



# COLLISION

BY **LYLE KESSLER**



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
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COLLISION  
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The New York City premiere of COLLISION was presented by the Amoralists (James Kautz, Artistic Director; Derek Ahonen and Matthew Pilioci, Associate Artistic Directors) at the Rattlestick Playwrights Theater in New York City, opening on January 22, 2013. It was directed by David Fofi; the assistant director was Michael Kessler; the set design was by Alfred Schatz; the lighting design was by Evan Roby; the sound design was by Phil Carluzzo; the costume design was by Jamie Torres; and the production stage manager was Judy Merrick. The cast was as follows:

GRANGE.....James Kautz  
BROMLEY..... Nick Lawson  
DOE..... Anna Stromberg  
PROFESSOR DENTON .....Michael Cullen  
RENEL..... Craig Mums Grant

## **CHARACTERS**

GRANGE

BROMLEY

DOE

PROFESSOR DENTON

RENEL

## **PLACE**

A college campus  
somewhere in the heart of America.

## **TIME**

The present.

# COLLISION

*Darkness. Sounds of students: talking, laughing, shouting. Music playing, growing louder and louder.*

*Spotlight on Bromley, an awkward eighteen-year-old, ear-phones on, eyes closed, gyrating to the music on his iPod.*

*Lights up on a college dormitory room, two cots, two desks. Sunlight through the large windows, overlooking the Commons below. Grange enters with a suitcase, a backpack, and a poster tube. He glances at Bromley, standing, gyrating to the music. Grange removes a poster of Che Guevara and tacks it to the wall. He tacks up another poster of Kurt Cobain.*

GRANGE. Name? *(No response.)* Name?!

BROMLEY. *(Removes earphones.)* Huh? Excuse me?

GRANGE. I said, name.

BROMLEY. Name? My name?

GRANGE. Who else's?

BROMLEY. Name's Bromley. And who are you?

GRANGE. Name's Grange. What kind of name is Bromley?

BROMLEY. What kind of name is Grange?

GRANGE. Touché! *(Offers his hand.)* Pleasure!

BROMLEY. *(Shaking hand.)* Yeah, pleasure.

GRANGE. You mind?

BROMLEY. Mind what?

GRANGE. If you mind, Bromley, say the word.

BROMLEY. What word? What are you talking about?

GRANGE. Me filling up the walls with posters, photos, and other assorted memorabilia.

BROMLEY. No, I don't mind.

GRANGE. Of a life. Of a life lived. Of my precious, unadulterated, unexpurgated life.

BROMLEY. I don't mind. (*Grange tacks a poster of Nine Inch Nails to a wall.*)

GRANGE. You're the congenial sort.

BROMLEY. (*Sits on his cot.*) I don't know, sometimes, I imagine, I guess.

GRANGE. The thing is, Bromley, I can't abide a bare wall. An empty canvas. The absence of something, anything. God abhors a vacuum. (*Grange removes photos of men, women, and children from his backpack.*) You know that?

BROMLEY. Know that God abhors a vacuum?

GRANGE. (*Tacks photos.*) Uh-huh.

BROMLEY. I thought it was "nature abhors a vacuum."

GRANGE. God, nature ... What the hell's the difference?

BROMLEY. Well, there is a difference.

GRANGE. It's all in the eye of the beholder, anyway.

BROMLEY. I opt for nature. (*Grange places a Mayan sculpture on a desk.*)

GRANGE. Are you a heathen, then, Bromley?

BROMLEY. I don't believe in an all-knowing, omnipotent overlord.

GRANGE. Well, wash out your mouth with soap and water, Bromley. Lightning might strike.

BROMLEY. I doubt if lightning will strike.

GRANGE. I don't want to be the recipient of collateral fuckin' damage.

BROMLEY. I don't consider myself a heathen.

GRANGE. What do you consider yourself?

BROMLEY. Someone who questions the truth. Someone who looks for verification.

GRANGE. You mean verification like in the sense of empirical knowledge?

BROMLEY. Something like that.

GRANGE. That's really snide of you, Bromley. You know religion demands a leap of faith. Not all life is verifiable. We strive for a loftier ideal.

BROMLEY. Well, I'm all for a loftier ideal.

GRANGE. I'm not advocating religious belief, Bromley, far from it. In fact, I have a bone or two to pick with the Lord.

BROMLEY. For instance?

GRANGE. Sodom and Gomorrah, the Flood, the walls of Jericho. A holocaust is a holocaust is a holocaust, to quote Gertrude Stein.

BROMLEY. I thought it was “a rose is a rose is a rose.”

