

*Acting Edition*

# Manahatta

by Mary Kathryn Nagle

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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ISBN 978-0-573-71125-1

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*MANAHATTA* was first produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Company (Bill Rauch, Artistic Director; Cynthia Rider, Executive Director) and received its world premiere on March 28th, 2018. The performance was directed by Laurie Woolery, with Scenic Design by Mariana Sánchez, Costume Design by E.B. Brooks, Lighting Design by James F. Ingalls, Projection Design by Mark Holthusen, and Sound Design and Composition by Paul James Prendergast. The Production Stage Manager was Karl Alphonso. The cast was as follows:

**LE-LE-WA'-YOU/JANE** ..... Tanis Parenteau  
**TOOSH-KI-PA-KWIS-I/DEBRA** ..... Rainbow Dickerson  
**MOTHER/BOBBIE** ..... Sheila Tousey  
**SE-KET-TU-MAY-QUA/LUKE** ..... Steven Flores  
**PETER MINUIT/DICK** ..... Jeffrey King  
**JAKOB/JOE** ..... Danforth Comins  
**JONAS MICHAELIUS/MICHAEL** ..... David Kelly

*MANAHATTA* received its East Coast premiere at the Yale Repertory Theatre (James Bundy, Artistic Director; Victoria Nolan, Managing Director) on January 24th, 2020. The performance was directed by Laurie Woolery, with Scenic Design by Mariana Sánchez, Costume Design by Stephanie Bahniuk, Lighting Design by Emma Deane, Hair and Wig Design by Matthew Armentrout, Projection Design by Mark Holthusen, and Sound Design and Composition by Paul James Prendergast. The Production Stage Manager was Julia Bates. The cast was as follows:

**LE-LE-WA'-YOU/JANE** ..... Lily Gladstone  
**TOOSH-KI-PA-KWIS-I/DEBRA** ..... Shyla Lefner  
**MOTHER/BOBBIE** ..... Carla-Rae  
**SE-KET-TU-MAY-QUA/LUKE** ..... Steven Flores  
**PETER MINUIT/DICK** ..... Jeffrey King  
**JAKOB/JOE** ..... Danforth Comins  
**JONAS MICHAELIUS/MICHAEL** ..... T. Ryder Smith

*MANHATTA* was originally developed by The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) and received its Off-Broadway premiere there on November 16th, 2023. The performance was directed by Laurie Woolery, with Scenic Design by Marcelo Martínez García, Costume Design by Lux Haac, Lighting Design by Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew, Hair and Wig Design by Younghawk Bautista, and Sound Design by Paul James Prendergast. The Production Stage Manager was Amanda Nita Luke-Sayed. The cast was as follows:

**LE-LE-WA'-YOU/JANE** ..... Elizabeth Frances  
**TOOSH-KI-PA-KWIS-I/DEBRA** ..... Rainbow Dickerson  
**MOTHER/BOBBIE** ..... Sheila Tousey  
**SE-KET-TU-MAY-QUA/LUKE** ..... Enrico Nassi  
**PETER MINUIT/DICK** ..... Jeffrey King  
**JAKOB/JOE** ..... Joe Tapper  
**JONAS MICHAELIUS/MICHAEL** ..... David Kelly

## CHARACTERS

**LE-LE-WA'-YOU/JANE** – (Female, Lenape, late twenties to early thirties.) Le-le-wa'-you is Jane's ancestor living on Manahatta in the early 1600s. Jane is a citizen of the Delaware Nation.

**TOOSH-KI-PA-KWIS-I/DEBRA** – (Female, Lenape, early to mid-forties.) Toosh-ki-pa-kwis-i is Debra's ancestor living on Manahatta in the early 1600s. Debra is a citizen of the Delaware Nation. She is Jane's older sister.

**MOTHER/BOBBIE** – (Female, Lenape, late fifties to early sixties.) Mother is Bobbie's ancestor living on Manahatta in the early 1600s. Bobbie is a citizen of the Delaware Nation and mother to Jane and Debra.

