

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

The Year and Two of Us Back Here.

A Play by Michael Kras

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Excerpt: *The Year and Two of Us Back Here* (Michael Kras)

CHARACTERS

Rain

Isaac

SETTING

The back room of 'For Hats Sake!', the worst hat store in the fucking world, on Halloween, Christmas Eve, Valentine's Day, Easter, and Halloween again.

SYNOPSIS

Rain and Isaac spend exactly one year together working at a shitty hat store in downtown Hamilton that no one ever comes in. Both at their own desperate yearning standstills, they struggle to overcome themselves and find connection while struggling to sell overpriced headwear.

The Year and Two of Us Back Here was developed at Theatre Aquarius in the 2017/18 Playwrights Unit. It was also developed with the financial support of the Ontario Arts Council through grants recommended by Essential Collective Theatre and Theatre Aquarius. It had its premiere at the 2018 Hamilton Fringe Festival, produced by Broken Soil Theatre and featuring the following cast and creative team:

Rain – Sarah Hime

Isaac – Stephen Ingram

Director – Michael Kras

Stage Manager/Set, Lighting & Sound Designer – James McCoy

ON DIALOGUE

The free-verse text moves at a decent rhythmic clip, but there are plentiful moments for silence and stillness. A slash (/) in the middle of a line indicates the start of the next line of dialogue, creating a slight overlap.

ON LOCATION

The play is set in Hamilton, Ontario because that's where I'm from. Feel free to change the name of the city to a similar spot near you.

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

The back room of 'For Hats Sake!', a hat emporium. The room is a mess... precariously stacked boxes everywhere, mannequin heads, broken mirror, broken microwave, wall calendar. ISAAC is sitting at a table and eating gross noodles from a black take out bowl. He slurps them kinda grossly. It's Halloween, too, with some spooky music playing on a shitty, static-y radio. RAIN pops in, wearing a flimsy witch's hat with her uniform and some sunglasses. She exhales. She doesn't see ISAAC at first and then does.

RAIN

Whoa

Jesus

Hi

ISAAC

Hi

RAIN

You're new

You scared me

ISAAC

Sorry

I was like really early

I thought I started at 12

So I was told I could just like

Chill back here.

RAIN

Well uh

Welcome

To 'For Hats Sake!'

FYI you have to shout it because of the exclamation point

Because hats are seriously exciting

But Deirdre probably already told you that.

Do you love hats?

ISAAC

I mean

I guess?

RAIN

Well get ready to love them even more.

You will have wet dreams about hats I promise.

I'm Rain

I work here

Obviously

ISAAC

Rain

Like

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC makes a rain sound and wiggles his fingers.

RAIN
You got it

ISAAC
That's cool
I'm Isaac

RAIN
Isaac
Like
Isaac.

ISAAC
Not as cool
Sometimes I get 'I suck' like
'I suck'

RAIN
Oh
That's kinda mean

ISAAC
I'm kidding I've never been
I was making a
Never mind
Are you early too?

RAIN
No I'm actually severely late
Don't worry they don't give a fuck
I mean sorry I probably shouldn't swear
Or tell you to be late
Don't be late
But if you like
Are
No one really cares.

ISAAC
Ok/ay

RAIN
I'm just
Sorry if I'm weird today
I'm not usually this like
Weird
But besides being severely late

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

I'm also severely hungover
Big Halloween party last night
By which I mean I drank a whole bottle of merlot and watched Hocus Pocus
So I didn't drag myself out of bed until like an hour ago
Normally I'm very nice and bright and shit.
You'll love being around me I swear.
Have you ever been hungover at work?
It's literal balls

RAIN sits and puts her feet up on the table. She pulls a cut drinking straw out of her pocket and pretends to smoke it like a cigarette.

ISAAC
I don't drink

RAIN
Respect

ISAAC
I mean like I can't drink

RAIN
Religious thing?

ISAAC
I'm 16

RAIN
Fuck off
Sorry
Again
Wow
Watch it Rain
But 16?

ISAAC
I know I don't like
Look like it

RAIN
Shit.
You're young enough to be my kid.

ISAAC
How old are you?

RAIN
28

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC

That's not really old

RAIN

Wait until you're 28.

