

Lafayette College Department of Theater
– presents –

THE BOOK CLUB

PLAY

by Karen Zacarías

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

Special thanks to the R. K. Laros Foundation
for their support of a visiting artist affiliated with this production.

Feb. 29 - Mar. 2 @ 7:30 PM
Mar. 3 @ 2:00 PM

219 N. Third Street
WEISS THEATER
at BUCK HALL

Directed by Mary Jo Lodge

The Book Club Play received its world premiere at Round House Theatre, Blake Robison, artistic director, January-February 2008. It was subsequently presented at Berkshire Theatre Festival, Stockbridge, Mass., Kate Maguire, artistic director, July 13-20, 2008, and at Arena Stage, Washington, D.C., *The Book Club Play* received its world premiere at Round House Theatre, Blake Robison, artistic director, January-February 2008. It was subsequently presented at Berkshire Theatre Festival, Stockbridge, Mass., Kate Maguire, artistic director, July 13-20, 2008, and at Arena Stage, Washington, D.C.,

Development of *The Book Club Play* was supported by the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center during a residence at the National Playwrights Conference of 2007 and at the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, Dr. Polly Carl, producing artistic director.



The Book Club Play

By Karen Zacarías

Mary Jo Lodge

Director

Katrina Miller

Scenic & Prop Designer

Erin Hopwood

Costume Designer, Hair & Makeup Design

Kia Rogers

Lighting Designer

Alexander Owens

Projection Designer

Jacqueline Holloway

Intimacy and Violence Coordinator

Liu

Assistant Director

Maddie Perry* & Lily Groff

Theater and Engineering Fellows

CAST

Ana Smith

Carly Johnson*

Alex

Teo Rodriguez

Lily Louise Jackson

Ronnie Ward

Ana understudy

Benry Juno James

Robert Novum Smith Jr.

Xander Walther

Jen understudy

Nihan Cedimagar

Jennifer McClintock

Michala Dennis*

Lily understudy

Simara Reynoso

William Lee Nothnagel

Tiago Brousset

Men's understudy

Lucas Phillips

The Pundits

Elsa (literary agent)

Nihan Cedimagar

Carl (inmate)

Ian Horch

Frank (Secret Service agent)

Lucas Phillips

Mrs. Simpson (librarian)

Benry Juno James

Sam (Walmart employee)

Simara Reynoso

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director and Production Manager

Alexander Owens

Stage Manager

Sebastiano Rivero*

Assistant Stage Manager

Kate Stadler

Costume, Hair & Make Up Lead

Laura Coffey

Costume/Hair & Makeup Crew

Regan Thomspson, Miles Asher

Dorai-Raj, Lily Groff, Emma Li,

Juliet Minadeo

Prop Crew

Kelsie Bouyer, Kylee Brotz, Sophia Gal,

Bryan Kibet

Light Board Operator

Melissa Burstein

Sound Board Operator

Sebastiano Rivero*

Sound and Projection

Liu, Mary Jo Lodge, Calum McConnell,

Alex Owens, Sebastiano Rivero* &

Kate Stadler

SHOP CREW

Ani Brutus, Laura Coffey, Owen Eltz, Sophia Gal, Lily Groff, Aven Lancaster, Lavender Layre, Calum McConnell, Seamus Mcgee, Zoe Ohl, Maddie Perry*, Sebastiano Rivero*, Kate Stadler, Tony Wanta

* denotes a member of Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society

There is no eating or drinking in the theater. Please turn off all electronic devices.

The Book Club Play will play with one 15 minute intermission.

The run time, with intermission, is approximately two hours.

As the Head of the Theater Department, I am delighted to welcome you to next production of the 2023-2024 Lafayette Theater Department Season, "Remagining the Classics", *The Book Club Play* by Karen Zacarías. We'll close out our season with our first ever Senior Capstone production in late April. We will have a season announcement soon for our productions for the 2024-2025 soon.

- Professor Mary Jo Lodge

Special Thanks:

Ben Jahre | Chris Phillips | Aaron Stone | Joanne Nadovich
Tracey & Caroline Brent-Chessum | Charlie & Joey Brent-Chessum
Lisa Marie Fulton | Muhlenberg College

DIRECTORS NOTE

Shortly after I first started teaching at Lafayette College, some new friends who also taught in the English Department (the Theater Program at that time was part of the English Department) suggested that we start a Book Club. I had heard of Book Clubs, of course, but had never been part of one. Oprah Winfrey had launched her Book Club on her show back in 1996, but my own Book Club didn't form until 2006/2007. I was part of the group for many years, running it most of the time, and I encountered many novels I now dearly love with my group of campus colleagues turned friends. While circumstances have changed and kids, and then the pandemic, shifted my ability to keep up with the books or the meetings, my Book Club holds a special place in my heart.