**SE-KET-TU-MAY-QUA/LUKE** – (Male, Lenape, late twenties to early thirties.) Se-ket-tu-may-qua is Luke's ancestor living on Manahatta in the early 1600s. Luke is a citizen of the Delaware Nation. He is Michael's adopted son and close childhood friend of Jane.

**PETER MINUIT/DICK** – (Male, white, sixties.) Peter Minuit was Director of the Dutch West India Company in the early 1600s on Manahatta. Dick is the head of a large investment bank called Lehman Brothers.

**JAKOB/JOE** – (Male, white, forties.) Jakob is a trader with the Dutch West India Company on Manahatta in the early 1600s. Joe is Lehman Brothers' CEO.

**JONAS MICHAELIUS/MICHAEL** – (Male, white, late fifties to early sixties.) Jonas Michaelius is the first priest for the Dutch church on Manahatta in the early 1600s. Michael is a man living in Anadarko, Oklahoma. He runs his local church's choir and works at a local bank. He adopted Luke when Luke was very young.

## SETTING AND TIME

*Manahatta* takes place in two time periods, simultaneously. One half of the play takes place in Manahatta, in both the 17th and 21st centuries. The other half takes place in modern day Anadarko and Chickasha, Oklahoma.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

### **Casting:**

The cast consists of seven actors total. Each actor must play the character as they are outlined above.

The double casting is not optional.

### **Staging:**

It is important that the two worlds begin separately, but immediately commence on a course that ultimately results in a collision.

Transformation from one character to another should take place in the moment and onstage as much as possible, to make clear to the audience that past and present overlap and coexist. Indeed, they are one and the same. The separate locations should not be conceived of as segregated space on stage. Beyond this proscription, anything is possible.

In some instances, a character's exit or entrance is written into the script. Where it is not, anything is possible. Even where it is, they may not need to exit.

### **A note on the historical accuracy of the piece:**

Although *Manahatta* is based on real events that took place, and was written following interviews with Lenape elders whose ancestors lived on Manahatta hundreds of years ago – *Manahatta* is a work of fiction, and the playwright is not to be mistaken for an expert on Lenape history or culture.

For instance, although Se-ket-tu-may-qua is a significant historical Lenape leader, he was not present at the time of the 1626 “land sale” to Peter Minuit and the Dutch. Se-ket-tu-may-qua (Black Beaver) was a legendary leader of the Lenape in the mid-19th century, when the Delaware Nation was removed from their reservation in Texas and placed where they are today, in Anadarko, Oklahoma. Black Beaver later participated in the Medicine Lodge Treaty negotiations of 1867 and acted as a moderator in inter-tribal councils throughout the 1870s. Thus, although he was not present when some of the events of this play took place, the playwright found it appropriate to name the only male Lenape character after this legendary leader since an elder of the Delaware Nation specifically requested that he be named for his great-great grandfather. To the Delaware Lenape today, Black Beaver continues to serve as an example of traits such as intelligence, integrity, and bravery that comprise the character of the Lenape people.

To learn more about the Lenape, their history, and their culture, please visit:

Delaware Nation, in Anadarko, Oklahoma:  
<http://www.delawarenation.com>

Delaware Tribe, in Bartlesville, Oklahoma:  
<http://www.delawaretribe.org/tribalsite>

## DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to all Lenape, past and present, but to a few Lenape in particular whose contributions have formed the inspiration for this play: Chris Moore, Paula Pechonick, Joe Baker, Linda Poolaw, Harold Pruner, and Curtis Zunigha. Your survival today is a testament to the strength of your people.

A very special thanks to the Delaware Nation and Delaware Tribe. Without your support, stories, inspiration, and encouragement, this play would never have been possible.

### **W'anishi**

*Manahatta* is also dedicated to Robert Owens Greygrass. As the very first person to bring Robert Snake to life in the March 27, 2013 reading at the Public Theater, we will always remember Robert with deep gratitude for all that he did to share not only this story, but all Native stories.

