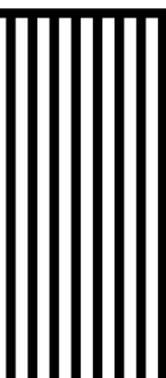


TIGERS BE STILL

BY KIM ROSENSTOCK



DRAMATISTS
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The world premiere of TIGERS BE STILL was produced in New York City by
Roundabout Theatre Company
as part of Roundabout Underground
at the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre on October 6, 2010
(Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director;
Julia C. Levy, Executive Director).

TIGERS BE STILL was developed in a professional workshop production at
Portland Stage Company, Portland, ME.

The following acknowledgments must appear in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

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(Giorgio Moroder and Tom Whitlock)
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This play is for my mom.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Dan Burson, Josh Chapman, Liz Engelman, Larnelle Foster, Gregg Henry, Portia Krieger, Cynthia Levin, Richard Nelson, Suzy Quinn, Karen & Michael Rosenstock, Megan Sandberg-Zakian, Shawny Sena, Lisa Timmel, Paula Vogel, Gavin Witt and Derek Zasky.

A very special thanks to all of the fantastic actors who brought the characters in this play to life in reading and workshop settings. And to all the stage managers who dealt with my neverending stream of new pages with infinite patience and grace.

A very very special thanks to the wonderful Roundabout Underground family, especially Todd Haimes, Robyn Goodman, Josh Fiedler and Jill Rafson.

A NOTE ABOUT JOY

When I started this play, I was setting out to investigate the ways people locate joy in their lives during dark times. At some point I realized that I was writing a comedy about depression. And I decided that in order to maintain the comedic tone, there could only be a handful of moments in which the characters allowed themselves to stare directly into the void. I believe these “void moments” only have space to land when an effortful search for joy surrounds them.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Costumes:

Grace should wear the same sweatsuit in every scene.

Pre-Show:

I always wanted the show to begin with a moment where the audience could observe Sherry and watch her make the decision to start telling her story. One example is the pre-show Sam Gold created for the Roundabout production. As the audience took their seats, Sherry was onstage, seated at her dining room table, putting the finishing touches on her model popsicle stick house. The audience watched her work. Then, when it came time to start, she finished what she was doing and began to speak.

Scene Titles:

A few directors have asked me whether or not I intended the scene titles to be displayed in production. The answer is: It didn't cross my mind. I originally wrote the titles to help me easily recall what happened in each scene. I realize this explanation is uninspired. I only offer it up because I feel bad when I think about some nice person working on this show spending any amount of his/her time trying to figure out what I intended.

Sound:

In the Roundabout production it proved helpful to hear recordings of Joseph making announcements over the school PA system as transitions into Scenes 8 and 15. I've included the text of these optional announcements in an appendix.

Speech:

A slash (/) in a sentence indicates where the next line begins to overlap with it.

Wanda:

In the Roundabout production, we could hear Wanda's voice on the other end of the phone whenever she called Sherry or Grace. The sound design was very realistic, so it was nearly impossible to make out exactly what she was saying. But intelligibility wasn't important. What was important was just knowing that she was there. I've included a map of Wanda's side of the phone conversations in an appendix.

TIGERS BE STILL was presented by Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director) at the Black Box Theater at the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre in New York City, opening on October 6, 2010. It was directed by Sam Gold; the set design and costume designs were by Dane Laffrey; the lighting design was by Japhy Weideman; the sound design was by Fitz Patton; and the production stage manager was Kyle Gates. The cast was as follows:

SHERRY Halley Feiffer
JOSEPH Reed Birney
ZACK John Magaro
GRACE Natasha Lyonne

TIGERS BE STILL was first developed in the summer of 2008 at the MFA Playwrights' Workshop, produced in association with National New Play Network, at the Kennedy Center.

The play was subsequently developed in the spring of 2010 in a professional workshop at Portland Stage Company in Portland, Maine.

CHARACTERS

SHERRY, 24

JOSEPH, 50

ZACK, 18

GRACE, 29

PLACE

Present day.

TIME

In a suburban town near a zoo.

TIGERS BE STILL

Scene 1

The First Day

We are in a suburban living room.

In the center of the room there's a large couch covered with tissues and candy wrappers. In front of the couch is a television. Behind the couch is a door with a padlock.

There is a staircase leading to a second floor.

