

Director's Note for *Hookman*

For months now, I've been describing this play as a slasher comedy about trauma. Wait, what? Yes, you heard that right. Or did you?

Welcome to Lauren Yee's *Hookman*, where horror tropes collide with the realities of freshman year of college, gaslighting abounds, and the absurdity of it all makes it almost...funny. Here, characters say things that make us do a double-take (like, we all knew she was thinking it, but did she really just say that?) and plunge us into the constant struggle of trying to answer the question of "is this real, or not?" To top it all off, no one seems to listen to the one person who might have actual answers about what really happened late one night on a deserted California road, because why on earth would we do that?

But...is this reality so absurd? In a world where outrageous claims have become normalized and the phrase "alternative facts" exists, evaluating the truth of every statement has become a scary, but daily, experience. This sense that "the facts" are constantly in flux only serves to further undermine the reports of groups of people whose lived experiences have historically been ignored - which in this play means women, especially young women, and most especially young women who have experienced trauma. *Hookman* is a coming-of-age story that reminds us that danger may lurk in unexpected, seemingly innocuous places, and it might not always look like a man in a trench coat with a hook for a hand. Instead, it might look very much like people or establishments that we've been taught to trust, which ultimately makes Yee's pithy play that swings effortlessly back and forth between horror and comedy feel very frightening indeed.

(Cue thunderclap.)

--Allie Moss