

## *Best Man Speech* Audition Packet

TBD, Spring 2023

YCA PAGE: <https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/best-man-speech>

## Table of Contents

<b>The Show .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Idea .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Team .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Values+ .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Audition Information .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Audition Timeline.....	7
Audition Side.....	8

## The Show

This is a story about Addy and Bailey - A to B non-stop, you're there in no time. Addy and Bailey...

Addy is getting married today. Bailey is his oldest friend; his barman, his waiter, his caddie; and today, the Best Man at his wedding. They had been herded together into the far corner of Mr Hackett's seating system at age thirteen, along with Croft and Dennis, who couldn't make it, and everything that follows is history...

A history that Bailey slowly unwraps. A history Addy would rather Bailey shut up about. The history of a Kelly Astey. A toast to a girl none of us ever knew, and none of us will ever see, and who Bailey saw for the last time last night.

A history we will not forget as much as we might wish it had never been.

**Note:** this play includes moments of anti-Asian racism, sexism, body and slut shaming, sexual language/description, threats of violence to the audience and the characters described, a bomb threat, and discussions of death, addiction, prostitution, an abusive relationship and attempted murder.

A full script is attached to the [YCA page](#) if you are interested in reading it!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please forgive 15-year-old me's scribbles in the margins...

## The Idea



Hi! I'm Carson (any and all pronouns, BF '25, TAPS/THST/TDPS/TDaPs?? major) [[carson.white@yale.edu](mailto:carson.white@yale.edu); (+44) 7802 731591].

I first read this play back in sophomore year of highschool. My acting teacher suggested I do the opening excerpt of the monologue (the audition piece) for an exam and I fell in love with the play. I did the opening section once again after that before deciding to learn the full piece for a performance that got cancelled in 2020 because of COVID... but the script has just been around sitting on my desk or poking out of my bookshelf since then and I've been toying with the idea of doing it at Yale for the past year.

I want to do this show as immersive theatre. Therefore it's unlikely we'll do it in one of the usual Yale theatres - possible venues include college courtyards/Old Campus, the courtyard of 220 York/SSS. It will be set up exactly as a society wedding reception might be (imagine string quartet and ushers disguised as wait staff serving drinks). Where exactly we settle on will depend largely on how large of an audience we can sustain the immersion for and the final details of the concept we decide upon with the show's designer, Carter King.

What draws me most to this play is its exculpation of memory and desire and the way that those forces appear in our relationships. And for full transparency there is a second version of this play in my head where four or five of the major memories that Bailey recounts are filmed (such that they could appear as standalone shorts) and are projected around the audience (probably in the OBT, retaining some of the immersion) treading this line for Bailey between interaction with the audience and his own memories displayed all around him. This, if it did happen, would be filmed/go up at some point next academic year. Whoever is cast as Bailey 100% does not need to commit/be interested in doing the project again though if, when possible plans are finalised, you still wanted to play the role, there wouldn't be any reauditioning.

Most of all what I'm really excited for in this process is the strength of the relationship that I hope we'll be able to build between actor and director. I fully expect to learn as much from whoever is cast as they might from me and want the relationship to end up as collaborative as possible. As you'll have noticed, there are not yet fixed dates for this production. While I've chosen this play, have a director's "vision", and have had a long relationship with it, I want the process of making this come to life be deeply two-way. To me this starts with finding a set of dates, and a rehearsal timeline<sup>2</sup> that works best for everyone's schedules. So after casting day the only thing I am set on is having **an off-book deadline, regardless of when the performance is, after we come back from Winter Break.**

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<sup>2</sup> If you'd like an idea I'd we'll settle on something that averages out to about 6 hours a week of rehearsal but I am not set on that and the way in which all that is distributed is something I'd like to figure out together.

## The Team

Because the only character in the play is Bailey, I am currently planning to be the totality of the rehearsal team. We do have a wonderful SM, Arden Parrish, signed on (as long as the dates we go with aren't too close to any of their other techs) but the idea is for them to enter the process later next semester as we approach show dates/start merging the tech and acting. If, however, whoever is cast would prefer to have an active stage manager in the rehearsal room, that will happen!

