

# Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404  
612-872-5108  
FAX 612-874-8119

## *The Day the Waters Came*

By  
**Lisa Evans**

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ACTOR ONE PUTS HIS FINGERS IN HIS MOUTH AND LETS OUT A  
PIERCING WHISTLE

ACTOR 1: Hey Maya

MAYA: Hey yourself! See you later

MAYA AND CAMILLE WALK ON

ACTOR 1: DOING A LITTLE SHOE SHUFFLE Aligator

CAMILLE: LINKING ARMS WITH MAYA. He think he so cool.

THEY TURN TO WATCH HIM SAUNTER OFF, NOD IN UNISON

TOGETHER: He cool.

ACTOR 2: Camille! Why that girl never home when she supposed to be? Camille!

MAYA: My best friend.

ACTOR 2: Come on inside. Your mom got dinner on the table.

MAYA: Her daddy Mr La Blanc

MOM: Maya!

MAYA: That's my name. Don't wear it out.

MOM: Come inside do your homework NOW!

MAYA: Coming Mom.

MOM: Oh hi Mr Freeman, how you feeling today?

MR FREEMAN: I can still hear her music through the wall nights.

MAYA: That is such a crock. He don't hear nothing. Hey Mr Freeman why you old guys always wear your pants up around your nipples?

HE DOESN'T REACT

See? Deaf as a beetle.

MOM: He got tinnitus, honey. Ringing in the ears

MAYA: So? Not my fault. I ain't never getting old.

ACTOR 2: CRYING LIKE A BABY

MAYA: Now Lenny, that kid got a cry make anyone's ears ring.

MISS EMMA: Oh Maya, I too old for this child rearing game

MAYA: Ah c'mon, Miss Emma. You not old.

I lie. But she pay me good money to mind her grandson while she line dancing.

Cross the backyard, put Lenny in front of the TV,

MAYA PUTS LENNY'S THUMB IN HIS MOUTH. HE STOPS CRYING

call Camille, home before Mom leave for the night shift. Easy bucks. Living in the Big Easy.

MOM: Hey Louis

MAYA: Where are you?

ACTOR 2: How you all feeling?

LOUIS: How you imagine, banged up waiting for a trial we all know going one way?

MOM: Don't lose hope son.

LOUIS: Hope ain't a solution Mom.

MAYA: Louis? Louis, wait for me! Why you never wait for me?

LOUIS: I'm burning – no place for me here where I fit in.

MAYA: Take me with you?

LOUIS: No place for a kid where I'm going.

CLANGING OF CELL DOOR. SOUNDSCAPE OF NEW ORLEANS,  
VENDORS CALLING, JAZZ BEING PRACTICED, SIRENS SCREAMING,  
BLACK VOICES LAUGHING

VOICES: Hey Mama!

Behave youself and git on home now!

3 for a quarter!

Walk right in.

SINGING: Mama don't mind, Papa don't mind..

Smell those ribs cooking, hot and spicey

CHANT SINGING Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet don't stop me now!

Step together two three and sliiiiide. Again!

TRUMPET "Oh when the saints Oh when the saints"

How much?

TRUMPET “Oh when the saints Oh when the saints”

Jaywalkin? You jerkin my chain officer?

TRUMPET “Oh when the saints go marchin in”

I look like a man with a sense of humour?

Step together two three..

SINGING: Mama don’t mind, Papa don’t mind, but god bless the child that’s got his own, that’s got his own

MAYA: You hear that? That’s the sound of my city, of New Orleans. Hey sister, how’re you feeling? Lookin good. Soundin fine. Loud and brash, brassy and better than anyplace on earth for – watch where you drivin you flash fool! Put my butt on the sidewalk you going to hear about it! I kick your tin can of a vehicle other side of Christmas. Music, hey music, playing. Second-lining. This my street. Born and raised. I played or strutted most every inch. Lord it’s hot out today– neighbourhood steaming – strays too tired to lift a leg flop – over 100 degrees - in the shade. I’m looking good, feeling fine, got a boyfriend name of

WILBUR A COOL BLACK DUDE ENTERS DEEP IN FLIRTATION WITH  
CAMILLE A HOT YOUNG BLACK WOMAN

MAYA: Wilbur?! And Camille? You forgot you was home fixing your hair today?

