

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play is subject to royalty. It is fully protected by Original Works Publishing, and the copyright laws of the United States. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

The performance rights to this play are controlled by Original Works Publishing and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation.

PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalties are payable with negotiation from Original Works Publishing.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured from Original Works Publishing through direct contact.

Copying from this book is in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play:

**“Produced by special arrangement with
Original Works Publishing.”**

www.originalworksonline.com

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

GRAY

Second Printing, 2008

Printed in U.S.A.

ISBN 978-1-934962-23-7

More Great Titles Available
From OWP

Everybody in This House
by Laura Axelrod

3 Males, 3 Females

Synopsis: A family wrecked by violence and a Priest's crisis of faith. Father O'Donnell turns a deaf ear to Mary Turner's pleas about her marriage. Several weeks later, she is dead. What happened to Mary Turner? Is Father O'Donnell responsible in some way? The Priest soothes his own conscience by visiting the family, only to have his fears justified. He finds the reality of domestic violence, and confronts his own powerlessness in the face of evil.

True Genius
by David Holstein

3 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: True Genius tells the unfolding story of a boy genius named Scooter who also happens to be a pathological liar. As Scooter falls in love with another pathological liar named Lila, and an eccentric psychologist pries at his past, Scooter's bizarre family history begins to unravel and he comes to question everything his mother has led him to believe is real. In the end, we're forced to ask, "Is Scooter crazy?" Or is his love for Lila breaking through to his sanity? Is she curing him? Or worse, is she not even there?

GRAY

By Tom Smith

Author's notes: *** indicates a change of location and/or a change of time. Simple or no set changes and no blackouts are preferred: nothing should stop the flow of the play. *Gray* runs about 90 minutes and is intended to be performed without an intermission. If you prefer to add one, I have indicated where it should go.

Characters

Matt: 32, A high school history teacher.

Laura: 31, A cool finder.

Pack: 16, a skater and street kid.

The time is present day.

The place is Seattle.

Lights rise on an empty space.

LAURA: This is a story about a dead-end kid: a boy who disrupted my life and left me wondering how it came to be that I loved the person I loved. The events of this story happened a few months ago, and they're also happening again right now, but somewhere else and with different people. There's blood, even though you won't see it, and a lot of it. There's also a lot of pain, and anger, and questions. The only things missing are answers. It's a story without an ending.

MATT: Laura's a bit more of a poet than I am. I'm a history teacher, so things are factual and less lyrical, I guess. I pride myself in compiling the details of an event, and being able to interpret how those events changed the world we live in. But I can't seem to do that with this story. It defies analysis. To me, anyway. Maybe it's ultimately not that complicated. But I find myself looking back over those events every day of my life, and I still can't put them into any sort of context.

PACK: I'm 16. Sometimes I look like I'm 24, and sometimes I look like I'm 12. I'm more nondescript than what you see before you. When people remember me, they remember me in different ways. But for this story I'm 16 and I have (*whatever color hair the actor has*) hair, I'm (*height of the actor*) tall, bout (*weight*) pounds and my

name is Pack. You won't see us change into different clothes, even though the events happened over the course of a month or two, because what would be the point? No one ever says, "I remember what I was wearing when Kennedy was shot." They just remember the important stuff. I guess that's all you need to know to begin with. Oh yeah, and not everything happens in sequence, because that's not how memory works. We always remember the ending first.

The skatepark. PACK is crouched, hiding.

MATT: Pack! Where are you?

PACK: Over here.

MATT: I got the money.
HE sees PACK, injured and bleeding.
Pack!

PACK: You flash bright, you burn deep.

MATT: Oh, God!

PACK: Don't touch me, don't!

MATT: Somebody help us!

PACK: Shut up. I don't know if they're still around.

MATT: I'm going to go for help.
HE takes a few steps, but thinks better of it.
Help!

PACK: Damn this hurts!

MATT: Who were they?

PACK: Listen to me, Matt...

