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Dramatic Publishing

THE WRESTLING SEASON

A Play
by
LAURIE BROOKS



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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For Joanna
Brave and Beautiful
and
For Jeff Church
Who made the play and the playwright stronger

* * * *

Acknowledgments

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The Wrestling Season was developed at The Kennedy Center's 1998 New Visions/New Voices: A Forum for New Works in Progress for Young Audiences, and the New York University Program in Educational Theatre's Summer Reading Series at The Provincetown Playhouse, 1999.

The Wrestling Season was featured at New Visions 2000/One Theatre World, a National Festival of Theatre for Young people and Families at The Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

Laurie Brooks was the recipient of a 1999 Aurand Harris grant to The Coterie for *The Wrestling Season*, awarded by The Children's Theatre Foundation of America.

The Wrestling Season was developed and featured at the 1998 New Visions/New Voices: A Forum for New Plays-in-Progress for Young Audiences, at The John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., May 1998. The production was directed by Jeff Church. It was commissioned by The Coterie Theatre, Kansas City, Missouri.

CAST

Jolt TOM COSTELLO
Willy REGGIE HARRIS
Luke ANDREAS KRAEMER
Matt LAFONTAINE ELITE OLIVER
Melanie BONNIE WAGGONER
Heather JODY FLADER
Nicole RISA GREEN
Kori MEGAN GILBRIDE
Referee MATT SAWYER

PRODUCTION STAFF

DEREK E. GORDON Vice President for Education,
Executive Producer

KIM PETER KOVAC Program Manager,
Youth and Family Programs,
NV/NV Producer

DIEDRE KELLY LAVRAKAS . . Production Operations Manager
NV/NV Casting Director/Production Manager

JOHN "SCOOTER" KRATTENMAKER Stage Manager

In 1999, *The Wrestling Season* was further developed at New York University, School of Education, Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions Program in Educational Theatre and presented at Staged Readings of New Plays for Young Audiences, The Provincetown Playhouse, New York, N.Y. The production was directed by Jeff Church and included the following artists:

CAST

Matt SHANNON GANNON
Luke JOHN JEFFREY MARTIN
Willy GERARD T. SCOTT
Jolt DENNIS WALTERS
Heather LAUREN O'BRIEN
Nicole MARIA ELENA LOPEZ-FRANK
Melanie SIDNEY AUSTIN
Kori AMANDA RAFUSE
Referee JIM GROLLMAN
Stage Directions DANA LEVIN

PRODUCTION STAFF

Producer JEFF KENNEDY
Stage Manager JOHN DEL GAUDIO
Lighting Design JASON LIVINGSTON
Production Supervisor LOWELL SWORTZELL

The Wrestling Season's world premiere was at The Coterie Theatre, Kansas City, Missouri, January 2000. The production was directed by Jeff Church and included the following artists:

CAST

Referee ANTHONY GUEST
Luke JOSHUA F. DECKER
Kori MELANNA D. GRAY
Melanie BETH GUEST
Nicole ALICIA JENKINS-EWING
Matt DAVID MCNAMARA
Jolt JUDSON MORGAN
Heather AMANDA RAFUSE
Willy MATT RAMSEY

PRODUCTION STAFF

Associate Director/Wrestling Coach LEIGH MILLER
Set and Costume Design/Properties ELIZA CAIN
Lighting Design ART KENT
Sound Design DAVID KIEHL
Production Stage Manager BROOKE SCHEPPNER
Scenic Construction DAN ESLINGER

Playwright's Notes:

The action of the play is seamless, moving from one scene to another unencumbered by sets and costume changes. Much will be left to the audience's imagination. The ensemble functions as a chorus when they are not in the playing space, responding to the action onstage as a group, in pairs and individually. All eight young people wear wrestling singlets and wrestling shoes throughout the play.

Movement in the scenes suggests wrestling moves, holds and escapes. When the stage directions read, "Ensemble shifts," they form new physical arrangements to underscore the action.

Wrestling weight classes in the play can be adjusted according to the actors' approximate size and current high school wrestling rules.

The referee is an integral part of the play throughout, moving about the mat as if each scene is a wrestling match.





