Sample Pages from

Brace Yourself

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Sixteen
in 10 Minutes or Less

Friend Request
Double Click
Brace Yourself
Lazy Eye
Fireworks
Pay Phone
Bench Warrant
Wheels
Tumblefur
Status Update: A Symphony

A Suite of Short Plays
BY
Bradley Hayward

Theatrefolk

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Sixteen in 10 Minutes or Less

The plays herein may be licensed together or separately. The piece was conceived as a full length evening of entertainment, but each short stands perfectly well on its own without any prior knowledge of the characters. When produced in its entirety, the plays should be presented in the following order:

Act One

Friend Request (*3M, 4W*).....5
Thanks to a series of ill-fated friend requests, a doctored photo of a student spreads like wildfire among a group of teenagers.

Double Click (*1M, 1W*)..... 15
Young love blossoms when two teenagers flip open their laptops and start chatting.

Brace Yourself (*1M, 1W*).....23
A teenage brother and sister squabble as they try to extract a gummy bear that has lodged itself in a set of braces.

Lazy Eye (*2 Either*).....31
Two eyeballs get bent out of shape while defending their half of a teenager's brain.

Fireworks (*1M, 1W*).....39
A couple of teenagers in love look up at the night sky and wait for colorful explosions to dance among the stars.

Act Two

Pay Phone (*2M, 1W, 1 Either*).....47
When a teenager loses his cell phone, he has no choice but to use a pay phone. Things quickly take a turn for the worse when a mysterious operator starts telling him what to do.

Bench Warrant (*4W*).....57
Three teenage girls have claimed a bench as their very own and routinely chase away all the "losers" who come near it.

Wheels (*2M*).....65
A teenage boy tries to repair a beat-up old truck so that he can get away from his parents and their broken down marriage.

Tumblefur (*1W*).....73
A sweet teenage girl takes her dog for a walk in the park and discovers that there is something exciting around every corner.

Status Update: A Symphony (*3M, 4W*).....79
Seven teenagers express their hopes and fears online in a rousing symphony of status updates.

Settings

When the plays are presented together, the settings should be simple representations of each locale. The use of blocks is more than sufficient and will help facilitate quick scene changes between plays. When the plays are presented separately, the settings may be as simple or elaborate as you wish.

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Characters

3M+4W, Expandable to 13M+17W+3 Either

James: Hyper & jumpy, male.

Piper: Outgoing & popular, female.

Cindy: Sarcastic & spontaneous, female.

Samantha: Exuberant & talkative, female.

Laura: Artistic & lonely, female.

Brody: Quiet & introspective, male.

Vance: Shy & thoughtful, male.

Right Eye: Eyeball, male or female.

Left Eye: Eyeball, male or female.

Operator: Voice only, male or female.

Mom: Voice only, female.

Dad: Voice only, male.

When all of the plays are presented together, the characters may be played by the same actors throughout (for a minimum cast of 7) or the roles may be assigned separately (for a cast up to 33). All of the named characters are sixteen years old.

Right Eye, Left Eye, Operator, Mom, and Dad were written to be played by the same actors as the named characters, but could be cast separately.

If the plays are presented independently, many of the roles become gender flexible. Simply change the pronouns when appropriate.

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Brace Yourself

by Bradley Hayward

Characters

Piper, James

Setting

A bare stage; a bathroom

JAMES has his mouth gaping wide open as PIPER inspects what's inside.

PIPER: Ew, gross.

JAMES: I know it's gross.

PIPER: What is it?

JAMES: I don't know.

PIPER: What do you mean, you don't know? Do you just stick random things in your mouth without checking what they are first?

JAMES: No, I mean it could be one of two things.

PIPER: And that would be...?

JAMES: A Cheerio or a gummy bear.

PIPER: Well, it's green, so I think you can rule out Cheerio.

JAMES: Gummy bear it is.

PIPER: Unless the Cheerios are really old.

JAMES: Or maybe it's an olive.

PIPER: What the hell kind of lunch did you have?

JAMES: I was hungry. It's all we had.

PIPER: Why are you showing me this?

JAMES: Help me get it out.

PIPER: I'm not sticking my fingers in your mouth. Ick!

JAMES: I tried already, but it's in there really good.

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PIPER: Don't look at me. I've never had braces before. I wouldn't know how to begin digging it out.

JAMES: Me neither. I've only had them a week.

PIPER: Didn't they tell you what to eat and what not to eat?

JAMES: Yeah, but I'm sixteen. I eat everything.

PIPER: Have you tried a toothpick?

JAMES: Duh! That's the first thing I tried.

PIPER: And?

JAMES: It got stuck. So I used a fork to get the toothpick out.

PIPER: And?

JAMES: That got stuck.

PIPER: You mean to tell me that you had a Cheerio, a gummy bear, a toothpick and a fork stuck in your mouth? All at the same time?

JAMES: And possibly an olive.

PIPER: And me without my camera.

JAMES: You're not helping.

PIPER: I have no intention of helping.

JAMES: Then why are you here?

PIPER: I was in my bedroom and heard you screaming in the bathroom. That would make anyone drop what they're doing.

JAMES: I wasn't screaming.

PIPER: Yes you were.

JAMES: I did not scream.

PIPER: You did. Like a girl.