CAMILLE: I aint’ forgot nothing.

MAYA: Oh yeah you do. Like forgot whose friend you are. That's my man.

CAMILLE: He told me you over and done.

MAYA: He did?

CAMILLE: He did.

MAYA AND CAMILLE EXCHANGE GLANCES. BEEN HERE BEFORE

WILBUR: Hey ladies, don't you go fighting over me.

CAMILLE & MAYA TOGETHER: Two three

ON THE LAST COUNT THEY BOTH STAMP ON THE TOES OF A  
SURPRISED WILBUR WHO YELPS AND RUNS OFF. THEY HIGH FIVE  
EACH OTHER

CAMILLE: Hey, you know my Aunt Lizzie say the quickest way to get over a man?

TOGETHER: Get a holda another one!

MAYA: This my city, my life all 14 years of it, New Orleans. Know it, feel it, scream it, dance it. Till the day the waters came, stop all that dreaming nonsense.

SOUNDSCAPE OF WIND AND HOWLING RAIN, METALLIC BANGING,  
WHINING OF TELEPHONE WIRES FLAILING, CRACKLING, ALL FOUR  
ACTORS SCREAMING, CHAOS. SILENCE

MAYA: That night I thinking about my future, how it going to play out.

CAMILLE: A nurse?

MAYA: Oh please. Wasting all this in blue pyjamas?

CAMILLE: Your Mom looks okay

MAYA: Exactly. How her fan base doing? How much red carpet she walk down?

ACTOR 1: I need painkillers, I need them now. You read me lady? This pain killing me. You know how it is?

MOM: I will get to you sir, as soon as I have finished treating this patient who has a head wound which is bleeding. Please be seated.

ACTOR 1: You don't understand. I got bugs crawling cross my eyes. They going to finish me. I need...

MOM: You need to calm down. This a public hospital. You will be seen. Just sit.

ACTOR 1: Gimme my medication now! You miserable piece a

MOM: You were warned. Security!!

MAYA AND ACTOR 2 LEAP ON ACTOR 1 AND RESTRAIN HIM

MOM: Get him outa here.

ACTOR 1: You can't throw me out on the street, there a hurricane warning!

MOM: Yeah, and I'm it.

CAMILLE AND MAYA HIGH FIVE EACH OTHER

TOGETHER: Go Mom!

DAD: Camille dinner!

MOM: Maya homework!

MAYA: Catch you on Oprah! Oscar winning actress

CAMILLE: Diva of the dance floor

MAYA: THRUSTING AN IMAGINARY MIKE TOWARDS CAMILLE. How do you manage to combine your punishing touring schedule playing to millions across the world, and still have time for charity work and your fifteen children?

CAMILLE: Staff chere, the key is staff. And talent. You either got it...

TOGETHER: Or you don't!

LOUD BANGING OF METAL PIPE ON CORRUGATED IRON

*[Mom's getting ready to go to work at the hospital at night]*

MAYA: Stay home. Don't go to work tonight.

MOM: And have the pleasure of watching you not doing your geography homework? How can a woman resist?

MAYA: Hurricane warning on the TV

MOM: You ever wonder why they call it the Hurricane Season? Happen every year.

MAYA: This one a Category 3

MOM: What category not working not earning not eating?

*[the Mayor actors are on radio and tv making public announcements]*

ACTOR 2: This is your mayor speaking.

ACTOR 1: All residents should evacuate the city now.

MOM: He give me the money for the hotel, we go. Leaving town for the last false alarm sent my credit card way over the limit.

MAYA: And the looters stole our TV.

ACTOR 2: I repeat, this is a mandatory evacuation.

MOM: You remember that?

MAYA: Not having a TV? She kidding?

MOM: You way too young.

MAYA:           Okay. So I remember the story.

MOM:           Hurricane warnin really that serious they woulda evacuated the hospitals, provided buses for those who got no transportation etcetera etcetera.

*[Mama leaves for work]*

ACTOR 2:       This is your mayor speaking. Evacuate the city now

MR FREEMAN:   I ain't for that leaving. Come hell or highwater.

MISS EMMA:     I got no vehicle. How I going to get me and Little Lenny to Baton Rouge?

