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MONROE ENTERTAINS YOU: A King comes to The Rose

BY DENNIS SMITH Apr 11, 2019



The play is written, the cast chosen, now to get the set built for "Independence Day at Happy Meadows." Laura King is both the playwright and director of this 'laugh-out-loud' comedy that opens May 10 at the Rose Theater, Forsyth. (Photo/Dennis Smith)

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Sound the trumpets, roll out the royal carpet, summon all subjects. A King is coming to the Rose Theater. Actually, the King is Laura.

Laura King is an award-winning playwright who penned "Independence Day at Happy Meadows," a farcical comedy about the antics of a group of nursing home residents, and she is directing the play.

This is a special treat for an audience to have the creator bring the story to life as it was intended to be told. As a bonus you can meet and greet her following each performance of the show, which opens May 10th at The Rose Theatre.

Laura is a neighbor. She lives in Barnesville where she is an instructor of theater at Gordon State College. Laura holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in playwriting from the Playwright's Lab at Hollins University in Virginia.

She has always loved to write. And, as best she can remember from her childhood days growing up in Maryland, she loved to hear and tell stories. Plus, Laura was enthralled with the idea of being on "stage."

Were this a play about Laura's youth and career we would now move to Scene Two, Act One of her life and find her at Western Maryland College (now McDaniel College, Westminster, Md.) studying theater and participating in campus productions. Soon after college, she married Mark King, moved to Chicago, and gave birth to their daughter Katie.

The couple headed to Baton Rouge, Louisiana where Mark received his Doctorate in English from L.S.U., and Laura worked as a freelance editor and writer and focused on raising their daughter.

Then in Act II of the Laura story things took a memorable turn. Mark, Laura, and Katie moved to Georgia, so Mark could accept a teaching job at Gordon State College. With Katie in school now, Laura decided to combine her writing skills, story telling ability, and love for the theatre into a new passion—becoming a playwright.

No easy feat for a young woman of 47 who was in an established lifestyle. Still, the stage was calling again, and this time could not be denied. Four years later with her Master of Fine Arts in playwriting degree in hand and lots of story-lines in mind, Laura started her new career.

A most interesting part of the story extends beyond words on paper to phone calls; interviews—big and small; mailing campaigns; travel; book shows; theatrical productions and conferences.

"Hello, I'm Laura King, playwright, and I want to tell you about my new stage play," words spoken often by Laura over the past decade. "Rejections came; but I've found that the rejections just make the successes sweeter. When I first started writing, I was disheartened by the rejections, but now I use them to fuel me to write more and work harder. You can't look at success on a daily, weekly or even monthly basis when you are a playwright. You must look bigger. How did I do this year? What am I going to do next season? Am I satisfied with me?"

Ms. King's bio reflects her commitment to her calling by the way she has immersed herself in the field. She is an Atlanta region ambassador for the Dramatists Guild, serves on the Publications Committee and as the chair of the Playwriting Interest Group for the Southeastern Theatre Conference, and is a member of Working Title Playwrights.

"Independence Day at Happy Meadows" was awarded the 2016 Southeastern Theatre Conference/Stage Rights Ready to Publish Award and is now available for licensing. Her play "Fallout" won the 2016 Georgia Theatre Conference Playwriting Competition.

Currently "The Cayuga Canal Girls," which was recently announced as a winner of the American Association of Community Theatre's NewPlayFest 2020 is set to premier in Connecticut next spring. Proof that Laura loves to write is demonstrated by the fact that she is the author of numerous 10-minute plays, including her collection "Youth on the Roof," published by YouthPLAYS which are hits with both middle and high school audiences.

Laura has grown to be very mindful and responsive to her following of fans and theatres. After her success with "Independence Day at Happy Meadows," some show producers asked her to do something similar that was a fun, light-hearted play. Along came "The Harmony Baptist Church Ladies Auxiliary Christmas Jubilee," which has become a great holiday hit.

Monroe County and surrounding area residents are very fortunate. "Independence Day at Happy Meadows" opens May 10 and runs through May 19. Then on Dec. 13-15 the Backlot Players will be presenting "The Harmony Baptist Church Ladies Auxiliary Christmas Jubilee," which will be directed by King as another treat for theatre goers.

Dennis Smith writes "Monroe Entertains You," highlighting the entertainment fare offered in Monroe County and the people who make it possible. Smith wants Forsyth to realize and support the riches it has in the cultural arts.



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