I usually love to have assistant directors in whatever capacity/fluid arrangement works best for them and I would definitely be happy to work with an AD on this show, but just because of the nature of a one-person play and the rehearsal process for it, I would want it to be someone committed to being as present for the whole of the rehearsal process as possible and excited to be a fully involved collaborator creating a trio in rehearsals rather than being a solo that sometimes joins the main duo.<sup>3</sup>

**Outside of rehearsals** we would be thrilled to find a role for anyone interested in any area of this production! We probably have most to do/space in the following areas,

- ASMs/other general techies
- Sound Engineer
- Musicians
- Design/set assistants

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<sup>3</sup> I hope that makes sense?? If you are interested regardless please reach out - I'd love to talk and we'll work something out if not on this show then another!

## Values+

The following are values of mine and things I think are important for me to articulate (in no particular order) as a director.

- I will not be perfect. Things will not always go perfectly. That is ok!
- I am really looking forward to having a longer rehearsal process.
- Just to give you a taste of what we'll do we will spend at least a few weeks on text analysis, various character exercises and will score the whole monologue in pretty significant detail; we will do as much character history etude work as is possible with a one person cast; we'll do some work on audience interaction/improvisation and energy exchange exercise that way.
- Your wellbeing is more important than this or any show. There is no such thing as an acting emergency.
- Your boundaries are perfect exactly where they are for you in this moment. They do not need to be explained or justified. They can change.
- Designers and technicians are as important as actors - in some pieces more so, in immersive theatre especially.
- I am queer. I am gender non-conforming.
- Discrimination of any form is unacceptable. If this cannot be a space where people feel comfortable bringing as much of their selves as they wish it should not exist.
- Rehearsal, design, and technical theatre should be a joy.
- I expect to learn as much if not more from working with whoever is cast as they will hopefully learn from me.
- Everyone should get something out of every show they do. I hope the concentration of focus in a one-person play will really bring this out.
- You will have your ways of working as an actor, an artist, or a person - if you want to use them, I will. That said experience is not expected or a necessity.
- Disagree with me. Please.
- I like immersive theatre - that aspect of this show excites me; I also like consent. Those two things are often to some degree at odds with each other. We will be thinking about it.
- I will offer you a lot of "homework". Very little of it will be mandatory/we will work through some together. But the work we do outside of rehearsal will hugely enrich our process - both for me and you.
- I'll probably have recommended half a dozen plays to read in the first three days. If you do the same to me I will be so happy.
- Increasingly I find myself moving away from naturalism as a default (mostly in design, however). But I retain a love for the smallness and intimacy of theatre.
- Communication, clarity, and transparency I think are a way to fix and prevent so many problems. That's why I include this. I am less scary than this possibly makes it seem.
- If you are at all interested in theatrical intimacy creation and/or wider consent work you are a cool and sexy human being. Let's talk :) This will be part of our work from the first rehearsals, for every moment of the play.
- I have been described as the sweetest misanthrope one of my friends knows. Do with that what you will???

## **Audition Information**

If you're considering auditioning, I'd be super grateful if you could fill out [this form](#) so I can have some basic info before you come in!

### **First-round auditions:**

You can sign up for a 20-minute slot [here](#) on YCA. For the audition I'll ask you to bring in the monologue included at the end of this packet, the opening excerpt of the play. This does **not** need to be memorised. You'll have time to ask any questions you have/get to know me and my style of working a little. You'll perform the excerpt, I'll give some notes and ask you to read it, or part of it, again and we'll continue in this sort of mode until the end of your slot. The main thing I am looking for in these auditions is how you respond to the sort of feedback I give and my style of working!

If you cannot make any of the current slots, email me ([carson.white@yale.edu](mailto:carson.white@yale.edu)) and we'll find a different time! And if there's anything that we can do to make auditioning easier/possible for you please reach out!

### **Callbacks:**

Because *Best Man Speech* is a one-person play and doesn't need the same sort of "chemistry" reads that callbacks usually contain, these may or may not happen need to happen if the first-round gives me all the information I need. If we do have callbacks, they will take roughly the same form as auditions simply in half-hour slots.

If they are not happening, everyone who has auditioned will be emailed to let them know they just have to wait until Casting Cycle on Sunday. If they are happening, you will be emailed Tuesday evening/Wednesday morning about whether or not you're being asked to come in again.

