

# INTERSECTION: WOOD BLOOM



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## CURRENT THEATRE SERIES

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# Introduction

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Do you want me to tell you it was really horrible actually?

No, I want the truth.

*Purple Weeds* by Madeleine Stedman

Each year, there is a buzz when we first read through the new *Intersection* scripts. We delight in seeing our students' eyes light up. Their smiles, their laughter, and their hushed appreciation. We hear the murmurings of '*I want to play that character, that's me*' and we know we are on our way. There is an instant kinship and connection to the characters and their experiences on the page—a relationship that can only be explained as *like meeting like*.

The authentic voice these young writers bring to their plays resonates deeply with our emerging young actors. They are both challenged and lifted in equal measure by the relatability and honesty of the writing. The work is immediate and powerful. Young people giving voice to young people. Young characters brought to life by the actors they were written for.

As drama practitioners we often stand back and let the students lead the *Intersection* conversation. This work is for them and the world it portrays is theirs.

Our work with CAPTIVATE CEDP brings students together from across Western Sydney, all sharing a passion for drama and artistic expression. The *Intersection* Festival opens the door to a unique performance opportunity for our senior students. One that only exists due to the expansive opportunities ATYP offers and their generosity to share, and trust us with the work. The benefits are twofold—the best young playwrights in Australia are matched with the optimistic energy of a large and diverse tribe of students from across NSW—all working, to the best of their capacity, to make each play sing.

This year's plays were ten varied and immensely diverse scripts inspired by the stimulus: Bloom. The quintessential small-town Aussie

tale of *Purple Weeds*. The finely observed and moving relationship shared by *Tully and Pinecone*. The joyful exploration of a school musical opening night in *Stage Fright*. The need to trust your instincts, follow your gut and forge your own path in *Cutlery*. The environmental party-protest of *Fish Doof*. The collaborative challenging of discrimination in *Norm Busters*. The exuberant humour of *Unrequited*. The importance of doing the right thing and standing up for friends in *Formal Night*. The poignancy of unreciprocated first love in *Like Sand*. And lastly the highly theatrical, epic journey of love and loss that is *The Ballad of Pak Craig*. All ten plays in the publication make us care. The playwrights have bravely gifted us characters and situations of real vision and stagecraft.

We look forward to bringing together our performances with those others entrusted with the Intersection Festival scripts. To have an opportunity, after two years of limitations and separations, to finally celebrate the work of young theatre makers, and the worlds they have created, makes this process even more vital. We thank ATYP for their unwavering advocacy of young people in the arts. We, the teachers who support them, are deeply grateful.

*Lucinda Armour and Tim Martin*

Lucinda Armour and Tim Martin are Drama Specialists with CAPTIVATE—of the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Parramatta. They deliver creative and performing arts opportunities to students and teachers across 82 schools from Granville to Lawson, Mt Druitt to Box Hill. CAPTIVATE is proud to be associated with ATYP Learning.

# Acknowledgements

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ATYP would like to acknowledge that the plays in this publication were created on diverse lands of traditional custodians. ATYP is a company that works and creates on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people, and we are grateful to be telling stories on First Nations land that has such a rich history of storytelling. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

ATYP would like to warmly acknowledge the Graeme Wood Foundation which generously supported the development of these plays.

Our deep thanks to our playwright mentors at the 2021 National Studio: Donna Abela, Vanessa Bates and Lewis Treston, whose wisdom and generosity were inspiring.

Thank you to all the writers from the 2021 National Studio: From Our Place to Yours: Lotte Beckett, Alex Castello, Maeve Hook, Isidora, Ruby Liddelow, Izabella Louk, Olivia McLeod, Miranda Michalowski, Wenona Moss, Sevgi Murphy, Milena Nestic, Dylan Ferenc Nyerges, Amarachi Okorom, Bokkie Robertson, Shahrin Shamim, Madeleine Stedman, Adam Stepfner, India Stuart, Rupert Williamson, LJ Wilson.



A selection of these plays were first rehearsed and performed by the following schools and performing arts programs in preparation for the Intersection Festival at ATYP's Rebel Theatre, on 2 August, 2022:

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING ARTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

*Teacher: Kian Pitman*

CAPTIVATE

*The performing arts unit of the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Parramatta.*

*Teachers: Lucinda Armour and Tim Martin*

CERDON COLLEGE

*Teacher: Samantha Murphy*

INNER SYDNEY HIGH SCHOOL

*Teacher: Renee Lane*

KATOOMBA HIGH SCHOOL

*Teacher: Clare Anstey*

OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE, PARRAMATTA

*Teacher: Caroline Rowland*

PENRITH SELECTIVE HIGH SCHOOL

*Teacher: Anthony Vassallo*

ST IVES HIGH SCHOOL

*Teacher: Catherine Whittle*

We encourage anyone producing and casting these works to consider performers from diverse backgrounds.



