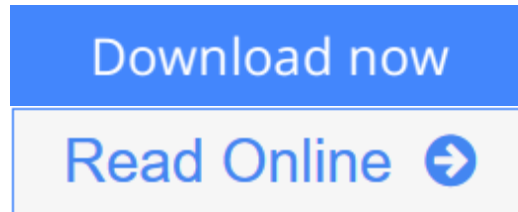


## Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays

From Lane, Eric (EDT)/ Shengold, Nina (EDT)



### **Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays** From Lane, Eric (EDT)/ Shengold, Nina (EDT)

This one-of-a-kind anthology features thirty-six hilarious short plays by major American playwrights and emerging new voices, all guaranteed to send readers and audiences into peals of laughter.

From the surrealistic wit of Steve Martin's "The Zig-Zag Woman" to the biting political satire of Steven Dietz's "The Spot," from Christopher Durang's wonderfully loopy "Wanda's Visit" to Shel Silverstein's supremely twisted "The Best Daddy," there's something in here to make everyone laugh. There are plays for casts of all sizes, from monologues to large ensembles, with diverse and challenging roles for actors of every age and type. Even the titles are funny: Mark O'Donnell's "There Shall Be No Bottom (a bad play for worse actors)," Elaine May's "The Way of All Fish," and Alan Ball's "Your Mother's Butt." A bonanza for theatergoers, performers, and comedy fans, *Laugh Lines* will bring down the house.

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## **Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays From Lane, Eric (EDT)/ Shengold, Nina (EDT) Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

From [Booklist](#)

This set of 34 comic dramas, many of which would run 15 minutes at most in performance, by contemporary or nearly contemporary Americans, some famous, many not, ranges from the sublime to the tedious. The best pieces in the collection, such as Christopher Durang's divinely insane *Wanda's Visit*, are comic gems in miniature. Others, such as Pulitzer Prize winner David Auburn's comedy-sketch-sized *Miss You*, show the antic side of writers known mostly for more serious work. Other well-known names to be found in the wide-ranging anthology include Alan Ball, David Cale, David Lindsay-Abaire, Steve Martin, and Elaine May, all represented by rarely collected one acts. Still, the real strength of the book arises from editors Lane and Shengold's spirit of inclusiveness, which allows obscure but hilarious writers to appear cheek by jowl with better-known funny women and men. *Jack Helbig*

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### About the Author

Eric Lane and Nina Shengold have been editing contemporary theater anthologies for more than twenty years. Eric Lane's award-winning plays have been published and performed in the United States, Canada, Europe, and China. Plays include *Ride*, *Times of War*, *Heart of the City*, *Dancing on Checkers' Grave*, and *Filming O'Keeffe*. *Floating*, a PlayPenn finalist, was workshopped at Raven Theatre. Eric's short plays are published in *Best American Short Plays*, *Poems and Plays*, and the *Foreign Language Press* (Beijing). He wrote and produced the short films *First Breath* and *Cater-Waiter*, which he also directed; both films screened in more than forty cities worldwide. For TV's *Ryan's Hope* he received a Writers Guild Award. Honors include the Berrilla Kerr Playwriting Award, the La MaMa Playwright Award, and fellowships at Yaddo, VCCA, and St. James Cavalier in Malta. Eric is an honors graduate of Brown University, and artistic director of Orange Thoughts, a not-for-profit theater and film company in New York City.

Nina Shengold's plays include *Finger Foods*, *War at Home*, *Homesteaders*, and *Romeo/Juliet*, and have been produced around the world. Her one-act *No Shoulder* was filmed by director Suzi Yoonessi, with Melissa Leo and Samantha Sloyan. Nina won a Writers Guild Award for her teleplay *Labor of Love*, starring Marcia Gay Harden; other teleplays include *Blind Spot*, with Joanne Woodward and Laura Linney, and *Unwed Father*. Her books include the novel *Clearcut*; *River of Words: Portraits of Hudson Valley Writers* (with photographer Jennifer May), and a growing posse of pseudonymous books for young readers. A graduate of Wesleyan, she is currently teaching creative writing at Manhattanville College. Nina lives in New York's Hudson Valley, where she has been books editor of *Chronogram* magazine since 2004.

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An Excerpt from

Miss You

by David Auburn

(First published in *Fifth Planet and Other Plays*, copyright © 2002 by David Auburn)

*Miss You* was first produced at the HBO Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado, on January 5, 1997. It was directed by James Eckhouse. The cast was as follows:

WOMAN 1, 2 Lisa Edelstein

MAN 1, 2 Jerry Levine

## CHARACTERS

MAN

WOMAN

MAN 2

WOMAN 2

MAN *and* WOMAN *on the phone.*

WOMAN: Hello?

MAN: I miss you!

WOMAN: Oh, hi.

MAN: Miss me?

WOMAN: Uh-huh.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: Yes. Yes I do: I miss you.

