



# ***Incels and Other Myths***

by ALLY SASS

directed by ERICA TERPENING-ROMEO

December 2-12 | Tickets: [BostonPlaywrights.org](https://www.bostonplaywrights.org)

Boston University College of Fine Arts  
School of Theatre and  
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences



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# A WELCOME FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hello, friends! Welcome to the third installment of our Season of New Plays—Ally Sass’s *Incels and Other Myths*. I’ve promised you something completely different, and here it is! This is a play about “story” and how it can pull us in and shape our lives. In this play, stories abound—whether they’re mythological tales of gods and goddesses or a simple narrative about the struggles of parenting.

If you’ve ever wondered how the internet has affected our culture, you’re about to get an unexpected answer. When Elaine, a professor of comparative mythology, meets the online world of gamers, her life changes in a myriad of ways—some beneficial and some not so benign. Let’s just say, for those of us worried about conspiracy theories and the Dark Web, well...We should be worried.

*Oracle*, the play’s online game, is a far cry from *Clue* and *Monopoly*. Based in a mythological world of monsters and warriors (*Game of Thrones*, anyone?), the battle for good over evil reigns supreme. These life/death battles are deceptive mental exercises and not physically dangerous; after all, we’re sitting at our desks alone with our computers and without real swords. But herein lies the rub! The potential risk lies not in the threat of mortal danger but in the lure and power of the compulsion to play. And as *Incels and Other Myths* escalates, we have to ask ourselves....To what end?

I’ll be interested in your answer. Once again, thanks for joining us for these hot-off-the-presses new plays! And I hope you’ll join us in February for something completely different AGAIN—Caity-Shea Violette’s timely *Rx Machina*, where doctors and drug representatives vie for patients (and for each other).

I’m toasting to you and to a wonderful holiday relaxing with family and friends. And I hope the New Year brings some normalcy along with good health and prosperity for us all. Most especially, I look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

With warmest regards,



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# ***Incels and Other Myths***

by ALLY SASS

directed by ERICA TERPENING-ROMEO

*A BU New Play Initiative production, produced by Boston Playwrights' Theatre  
and the Boston University College of Fine Arts School of Theatre*

Scenic Design	Steven Velasquez
Lighting Design	Max Wallace
Sound Design	Sara Vargas
Costume Design	Sandra Zhihan Jia
Properties Design	Danielle Ibrahim
Stage Manager	Wendye Clarendon*
Assistant Director	Matthew Swain
COVID Safety Managers	J.C. Pankratz, Julie Tidemand
Technical Directors	Elliott Purcell, Steve Vieira
Scenic Assistants	Madeline Riddick-Seals, Peyton Tavares
Costume Assistants	Alison Miranda, Logan Samuels
Sound Assistant	Feitong Wang
Fight Choreography	Ryan Winkles
Intimacy Choreography	Jackie Davis
Production Assistants	J.C. Pankratz, Julie Tidemand
Master Electrician	Mark Fortunato
Crew	Kevin Fulton, Catherine Giorgetti, Matt Leal, Patrick Meade, Isaak Olson, Claire Parrell, Sara Vargas
Paint Charge	Maggie Kearnan
House Manager	Catherine Giorgetti
Front of House Staff	David L. Caruso, Jay Eddy, Matt Leal, Fatima A. Maan, Mavis Manaloto, Elise Wien

## **CAST**

Elaine	Allison Blaize
Mr. Anderson	Jesse Hinson*
Avery	Aidan Close
Frankie	Julien Tornelli
Benji	Fady Demian
Hornz	Matthew Swain (through Dec. 10)
Hornz	Thomas McLaughlin (Dec. 11 and 12)
Oracle and others	Katherine Schaber

*Incels and Other Myths* runs approximately two hours. There will be a 15-minute intermission.

Content advisory: *Incels and Other Myths* includes adult language and themes.  
Appropriate for ages 13 and up. A strobe light is used in the performance.

\*Member, Actors' Equity Association

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by  
any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

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## A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

As writers, we're often taught to write about the things that scare us. If we let ourselves tell the story we're nervous to tell, step a little closer to the fire, that's when the story can show up for us. In the two years since I thought up the idea for this play, it has been an undeniably fraught period on our planet, during which the play has seen many scrapped drafts, breakdowns, and breakthroughs. Somewhere along the way, it all veered a little off course; that's when the story showed up.