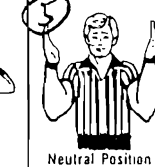














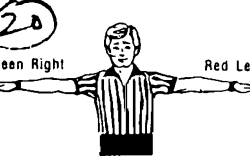

Entrances and exits on and off the mat should be used to further define relationships between the characters.

The action between Matt and Melanie on page 45 is an act of sexual aggression, but it is not rape.



OFFICIAL WRESTLING SIGNALS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE



 <p>1 Stopping the Match</p>	 <p>2 Time Out</p>	 <p>3 Start the Injury Clock</p>	 <p>4 Stop the Injury Clock</p>	 <p>5 Neutral Position</p>
 <p>6 Indicating No Control</p>	 <p>7 Out-of-Bounds</p>	 <p>8 Indicating Wrestler in Control Left or Right Hand</p>	 <p>9 Deter Choice</p>	
 <p>10 Potentially Dangerous Left or Right Hand</p>	 <p>11 Stalemate</p>	 <p>12 Caution for False Start and incorrect Starting Procedure</p>	 <p>13 Stalling Left or Right Hand</p>	
 <p>14 Interlocking Hands or Grasping Clothing</p>	 <p>15 Reversal</p>	 <p>16 Technical Violation</p>	 <p>17 Illegal Hold or Unnecessary Roughness</p>	
 <p>18 Near-Fall</p>	 <p>19 Awarding Points Left or Right Hand</p>	 <p>20 Unsportsmanlike Conduct</p>	 <p>21 Flagrant Misconduct Left or Right Hand</p>	

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THE WRESTLING SEASON

A Play in One Act
For 5 Men and 4 Women

CHARACTERS

MATT 17 years old
KORI 17 years old
MELANIE 17, “Cherry” Garcia
LUKE 17, Matt’s best friend
HEATHER 17, Jolt’s girlfriend
JOLT 17, wrestler
WILLY 17, about the same size as Matt
NICOLE 17, Heather’s friend
REFEREE wears black and white referee uniform,
and carries a whistle

SETTING: A bare stage. Standard-issue wrestling mat at center.

THE WRESTLING SEASON

(Lights. All nine characters are grouped on the mat.

ENSEMBLE FUNCTIONS AS A CHORUS.)

ALL (*except REFEREE*). I will remember always that fair play, moral obligation and ethics are a part of winning and losing, that graciousness and humility should always characterize a winner and that pride and honor do not desert a good loser.

(The ensemble explodes out into the space. They remain present throughout the play, watching and commenting on the action.)

HEATHER. You think you know the way it is.

JOLT. You think you know the score.

NICOLE. You think you're so smart.

KORI. You think you've got me figured out.

WILLY. You think you've got me pegged. Pinned.

MELANIE. You think you know me, but you don't.

LUKE. How can you know me?

MATT. I'm not even sure I know myself.

(REF blows whistle. MATT, LUKE, JOLT and WILLY warm up. REF blows whistle, indicates MATT and

LUKE. They take positions and the practice match begins. The ensemble yells, "Take him down!" "Push him! Push him!" and "Go! Go! Go!" Each wrestler struggles to take the other down. MATT flips LUKE onto his back. REF signals two points. LUKE tries to escape. MATT pins him. REF counts "One, two..." slaps the mat to signal a pin. Buzzer.)

MATT. And now I'd like to thank all the little people who have helped me to attain my goals.

LUKE. Save it for the media.

MATT. I'd like to thank my mom for believing in me, my coach for kicking my butt...

LUKE. I think I'm gonna be sick.

MATT. ...and last but not least, my buddy Luke, inspiration and guiding force.

LUKE. Next time you'll beg for mercy.

MATT. In your dreams.

LUKE. I wrestle slicker than you any day.

MATT. You won't have to worry about outsmarting me this year.

LUKE. I never worry about outsmarting you.

MATT. I mean, I won't be a threat at 171. I talked to Coach this morning. I'm gonna weigh in at 160 this season.

LUKE. You're kiddin'.

MATT. Dead serious.

LUKE. You're gonna be unstoppable at 160.

MATT. Yeah. It was Mom's idea.

LUKE. She wants that scholarship more than you do.

