

# Every Day She Rose

Written by Andrea Scott and Nick Green  
Directed by Andrea Donaldson and Sedina Fiati

A Nightwood Theatre Production  
**Resource and Background Material**



Photo of Nick Green and Andrea Scott by Tanja-Tiziana.

Created by Taylor Trowbridge

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Community Engagement Partner

## Introduction

Synopsis: The personal becomes political in this collaboratively created work from Nightwood's Write from the Hip\* playwrights Andrea Scott and Nick Green. When racial and queer politics collide with the Black Lives Matter protest at the 2016 Toronto Pride parade, two best friends discover that the things that brought them together may now drive them apart. *Every Day She Rose* delivers a hilarious and heartbreaking stare-down of privilege and oppression.

\* *Write from The Hip* is a year-long script development program designed to support new writers towards the completion of a full length play.

Q & A with the *Every Day She Rose* playwrights, Andrea Scott and Nick Green

### ***How did this work evolve?***

**Andrea:** Shortly after my play, *Don't Talk to Me Like I'm Your Wife*, wrapped at SummerWorks in 2016 Nick Green reached out and asked if we could go out for dinner. We had met through a mutual friend a few years before and I admired his work. He had seen my SummerWorks play and liked it. So we met at Sambuca's in the Village and over martinis he pitched me on the idea of a couple of friends having a falling out over Black Lives Matter stopping Pride in Toronto. I was intrigued. I'd never written a play with anyone else. I also appreciated that Nick believed the play would not work without the voice of a black female playwright. I agreed and we began sending ideas back and forth via email before finally writing anything. We brainstormed scenes/scenarios and then offered to write whatever spoke to us the most. Then we would send the completed scenes to one another for tweaks and discussion. This process was mainly completed through the use of Google Docs. We had a few meetings in person at Nick's condo or business centre using a white board and post it notes. The play was slated for a reading at a Pride function in June 2017, supported by Sky Gilbert, so that gave us a built in deadline. As former actors we also performed all the readings where the play was well received. A few months later the play was accepted into Write from the Hip. The rest is history.

**Nick:** This piece started out of a hope to work on something with Andrea because she's a fantastic playwright and wonderful friend. I don't remember how we started to focus specifically on the Black

Lives Matter protest at the Pride Parade, but once the idea was on the table, we both knew that it was the direction that we had to move in. It was such a polarizing and important moment in history; one that opened a lot of eyes to the racism in the queer community; one that shed light on the divergent paths that are walked by those of different social locations.

***How has this play changed from the initial idea you had for the piece?***

**Andrea:** Originally the play was about the beginning, middle, and end of a friendship between a black straight woman and a white gay man. The structure allowed for time jumps back and forth in time. The audience would have seen them as teenagers when they meet and then as adults close to thirty. Five months into writing the play Nick suggested we add a meta-theatrical layer where *Every Day She Rose* fractures into the process of Andrea Scott and Nick Green trying to write the play. So then it became about the relationship between the writers filtered through the characters sorting through their changing relationship. It's a far more textured piece of work at this point.

**Nick:** Our first approach to the show focused only on two fictional friends who were designed to illuminate and explore this event in the most extreme way possible. Through our development in the Write from the Hip unit, we were pushed to think about how we may go deeper and examine the issue in a more complex way, which led to Andrea and I writing ourselves into the play. Of course it's a fictionalized presentation of ourselves, but it opens up a much more nuanced, difficult examination of the subject.

***What did you learn about yourself in creating this play?***

**Andrea:** That I need to be more patient with myself and others while creating a new work. I've always worked alone and collaboration on sensitive issues is a skill I've yet to master.

**Nick:** Well it's certainly a strange experience watching someone *play* you on stage! There are moments when I've watched Adrian deliver a line and I want to scream *AM I LIKE THAT?! ...*to which Andrea says *yes*.

Aside from that, co-writing this show with Andrea has been an incredible experience. She's such a generous and enthusiastic collaborator. I've also learned so much about my process, the space I take up as a white male-presenting person in the arts, and my blind spots when it comes to race, sexuality, and social location. Table work with our brilliant co-directors has been illuminating and challenging, and I think I've grown a huge amount through it.