This play would not have been possible without the support and guidance I received from the Lenape Center, especially their co-founders, Joe Baker and Curtis Zunigha. Also, many thanks to Se-ket-tu-may-qua's great-grandson Harold Pruner, who encouraged me to fashion a character after and in honor of his grandfather. Manahatta is, always has been, and will continue to be a sacred home.

## One

*(Manhattan. Summer 2002.)*

*(JOE sits behind his desk in his office. JANE enters.)*

**JOE.** You're late.

**JANE.** I was lost.

**JOE.** Lost?

**JANE.** I got on the subway going the wrong way.

**JOE.** I never ride the subway.

**JANE.** You live close enough to walk.

**JOE.** I take my helicopter.

**JANE.** Oh.

**JOE.** You can sit down. That's what the chair's for.

*(JANE sits.)*

So you want to work at an investment bank.

**JANE.** Yes.

**JOE.** But not a commercial bank?

**JANE.** Commercial bankers make loans.

**JOE.** What's wrong with that?

**JANE.** I want to underwrite securities. You know, work with stocks and bonds –

**JOE.** Because you think that's sexy?

**JANE.** I think it's challenging.

**JOE.** You want to be challenged?

**JANE.** Yes.

**JOE.** Go to law school.

**JANE.** I don't like to argue –

**JOE.** You're arguing now.

**JANE.** I'm not arguing, I'm explaining –

**JOE.** So be a teacher.

**JANE.** That sounds boring.

**JOE.** (*Looking at her résumé.*) You studied math. At MIT.  
That sounds boring.

**JANE.** What do you know about math?

**JOE.** Enough to know I don't want to talk about it.

**JANE.** I got my degree in Financial Mathematics –

**JOE.** I'm asleep already.

**JANE.** Math is very important.

**JOE.** So is brushing your teeth. But we aren't gonna pay you to do it. Look, number one in your class at MIT, Stanford business school. I get it. You're smart. But we interview a lot of people that are smart for this position. Most of them don't want it. Like you, they graduate from some fancy schmancy Ivy League school at the top of their class, but they have no idea what they want to do with their lives. They see this as a place where they can go and make money. Lots of it. But at the end of the day, loving money isn't enough. Everyone loves money. To succeed at this job, you need something else. Something more. Do you understand what I'm saying?

**JANE.** Yes.

**JOE.** I need to know if you really want this.

(**JANE** *smiles.*)

Well, that's one less person I need to consider.

**JANE.** I left my dad. To come here. He's in Oklahoma, and I'm here –

**JOE.** Dads generally don't participate in our interviews.

**JANE.** He's in the hospital, having open heart surgery.

**JOE.** You mean...like right now?

**JANE.** Your secretary said you wouldn't reschedule –

**JOE.** Ordinarily no, but for something like this –

**JANE.** I want this job. That's why I'm here. I know the other candidates, the others you've interviewed. I went to school with them. I competed against them. But I am not one of them. I didn't go to Stanford because my parents told me to. My parents didn't graduate from high school. I went to Stanford because I knocked down every obstacle they placed in my way.

(**JOE** *signs a piece of paper and hands it to JANE.*)

What's this?

**JOE.** Your paperwork. Take this to my secretary. She'll introduce you to your managing director –

**JANE.** Does this mean –

**JOE.** I'm assigning you to the RMBS Group –

**JANE.** Did you just hire me?!

**JOE.** Ms. Snake, you work on Wall Street now. If you let others see you get this excited about success, you'll never have more of it.

(**JANE** *nods.*)

**JOE.** And let me tell you something about Manhattan. When you're not from here, when you're from somewhere else, this place can be hell. It'll eat you up, chew you up, and spit you out. There will be days when you think everyone is against you.

But if you stick it out, if you give it all you got, you'll see, Manhattan has more to offer than any other place in the world.

## Two

*(Anadarko, Oklahoma. Three days later.)*

*(BOBBIE at the table in her house. She waves a postcard in her hand to ward off the bands of sweat running down her face and neck.)*

**BOBBIE.** I was hopin' you'd come back with photos. Not postcards. Never asked for postcards of all this crazy stuff. The Umpire State Building. Or what is this –

*(Squints as she tries to read from the postcard.)*

the Mama Museum? No. Not for me. All I wanted was a photo. Of Manahatta.