MAN: A lot?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: How much?

WOMAN: I told you, a lot.

MAN: God, I miss you.

WOMAN: Mm.

MAN: I wish you were here.

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: I wish you were here right now.

WOMAN: Mm.

MAN: I wish I was *there*.

WOMAN: Uh-huh.

MAN: I wish I could be there with you: I mean, I really *miss* you. I have a—

WOMAN: I know.

MAN: I have a—

WOMAN: Can you hold on?

MAN: I have a little sur—

WOMAN: Can you hold on a sec? I've got another call.

MAN: S (ure)—(*Beat. She clicks over.*)

WOMAN: Hello?

MAN 2: Hey.

WOMAN: Oh, God. Oh, God, hi! Oh, hi! God, hi!

MAN 2: Hey.

WOMAN: Hi, God, you called! I was hoping you'd-where have you been? Hi! Thank you for calling! How are you?

MAN 2: I'm fine.

WOMAN: Great.

MAN 2: How are—

WOMAN: Great. Wonderful. Now! Hi. When can I see you? Are you free? Are you busy? I can get time. Do you want to get something to eat tonight? Or we can cook. I can shop and we can— We can stay in. *We can cook here*, I've got wine. *Come over*. Come over now if you want. I miss you.

MAN 2: Listen-

WOMAN: I miss you. Yesterday afternoon was-the museum was wonderful (I can't believe I live right here in the city and I never go), and the walk, and the river. And the ice cream! Unh! *Nothing* has ever tasted so good to me in my life, I swear to God, it was—and drinks by the—and dinner, and *God*, you looked so—and last night was—

MAN 2: Listen, there's some things I should do, but we ought to try to get together.

WOMAN: Try? Try to get together? Yes, I think we should "try"! I mean, yes. *Yes*. That would be great. Tonight? Do you want to set something up for tonight? (*Beat.*)

MAN 2: Tonight?

WOMAN: Yes. We could—

MAN 2: Look, can I call you back?

WOMAN: What?

MAN 2: I gotta call you back.

WOMAN: Okay, but call me right—

MAN 2: Yeah. I'll call you. I'll talk to you. Okay?

WOMAN: Soon. I'll talk to you, okay—

MAN 2: Bye. (*Beat.*)

WOMAN: Bye— (*She almost hangs up.*) Shit— (*Clicks over.*) Hello?

MAN: Hello?

WOMAN: It's me.

MAN: *I missed you!*

WOMAN: I'm sorry. I couldn't get—

MAN: I'm coming home.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: I'm calling because I'm coming home. It's my surprise. I'm cutting things short. I'm at the airport!

WOMAN: Why?

MAN: I'm about to get on an airplane.

WOMAN: No, why-you're cutting things short? Can you do that?

MAN: Yes. I worked straight through. I haven't slept for two days so I'd get done early because I *missed* you and I'm—

WOMAN: Wait. Hold—

MAN: We take off in ten minutes. They're preboarding now. I'm carrying my—I want to give you my arrival time so you can come get me. I've only got carry-on, so don't come to the gate, don't park, just pull up at arriving flights and I'll be—

WOMAN: 'Nother call, sorry, I—

MAN: Honey, wait, I'm about to board, I don't want to miss my—

WOMAN: (*Clicks over.*) Hello?

MAN: No, it's still me. Don't go. I don't want to miss my—

WOMAN: Sorry, *hold on.* (*Clicks.*) *Hello? Hello?*

MAN 2: Hey, me.

WOMAN: Oh, *hi!*

MAN 2: Hey. Listen. I—

WOMAN: That was *fast*! You're—

MAN 2: Listen, I just realized, I've got a lot of things to take care of.

WOMAN: Uh-huh.

MAN 2: So I think we better—

WOMAN: What?

MAN 2: I think we better take a rain check on tonight.

WOMAN: A rain check.

MAN 2: We'll do it some other time.

WOMAN: You have a lot of *things* to take care of?

MAN 2: Yeah.

WOMAN: What things?

MAN 2: I should get some sleep. I have to get up early.

WOMAN: We spend the day together yesterday. You didn't have things to take care of. Yesterday turned into last night and it was a long sleepless night and that seemed fine with you then; it seemed wonderful to me—

MAN 2: We'll have to do it another time.

WOMAN: I don't have another *time*. This is the time. Do you see? Let's do this *now*. I'm sorry. I just mean, while we can. We shouldn't miss this. Yesterday came out of nowhere. We were together. It was *great*. I loved it. I loved being with you. I loved you. (*Beat.*) Did you hear me? I love you. Can you hear me? Are you there?

MAN 2: Can you hold on a minute?

WOMAN: What?

MAN 2: I've got another call coming in.

WOMAN: Don't take it!

MAN 2: I have to—

WOMAN: They'll call back.

MAN 2: I'll just be—

WOMAN: *Don't— (He clicks over.)*

MAN 2: Hello?

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