JAMES: Did not.

PIPER: Like a wee little girl who lost her Barbie.

JAMES: Get lost.

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PIPER: The same way you scream after that recurring pay phone dream of yours.

JAMES: That's not a dream. It's a nightmare!

PIPER: You lose your cell and have to use a pay phone. Some nightmare.

JAMES: It's worse than it sounds. Trust me.

PIPER: Why don't you just use a toothbrush?

JAMES: Huh?

PIPER: You know. It's that stick with bristles on the end of it.

JAMES: What are you talking about?

PIPER: To get out the gummy Cheerio olive.

JAMES: It hurts when I brush them.

PIPER: But jabbing them with a fork feels good?

JAMES: I tried to brush it out, but the bristles got tangled in the metal. That's why I was screami... yelling.

PIPER: You didn't use my toothbrush, I hope.

JAMES: Maybe. Maybe not.

PIPER: You didn't!

JAMES: You'll never know. Heh heh.

PIPER: You are so immature.

JAMES: I am way mature.

PIPER: Resorting to psychological warfare against your own sister? Not a wise idea.

JAMES: It is if it works.

PIPER: It didn't work.

JAMES: Yes it did. Right now all you're thinking about is your toothbrush in my mouth. Heh heh.

PIPER: "Heh heh." Stop being such a dork.

JAMES: You think you're sooooo smart, don'tcha?

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PIPER: Cause I am. Smarter than you anyway.

JAMES: I beg to differ.

PIPER: This from the one who ate a fork.

JAMES: I didn't eat it. It just got stuck in my mouth.

PIPER: Pardon me. Nothing says genius like chewing on cutlery.

JAMES: I told you, I was just trying to get the toothpick out.

PIPER: Remind me when finals roll around to suck on a soup spoon.

JAMES: You think you're so smart, just because you're older than me.

PIPER: That's right.

JAMES: I'd hardly call five minutes "older."

PIPER: Hey, you could have come out first if you wanted to.

JAMES: Maybe I did.

PIPER: Nuh uh. I came out first. It says so on our birth certificates.

JAMES: How do you know for sure you came out first? They could have mixed us up. All babies look the same.

PIPER: I'll give you five seconds to figure out how stupid what you just said is.

JAMES: It's not stupid.

PIPER: Five –

JAMES: All babies have alien heads.

PIPER: Four –

JAMES: Five fingers.

PIPER: Three –

JAMES: Five toes.

PIPER: Two –

JAMES: And one –

PIPER: One.

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JAMES: (*realizes*) Oh.

PIPER: Now you got it.

JAMES: Okay, so what if you came out first?

PIPER: It's not just that I came out first. I came out ahead. And I've been coming out ahead for the last sixteen years.

JAMES: Talk about psychological warfare.

PIPER: It's not your fault you're slightly... well, not so slightly... behind me. Girls mature faster than boys. It's a fact. So don't get down on yourself.

JAMES: I'm not down on myself.

PIPER: Yes you are. You whine and whine all the time that you're stuck playing catch-up.

JAMES: I don't play with ketchup.

PIPER: Catch-up, you moron. Catch-up. Not ketchup. Did you also stick a fork in your ear?

JAMES: Even if I concede that you're older, that doesn't make you any better.

PIPER: I don't think I'm better than you are. That would be totally narcissistic.

JAMES: Your point?

PIPER: I'm not a narcissist.

JAMES: Said the narcissist, as she pulled her big britches out of her crack.

PIPER: Hey, I was just playing around with you. You're being mean.

JAMES: You do. You think you're better than everybody else.

PIPER: Hold on. What are we talking about? You or everybody else?

JAMES: What's the difference?

PIPER: There's a big difference. Even though you pour grape soda on your cereal, I don't think I'm better than you are. Wiser, yes. Brighter, yes. Prettier, yes. But not better. However, if we're talking about "other people," then chances are I am a little better.

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JAMES: Said the narcissist, looking down from on high.

PIPER: Listen. I could take back all the nice things I just said about you. You want that?

JAMES: Nice?

PIPER: Yeah, nice.

JAMES: You have a pretty messed up idea of "nice."

PIPER: I'm nice.

JAMES: If you weren't my sister, I'd be terrified of you.

PIPER: (*proudly*) Really?

JAMES: Wipe that smug look off your face. It's people like you that make it impossible for people like me to feel good about themselves. I haven't smiled for a week because of these braces. I've barely spoken to anyone at all. And you know why? I'll tell you why. Because there are at least a dozen other people like you that patrol up and down the hallways at school, looking for things like pimples and bra straps and braces, just so they can feel superior.

PIPER: Tell me who's bothering you. I'll set them straight.

JAMES: That's not why I'm telling you this.

PIPER: Then why are you telling me?

JAMES: Someday you'll have braces. Or something like them. And I don't want you to end up with nowhere to turn. But keep this attitude up and that's exactly where you'll be. Nowhere.

PIPER: Open your mouth.

JAMES: Why?

PIPER: Just open it! (*JAMES opens his mouth*) Say "ahhh."

JAMES: Ahhh.

PIPER: Hmm. Guess not.

JAMES: What was that for?

PIPER: I was just checking to see if you also had Dr. Phil stuck in there.

JAMES: Fine, don't listen to me. See if I care.

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