***What do you hope audiences take away from the play when they leave the theatre?***

**Andrea:** I am hoping that in these very divisive times where conversation can quickly become an argument devoid of nuance people will pause and listen to someone who appears to be very different from them. I will continue to say that *Every Day She Rose* is a love story between two people who grow apart. While there are big issues about intersectionality, race, gender, privilege, and power imbalances, at its heart, this play is about love, growth, and the freedom to change your mind.

**Nick:** I am hoping that people walk away from this show with a desire to talk about the complex ways that racism and experiences of other forms of oppression exist in and impact relationships. Andrea and I see this show as a tragic love story, and I imagine that the villain is unexamined privilege. I hope that those who have access to power and privilege will look at their blind spots and prejudices, and be engaged in discussions about how to be a better friend and ally.

## Characters

### Mark

Mark is a gay, white man in his late 20s. He is best friends with Cathy-Ann and owns the two-bedroom condo they both live in.

### Cathy-Ann

Cathy-Ann is a straight, black woman in her late 20s. She rents a room in her best friend Mark's condo.

### Nick

Nick is a gay, white man who is co-writing *Every Day She Rose* with Andrea.

### Andrea

Andrea is a straight, black woman who is co-writing *Every Day She Rose* with Nick.

## Themes

Themes in this piece include: racism, homophobia, intersectionality, allyship, protest, police presence, collaboration, the creative process, differing lived experiences, personal growth and transformation.

## Cast and Creative

**Written by** Andrea Scott and Nick Green

**Directed by** Andrea Donaldson and Sedina Fiati

**Starring** Adrian Shepherd-Gawinski and Monice Peter

**Set Design** by Michelle Tracey

**Lighting Design** by Rebecca Picherack

**Costume Design** by Ming Wong

**Sound Design** by Cosette Pin

## Synopsis

### Scene 1

Mark and Cathy-Ann are getting ready to attend the 2016 Pride parade. They are in the condo Mark owns, where Cathy-Ann rents a room. Mark is eager to leave the house and join the celebration and is rushing Cathy-Ann along.

### Scene 2

Mark and Cathy-Ann attend the 2016 Pride parade and relay their experiences to the audience. They see Justin Trudeau marching in the parade and then come across the Black Lives Matter protest halting the events. The scene then splits - flipping from the narrative being relayed by Cathy-Ann and Mark into a behind-the-scenes look at the playwrights Andrea and Nick debating how to write the scene itself and their characters' back stories.

### Scene 3

It's 10 pm, the night of the parade. Mark and Cathy-Ann are back at the condo. They discuss the protest at Pride that day and discover they have differing views on the matter. Mark expresses feeling safer having the police at the parade after the recent, targeted mass shooting at a gay club in Orlando. Cathy-Ann defends BLM's demands to have no uniformed police presence at the march. They get into a heated debate, which then flips into a creative debate between Andrea and Nick, as they attempt to write the scene in a way that raises the stakes, but is still within the realm of believability for the characters. They debate whether a gay male could potentially feel unsafe at Carribana and re-write an exchange about that point several times. The scene ends with Mark ready to leave with Cathy-Ann to continue celebrating Pride and Cathy-Ann saying she does not feel like going out anymore. Tensions remain high.

### Scene 4

Back to Nick and Andrea as they spend more time debating what the backstory of these characters are and what the history of their friendship should be.

### **Scene 5**

Mark comes home late from partying and is friendly with Cathy-Ann. She is warm in return and offers to make him something to eat. Mark discovers on Cathy-Ann's laptop that she's been looking at apartment rental websites and that her move in date is set for next week. Mark is hurt and says Cathy-Ann is over-reacting to the events at Pride. Cathy-Ann tells a story of her brother dealing with police brutality. She continues to express feeling done with the traditional Pride parade. Mark argues that she finds gay people distasteful, which she refutes. The scene flips to Andrea and Nick as they debate the character of Mark and how he is being written, which becomes a discussion about whether Nick worries audiences will think Mark's views represent his own views. They debate whether Cathy-Ann's character should have homophobic undertones so that both of their characters have apparent flaws, making it harder for an audience to take sides.

### **Scene 6**

The scene opens on the morning of moving day for Cathy-Ann. Mark breaks the silence between them and asks if she needs help and Cathy-Ann kindly declines. They discuss their past together with some fondness. Mark learns Cathy-Ann is moving in with her co-worker and asks if she is black. Cathy-Ann asks what that has to do with anything and then confirms she is black. Mark takes this detail as a knock against him, but Cathy-Ann says she's simply been looking forward to living with a woman who understands her on a different level.

