



OUTSTANDING SHORT PLAYS VOLUME 3

Edited by **CRAIG POSPISIL**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



OUTSTANDING SHORT PLAYS: VOLUME 3
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INTRODUCTION

As I started my search for short works for this third volume of *OUTSTANDING SHORT PLAYS*, I knew I wanted to correct an imbalance that had been present in the first two collections. Both of the first volumes featured more male playwrights than female ones, and I wanted to do better. And since actresses often (and rightfully) lament about the number of female characters and leading roles in plays, I also wanted to find plays that particularly featured good roles for women.

For this collection, I turned to a number of playwrights whose work we have published before: people like Arlene Hutton, Julia Jordan, Ruby Rae Spiegel, Lee Blessing and Rob Ackerman. And they had some terrific pieces to choose from. I also sought out some new voices that could be brought into the DPS fold, and found Chiara Atik's *52ND TO BOWERY TO COBBLE HILL*, IN *BROOKLYN*, Daniel Reitz' *NAPOLEON IN EXILE*, and more.

Interestingly, there are more dramas in this collection than I usually see at a short play festival, where the plays tend to be comedic. Hutton's *CAPTURING THE FORT*, Jordan's *A SWEET AND BITTER PROVIDENCE*, Blessing's *INTO YOU*, and my one-act *DISSONANCE* are definitely more dramatic works. But that isn't to say there aren't some great comedies in this volume. I know you're going to laugh out loud while reading Kara Lee Corthron's very funny *MERCURY IS PERPETUALLY IN RETRO-GRADE SO STOP WORRYING ABOUT IT*. Jenny Lyn Bader's *ANNIVERSARY SEASON* is an absurdist trip, and Patricia Cotter's *RULES OF COMEDY* is a gem I saw at the Actors Theatre of Louisville and knew immediately I wanted it for this collection.

This volume of plays is a drop in the ocean in addressing the gender imbalance that still exists in the theater world, but I hope this is a step toward making these choices more inclusive, while still putting together a terrific group of plays. Which I think this is.

—Craig Pospisil
2017

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**52ND TO BOWERY TO
COBBLE HILL, IN
BROOKLYN**

BY CHIARA ATIK

CHARACTERS

HALLE

ALISON

52ND TO BOWERY TO COBBLE HILL, IN BROOKLYN received its premiere production at the Ensemble Studio Theatre (William Carden, Artistic Director; Paul A. Slee, Executive Director) in its Marathon of One Act Plays, opening on May 13th, 2015. It was directed by Adrienne Campbell-Holt. The cast was as follows:

HALLE Megan Tusing
ALISON Molly Carden

52ND TO BOWERY TO COBBLE HILL, IN BROOKLYN

Midnight on a Saturday in New York City. Raining.

Halle, 20s, dressed for a night out, climbs into the back of a taxi cab.

HALLE. *(Slightly out of breath, shaking her umbrella out.)* Bowery and Delancey, please?

Alison, also in her 20s, runs on, using her jacket to shield herself from the rain. She talks through the window of the cab.

ALISON. Are you going downtown?

HALLE. What?

ALISON. You're going downtown, right?

HALLE. Uh, yeah—

ALISON. Sweet, scotch.

Halle obediently moves over and Alison climbs into the cab.

(To the driver.) Sir, we're making two stops, the first is...?

HALLE. Uhm. Bowery and Delancey.

ALISON. And the second is in Cobble Hill. In Brooklyn. Thank youuuuu. *(To Halle.)* Oh my god, there were like no cabs, we're so lucky we got one.

HALLE. I don't have cash.

ALISON. That's okay, you can get me back. What did you think of that party? I barely got to talk to you.

HALLE. Yeah, I know, I was—

Halle starts fumbling with the taxi TV button, trying to turn

it off.

ALISON. Had you met his fiancée before? She wasn't what I was expecting. She was really pretty! Not that Joe's a mutant or anything, but she is really pretty. And she seemed nice.

HALLE. (*Fumbling with the TV.*) Turn OFF!

ALISON. Oh, here, you just—

Alison takes a stab. Nothing.

HALLE. Yeah, it's not—

ALISON. Is it broken?

HALLE. No, it's just these stupid—

ALISON. Can you just put it on mute?

