SOFTWARE & TECH

Stop Kiss Play Script

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Exploring the Depths of the Stop Kiss Play Script: A Comprehensive Guide

Few contemporary plays have resonated as powerfully as Diana Son's **Stop Kiss**. Since its debut in 1998, this poignant two-character drama has captivated audiences and readers alike with its raw emotional honesty and unflinching look at love, identity, and violence. Whether you are a theater director searching for your next production, a student analyzing the **Stop Kiss play script** for a literature class, or simply a curious reader wanting to understand what makes this piece so enduring, this comprehensive guide will walk you through every aspect of the work. From plot summary and character analysis to thematic depth and practical performance tips, we'll explore why the **Stop Kiss play script**remains a cornerstone of modern American theatre.

Written by Diana Son and first staged at the Public Theater in New York City, **Stop Kiss** tells the story of two women, Callie and Sara, whose tentative romance is shattered by a brutal hate crime. What makes the **Stop Kiss play script**so unique is its non-linear narrative. The play begins with the aftermath of the attack and then weaves backward and forward through time, revealing the tender, awkward moments that led up to the violence and the painful recovery that follows. This structure forces the audience to see the characters not as victims but as fully realized individuals whose ordinary lives are interrupted by extraordinary cruelty. In this article, we will dissect the script's structure, explore its major themes, and provide insights for anyone looking to produce or study the play.

What Is the Stop Kiss Play Script About?

At its heart, the **Stop Kiss play script**is a love story, but it is also a story about the casual, everyday homophobia that can escalate into violence. The plot centers on Callie, a New York City traffic reporter, and Sara, a recent transplant from St. Louis who works as a teacher. They meet through a mutual friend and gradually develop a deep emotional connection. The play traces their evolving relationship through a series of scenes that jump in time. Key moments include their first awkward conversations, the tentative steps toward physical intimacy, and the fateful night when they share their first kiss in a public park—an act that triggers a vicious assault by a passerby.

The **Stop Kiss play script**does not show the attack directly. Instead, it shows the before and after. The first scene of the play is set in a hospital room, where Sara lies unconscious after the beating. Callie, bruised and shaken, speaks with a detective. From there, the play alternates between scenes of their early, hopeful interactions and scenes of the aftermath, including Callie's guilt, Sara's recovery, and the legal proceedings. This fragmented timeline serves a crucial purpose: it emphasizes that the love between Callie and Sara is as real and ordinary as any other relationship, while also highlighting how quickly that ordinary life can be shattered.

Key Characters in the Stop Kiss Play Script

The **Stop Kiss play script** is a two-character play, though there are also several minor roles that are often played by a single additional actor. Understanding the two leads is essential for any production or analysis.

- Callie: A somewhat guarded, sarcastic woman in her late twenties. She works as a traffic reporter, a job she finds mundane. Callie is initially hesitant to explore her feelings for Sara, partly because she has not fully acknowledged her own sexuality. Her arc in the Stop Kiss play script involves moving from emotional isolation to a willingness to love and be loved, even after trauma.
- Sara: Open, warm, and more self-assured than Callie. Sara has moved to New York to start a new life after a breakup with a boyfriend. She is the one who initiates their emotional and physical connection. In the Stop Kiss play script, Sara represents vulnerability and strength. After the attack, she must rebuild her sense of self and her relationship with Callie.
- Minor characters: A detective, Peter (Sara's ex-boyfriend), and Mrs. Winsley (Sara's neighbor) are usually played by one or two additional actors. They provide context and contrast, showing how the outside world reacts to the relationship and the attack.

Why the Stop Kiss Play Script Matters: Themes and Significance

The **Stop Kiss play script** is widely studied and performed because it tackles several important themes with nuance and without preachiness. These themes include:

1. The ordinariness of love: Diana Son deliberately shows Callie and Sara's relationship as mundane and realistic. They talk about traffic, decide what to eat for lunch, and watch TV. This ordinariness is a political statement: the play argues that same-sex love is not exotic or threatening—it is just like any other love story.
2. Hate crime and its aftermath: The play does not sensationalize the violence. By showing the attack only through its consequences, the Stop Kiss play script forces the audience to focus on the emotional and physical scars. It also raises questions about justice, trauma, and resilience.
3. Identity and coming out: Both Callie and Sara struggle with their identities. Callie has never been in a relationship with a woman before, and Sara has recently ended a heterosexual relationship. The play explores the fear and courage involved in acknowledging who you are.
4. Friendship and intimacy: The blurred line between friendship and romance is a central theme. The title "Stop Kiss" refers to the moment when their friendship turns into something more—and the tragic consequences of that kiss.
5. Women's voices: The play is written by a woman and centers on women's experiences. It avoids male-gaze tropes and presents a genuine, interior view of female relationships.