GRANGE. Don't be so fuckin' literal, Bromley. One man's rose is another man's holocaust. (*Pause.*) Listen, Bromley ...

BROMLEY. Yes, Grange ...

GRANGE. What do you think?

BROMLEY. About what?

GRANGE. Our environment, for Christ's sake. In the beginning there were bare walls; now there is something.

BROMLEY. I kind of like it.

GRANGE. Kind of...?

BROMLEY. I like it. Is this your family?

GRANGE. Don't be silly.

BROMLEY. I don't understand.

GRANGE. I would never place photos of my family on the wall. I would have nightmares.

BROMLEY. (*Inspecting photos.*) Well, who are they?

GRANGE. A cross-section of humanity. Men, women, boys, girls ... No one of any consequence. (*Pause.*)

BROMLEY. I see.

GRANGE. You don't see.

BROMLEY. Well, no, I don't see.

GRANGE. Well, then why did you say you see?

BROMLEY. I didn't want to offend you.

GRANGE. You offend me by being dishonest.

BROMLEY. I'm sorry.

GRANGE. Here we are, two complete strangers, unknown to one another, jockeying for position, so to speak, establishing a foothold, based on what, based on trust, based on common decency, sharing a room, sharing much more, sharing a confidence. Let's be honest with one another, candid, above-board ...

BROMLEY. I'll never lie to you again, Grange! I promise you.

GRANGE. I appreciate that. I can be myself now. It's so hard, so difficult, living one's life for others ...

BROMLEY. I agree.

GRANGE. To get what ... to get their approval. And by doing so, gain what...?

BROMLEY. Gain ...

GRANGE. Go on ...

BROMLEY. Gain ... their acceptance.

GRANGE. Acceptance. Exactly. Is it worth it, Bromley? Becoming them. Becoming unindividualized. We don't want that, do we?

BROMLEY. No, we don't want that.

GRANGE. We strive for, at all times, individuality.

BROMLEY. Uniqueness of being.

GRANGE. Listen, Bromley, while we're on the subject ...

BROMLEY. What subject?

GRANGE. What do you say we flip for the beds.

BROMLEY. Flip...?

GRANGE. Heads, tails ...

BROMLEY. I don't understand.

GRANGE. To see which one gets which bed.

BROMLEY. Well, I arrived a couple of hours before you.

GRANGE. Are you saying the early bird gets the worm kind of thing?

BROMLEY. No, I'm just saying I arrived two hours ago, so I picked a bed, I decided on a bed.

GRANGE. I like that bed.

BROMLEY. I like it too.

GRANGE. I like where it's situated in the room. I like its positioning.

BROMLEY. I also like its positioning.

GRANGE. This is why I'm saying let's make it equitable. We don't want to get off on the wrong foot, so to speak. I mean, we're not running a foot-race here. This is not a land grab in the old fuckin' West. We're just talking two beds.

BROMLEY. Okay, okay, let's flip.

GRANGE. I appreciate that, Bromley. You call. (*Grange flips a coin.*)

BROMLEY. Heads.

GRANGE. (*Looks at it.*) Tails. (*Grange pockets the coin.*)

BROMLEY. You're kidding me.

GRANGE. (*Unpacking.*) I kid you not, Bromley.

BROMLEY. You never showed me the coin!

GRANGE. What's to see, Bromley. It's just a lousy quarter.

BROMLEY. How do I know it was tails?

GRANGE. Would I lie to you?

BROMLEY. I don't know what you would do. I don't even know you.

GRANGE. Well, you're getting to know me. Would you mind getting off my bed.

BROMLEY. It's not your bed, it's my bed!



# COLLISION

by Lyle Kessler

4M, 1W

COLLISION takes place in a college dormitory somewhere in the heart of America. Three students, a professor, and a stranger collide in this black comedy of emotions on the edge of the abyss.

*“Bruising, rowdy-guy theater ... Mr. Kessler has a gift for building momentum through accelerating degrees of conflict.”*

—**The New York Times**

*“[A] cocktail of sex, drugs, radical talk and visceral not-quite-realism ... it’s a creepy pleasure to watch the characters ... stomp down the garden path.”*

—**Time Out (New York)**

*“Kessler has a keen eye for psychological and emotional manipulation.”*

—**Backstage**

*“Kessler’s disturbing play delves into dark and disconcerting places ... stunning language, vibrant speeches, and genuine emotion ... COLLISION is a smart, troubling, and timely play ... an intense, intelligent, and complicated piece for audiences ready to be challenged and intrigued.”*

—**Theasy.com**

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