

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication Grant

Deadline February 15th (or following Monday if a weekend)

Please print and complete this checklist and attach it as the cover page of your grant application. For more information about Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication grants, please see <http://gustavus.edu/facdev/GrantOpportunities/PresidentialGrant.php>.

Faculty information

Name: Amy Seham Dept: Theatre and Dance

Email: aseham@gac.edu Rank: Associate Professor

Student Information

Name: Margaret Sotos Year: 2009

Email: msotos@gac.edu Major: History (Theatre minor)

Checklist

Project Details

- ☐ Brief description of the proposed project including its collaborative nature
- ☒ Clear statement of anticipated outcomes
- ☒ Likely placement for publication or performances
- ☒ Anticipated research completion date

Participant Details

- ☒ Names and brief biographies of all participants
- ☒ Explanation of how this project fits into the career of the faculty
- ☒ Explanation of how this project fits into the educational trajectory of the student
(include year of graduation; student eligibility is limited to full-time returning students)

☒ **Presidential Budget Proposal Form attached as last page of application**

☒ **Eight copies of completed application (including this checklist) to be submitted to the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning (SSC 119)**

**If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future faculty applications.
This decision will not in any way influence the evaluation of my application.**

Yes / No (please circle one)

BUDGET PROPOSAL FORM

The Project:

Theatre is a highly collaborative art to begin with. In my scholarship and in my teaching, I have emphasized the benefits of collaborative research and creativity through my work with social justice theatre, improvisation and original scripts. The proposed project allows me to engage students at the deepest level of the creation of a new work and to see that piece through to production.

For the past five years, I have participated in the Minnesota Fringe Festival as a playwright and director. This annual festival provides opportunities for theatre artists to experiment, explore and test innovative work in a fairly supportive structure. Last summer, I began a particularly fruitful collaboration with the Saint Peter Area Children's Theatre (SPact). The leaders of SPact worked with me to offer a number of discussion and story-telling workshops for Saint Peter youth to determine what topics the young people would like to explore and address through theatre. In a session on "bullying," students agreed that the new forms of "cyber-bullying" were a serious problem for students, and that no one "talked about it."

From these workshops, I developed a play aimed at grade-school-age children, *Miranda's Amazing Adventure*. With a small group of Saint Peter Area Children's Theatre actors and several Gustavus students, I rehearsed and revised the text for performance at the Minnesota Fringe Festival in 2007. The play was extremely well reviewed as both entertaining and effective in dealing with important issues. Since the performance in Minneapolis, the show has performed at Gustavus and as the keynote performance at a conference in Fine Arts organized by the South Central Service Cooperative in Mankato. As a result of that presentation, there have been increasing numbers of requests for the play to perform at schools where the issue of cyber-bullying is a real and present problem.

I was pleased to involve three Gustavus students along with SPact members in part of the creation of this piece, but I believe that students serious about playwrighting, directing, and social justice theatre would benefit even more from being intensively engaged in the process from beginning to end.

In the proposed project, I would collaborate with two Gustavus students to research, workshop, rehearse, script, direct and produce a short play aimed at a teen-age audience. The play would premiere (or be "published") at the

Minnesota Fringe in August, 2008 and would have great potential to be repeated in schools throughout the state.(I intend to explore the possibility of publishing both this new piece and *Miranda's Amazing Adventure* with a script-publishing company so that schools can mount their own productions.) The lack of good scripts for high school students is a frequent frustration for many educators, and several teachers have urged us to write more.

We would collaborate closely again with the Saint Peter Area Children's Theatre, who have enthusiastically agreed to participate. We plan to explore issues of identity, gender, and the internet for a somewhat older (i.e. high school) audience. The specific focus of the play will be developed collaboratively with the Gustavus students and the workshop members.

The Participants

The nature of theatrical creation often requires participation of a number of artists, each contributing from their own strengths and perspective to the collaborative whole. For this project, I plan to involve two talented Gustavus students.

Maggie Sotos is a History major/ Theatre minor with an interest in performance and directing. Her emerging skill as a playwright is the one I hope most to nurture with this project, although she will have opportunities to explore others as well. Maggie has been writing for many years, and is particularly interested in exploring issues of gender and identity through performance. In my Theatre and Society class, she created an innovative solo piece that used comedy to explore questions of stereotype and sexuality. In the 2007 Theatre/Dance festival this Fall, Maggie presented three short plays she had written that were poignant, funny, and well-crafted. Most of the audience assumed these were published plays by established playwrights. When it became clear that Maggie had written them herself, and had passionate interest in writing for the stage, I encouraged her to pursue her playwriting gifts. She is currently taking Playwriting/ Playmaking at Gustavus with our guest artist from the Playwrights' Center, Cory Hinkle.

Bryan Pelach is a Theatre major with a passion for social justice theatre and great abilities in directing. He was part of the troupe for *Miranda's Amazing Adventure* last summer, and relished the opportunity to participate in the

creative process. He was frustrated, however, by the need to commute to rehearsals from Minneapolis, and was forced to miss many workshops that conflicted with his summer job. He has been a key leader for the Gustavus social justice theatre group, I Am We Are, and has collaborated in creating three full shows and a number of touring pieces with that group. He is eager to have an intensive opportunity to explore development of educational and issue-based theatre. Bryan was the only sophomore theatre student to be entrusted with direction of a one-act play in the Theatre/Dance festival this year, and proved himself to be the most focused, thoughtful and conscientious director in the project. He is a talented performer and designer, but sees directing as his ultimate vocation. Currently enrolled in our Beginning Directing class, Bryan needs more opportunities to practice this art than the regular department curriculum can provide. This summer project would be the in-depth, collaborative directing and script-development experience he needs.