MR FREEMAN:   Who take care of my home when I gone? Tell me that.

MAYA:           PHONING. Hey Camille, you reckon we get the day offa school if this here hurricane hit New Orleans?

CAMILLE:       PHONING. Have you seen the size of the zit on my chin? Do I look like I care about weather? Sister I aint never leavin this house till I human again.

MAYA:           Not even under cover of darkness?

CAMILLE TAKES AND SENDS HER A PHONE PIC OF HER FACE

MAYA: You're right. Stay home.

CAMILLE: Hanging up

MAYA: Hanging up

ACTOR 1. NEWS: Weather forecasters tell us that Hurricane Katrina is now officially a category 5 hurricane and has turned away from Florida back out into the Gulf.

MAYA: You reckon she gone? Wrong. Oh so wrong sister! Thing about hurricanes is they starving, desperate for water to suck up and whirl around. I know this now. Katrina she thirsty for destruction, she keep casting about, looking for more cheap housing and small boats to tear up and fling aside. Finding herself still hungry in Florida Katrina, she change direction and, screaming with fury, turn her eye on New Orleans. One moment it just a background high wind, then, oh my god, I never heard such a roar in all my life, like having a freight train in your ear for hours on end.

SOUND CUES TO MATCH, INCREASING WITH THE SCENE. THE PERFORMERS ADD TO THE CACOPHANY WITH SCREAMING, USING METAL OBJECTS FOR PERCUSSION

ACTRESS 2: It was like she whistling , moments of near silence then shrieks of wind like the ghost of hell let loose in our city.

ACTOR I: Glass breaking. Sheets of rain. Tore the aluminium siding right off a building.

ACTOR 2: She tear loose guttering, bringing down electric wires so they whip through the air spinning sparks.

MAYA: She bend palm trees double to touch the ground.

ACTRESS 2: Katrina she peel roofing off tall buildings like newspaper in a breeze.

ACTOR 1: All the while she howling

ACTOR 2: Groaning

MAYA: Screaming

ACTRESS 2: Crashing bits of the world together like she mad as hell and she ain't going to take it any more

ALL SCREAMING OUT

MAYA: Mom!

ACTRESS 2: Louis!

ACTOR 2: Camille!

ACTRESS 2: Maya!

SILENCE

TOGETHER: Dark. Black. Night.

MAYA: Quiet like you can touch. Flick the switch. No electricity.

*[She dials on her cellphone]*

Mom?

ACTRESS 2: The person you are calling knows you are waiting. Please try later. Please try later. Please try later.

MAYA: *[Redialling]* Camille?

CAMILLE: Who is this calling?

MAYA: Her agent. Fatbutt and Bull. Who you think it is?

CAMILLE: GIGGLING AND WHISPERING Fattbutt and what?

MAYA: Why you whispering?

CAMILLE: Electricity's out. Daddy say I got to conserve the battery..

MAYA: That is such a crock. I all alone here. In the dark. I need you to talk to me.

CAMILLE: You think you got it tough. Calm myself down during the storm I think  
Home Beauty Treatment.

MAYA: Which one?

CAMILLE: Leg wax.

MAYA: STARTS TO LAUGH. Leg wax? In the dark?

CAMILLE: I got objects I don't even recognise stuck to my calves including pieces of the  
rug. My legs furrer than a grisly bear in winter.

THEY'RE BOTH LAUGHING FROM RELIEF

MAYA: You watch the OC tonight? Melissa's mom, right? I mean what does she expect if she.....

CAMILLE: Yeah Dad! Gotta go.

THEY HANG UP

MAYA: Daybreak. You wake up. Quiet. Your street never that quiet. You go to the window, look down into the street. Your street. Only your world done change. No street, no sidewalk. You looking at a world of water, far as your eye can see. You run to your stairs leading down to the front door. They gone. Just water, brown, where stair carpet used to be. And for what seem like hours you run from window to staircase. Staircase to window. What to do? What to think? What to do? And you all alone. And you running back and forth, window, staircase, window, staircase and someone is making a noise like a hurt puppy and in a while you know it's you because there's nobody else there. You are all alone.

ACTOR 1: Lines are busy. Please try later. In an emergency dial 911

MAYA: This is. This is a...

*[Maya dials 911]*

MAYA: 9 1 1. Hello? Hello?