MATT: Help!

PACK: Listen!

MATT: What?

PACK: I want you to leave me alone.

MATT: What are you talking about? You need me.

PACK: Leave me the fuck alone! I don't want you around.

MATT: Shhh...

HE hands PACK a handkerchief.

Hold this here, Pack.

PACK: It's all wrong, man. It's all wrong.

MATT: Press it in tight. Please, someone, please help us...help me...

PACK: I love you, Matt. But—

MATT: Help me...

PACK: Go!

HE weakly pushes MATT away.

MATT: Oh, God, don't do this, Pack. Don't die.

PACK: ...alone...

HE stops moving.

MATT: Help me. Help me. Help.

Laura's apartment.

LAURA: Don't start up again! You spent the entire ride home going on about it.

MATT: Then just agree with me. That was by far the worst wedding we've ever been to. Everyone was bored silly. The bride and groom were bored.

LAURA: Let it go...

MATT: And yet you insisted we stay!

LAURA: You were the best man! You can't leave before the bride and groom. For God's sake, I'm mortified that you left before most of the guests.

MATT: I stepped in as a favor. I don't particularly like my cousin, and I didn't feel the need to stick around any longer than necessary.

LAURA: Un-do me.

MATT unzips her dress.

MATT: My God, was that a boring reception! I didn't know you could hire a DJ to play nothing but boring songs, but somehow they managed to find one who did.

LAURA: You know what your problem is?

MATT: I can guess it's not something fixable.

LAURA: Forget it.

MATT: No, tell me. What is my problem?

LAURA: I said, forget it.

MATT: I'll be good. Tell me.

LAURA: You're so over-dramatic. It couldn't just be a boring wedding to you; it has to be the most boring wedding you've ever been to in your life. The DJ wasn't just bad, he was the worst you'd ever heard. There's no middle ground with you. It drives me nuts.

MATT: You're the most beautiful woman in the world when you're angry.

LAURA: Before I forget, can we switch cars tomorrow?

MATT: Why?

LAURA: I have to go to the waterfront. Your car draws less attention.

MATT: Because it's a piece of junk? What are you doing on the waterfront? Do you have a new client?

LAURA: I have to do some fieldwork. There's supposedly a new skate park down there.

MATT: Where? I haven't seen one.

LAURA: It's in a burnt out apartment building. Nothing the city has approved of.

MATT: Why can't Jason drive?

No reply.

Isn't Jason going with you?

LAURA: No.

MATT: Well, I hope you're at least taking Shauna.

LAURA: Please don't start.

MATT: Why do you purposefully put yourself in danger like this?

LAURA: Let me do my job, Matt.

MATT: If any one of your friends told you they were going to hang around a dozen little coked up punks in a burnt out skate park, you'd—

LAURA: "Coked up" punks?

MATT: "Cracked up." I don't know. — you'd think they were out of their mind.

LAURA: I'm going to bed now.

MATT: It's only 9 o'clock.

LAURA: I'll read.

SHE climbs into bed and waits. MATT stares at HER.

And screw you! You know what's supposed to happen after we go to weddings.

MATT: I forgot, I promised to pick up Amy and Keith tomorrow.
Your car's not big enough.

LAURA: I can always take a cab.

MATT: Why can't Jason go?

LAURA: They hate guys there.

MATT: What about—

LAURA: And Shauna's off until Wednesday.

MATT: Stay home tomorrow; you're the boss. I'll call in a sub.
We'll enjoy a long weekend.

LAURA: I have an initial report due to the client on Wednesday.

MATT: Just make something up.

LAURA: Do I tell you to make up facts about the Civil War?

MATT: (*Climbing into bed.*) Don't be mad because I care.

LAURA: I'm mad because you don't trust me to take care of myself.

MATT: You're on my side.

LAURA: Good.

MATT: I'll go over, you go under.

LAURA: I'm not moving.

MATT: Why do you insist on torturing me?