**JANE.** It was a short visit.

**BOBBIE.** But ya got to see it.

**JANE.** I did.

**BOBBIE.** And?

**JANE.** And then I got on a plane and –

**BOBBIE.** Yer dad wanted to visit.

**JANE.** I can't find your necklace.

**BOBBIE.** I promised him we'd go –

**JANE.** Mom –

**BOBBIE.** He wanted to see Pearl Street.

**JANE.** We're late.

**BOBBIE.** They named it Pearl Street after the huge mounds of shells we left there along the shore.

**JANE.** I can't find your wampum.

**BOBBIE.** Pearl Street is where we got our wampum.

**JANE.** We need to leave for the church –

**BOBBIE.** Yer ancestors in Manahatta didn't say goodbye to their relations in a church.

**JANE.** We're in Oklahoma, not Manahatta.

**BOBBIE.** When my parents died, we buried them the Indian way.

**JANE.** Did you take it off in the kitchen?

**BOBBIE.** When I was a kid, our funerals useta be four days, not four minutes.

**JANE.** Mom!

**BOBBIE.** My sock drawer.

*(Exasperated, JANE exits to retrieve the necklace from the sock drawer. DEBRA enters.)*

**DEBRA.** You ready to go?

**BOBBIE.** Almost.

**DEBRA.** Almost? Everyone is at the church waiting on us and – where's your wampum?

**BOBBIE.** Janie's lookin' for it.

**DEBRA.** You wore it, last night –

*(JANE enters, carrying the wampum necklace.)*

**JANE.** Found it.

*(BOBBIE stands up to put on the necklace. She struggles to clasp it behind her neck.)*

**DEBRA.** I knew this would happen.

**JANE.** I couldn't find the necklace.

**DEBRA.** I told you that if I left to take the food you would have to get Mom ready.

**JANE.** It's not my fault things are disorganized around here.

**BOBBIE.** I told you, the sock drawer –

**DEBRA.** It's been sitting in the same sock drawer for thirty-five years.

**JANE.** Sorry, that's the last place I thought to look.

**DEBRA.** I guess they don't teach you to use common sense in grad school.

**BOBBIE.** Someone help me with this.

**DEBRA.** Give it to me.

**BOBBIE.** Why the heck we gotta do this in a church anyways?

**DEBRA.** That's what Dad wanted.

**BOBBIE.** He never told me that.

**DEBRA.** Maybe you never listened.

**BOBBIE.** You tryin' to choke me?

**DEBRA.** Hold still.

*(DEBRA continues working on the necklace around BOBBIE's neck.)*

**BOBBIE.** *(To DEBRA.)* She got the job, ya know.

**DEBRA.** We're late.

**BOBBIE.** She's gonna live in Manahatta.

**DEBRA.** Whole church's waitin' on us.

**BOBBIE.** What exactly ya gonna do?

**JANE.** It's complicated.

**BOBBIE.** Better be. Had to go to school ten years to do it.

**JANE.** I'll be working at an investment bank.

**DEBRA.** They let Indians do that?

**JANE.** Yes, Debra, they do.

**DEBRA.** I bet you're the only Indian.

*(SE-KET-TU-MAY-QUA enters, carrying furs for scraping.)*

**JANE.** I might be.

**DEBRA.** I'd hate to live in Manhattan.

**JANE.** Good thing you don't have to.

**DEBRA.** It's all concrete and skyscrapers and there's no leaves, no trees, no sky –

**JANE.** There's sky in Manhattan –

**DEBRA.** No grass –

**JANE.** You've never been there –

**DEBRA.** I've seen pictures.

**JANE.** *(To DEBRA.)* You have no idea what you're talking about.

**BOBBIE.** None a ya do.

*(SE-KET-TU-MAY-QUA places a fur in front of JANE.)*

That's the problem with your generation. Ya got no idea where you came from.

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