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Dramatic Publishing



Fissures (lost and found)

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Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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FISSURES (LOST AND FOUND)

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“Commissioned and originally produced by
ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE in the Humana Festival
of New American Plays and THE PLAYWRIGHTS’ CENTER.”

Special thanks to the actors who participated in earlier workshops of *Fissures*: Jennifer Baldwin Peden, Lisa Clair, Jon Ferguson, Nathan Keepers and Amanda Whisner.

Fissures (lost and found) was developed by the creators and the participating actors during a series of workshops under the auspices of The Playwrights' Center and Actors Theatre of Louisville. The piece had its premiere at the 2010 Humana Festival of New Plays. The cast included Casey Greig, Nathan Keepers, Emily Gunyou Halaas and Megan Hill. They are the characters as well as the performers.

The show was rehearsed and presented in ATL's Bingham Theatre—the scenes were tailored to the specificity of the space. The thought is the piece would need to be somewhat reconceived for every space it is performed in. This idea will become clearer as we go along.

The play begins before you realize it's beginning.

There are no scene changes or blackouts until the end.

Fissures (lost and found)

CHARACTERS

CASEY

NATHAN

EMILY

MEGAN

DOMINIQUE

Fissures (lost and found)

1. Casey's Keys

(CASEY enters before the lights go down, while the audience is still settling in.)

CASEY

Did someone lose their keys?

It looks like there's a car key here,

And a bike lock key

A house key, or no, maybe it's an apartment key?

Oh, wait. These are mine.

Do you remember where your keys are?

Can you find them now?

Is it the left pocket, or the right?

Do you have an apartment key, or a house key?

And when you return home, do you enter through the front door, or the back door?

Does the door open in or out?

When you reach for the light, is it on your wall to the left, or the right?

Or maybe there's not a switch, there's a lamp?

Or maybe you have a pull chain like I do.

With the little bumps on it, almost like beads,
rosemary beads—*rosary* beads...
Beads that help you remember... “Hail Mary, full of ...”
If you’re Catholic, maybe you know...
I’m not—Catholic. Maybe you are...

Did you leave the stove on?
Is it gas or is it electric?

Now walk to your bedroom.
How do you get there?
Down a hallway?
Or do you go up the stairs?
Or do you go up the stairs and then down a hallway?
Do you have stairs?
Maybe you live on a single floor?

Is your bed in the center of the room?
Or under a window?
What color are the sheets?
Is it a single?
Is it a double, a queen? a king?

Do you sleep alone?
Is there room for someone beside you?
Is anyone there?
Is the bed lifted up off the floor?
Is there space down below? Can you crouch down
and look—look under the bed?

Is there dust? Socks? A book you forgot to finish?

Or maybe there's a box?
Can you reach it?
Can you pull the box out and put in on the bed?

Is it a large box, or small?
A shoebox or an old gift box
or a box left over from
the last time you moved?

Maybe you marked it "kitchen,"
or "library"?
No, you probably don't have a library, do you?

When was the last time you opened it?
Do you even remember what you put in there?
Could you open it now?
Could you open it,
and look inside?

(He sits on the sidelines, watching.)

2. Nathan's Keys

(NATHAN rushes breathlessly into the space.)

NATHAN

Sorry, sorry.

Just give me a second to catch my breath...

I'm sorry, really. I lost my keys.

They weren't on the desk—I have a desk—

(He shows us the spot where his desk is, against the wall.)

That's where I usually put them—I walk through the door and throw my coat on the chair and my keys on the desk—it's more of a table, really, oak, but I call it a desk—but my keys weren't there so I went to see if they were still in the door, but when I step outside, the door shuts behind me and now, I'm locked out.

So I have to climb up the water thing and through this broken window screen—gotta get that fixed—and I go to the kitchen where I have a glass of milk and a brownie. Then I remember, I have to be somewhere. So I check my calendar. The page for today is missing. Sometimes I tear it off and keep it in my wallet, so I check my wallet. There's a receipt in my wallet for a lot of money, but I can't remember what I bought...

That reminds me I have to pay my credit card bill. So I look for a pen—there's usually one on the desk—well the table.

(It's on the floor.)

Oh, there it is, it fell. And I pay my credit card bill and I put it in an envelope. And then I remember what I bought, my new coat. So I put on the coat to go downstairs to mail the credit card bill—oh, there are my keys, they're in my coat, great—but then, I forget where I parked my car...

So I take a walk, south past the Mexican taco place and the laundromat—and I see this woman, walks past me. That's my wife. But, that's not possible. She's gone now.

So I follow her. And she turns a corner and then another corner and then she's going into a house that's right across the street from my house—she walks right in—

(He goes into the house.)

The door is open.

The house is empty. No furniture, nothing. Except—some books, scattered on the floor, like they fell out of a box and nobody bothered to pick them up, or forgot to—there are people wandering about, but it's really really quiet, there's like no sound at all—sssh...

(He looks around.)

Oh.

(Takes off his shoes.)

Because nobody is wearing any shoes. The floors are really, really nice. There's a pile, here—

(He sets his shoes next to CASEY's feet.)

I have no idea where she went. So I go into the other room and on the mantle there's a picture frame, and inside the frame—is a picture of me, with my wife, the frame is one of those really nice silvery things you get at a crafts shop in a vacation town, you know.

It's not a picture I remember. The flash in the picture was so bright that there's a weird burst of silver all around our faces and our eyes are red and it's not very flattering, but we look happy. What the hell is this picture doing here? It's a shame, our eyes are red, because otherwise you would see, she had really beautiful eyes—

“Somewhere, beyond the sea...” She loved this one song, her favorite song. “Somewhere, beyond the sea...” No that's not it. “Somewhere, waiting for me...” Well now I can't get it out of my head, but that's not the one, it's like that but not it... I know this song but it's the other song, the other song was her— “Somewhere, beyond the sea...”

I have no idea.

So...a man is standing in his socks in an empty house, with an unflattering picture he doesn't recognize, with no idea of how he got there, or how the picture got there, and he's trying really hard to *(he hums the song)* his wife's favorite song...

And then, just as he's about to give up, he remembers where he parked his car.

(He exits with his keys as EMILY marches confidently onstage.)

3. Half-Life of Memory

EMILY

I read this somewhere—or somebody told me—I don't remember—that every time you remember something, you only remember half of what you remembered the last time you remembered it. So every time you remember something, you're also forgetting it. It gets farther away. Faces become shapes become splotches, paragraphs become sentences become words become sounds. Hills become dots and then I don't know.

Can I borrow your program?

(she takes a program from an audience member)

So, you have the thing, and the memory is half of that thing,

(tears the program in half)

and then your next memory is half of that, and the next time half of that,

(she tears and tears as she speaks)

then half of that and half of that and half of that, and so on and so on, until you're only holding the barest essential.

(hands the audience member the tiny piece that remains)

So think about what you did yesterday. Got it? Great. Hold it there...because the next time you think of it, you'll only have half. But another thing! If you remember something wrong, that still becomes part of the way you'll remember it next time. So you're remembering something that never really happened, but it becomes part of your memory anyway. Something that never really was becomes as real as something that actually *happened*.

So if a man is walking down the street and thinks he sees his dead wife, and he follows her, then there's always a part of him that will remember his wife walking down that street, even if she never actually did.

(She backs slowly off as CASEY rises, exiting with her.)

CASEY

Do you know where your wife is?

Do you even have a wife?

Are *you* a wife?

Maybe you're single

(nothing wrong with that)

Maybe you're an only child?

A sister?

A brother?

What *are* you?

(He is gone.)