
Playwright's Note

I started writing this play two years ago during a playwriting course where the assignment was to choose a historical figure and revamp their narrative. Considering my warped imagination and neglect for almost all structural rules, I selected Kaa from *The Jungle Book*. I had been wooed by the character's manipulation and ability to convince and entrap, using trust as a means of seduction. The predator was so likable and charming, a familiar figure sucking in not only its prey, but its viewers as well. After all, there is something so sexy about a snake.

What began as a ten-minute classroom exercise soon blossomed into a full-length play within the course of a couple of months. In that time it has endured the vast annihilations and renovations of over five workshops and staged readings. Most of the student body here, those past graduated, and professors alike have been a part of this piece's life in some way, their voices integrated into the story's language and landscape.

I'm exploring vulnerability in this play. What it means to fully love another person. How much you give. How much you take. What the risk-factor is. If it's worth it. If it's strength. If it's weakness. How it weighs on us. Fills us up. Empties us out. We've become accustomed to the love/hurts mentality to the point where we have accepted that in order to let love in, we must let the pain in with it. And oh how we fling open the door time and time again.

We must be careful with who we give our pain to. This play has taught me that we need to be very careful about what we do with that pain, where we put it down, how we process it, how we wear it on ourselves. Our pain is very precious to us. It has our claw marks on it. We don't want to give it up, it's what we know best. As Ann says, "you're afraid to not hurt". But, we must be very careful. Pain translates to more pain. It inspires a cycle, very much like the one we're living in today. The similarities we see between this haunting world onstage and our own are dangerous. We are all a part of this Jungle that chooses to turn away from the disturbing and the disturbed, that sits back and watches, that allows, that permits, that deflects. I am very concerned with how embedded sexual violence is in our systems of operation. It deeply disturbs me how such inhumanity has become so familiar to us. Unfortunately, this story isn't new, it is a reflection of what we are and what we are seeing today.

- emma joy hill