Saint Peter Area Children's Theatre is a community-based group devoted to providing young people with opportunities to grow and learn through theatre. Leaders of the group, Martha Morrow and Mary Spear are both enthusiastic about the experience their young actors gained through provided the collaborative process of creating Miranda's Amazing Adventure. They look forward to building on the foundation of that project to reach more young performers and audiences with the next one.

MY GOALS

This summer project is an integral piece of my trajectory as a creative, energized member of the Gustavus faculty. As Chair of our department with its many fresh faces in faculty, staff and student body, I have articulated a specific goal of foregrounding social justice theatre as a defining aspect of our mission. Our work in this area includes the extra-curricular group I Am, We Are, and increasingly includes our major requirements and curriculum. New courses such as Creating Social Justice Theatre are in process, and other courses are making questions of social justice more explicit in their syllabi. In terms of outside professional work, I am focusing on playwriting, directing, and social justice theatre workshops along with my ongoing scholarship in transformative improvisation. The annual Fringe Festival in Minneapolis has been a crucial opportunity for me to participate as scholar, artist and educator in the professional theatre community. I have included

Gustavus students in this projects every year, and they have greatly appreciated the experience. However, it is difficult for any student to make full commitment of time to the research/workshop phase of the project, along with rehearsal and performance time, while they also must maintain an outside job. With this grant, I hope that two of our most promising students will be able to give their full attention to the collaborative process of turning an idea into a fully-staged performance.

A NOTE ON THE BUDGET:

I have requested stipends for two students for seven weeks. This request would entail housing for two students. I have included expenses for driving between Minneapolis and St. Peter for dress rehearsals and performances at the Fringe Festival, but assume rehearsals, research and workshops will happen in St. Peter. I have requested \$1,200 to defray my personal costs for child care and \$100 for props.

However, this process is flexible. If the committee objects to the seven-week time period or the housing needs of two students, I am open to discussion on the particulars.

Thank you!

Maggie Sotos

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration Research and Publication Grant

Personal Statement

Theatre has been a lifelong pursuit of mine. As I have grown personally, different aspects of the theatre have interested me. As a child, I was eager to make the spotlights shine on the actors; this seemingly divine power at my fingertips gave me an indescribable pleasure. But soon I wanted to act in plays, for merely watching others receive all of the attention was no longer satisfying. But by the time I turned fifteen, the desire to act was maturing into a desire to direct. Perhaps it was an infantile desire to give orders to my peers that drew me to this area. But in reality, the roots of the desire were much more noble. As an aspiring teacher, I found it incredibly satisfying to help my friends find a voice on the stage; to help them find the blocking that worked for their character, to help them find their new selves in a different person. In my senior year of high school I directed the comedy “15 Minute Hamlet”, and found the experience was incomparably educational.

In my first year at Gustavus Adolphus College, I was given the opportunity to direct two ten-minute plays. Although both plays went well, I found I was longing for more. I wanted to be the composer of the music, not simply the conductor of the orchestra. So, when provided with an opportunity to present my own material this fall, I jumped at the chance. Writing three ten-minute plays in a span of one month was exhilarating; producing and directing them in the following two and a half months was exhausting. But the plays were successes, and well worth the effort. The process has left me hungry for more, thus the reason I enrolled in the Spring semester of “Playwriting/ Playmaking”. Playwriting and directing have given me confidence, patience, and faith. It is important to listen to our inner narrators and give them the chance to express themselves, for without this step towards independence we are but instruments for other people’s ideas. I love to act, help with technical theatre, and direct. But I know the ultimate skill to master is to combine all of these aspects, and this challenge must be mastered before I can be satisfied.

In the summer project proposed for this Presidential research grant, I would have the opportunity to participate in every aspect of developing an original theatre piece from the initial workshop phase to final performance in the Minnesota Fringe Festival. Collaborating with theatre professor, Amy Seham, I would experience the challenge of co-creating a longer play using techniques not covered in a conventional script-writing class. This play will be devised using a workshop process involving high school students from the St. Peter community. The social justice focus and the educational elements of this project are very relevant to my artistic and career goals. I know I’ll learn a lot – and I look forward to it! Thanks.

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication Grant

ITEM	AMOUNT
Equipment (not to include computer hardware)	\$ 200
1: Playwriting software Cost: \$200	
2: Cost:	
3: Cost:	
Materials	\$ 120
1: Props Cost: \$50	
2: Costumes Cost: \$70	
3: Cost:	
Personnel	\$ 3,200
Student Stipend @ \$400/week: Margaret Sotos	8 weeks @400
Other Rate:	
Travel Costs	\$ 630 (+)
Airfare:	10 round-trips to Mpls
Mileage: Number of miles 1,360 @ \$0.505/mile	
Lodging	\$
Number of days @ \$ /day	
Other Expenses (check the faculty book white pages for excluded items)	\$ 100 (+)
1: Printing scripts/posters Cost: \$100 +	
2: Cost:	
3: Cost:	
Faculty Stipend	\$ 1750
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 6,000 plus additional resources contributed by SPact and other participants
AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$6,000

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project?

Funding Source:

Amount:

Please explain how the Presidential will be used in addition to the other funding.

CASE OF THE GIGGLES

A CASE OF THE GIGGLES was first produced by Maggie Sotos at the Anderson Theatre at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN on November 16, 2007. It was written and directed by Maggie Sotos. The cast was as follows:

Greg Scott Engelman

Vanessa Kaija Joy Daniel

Greg, a young, eager, somewhat nerdy guy sets up a breakfast table at center. Downstage left is a chair with shoes, a purse, and other sexual tokens lying around (condoms, lube, etc). A woman's jacket lies on the floor stage right. A small flower sits in the middle of the table. He is antsy and glances at the bedroom door constantly. He paces and fidgets, turning his back to the door just as an attractive young woman comes in wearing a bathrobe.