Two years ago I was lying in the grass of Washington Square Park, reading the incredibly perturbing manifesto written by Elliot Rodger, who, in 2014, enacted a deadly attack on the public in an act of "retribution" for his perceived sexual rejection by women. I was led to this manifesto through my own descent into the rabbit hole of the "incel" or "involuntary-celibate" community, a culture that promotes a sense of entitlement and hate towards women, fueled by a deep sense of isolation. I couldn't help but notice the parallels between this group of men, who feel disadvantaged by their own physical flaws, and the ways women are endlessly trapped by physical presentations.

I didn't question my own desire to write this play until I began sharing the idea with people around me. While most people in my life were supportive of this pursuit, there was often an unease reflected back onto me about the subject matter. Suddenly, I wondered what people would think about me if I explored this territory. Why was I so interested in this, anyway? I wondered if I was taking on too much, if the play would be too complicated, if the word incel should be uttered, if it was even about incels. With the endless support and guidance of my director and dramaturg, Erica Terpening-Romeo, I learned that it is okay to lean into that feeling. This is what it means to write the thing that scares you, to trust that there is a reason for your fixation, even if you're not sure what it is yet. This is a play about many things: a woman who lets herself step closer to the fire is one of them.

Thank you to everyone in my life who has made this play possible.

—Ally Sass

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## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Now that you're here, I have a confession to make: this is not a play about the internet. This is not a play about online gaming. This is not even, strictly speaking, a play about incels. I think it's most fair to describe this as a play about entitlement and permission—about what we are *actually* entitled to versus what we *think* we are entitled to, and about the permission we give ourselves and one another.

Permission is a powerful thing. Permission can empower us to be our fullest selves, to overcome our fears, to tell and feel the truth. Permission can also embolden our basest impulses, distance us from our responsibilities, and blind us to the truth. Depending on its source, permission can either draw us towards a light or invite us deeper into the dark. I'm not sure how we're supposed to tell the difference between the two, especially at first, but I think the distance is measured in harm. Harm to ourselves and harm to others. And whose job is it to measure that? Whose eye is on the scale?

I have had the great pleasure of walking alongside this play—and Ally Sass, its brilliant playwright—for nearly two years. In that time, *Incels and Other Myths* has grown from an insistent and particular voice in Ally's ear to a complex and messy fable about desire, sex, identity, performance, and the monsters we fear and release in ourselves and one another. I love this play for not tripping over itself to offer us answers. In our current moment, when the cacophony of dissonant "answers" is deafening, I love this play for just laying the steaming cauldron before us and asking us to peer inside.

I am using words like "we" and "us" and "ourselves," but don't get me wrong—I'm not saying the story and themes of this play are universal. They are culturally particular. This is a play about particular people, and particular kinds of people. So I will do my best not to presume anything about you and just confess that I feel personally implicated by this play. I see my own fraught relationship to permission and entitlement (and gender and sexuality and vanity and shame) reflected in the cauldron when I peer inside. I'm curious what you see in there. Here it is, waiting for you, if you decide to look.

—Erica Terpening-Romeo

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## CAST & CREW

**ALLISON BLAIZE (Elaine)** is a New Orleans native based out of Los Angeles and the Southeast. She has a BA in Theatre from the University of New Orleans and attended conservatory at AMDA. She was recently in Skylight Theatre's *West Adams* (LA Times CC). Other credits include *Spanish Prayer Book* (Road Theatre); *Cardboard Piano* (International City Theatre); *Splintered Soul* (International City Theatre); *Stupid Kid* (Road Theatre); *ESR* (24th Street Theatre); *The Play About the Baby* (Road Theatre-LA Times CC); *No Place to be Somebody* (Robey Theatre Company). TV/FILM: *Sacrifice* (BET); *Elephants* (Amazon Prime); *Sometimes Our Friends Come Over* (VimeoOnDemand); *Remaining Light*. [www.allisonblaize.com](http://www.allisonblaize.com)