ACTOR 2: Lines are busy. Please try later.

ACTRESS 2: Please try later.

ACTOR 1; Please try

MAYA: This an emergency!

ACTOR 1: I'm sorry. We are not sending out any rescue services at this present time.

MAYA: WHAT??!!!

*[Camille and her Dad look out from the first floor of their house from where the wall used to be. He is holding on the phone]*

DAD: Come back from the edge!

CAMILLE: Where'd the wall go Dad?

DAD: Camille. Come back at once!

CAMILLE: Wow, there water up to my feet. Downstairs is underwater.

DAD: Come back right this instant!

CAMILLE: Hey, it not my fault! No call to yell at me! I didn't make my sister's bedroom wall disappear. More like the taste police. I mean, pink plaid? You think Serena three not eleven.

DAD CLUTCHES HER

DAD: I got you.

CAMILLE: Where they gone? Serena! Mom!

DAD: Hold on to me

CAMILLE: Serena! Mom! Serena! Get help.

DAD: HANGING UP THE PHONE. Aint nobody listening

CAMILLE: What they say?

DAD: "Why don't we leave town when the mayor say." Like I said, nobody listening.

ACTOR 1: I got no vehicle in which to leave. My daughter disabled. I go to the front door, I put my finger on the door knob and I taste salt. That ain't good. I turn and see my car floating past the window. Then the door is pushed in by the weight of the water. I get my daughter in her wheelchair up onto the roof. I held her as long as I could, till I could hold her no longer.

SOUND OF HELICOPTERS OVERHEAD

MAYA: WAVING A SHEET PAINTED WITH THE WORDS HELP US  
Hey guys! Help us. We got no water! We stuck on this roof all day now. Miss Emma she an ole lady and Lenny need medication! Hey!

SOUND OF HELICOPTERS FADING

MISS EMMA: Maya! Maya by your feet!

MAYA: Oh my god. Oh my..

MAYA RETCHES

MAYA: Make it go away.

MISS EMMA: I don't think I can touch him.

MAYA: Who is it?

MISS EMMA: Can't tell from the back of his head.

MAYA: Why he keep floating at us?

MISS EMMA: He ain't doin it on purpose Maya. He just drowned dead.

MAYA: Should we tell someone?

MISS EMMA: Like who?

MAYA: I don't know. The police. The authorities? Whoever takes care of dead bodies. Aaaah, he touched my leg!

And then I'm kicking him. I'm kicking a dead man I never met alive, or maybe I did, I don't know who he is, but I kicking his corpse and he bobbing up and down on little waves like this big ole starfish, face down in brown water full of trash and worse. I kicking him to go away. I want it all to go away but the current or whatever it is pushing him toward us, keep on pushing and he stay there, beside us, like a faithful pet, what used to be a man. What used to be someone's son. And then I hear

MISS EMMA: Maya look!

MAYA: Hey mister! Hey you in the boat! Red bandana man! Help us. Please help us!

BANDANA MAN: How long you been here?

MAYA: Since last night. We don't have no water.

BANDANA MAN: You know him? The guy floating?

MAYA: Not really. Where you going?

BANDANA MAN: Word is to make for the Superdome.

MAYA |: They got water there? And food?

BANDANA MAN: I guess so. I can't take you all. Boat's only just above the water. Who's it to be? The old lady, the kid, you?

*[BANDANA MAN, MISS EMMA AND LENNY LEAVE]*

MAYA: I stay.

SHE DIALS ON HER PHONE

MAYA: Camille? Camille? How you doing? Can you hear me? Look Camille

MAYA PHOTOGRAPHS HERSELF BUT HER BATTERY IS DEAD

This me not looking my best. Look everybody. This a girl on a rooftop.  
Holding a phone with a dead battery. Could do with a makeover, Camille.  
You offering?

SOUND OF HELICOPTER

*[Camille waves from the rooftop]*

CAMILLE: Hey you piece a..

DAD: Camille honey, they can't hear you.

CAMILLE: Don't they know I got a headache, and my nose so sunburnt it going to peel right off my face? Don't they know we in trouble? I don't want to pee off the side of the roof no more. I want a toilet and toilet paper and handcreme. I want Mama and Serena and my straighteners!