## **Audition Timeline**

**First-round Auditions:** Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> of November

Sign up on [YCA](#) for a slot!

- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> @ 9:30-11:30pm, Phelps Hall 207<sup>4</sup>
- Monday 7<sup>th</sup> @ 6-9pm, Bass L73

**Callback Notification:** by Wednesday @ 12pm

**Callbacks:** Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> - Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> of November

You'll be emailed about location once times are decided! Or they might not happen!

**Casting Day:** Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> of November @ 12pm

All shows casting in the November Casting Cycle will gather and start calling actors at noon to offer roles. You will hear back via email later in the afternoon if we were not able to cast you.

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<sup>4</sup> See cover page for directions!

## Audition Side

While Bailey is obviously the best man, AMAB, and is referred to in the stage directions and refers to himself a few times with he/him pronouns, I would not be opposed to exploring some gender non-conformity in the character using queerness as one of the lenses of power through which Bailey's relationships with other people (especially Addy) operates. Regardless, actors of any gender identity who would be interested in playing the character are welcome to audition. Similarly Bailey's race is never specified (and so while the author likely conceived of him as white and British) actors of any racial identity are welcome to audition.

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*Context: This is the opening section of the play. Addy is Bailey's oldest friend and he has gotten married this afternoon. Bailey was his Best Man and is about to give a toast at his reception. Addy was always going places and promised he would help Bailey rise up with him. Over the years that promise has turned sour and this speech is Bailey's moment to get revenge and have his side of the story, with its pain and bitter hatred, be heard. It should be unclear to the audience how serious any of this is and how dark Bailey's story is going to get but they should get a feeling that he is teetering on the edge of something big.*

*Bailey is about to give his speech. He has a large, wrapped present in front of him.*

Well. This is the present. Get it? Present.  
I expect you've all had presents  
you'd rather not have had. This is the present  
I've sort of dreaded. This is the present moment.  
And me, well I'm the best man they could find.  
Miranda and Addy. Addy, friend of my youth,  
and I wish you'd leave my youth alone, he's shy,  
and Miranda, blushing bride, only not blushing,  
congratulations, may you - blush forever.  
Blushing best man, it ought to say. It's me  
alone in the present moment, I'm the one  
the light's caught. You can't stop me,  
can you, it's my moment.

Look at the lovely bridesmaids. Don't they look  
lovely. They're not blushing either. Sammie,  
Jade, and Tabitha. On their behalf  
I answer the toast, I answer the toast. Hey, toast,  
the answer's no. You're going in the toaster.  
That was my first joke.  
(It says here: 'Wait for laughter to die down.')  
Splendid. On we go.

Now. You're probably wondering about my present,  
my humble offering to the happy couple.  
There's a prize for guessing what's inside. Clue:  
it's a high-tech device for *easy listening*.  
State of the art. I tell you, cutting-edge,  
it'll blow you away, trust me. Now, who am I...  
I should have started there, my mother did.  
My name is Bailey. I do have a first name,  
but they took it at the door. I've got this ticket  
to get it back, but till that time, I'm Bailey.  
It's simpler for Addy, that, just the one name.  
Some of you regulars at this élite  
venue, the Maple Vale Country Club,  
might know me by my other name of 'Barman,  
where's my bloody lager?' or perhaps  
'Oi, caddie, that's a friggin' five-iron!' Well,  
caddie, barman, waiter,  
those are my slave names. But for once I'm here,  
in with the cream. I ought  
by rights to raise a glass to the supremo  
who made the Maple Vale Country Club  
what it is today, but as you know,  
he happens to be the groom, and he's had enough  
compliments for one day, though, having said that,  
mostly in his own speech. So I'll merely  
Thank the staff on duty here today,  
(suckers, having to clear up after this lot,  
whoops, there goes some more)

*He throws his drink over his shoulder.*

and say how very pleased I am to be  
among what we always call 'the bastard public'.  
(Shouldn't have said that, Addy, should I, no,  
Looked good on paper.) Anyway, I'm speaking,  
*I have the floor*. Yes, I hear him going,  
you'll be mopping it this time tomorrow, Bailey.