

**SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &  
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**JANE CHAMBERS AWARDS**

**MAIN CONTEST WINNER for 2017**

**NEVER NOT ONCE (3W, 2M)**, by Carey Crim:

Eleanor, a biology major at Princeton, brings her boyfriend Rob home to meet her two (not perfect but still pretty excellent) moms. While there, she lets them know that she has hired a private investigator to help her find her biological dad. She says, as a scientist, she is curious about her genetics. But it's evident she might also just want to meet her dad. Nadine, her non-biological mom, thinks it's a great idea, partly because she had a deep and wonderful relationship with her own father. Allison, Eleanor's biological mom, completely disagrees, insisting that Eleanor's father, a drunken one night stand in college whose name Allison doesn't remember, never even knew she existed. To respect Allison's right to know her biological father, Nadine eventually tells Allison that her mother used to talk in her sleep about someone named Doug. This information sends Eleanor on a journey to an unexpected and explosive answer to the question "Where do I come from?" The fallout and complications from this revelation force the whole family—and Doug—to confront the past in order to have any hope of moving on to a better future. With a multiracial cast of well-defined characters, complex development, and a nuanced lens on sexuality, non-traditional family, and taking responsibility, this play is theatrically satisfying and socially urgent.

**Carey Crim** is an award-winning playwright and resident artist at The Purple Rose Theater Company. Her play, *Conviction*, premiered to critical acclaim at Bay Street Theatre starring Sarah Paulson, Garret Dillahunt and Elizabeth Reaser. It then opened at The Rubicon Theatre in Ventura, CA where it was nominated for an Ovation award for best new play. Her earlier works, *Growing Pretty*, *Wake* and *Some Couples May* all received world premieres at The Purple Rose Theatre. *Wake* also received a West Coast Premiere at the SeaGlass Theatre in Los Angeles, where it was a Critic's Pick. Carey has recently adapted it for the screen and it's shooting in Long Beach with a fantastic cast and crew. Her play *Morning After Grace* ran to sold-out houses at The Purple Rose Theater Co. starring Randolph (Randy) Mantooth and is slated to run at Asolo Repertory Theatre and The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre in 2018. Her newest play *Paint Night* had a workshop at The Purple Rose in April. She is working on two new plays: *The Last Broadcast* and *Never Not Once*. She is a three-time finalist for Miami City Theater's short play competition, which she won in 2011. A finalist for The Heideman Award and three-time finalist in the Samuel French OOB festival, her work has received productions and/or workshops at Pasadena Playhouse, Primary Stages, Luna Stage, Asolo Rep, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Miami City Theatre, Rubicon Theatre and The Purple Rose Theatre Company. Carey is a graduate of Northwestern University.

**2017 RUNNER-UP**

**THE GREAT DIVIDE (3W 2M)** by Alix Sobler

On Saturday, March 25, 1911, at 4:45 pm, someone screamed "Fire!" on the 8th floor of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on the lower East Side of Manhattan. Within 10 minutes, 146 workers, most of them young women, recent immigrants from some of the most oppressed countries in the world then, lay dead, either on the floor of the sweatshop, or on the street eight stories below. *The Great Divide* gives voice to some of these doomed workers, the lives they led, and the lessons they learned during their time in the American garment district. Exploring the immigrant experience and the fate of sweatshop workers, the story of the girls who died in the Triangle shirtwaist factory still rings true today. Where does the business of life intersect with the business of business? How do you find

**FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)**

**SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &  
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

your identity when you are treated as one of the masses? What does it say about our society that a century later we face the same problems to maintain comforts and luxuries in the industrialized world? A feminist story about women's contributions to industrialized labor, the turn of the century and American quality of life, *The Great Divide* is full of heart, song and history. This new play glances at the human side of the cost of cheap labor by telling the story of the trials faced by a generation who moved the world across the ocean on their very backs.

In addition to being a runner-up for the Jane Chambers Feminist Playwriting Contest, *The Great Divide* was also the winner of the 2015 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, and was a finalist in the 2015 Henley Rose Playwriting Competition for Women.

**Alix Sobler** is a writer and performer who lives in New York City. Her play *Sheltered* won the 2018 Alliance/Keneda National Graduate Playwriting Competition and will receive a world premiere at Alliance Theater in 2018. *The Great Divide*, which won the 2015 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition and was named as a finalist in the Henley Rose Playwriting Competition, received its world premiere September 2016 at The Finborough Theatre in London. Her play *The Secret Annex*, originally produced in 2014 at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre was produced in 2016 at the Segal Centre in Montreal. In 2015 it was published by Scirocco Press and received a public reading at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Sobler's other works have been read or produced in theaters across North America, including South Coast Repertory (Costa Mesa, CA), Theatre Ariel (Philadelphia, PA), Chicago's Theatre Seven (Chicago, IL), Mad & Merry Theater Company (New York, NY), Prairie Theatre Exchange (Winnipeg, MB), Brown Trinity Playwright's Rep (Providence, RI), The Tank (New York, NY), Theatre Or (Minneapolis, MN), among others. A graduate of Brown University, she received her MFA in playwriting from Columbia University in 2017, where she was honored to study with David Henry Hwang, Lynn Nottage and Charles Mee, among others. Find more at [alixsobler.com](http://alixsobler.com).