**WENDYE CLARENDON\* (Stage Manager)** is soooo happy theatre is making its way back into our lives! Credits include eight seasons of new plays at 16th Street Theater; *An Enemy of the People* with Stuart Margolin; *Nunsense* (Greenbrier Valley Theatre); *The Seagull* (The Artistic Home); *The Electric Baby* (Rivendell); *A Steady Rain* (Chicago Commercial Collective, tour); *The Four of Us* (Theater Wit); *Aiming for Sainthood* (The Jay Pritzker Pavillion for Chicago Dramatists); *Scientology Pageant* (A Red Orchid Theatre), and *Shear Madness* (The Chicago Theatre, national tour). As an actor, and before the world came to a halt, Wendye was last seen as the wise-cracking goat, Weezy, in *Alabaster* at 16th Street Theater. Other credits include Kate in the Florida tour of Todd Logan's *Botanic Garden* with James Leaming; Maria in *A Comedy of Tenors* (Greenbrier Valley Theatre); Sonia in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Farmers Alley Theatre); *Cuttings* (Stage Left), *Shear Madness* (Dallas, Chicago), *Crimes of the Heart* (Human Race Theatre), *The Mousetrap* (Casa Mañana), *Present Laughter* (Theatre Three). TV/Film: *Chicago Med*, *Proven Innocent*, *Chicago Fire*, *Public Access*, *Broken*, *Baby on Board*, and *D.O.A.* Wendye is a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA. Thank you to Kate, Darren, and the lovely cast, crew, and staff for such a warm welcome.

**AIDAN CLOSE (Avery)** is currently a third-year acting major at Boston University and is absolutely stoked to be making his Boston Playwrights' Theatre debut in *Incels and Other Myths*! He had the privilege of playing Avery in the workshop earlier this year and is beyond grateful to have been invited back to bring this story to life. Aidan would like to thank his friends and family, his two beautiful roommates, and, especially Ally and Erica for giving him more than he can ever put into words.

**JACKIE DAVIS (Intimacy Choreography)** was last seen at Boston Playwrights' Theatre as Estella Vellez in Alexis Scheer's *Laughs in Spanish*. Jackie's work includes acting, directing, choreography, and producing. She was a co-producer of the webseries *From A Distance*. She was last seen on stage in Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater's production of *Shipwrecked*. Jackie is involved in all three disciplines: theatre, film, and television. You can see her as Susan Collins in *Little Women* and hear her as Addie in season one of The Wilbury Theatre Group's audio drama *God Talks to An Agnostic*, available on NPR, Spotify, and

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other audio outlets as well as her website: [www.jackiemdavis.com](http://www.jackiemdavis.com). Jackie is on the Movement faculty of the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program in Providence, RI, and a teaching artist for Trinity Repertory Theatre's Education Department.

**FADY DEMIAN (Benji)** is an actor and writer currently pursuing a BFA in Acting at Boston University. His passions center around physical theatre, clowning, absurdism, and Shakespeare. He has played Horatio in *Hamlet* with the Oxford Shakespeare Company in Denmark and is expected to work with the Prague Shakespeare Company next summer. Previous work in Boston includes a devised piece titled *Walls* with Playback Theatre; the lead in a short film titled *The New Tenant* directed by Youssef Hesham which is currently being screened at various film festivals; and, most recently, in *LORENA: a Tabloid Epic* here at BPT. Fady can be seen next in *T: An MBTA Musical* at the Rockwell and will continue his acting training in the spring at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. He would like to express gratitude for his parents and the entire team behind this show. Instagram: @fadyd5

**JESSE HINSON\* (Mr. Anderson)** is a Boston-based actor, educator, and violence designer. He is a resident acting company member with Actors' Shakespeare Project. Recent credits include *The Merchant of Venice* (ASP), *The Thanksgiving Play* (Lyric Stage), *Shakespeare in Love* (SpeakEasy Stage), and *Cymbeline* (Commonwealth Shakespeare). Jesse is an Associate Teaching Professor and the Undergraduate Coordinator for the Department of Theatre at Northeastern University.

**DANIELLE IBRAHIM (Properties Design)** is a graduate of Boston University's College of Fine Arts in Technical Production. Danielle has worked as a props artisan, scenic painter, and technical director for numerous Boston University productions and has a passion for creating out of secondhand materials. They are currently working as the Technical Director/Theatre Manager for Natick Public Schools, as an educator at Pierce School in Brookline, and as a freelance prop and scenic artisan. Thanks to Phil Schroeder, Mitchell, Charles, and Gene.