Vanessa: Hey can I borrow your –

Greg: *(surprised, jumping up)* HOLY CHRIST HI!

Vanessa: Hi...

Greg: Hi! Good coffee, want some morning? I mean, oh shit, I

mean, do you want anything?

Vanessa: Well, I will need –

Greg: No no no yes yes yes I know I know! Here, have a flower. It's beautiful, like your, um, eyes!

Vanessa: Thanks, but actually I was just wondering –

Greg: Do you want pancakes? I made up some batter for us, and I've got a waffle iron in the basement but if you'd prefer oatmeal I've only got Apple Cinnamon left... FUCK where's the banana nut!

Vanessa: Um, I just wanted to know if you had a hair dryer.

Greg: Huh?

Vanessa: I hope you don't mind, but I took a shower.

Greg: Oh... Can I take one with you?

Vanessa: I just took one....

Greg: Oh, hehe, right... *(to self)* Stupid!

Vanessa: Um, forget it, it's fine. *(exits again to bedroom)*

Greg: *(watches her leave, then shakes head, mocks self)* Can I take one with you?

Greg waits until she is gone, then begins fidgeting again. Now he pours orange juice for the two of them and prepares some toast. Vanessa re-enters, dressed but with wet

hair. She begins applying makeup and cleans up scattered condoms on floor.

Vanessa: Um, what are you doing?

Greg: Breakfast?

Vanessa: Um...

Greg: Do . . . do you not eat breakfast? It's kind of the most important meal of the day.

Vanessa: No, I just . . . why?

Greg: Because it starts up your metabolism. That's why they call it breakfast: you're "breaking" the "fast".

Vanessa: No, I know why breakfast is important, but, why would we have breakfast together?

Greg: Because last night we made love.

Vanessa: Yes . . . yes we did.

Greg: Making love is making love, and I think last night was pretty special so I think we should sit down and have some breakfast together.

Vanessa: Um . . . yes. Special it was. Um . . . gosh, what's your name again?

Greg: Greg.

Vanessa: Right, Greg. Cool. Um yeah, it was special.

Greg: Really? I was so nervous . . . (shows orange juice under her nose) Orange juice?

Vanessa: Sure . . . (still standing, she begins drinking from glass. Greg trots back to table and pulls out chair for her. He gestures for her to sit; Vanessa unsure about self but sits. Greg tries to push chair in for her but is too forceful. He nervously giggles and sits in his chair).

Greg: My dad always said the best way to woo a lady the next day was freshly squeezed orange juice.

Vanessa: (slightly sarcastic) I think you did your wooing last night, pal.

Greg: Really? (Begins to adolescently giggle)

Vanessa: What?

Greg: We had sex!

Vanessa: (rolling her eyes) Yeah we did.

Greg: HOLY COW WE WERE SO NAKED!

Vanessa: Craig –

Greg: It's Greg.

Vanessa: Right. Um, listen, here's the thing: why don't we not make too a big deal out of this, OK?

Greg: OK. (Begins to giggle again, even more this time)

Vanessa: *(can stand it no more)* What?

Greg: You're piercing tickled.

Vanessa: *(standing up to leave)* OK . . .

Greg: No no, wait wait, sorry. Sit down again? *(pulls out chair for her. She reluctantly returns to seat. He pushes her in too forcefully again. He is embarrassed but attempts to recover the situation)* So. Um . . . that was a big party last night.

Vanessa: Yeah, it was a rager.

Greg: I wonder if the coppers busted it.

Vanessa: Probably not, they weren't too loud.

Greg: *(sees that convo is going no where; in falsetto voice to self)* So Greg, what's your major? I'm so glad you asked! See, I'm a biology major. I'm helping my prof do research for Marine Biology. We're researching seals. Yeah. Do you like science?

Vanessa: Honestly? I never really understood the sciences.

Greg: OK, have you read Harry Potter?

Vanessa: No-

Greg: Because I just realized you have black hair and blue eyes like the H. Pot.

Vanessa: He's got green eyes, the kid in the movie just

happened to have blue ones.

Greg: So you do read Harry Potter!

Vanessa: *(shrugging)* Just the first one.

Greg: *(awkward silence; softly chants theme from Harry Potter Puppet Pals)* Snape . . . Snape . . . Severus Snape. Snape . . . Snape . . . Severus Snape.

Vanessa: *(under breath, playfully)* Dumbledore.

Greg: You know he's gay, right?

Vanessa: I know, I heard that!

Greg: Why would she announce that after he died?

Vanessa: Yeah, it just came out of nowhere!

Greg: HA! "CAME OUT!" HAHA! You're such a Harry Potter freak! *(makes lightning bolt symbol on her forehead)*

Vanessa: What the hell are you doing, you creeper?

Greg: Whoa! Hehe . . . sorry.

(As they sit there Greg tries to impress Vanessa by importantly folding out the paper. It is merely irritating and she rolls her eyes)

Greg: *(giggles as he reads newspaper; Vanessa glances up, ignores this)*. Aren't you going to ask what I was laughing at?

Vanessa: No.

Greg: Cause it's kind of funny.

Vanessa: I believe you.

Greg: I mean, it really is something you'd laugh at.

Vanessa: OK, I hear you.