Items in the living room include a coffee table, a telephone, an array of video game systems, a karaoke machine and shopping bags filled to the brim.

Sherry stands in the middle of the room, framed in a spotlight. She has an upbeat but slightly nervous energy. She's never done this before.

SHERRY. This is the story of ... well ... I guess ... OK. This is the story of how I stopped being a total disaster and got my life on track and did *not* let overwhelming feelings of anxiousness and loneliness and uselessness just like totally eat my brain. I hope it will be an inspirational tale of triumph! *(Pause.)* I need to tell you a few things before we get started. First, my name is Sherry. And I'm twenty-four years old. And this is my home. *Welcome!* I live here with my mother and sister. And for the past month all three of us have just been sitting in here, depressed. And that's *bad*. But today is *good!* Because today I'm getting out of the house. Because

today I start my very first job. As an art teacher! In a school! And the first thing that happens at my first job is an emergency assembly. (*Joseph enters. He's distressed. He speaks into a microphone.*)

JOSEPH. (*Testing the mic.*) Check one. Check one.

SHERRY. The assembly is called by my first boss, Principal Moore, in order to alert everyone that —

JOSEPH. This morning a tiger escaped from the zoo. Officials have told us that this tiger could be anywhere within a hundred-mile radius. Since this town is within one mile of the zoo, that places us well within the range of “extreme danger.” Here are the things I know about tigers: they are fast, they are big, they are mean and they have stripes. OK. So the question is: What is Oceanside Middle School doing to protect you, the student body? Well, we have cancelled recess indefinitely. P.E. classes will focus on indoor sports: basketball, and the other ones. Furthermore, we have three highly trained policemen who will be standing guard outside the school on lookout. We also have three highly trained lunch monitors who will be on lookout inside the school, in case the tiger comes to the cafeteria. And finally, we have instituted a school-wide buddy system so that everyone is accountable to at least one other person. (*A question is asked.*) What's that? Oh. No, I don't have a buddy. I have a rifle. Any other questions? OK ... Then, uh, have a good day. And try to carry on like normal. (*Joseph exits. Sherry turns her attention back to the audience.*)

SHERRY. Principal Moore didn't just hire me to work at his school, he also hired me to work one-on-one with his son, Zack. (*Zack enters wearing a CVS shirt.*) Zack works at CVS. (*He holds up a box of tampons. He tries to swipe them at his register but he gets an “error” noise. He makes an angry sound.*) Zack has anger management issues. (*Zack addresses a customer in a deadpan manner.*)

ZACK. Oh. This box won't scan. Would you mind getting a new one? (*Pause.*) Yeah, I'm sure you know how much they cost, but I need to swipe it. (*Pause.*) It's not that I don't trust you, this isn't an issue of trust, it's an issue of store policy. (*Getting annoyed.*) Fine. Fine. (*Zack gets on his intercom.*) Maribel, I'm gonna need a price check up here on these extra-large, odor-protectant tampons. In case you missed that, that's *extra, large, odor, protectant, tampons*. That's *gigantic tampons* that have deodorant in them. For the lovely lady standing at the register in the purple hat. (*Zack glares at the customer and exits.*)

SHERRY. This is my sister Grace. (*Grace enters wearing a sweatsuit and holding a bottle of Jack Daniels. She's pretty drunk.*) Grace just got out of a long-term relationship and it was not her decision.

GRACE. Huh?

SHERRY. (*To Grace.*) Hey, Grace.

GRACE. (*Looking at the audience.*) What's going on?

SHERRY. I really need Grace to get off the couch for my first appointment with Zack. But when I ask her, "Grace, can you please get off the couch?" She tells me — (*Grace lies down on the couch, dramatically.*)

GRACE. I wish I could but I can't because I have lost the ability to move.

SHERRY. (*Sherry picks up a spice rack from the floor.*) Well you must have been moving at some point today because I see you made another trip to Troy's condo to steal something random.

GRACE. That's not random, that's a spice rack. And I didn't steal it, I earned it.

SHERRY. (*Sherry begins the Herculean task of cleaning the room — moving around in a straightening-up frenzy.*) Right. Look. Like I've said, I totally understand your impulse to take Troy's stuff / but —

GRACE. Do you think I should sleep with Mr. Cooper?

SHERRY. The mailman?

GRACE. You think he's cute?

SHERRY. I think he's old.