**HONORABLE MENTIONS**

**PARADISE** (1W 1M) by Laura Maria Censabella:

Yasmeen Al-Hamadi is a Yemeni-American senior at a struggling inner-city Bronx high school who has just discovered her passion for science because of a new teacher, Dr. Guy Royston, a former neuroscientist at Columbia University who specializes in the study of romantic love. She connects with science in spite of the fact that Dr. Royston, a former Evangelical, seems to hold his students in contempt, which may have something to do with rumors about his disgrace and why he is teaching there. Yasmeen needs his help in applying for a science scholarship to Columbia. An unlikely research team, together they embark on a neurological study of adolescence and romantic love, leading to stormy conflicts over love, faith and culture. An Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan commissioned play

**Laura Maria Censabella** won the 2014 \$10,000 ADAA William Saroyan Human Rights/Social Justice Playwriting Prize for her play *Carla Cooks The War*. Her Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan commissioned play *Paradise* premiered at Underground Railway/Central Square Theater (Cambridge) in April 2017 and will also be produced by Gulfshore Playhouse, and co-produced by Passage Theatre/Luna Stage in the fall. Her other plays have been developed/produced at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, Philadelphia Festival Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Portland Stage, The New Harmony Project, The Working Theatre, and Urban Stages, among others. She has won three writing grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts. She has also won two daytime

**FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)**

**SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &  
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

television Emmy Awards. Her short film *Last Call* is available on Netflix and she has been published in *The Best Short Plays of 2012-2013* (Applause Books), *ConnotationPress.com*, *IndependentPlaywrights.com*, *Poems and Plays* and *The St. Petersburg Review*. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Writers Guild of America, East, and the League of Professional Theatre Women, and she directs the EST Playwrights Unit. She graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in Philosophy and is part-time Assistant Professor in Playwriting at the New School for Drama where she won the Distinguished University-Wide Teaching Award. Most recently she received a new EST/Sloan commission to write about the pioneering work in animal cognition of Harvard scientist Dr. Irene Pepperberg and her grey parrot Alex. You may contact Laura at [LaurMaria@aol.com](mailto:LaurMaria@aol.com) or through her agent Elaine Devlin at [Edevlinlit@aol.com](mailto:Edevlinlit@aol.com).

**A SMALL OAK TREE RUNS RED** (1W, 2M) by Lekethia Dalcoe:

Shackled, bound, and trapped in a psychic abyss someplace between reality and make-believe, lies swollen bellied, bloodied Mary Turner, as well as the accused murderer Sidney Johnson, and her loving husband Hayes Turner. The characters are haunted by the voices of the mob that reside in the abyss. Their torture continues even in the afterlife, as the abyss tangles, throws, and switches the elements all in an effort of stopping their memories. Sidney has been given the task to force Mary to remember the horrible accounts of her lynching so they both can move on, which he reluctantly pursues. In this world entangled in history and unforgivable acts against humanity, to forget is to forever perish, just like the countless stories before them; trapped within old newspapers and forgotten memories

**Lekethia Dalcoe** is a playwright and actress from Houston, TX, who now resides in New York City. She holds a MA in Theatre from Texas A&M University- Commerce and an MFA in Acting from the New School for Drama in NYC. Some of her acting credits include, *Zoohouse* (National Black Theatre), Royal Shakespeare Company *Julius Caesar* (BAM), Hester- "In the Blood" (NSD), *Marie-Woyzeck* (NSD), Warwick -*Shakespeare's Henry's* (NSD), Beneatha- *To Be Young Gifted and Black* (MainStage Theatre). Her recent playwriting credits includes, *A Small Oak Tree Runs Red* (Full-length) commissioned by the Congo Square Theatre in Chicago for its 2015-2016 "Power of Her season"; directed by Tony nominated actor/director Harry Lennix, selected for Capital Stages (2016) Playwrights' Revolution staged reading series, also produced at the Venus/Adonis festival (2015) in New York, and as a staged reading for "The Keep Soul Alive playwriting series at The National Black (NBT) in New York. Top Chicago theatre critic, Chris Jones stated, *A Small Oak Tree Runs Red*, is an exceptionally gutsy, powerful and potent drama from Lekethia Dalcoe." Her play recently won best theatrical Production and Director for the 2016 Chicago Black Excellence awards. Other plays include: *Butterflies in the Mist* (Full-length), *Floating* and *An Ancient Tale of Debauchery*. Check her website out at <http://www.lekethiadalcoe.com>

