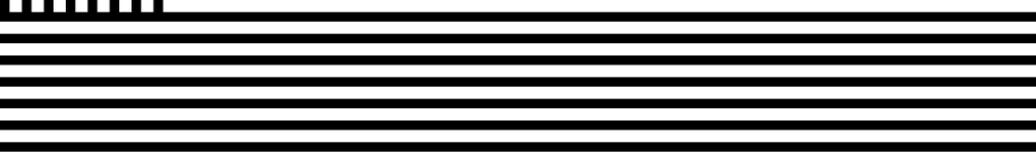
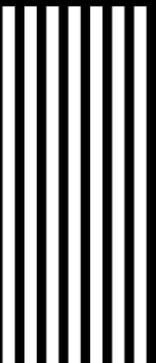


SCISSORING

BY **CHRISTINA
QUINTANA**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



SCISSORING
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For Calvert

SCISSORING had its world premiere at INTAR (Louis D. Moreno, Artistic Director), New York City, on June 11, 2018. It was directed by Estefanía Fadul, the set design was by Raul Abrego, the costume design was by Heather McDevitt Barton, the lighting design was by Christina Watanabe, the sound design was by Fan Zhang, the stage manager was Fran Acuña-Almiron, and the assistant stage manager was Lindsay Kipnis. The cast was as follows:

ABIGAIL BAUER Vanessa Butler
JOSIE HERNANDEZ Ashley Marie Ortiz
ELAINE DUFOE Kim Brockington
CELIA LAROQUE Ally Carey
P.A. SYSTEM/FATHER RAY Ryan Vincent Anderson
LORENA HICKOK Marie Louise Guinier
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT Elise Santora

Following opening, Alejandra Maldonado took over as stage manager on June 12, 2018, and on June 18, 2018, Christy Escobar took over the role of Celia.

SCISSORING was a finalist in the 2013–2014 Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition and presented in workshop by Columbia Stages at the Studio Theatre of the Pershing Square Signature Center, New York City, opening on May 2, 2013. It was directed by Rebecca Cunningham, the producer was Matthew Groff, the dramaturg was Greg Taubman, the set design was by Lucas Womack, the lighting design was by Evan Roby, the costume design was by Matsy Stinson, the sound design was by Olivia Gemelli, the stage manager was Olivia Gemelli, and the assistant stage manager was Emily Asaro. The cast was as follows:

ABIGAIL BAUER	Emily Everidge
JOSIE HERNANDEZ	Jene Hernandez
ELAINE	Jeanine Foster-McElvia
CELIA	Elizabeth Gray
FATHER RAY	Jonathan Hooks
LORENA HICKOK	Phyllis Rossi
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT	Ramona Floyd
P.A. SYSTEM	Joseph Cordaro

CHARACTERS

ABIGAIL BAUER, early thirties, African-American or biracial, New Orleans native, history teacher plagued by Catholic guilt

JOSIE HERNANDEZ, early thirties, Nuyorican, Abigail's partner, a painter who lives loud

ELAINE DUFOE, fifties, African-American, overbearing über-Catholic principal

CELIA LAROQUE, early/mid-twenties, white, born/raised Uptown girl, math teacher

FATHER RAY, thirties, benevolent Haitian-American priest, came to New Orleans for seminary

LORENA HICKOK, shadow of journalist and Eleanor Roosevelt's confidante

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, shadow of the First Lady

P.A. SYSTEM, any gender, any race, any age; a personified version of the classroom loudspeaker, constantly shape-shifting

TIME

Now (2017–2018 school year)—plus visits from the past

PLACE

New Orleans, Louisiana (specifically Uptown and the Marigny).

In a city dominated by Catholic schools, St. Elizabeth Rose is a well-established Uptown all-girls Catholic high school. It's a very white institution, and Elaine has worked hard for her place there.

The Marigny (though always funky and gorgeous) was a "less desirable" area of the city pre-Katrina, largely home to artists and the LGBT community. Though still full of artists, post-Katrina the area has become much more shiny and gentrified, particularly because of its proximity to the Quarter and the introduction of a new streetcar stop at Rampart.

ON CASTING

The actor playing Father Ray may double as the Park McArthur voiceover.

In the world premiere, Father Ray doubled as the P.A. System. In other iterations, the P.A. has been cast separately as a drag queen and as a woman. The world is your burrito.

The characters of Lorena and Eleanor should be cast as women of color. In the world premiere, Eleanor was played by a Latina and Lorena played by an African-American woman.

NOTES

This play is to be performed without an intermission.

Slashes / indicate when the next character begins speaking. The slash's placement serves as estimation; take liberties.

Brackets [] indicate thoughts which are not said out loud.

Scenes flow in and out and on top of one another—one begins while another ends.