ISAAC

Are you new here too?

RAIN

Nooooooooooooo

This'll actually be year eight I think?

So like a disturbingly long time

ISAAC

Wow

This store has been here that long?

I didn't even know it existed until now

RAIN

Don't get me wrong

This place is pretty cool most of the time

By which I mean nothing happens

It's easy as shit.

Just don't destroy a chapeau or punch a customer and you're golden.

So 16

Joining the work force early?

ISAAC

I dropped out of school

I'm doing this to get out of the house

Because my mom's crazy

RAIN

All parents are crazy probably

ISAAC

Not like my mom

RAIN

Well education is very important young man

It's the foundation / of a

ISAAC

I'm not that young.

And school wasn't my thing really.

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

RAIN

Where did you go?

ISAAC

Cathedral

RAIN air-fives ISAAC with great enthusiasm. ISAAC reciprocates none of this.

RAIN

Same!

So does that mean you're / like

ISAAC

Am / I

RAIN

Sorry yeah are you

Actually never / mind uh

ISAAC

No I mean

Like I'm not like religious at all if that's / what you

RAIN

I kinda realized too late that that's super weird / and personal

ISAAC

That's that's okay that's

But no I'm not.

Which goes over really well at my house.

Sorry if you are I don't mean / to like

RAIN

No no no I'm not either

Well I mean I guess I'm like

Spiritual?

I like to think there's something.

ISAAC

My mom says people who call themselves spiritual

Are just afraid of their relationship with the lord.

Told you she's crazy.

RAIN

Well she believes in something at least

That's more than a lot of people.

So school isn't your thing but hats are?

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC

For now I guess

RAIN

I bet in your interview Deirdre was all like
“So why are you passionate about hats!?”
And you had to find some bullshit response
Dig it out from the pits of your soul
“Well hats are an amazing blah blah blah”
And Dee probably ate it up because like
Okay like I mess around about hats all the time
Because they’re stupid and unnecessary
But Dee actually fucking loves them
Don’t tell her you know this
But she actually puts like
A ton of her own money into keeping this place open.
Like her bank account is a bottomless pit and I don’t understand it
And she does it all for hats.
They’re like a way of life
So just like be aware of that
I’m her assistant manager so
Is that from Forbidden City?

ISAAC

Huh?

Oh.

Yeah.

RAIN

I hate them
I boycott them
I got sick like three times
Like throwing up
And it’s not even like real Chinese
I’ve had real Chinese
I’ve been to China.
It’s beautiful
Busy but yeah.

ISAAC

This isn’t that bad.
I mean it’s kinda greasy but

ISAAC takes another slurpy bite.

RAIN

You’re basically shitting on all of Chinese culture.

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC (*mouth full*)

Sorry.

RAIN

I'd live in China if I could

ISAAC

Why don't you?

RAIN

Well who would sell tasteful handcrafted headwear to the clamoring Hamilton masses?

ISAAC

Why are you smoking a straw?

RAIN

So I don't smoke a cigarette.

You don't smoke do you?

ISAAC

Absolutely not.

My dad chain-smoked so

RAIN

If I catch you smoking I'll kick your ass

I'm not kidding

Cancer's legit.

ISAAC

I would absolutely never

I think it's gross

I think it's literally the worst thing.

RAIN

So you don't smoke

You don't drink

You don't go to school

What do you do?

ISAAC

Nothing.

RAIN

Well you do this now

So

By the way did you bring a costume?

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC
Ye/ah?

RAIN
You can totally wear a Halloween costume we're fun like that.

ISAAC
Oh
I thought you meant my uniform

RAIN
Wow
Did we only have like a double XL left?

ISAAC stands and shows off the size of his shirt.

ISAAC
Quintuple.
Deirdre said she'd order the right size for me

RAIN
Well here
For Halloween
To go with your new dress

RAIN grabs a tiara off of a creepy mannequin head.

RAIN
Ta-da

ISAAC
Uh what no / way

RAIN
It'll be adorable

ISAAC
I don't wanna be adorable

RAIN
You'll be a trendsetter
You'll be Princess Isaac

ISAAC
I'm good I'm fine.
Seriously.

