



# NAPERVILLE

BY **MAT SMART**



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



NAPERVILLE  
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*for my mother*

The world premiere of NAPERVILLE was produced by Slant Theatre Project (Matt Dellapina, Wes Grantom, Adam Knight, and Mat Smart, Co-Artistic Directors) at the June Havoc Theater in New York City, opening on November 24, 2014. It was directed by Adam Knight, the scenic design was by Meredith Ries, the costume design was by Kristina Makowski, the lighting design was by Derek Wright, the sound design was by Stowe Nelson and Erik Skovgaard, the compositions were by Ethan Deppe, and the stage manager was Alex H. Hajjar. The cast was as follows:

CANDICE ..... Susan Greenhill  
HOWARD ..... Matt Dellapina  
ANNE ..... Stacey Yen  
ROY ..... Brent Langdon  
T.C. .... Brett Epstein

The Midwest premiere of NAPERVILLE was produced at Theater Wit (Jeremy Wechsler, Producing Artistic Director) in Chicago, Illinois, opening on September 6, 2016. It was directed by Jeremy Wechsler, the scenic design was by Joe Schermoly, the lighting design was by Alexander Ridgers, the costume design was by Christine Pascual, the sound design and compositions were by Ethan Deppe, and the stage manager was Katrina Herrmann. The cast was as follows:

CANDICE ..... Laura T. Fisher  
HOWARD ..... Mike Tepeli  
ANNE ..... Abby Pierce  
ROY ..... Charlie Strater  
T.C. .... Andrew Jessop

NAPERVILLE was developed in part at Vineyard Arts Project, Edgartown, Massachusetts (Ashley Melone, Founder and Artistic Director).

NAPERVILLE received a developmental workshop at Cleveland Play House / Case Western Reserve University.

NAPERVILLE received a developmental reading at Primary Stages.

## **CHARACTERS**

CANDICE, female, late 50s or early 60s, blind

HOWARD, male, early 30s, Candice's son

ANNE, female, early 30s, a high school classmate of Howard's

ROY, male, late 40s, a coffee shop regular

T.C., any gender, 20s or 30s, the manager of the coffee shop

## **PLACE**

Naperville, Illinois

## **TIME**

2012

## **NOTES**

NAPERVILLE is to be performed without an intermission.

Depending on how the actor cast as T.C. identifies, please adjust the gender pronouns accordingly.

# NAPERVILLE

*Mid-June. The Caribou Coffee on 95<sup>th</sup> Street in Naperville, Illinois. It is just past five A.M. Anne writes on a napkin. She crosses out, writes, crosses out, draws arrows, thinks, crosses out. She opens a voice-memo app on her phone and speaks into it.*

ANNE. Joseph Naper was born in 1798. He was a shipbuilder. It's what his father did. It's what his brother did. Naper ships sailed all over the Great Lakes—all over Lake Erie and Lake Michigan and Lake—Lake—Lake—Lake Superior! Lake—Lake—

*Anne stops recording.*

You've got to be kidding me—

*Anne starts recording again.*

Joe Naper was born in 1798. He was a shipbuilder. It's what his father did, what his brother did. Naper ships sailed all over the Great Lakes—whatever they are. But there was something Joe Naper—Lake Huron! Yes.

*Anne stops recording, starts again.*

What would that feel like? To build a ship? Not an app or a stock portfolio—not something on a screen or in a bank account—but a ship. Something that can take people from one place to another—from lake to lake—ocean to ocean. What would it be like to sail on a ship that you and your brother and your father built together? Would it be...joy?

*Stops.*

Barf.

*Starts.*

Joseph Naper was a shipbuilder. It's what his father did, what his brother did, but it wasn't enough for him. When he went to sleep every night, smelling of sawdust, with blisters on his hands—he

dreamed of building a town. And not just any town—this one. Where I was born and grew up and got married.

*Anne looks out the window.*

Joe Naper dreamed of building this.

It is just past five A.M. and I am—

*She stops recording and quickly says:*

Lake Michigan. Lake Erie. Lake Superior. Lake Huron. Lake—Lake—  
Lake—

*Records.*

It is five A.M. and I am the only customer here at the Caribou Coffee on 95<sup>th</sup> Street in Naperville, Illinois. Thirty-five miles southwest of Chicago.

U.S.A., North America, Planet Earth, Solar System, Milky Way Galaxy.

This Caribou's claim to fame—other than being right across from Neuqua Valley High School—is that a very special person used to come here: 2010 Men's Figure Skating Gold Medalist and Naperville native—Evan Lysacek. Before ice skating practice, Evan would come here to—

T.C. You need some paper?

*T.C., wearing his Caribou hat and Caribou apron, stands at Anne's table. He holds out a few sheets of blank paper.*

ANNE. That's okay.

T.C. You like writing on napkins?

ANNE. I guess, yeah.

T.C. It's not just because you don't have paper? Because you can have this.

ANNE. No, it's just that I like—I don't know. Sure. Thank you.

*Anne takes the paper.*

T.C. Are you making a podcast or something? I overheard.

ANNE. ...I don't know what I'm doing yet. I'm just trying to build something, I guess.

*Anne stops recording.*

T.C. Cool. I'm T.C. I'm the new manager. I just transferred from



the Bolingbrook Caribou and got this promotion and I'm pretty freaked out—well, a mix of freaked out and stoked—but I totally know what I'm doing. I got this. There were plenty of times when Parvesh was gone and I was in charge, so I've totally got this. But if something goes wrong—it's on me. I'm the captain of this ship. Look at all this glass—it's like I'm Jean-Luc Picard. You know what's best about this Caribou?