The Book Club Play is the latest in a long string of plays and musicals I've been able to do at Lafayette which allow me to showcase my deep love of reading and books. I've directed *Little Women*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Into the Woods*, among others, all which brought to life on stage some of the best stories ever told. *The Book Club Play* is about books, too, but it is also

about the people who love books, and it is truly a love letter to those who often find themselves lost in a good book. I have thoroughly enjoyed working on this hilarious play with the students - we even created our own Book Club and tried to tackle *The Age of Innocence* as a group, though, in a moment where real life mirrored the play, many of us just didn't find time to read it!

Book Clubs have been around for far longer than you might think. A blog on "The Radical History of Book Clubs" notes that in 1634, in what might have been the first book club, "Anne Hutchinson, who was aboard a ship on its way to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, organized a women's group with the goal of examining and discussing the weekly sermons."* Perhaps playwright Karen Zacarías, the Mexican-American playwright whose popularity has exploded in the last few years with hits like *The Book Club Play* and *Native Gardens*, was paying homage to Anne Hutchison with the character of Ana Smith, the type A organizer of the play's Book Club (a woman with whom I find I have, perhaps, too much in common).

The Book Club Play has been a joy to work on, and has allowed me to work

with wonderful collaborators, old and new. Katrina Miller joins us as set designer for the first time, after working previously with Lafayette on a number of productions in other capacities, and has created a beautiful home for Ana and Rob, and for the play. Erin Hopwood has returned to create the show's vibrant costumes, and Lafayette regular Kia Rogers has illuminated the complicated world of the play. As always, Technical Director Alex Owens has guided his students through crafting the set (and has created the projections and sound designs), is supervising the return of our Theater and Engineering Fellows, advanced students Maddie Perry and Lily Groff, who were charged with creating the centerpiece of the set: the gorgeous

rolling library ladder. This is a surprisingly complex show, and Stage Manager Sebastiano Rivero, supported by Assistant Stage Manager Kate Stadler, has risen to the unique challenge of managing the very extensive collection of props featured in the show, while Assistant Director Liu has ably stepped in to help with any challenge that arose in rehearsal.

I hope you enjoy *The Book Club Play*. I also hope you too can find the joy and pleasure of losing yourself in a good book. Books truly can change your life.

"Some books just turn you upside down...and suddenly you can see the world right side up."

-Mary Jo Lodge

*The Editing Company. "The Radical History of Book Clubs: Connecting Us Through Literature." theeditingco.com. Feb. 23, 2024.

THE COMPANY

Kelsie Bouyer '26 (Props) Kelsie (she/her) is a sophomore Biology major and Theater minor at Lafayette. This is her second production with the Theater Department, and her first time working backstage! She wants to thank the cast and crew for their amazing work on this show. Her favorite book is either *The Hazel Wood* by Melissa Albert or *Scythe* by Neal Shusterman.

Kylee Brotz '27 (Props) Kylee (she/her) is a first year student from New Jersey who is planning to major in Mechanical Engineering.

Tiago Brousset '27 (Will) Tiago (he/him) is a freshman at Lafayette considering majoring in Theater. This is his second production at Lafayette, after previously appearing in *Miracle on 34th Street*. His favorite book is "a comic book or something."

Melissa Burstein '27 (Lighting Board) Melissa (she/her) is a freshman Electrical and Computer Engineering major. This is her first production at Lafayette. She doesn't have a favorite but enjoys reading Sci-Fi books.

Nihan Cedimağar '27 (Elsa/Jen Understudy) Nihan (she/they) is a freshman Theater and Physics double major at Lafayette. This is her 3rd production with Lafayette. She previously worked on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a light board op and on *Miracle on 34th Street* as an actor. Her favorite books are *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison and *Kafka on the Shore* by Haruki Murakami.

Laura Coffey '26 (CHMU Lead) Laura Coffey (she/her) is a second-year student pursuing a degree in Film and Media Studies. She loves being involved with the Theater Department. Outside of her theatrical endeavors, she devotes her time to mindlessly spinning upside down and to her adorable pet rabbit. She can't possibly choose a favorite author or book, but she's currently reading *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* by Toshikazu Kawaguchi.