**SANDRA ZIHAN JIA (Costume Design)** (she/her/hers) is a second-year MFA Theatre Design candidate (MFA'23) in Costume Design at Boston University. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine, with a degree in Drama as an honors student. Favorite experiences include being the costume designer for UCI Shakespeare Festival's *The Comedy of Errors*; director of the thesis play *Silent Sky*; and Boston Playwrights' Theatre's *Gone Nowhere*. She has also worked as a freelancer for Asian film and media projects in university productions. For more information, please visit [sandrazh.com](http://sandrazh.com).

**THOMAS MCLAUGHLIN (Hornz)** is an actor and current student at the Boston University College of Fine Arts School of Theatre. He took a break from school and theatre during the pandemic, but is very happy to be back this year doing what he loves. Thomas is thrilled to be working alongside a very talented cast and crew. His previous credits at BU include Ray Gosling in *Photograph 51* and ensemble in *Anyone Can Whistle*.

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**J.C. PANKRATZ (Production Assistant/COVID Safety Manager)** (they/them) is a queer, non-binary, transgender playwright and educator writing genre-defying work about gender, class, trauma, and magic. Their plays include *Redeemer Mine* (finalist, O'Neill Playwrights Conference), *Joyless Eye* (semi-finalist, O'Neill Playwrights Conference; Jean Kennedy Smith Award runner-up), and *Honest to God* (production, Gadfly Theatre Company). They are currently an MFA candidate at Boston University and have interned at New Dramatists and Clubbed Thumb.

**ALLY SASS (Playwright)** (she/her) is a recent graduate of the MFA Playwriting program at Boston University. Plays include *Zygote* (Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference semi-finalist), *Incels and Other Myths* (Boston Playwrights' Theatre), *Modern Beauty* (NNPN MFA Playwrights' Workshop finalist), *Late Night at the Serpent* (John Cauble Short Play Award Finalist, New York International Fringe Festival), and *The Cleanout* (John Cauble Short Play Award finalist). She originally hails from Cambridge, MA, and is currently based in New York City. She is a member of AEA, the Playwrights' Center, and the Dramatists Guild. She enjoys dragonfruit and friendly pitbulls. [allysass.com](http://allysass.com)

**KATHERINE SCHABER (The Oracle/Ariel)** is a Boston-based actor and model. She is currently pursuing a BFA in Acting from the School of Theatre at Boston University. Favorite theatrical experiences include *INMOTION Theatre: The Poets* (Boston University), *Othello* (Actors' Shakespeare Project), and *The Punk Dyke Play* (Boston University). Recent film credits: *Johnny & Clyde* (post-production), *Bulletproof Bandit* (post-production), and *About Fate* (post-production). She gives many thanks to Erica, Ally, and the entire cast and crew of *Incels and Other Myths* for a fulfilling rehearsal process and experience.

**MATTHEW SWAIN (Assistant Director/Hornz)** is a student at Boston University studying Theater Arts. He was a part of a development team for *Incels and Other Myths* in early 2021, and he has loved this show since. Through Boston University Matthew has found a passion for directing and in class has worked on shows like *Bachelorette* by Leslye Headland, *Gruesome Playground Injuries* by Rajiv Joseph, *Farragut North* by Beau Willimon, and *At Liberty* by Tennessee Williams. Matthew most recently completed an internship on new works in the U.K. and he looks forward to continuing his learning at The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in the spring.

**ERICA TERPENING-ROMEO (Director)** is a director, actor, teacher, and writer in Western Massachusetts, where she runs Hilltown Theatre Anonymous. She is the co-founder of the Shakespeare company Anon It Moves and former Literary Manager of Portland Actors Ensemble, both in Portland, Oregon; the former Managing Director of The Strain Theatre in Manhattan, New York; and co-founder of Singing House Productions in Lafayette, Colorado. Erica received her MFA in directing from Boston University. She has contributed to the anthologies *How and Why We Teach Shakespeare*, *Why the Theatre*, and *Playing with Reality*, all published by Routledge Press.