Greg: *(sits quietly, for a moment, then begins tapping foot nervously; Vanessa looks at foot but says nothing, goes back to her reading; awkward silence. Foot tapping crescendos with teeth chomping, coughing "Ask me what I'm laughing at" under the breath, etc. Up to actor for individual interpretation)*

Greg: Can you please ask me what I'm laughing at?

Vanessa: *(standing and exploding)* Why!? WHY!? WHY MUST YOU TELL ME THESE THINGS THAT ARE NOT FUNNY!? WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU!?

Greg: *(stunned momentarily)* Knock knock.

Vanessa: What?

Greg: Knock knock.

Vanessa: Are you serious?

Greg: Impatient cow.

Vanessa: Impatient cow—

Greg: MOO! Hahahahaha!

Vanessa: Look Craig —

Greg: Greg.

Vanessa: *(Getting up)* I'm leaving.

Greg: *(panics, standing after her)* Leaving? Now? I just -- Ok . . . I just thought, I don't know, if you wanted to catch a movie or something, maybe hang out today --

Vanessa: Sorry, but . . .

Greg: I just, I would really hate for you to think I'm one of those creepy jerks that sleeps with you for one night and then just throws you out. That's not me, I'm not . . . I'm not like that.

Vanessa: We don't need to do anything else, it doesn't really work like that.

Greg: What if I want it to work like that?

Vanessa: I don't work like that.

(awkward silence)

Greg: OK.

Vanessa: OK.

(Vanessa puts on coat)

Greg: You're really easy to talk to, you know. You should be a doctor.

Vanessa: Well, I've seen enough people naked . . .

Greg: Huh?

Vanessa: Why a doctor?

Greg: (moving downstage left) Well, cause you're really easy to talk to. Like, with all the other girls I've met, it's weird talking to them. Like, I never want to tell them what I'm thinking or I'm afraid what they're thinking of me. A lot of times they don't listen. But, I don't know, you're different. Doctors should all be like you.

Vanessa: Well, not all doctors are bad.

Greg: No, but I just haven't . . . (sitting in chair) Well, like, see, when I was ten my Mom kept saying, 'Hey, I've got this weird tickling in my throat, please look at it'. She said it again and again and we went to about ten different doctors but they all said it was a cold. Then one doctor finally listened to her and got her tested and found out it was esophagus cancer. I'm glad they caught it in time, and she's OK now. But still, it's really . . .

Vanessa: Scary?

Greg: Yeah. Like, what if that one doctor hadn't listened? Since then I've always tried to listen to people when they talk to me; just not everyone wants to talk, I guess.

Vanessa: (pensive) Yeah.

Greg: But you're a great listener. Be a doctor.

Vanessa: (Giggles)

Greg: What? What's funny?

Vanessa: I've always wanted to be a doctor.

Greg: (spotting a condom on the floor; retrieves it and returns it) But you're a lady of the night.

Vanessa: (soft laugh) Yeah . . . 'common whore'.

Greg: Well, you have a lot in common, doctors and . . . prostitutes. I mean, you both touch people with diseases . . . And like, if you were a plant, you'd be a Horivervane.

Vanessa: I don't get that one.

Greg: It's a Biology joke.

Vanessa: Oh. Well. I'm sure it'd be funny if, you know, I got it. Or maybe, I could be like a doctor *and* a prostitute. I could save people –

Greg: Yeah!

Vanessa: And then sleep with them –

Greg: Oh.

Vanessa: For money!

Greg: Or you could *just* save them? I don't know, maybe you still can be a doctor.

Vanessa: (*looks down at condom*) I don't think so somehow.

(*pause*) Can I call you?

Greg: (*surprised*) YES! I mean, uh, yeah.

Vanessa: OK. Well, um . . . bye . . . (*they make an awkward attempt at hugging, but bungle it into a pound*).

Greg: (*as she leaves*) Hey wait, I forgot! (*runs over to wallet, sheepishly, suddenly ashamed of self*) Um . . . how much do you . . . charge?

Vanessa: (*softly*) Get me lunch tomorrow and we'll call it even.

Greg: (*surprised, but happy*) OK.

Vanessa: OK . . .

(*Vanessa leaves*)

Greg: See ya', Vanessa . . . (*watches her leave. Crosses back to table, picks up flower and giggles again*). Oh I should call my mom!

The End

COURTNEY AND KELLY

COURTNEY AND KELLY was first produced by Maggie Sotos at the Anderson Theatre at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN on November 16, 2007. It was written and directed by Maggie Sotos. The cast was as follows:

Courtney Courtney Covey
Kelly Kelly Katharine Nelson
Mom Alyssa Hansen

(Lights up on a girls' bedroom. A bed has been placed downstage center, and a small bedside table sits next to it on the left. It can be mildly messy, but it should not be neglected)

Courtney: *(18-year-old high school senior. Her appearance is one of a bright and talented girl who gave up a long time ago, and is now "going through the motions" and "putting in time" until graduation. She enters stage right, throws jacket and coat on bed, sits, slowly takes out a pen and begins writing in a notebook)* Um...

Kelly: HEY! *(A ten-year-old, bright and chipper. She pops out from behind couch or creeps up from offstage)*

Courtney: Kelly, you little freak show!

Kelly: Whatcha' doin'?

Courtney: Homework, go away!

Kelly: Let me help!

Courtney: No!

Kelly: Let me help!

Courtney: No!

Kelly: Let me help!

Courtney: NO! Are you ever going to stop acting like you're ten?

Kelly: I could be fourteen, for all you care: you'd still see me as ten years old. You're always going to see me as the baby sister. That's just the nature of our relationship. You're going to go to college, be a nurse, go to grad school, get the heck out of this town, marry a hot guy who makes you feel safe and loved, and you'll have a fat baby with dimples and you'll still see me as a ten year old brat. *(blows raspberry)*

Courtney: *(stunned)* How do you know all that?