SOUND OF A HELICOPTER. FADING

*[boy on a mattress waving at Maya]*

MATTRESS BOY: Hey! What's your name?

MAYA: Maya.

MATTRESS BOY: You want to hitch a ride on my mattress?

MAYA NODS

MAYA: What happened? Where did all the water come from?

MATTRESS BOY: After the hurricane, the levees broke, floods all over. Lower 9<sup>th</sup> underwater.

MAYA: You from round here? I don't know you.

MATTRESS BOY: You know my brother, Joshua.

MAYA: Joshua Walker? The geek?

MATTRESS BOY: The same.

MAYA: Sorry. Kinda rude.

MATTRESS BOY: Kinda true. He got the brains.

MAYA:                   What you get?

MATTRESS BOY:    I don't know.

MAYA:                   Where're your family?

MATTRESS BOY:    I don't know that either. You?

MAYA:                   My mom's at the hospital where she works, I guess. My brother's ..is this  
loosing air?

MATTRESS BOY:    I don't know. I guess it is.

MAYA DUCKS AND FLAPS HER HANDS

MATTRESS BOY:    What you doing?

MAYA:                   Something flew at me!

MATTRESS BOY:    Careful!

MAYA:                   Oh my god cockroaches flying everywhere.

MATTRESS BOY: Stop flapping! Hold on!

MAYA: And I'm in the water splashing, trying to get the roaches out of my hair,

MATTRESS BOY: Keep your mouth outa the water

MAYA: They supposed to live under refrigerators, not in the air!

MAYA: You wake up, year later, breath short, sweat sticking your clothes to your body. Dreaming again, back there, back when creatures that scuttle are flying, creatures that slither are swimming, back the day the waters came changing everything.

ACTOR 1: Help us!

ACTRESS 2: Help us!

ACTOR 1: Please, somebody!

SOUND OF BANGING FROM UNDER A ROOFTOP

MAYA: Hello?

*[Maya is on a door, floating, the others are trapped under a roof]*

MAYA:                   Where are you?

SOUND OF BANGING FROM UNDER A ROOFTOP

ACTOR 1:               In the attic.

ACTRESS 2:           It's so hot. I'm thirsty.

MAYA:                   I don't have water. I'm sorry. All I got is a door to float on. What's your name?

DAMON:                Damon. Damon Rock.

MAYA:                   How old are you Damon?

DAMON:                13.

MAYA:                   Is your Mom there?

DAMON:                No. Just my sister Phyllis. We been banging on the roof but nobody come.

PHYLLIS:              It's real hot in here. I'm thirsty.

MAYA: You got any kind of tool in there to break the roof?

DAMON: Mama told us to climb up. Then she fell off the steps.

PHYLLIS: She don't come back.

DAMON: Must be hundred degrees in here. Is someone coming?

MAYA: Hey mister! Please, stop!

ACTOR 2: I got to get this woman to the hospital, she just had a baby.

MAYA: They're trapped under the roof. Kids. Please.

SOUND OF BANGING FROM UNDER THE ROOF

ACTOR 2: I'll come back. I promise.

MAYA: And he paddle off, the dugout rocking side to side, with the woman holding her baby up out of the water, cord still dangling from its belly. You hear that? He coming back for you. Damon?

DAMON: Phyllis not looking too good. What should I do?

MAYA: You aint got no water noplacé?

DAMON: I told you! We ain't got none!

MAYA: Okay, okay. Sorry. Just stroke her forehead okay? The man coming back.

PHYLLIS: Moma?

DAMON: Help coming soon Phyl. Hold on. Is it dark yet?

MAYA: Coming soon.

DAMON: You still there?

MAYA: Yeah.

DAMON: My throat dry. What's your name?

MAYA: Maya.

DAMON: Don't go.

MAYA: I won't.

DAMON: Promise?

BEAT

MAYA: Damon? Phyllis?

DAMON: Yeah?

MAYA: You get too tired, you just knock, tell me you still hear me.

DAMON: Okay.

HE KNOCKS

MAYA: I hear you.

DAMON: Can you see the help yet?

