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Mr. Overby

Honors Drama

December 19th, 2017

Directing Project Proposal: Rabbit Hole by David Lindsay-Abaire

Synopsis

Act 1

The play opens in New York, in the kitchen of Becca Corbett, who recently lost her 4-year-old son, Danny, in a car crash. After a dramatic retelling of her sister Izzy's recent bar fight, Becca learns that her sister is pregnant by a musician named Auggie. Becca views Izzy as irresponsible and complains to her husband, Howie, about her and her never-ending "to do" list. Howie flirts with Becca, hoping to have a nice romantic evening, but Becca is annoyed and shuts him down. Becca asks to move from their home since it holds too many memories of Danny. As Becca goes to bed, Howie begins to watch an old home movie of Danny. At Izzy's birthday party, Becca and Izzy's mom, Nat, brings baby clothes for Izzy when they had agreed on no baby gifts. Her comparison of her 30-year-old son committing suicide to a four-year-old being hit by a car upsets Becca and she storms out of the party. In Danny's room that night, Becca finds a letter written by Jason Willete, the 17-year-old boy who drove the car that killed Danny. Jason apologizes for the accident and wants to dedicate a sci-fi story he wrote to Danny. Howie calls for Becca and reveals that she accidentally recorded over Danny's home video that he was watching. They fight about their different ways of grieving.

Act 2

At an open house trying to sell the Corbett's house, Izzy confronts Howie about holding hands

with another woman. Nat and Becca return from the grocery store, where Becca fought another woman because she was ignoring her child. Jason knocks on the door and is pushed out by Howie who feels uncomfortable with his presence. Later, as Nat and Becca are packing up Danny's belongings, they discuss life after the loss of a child and reach an understanding. A few days later, Becca meets with/calls Jason who is filled with remorse. Becca assures him that it was an accident and they talk about the parallel universe in Jason's story where everyone is happy. As Nat, Izzy, and Becca pack up Danny's boxes, Howie returns and talks to Becca about him leaving the support group. They agree to rebuild the friendships they were sidestepping and be there for each other during the tough time.

Why This Project?

I first read this play when preparing a monologue from it and was immediately attracted to the complex yet relatable characters. I was intrigued by the different ways Becca and Howie cope with the same loss. As Becca says, "You're not in a better place than I am, you're just in a different place. And that sucks that we can't be there for each other right now, but that's just the way it is." The story is about a couple who struggle to come together during a tough time, a situation I have witnessed and relate to personally. I am always bogged down by tension between my parents, and the worry about how they will cope when I am gone to college or anything else always plagues me. Therefore, I want to use this play to explore how a tragedy can divide two people but how it can also unite them. Personal tragedy is a topic that often gets ignored in favor of more sensational stories, but I feel like this story of vulnerability and emotional journey would carry great weight in its production.

Challenges and Experience

I have some directing experience which I hope to enhance through this project. I have directed short competition scenes and also written, directed, and produced my own one act when I was

12. This project is an emotional drama which mixes tragedy with light-hearted moments.

Although the play is written around 5 characters, I want to focus on comparing the emotional journeys of Becca and Howie and use the other characters and storyline as support to highlight this. My biggest challenge will be to cut the script which is a full length play into a shorter piece of less than half the length that focuses on the character's responses to Danny's death more than the plot itself, but I have already found many places that can be cut that don't take away from Becca and Howie's emotional journey.

Technical Components

Set: The play takes course over 3 sets: the living room, the kitchen, and Danny's bedroom.

Lights: Split-stage, half-stage, spots, mood, dimmed, dark-room

I want to use lighting colors to highlight the internal emotions of the characters. Lighting colors needed would be white, yellow, pink, red, green, orange, blue, and aqua.

Props/Furniture:

- Living room - couch, table, 4 chairs, TV set, letter, telephone
- Kitchen - counter, fridge, table, chairs, cake, plates, spoons, forks, napkins, presents (wrapped bathroom set and wrapped baby clothes)
- Bedroom - bed, a few boxes or crates, lamp, and Danny's belongings (artwork, clothes, toys)

Sound: soft background music (lyrical, contemporary instrumental)

Costumes:

- Becca – sundress, pants, blouse, cardigan

- Howie – slacks, button up shirt, hoodie, jeans
- Izzy – flowy black top, black pants
- Nat – tight black blouse, black pants
- Jason (if played by an actor) – black t-shirt, black jeans

Crew: Stage manager, sound operator, light operator, backstage manager?

Cast

3 females, 1-2 males

Becca

Izzy

Howie

Nat

Jason Willette (can be a voiceover if not enough actors are available)

Characters mentioned but not in the play: Danny, Taz the dog, Rick, Debbie, Reema, and Auggie

Length

Rabbit Hole is originally a full length play around 100 minutes, but I will edit it around Becca and Howie’s stories to make it around 40 minutes.

Total Estimated Budget

Item	Cost
Performance Rights	\$100
Script	\$9
Set/Furniture/Props	\$200
Costumes	\$100
Miscellaneous	\$100?
Total	\$510