Kelly: It's in your diary.

Courtney: WHAT!?

Kelly: Page 25!

Courtney: Oh you little mother—

Kelly: *(begins yelling)* MOMMMMMMM! TASHA'S SWEARING!

Courtney: No, OK, OK, sorry. Don't tell Mom, please! I don't know, I just... sometimes I just don't want her to know I'm talking to you.

Kelly: She talks to me too, you know.

Courtney: Yeah I know. I live here. I notice when people have conversations in the next room.

Kelly: Why shouldn't you talk to me, I'm your sister.

Courtney: *(silent)*

Kelly: Well, why don't I just help you with your homework?

Courtney: Hal No.

Kelly: No come on, please? I can be smart when I turn my brain on.

Courtney: Go get your period.

Kelly: *(dabbing at crotch)* Sorry, I seem to be in a state of arrested development, no menstruation yet.

Courtney: Kelly!

Kelly: No seriously, it's like that video you saw in Health Class in Middle School: 'Jenny asked her friends if they had ever found the little red spots in their underpants as she had after gym class. You guys, I think I'm bleeding . . . down there!'

Courtney: Shut up shut up! I am never going to get this poem started if you don't shut up!

Kelly: 'It's all smelly and'—a poem? You have to write a poem?

Courtney: Shut up, it's for English.

Kelly: Aren't you in Advanced Placement?

Courtney: Yes! Leave me alone! I'd rather be doing math homework, believe me.

Kelly: Why?

Courtney: Because . . . because . . . I can look back at my work and can say, 'Oh right there, I made a mistake right there, that explains why I got 3.5 instead of three trillion'. I mean, I still made the mistake, but it's not as if you will ever make it again. Math is—fair.

Kelly: I don't like math. God, I'd rather be a body double in the movie 'Saw'.

Courtney: How'd you see 'Saw'? That thing's rated R.

Kelly: What do you mean, how did I see it? YOU saw it before you were even seventeen! You really shouldn't have done that, Courtney, the rating system is there for your protection . . . kind of like a condom . . . or a dental dam . . .

Courtney: HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE THINGS, YOU LITTLE PERV?

Kelly: MOOOOOMMM! Moooooommal Mommy

Momomomomomomom! TASHA CALLED ME A PERV!

Courtney: Shhh! Stop it! Stop it! I'm sorry I'm sorry Kelly please!

Kelly: Let me help you with your poem.

Courtney: (*sighing, giving in*)

Kelly: (*Getting under jacket*) Does it have to be in free verse, slant verse or structured rhyme?

Courtney: (*shrugs*) I think it's more whatever you want to do with it. God, I just really hate this poetry unit. It's so imprecise. I feel like I don't get any of it.

Kelly: Hey, hey, what am I: Dash dash dash dash dash dash dash dash!

Courtney: Morse code?

Kelly: No, an Emily Dickinson poem! Ha! Wanna' build a fort?

Courtney: Do you ever run out of oxygen?

Kelly: You know I do. What are you supposed to write about, anyways?

Courtney: I'm supposed to write about something important that has happened in my life, or an event that will happen in my life.

Kelly: Well, how about being able to drive? That was a big day!

Courtney: Too cliché.

Kelly: First kiss? I'm sure reminiscing about Brandon MacArthur from fifth grade would be really emotionally rewarding.

Courtney: Awkward, but thanks.

Kelly: Being able to legally drink won't happen for another three years . . . but hey that's never stopped you before.

Courtney: (*seriously*) That was one time.

Kelly: Still happened.

Courtney: Just one time though.

Kelly: *(circling)* You were supposed to be babysitting me.

Courtney: That was four years ago, Kelly, come on.

Kelly: I was playing by myself in the front yard.

Courtney: I've never touched a drop since then. And don't think I don't feel guilty, either. I spend so much of my time wondering what could have happened to you. You could have been kidnapped, or raped, or drugged, or . . . *(trails off and shakes her head)* anything could have happened to you, Kelly.

Kelly: You have to forgive yourself.

Courtney: I never will.

Kelly: It's been four years.

Courtney: It doesn't feel like any time has passed. I feel like people still judge me for it.

Kelly: I know. Maybe that's why you don't have a boyfriend.

Courtney: What!?

Kelly: *(walking casually over to Diary on table)* Oh come on, you know what all the boys think of you. You're 'that girl'. Guys don't date you, they pity you. You're untouchable, like in the Indian caste system. It's nothing personal, don't take it the wrong way. You know you have a great body and a great personality. But no one around here who knows you is going to want to date you. Because you're simply out of bounds, beyond the scope of reasonable curiosity. Other girls are the loveable targets, hunted and circled from way high up by those cunning hawks that dart down unexpectedly and pick you up and whisk you away with an invitation to a dance or a peck on the cheek. But you're not like the mousy little girls that get picked up. You're a rock. You're stony and cold and only an idiot who was too blind to see you for what you are would ever stoop down to your level. They're too afraid to handle you

because you're dangerous. You're never leaving this cold hard earth.

Courtney: . . . I deserve it, though. And worse.

Kelly: Yes, yes you do. But it'll get better. You'll move away from here and meet the guy who doesn't know what you really are, and he'll love you and keep you safe and you'll give him a baby girl and you'll name her Kelly. *(puts down Diary)*

Courtney: I really wish we were having this conversation right now. I miss this.

Mom: *(entering, only seeing Courtney)* Courtney? Who are you talking to?

