

A Look at the Arts: Directing a Play
Part 1: Selecting a piece.
By Marley Reynolds & Daniel Cheer

William Shakespeare once coined the phrase, "All the world's a stage." We all enjoy entertainment in some medium but rarely pull back the curtain to see the moving parts and ask the question; How does it all work? What is the process by which these artists choose to let people into their interpretation of a written work?

In this series, we follow Marley Reynolds and her classmates through the journey of putting on a play for the Pensacola State College (PSC) student one-act shows in April. Each member of the class chooses a script, picks a cast and then after some fine tuning, presents their play during a large one act performance. Along the way, we'll get some insight from some of the actors as well as the teacher of the class, Rodney Whatley. We hope you enjoy this series and follow along in the upcoming issues.

The Directing I class is supposed to replicate the experience of putting on a professional production, just without the budget.

Choosing a play is hard to say the least. Scouring book after book, website after website to find something that speaks to you. Dr. Whatley put it best on our first day of Directing I "You'll be married to this play for the next four months, so you better love it."

Before the semester even started, I had my sights set on a handful of plays that I had read in the past but my bubble was quickly popped. Some were too long while others were just not written well enough for what I had in mind. I had to start from scratch.

Internet sources were helpful, but after awhile the sites just had the same plays I had seen before. That's how I found myself on the floor of the library nose deep in The Best American Short Plays collection one afternoon while on a break between classes.

After my fourth book I began to feel a bit hopeless. All the plays were good, but none screamed: "Pick Me!" It didn't help that I came into the process with expectations of what type of play I should pick.

I didn't want a straight comedy, but nothing too depressing either and with a sprinkle of life lessons to top it off. I want the audience to ponder their thoughts when the play is done, but I also didn't want to confuse them. The list went on and on.

After plays and some process of elimination, I had my top three list. I wanted to make sure that they wouldn't go over the time limit of thirty minutes so I recruited a friend of mine to read them out loud with me while I timed it. After reading the first play, I didn't even read the other two to see if they would fit. I knew I wanted this to be the play I married for the next four months.

Before a decision can happen, I had to pitch my idea to the class. I put together a presentation about the play I've chosen and why it deserves to be put on the stage.

It was nerve-wracking, and I rambled on for a little too long, but it got approved. Heights by Amy Fox will be making an appearance in this year's PSC 2020 One-Acts.