Michala Dennis '24* (Jen) Michala (she/her) is a senior Electrical and Computer Engineering major with a Music minor at Lafayette. This is her fourth production with the Theater Department, but her first on the Buck Hall stage! Michala would like to thank Professor Lodge, the cast, and the crew of *The Book Club Play* for making her last production so wonderful! Her favorite book is *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo.

Miles Asher Dorai-Raj '25 (Costumes) Miles (he/him) is a junior A&S and Religious Studies double major. He did props for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and hopes to get a couple more shows under his belt before graduation. His favorite book is either *Quiverfull* by Katherine

Joyce, or *The Death of Jane Lawrence* by Caitlin Starling.

Sophia Gal '27 (Props) Sophia (she/her) is a first year student who plans to major in Biology. Sophia is a freshman Biology major. This is her first production with the Theater Department. Her favorite book is *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green, and yes she watched the movie first.

Lily Groff '25 (Costumes/Engineering Fellow) Lily (she/her/any) is a junior Theater major, ME minor. She has worked on several shows for both the Theater Department and for the Marquis Players, and has enjoyed working behind the scenes in so many aspects of this show. (Hey guys, look, I'm in *The Book Club Play!*) Lily's favorite book is always changing, but at the time of this writing, it is *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. Thanks, Maddie for being a great fellow T&E Fellow!

Erin Hopwood (Costume Designer) Erin (she/her) is a graduate of Kutztown University's Theater Department and has had the opportunity to work at several of the area's high schools, colleges and universities. Erin started designing at Lafayette in 2011 on the musical *Rent*, and she has costumed and/or designed make-up and hair for many department productions including *The Penelopiad*, *The Grinch*, *Metamorphoses* and this season's productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Miracle on 34th Street*. Her favorite book is *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.

Ian Horch '27 (Carl) Ian (he/him) is some flavor of engineer and is taking on his third play at Lafayette. His favorite book is a 4 way tie between *Dracula* (Stoker), *1984* (Orwell), *Speaker for the Dead* (Card), and *Pirate Pete's Talk Like a Pirate* (Kennedy).

Benry James '25 (Mrs. Simpson/Ana Understudy) Benry is a junior English and Geology double major who has worked with several other productions at Lafayette College, most recently *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Miracle on 34th Street*. Benry does not have a favorite book on account of being illiterate.

Carly Johnson '24* (Ana) Carly (she/her) is a senior History and English double major born and raised in London, England. This is Carly's third production with the Theater Department, but (hopefully) not yet her last! Carly is extremely grateful for the opportunity and support from Professor Mary Jo Lodge throughout the production. Her favorite book is Jane Austen's *Emma*.

Bryan Kibet '27 (Props) Bryan (he/him) is a Freshman Economics major and Theater double major at Lafayette College. This is his first show with the Theater Department. He is usually on stage, but wanted to

give crew a shot. His favorite book is either *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds or *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden.

Emma Li '27 (Costumes) Emma (she/her) is a first year Theater and International Affairs double major. Earlier this season, she performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *A Miracle on 34th Street*. Her favorite book is *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.

Liu '25 (Assistant Director) "Love loves to love love", but Liu (they/ them) loves nothing more than a good story. It's no surprise Liu is a FAMS and English double major. From merrily wandering the night in *Midsummer Night's Dream* to Cozying up in the dark in *Black Comedy* and believing things when common sense tells you not to in *Miracle on 34th Street*, Liu is no stranger to the theater. Liu is beyond excited to be taking this bold step into the world of stage direction and is incredibly grateful for the amazing people that have guided them through the process. Their favorite book is *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin.

Mary Jo Lodge (Director) Professor Lodge (she/her) is Professor of Theater and Head of the Theater Department at Lafayette, and is a theater performer, director, choreographer and scholar. She has published numerous articles and book chapters on the musical, and has directed and choreographed a wide range of professional, college and summer stock productions. At Lafayette, those include *The Secret Garden*, *She Kills Monsters*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Wolves and Head Over Heels*. Her edited collection *Dueling Grounds: Revolution and Revelation in the Musical "Hamilton,"* was published by Oxford University Press in May of 2021 and her most recent book, *Milestones in Musical Theater*, was published by Routledge in June 2023. Her favorite book is *Persuasion* by Jane Austen.