**POLICARPA** (6-9 with doubling. All parts can be played by women) by Diana Burbano:

In a future, post apocalyptic Colombia controlled by the very wealthy, the brilliant, mad Ingrid Bolivar collects young women and turns them into weapons. Policarpa, a girl with magical gifts, must resist the allure of becoming a creature of destruction. Instead she must use her gifts to help the resistance and wrest control from destructive patriarchal forces who would dispose of the young and imprison all female dissenters. Along with her sisters-in-arms, Policarpa navigates the corrupt society, escaping prison, rescuing her quadriplegic brother and weaving magical fabric of butterflies to resist the corrupt government. She has the power to bring about the end of the world

**FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)**

**SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &  
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

and end suffering for all, but what is the humane choice in a world that has lost its humanity? Mythic in scope, *Policarpa* features extraordinary female characters to explore the divine feminine while also exposing the ugly underbelly of politics and power when a society loses its moral compass at the hands of cruelty and greed.

**Diana Burbano** is a Colombian immigrant, playwright and teaching artist at South Coast Rep and Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble. Full length plays: *Policarpa*, which had a Rough Draft Residency at the Drama League in May 2017 and will be featured on The Parsnip Ship in 2018. *Fabulous Monsters*, a Festival51 winner (Rhode Island), about women in Punk Rock, which was also a selection of the Oc-Centric Theatre festival in Orange County CA and Barefoot Theatre Co in NYC. Her *Picture me Rollin'* was featured at the 35th annual William Inge Festival and InkFest in Hollywood, while *Silueta*, (about the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta), with Tom and Chris Shelton, opened in Spanish in 2016 at Teatro Tercera Llamada in Louisville KY—to be published in 2018. *Caliban's Island*, published by YouthPLAYS, won the Headwaters at Creede Repertory 2017. *Libertadoras*, *Vamping* and *Linda* were written for the 365 Women a Year project and have been performed around the world. [dianaburbano.com](http://dianaburbano.com)

**THE O'MALLEY GAMBIT** (5W 5M, 20 Roles) by Kate Monaghan:

Grace O'Malley was a pirate. In an Ireland where women were largely ignored by historians and clan leadership was an elective office, she rose to become The O'Malley, the only known female clan chief of pre-modern times, a position she maintained for roughly four decades. She was also regarded by the English Governors of Ireland as “the mother of all rebellions” in that very rebellious country. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Tudor was a princess, then a bastard, then a princess again. In an England where women born into noble families were political capital, manipulated by their male relatives in pursuit of power, influence and wealth, she rose to become Queen Elizabeth I, evaded multiple attempts to marry her off and ruled alone, the only female monarch in western Europe, for 45 years. This ensemble play, filled storytelling charm, is set in 1593, when both women were in their 60s: O'Malley risked her life and liberty to sail to England to petition Elizabeth for the release of her son, imprisoned and under sentence of death by Elizabeth's governor. Surrounded by the men who advise and follow them, witnessed and supported by an Everywoman Narrator, the two women ultimately meet and discover the ways in which they are alike and unique in a society geared to keeping women from power. With wit, the two negotiate an agreement to mutual advantage, acknowledge their mutual respect, and part as friends, recognizing the reality of their world virtually guarantees they will never meet again.

Mixing past and present, legend and history, humor and desperation, political savvy and mother wit, this new play invites its audience into the private meeting between the two women, and offers a fly-on-the-wall opportunity to overhear a conversation of which there is no official record. The play illuminates the herstory of both the extraordinary women who are its central figures and the entire milieu in which they lived and thrived. Highly entertaining and accessible, this play could target adult or young audiences.

**Kate Monaghan** has studied playwriting as a Community Scholar at the University of Virginia since 2009, and remains active in the local theater community as a playwright, actor and director. She has chosen as her particular mission as a playwright to write challenging, substantive roles for mature women. She wants to write the kind of roles she'd like to play! Her full-length works include *The O'Malley Gambit*, *Embers* and the book and lyrics for *Resolutions: A Christmas Musical* ([www.ResolutionsAChristmasMusical.com](http://www.ResolutionsAChristmasMusical.com)). Shorter plays include *MORNINGS AFTER*, *TWO*

FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)

**SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &  
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

*QUESTIONS, DOCTOR, DOCTOR, GAMER, ACCIDENTS* and *The Jam Jar*. Her plays have been produced in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio and North Carolina. They have won awards as Best Play at the Wilmington Drama League's Annual One-Act Play Contest, the Delaware Community Theater Association's Annual One-Act Play Festival, and the Brunswick Little Theater's One-Act Play Contest (Southport, NC). A member of the Dramatists Guild, the Minneapolis Playwrights' Center, and the Playwrights Lab at Live Arts Theater in Charlottesville, Kate was also co-founder of the First Draft Playwrights Circle in Wilmington, Delaware and the Charlottesville Playwrights Collective, Charlottesville, VA. For rights, contact [monaghanjk@comcast.net](mailto:monaghanjk@comcast.net).