The painting of St. Elizabeth Rose should not be too literal—if we see it at all.

Re: accent—No *Streetcar*, please! A Georgia or Mississippi or even rural Louisiana accent is *very different* than a New Orleans accent. New Orleanians tend to speak with an easiness on the words. Yats have an accent closer to Brooklyn than anywhere else in the South. Uptowners often have little discernable accent to outsiders. Above all: *Less is more!* New Orleanians most often pronounce New Orleans as New Or-lins. There are notations re: pronunciation throughout the play.

Recommended reading: *Empty Without You: The Intimate Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok*, edited by Rodger Streitmatter

*Darling, will you never learn that love can't be pigeon holed
and perhaps we love people more for their weaknesses than
for their best qualities of which you have a lot tho' you forget
them when you are down.*

—Eleanor Roosevelt to Lorena Hickok,
Empty Without You

*It is human, is in all the books:
choose now, or be left behind.*

*What of those who do not choose?
And do not fall?*

*Neither man nor wife.
And at the same time both: not promised,
not withheld.*

*I have seen them.
I want to find them.*

—Abe Louise Young,
“Houses Made Only of Entrance”

SCISSORING

ACT ONE

Prologue:

Early February 2018, Mardi Gras Weekend

A side street off St. Charles Avenue, where a parade rolls. Abigail and Josie walk together. It's by no means desolate, but they're in their own world.

They wear a bunch of beads, maybe Josie holds a go-cup. They sing:

ABIGAIL. *New Orrrrrleans laaaaaadies...*

(*To Josie.*) You've gotta sing with me. It's Mardi Gras, so it's Mardi Law.

JOSIE. (*Laughs.*) Oh yeah?

ABIGAIL. Yeahhhh—

They laugh. They're drunk. They love each other.

JOSIE and ABIGAIL.

NEW ORLEANS LADIES!

ABIGAIL.

ALLLLL THE WAY—

FROM BOURBON STREET TO ESPLANADE!

...Hey. Where'd everybody go? Remy! Viiiiic!

JOSIE. Don't worry. We'll catch up to 'em.

Abigail reaches for Josie, dances with her—or something like it.

ABIGAIL. *This is nice. Isn't this nice?*

JOSIE. Yeah... It'll be nice until you start feelin' all those shots.

* Pronounced ESS-pluh-nayd.

ABIGAIL. How many did I take?

JOSIE. Three.

ABIGAIL. *You took three!*

JOSIE. I had to. In solidarity...

ABIGAIL. (*Sighs deep, over the top.*) When's the last time life felt so... so easy?

JOSIE. College? (*Smiles.*) Now?

Abigail kisses her deeply, like it's going somewhere.

ABIGAIL. Hey. Let's skip the next parade... Go home. What do you say?

JOSIE. (*Imitating a Southern drawl.*) My word, / Ms. Bauer!

ELAINE. (*Offstage.*) Ms. Bauer!

Abigail and Josie look at each other knowingly.

Abigail steps back.

ABIGAIL. Shit.

JOSIE. You want me to go?

ABIGAIL. No.

JOSIE. Yeah, you do.

ABIGAIL. You know I don't really.

JOSIE. But you do. I get it.

ELAINE. (*Offstage.*) Abigail! Is that you? Or am I just making a fool of myself!

Abigail sobers quickly.

ABIGAIL. (*Calls.*) Elaine!

JOSIE. (*To Abigail; matter-of-fact.*) I'll grab a pack of cigarettes. It'll be like I don't exist.

ABIGAIL. Jos—wait.

JOSIE. What?

ABIGAIL. Maybe I shouldn't have taken the job.

JOSIE. Well, it's yours.

Josie stumbles away. Elaine approaches. Maybe in costume, maybe wearing a mask.

ELAINE. Abigail! One of my girlfriends has a house a few blocks down! Why don't you join us?

ABIGAIL. Oh, that's really nice of you/, but—

ELAINE. And who was that you were talking to?

ABIGAIL. Oh...uh—just a friend...

*Lorena Hickok appears, watches. Abigail doesn't see her.
Darkness.*

Scene 1: April 2017

Suddenly it's bright and fluorescent.

Elaine's office. An interview.

Abigail explores the office politely with her eyes. She stares hard at the P.A. System speaker, which suddenly blinks and then stares wide-eyed at her, accusingly.

Suddenly it opens its mouth.

P.A. SYSTEM. Good morning teachers and students.
It's time for the prayer to start the day...

Abigail jumps back in her seat. The P.A. System returns to being inanimate. Elaine does the sign of the cross, then peruses Abigail's résumé.

ELAINE. Is it Mrs. Bauer?

ABIGAIL. Oh...uh. Ms. Actually.

ELAINE. Forgive me! I saw the ring and assumed—engaged?

