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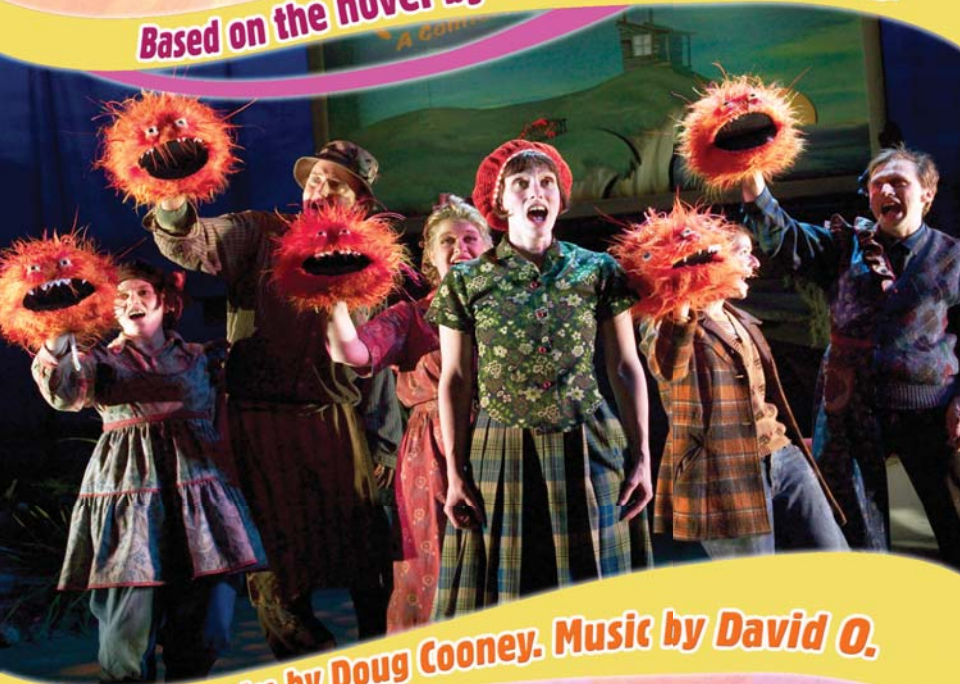
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The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip

Based on the novel by **George Saunders**



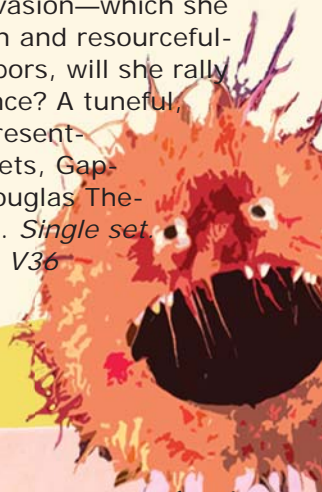
Book and lyrics by **Doug Cooney**. Music by **David O.**

The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip

Musical. Based on the novel by George Saunders. Book and lyrics by Doug Cooney. Music by David O. Cast: 2m., 4w. Gappers are fuzzy orange creatures that wreak havoc on the seaside town of Frip. They latch onto the goats (whom they love) in the three-family village and jeopardize the community's goat-milk-based economy. Every day, the children of Frip brush gappers off their goats to toss them back into the ocean, and every day the gappers return. When the pesky critters target only one of the houses and the neighbors unexpectedly refuse to help, 10-year-old Capable must cope single-handedly with the gapper invasion—which she does with her own special brand of compassion and resourcefulness. After the tables turn on Capable's neighbors, will she rally to their assistance or revel in their comeuppance? A tuneful, hilarious and wildly theatrical youth musical presented by quick-change actors and a bevy of puppets, *Gappers* received its world premiere at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in a Mark Taper Forum P.L.A.Y. production. *Single set. Approximate running time: 75 minutes. Code: V36*

Cover photo: Center Theatre Group/P.L.A.Y. production at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, Los Angeles.

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GEORGE SAUNDERS

Book and lyrics by
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Music by
DAVID O



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Book and lyrics by DOUG COONEY

Music by DAVID O

Based on the book by GEORGE SAUNDERS

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IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the musical *must* give credit to George Saunders as the author of the book, to Doug Cooney as the dramatizer of the musical and the author of the lyrics, and to David O as the composer of the musical in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the musical and in all instances in which the title of the musical appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the musical and/or a production. The names of George Saunders, Doug Cooney and David O *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on George Saunders, Doug Cooney and David O, if included in the play-book, may be used in all programs.