Katrina Miller (Scenic Designer) Katrina (she/her) holds an MFA in Scenic Design from Purdue University and a BFA in Theatre Design and Production from Northern Illinois University. Previously her work has been seen at Boston Children's Theatre, Music Theatre Wichita, Orlando Shakespeare Theatre, Texas Shakespeare Festival, Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, Lehigh University, Muhlenberg College, and NBC's production of *Peter Pan Live*. Katrina is an avid reader and couldn't possibly pick a favorite book, but could maybe narrow it down to a top five in a given genre.

Juliet Minadeo '27 (Props) Juliet (she/her) is a freshman majoring in Film and Media Studies. This is her third production with the Theater Department, and she is very excited to be a part of this show. Her

favorite book is *The Adventurous Life of a Cape Cod Dog* by Nancy Scaglione-Peck, and it has been since she was a child.

Alex Owens (Technical Director) In his time at Lafayette, Alexander (he/him) has collaborated on a successful grant for the creation of the Immersive Arts Lab, developed a fellowship for Engineering students interested in theater, constructed a swimming pool onstage for *Metamorphoses*, and oversaw the move into and opening of William C Buck Hall. His favorite book is *Hello, Cat You Need A Hat* by Rita Golden Gelman.

Maddie Perry '24* (Engineering Fellow) Maddie (she/her) is a senior pursuing dual degrees in Mechanical Engineering, and has been a part of many productions in the Theater Department. She'd like to focus on books for this bio, though. She believes picking a favorite book is akin to picking a favorite dog, but her Goodreads says that her most recent 5 starred novel is *Bright Young Women* by Jessica Knoll. She is currently reading *Sure, I'll Join Your Cult* by Maria Bamford. She'd like to thank Lily Groff for her love, friendship, and support.

Lucas Phillips '26 (Frank/Men's Understudy) Lucas (he/him) is a sophomore majoring in Mathematics and minoring in Economics and Theater. This is his third production at Lafayette, and he is incredibly excited and grateful to be a part of it. He would like to thank his family for always supporting him. His favorite book is *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi.

Simara Reynoso '27 (Sam/Lily Understudy) Simara (she/her) is a freshman at Lafayette pursuing a Dual Degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering and International Studies. Simara is very happy to be in a Theater Department production for the first time. Amidst the whirlwind of academics threatening to hijack her sanity, there's nothing like an enchanting tale to transport her to a different world and provide a much-needed escape. With that information, her favorite book is *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer (Team Jacob!).

Sebastiano Rverso '24* (Stage Manager) Sebastiano (he/him) is a senior pursuing a dual-degree in Computer Science and Theater. This is his ninth production with the Theater Department and he is very excited to be able to stage manage this incredible show. He can also be seen this semester as a member of the ensemble for the Marquis Players' *Cabaret* and will be stage managing once again for the Senior Capstone show in April. His favorite book is either *Neverwhere* and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, both by Neil Gaiman.

Téo Rodriguez '24 (Alex) Téo (he/him) is a senior Theater major who is also actively pursuing his music career on campus. He most recently played Kris Kringle in *Miracle on 34th Street* for Lafayette and is performing as part of the year's final production, the Senior Capstone show, in April. He would like to thank his friends and the faculty on campus, as well as his mom, for their consistent love and support of his passions. Listen to his debut album *For Those Who Waited* on all streaming platforms! His favorite book is *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison.

Kia Rogers (Lighting Designer) Kia (she/her) is a New York City based Lighting Designer for Theater and Dance. Her international credits include Lighting Design for *The Baby Monitor*, Rome and Cagliari, Italy 2021, and Belgrade, Serbia for the Belgrade Pride Festival and Associate Lighting Designer for *Slutforart/98.6* in Gothenburg, Sweden with Muna Tseng.

Her West coast designs include El Portal's Monroe Forum Theatre, Los Angeles and Z Space, San Francisco. Her film credits include *Georgia & Me*, *Happy Days*, and the *Hot Angry Mom* web series. Kia is a member of LAByrinth Theater Company and has been a Creative Partner with Flux Theatre Ensemble since 2012. She has designed numerous Lafayette productions. Her favorite book is *Winter's Tale* by Mark Helprin.

Kate Stadter '26 (Assistant Stage Manager) Kate (she/her) is a sophomore studying History, Computer Science, and Theater. This is her fourth production with Lafayette and eleventh overall. She is very excited about the opportunity to help stage manage this show, and is grateful to everyone involved for making the experience so incredible. Kate's favorite book is *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Regan Thompson '27 (Costumes) Regan (she/her) is a freshman and this is her first time helping behind the scenes with a show. She's also very excited to see her friends perform. Regan is not sure what her favorite book is but she loves a good coming-of-age self-discovery story or a cheesy romcom.