ABIGAIL. Oh, this, it's not—

ELAINE. It's lovely. Simple. You rarely see that anymore. For whatever reason, women want to wear the Ark of the Covenant on their fingers. Wait until you get a look at Mrs. Bordelon's* ring. Her husband's a surgeon. The muscles in her left arm—it must be like lifting weights!

Abigail laughs uncomfortably. She looks up at the P.A. System when Elaine looks away.

* Pronounced Bor-duh-lawn.

ABIGAIL. I'll keep an eye out.

ELAINE. You won't have to look hard. Wait for the afternoon sun and it very well might blind you in the hall. (*Laughs to herself.*) A woman's jewelry says a lot about her. Simplicity shows grace. I admire that.

ABIGAIL. Thank you.

A moment.

ELAINE. So, you've never been married?

ABIGAIL. Well, uh, / no.

ELAINE. That surprises me.

ABIGAIL. I'm not sure what that has / to do with...

ELAINE. Your résumé's impressive. Master's from Tulane. Very nice.

ABIGAIL. I was looking into a PhD for a while, but—

ELAINE. I hope you're prepared to fully commit to the position. We don't want to fall in love with you and then have to let go just as fast!

ABIGAIL. Oh. Of course. I meant that—I *was* considering it, but if given the opportunity, I'm here to stay. It's exactly the type of position I want.

ELAINE. That's what I like to hear!

And—I see you briefly taught in the public school system. What happened? *Couldn't take it?*

Elaine laughs.

ABIGAIL. Uh...

Cut to: Later that day. Abigail and Josie's apartment.

Say hello to Ms. U.S. History and Government at St. Elizabeth Rose!

Josie pecks Abigail on the cheek.

JOSIE. Congrats.

ABIGAIL. Don't go too crazy with the cheers...

JOSIE. I got your text.

ABIGAIL. So, this is how you're gonna be about it?

JOSIE. (*Trying.*) If this is what you really want, OK.

ABIGAIL. You know how hard I've been looking...and I'm, honestly, I'm really excited about it...

JOSIE. Babe, why not finally go for the PhD? Stanford?

ABIGAIL. Let's / not—

JOSIE. *Isn't that what you really want?* You'd get in no problem. I'm sure of / it.

ABIGAIL. It's not like I can just *jump* into a program. The application process is insane—you know that—and I'm not even sure it's the right move.

JOSIE. Why not?

ABIGAIL. Getting a PhD doesn't guarantee anything! In fact, it might be harder for me to find a job, plus more debt! It's my life, OK? I can make my own decisions. *I'll do this* while I figure it out...

JOSIE. You could get an admin gig, something else, *anything* else—why go out of your way to make your life—our lives—more difficult?

*Suddenly Lorena Hickok emerges, makes herself at home.
Abigail can't believe her eyes.*

LORENA. Well. She has a point, Abigail—why is it you took the job?

ABIGAIL. *(To Lorena.)* Huh?

JOSIE. You heard me.

ABIGAIL. No—it's just—uh—Lorena—Lorena Hickok...?

JOSIE. Who?

ABIGAIL. That um...the journalist. The one who had the affair with Eleanor Roosevelt—

Lorena grabs an apple (or something else), takes a bite, and speaks with her mouth full.

LORENA. *(Scoffs.)* "Affair" is such a tasteless term—and truly / inaccurate.

JOSIE. ...What about her?

ABIGAIL. *(Eyes on Lorena.)* I'm sorry—I don't know what's—

JOSIE. Are you O/K?

LORENA. *(To Abigail.)* What *in God's name* are you doing taking that job?

ABIGAIL. *(Looking between Lorena and Josie.)* I had a really good point and then—

Abigail approaches Lorena and examines her up close, maybe

SCISSORING

by Christina Quintana

1 man, 6 women, 1 n/s (doubling, flexible casting)

When Abigail Bauer takes a job as a teacher at a conservative Catholic school, she is forced to step back into the closet against the wishes of her long-term girlfriend. As she struggles to reconcile her professional ambitions, personal relationships, religious beliefs, and internalized shame, Abigail receives guidance from First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Eleanor's devoted friend and lover, Lorena Hickok. Through it all, Abigail must find the courage to be unabashedly herself.

"Quintana's crisp, humorous writing is effervescent and lively... SCISSORING is...perfect LGBTQ+ themed theater...for all time and all audiences, as it drives home the harm and anguish that's born out of discrimination... It's a message that should be heard especially now, especially always."

—**TheaterPizzazz.com**

"...SCISSORING is an excellent and thought-provoking piece sure to inspire both a laugh and a tear."

—**Theasy.com**

"...Quintana creates a complex protagonist who is sympathetic, exasperating and engaging. ...SCISSORING stands as an accomplished work of theater."

—**TheaterScene.net**

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