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“The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip was originally commissioned and produced by Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum Performing for Los Angeles Youth (P.L.A.Y.).”

In all programs this notice must appear:

“Produced by special arrangement with
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The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip was originally commissioned and produced by Center Theater Group/Mark Taper Forum, Performing for Los Angeles Youth (P.L.A.Y.).

Special thanks to Corey Madden, Keith Mitchell, Audrey Fisher, Alice Vernon, Mary Ann Kellogg, Rick Smith, Eric Johnson, John Zalewski, the theater department of the University of Texas at Austin, the leadership and staff of the Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices and all the many actors who contributed their time and talents to *Gappers*.

THE VERY PERSISTENT GAPPERS OF FRIP

CHARACTERS:

CAPABLE a plucky 10-year-old girl
CAPABLE'S DAD her father
CAPABLE'S MOM. the memory of Capable's mom
BEA ROMO. an operatic neighbor
ROBERT ROMO her son, 9
GILBERT ROMO. her son, 8
SID RONSEN a conservative, well-ordered neighbor
CAROL RONSEN. his wife
BEVERLY RONSEN their daughter, 9
GLORIA RONSEN. their daughter, 8
GAPPERS orange, prickly sea-urchins with bulgy eyes
SMART GAPPER the smartest of the bunch
MOVERS laborers from the next town

DOUBLING OCCURS AS FOLLOWS:

Bea Romo / Capable's Mom / Gapper-2 (Female)
Sid Ronsen / Carol Ronsen / Gapper-1 (Male)
Robert Romo / Beverly Ronsen / Gapper-3 (Female)
Gilbert Romo / Gloria Ronsen / Gapper-4 (Female)
Capable's Dad / Smart Gapper (Male)

The "movers" can be portrayed by Capable and Capable's Dad.

SETTING: Three shacks surrounded by goat yards situated on a cliff overlooking the sea. [NOTE: Since the story is a mythical tale, the time frame can be determined by the production design. The original production was set in the 1930s.]

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

1. Eight Times a Day . . . Capable, Gilbert, Robert, Sid,
Bea, Dad
2. Persevere Smart Gapper, Gappers
3. Wish. Capable
4. Easy Does It. Smart Gapper, Gappers
6. Now That the Gappers Are Gone. Bea, Carol,
Beverly, Gloria, Sid, Gilbert, Robert
8. Dear Capable Sid, Beverly, Gloria
9. Yard Sale Dad, Capable
10. She’s Capable Bea, Carol, Beverly, Gloria
11. Nobody Capable
12. Persevere Reprise Smart Gapper, Gappers
15. Fish for Fish Capable, Mom, Dad
17. No Fun at All/Open the Door Beverly, Gilbert,
Sid, Bea, Capable
18. Fish for Fish Reprise/Final Sunset Capable, Dad,
Beverly, Gilbert, Sid, Bea
19. Bright Orange Screaming Fences Capable,
Smart Gapper, Gappers

Additional moments of “sung dialogue” and incidental music are annotated in the score.

THE VERY PERSISTENT GAPPERS OF FRIP

SCENE ONE

(The town of Frip. Three rickety shacks with goat yards facing a seaside cliff.)

At daybreak, an anxious GOAT trembles on stage, covered in GAPPERS—bright orange critters noted for their buggy eyes and sharp spindles. CAPABLE enters in big green boots with a burly gapper sack over her shoulder. She stumbles and winces when she steps on something painful.

CAPABLE. Ow! *(To the audience.)* Ever had a burr in your sock? A gapper's like that. Only bigger. *(She tugs off her boot, removes a gapper and replaces her boot.)* And gappers love goats. Anytime a gapper gets near a goat, it gives off a high-pitched, happy shriek of pleasure that makes it impossible for the goat to sleep. *(We hear tiny shrieks of pleasure from the goat's coat. CAPABLE applies her brush to the goat.)* And if a goat can't sleep, a goat gets skinny. Goats get skinny and stop giving milk. No goat milk, no money. No money, no food, no clothes, no house. So unless you like being hungry and cold and stuck outside in your underwear,

you gotta keep those gappers off those goats. Such a town is Frip.

(As CAPABLE rides the goat of GAPPERS, the shrieks diminish—until we hear the musical introduction to—)

SONG #1: EIGHT TIMES A DAY

(EIGHT TIMES A DAY transpires over the course of a single day.