**STUDENT CONTEST WINNER 2017**

**FLUSH** (5 W) by Rachel Calnek-Sugin:

*Flush* portrays a semester in the lives of five 15-year-old girls as glimpsed through scenes in the girls' bathroom of their New York City public high school. The girls grapple with love, intimacy, beauty, race, faith, friendship, queerness, and violence in an adolescence that is often comical, mostly excruciating and always desperately tender.

**Rachel Calnek-Sugin** is a writer and activist from New York City and a rising junior at Yale University. She has had readings and performances of her work—including *The Better Half* and *Flush*, along with shorter works—in New York City at Rattlestick Playwrights' Theater, Primary Stages, Watermark Theater Company, Brick Prison Playhouse, the Writopia Lab Worldwide Plays Festival, and in New Haven in the Yale Playwrights' Festival. Her writing appears in *The New Journal*, *The Yale Daily News Magazine*, *Winter Tangerine Review*, *Scholastic's Best Teen Writing*, and has been honored by the Norman Mailer Awards, Bennington Competition, CCNY Poetry Contest, CT Circuit Poetry Contest, and by the Wallace Prize. At Yale, Rachel double majors in English and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, works on campus organizing, edits the *Voices* section of the *Yale Herald*, and is the artistic director of TEETH Slam Poets.

*We hope you will join us at the pre-conference this August for the staged reading of this gripping new play by an emerging playwright.*

**STUDENT HONORABLE MENTIONS**

**TIGHT END** (2W, 3M) by Rachel Bykowski:

Ash Miller's dream is to catch the winning touchdown pass for the Westmont High Titans' Homecoming game. Football is in her blood. In order to make the team, Ash will have to prove she is one of the guys even if that means sacrificing her body for the love of the game.

**Rachel Bykowski** is a an MFA student in playwriting at the University of Ohio.

**WHY WE HAVE A WINTER** (2W, 2M) by Alexa Derman:

In *Why We Have Winter* the myth of Persephone's abduction is refracted through the story of a young queer couple dealing with sexual assault. The play is about high school, teenage girls, and loving when it hurts on both sides.

**Alexa Derman** is currently an undergraduate pursuing a B.A. degree in English and Women's,

**FEMINIST PLAYS BY WOMEN, WITH GREAT ROLES FOR WOMEN (AND SOMETIMES MEN)**

**SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN AND THEATRE PROGRAM &  
THE ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Gender and Sexuality Studies at Yale University.

**THE JANE CHAMBERS AWARD** recognizes plays & performance texts by women writers that present a feminist perspective & contain significant roles for female performers. This annual award, established in 1984, is given in memory of lesbian playwright Jane Chambers who, through her plays *A LATE SNOW*, *LAST SUMMER AT BLUEFISH COVE*, *MY BLUE HEAVEN*, *KUDZU*, & *THE QUINTESSENTIAL IMAGE*, became a major feminist voice in American theatre. We understand feminism to refract across diversity, welcome experimentation, and often honor works that stage under-represented voices on the stage. Sponsored by the Women and Theatre Program (WTP) with the Association for Theater in Higher Education, the Jane Chambers winner receives \$1000 & a reading of the winning play at ATHE. Guidelines for submission—and our archive of recent winners—can be viewed at [www.athe.org/wtp/](http://www.athe.org/wtp/). We rely upon private donations to fund this Award. This year's winning play— *NEVER NOT ONCE* by Carey Crim—rose from nearly 400 submissions. Honored plays suit a variety of theatre missions and feminist perspectives. The Winning Student Play—*FLUSH* in 2017—receives \$250 and a reading at the WTP Conference.

In 2017, the Main Contest was coordinated by Jen-Scott Mobley with the assistance of Maya Roth, and involved over twenty-five feminist readers from across the U.S. in three rounds of adjudication. Together, Jen-Scott and Maya are working on an anthology of recent winning plays to increase production and recognition of the impressive works the Award honors.

The 2017 Student Contest was coordinated by Elaine Molinaro. For more information on the Awards, or to reach the coordinators, refer to the WTP Website. Electronic submissions for the 2018 Contest will again be fielded through ATHE's Website.