Kelly: Say, 'No one'.

Courtney: No one.

Mom: OK. *(stares after her a moment, then leaves)*

Kelly: I think she heard you.

Courtney: *(nods)*

Kelly: Well, I'll let you write your poem then *(begins climbing back over couch)*

Courtney: Kelly. Are you ever coming back?

Kelly: It's been four years, Court . . .

Courtney: But they never were sure if you . . .

Kelly: As long as you still hate yourself, I'll be around.

(disappears)

Courtney: *(sighs, picks up pen, gets back into original position, begins to write)*

The End

Selection from—

Miranda's Amazing Adventure

by Amy Seham in collaboration with SPact

as performed at Minnesota Fringe Festival and Anderson Theatre 2007

CHARACTERS:

Miranda (about 10 years old)

Ensemble: Audrey, DAD, Mouse, Surfer, Instant Messenger,
Pop-up #1, Pop-up #2, Blocker, Girl (Megan), Friends #1, 2, 3, 4 (Taylor, Jace, Ashley, Gene), Puppy, Wolf, Voices #1, #2, #3, #4 (Middle school students)
Avatar (Henry), Dorfendron/(Steve), Wikipedia, Shark, Geek
Characters in Bullying Scenes and Amazing Internet scenes

LIGHT CENTER

PERFORMER PLAYING MIRANDA: Hi! Thanks for coming to our show. I play Miranda – the main character. I get to have a pretty amazing adventure. Now, as we go through the adventure, there are a bunch of places where I'll stop and ask for your help. And I really want to hear from you. If I ask a question, just call out whatever you think of. That will really make the whole adventure work. So can we practice?

HOUSE LIGHTS

Let's say I ask "what's your favorite color?" You can just shout it out. So what *is* your favorite color. (*Gets several answers. Repeats them – pink, blue, red*) Good. Here's another one -- "name an animal you wish you could have for a pet." (*Several answers—horse, dog, cat, etc. Repeat several*) But what if you had a pink dog (or other strange combination). That would be kind of "amazing" wouldn't it? Okay – here's another questions --What's your favorite fairy tale? Anyone else? (*repeats them*) Cool.

Audience response

Good answers! Don't forget – throughout the show I might stop and ask for your help-- so don't be afraid to shout out loud. So are you ready for the **amazing adventure** to start? What? I didn't hear that, are you ready?

HOUSE OUT. LIGHTS SHIFT TO SL

Okay. This is my bedroom, and my dad is telling me a bedtime story. Wait, let me get in the bed. Okay. Ready. Go

DAD: (*in a DAD tone*) Once upon a time, there was a little girl--

MIRANDA: named Miranda

DAD: Of course. Named Miranda. Now Miranda was a princess who lived in a beautiful palace in a magical kingdom --

MIRANDA: What does she get to do?

DAD: She's a princess! She wears beautiful dresses

MIR: uh hunh

DAD: She goes to the ball

MIR: good

DAD: And she meets the handsome prince

MIR: okay

DAD: What else is there?

MIR: What does the princess get to do in the story? What do I get to do?

DAD: Well, different princesses do different things. Like Sleeping Beauty

MIR: What does she get to do?

DAD: She ---

MIR: [to audience] what does Sleeping Beauty do in the story?

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

MIR: She sleeps? Until the prince kisses her? That's no fun.

DAD: Well, being a princess isn't about fun, Miranda. It's more important than that—

MIR: Try another idea. Name another princess.

[to audience]

Who knows another princess story?

Audience response. DAD brings up Snow White

DAD: There's Snow White. She has seven dwarfs

MIR: What does Snow White do?

DAD: Well, there's a wicked queen –

MIR: (insisting) What does Snow White *do*?

DAD: She cooks and cleans for the dwarfs – she eats the poison apple –she – hmmm, well, she

MIR: What?

DAD: She falls asleep

MIR: Not again

DAD: until

MIR: Don't tell me-- until a prince kisses her. Boring!

DAD: Don't you want to live happily ever after?

MIR: Sure. Someday. But before that, I want an adventure. Don't any princesses get to go on adventures?

AUDIENCE response –[might say Fiona or Mulan or Princess Leia. Interact]

MIR: Okay. So [I'm sure] *some* princesses get to do *something*. A princess wants to rescue people herself once in a while-- not just *get* rescued all the time. Tell the story where Miranda gets to do exciting stuff – and doesn't fall asleep.

DAD: It's getting late

MIRANDA: She doesn't fall asleep

DAD: It's past bedtime.

MIRANDA: She journeys to a strange land—fights the monsters—defends the innocent—stands up for fairness

DAD: Time for sleep

MIR: She doesn't fall asleep. She has princess power!

DAD: All right. Into bed.

MIR: Audrey's not in bed.

DAD: Audrey's the big sister. You're the little sister.

MIR: Princess

DAD: Okay, little princess. I'll see you in the morning. [kisses her]
(TO AUDIENCE)

And she fell into a deep deep sleep

MIRANDA seems to fall asleep. As soon as DAD exits, she opens her eyes and winks at the audience.

MIRANDA: Did I fool you? Well, at least I fooled him. No way am I going to fall asleep now! There's gotta be someone who needs to be rescued!

AUDREY offstage crying. Enters

MIRANDA: Wait ! I hear a sound. What is that snuffly sound?

[Ask audience. Someone says "crying"]
LIGHTS UP SR for AUDREY (low)

MIRANDA: Crying? No. That's just my sister Audrey. My older sister. She's in junior high so she gets to stay up late.