LAURA: It's fun to see the veins pop out of your head.

MATT: It really was a boring wedding. I don't want ours to be like that.

LAURA: Then get a decent best man.

MATT: (*Kissing LAURA.*) I love you.

LAURA: I know.

MATT: And you love me too.

LAURA: Most of the time.

MATT: (*Kissing HER on each "I love you."*)
I love you.
I love you.
I—

LAURA: —love you too.
SHE gets on the other side of the bed.

MATT: Have we made up?

LAURA: Probably.

MATT: *Kissing HER.*
Do you wanna...?

LAURA: Just hold me first.
HE does.
Tighter. Tighter.

The skatepark, the following day.

PACK: Quit spying, bitch.

LAURA: What?

PACK: We can see you. Quit spying.

LAURA: I can watch. Free country.

PACK: Quit it or I'll kick your ass.

LAURA: (*Clutching HER purse.*) Back up or I'll shoot your fucking heart out.

PACK: What the hell are you doing here anyway?

LAURA: None of your business.

PACK: You a cop?

LAURA: You got a record?

PACK: Naw, you're no cop. You're someone who drinks five dollar mochas at Starbucks.

LAURA: Screw you.

PACK: You wanna give me some money?

LAURA: Back up! I've got a little friend in my purse that's just waiting to come out and play.

PACK: Quit talking like bad tv. Listen, lady, all I gotta do is get my friends over there to help me out, and I'll get your money one way or another.

LAURA: You think I'm gonna bring money down here? I got 10 dollars.

PACK: Prove it.

LAURA: If you think I got more hidden on me, you're a bigger idiot that you look.

PACK: Get outta here, lady!

LAURA: Free country.

PACK: What're you writing down?

LAURA: None of your business.

PACK: Gimme your 10 dollars.

LAURA: Screw you!

PACK: Gimme it and I'll tell you whatever it is you want to know.
LAURA hesitates.
You're obviously writing something bout us. Gimme 10 dollars, and I won't tell my boys that you're a reporter.

LAURA: What's to stop you from running off with my money?

PACK: Nothing.

LAURA: Give me your skateboard.
PACK hesitates.
I'll give it back after you hold up your end of the deal.

PACK: 10 bucks for 5 minutes of information.

LAURA: What are you going to do with 10 dollars?

PACK: Gimme it and I'll tell you.

LAURA: Drop your board.
HE does. SHE quickly grabs it.

PACK: Now, gimme my money.
SHE hands it over.

LAURA: What are you going to do with it?

PACK: 10 bucks? Not much.

LAURA: Answer my question.

PACK: Why should I?

LAURA: I paid for information. Don't play me.

PACK: "Play me." Ha!

LAURA: Are you going to buy drugs? Liquor?

PACK: Prawlly a Big Mac.

LAURA: What's your name?

PACK: Megan.

LAURA: Your name's Megan?

PACK: That's what I think yours is.

LAURA: Wrong. What's yours?

PACK: You tell me yours first.

LAURA: Lau— Shauna. Now you.

PACK: Pack. Pleased to meet you, Laura.

LAURA: What are you wearing on your wrist?

PACK: Guard.

LAURA: What's it made out of?

PACK: Top part of a boot. Why do you dress like you're 20 when you're obviously not?

LAURA: How old are you?

PACK: Don't know. Can't count.

LAURA: How long have you been skate boarding?

PACK: Don't know. Can't count.

LAURA: This isn't worth my 10 dollars.

PACK: Didn't say it would be. You work for the Times? The Weekly?

LAURA: Do you hang out on the streets everyday?

PACK: Gimme my board back.

LAURA: You haven't given me my 5 minutes.

PACK: What else do you want to know?

LAURA: *Pointing.* What's that kid got around his neck? Over there.

PACK: Don't know. Prawlly some intertube or something.

LAURA: "Inner" tube.

PACK: Whatever.

LAURA: Who cuts your hair?