MAYA: Not yet. I hear water lapping. Steady drum of helicopters not far off. In the distance I see two women up to their necks pushing an open refrigerator containing three little kids through the water. I see a man held in the branches of a tree, not moving. I see a house been swept by the waters clear off its plot and relocated leaning crazy against a lamp post across what was the sidewalk. Damon?

KNOCKING SOUND

MAYA: You hang on in there. Help coming. All that long evening I see helicopters with TV crews filming. I see National Guard trucks, guns pointing. I see boats carrying white folks. I see water full of what belong in the sewers. What I don't see is help coming.  
Damon?

MAYA KNOCKS

Damon? Damon!

MAYA DRUMS HER FISTS ON THE ROOF. IT TURNS INTO A  
HELICOPTER SOUND

MOM: Water still rising?

DOCTOR: First floor's a fish tank. All patients been relocated to second floor and above

PATIENT: I'm hot.

MOM: Lie still honey. We safe up here on the roof till the helicopter come.

DOCTOR: Local radio reporting looting and arson from the hospital pharmacy.

MOM: They got wetsuits? It's underwater!

PATIENT: Can't I go back inside? It's so hot out here.

DOCTOR: Hotter indoors son.

MOM: He swallowed toxic water. Not going to help his appendicitis none.

DOCTOR: How'd you get here to the hospital?

PATIENT: A young guy swam, pushing me on a tyre. We heard them, under the roof, calling out. He said he had to make a choice and I was it.

MOM: You know his name?

PATIENT: A young guy, wearing a red neckerchief round his head. Waters swept my folks' house away. I don't know where my family is.

DOCTOR: What are those clowns in the humvees doing down there ? Call yourselves National Guard - driving up and down waving guns at folks in the water? Look at their faces. Like tourists at the Aquarium looking at the sharks. Hey, we your countrymen, you supposed to be on our side!

MOM: Step back from the edge or you going to get yourself shot at.

DOCTOR: I'm an American citizen, or did all the people of New Orleans suddenly lose their passports? My taxes pay your wages!

MOM: How long since you took a break doctor?

DOCTOR: This is my break.

MOM: You don't have to be here?

DOCTOR: I was going fishing, reckon my boat'll be matchsticks by now. At least my wife and kids are safe at her parents in Baton Rouge. You?

MOM: I don't know. Phone's dead. No way of knowing.

DOCTOR: Let's hope they got to the Superdome. Folks pouring in there.

MOM: Maya's a sensible girl. And my son, well, leastways I know where he is.

*[the prisoners talk]*

ACTOR 1: Day one Guards abandon us, locked in with no food, no water.

ACTRESS 1: Day two we hoarse from shouting. Nobody came

ACTOR 1: Day three we eating toothpaste and paper

ACTRESS 1: Day four they remember and let us out.

ACTOR 1: We ain't got money. We head for the grocery store and steal food. Hell, we criminals anyway.

SOUND OF HELICOPTER APPROACHING. DOCTOR'S WAVING  
TO THE SKY.

DOCTOR: Keep your head down!

SOUND OF HELICOPTER LANDING.

What the hell took you so long?

PARAMEDIC: Orders to evacuate Tulane first.

DOCTOR: You know how long these patients been on this roof?

PARAMEDIC: Listen doc, I do what I'm told. Private hospitals get priority. It crazy out there. You had much looting?

DOCTOR: None, everyone here too tired, too sick or too damned dead.

*[Genevieve clings to the rafters of her home. Coastguard rescue man tries to persuade her to trust him and let go]*

COASTGUARD: It's okay Ma'am. We the coastguard. We here to help you.

GENEVIEVE: I can't swim!

COASTGUARD: Take this life jacket.

GENEVIEVE: I rather stay here.

COASTGUARD: Water rising. What's your name?

GENEVIEVE: Genevieve.

COASTGUARD: Genevieve, you need to let go of the door frame.

GENEVIEVE: I can't do it.

COASTGUARD: Let go. Come to us.

GENEVIEVE: I can't. I can't. The water.

COASTGUARD: Don't panic.

GENEVIEVE: I can't do it.

COASTGUARD: Yes you can. Let go and come to us.

GENEVIEVE: I don't want to drown.

COASTGUARD: Come towards me. Once you come to us we can get you into the boat.  
Genevieve. Trust me.

*[A young man drives a truck hooting the horn, waving and shouting]*