ANNE. That Evan Lysacek used to come here?

T.C. Dude, Evan Lysacek was in the same class as my little brother at Neuqua. He's like the nicest guy ever. When he beat Plushenko for the gold, I jumped up and down so hard that my TV fell off the wall mount and shattered on my apartment floor. Because it wasn't just a victory for like America over Russia—or for Naperville—it was a victory for—I don't know—Plushenko had a quadruple jump and Evan only had triples—so all the Russians were so pissed—I get it. But Evan's free skate? That was...soul. On ice.

*T.C. points.*

That's where Evan usually sat.

At least, that's what my brother said. I was in college already. But other than that—the best thing about this place is—look!—bum bum bum ba! No drive-thru. The drive-thru is the worst invention in the history of the world. My old store had a drive-thru and there were always ten cars waiting and we constantly had to make latte after latte after latte and if you're not working the window, you don't see the people. It's like you're making coffee for cars. I wanted to blow my brains out. Because sure—this is a chain and this is the suburbs and everything's the same—yada yada—however people want to dump on the 'burbs—but the truth is—giving people their coffee in the morning is like a...beautiful thing. And I want to see their faces. Your face.

*T.C. looks at Anne for a few moments. He really looks at her face and takes her in. Perhaps it goes on a little longer than comfortable.*

Hi.

ANNE. ...Hi.

T.C. Thank you for coming to Caribou Coffee: “Life is short. Stay awake for it.”

ANNE. May I...may I record you saying that?

T.C. Um, which part?

ANNE. About giving people their coffee.

*Anne presses record. T.C. speaks into her phone.*

T.C. The truth is—giving people their coffee in the morning is a...beautiful thing. And I want to see their faces.

Crap, customer. “Captain to the bridge!”

*T.C. hurries back to the counter, stops.*

Hey—if it turns out you need some music—maybe an underscore for whatever you end up doing—I...I play clarinet. Sometimes I use a looper and play all this crazy-sounding music with myself. My website is T.C. clarinet in your face dot com. Check it out.

*T.C. goes to the counter.*

*Anne scrolls back in the recording and pushes play.*

RECORDING OF ANNE. ...I don’t know what I’m doing yet. I’m just trying to build something, I guess.

*Rewinds, plays.*

I’m just trying to build something, I guess.

*The sun rises.*

*Time passes.*

*The sky fills with full, white clouds.*

*Another empty coffee cup appears on Anne’s table. Another. It is just past nine A.M. Howard leads his mother, Candice, inside.*

*Howard stops short when he sees Anne.*

HOWARD. Crap.

CANDICE. What?

HOWARD. Your spot’s taken.

CANDICE. We can ask them to move.

HOWARD. You can’t do that.

CANDICE. *(To Anne.)* Excuse me?

HOWARD. Mom—

CANDICE. Say—

HOWARD. (*Whispering.*) Please do not ask her to move.

CANDICE. You're in my spot.

ANNE. Um.

CANDICE. Most people know that's my spot. Who's there?

ANNE. What?

CANDICE. Who are you?

ANNE. I'm Anne.

CANDICE. Anne, you're in my chair and I'll buy you a cup of coffee if you move. It's the best spot. Far enough from the door you don't get a draft, but not in a corner—close to the fire, warm but not too hot. It's perfect.

HOWARD. (*To Anne.*) I'm really sorry about this—

CANDICE. (*To Howard.*) Don't apologize for me.

HOWARD. Mom—

CANDICE. (*To Anne.*) I haven't been here for three weeks and my overprotective son here—

HOWARD. You got out of the hospital last week.

CANDICE. I had a little accident.

HOWARD. Little?

*Beat.*

ANNE. I'll move. It's cool.

*Somewhat annoyed, Anne gathers her stuff.*

CANDICE. Oh, thank you! That is so sweet of you.

*Anne looks for another table. She zeros in on the table where Evan Lysacek used to sit. She stops. She sits down. She closes her eyes.*

HOWARD. Okay, two more steps to the table. Here's the back of the chair.

*Howard leads Candice to the table and puts her hand on the back of the chair.*

You got it?

# NAPERVILLE

by Mat Smart

2 men, 2 women, 1 n/s

Howard leaves his career in Seattle and moves back home to Naperville, Illinois, to help his mother Candice transition after an accident leaves her blind. At the local Caribou Coffee, they cross paths with Anne, Howard's old classmate and an expert on Naperville's founder, Captain Joseph Naper. NAPERVILLE is a comedy about high school crushes, curfews (for your mother), sight, and how beauty reveals itself in the suburbs.

*"Smart...surprises you in this intricate, delightful comic drama... everyone in this shop has a story, a loss, a regret, and Smart weaves their tales together adeptly."*

—The New York Times

*"...charming... Smart's play is a loving appreciation of an underappreciated place to call home."*

—Time Out Chicago

*"...a quirky, deeply poetic homage to [an] affluent western suburb... [a] piercingly honest and humane portrait of ordinary people... it is bound to leave you breathless."*

—Chicago Sun-Times

*"Smart's clever, touching, and hilarious...play NAPERVILLE is universal whether you grew up in a subdivision, farm, or high rise..."*

—Theasy.com

*"NAPERVILLE is a charming and rich examination of a group of suburbanites looking for redemption from [an] underlying sense of malaise... NAPERVILLE is filled with magnetizing moments and engaging characters that play on the comedy and tragedy of quiet places we are too quick to forget. [Smart's] dramedy is a beautiful valentine to the heart and soul of the American suburbs."*

—NewYorkTheatreReview.com

Also by Mat Smart  
THE STEADFAST

ISBN 978-0-8222-3881-2



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