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**JULIEN TORNELLI (Frankie)** is a junior Theatre Arts major with a minor in Film and Television hailing from Brooklyn, NY. As an actor and singer at the Professional Performing Arts School in Manhattan, Julien performed several times on Broadway stages through the Shubert HS Festival, and during his time in the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, was able to perform in notable music halls around the country. Next semester, he will participate in BU's Los Angeles abroad program for Film & Television. He can also be seen in Peter Hedges' feature film *Ben Is Back*. Julien previously participated in BPT's production of *LORENA: a Tabloid Epic* earlier this fall and is honored to continue this partnership in *Incls*.

**SARA VARGAS (Sound Design)** is excited to work with Boston Playwrights' Theatre for the first time. She is looking forward to graduating from Boston University this spring with a BFA in Theatre Design and Production. Her passion for theatre has enabled her to work on productions like *The POETS* (Booth Theatre) and *Jamal The Black Boy Werewolf* (Zoom) most recently. In her free time, Sara likes to hang out with her cats and work on crafts. Sara thanks family and friends for all their love and support and hopes you enjoy today's show.

**STEVEN VELASQUEZ (Scenic Design)** is excited to be making his Boston Playwrights' Theatre debut as a set designer. Steven is in his second year as an MFA candidate in scene design at Boston University. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Five Towns College with a BFA in theatrical design. He won the Don Childs Award for Cross Discipline Collaboration and the Marvin Simms Award for Scene Design. Recent credits include *Buyer and Cellar* (Tavern at FBP), *Altar Boyz* (Forestburgh Playhouse), *And the World Goes Round* (Forestburgh Playhouse), *Assistance* (Boston University), *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* (Forestburgh Playhouse), *Constellations* (Boston University), *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley* (Argyle Theatre), and *For Colored Girls...* (Five Towns PAC). Upcoming credits include *Wig Out* (Boston University), *Punk Rock Girl* (Argyle Theatre). Steven is excited to be here and is thankful for the support of his family through this endeavor!

**RYAN WINKLES (Fight Choreography)** is an actor/teacher/choreographer currently based in Western Massachusetts. As a fight choreographer he has worked with companies that include BU Theatre, BU Opera, Barrington Stage, Hampshire Shakespeare, NY City Center Encores!, Weston Playhouse, and Shakespeare & Company. Ryan is a long-time company member of Shakespeare & Company where he was most recently seen on stage as Cornwall in *King Lear*. He also has a great love for circus arts and occasionally can be found teaching flying trapeze.



\*Actors' Equity Association (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 49,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States.



# ***Rx Machina***

by CAITY-SHEA VIOLETTE

directed by BLAIR CADDEN

February 17-27 | Tickets: [BostonPlaywrights.org](http://BostonPlaywrights.org)

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

Phil Schroeder, Thomas McLaughlin, Matthew Swain

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#IncelsBPT #BUarts #newplay

## **LISTEN TO TYPECAST**

Episode 3 of **Typecast: Boston's New Play Podcast**—about the process of bringing a new play into the world—features *Incels and Other Myths* playwright Ally Sass. Listen: <https://www.bu.edu/bpt/community/typecast/>

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

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Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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 **Boston PLAYWRIGHTS' Theatre**

Boston Playwrights' Theatre is an award-winning professional theatre at Boston University dedicated to new works. Founded in 1981 by Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott, the heart of BPT's mission is the production of new plays by students and alumni of BU's MFA Playwriting Program—a collaboration with BU's renowned School of Theatre. The program's award-winning alumni have been produced in regional and New York houses, as well as in London's West End. BPT's productions have been honored with numerous regional and Boston awards, including awards from the Independent Reviewers of New England (IRNE) and Boston Critics' Association (Elliot Norton Awards).

From class workshops to our Season of New Plays, BPT employs the best of New England's professional actors, directors, and designers to bring each playwright's vision to its first audiences.

Each spring we produce New Noises: Massachusetts Young Playwrights' Project. Area high schools work with professional playwrights, directors, and actors to see student works on stage for the first time.

Fifty local theatre companies join us annually for the Boston Theater Marathon, a showcase of new ten-minute plays by New England playwrights chosen each year from hundreds of entrants. Each play is produced by a different New England theatre company in a single ten-hour event with all proceeds going to charity.

When we are not producing plays, we continue our mission through the New Play Odyssey Program, which makes theatre space available to other New England theatre companies and playwrights for readings and festivals of new plays.

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