GRACE. I just figure it's time to try a real man, y'know, someone who's *really lived*. We got to talking today and it turns out we have a lot in common actually, like, we both love reading other people's mail, and smoothies. (*Grace turns on the television. She gets very excited.*) Oh, I love this show!

SHERRY. This is an adult diaper / commercial.

GRACE. Shhhh! It's the episode with the crossing guard.

SHERRY. Grace, he'll be here any minute. We need to straighten up!

GRACE. In a second, the end is the best part — she gets the diapers and then all of her grandkids gather around her while she helps them cross the street. See, look! (*We hear a crowd of kids cheering from the television.*) They're so happy to see that she can work again.

SHERRY. Could you maybe try to get all of the tissues and candy wrappers off the couch? This is no longer just a living room, it's a

home office. (*Grace turns the television off.*)

GRACE. Why do you get to have a home office? Maybe I need this to be *my* home office. Maybe it already is.

SHERRY. I'm just trying to my make my patient feel comfortable and welcome.

GRACE. Well, I'm sorry but I can't let you have the couch. I need it.

SHERRY. And you can have it, except for on Tuesdays at 4 P.M. when I use it for therapy. Which is right now. I'm trying to be calm but I told you about it this morning and you had all day to make this room presentable. I wanted everything to be perfect. Principal Moore can't know that his son is my first patient.

GRACE. (*Sighing heavily.*) Fine. (*Starts to clean up the tissues and candy wrappers.*) But I'm not bothering with the ones that are underneath the cushions. (*Grace pushes a bunch of stuff under the cushions.*)

SHERRY. I just want things to go well, you know — it's just uncertain right now whether or not this job is gonna be like a permanent thing. I have to prove myself if I want to get hired full-time ... which would be, I mean just thinking about having a full-time job is ... *thrilling*.

GRACE. You need a boyfriend, so badly.

SHERRY. No I don't.

GRACE. This twenty-four-year streak is a real accomplishment, don't get me wrong. But enough is enough. You need to go to a bar. Or a website. Or maybe your patient could be your boyfriend. I mean, clearly you're trying hard to impress him.

SHERRY. I'm not trying to impress him. I'm trying to seem professional. I'm trying to *not* seem like a therapist whose home office is a dirty couch that smells like tears.

GRACE. I bet he's gonna be hot. I mean, we know his dad was a total fox. That picture of him in Mom's room is just like ... Ugh. It's sad to think that someone that hot has to get old, you know? And it's like, good for Mom, dating a hot guy. But then it's like, stupid Mom, for marrying a plain-looking man and having only reasonably attractive children. If Mom had stayed with that guy — the one in that picture — we would be *hot*.

SHERRY. We wouldn't exist.

GRACE. Whatever, *Darwin*.

SHERRY. Besides, we *are* hot.

TIGERS BE STILL

by Kim Rosenstock

2M, 2W

TIGERS BE STILL is a comedy that follows the misadventures of Sherry Wickman, a young woman who has recently earned her masters degree in art therapy only to find herself moving back home. Unemployed and overwhelmed, Sherry retreats to her childhood bed and remains there until an unexpected employment opportunity gives her a renewed sense of purpose and hope.

"[Rosenstock's] subtly funny dialogue and the vivid, truthful characters keep the play grounded in prickly emotional authenticity."

—The New York Times

"An offbeat and nuanced comedy ... Rosenstock finds fresh humor and anguish in two outrageously troubled suburban families in a world of real danger."

—Newsday

"Rosenstock writes clever comic dialogue in a voice that is too smart to be cute. There's something both sad and wise, after all, about redefining a 'mellow' mood as meaning 'paralyzed with depression.'"

—Variety

"Rosenstock accomplishes something rather extraordinary: she makes hanging out with despondent, angry, wayward people fun."

—Entertainment Weekly

"A painfully funny portrait of ordinary people trying to make their way in a suburban wasteland."

—BackStage

"An affecting, sweet, darkly comic new play."

—The Chicago Tribune

"TIGERS BE STILL will leave you with a tender ache for those moments when we all make decisions to move on, not necessarily to 'happily ever after,' but to whatever comes next."

—The Boston Globe

"TIGERS BE STILL is surprisingly rich and engaging, evoking belly laughs and lumps in the throat ... Ultimately, Rosenstock reveals how, in the smallest and quirkiest and most accidental ways, we help each other out of the mire."

—The San Francisco Examiner

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