Another goat runs on—followed by GILBERT and ROBERT ROMO, two nasty neighbor boys.)

CAPABLE *(spoken, with rhythm).*

[Intro]

THIS IS THE TOWN OF FRIP

GILBERT & ROBERT ROMO. 'Morning, Capable.

CAPABLE *(spoken, with rhythm).*

A LITTLE TOWN, PERHAPS YOU'LL COME TO VISIT IT

(Spoken.) Hey, Gilbert. Hey, Robert.

(Back to the song.)

THE TINY TOWN OF FRIP

GILBERT ROMO. Ow! Gapper got me.

ROBERT ROMO. You gotta watch out for the pricklers.

GILBERT ROMO. Duh.

CAPABLE (*spoken*).

**FOLKS DON'T KNOW FRIP 'CAUSE
NO ONE EVER MAKES THE TRIP**

ROBERT ROMO. Ugh. Gappers.

CAPABLE. Orangina-prickly-atticus-bulge-eye.

GILBERT ROMO. I hate the way they stare at you.

CAPABLE. Ick.

SID RONSEN (*spoken*).

UNTOUCHED—

BEA ROMO (*spoken*).

—AND PURE.

DAD (*spoken*).

IT'S SIMPLE—

ROMO BOYS (*spoken*).

—IT'S POOR.

CAPABLE (*singing*).

PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO TAKE A TOUR.

CAPABLE & ROMO BOYS.

**EIGHT TIMES A DAY
AND WE'RE TALKING EV'RY DAY
WE BRUSH THE GAPPERS OFF OUR GOATS
AND GIVE THEM SHINY GAPPER-FREE COATS**

**EIGHT TIMES A DAY
DID WE MENTION EV'RY DAY?**

**WE TOSS THOSE GAPPERS TO THE SEA.
THAT'S THE WAY TO KEEP GOATS
GAPPER-FREE.**

(GILBERT empties his sack off the cliff. CAPABLE'S DAD, sullen and removed, arrives on the scene. He is joined by neighbors: uptight conservative SID RON-SEN—and BEA ROMO, a frustrated opera singer.)

ALL.

**THOUGH GAPPERS ARE QUITE MEDDLESOME
WE KEEP OUR EQUILIBRIUM
WE HAVE A SIMPLE RULE IN FRIPP
WE NEVER EVER EVER EVER EVER LET OUR
BALANCE SLIP.**

(The parents observe their children in the daily task of tending to the goats but are preoccupied in the various tasks of their morning.)

ROBERT ROMO. How come kids do all the work and grownups do nothing?
CAPABLE. I don't think they notice.

(The kids bark with laughter—but then groan because it's not so funny.

Dance break.)

ALL.

EIGHT TIMES A DAY

CAPABLE, GILBERT & ROBERT.
AND IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY

CAPABLE.
MY DAD AND I LIVE IN THIS SHACK
AND GAPPERS KEEP ON COMING BACK

ALL.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY

CAPABLE, GILBERT & ROBERT.
AND THEY NEVER GO AWAY

CAPABLE.
MY DAD IS SAD 'CAUSE WE LOST MY MOM
AND I DUNNO WHERE THE GAPPERS COME
FROM.

ALL.
YES GAPPERS DO GET IN OUR HAIR.
'CAUSE EV'RY DAY, THEY'RE EV'RYWHERE.
SOMETIMES THEY SCREAM, SOMETIMES THEY
NIP
BUT THAT'S THE WAY THAT LIFE IS HERE
IN—FRIP.

(CAPABLE empties her sack. Wind causes GAPPERS to flutter about her.)

CAPABLE.
WHEN I THROW THE GAPPERS INTO THE SEA
THEY LOOK LIKE FLYING ANEMONE.

**THEY'RE FALLING BUT AT LEAST THEY'RE
FREE.
I WONDER WHAT IF ONE OF THEM WERE ME.
COULD I SAIL AWAY ON A PIRATE SHIP?**

BEA ROMO.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

DAD & SID.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

ROMO BOYS.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

CAPABLE.
OR SKIP LIKE A ROCK AT A STEADY CLIP?

BEA ROMO.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

DAD & SID.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

ROMO BOYS.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

CAPABLE.
OR SINK UNDERNEATH AND BECOME A DRIP?