### **Scene 7**

Cathy-Ann and Mark speak in solo direct address to the audience about the affection and frustration that exists between them. They convey that they will miss each other, but Cathy-Ann expresses that it's time to move on and Mark expresses that he knows he can't control the situation.

### **Scene 8**

The play flips to Andrea and Nick as they debate the structure of the play and how to finish the piece. Andrea begins to question why they are writing the play and Nick defends what they are creating. Andrea asks Nick why he asked her to write this piece with him.

### **Scene 9**

Cathy-Ann is done packing and she and Mark share a tense but honest conversation. Cathy-Ann relays that people change and that they have grown apart.

### **Scene 10**

The playwrights, Nick and Andrea, wonder if this is the end of their play and hypothesize about what happens to Mark and Cathy-Ann's friendship in the future. The playwrights wonder if they can save Mark and Cathy-Ann's friendship through re-writes. Andrea says it's possible but it would be a huge task and that they would probably need to start writing the play all over again. Neither playwright knows what to do next. They both admit they are tired. They look at their computers. **(End of Play.)**

## About Nightwood Theatre

As Canada's foremost feminist theatre, Nightwood provides an essential home for the creation of extraordinary theatre by women. Founded in 1979, Nightwood Theatre has created and produced award-winning plays that have garnered Dora Mavor Moore, Chalmers, Trillium and Governor General's awards. The company is helmed by Artistic Director Andrea Donaldson and Managing Director Beth Brown, and has received public acclaim for artistic excellence, the successful training and development of emerging female talent, and its ongoing activism around gender equity.

## Related Articles

### Questions before reading the article:

1. Do you recall the Black Lives Matter protest at the 2016 Pride Parade? What details do you remember? Do you know what the demands of BLM included?
2. Do you know how the Pride parade started?

### Exclusive: Black Lives Matter Toronto co-founder responds to Pride action criticism

"Our action was in the tradition of resistance that is Pride. We didn't halt progress; we made progress."

**By Janaya Khan**

NOW Magazine, July 6, 2016

I remember my first Pride.

I was newly out as queer, and eager to experience entire city blocks full of people like me. Church Street was resplendent, and the colours screamed of possibility.

I looked around, saw the tents with big bank and corporate logos, the groups of largely white people, and shrugged. I was with my friends, who were Black like me, and we had come to have a good time.

But then, about 20 minutes later, we were accosted by police on the fringe of the celebration. One of them wanted to know who we were and where we were going. He became increasingly aggressive but eventually left us alone.

This was not the first time a police officer had been hostile to me. Some of my earliest childhood memories were of traumatic experiences with violent police officers.

We attempted to ignore the incident, to continue to celebrate, but it hung like a shadow over us, so we left.

Ten years later, on Sunday, July 3, I found myself standing in the sun with the rest of my Black Lives Matter Toronto team as part of the “honoured group” at Pride 2016.

We brought the Pride parade to a full stop with a list of demands (see below) reflecting the needs of some of Toronto’s most marginalized LGBTQ2SIAA community members. These demands challenged the erasure of Black infrastructure and called for the removal of police floats from the Pride parade and community fair, among other things.

And we were successful.

A co-chair and the executive director of Pride Toronto signed our document, and although it seems as if they are attempting to backtrack in recent interviews, we intend to hold them accountable. They have committed to a more inclusive Pride – an inclusivity connected to the very first Pride, known as Stonewall, the riot led by transwomen and queer people of colour against police brutality in 1969 New York.

Canada, too, has a long history of homophobia and transphobia. From the 1950s to the 90s, LGBTQ2SIAA people in Canada were surveilled, violated and brutalized by police forces, resulting in raids and incarceration.

The Toronto Police Service recently issued a formal statement saying it “regretted” the 1981 bathhouse raids, but has made no statement on the Pussy Palace raid in 2000 or the attacks on entire trans and sex-working communities through TAVIS as recently as last year.

Our action was in the tradition of resistance that is Pride. We didn’t halt progress; we made progress.

We achieved a commitment to our demands despite intense push-back from a primarily gay white male community. The same community did not want Black Lives Matter involved in Pride at all, even going so far as to create a group on Facebook called No BLM in Pride. Gender and sexual diversity, it seems, does not preclude racism or white privilege.

The majority of the leadership within Black Lives Matter – Toronto and Black Lives Matter internationally identify as queer or trans. Pride has always been for the most marginalized, and has always been for us.