PACK: Who cuts yours?

LAURA: You cut it yourself?

PACK: What's that gotta do with anything?

LAURA: 5 minutes are up. Here's your board.

PACK: Next time, come with real money and you'll get real answers.

LAURA: *Walking away, muttering.* Punk.

PACK watches HER, smiling.

A park, later that afternoon.

LAURA: He was only, like, 16 maybe... It's hard to tell.

MATT: Yeah?

LAURA: And he looks like he's homeless.

MATT: How clean was he?

LAURA: He didn't look too dirty.

MATT: I mean, was he on drugs?

LAURA: Prawlly. Probably. I don't know.

MATT: What was his name again?

LAURA: Pack.

MATT: Like the verb?

LAURA: It's probably just a street name.

MATT: I would hope so. I can't imagine anyone naming their kid Pack.

LAURA: He's an interesting kid. He's different than the others I saw.

MATT: How so?

LAURA: He seemed wise, like wise-beyond-his-years wise. Like he's got a really old soul.

MATT: You said that about that Dalmatian we saw at the pound last month.

LAURA: I'm serious, Matt. There was just something magnetic about him. Even though he was talking tough, I got the feeling that he could never hurt anyone.

MATT: Well thank God for that.

LAURA: If I was a 16 year old girl I'd be all over him. Anyway, I got some really good stuff today. I'm going to go back tomorrow and see if I can get more.

MATT: Laura!

LAURA: I can't just go in with what I got today.

MATT: Sure you can. Just embellish it or something.

LAURA: This is my job, Matt, and I don't get paid to "embellish." You're starting to sound like when I had to go to those raves a few years ago. You were all freaked out that I was going to come home hooked on Ecstasy. Let's just drop this, ok? I don't want to have this discussion again.

MATT: Fine, ok. Do you want me to pick up some Thai for dinner?

LAURA: Sure.
Seeing something; calling across the street.
Hey!

MATT: What is it?

LAURA: I've got to go.

MATT: What is it?

LAURA: I'll call you later!

SHE rushes off.

Continuous, across the street. PACK on his skateboard.

LAURA: Hey, Pack! Pack!

PACK: What do you want?

LAURA: Remember me? I met you earlier today? I gave you 10 dollars.

PACK: Whatever.

LAURA: Can you and I go somewhere and talk some more?

PACK: No.

LAURA: I've got more money. I'll pay you for your time.

PACK: How much?

LAURA: A dollar a minute. Two dollars a minute. You can stay and talk as long as you'd like. Two dollars a minute.

PACK: Go buy me a 40 first.

LAURA: I won't buy you beer.

PACK: See ya!

LAURA: Look, three dollars a minute.

PACK: 40-ouncer and three bucks a minute.

LAURA: Deal. Don't leave. Go across the street to the park. I'll be right there. Don't run off.

5 minutes later in the park. PACK is drinking from a 40-ouncer.

PACK: You sure you're not a reporter?

LAURA: No. I... Look, my job... I mean... I'm a cool finder.

PACK: A what?

LAURA: A cool finder. My job is to make predictions about what trends will catch on with the general public, and then provide that information to corporate clients.

PACK: You get paid for that?

LAURA: Yep.

PACK: Cool finder? Is that really your job title?

LAURA: (*Handing HIM HER business card.*) See for yourself.

PACK: Sheet! How much you get paid?

LAURA: Depends on how much information I provide.

PACK: Ballpark.

LAURA: I do ok.

PACK: How much?

LAURA: I do ok.

PACK: What “cool” things have you found?

LAURA: I want to talk to you about what you and your friends are wearing.

PACK: C’mon, tell me. What cool things?

LAURA: Look, it’ll all sound dumb because trends come and go very quickly.

PACK: Bellbottoms? Pac Man?

LAURA: Hammer pants.

PACK: What?