BEA ROMO.
EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

DAD & SID.

EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

ROMO BOYS.

EIGHT TIMES A DAY—

CAPABLE.

OR AM I HAPPIER IN FRIP?

ALL OTHERS.

OR AM I HAPPIER IN FRIP?

ALL (*overlapping*).

OR AM I HAPPY-HAPPY-HAPPIER IN FRIP?

(The townspeople exit. CAPABLE remains. She secures one goat beside a fence. She heads off—then pauses at a slight distance.)

CAPABLE (*an easy hello*). Hey, goat. You only got a minute before the gappers come back. Enjoy it while you can. (*CAPABLE heads off.*)

SCENE TWO - What Gappers Do

(The lone goat remains. In the distance, we see the GAPPERS inch their way up the cliff on their trek to Frip. The SMART GAPPER is their leader. One by one, the GAPPERS emerge over the edge of the cliff. GAPPERS creep closer to the goat yards and the fences.)

SONG #2: PERSEVERE

SMART GAPPER.

**GAP, GAP, GAP-GAP,
GAP GAP, GAP-GAP,**

(Continues underneath.)

GAP...

GAPPER-1.

**UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP,
UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP,**

(Continues underneath.)

UBER-GAP...

GAPPER-3.

**UBER-GAP, GEE-LONGA, UBER-GAP
UBER-GAP, GEE-LONGA, UBER-GAP**

(Continues underneath.)

UBER-GAP...

GAPPER-2.

**GAP. GAP. GAP. GAP.
GAP. GAP. GAP. GAP.**

(Continues underneath.)

GAP...

GAPPER-4.

**UBER-GAP, GEE-LONGA,
UBER-GAP, GEE-NOSTRA.
UBER-GAP, GEE-LONGA,
UBER-GAP, GEE-NOSTRA.**

GAPPERS.

**DAY TO DAY,
YEAR TO YEAR,
OUR LOVE IS TRUE...**

SMART GAPPER.

THE COAST IS CLEAR!

GAPPERS.

OUR LOVE PERSISTS...

SMART GAPPER.

WE PERSEVERE!

GAPPERS.

**WE PERSEVERE, WE PERSEVERE!
WE PERSEVERE, WE PERSEVERE!
PERSEVERE!**

GAPPER-2.

A GOAT APPEARS...

GAPPER-4.

I SAY C'MERE!

GAPPER-1.

**GOATS LIKE IT WHEN
YOU CHEW THEIR EAR!**

GAPPER-3.

**IT ONLY PROVES
OUR LOVE'S SINCERE.**

SMART GAPPER (*spots the goat*).
A GOAT!

GAPPERS.
C'MERE! C'MERE! C'MERE! C'MERE!
(*As they approach.*)
WE PERSEVERE, WE PERSEVERE!

SMART GAPPER (*overlapping*).
WE PERSEVERE!

GAPPERS.
WE PERSEVERE, WE PERSEVERE!

SMART GAPPER.
WE PERSEVERE!

GAPPERS.
PERSEVERE!

(*The SMART GAPPER leads the GAPPERS along the fence.*)

SMART GAPPER.
GAP, GAP, UBER-GAP, UBER-UBER-GAP,
GAP, UBER-UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP, GAP!
(*Continuing, as GAPPERS join below.*)
GAP, GAP, UBER-GAP, UBER-UBER-GAP,
GAP, UBER-UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP, GAP!

GAPPER 1 (*over above*).
GAP, UBER-UBER GAP, GAP, UBER-UBER-
GAP, GAP, UBER-UBER-GAP, GAP!

GAPPER 2 (*over above*).

**UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP, GAP
UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP, UBER-GAP, GAP**

GAPPER 3 (*over above*).

**UBER-UBER-GAP, UBER-UBER-GAP, GAP!
UBER-UBER-UBER-GAP, GAP-GAP-GAP!**

GAPPER 4 (*over above*).

**UBER-GAP, GAP, UBER-GAP, GAP, UBER-
GAP, GAP, UBER-GAP, GAP, UBER-GAP!**

GAPPERS (*all together*).

GAP! GAP! GAP! GAP! GAP!

(They see the goat and gleefully jump on it. With ecstasy.)

GEE! GEE! GEE!

(CAPABLE appears and sweeps the GAPPERS off the goat with one stroke of her brush—and into her gapper sack and over the cliff.)

GAPPERS (*as they tumble*).

AAAGH!