIELSON. Of course.

KHADIM. Are you a real doctor?

DANIELSON. I'm a Ph.D.

KHADIM. What's that?

DANIELSON. It means I'm a Doctor of Philosophy.

KHADIM. So, you're like a philosopher?

DANIELSON. Well, in a way, I suppose you could say that. Yes, I'm sort of like a philosopher.

KHADIM. That's cool. How much do you make?

DANIELSON. What?

KHADIM. How much money do you make?

DANIELSON. Well, Khadim ... in this country, it's actually not polite to ask people how much they earn.

KHADIM. Oh. Sorry.

DANIELSON. But I make around seventy thousand dollars a year.

KHADIM. That's really good.

DANIELSON. But it's pride of work that brings pride of self. Not some price tag. Okay? Always remember that.

KHADIM. I will, Dr. Danielson.

DANIELSON. So tell me, what do you think of life at Sheffield outside of classes?

KHADIM. Outside of classes?

DANIELSON. I don't know. Socially. Or in student activities. Are you involved in any extra-curricular activities?

# THE NORTH POOL

by Rajiv Joseph

2M

In this riveting psychological thriller, a high-school vice-principal and a Middle Eastern-born transfer student engage in a politically and emotionally charged game of cat and mouse, with dangerous consequences.

*“High school is a model fascist state. [Joseph] adroitly shows how power dynamics can turn on a dime.”*

—**TheaterMania.com**

*“Joseph has a gift for penetrating to the depths of human nature. As he explores the question of guilt — in all its forms, for all its reasons — there’s barely a wasted word.”*

—**The Boston Globe**

**Also by Rajiv Joseph**

ANIMALS OUT OF PAPER

BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD

ZOO

GRUESOME PLAYGROUND INJURIES

**DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.**

ISBN 978-0-8222-2932-2



9 780822 229322