HALLE. I get carsick really easily, I'd rather just—

She gives it one final stab. It turns off.

(*Frustrated.*) God!

ALISON. (*Triumphant.*) Okay!!

ALISON. I'm so glad we have this cab ride to catch up! I feel like I haven't seen you in so long.

HALLE. Yeah, I know, it's been a while.

ALISON. I wish I saw you more often. Whenever I see you I'm always like, "I love Halle, we should hang out more!" And then I don't know why we don't! I mean I guess I'm really busy these days.

HALLE. Mmm.

ALISON. So how are things? What's been going on with you?

HALLE. Not much,

ALISON. I saw, or heard somewhere that you went back to school? Or, you're in grad school?

HALLE. Yeah.

ALISON. That's awesome. For what?

HALLE. Library sciences.

ALISON. Cool! That's cool. You always really liked reading.

HALLE. Yeah.

Awkward beat.

(*Dutifully.*) How have you been?

ALISON. Sooooo busy. Like. SO busy. I like, have no life right now, I'm so overwhelmed with work. But I guess that's a good problem to have, right?

HALLE. Yeah.

ALISON. Like, better than the opposite!

HALLE. Definitely.

ALISON. But, yeah, it's been crazy. I don't know if you heard but, uhm, my app was sold?

HALLE. Oh, no, I hadn't—

ALISON. Oh, I thought maybe you would have seen on Facebook or something—

HALLE. No...

ALISON. Read about it somewhere, it was sort of a thing...

HALLE. No.

ALISON. Oh. Okay, well, yeah, we got funding, so yay! But also like—when can I take a vacation? Gah!

HALLE. Right.

ALISON. Well, you know, that's how it goes. Ultimately these are good problems to have. I can sleep when I'm dead.

HALLE. Yeah.

ALISON. I'll sleep in my forties!

HALLE. Ha ha.

ALISON. Like, right?

HALLE. That's funny.

ALISON. Hey, can I ask you a random question?

HALLE. Uh—

ALISON. Do you and Joe have, like. A thing?

HALLE. Me and Joe?

ALISON. Yeah.

HALLE. Joe, the guy whose engagement party we just left? That Joe?

ALISON. Yeah.

HALLE. No!?!?

ALISON. Okay! I just thought I maybe sort of sensed. You know.
A vibe between you

HALLE. I don't think so.

ALISON. To be honest, I always thought you sort of had a crush
on him.

HALLE. Nope!

ALISON. I wouldn't tell anyone!

HALLE. Well, thanks very much, but that's not—why would you
even—?

ALISON. You're just sort of flirty around him! "Joe."

Alison mimics bashfully punching him.

HALLE. I don't. I don't *punch* him, Alison.

ALISON. I've seen you do that!

HALLE. When?

ALISON. (*Playfully—she thinks they're joking.*) "Joe, you're such
an asshole."

HALLE. Oh my god.

ALISON. It's not that big of a deal.

HALLE. If people think I'm flirting with our engaged friend? That
is a big deal.

ALISON. I don't think people think that! I've just noticed that
you're smiley around him, and thought...

HALLE. I'm actually smiley around a lot of people. Maybe not
your level of smiley, but. I smile.

ALISON. So are you seeing anyone?

HALLE. Not anyone special.

ALISON. Yeah, it's hard.

HALLE. I mean it's not that it's *hard*, I'm just like, not, at the moment.

ALISON. Well, you're probably busy with school!

HALLE. Yeah.

ALISON. 'Cause I'm sure there are *lots* of guys who'd want to date
you, you're so cute and funny!

HALLE. Are we taking Broadway?

ALISON. Oh, we shouldn't take Broadway.

Their voices go up an octave as they address the driver.

HALLE. Sir?

ALISON. Excuse me, sir?

Can you take Second?

ALISON. Just Second all the way down.

HALLE. Thank youuuuu.

ALISON. Thank youuuuuuu.

Halle leans back in her seat.

ALISON. Are you okay?

HALLE. I'm just feeling kind of carsick.

ALISON. Okay.

Beat.

Hey, can I ask a random question?

HALLE. Okay?

ALISON. I normally would never ask this, and I know I'm probably just being paranoid, but like. Did I...?

