



**IF THERE IS I HAVEN'T
FOUND IT YET**

BY NICK PAYNE



DRAMATISTS
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Originally Produced in New York City by Roundabout Theatre Company
(Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy,
Executive Director)

World Premiere by the Bush Theatre

For Mum and Dad

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The panel of the George Devine Award 2009: Lucy Caldwell, Chris Campbell, Harriet Devine, Bijan Sheibani, Graham Whybrow, Alexandra Wood and Jenny Worton.

Minna, Mum.

Last, I would like to acknowledge the following books and their authors: *How Bad Are Bananas?* by Mike Berners-Lee, *What's Left?* by Nick Cohen, *The Politics of Climate Change* by Anthony Giddens, *Heat* by George Monbiot, *Six Degrees* by Mark Lynas and *The Hot Topic* by Gabrielle Walker and Sir David King.

IF THERE IS I HAVEN'T FOUND IT YET received its New York premiere at Roundabout Theatre on September 20, 2012, produced by the Bush Theatre. It was directed by Michael Longhurst; the set design was by Beowulf Boritt; the costume design was by Susan Hilferty; the lighting design was by Natasha Katz; the original music and sound design were by Obadiah Eaves; and the production stage manager was J. Philip Bassett. The cast was as follows:

GEORGE Brían F. O'Byrne
FIONA Michelle Gomez
ANNA Annie Funke
TERRY Jake Gyllenhaal

CHARACTERS

GEORGE, male, 40s

FIONA, female, 40s

ANNA, female, 15

(Anna is considerably overweight.)

TERRY, male, 20s

Note: Ellipsis dots (“...”) following a character’s name indicate a desire to speak but an inability to know quite what to say.

I would suggest that even the most sophisticated and determined environmentalist [...] struggles with the fact that, under the shadow of future cataclysm, there is a life to be lived within the constraints of the here-and-now.

*Anthony Giddens, The Politics of Climate Change
(Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, p. 3.)*

Whatever we do today to reduce emissions will matter for our children's generation and beyond, but not for our own. The problem of climate is one of legacy.

*Gabrielle Walker and Sir David King, The Hot Topic
(London: Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 54.)*

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GEORGE. When I was younger, I adored polar bears. My, my father used to subscribe to *National Geographic*, and for years I had polar bear paraphernalia all over the walls of my bedroom — I even had a pair of polar bear swimming trunks. But not long after my wife had given birth to our daughter, I insisted the three of us take a trip to Edinburgh Zoo to see the last two polar bears in Britain — a couple — Barney and Mercedes, would you believe. But when we arrived — and I'll never forget this — when we arrived at the zoo, we were told that Barney had died: he had choked to death on a child's toy that had been thrown into his pool. So, so, I suppose you could say that my interest in the fate of our little blue planet began with a love of all things *Ursus maritimus*.

School corridor, day. Anna and Fiona. Anna wears her PE outfit. Anna dabs a tissue on her slightly bloody nose throughout.

FIONA. Why don't we just start at the beginning? (*Meaning tissue.*) Here. (*Fiona hands Anna a fresh tissue and removes the old one.*) Keep it pressed. Try not to dab it.

ANNA. I can taste it. The blood, in the back of my throat. (*Beat.*)

FIONA. I used to loathe PE, you know.

ANNA. What?

FIONA. The horror, my goodness, the horror of having to get changed in front of your peers. Everyone trying not to look at each other's bits — or rather, everyone trying to look as if they're not

trying to look at each other's bits. Because who knows how our bits are supposed to look when we're that age?

ANNA. What on earth are you on about?

FIONA. I understand your frustration. But I just want you to know that in spite of all of that, it's important to try and remember —

ANNA. No I'm being serious, I don't understand what you're talking about. None of this has anything to do with PE.

FIONA. Oh. Really? Well, that's strange, because I thought — Miss Clarke said to me that — If the fight wasn't about netball, Anna, then what was it about? *(Beat.)* Anna? *(Beat.)* Anna, please, I promise you I'm just trying to help. *(Beat.)* Anna, they're thinking of suspending you.

ANNA. What? How long for?

FIONA. At the moment it's two weeks.

ANNA. What about Lucy Mitchell, everyone else?

FIONA. What about them?

ANNA. Are they gonna get suspended?

FIONA. Not as far as I know, no.

ANNA. This is such fucking bullshit.

FIONA. Language.

ANNA. Isn't it, though?

FIONA. Well. Perhaps if you tell me what happened, I might be able to help. But at the moment I'm completely in the dark — And you can tell me and, I promise, you won't have to tell anyone else. You can tell me anything. *(Beat.)*

ANNA. They found out you were my mum.

FIONA. What did they say? Anna?

ANNA. They just called you lots of stuff.

FIONA. Like what?

ANNA. Just. Lots of stuff all right.

FIONA. And is that why you lost your temper? As opposed to it being about netball —

ANNA. Can't you talk to someone?

FIONA. How do you mean?

ANNA. Tell them it's not my fault. Tell them it's because you work here. Tell them what I'm normally like. That I'm not normally like this. I didn't ask to come here, you know.

FIONA. Anna — *(Doesn't finish. Beat. Fiona watches Anna briefly.)* Why don't we finish this conversation off at home? There's soup in the fridge when you get in. And then I'll pick something up for

IF THERE IS I HAVEN'T FOUND IT YET

by Nick Payne

2M, 2W

Fifteen-year-old Anna's weight makes her a target for bullies. When her mom transfers Anna to the school where she teaches in order to protect her daughter, it only makes things worse. George, Anna's environmentalist dad, is no help at all — he's determined to finish his new book and save the planet. Just as Anna gets suspended for retaliating with a head-butt, her estranged uncle, Terry, arrives unannounced. A heartbroken drifter with the mouth of a sailor, Terry reaches out to Anna in a way that no one ever has. Their unexpected friendship sends her parents' rocky marriage into a tailspin as the whole family wonders: what — or who — really needs saving?

"Mr. Payne is ambitiously addressing both the state of the world (or at least its ecology) and the state of a family, while showing how each intersects with and illuminates the other."

—**The New York Times**

"[A] brutally honest and tender family tale ... George is a man who stands to gain the world, but could lose his family. The ending of this stirring, humane, insightful work suggests that perhaps we shouldn't have to choose."

—**Time Out New York**

"The title of Nick Payne's wonderfully off-kilter play sounds like an answer. But what's the question? If we knew that, we would all be wise — and nobody is wise in Payne's messy, fumbling and huggable comedy about a messy, fumbling and huggable family. The play ... is about people groping their way forward even as the sky falls. Like all of us, they are forever getting it wrong, giving up, and then going on again. There is genuine compassion here amid the high comedy and sharp observations."

—**The Guardian (London)**

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