LAURA: I predicted the rise of Hammer pants. You know, those big, ballooney pants everyone wore in the 80s? MC Hammer wore them? When I was in high school, I predicted those would become a trend. And they did. Someone from a manufacturing company who was on campus for career day heard me talking about them and saw me selling them to my friends. I sold them my pattern, and they hired me as an intern. When I graduated from college I went to work for them fulltime, and eventually became a freelancer with my own company. I have two employees, and I do ok. All thanks to Hammer pants.

PACK: Never heard of them.

LAURA: You probably weren’t even born yet. How old are you, anyway?

PACK: How old do you want me to be?

LAURA: Old enough so I don’t get busted for aiding in the delinquency of a minor. Anyway, I have a presentation I have to give this week, and I don’t know if some of my findings are accurate.

PACK: It’s confidential.

PACK: I’m not going to tell anyone. C’mon...

LAURA: I can’t. Really. Let’s just say that it’s a major beverage company.

PACK: Coke?

LAURA: Confidential.

PACK: Pepsi? Gatorade? Who?

No reply.

Tell me and I'll cut you a deal. I won't charge you for the time we've already been talking.

LAURA: I can't.

PACK: Listen, I don't want to bullshit you again, but if I feel you're holding out on me, I'm going start holding out on you.

LAURA: It's a water company. Bottled water. They're going to start adding ginseng and caffeine.

PACK: What's that supposed to do to you? Ginseng?

LAURA: It gives you more energy. The product is an alternative to traditional bottled water. It's for people on the go. Hence, the caffeine and ginseng. It's cutting edge to add stuff to water, so they want a cutting edge commercial. I'm supposed to give them information on street fashion and attitude.

PACK: Whatever.

LAURA: Now, tell me. What things do you see as far as accessories go?

PACK: What do you mean?

LAURA: Accessories. Stuff you wear in addition to clothes.

PACK: Well, shirtless is still pretty cool. And some guys wear socks, some don't. A lot wear their socks pulled up high.

LAURA: I can see all that. It's accessories I'm wondering about.

PACK: Like jewelry and stuff?

LAURA: Yeah. Like your necklace. What's that on the end of it?

PACK: Nothing.

LAURA: It looks like a tooth.

PACK: It's nothing.

LAURA: Are other guys wearing that? Your boys?

PACK: No. And you can stop that, ok? When you try to talk like me it just makes you sound like a quin.

LAURA: What's a quin?

PACK: Harlequin. A fool.

LAURA: Ok. I'll stop sounding like a quin. So how come you wear that tooth? What's it mean?

PACK: It's just a tooth.

LAURA: Where did you get it?

PACK: Some guys are wearing shoes made from two or three old pair sewn together.

LAURA: Do you think that necklace is something that other guys will start wearing?

PACK: Get off the necklace. Jesus!

LAURA: I'm sorry. I was just asking. I haven't seen anything like it before.

PACK: It's my tooth. I got it when my old man knocked the sheet out of me. No one else has one because no one else has a bastard like my old man for a father.

LAURA: I...I'm sorry, Pack. I didn't mean to—

PACK: Sheet!

LAURA: I'm sorry.

PACK: What else? You wanna know bout the kind of underwear I wear? Cause I don't.

LAURA: Do you sleep out here? On the streets?

PACK: What's that gotta do with anything?

LAURA: Just curious.

PACK: Not part of the deal.

LAURA: I'm sorry, you're right. Talk to me about hair. It looks like short hair is pretty popular.

PACK: Long hair gets in the way if you're going for speed.

LAURA: And it looks like no one is bleaching it anymore.

PACK: Only posers.

LAURA: Tattoos?

PACK: Homemade.

LAURA: Piercings?

PACK: Never in the ear. Not in the eyebrow, unless you're a carb.

LAURA: What's a carb?

PACK: Carbon copy. Poser.

LAURA: Belly button ring?

PACK: Carb.

LAURA: Where then?

PACK: Here.
Points between fingers.
Webs. And here.
Points to neck.