HALLE. ??

ALISON. Did I do anything to you?

HALLE. Like what?

ALISON. Anything, I dunno. Anything to make you hate me.

HALLE. I don't hate you.

ALISON. No, I know, I know that, it's just that I thought I was getting this vibe from you, first at the party and then now, so I just thought I'd—

HALLE. I just don't like you very much.

ALISON. Uh. What?

HALLE. I'm sorry.

ALISON. You don't—

HALLE. Like you.

ALISON. ...very much, or at all...?

HALLE. Just. Middle-of-the-road not liking you, I think.

ALISON. Okay.

OUTSTANDING SHORT PLAYS VOLUME THREE

edited by Craig Pospisil

52ND TO BOWERY TO COBBLE HILL, IN BROOKLYN by Chiara Atik. Halle hails a taxi after a party, when Alison, her aggressively bubbly friend, pushes into the cab too. It's clear Halle didn't want to ride with her, but she puts up with it until Alison asks if she's mad at her, so Halle comes right out and tells her "I just don't like you very much." (2 women.) **ANNIVERSARY SEASON** by Jenny Lyn Bader. Zoe and Matt got married during hurricane season, and each year when their anniversary rolls around they seem to battle each other or prepare for another storm. Will their marriage last? Will they remember their anniversary? Will the power be knocked out again? (1 man, 1 woman.) **CAPTURING THE FORT** by Arlene Hutton. Carrie and Michael are US Marines on security duty in a desert war zone. They would seem to have little in common. Michael seems to be "one of the boys," and Carrie is married with a husband back home. But with little to do but talk, these two soldiers begin to connect. (1 man, 1 woman.) **CARRIE & FRANCINE** by Ruby Rae Spiegel. Carrie, 13, asks her friend Francine to help her get ready for a make-out session at a bar mitzvah. Having seen too many *Girls Gone Wild* videos, Carrie thinks she's the right age to go wild herself. These girls can be cruel and talk like truck drivers, but there's an odd innocence to them as well. And somehow, they may be okay in the end. (3 women.) **DISSONANCE** by Craig Pospisil. Tricia returns to the Berkshires to deal with her mother's death following a battle with Alzheimer's, but at the funeral home she collides with Fitz, a prodigy and former piano student of her mother's, with secrets of his own, who challenges her choices. (1 man, 1 woman.) **INTO YOU** by Lee Blessing. A week after being drugged and raped at a frat party, Molly brings home a drunken man from another party. She doesn't know him. She doesn't know who raped her. But she plans to exact her revenge on him. (1 man, 3 women.) **MERCURY IS PERPETUALLY IN RETROGRADE SO STOP WORRYING ABOUT IT** by Kara Lee Corthron. Polly's life is great. Her mother just sent her two tickets to *Wicked*. What could go wrong? Then her boyfriend breaks up with her. And her best friend does too. And her mother changes her phone number. And that's just the start of things... (1 man, 3 women.) **NAPOLEON IN EXILE** by Daniel Reitz. A single mother, sick with cancer, struggles to talk to her low-functioning twenty-five-year-old son with Asperger's about how he might take care of himself when she's gone. (1 man, 1 woman.) **ON THE MENU** by Rob Ackerman. A mother tries to talk to her fourteen-year-old daughter about sex before she goes off to culinary camp for the summer. The daughter—of course—wants nothing to do with this conversation. But her mother persists, until the daughter finds a way to turn the tables on her. (2 women.) **RULES OF COMEDY** by Patricia Cotter. Caroline is really, really not funny. Which is why she hires Guy, a stand-up comedian with some hang-ups of his own, to teach her how to tell jokes. But it turns out that they both have things to learn from one another, about life as well as laughter. (1 man, 1 woman.) **A SWEET AND BITTER PROVIDENCE** by Julia Jordan. Late at night, outside their father's hospital room, Molly, Grace, and Lucy argue about which of them should tell their brother Sam to break up with "that girl" they can't stand. It seems catty, but they love their brother and their family. And they may be right. (1 man, 3 women.)

Also edited by Craig Pospisil
OUTSTANDING SHORT PLAYS,
VOLUMES 1 & 2
THE APARTMENT COMPLEX
and others

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