Since the action, I have received hate mail and death threats, primarily from gay-identifying men. I have been screamed at on the street. I have been called a “nigger” more times than I care to count. People have told me I’m no longer part of the queer community because my Blackness has no place there.

People who are not under the LGBT2QSIAA umbrella have used our action as an excuse to attack us with racist vitriol. Their actions are revealing the racism that prompted our intervention at Pride in the first place.

We are not all on a level playing field fighting for the same equality. Any such claim is absurd.

Some mainstream media have provided a platform for racist assertions and chosen to focus more on our demand that police not participate in future Pride parades than on the reality of anti-Black racism.

They are fostering a narrative wherein calling for an end to police floats in Pride is considered “discriminatory,” completely overlooking the reality of privilege and power granted to police. Black people are one of the fastest-growing prison populations in Canada, and racial profiling and death continue to be the outcomes all too often when police interact with Black communities.

Black Lives Matter Toronto led every major event in Pride, from the Dyke March to the Trans March.

We paused for a moment of silence for the lives lost in Orlando in all three marches. Orlando continues to devastate me and remind me that I have a responsibility to disrupt a system that continues to brutalize the LGBT2QSIAA communities that look like me. Part of that work is creating more inclusivity in spaces like Pride. An increased police presence at Pride in the wake of the Orlando tragedy does not make the most marginalized among us feel safe. It did not in 1969 and it does not today.

The LGBTQ2SIAA community knows that labels do not devalue us, they help define us. And yet something about the words “Black lives matter” is making many people deeply uncomfortable. All lives matter in principle, but not in practice.

Until those two line up, Black Lives Matter will continue to exist.

As the first Dyke March 20 years ago did, we are calling upon Pride to change and grow to reflect the communities it represents. Twenty years ago there was push-back and negative attention for women asserting their right to celebrate themselves in their entirety.

Will it be another 20 years before Toronto realizes Black lives matter at Pride?

### **Black Lives Matter's demands of Pride**

- Continued space, including stage and tents, funding and logistical support for Black Queer Youth.
- Self-determination for all community spaces at Pride, allowing community groups full control over hiring, content and structure of their stages.
- Full and adequate funding for community stages, including logistical, technical and personnel support.
- Doubling of funding for Blockorama to \$13,000.
- Reinstatement of the South Asian stage.
- Prioritizing of the hiring of Black transwomen, Indigenous people and others from vulnerable communities at Pride Toronto.
- More Black deaf and hearing sign language interpreters for the festival.
- Removal of police floats in the Pride marches and parades.
- A town hall organized in conjunction with groups from marginalized communities, including but not limited to Black Lives Matter – Toronto, Blackness Yes and Black Queer Youth, in six months, where Pride Toronto will present an update and action plan on BLM-TO’s demands.

*Janaya Khan is a co-founder of Black Lives Matter – Toronto.*

### **Questions after reading this article:**

1. Did reading this article surprise you? In what way?
2. Do you feel the focus at the Pride parade should be about the celebration or the protest? Can it be both?

## Selected Scene from the Script

### *Every Day She Rose* - Selection from Scene 3

*The night of Pride 2016. Mark and Cathy-Ann are back at the condo they live in and are discussing the Black Lives Matter protest at the parade that day.*

Cathy-Ann: No, I mean, the protest was, in part, about the police. And I was like, 'whoa!' These women are not here to play. They are here to stand up and check the police.

Mark: It was pretty intense.

Cathy-Ann: What do you mean?

Mark: I mean just that they wanted that guy to sign that agreement.

Cathy-Ann: Their demands.

Mark: Yeah. Like that was... intense. Especially the stuff with the cops.

Cathy-Ann: I know.. I mean, I'm not afraid of the cops but to be black and trans and queer...it must be fucking terrifying to see the police at the parade when they've been a target for so long.

Mark: Yeah.

Cathy-Ann: Yeah? You seem kinda...whatever about it.

Mark: They kinda made me feel safer.

Cathy-Ann: Which is the whole point. Because you're white.

Mark: Well, I mean there's more to it than that.

Cathy-Ann: Not really.

Mark: Cathy-Ann, I mean come on.

Cathy-Ann: What?

Mark: You don't think there's reason for queers to want police there these days?

Cathy-Ann: I think that you feel safe because you're white.

