

A Note from the Playwright

DEAR CURIOUS PATRONS,

To set the scene: it was 2010 and I was six months away from completing my MFA in Writing for the Stage and Screen at Northwestern University, bracing myself for the inevitably challenging transition into the real world. An intriguing email appeared in my inbox, an application announcement for the NNPN (National New Play Network) Playwright-in-Residence program. It was the opportunity to spend a year in residence with a NNPN member theatre developing new work. Only catch: the application was due in a week.

As I scrolled through NNPN's list of member theatres, I paused when I came to Curious Theatre Company. Hmm... Denver, Colorado. I had family there. I was a huge fan of many of the plays in their current and past seasons. Their mission strongly aligned with my artistic tastes and values. With no time to waste, I nervously picked up the phone and cold-called the theatre.

I was surprised when Chip Walton picked up after a few rings. While intimidated to be speaking directly to the Artistic Director, within a few minutes his warmth and affability put me completely at ease. Unfortunately, Curious already had a prospective playwright for the residency. *But*, Chip added, they weren't sure it was going to work out, so why didn't I go ahead and send him one of my plays?

Long story short: six-months later I was packing my bags for the move from Chicago to Colorado. What followed was one of the most exhilarating and artistically-fulfilling years of my young career. In Chip I found an incredibly supportive mentor, and in Curious I found an artistic home. Three years later, Curious and I had the opportunity to partner again to propose a play for the 2014 NNPN Commission. Awarded to one playwright annually, the

Commission is chosen from projects nominated by member theatres and selected by NNPN's Board of Directors. We were awarded the 2014 Commission to work together to develop *The Luckiest People*.

As *The Luckiest People* began to take shape, Chip and I started to identify the potential for a larger story arc. The scope of the characters' individual and collective journeys felt like they extended far beyond the six days we spend with them in this play. During a workshop at The Kennedy Center in August 2015, we explored impulses and ideas for future installments. After a week of discussion and experimentation in the room, Chip and I walked away fully committed to collaborating on a series of plays exploring what Chip deemed the "Sahara of Middle Age."

Much like how my relationship with Curious began, there is an element of fate to our newest collaboration, and also a huge vote of confidence. Curious took a chance on me seven years ago when they applied with a playwright they barely knew for a season-long residency. Now they are once again taking a leap of faith, trusting me to create a series of plays that will live up to the high artistic integrity that patrons expect from Curious.



Meridith Friedman
Playwright