Lights reveal AUDREY. She sits near a computer monitor, crying. MIRANDA listens

MIRANDA: Yup – that's Audrey. She doesn't hang out with me any more. Hardly even talks to me. Has all these junior high friends. Think they're so great.

AUDREY cries

AUDREY (to computer): Oh no! Why are they doing this to me?

MIRANDA: I wonder why she's crying so much tonight. Anyway. It's time for a Princess Miranda adventure. I just need to think of a special quest or something. Can anyone think of a cool quest?

AUDREY cries

AUDREY (to computer): It's too much. I can't take this anymore.

MIRANDA: She's always talking to that silly computer-thing. I don't get it. I hate everything electronic anyway. I don't do computers. I do fairy tales. I was definitely born in the wrong century. Anyway – I need ideas for my quest. Anyone know a dragon I can fight? Or someone who needs help?

Ask audience.

AUDREY: Somebody help me! (cries)

Someone says "your sister"

MIRANDA: You think I should try to help Audrey? My own sister? She doesn't want my help. Really. Watch.

MIRANDA crosses toward AUDREY

AUDREY: Get out of my room

MIRANDA: [to audience] See? [to AUDREY] What's wrong?

AUDREY: Leave me alone.

MIRANDA: Just trying to help

AUDREY: I don't need any help from you, pee-wee.

MIRAND: Right. That's why you're crying your eyes out.

AUDREY: Whatever. Just forget it. (cries)

MIR: At least tell Mom what's bothering you

AUDREY: No way! No Mom! And you don't say a thing – do you hear me? I'll smash you!

MIR: About what?

AUDREY: Mom would totally kick me off the internet. That's not acceptable. I'll be totally cut off. I won't know what's going on! And I'll lose whatever is even left of my pathetic social life.

MIR: [to audience] Okay, guys, you might be right. She definitely needs help here.

AUDREY: Who are you talking to? Is that a cell phone? Mom wouldn't let me have a cell phone until I was twelve!

MIR: No, it's not a cell phone. It's – not a cell phone.

AUDREY: Imaginary friends. You and your imaginary friends

MIR: Me! What about your computer friends and stuff?

AUDREY: I don't have any friends. They all hate me. (*Bursts into tears*)

MIR: Hate you? Who? What's going on?

AUDREY: Mean e-mails. Like, twenty times a day! Scary messages, threatening to hurt me or just—I don't know—saying how fat and ugly I am or how --you wouldn't understand. And now there's even a website—everyone in school can see. Pictures. Nasty comments.

MIR: (looking at computer) Are you saying that all this mean stuff is coming through—right onto your computer screen? Is that a picture of you? That's embarrassing.

AUDREY: That's just the beginning—look at this

MIR: (reading) Vote here to name Audrey as the ugliest girl in school. Post your comments about her --

AUDREY: I'm never going back to school. How can I ever go back?

MIR: Why don't you just turn off the computer. Don't read the stuff. Poof—it's gone. (to audience) That was easy. Just takes a little Princess power.

AUDREY: It's not gone! Everyone sees it! Everyone at school—And they don't just see it, they add to it. They post new things every day.

MIR: It's not real.

AUDREY: No—you don't get it. It's very real, and I can't escape. It follows me home, too. Nowhere is safe.

MIR: [to audience] Gee—I didn't realize Audrey felt this bad

AUDREY: People don't talk to me at school. People I thought were my friends. But they talk behind my back. I can hear them whispering. Laughing. I just want to die.

MIR: (to audience) This looks like a case for Princess Miranda! Do you think I can rescue her from—whatever?

AUDREY: And now it's out there. It's everywhere. People in other cities, other countries—other planets can see these pictures and read about all the ways to hate me.

MIR: I'll save you, Audrey!

AUDREY: You can't do anything. I don't even know who started it, first of all.

COURTNEY AND KELLY

COURTNEY AND KELLY was first produced by Maggie Sotos at the Anderson Theatre at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN on November 16, 2007. It was written and directed by Maggie Sotos. The cast was as follows:

Courtney Courtney Covey
Kelly Kelly Katharine Nelson
Mom Alyssa Hansen

(Lights up on a girls' bedroom. A bed has been placed downstage center, and a small bedside table sits next to it on the left. It can be mildly messy, but it should not be neglected)

Courtney: *(18-year-old high school senior. Her appearance is one of a bright and talented girl who gave up a long time ago, and is now "going through the motions" and "putting in time" until graduation. She enters stage right, throws jacket and coat on bed, sits, slowly takes out a pen and begins writing in a notebook)* Um...

Kelly: HEY! *(A ten-year-old, bright and chipper. She pops out from behind couch or creeps up from offstage)*

Courtney: Kelly, you little freak show!

Kelly: Whatcha' doin'?

Courtney: Homework, go away!

Kelly: Let me help!

Courtney: No!

Kelly: Let me help!

Courtney: No!

Kelly: Let me help!

Courtney: NO! Are you ever going to stop acting like you're ten?

Kelly: I could be fourteen, for all you care: you'd still see me as ten years old. You're always going to see me as the baby sister. That's just the nature of our relationship. You're going to go to college, be a nurse, go to grad school, get the heck out of this town, marry a hot guy who makes you feel safe and loved, and you'll have a fat baby with dimples and you'll still see me as a ten year old brat. *(blows raspberry)*

Courtney: *(stunned)* How do you know all that?

Kelly: It's in your diary.

Courtney: WHAT!?

Kelly: Page 25!

Courtney: Oh you little mother—

Kelly: *(begins yelling)* MOMMMMMMM! TASHA'S SWEARING!

Courtney: No, OK, OK, sorry. Don't tell Mom, please! I don't know, I just... sometimes I just don't want her to know I'm talking to you.