MATT. Nobody wants it more than I do. Here's the plan. Drop weight to 160, train like a madman for that slot,

kick ass in the wrestle-offs, win the divisionals, then the regional championship, then the state finals. One. Two. Three.

LUKE. Easy as that?

MATT. I didn't say it'd be easy.

LUKE. Good, because you gotta pass pre-calc to stay on the team.

MATT. Thanks, Mom.

LUKE. You're gonna need major help to pull up that pre-calc grade.

MATT. You got me through Algebra III, didn't you?

LUKE. Yeah, that was a minor miracle.

MATT. If I can keep my concentration, I'll be home free. Like Coach says...

LUKE. ...don't need to be the best, you just gotta win.

MATT. One match at a time.

LUKE. And pass pre-calc.

MATT. Yeah. I'm counting on you for that.

LUKE. And lose the weight and keep it off.

(MATT wrestles LUKE.)

MATT. Wait a minute. Is this encouragement?

LUKE. This is realism.

MATT. I'll do whatever it takes, okay? I'll do extra workouts. I'll visualize my goals. I'll fast and meditate like those demented monks over in Tibet. I want this.

LUKE. Quarter finals weren't good enough for you, huh?

MATT. I've gotta go all the way this year if I want a scholarship. This is my future we're talking about here.

LUKE. You forgot one minor detail. If you drop down to the 160 slot, you gotta get past Willy in the wrestle-offs. He's good.

MATT. Yeah, but he's not slick. I'll out-maneuver him. I learned to kick your butt, didn't I?

LUKE. Yeah. Only because I taught you all my moves in old man Gebhardt's garage.

MATT. The sacred training ground. Seems like a hundred years ago.

LUKE. Yeah. Remember how we drilled those reversals?

MATT. I remember how scrawny you were.

LUKE. Oh, yeah?

MATT. Yeah.

LUKE. Scrawny? I don't think so.

(LUKE wrestles MATT. Buzzer. Ensemble shifts. REF blows whistle, indicates MATT and LUKE.)

MATT. Come on. We're gonna be late.

LUKE. Late for what?

MATT. I told you about ten times. My mom's expecting you for dinner.

LUKE. Power bars and yogurt? I'm not hungry.

MATT. Will you lighten up? What's going on with you lately?

LUKE. Nothing.

MATT. I'm pretty sure it's not nothing.

LUKE. I've got a paper due on Monday and that lab report's killing me.

MATT. You work too hard, my friend. You need to have some fun. *(LUKE sobs silently.)* Hey. Come on, man. Come on. It can't be that bad.

LUKE. How would you know how bad it is.

MATT. 'Cause I'm the best friend you got in the world?

LUKE. You don't have a clue, okay?

MATT. So enlighten me.

LUKE. You wouldn't understand.

MATT. If you're trying to insult me, you've succeeded.

LUKE. I'm not trying to insult you.

MATT. What, then? Did I do something?

LUKE. It's not you. It's me. Just forget it. Let's go.

MATT. No. I'm not going to forget it. Whatever this is, it's really got to you. Tell me.

LUKE. You know how you got this plan? You can see your whole year in front of you.

MATT. Yeah...

LUKE. You got your whole future figured out.

MATT. Yeah...

LUKE. Well, I don't have anything figured out. I don't have a plan.

MATT. You don't need a plan. You're ten times smarter than I am. You can have your pick of schools next year and scholarships, too. You're ugly, but looks aren't everything. You've got it all, man.

LUKE. You don't know.

MATT. I know everything there is to know about you and some things you don't even know about yourself.

(REF blows whistle, indicates LUKE in spotlight.)

LUKE. You think you know me, but you don't.

(REF blows whistle twice to resume scene. Ensemble shifts.)

MATT. I know. It's some girl, right?

LUKE. No.

MATT. Is it the team? Are you worried about the wrestle-offs?

LUKE. No. Jolt'll probably kick my butt.

MATT. Maybe not. We'll train together. In Gebhardt's garage, like the old days.

LUKE. It doesn't matter. Nothing really matters now.

MATT. Hey. Don't say that. It'll be all right. (*Reaches out to LUKE. LUKE grabs MATT, hugs him.*) It's okay. Whatever it is, it'll be all right.

(*Buzzer. REF blows whistle, indicates JOLT and WILLY.*)

JOLT. They're mighty friendly.