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

RAIN

Fine

But you're gonna be the most boring person in the store today by / far

ISAAC

I'm okay with that

I'm fine being boring.

RAIN

Well that's kinda depressing

ISAAC

Sorry to be depressing then.

Um.

Silence.

RAIN

Did Dee teach you POS?

ISAAC

I mean I haven't officially started yet so

RAIN

Right

Well I'll teach you

It's actually really easy.

It's not really high tech or anything

Because Deirdre hates computers

She actively resists the future

Halloween is our busiest time

Which is saying like nothing

Because our hats are mostly too expensive anyway so

People just come in and try them on and mess around

And then they're like "How much is this?"

And it's usually close to a billion dollars

And they always gasp and throw the fedora at your face and leave.

And like they're not even well-made hats

These are factory made shitty child labour hats

This is why I hate capitalism.

ISAAC

Yeah

Ca-ti-pa-lism sucks

RAIN

But that all stays back here

Outside that door?

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

These hats are individually hand stitched
Crafted with first class materials
Made to last a lifetime at least.
We basically sell hot dogs as steaks
Smile a lot
Be clean
Make people trust you.
Mop and dust and shit if we're dead
Which is always.
Can you do that?

ISAAC
Probably yeah

RAIN
The guy who was here before you?
Gerald?
He always looked shifty
Like not even making a face it was just
His face
Like he looked like he just killed his hamster
Every single day.
And I think he sold like one hat in a month or less
So he got fired.
Don't get fired.
Sell hats.
Even if it hurts.
And trust me
It hurts sometimes.

RAIN picks up a bowl of candy and heads for the door.

ISAAC
What's all the candy for?

RAIN
We hand it out?
It's Halloween?

ISAAC
People trick or treat at stores?

RAIN
Not this one.
So we basically get to eat all of this ourselves

ISAAC
Well it's all yours

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

RAIN

You don't eat candy?

ISAAC

Not really

RAIN

I am aghast

What kid doesn't / like

ISAAC

I'm not a kid

And I don't know

Why does anyone not like stuff.

RAIN

Well at least we won't fight over the Snickers

Which means we have an infinitely better chance of being friends.

I dated this guy once who loved Snickers as much as me

It literally ended our relationship.

Plus he was a verbally abusive shit sack.

Probably more that.

His name was Zhang Wei

ISAAC

Zhang Wei?

RAIN

That's why I went to China.

Fresh out of high school

I met him online and it got serious

Obviously didn't work out.

Four months of my life I'll never get back.

ISAAC

Like long distance?

Like he lived there?

RAIN

That's how my mom met my dad

He was from Italy

And they did this pen pal thing

Where they wrote back and forth to each other

For like

Years without seeing each other

Like they fell in love on paper

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC

And that actually worked?

RAIN

For a while

But then he said he missed Italy

And my mom is afraid of change and didn't wanna move there

And they fought a lot

And one morning I woke up and he was gone.

It messed her up severely

Whole life came crashing down.

She doesn't really leave the house now

Hasn't really worked in years either.

So I mean it was good that I moved back in after China

I was even guilty about going to be honest

It's just me and her and my salamander

The last thing my dad gave me.

His name's Jean-Baptiste

You'll never meet him because he's agoraphobic

But otherwise he's chill as heck

ISAAC

You'd get along with my mom

She talks a lot too.

RAIN

Sorry / sometimes I ramble

ISAAC

Like I mean she doesn't

Oh that's okay I don't care

But yeah I mean she doesn't talk as much now.

But like she can.

Anyway never mind uh.

RAIN

Well time to get work-appropriately spooky.

Oh by the way

Not to be morbid but like

Gerald probably actually did kill hamsters

I heard after he'd buy one every week and then like

Kill them.

Because like one day one fell out of his bag here

Just plop just dead

And he was like "Whoa how'd that get in there?"

But like super sketchy

Super fucked up.

You're not a hamster murderer are you?

Excerpt: The Year and Two of Us Back Here (Michael Kras)

ISAAC

I don't think so.

RAIN

Then you're already the best sales person we've had.

See you out there Princess Isaac.

RAIN yelps a guttural football cheer and shoves out the door.

ISAAC

What the fuck.