Mark: Even after...? Never mind. I don't want to get into it.

Cathy-Ann: No, let's get into it. Even after ....?

Mark: Orlando.

Cathy-Ann: What about it?

Mark: 49 people were shot dead in a gay bar.

Cathy-Ann: And 90% of them were Hispanic.

Mark: So what? What does that have to do with them being murdered?

Cathy-Ann: It was Latin night and the shooter knew that.

Mark: How do you know that he knew that?

Cathy-Ann: It was common knowledge.

Mark: That he knew that?

Cathy-Ann: That it was a Latin night.

Mark: So you think that he, like, went to Google and started looking up-

Cathy-Ann: I really don't understand why you want to erase their race in order to co-opt their tragedy.

Mark: I'm not trying to co-opt their tragedy! What a shitty thing to say.

Cathy-Ann: Think about it, Mark: what was the protest about? Queer people of colour being afraid of violence and death at the hands of a homophobe. Unfortunately sometimes that homophobe is a person with a badge and a gun.

Mark: So no cops at a gay celebration.

Cathy-Ann: No. No no no no no. No cops in uniform. Come on, Mark. I know what you're doing.

Mark: Remember how you *rolled your eyes* about my friends or whatever being at the beach during the Pride parade? Did you even take a second to consider that a ton of gay guys were too scared to go to Pride this year?

Cathy-Ann: I know where you're going with this Mark, and you need to stop.

Mark: And then in comes an organization, stops our parade and demands that the police should have to leave? How the fuck was that supposed to help anything?!

Cathy-Ann: And this is the part where you paint Black Lives Matter as a terrorist organization. Black people aren't terrorists, Mark, but some cops are. And guess what, the reality is that the people who were killed in Orlando were gay people of colour and women, not white men.

Mark: So, I don't have a right to feel scared.

Cathy-Ann: No. You don't have a right to erase my opinion about the Pride parade.

Mark: Well it's not like you see gay people with a megaphone stopping Caribana, do you?

Cathy-Ann: Well, Mark, you'd have to actually go to Caribana for that to happen, wouldn't you?

Nick: *(DING)* This is the point of the whole play. Do you agree, or-

Andrea: I think this is one of the main points.

Nick: I mean this is it, this is where the conflict lays. The anger from the white gays about having their party disrupted, and the anger from the black community about the ignorance of white gays.

Andrea: But there's also the- here try this.

*DING*

*Switch into scene:*

Mark: Well you don't see me kneeling down at Caribana.

Cathy-Ann: No Mark, you have to actually go to Caribana in order to do that.

Mark: I'd rather not get shot, thank you very much.

*DING*

Andrea: See, it's the racism.

Nick: Mhmm...

*DING*

Mark: Well you don't see me kneeling down at Caribana.

Cathy-Ann: No Mark, you have to actually go to Caribana in order to do that.

Mark: I'd rather not get beaten up, thank you so much.

*DING:*

Nick: It's only a little change, but I think it's a bit more fair.

Andrea: More fair?

Nick: Not more fair. I mean more accurate. Like I don't think gays like Mark- and I'm not saying like *me*- like Mark I'm not so sure they'd worry about getting shot so much as beaten up for being gay.

Andrea: Ugh that's so idiotic.

Nick: Mark's a bit of an idiot when he's mad, I think.

**End of Scene Selection**

## Questions for discussion

1. This play switches between the narrative between Cathy-Ann and Mark, then to Andrea and Nick as they attempt to write the scene. What insight does this approach give you about the subject matter?
2. What similarities do Cathy-Ann and Mark share, and what are their differences?
3. What are the benefits and challenges of a play being written by two playwrights as opposed to one?
4. Does this meta\* format of the playwrights being present in the piece change the audience's relationship to the play and to the subject matter? In what ways?

\*Definition of meta: *adjective* (of a creative work) referring to itself or to the conventions of its genre; self-referential. Ex. "the enterprise is inherently "meta," since it doesn't review movies, for example, it reviews the reviewers who review movies" (Source: Oxford)

## Suggested Activities

1. Is there an organization that you would be interested in protesting? Write about why and what demands you would make.
2. Collect reviews from newspapers and online that reviewed *Every Day She Rose*. Do you agree with what they have to say? What do you think they got wrong? Write your own review.
3. How can we navigate disagreements and find common ground and understanding? Pair up, brainstorm and write down ways in which this could be achieved.