# Stage Fright

Alex Castello

---

JAMES, 17, male.

ZAC, 17, male.

RUBY, 17, female.

*Several high school students are backstage in their school hall where a production of Grease is about to take place. It's opening night.*

*JAMES, a boy with hair styled like a 1950s greaser with a big leather jacket, leans against the backstage door.*

*He stares at himself in the mirror from afar, making subtle adjustments to his hair.*

*If possible, extra cast members are either sitting down reading scripts or making last minute adjustments to their costumes, except for ZAC, who is playing 'Greased Lightnin'" from the musical aloud on a speaker and dancing to it whilst mouthing the words.*

*RUBY, wearing all blacks with a clipboard in her hand, storms into the room.*

RUBY: This is your ten-minute call. Ten minutes.

JAMES: Thank you.

RUBY: Nice moves Zac!

*ZAC smiles at her and continues to dance.*

*RUBY exits.*

*JAMES starts to practise dancing and ends up falling on the ground.*

ZAC: Break a leg Danny Zuko.

*JAMES gets up and shakes his legs.*

JAMES: [*nervously*] Thanks! You too Kenickie.

ZAC: I mean literally.

*ZAC realises that JAMES thinks he's being serious.*

Just kidding. Did you want to go over some chorey? Wouldn't want you to fall on me and break my legs.

JAMES: I think I just need to focus on the opening. Thanks, Zac.

ZAC: Suit yourself.

*ZAC reaches into his bag, pulls out a can of Redbull and takes some giant gulps.*

*JAMES sits in front of the mirror and gives himself a pep talk. No-one else can hear him.*

JAMES: I got chills and they're multiplying.

*[Putting on a poorly impersonated John Travolta voice from the 1978 film] Hey, nervous? Don't worry. Before was a different version of me, but this is the real me.*

*JAMES looks under the table and pulls out flowers.*

*I even got these flowers for you.*

God, what if she laughs at me? Or says no? *[Deep exhaling]* No ... but I'm not me. I'm ... Danny Zuko, and I can do this.

*JAMES gets up, pulls a comb out of his pocket and uses it on his hair.*

*He puts the comb back in his pocket and struts with the flowers towards the other side of the stage. He sees Ruby looking busy onstage. He groans and turns away.*

*ZAC laughs at JAMES and looks at the flowers.*

ZAC: For me? Oh you shouldn't have.

JAMES: Not for you.

*ZAC looks in the direction James came from and realises.*

ZAC: They're for her? Ruby?

JAMES: *[blushing]* No ...

*ZAC doesn't look convinced.*

*[Angrily]* Yes. Okay? Now leave me alone. I need to focus.

ZAC: Alright bro, suit yourself.

*ZAC finishes his Redbull and throws the can in the bin. He looks in the stage mirror and adjusts his hair.*

JAMES *walks back to the mirror. He throws the flowers under the dressing table. He sits down.*

*A school bell rings.*

JAMES *flinches at the sound of the ring, starts hyperventilating and talks to himself. No-one else can hear him.*

JAMES: [*switching up between a Danny Zuko voice and his own voice*] *I better shape up or it's not gonna end well. I need to be the best version of myself. I am Danny Zuko, the star! I need to do well for the audience. And prove to myself, that I can do this! I am Danny Zuko! I am cool! I am me! Even though I'm pretending to be someone else. What if I screw up ... everything? Stop. Stop. You need to snap out of this ... I think I'm going to be sick.*

JAMES *runs offstage. We hear retching.*

RUBY *enters.*

RUBY: This is your five-minute call. Five minutes.

RUBY *scans the room.*

Where's James?

ZAC: In the bathroom. I think he's got stage fright.

RUBY: Please tell me you're joking.

ZAC: I'm being one hundred percent serious—

RUBY: Zac, please.

*Retching sounds come from offstage.*

Oh no. [*Calling*] James, are you okay?

*There's no response.*

I'm getting Mr / Newton.

ZAC: I can handle this.

RUBY *exits.*

JAMES *enters and returns to his mirror.*

JAMES: [*under his breath*] Maybe I didn't deserve this role.

ZAC: Bro, are you feeling okay?

JAMES: I'm fine.

ZAC: You didn't sound fine.

JAMES: Nervous that's all.

ZAC: Are your parents in the audience?

*A beat.*

JAMES: Parents don't know I'm in the show.

ZAC: Wait, what?

JAMES: Yeah ... they're not supportive.

ZAC: *Tell me more, tell me more.*

JAMES: They don't know where I go at night.

ZAC: *Tell me more, tell me more.*

JAMES: I don't want to put up a fight.