WILLY. Too friendly, if you ask me.

JOLT. I didn't ask you.

WILLY. Too bad. Guess you don't want to hear the news about Mr. Can't Do Wrong and his sidekick.

JOLT. What news?

WILLY. I don't think I heard you ask me.

JOLT. I heard he's after your wrestling slot, if that's what you mean. Coach said he's dropping weight to the 160 slot. Trouble for you.

WILLY. I can take him.

JOLT. Yeah, you and who else? He's tough. And look how he's muscled up since last year.

WILLY. Do I look worried?

JOLT. You should be.

WILLY. He's nothin' but an ass-kisser.

JOLT. Yeah, he's on Coach's A-list, all right.

WILLY. If Coach only knew.

JOLT. Knew what?

WILLY. Was that a question?

JOLT. All right. What about Mr. Can't Do Wrong and his sidekick?

WILLY. I know the truth about those perverts.

JOLT. What truth?

WILLY. They're too sweet for their own good, if you know what I mean. They got it bad for each other.

JOLT. Yeah?

WILLY. It's so obvious.

JOLT. Yeah. How can you tell?

WILLY. Can't you?

JOLT. Sure I can. I can always tell. But do you have any proof?

WILLY. Yeah. I do.

JOLT. You've got proof?

WILLY. Yeah.

JOLT. Right. You're so full of it.

WILLY. I saw them. In the locker room. They were all over each other.

JOLT. What were they doing?

WILLY. What do you think? (*REF blows whistle, signals #20, says, "Unsportsmanlike Conduct."*) It was disgusting.

(REF indicates HEATHER and NICOLE, who join WILLY and JOLT on the mat.)

HEATHER. What was disgusting?

WILLY. You don't wanna know.

NICOLE. I do.

HEATHER. I do, too.

JOLT. I'll tell you later tonight when we're alone.

HEATHER. My parents'll be home tonight.

JOLT. Then I'll meet you at the library.

HEATHER. Eight o'clock. Reference.

JOLT. I got somethin' you can refer to.

NICOLE. Would somebody please tell me what was disgusting?

WILLY. Come here. I'll show you.

NICOLE. Uh-uh. I don't wanna know that bad.

WILLY. Come on. Just a little closer.

NICOLE. Tell me from a distance, okay?

WILLY. That takes all the fun out of it.

NICOLE. For you, maybe.

(JOLT and HEATHER whisper together.)

WILLY. You're hurting my feelings.

NICOLE. You'll get over it.

HEATHER *(to JOLT)*. You're kidding!

JOLT. Do I look like I'm kidding?

HEATHER. I never would have thought that. Never!

JOLT. It's true. Willy's got proof.

HEATHER. Oh, my God.

JOLT. Willy saw them together.

NICOLE. Saw who?

HEATHER. You mean together together?

WILLY. Yeah. Well... sort of.

HEATHER. Well, either you saw them or you didn't.

JOLT. I told you. He saw them. In the locker room.

HEATHER. Oh, my God!

NICOLE. Saw who?

HEATHER. Well, it makes perfect sense if you think of it.

They're always together.

NICOLE. If you don't tell me this instant who you're talking about, I'm going to scream.

HEATHER. Matt and Luke, of course.

NICOLE. Matt and Luke?

HEATHER. That's why Matt doesn't have a girl.

WILLY. Who'd have him?

NICOLE. I would. But he's not interested in me.

HEATHER. That's what I mean. That's the point.

NICOLE. He's always hanging out with Luke.

HEATHER. And Kori. Why else would he hang out with those two?

NICOLE. What do you mean?

HEATHER. Well, Kori's not exactly Miss America. All that chopped-off hair and those weird hanging things she calls jewelry.

NICOLE. Yeah, she's scary.

HEATHER. She must shop at the junkyard.

NICOLE. And you know her and food.

HEATHER. Have you ever seen her at a dessert table?

(REF blows whistle, indicates KORI in spotlight.)

KORI. You think you know me, but you don't.

(REF blows whistle twice to resume action. Ensemble shifts.)

NICOLE. So what about Matt and Luke?

HEATHER. God, Nicki, do we have to draw you a picture?

WILLY. Those guys give me the creeps.