For these reasons, the **Stop Kiss play script** is frequently included in university curricula, and it remains a favorite for community theatre and independent productions. Its compact cast and simple set make it accessible, while its emotional depth challenges actors and audiences alike.

Analyzing the Structure of the Stop Kiss Play Script

One of the most striking features of the **Stop Kiss play script** is its non-chronological structure. The play consists of multiple short scenes, each clearly labeled with a time and place (e.g., "A Park, 2 Weeks Earlier"). This technique creates a mosaic effect. The audience pieces together the story as the scenes shift between the initial meeting, the growing intimacy, the attack, and the recovery.

When reading the **Stop Kiss play script**, it is helpful to pay attention to the following structural elements:

- Juxtaposition: Scenes of happiness are placed next to scenes of pain. For example, a sweet conversation where Sara and Callie discuss the perfect kiss might be followed by a hospital scene where Callie cannot speak without crying. This contrast heightens the emotional impact.
- Repetition of motifs: The idea of "stopping" appears throughout—stopping a kiss, stopping a car, stopping a conversation. The traffic reporting job also provides a metaphor for the flow of life and the sudden halts that

violence causes.

- Unspoken moments: Diana Son writes long silences and pauses into the script. These pauses allow the actors to communicate deep emotions without words. For any director or performer working with the Stop Kiss play script, handling these silences is crucial.

How to Obtain the Stop Kiss Play Script and Performance Rights

If you are interested in reading the **Stop Kiss play script** for study or performance, it is widely available. The script was published by Dramatists Play Service, Inc., and it can be purchased in print or digital format from online booksellers and theatre script retailers. Libraries often carry copies as well.

For those who want to produce the play, you must obtain performance rights. The **Stop Kiss play script** is under copyright, and amateur or professional productions require a license from Dramatists Play Service or another authorized agency. The licensing process typically involves paying a royalty fee based on the number of performances and the size of the venue. It is also important to order the required number of scripts for the cast and crew. Be sure to check the official play publisher's website for the most current information on rights and fees.

Directing and Performing the Stop Kiss Play Script

Bringing the **Stop Kiss play script** to life on stage is a rewarding challenge. The play demands a great deal from its two leads. Here are some tips for directors and actors:

- Chemistry is everything: The relationship between Callie and Sara must feel authentic. Cast actors who can show vulnerability and trust. The love and friendship between them must be palpable even in the early, awkward scenes.
- Embrace the non-linear structure: When rehearsing, you may want to work on scenes chronologically at first, so that the actors understand the full arc of the relationship. Then, rehearse in the script order to capture the emotional whiplash.
- Handle the violence with care: The attack is not shown, but its aftermath is. The physical and emotional state of the characters after the assault must be portrayed realistically but sensitively. Consult with intimacy coordinators or specialists on staging trauma if needed.
- Use minimal set design: The Stop Kiss play script calls for multiple locations—apartments, a hospital, a park. A minimalist set with key props and lighting can help transition smoothly. The focus should always remain on the actors.
- Work on subtext: Much of the dialogue is indirect. Characters say one thing but mean another. Directors should help actors find the hidden emotions beneath the lines.

Comparing the Stop Kiss Play Script to Other Works

The **Stop Kiss play script** is often compared to other LGBTQ+ plays of the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as *The Laramie Project* (which also deals with anti-gay violence) and *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (which explores gay male relationships). However, **Stop Kiss** is distinct because of its focus on lesbians and its intimate, two-person structure. It is also similar to plays like *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* in its examination of the early stages of a relationship, but with the added weight of societal prejudice.

For students writing essays about the **Stop Kiss play script**, a comparative analysis can be fruitful. Consider how the play treats public displays of affection versus private moments, or how the presence or absence of other characters affects the dynamic. The play is also a rich text for feminist and queer theory analysis, particularly regarding the concept of "compulsory heterosexuality" and the visibility of lesbian lives.

Common Discussion Questions for the Stop Kiss Play Script

If you are teaching or studying the **Stop Kiss play script**, here are some discussion questions that can deepen understanding:

1. Why do you think Diana Son chose to begin the play after the attack rather than before? How does this affect your experience as an audience member?
2. The title “Stop Kiss” can be read in multiple ways. What do you think it means—stopping the kiss, or the kiss that stops everything?
3. How do the minor characters (the detective, Peter, Mrs. Winsley) reflect societal attitudes toward same-sex relationships?
4. Discuss the role of humor in the script. How does Son balance comic moments with the tragic elements?
5. Do you think the ending of the Stop Kiss play script is hopeful? Why or why not?

Conclusion: The Enduring Power of the Stop Kiss Play Script

More than two decades after its premiere, the **Stop Kiss play script**continues to move and challenge audiences. Its honest portrayal of love, fear, and resilience speaks to universal human experiences while also giving voice to a specific community often marginalized on

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