ZAC: My parents aren't all that supportive either. But they're still in the audience paying to see me. Suckers. Y'know there's still two nights left after this. You can tell them, and they could come ...

JAMES: I'd rather not.

ZAC: What's the worst that can happen? You're already in the show, it's on and will be over in a few days. Do you have any friends in the audience?

JAMES: My friends aren't into musicals, some of them tried to talk me out of it. I think they thought I'd screw up and embarrass myself and then not want to talk to me anymore. They're just into different things. If I don't have my friends, who do I have?

ZAC: [*smiles*] The T-Birds. The cast ... and crew. [*A beat.*] You should just give the flowers to Ruby, I bet she'll love them. And you, of course. I know what it's like to have stage fright and trust me, you shouldn't have anything to worry about because you are nailing the role.

JAMES *laughs*.

JAMES: I hope she likes me as Danny Zuko.

RUBY *enters and sees James*.

RUBY: Thank God, you're still here!

JAMES: I'm feeling better now.

RUBY: Glad to hear it, I couldn't find any teachers. So I ran back here hoping you hadn't bailed.

JAMES: I would never bail ... It's my first performance ever and I'm just nervous that's all.

RUBY: This is your first time?!

ZAC: And he got the lead role. Cool huh?

RUBY: Wow.

JAMES: [*smiling*] Yeah, it's pretty cool.

RUBY: Anyone you know in the audience?

JAMES: No, but that's okay. I get a sense of freedom not knowing. I'll do my best. That's my promise to all of you, and if things go wrong on stage, we'll just improvise and make it good. And if that doesn't work, screw them.

RUBY: Things go wrong in performances all the time. But, I've seen your dress rehearsals and trust me; everything is looking amazing.

JAMES: Yeah, well I've also been practising a lot outside of rehearsals because I just want to do well. I love doing this.

ZAC: And it shows. You're the lead! I wish I was the lead! I auditioned for Danny Zuko and didn't get it and I've been doing musicals since I was seven. This is your first one and you happen to land the main role. *You're the one that they want.* Come on bro, be proud of yourself. You're about to go out and smash it. We're T-Birds right?

JAMES: Yeah T-Birds!

*JAMES and ZAC improvise a signature handshake.*

RUBY: You've got this, James.

*ZAC pulls JAMES closer with the signature handshake and speaks so only he can hear.*

ZAC: Give her the flowers now, or I will.

*JAMES puts on his cool Danny Zuko persona and pulls out the flowers from underneath the dressing table.*

JAMES: I got these flowers for you, Ruby.

*RUBY blushes and takes the flowers.*

RUBY: Thank you!

JAMES: I was wondering, did you want to grab dinner sometime after the shows are finished?

RUBY: Yes! Absolutely! Oh, I need to check the time!

*RUBY reaches into her pocket, and searches for her phone.*

*JAMES grins to himself and looks to ZAC. They both nod in unison.*

JAMES: You're right. I will smash it. Thanks Zac. [*Taking a deep breath and looking at himself in the mirror*] *You are Danny Zuko.*

RUBY: Beginners, [*smiling*] that's you James. Chookas.

JAMES *glances over at RUBY and smiles.*

JAMES: *That's my name, don't wear it out.*

JAMES *pulls out a comb and fixes his hair. He exits to go onstage.*

THE END

# Norm Busters

Ruby Liddelow

---

HAZEL, *she/her, Year 11. Protagonist, big dreamer, practical schemer. Wants to publicly display private injustice.*

LOUIS, *he/him, Year 11. Not particularly rebellious, model student, a bit down about not being allowed to authentically express himself.*

RAZZI, *he/him, Year 11. Plots with Hazel to support Louis' cause. Is impulsive, tenacious, perceptive.*

WREN, *gender flexible, 17. Razzi's cool older sibling who is down to aid the facilitation of chaos. Very aesthetic, kinda loose.*

CHARLIE, *gender flexible, Year 11. Artist and ideas machine who knows lots of things. Curious but private, and secretly pleased to be swept into the action.*

LAYLA, *she/her/flexible, Year 12. Her mum is the school deputy. Dually obligated to be responsible, and bursting to let loose.*

JULES, *he/him/flexible, Year 12. Uses a walking cane and can't run. Thinks about how to use tech to leverage art into change-making.*

*This piece will give best results if creative blocking, physical theatre, and/or contemporary movement are applied under the direct address sections and imaginative thinking is applied to set and props ideas. It's like King Lear, the unstageable play—of course you can't have two cars and even chairs may not work in this eight-minute piece but the cast are painting the picture verbally so how crafty can you get here?*

*Chalk spray paint found at a hardware shop could make an easy stage switch for this piece—and potentially the whole thing could be stencilled on for speed and quality.*