Xander Walther '27 (Rob) Xander (he/him) is a freshman majoring in psychology with a passion for acting and producing his own music. This is his second production with Lafayette College following his role as Fred in *Miracle on 34th Street* and his third performance on stage. He could not be more thankful for the support and friendship of the amazing cast and crew, and the staff that were involved in the production process. Xander's favorite book is *City of Glass* by Paul

Auster.

Ronnie Ward '25 (Lily) Ronnie (she/her) is a Junior Government & Law and Theater Double Major. This is her 7th show (including crew and Theater for Young Audiences) at Lafayette. She's excited to be on stage again. Her favorite book is *Our Time Is Now* by Stacy Abrams.

Register for these exciting Theater Department Class in Fall 2024

THTR 102	Basic Stagecraft: Technical Theater (H) MW 2:45-4:00pm	Professor Alex Owens
THTR 110	World Theater I: Antiquity through the 19th Century (H, GM2) MWF 10:35-11:25p.m.	Professor Courtney Ryan
THTR 130	Acting I TTH 1:15-2:30	Professor Melissa Livingston
THTR 209	Theater & Environment (H, V, GM2, W) MWF 9:30-10:20a.m.	Professor Courtney Ryan
THTR 223	Introduction to Design (H, V) MW 1:15p.m.-2:30p.m.	Professor Jake Salgado
THTR 280-01	Speaking Power (H, V, W) TTH 2:45p.m.-4:00p.m.	Professor Melissa Livingston
THTR 280-02	Speaking Power (H, V, W) F 1:15p.m.-4:00p.m.	Professor Melissa Livingston
THTR 369	Theater Artists in Focus: Women & Theater TTH 11:00-12:15p.m.	Professor Mary Jo Lodge

Theater Department Faculty - Spring 2024

Mary Jo Lodge, Professor, Department Head

Michael O'Neill, Professor

Jake Salgado, Assistant Professor

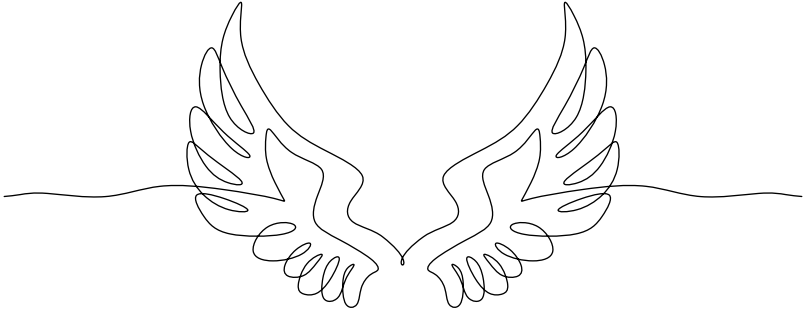
Melissa Livingston, Visiting Assistant Professor

Alex Owens, Technical Director

The department is delighted to welcome Professor Courtney Ryan, who will join the Lafayette College Faculty as a tenure track Assistant Professor of Theater in Fall 2024.

WE BELIEVE IN ANGELS

In the theater, an Angel is a divine person who makes generous donations so theater can happen right here on earth. Support from our Angels has brought in professional designers and choreographers, supported our students competing in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, and sponsored lectures by playwrights.



Theater Angels

Amy P. Ahart
Brandon Dean Armstrong
Jay Ascher
Andrew T. Bostian
Melaina Carey
Allison H. Davis
Thomas A. DiGiovanni
Mrs. Leslie Dreyer
Thomas M. Dunlap
Dr. Kenneth H. & Robin Einhorn
Carolyn A. Fast
Margaret K. Frodell
David S. & Christina R. Fryman
Robert and Mary Anne Fennell
Heino
Brent B. Horowitz
Christopher A. Johnston
Carolyn A. Kerr
Kristin Dahl Knight

Matthew P. Koos
Dr. Richard S. Koplin
Mr. Richard C. Laskey
Dr. Gianna M. Locascio
Keara F. McCarthy
Ms. Brenna Murphy
Kalra Zeynep Deniz Ozbay
Matthew A. Peters
Stephanie M. Petersen
Martin J. Robinett
Matthew J. Roux & Jennifer Heim
Roux
Patrick A. & Carmella S. Stadler
Emily Barnes Taub
Denise Tuck
Prof. Nancy M. Waters
Hannah C Weaver
Dr. C. Beth Wynstra