Kelly: She talks to me too, you know.

Courtney: Yeah I know. I live here. I notice when people have conversations in the next room.

Kelly: Why shouldn't you talk to me, I'm your sister.

Courtney: *(silent)*

Kelly: Well, why don't I just help you with your homework?

Courtney: Hal! No.

Kelly: No come on, please? I can be smart when I turn my brain on.

Courtney: Go get your period.

Kelly: *(dabbing at crotch)* Sorry, I seem to be in a state of arrested development, no menstruation yet.

Courtney: Kelly!

Kelly: No seriously, it's like that video you saw in Health Class in Middle School: 'Jenny asked her friends if they had ever found the little red spots in their underpants as she had after gym class. You guys, I think I'm bleeding . . . down there!'

Courtney: Shut up shut up! I am never going to get this poem started if you don't shut up!

Kelly: 'It's all smelly and'—a poem? You have to write a poem?

Courtney: Shut up, it's for English.

Kelly: Aren't you in Advanced Placement?

Courtney: Yes! Leave me alone! I'd rather be doing math homework, believe me.

Kelly: Why?

Courtney: Because . . . because . . . I can look back at my work and can say, 'Oh right there, I made a mistake right there, that explains why I got 3.5 instead of three trillion'. I mean, I still made the mistake, but it's not as if you will ever make it again. Math is — fair.

Kelly: I don't like math. God, I'd rather be a body double in the movie 'Saw'.

Courtney: How'd you see 'Saw'? That thing's rated R.

Kelly: What do you mean, how did I see it? YOU saw it before you were even seventeen! You really shouldn't have done that, Courtney, the rating system is there for your protection . . . kind of like a condom . . . or a dental dam . . .

Courtney: HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE THINGS, YOU LITTLE PERV?

Kelly: MOOOOOOMMM! Moooooom! Mommy Momomomomomomom! TASHA CALLED ME A PERV!

Courtney: Shhh! Stop it! Stop it! I'm sorry I'm sorry Kelly please!

Kelly: Let me help you with your poem.

Courtney: (*sighing, giving in*) Kelly: (*Getting under jacket*) Does it have to be in free verse, slant verse or structured rhyme?

Courtney: (*shrugs*) I think it's more whatever you want to do with it. God, I just really hate this poetry unit. It's so imprecise. I feel like I don't get any of it.

Kelly: Hey, hey, what am I: Dash dash dash dash dash dash dash!

Courtney: Morse code?

Kelly: No, an Emily Dickinson poem! Hal! Wanna' build a fort?

Courtney: Do you ever run out of oxygen?

Kelly: You know I do. What are you supposed to write about, anyways?

Courtney: I'm supposed to write about something important that has happened in my life, or an event that will happen in my life.

Kelly: Well, how about being able to drive? That was a big day!

Courtney: Too cliché.

Kelly: First kiss? I'm sure reminiscing about Brandon MacArthur from fifth grade would be really emotionally rewarding.

Courtney: Awkward, but thanks.

Kelly: Being able to legally drink won't happen for another three years . . . but hey that's never stopped you before.

Courtney: (*seriously*) That was one time.

Kelly: Still happened.

Courtney: Just one time though.

Kelly: (*circling*) You were supposed to be babysitting me.

Courtney: That was four years ago, Kelly, come on.

Kelly: I was playing by myself in the front yard.

Courtney: I've never touched a drop since then. And don't think I don't feel guilty, either. I spend so much of my time wondering what could have happened to you. You could have been kidnapped, or raped, or drugged, or... (*trails off and shakes her head*) anything could have happened to you, Kelly. Kelly: You have to forgive yourself.

Courtney: I never will.

Kelly: It's been four years.

Courtney: It doesn't feel like any time has passed. I feel like people still judge me for it.

Kelly: I know. Maybe that's why you don't have a boyfriend.

Courtney: What?

Kelly: (*walking casually over to Diary on table*) Oh come on, you know what all the boys think of you. You're 'that girl'. Guys don't date you, they pity you. You're untouchable, like in the Indian caste system. It's nothing personal, don't take it the wrong way. You know you have a great body and a great personality. But no one around here who knows you is going to want to date you. Because you're simply out of bounds, beyond the scope of reasonable curiosity. Other girls are the loveable targets, hunted and circled from way high up by those cunning hawks that dart down unexpectedly and pick you up and whisk you away with an invitation to a dance or a peck on the cheek. But you're not like the mousy little girls that get picked up. You're a rock. You're stony and cold and only an idiot who was too blind to see you for what you are would ever stoop down to your level. They're too afraid to handle you

because you're dangerous. You're never leaving this cold hard earth.

Courtney: ... I deserve it, though. And worse.

Kelly: Yes, yes you do. But it'll get better. You'll move away from here and meet the guy who doesn't know what you really are, and he'll love you and keep you safe and you'll give him a baby girl and you'll name her Kelly. (*picks down Diary*)

Courtney: I really wish we were having this conversation right now. I miss this.

Mom: (*entering, only seeing Courtney*) Courtney? Who are you talking to?

Kelly: Say, 'No one'.

Courtney: No one.

Mom: OK. (*stares after her a moment, then leaves*)

Kelly: I think she heard you.

Courtney: (*nods*)

Kelly: Well, I'll let you write your poem then (*begins climbing back over couch*)

Courtney: Kelly. Are you ever coming back?

Kelly: It's been four years, Court...

Courtney: But they never were sure if you...

Kelly: As long as you still hate yourself, I'll be around.

(*disappears*)

Courtney: (*sighs, picks up pen, gets back into original position, begins to write*)

The End