

## Jewel Theatre Audience Guide



directed by **Susan Myer Silton**

by Julie Bell Petrak, Assistant Dramaturge  
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*Take her mind away—even a little bit—  
and what does she have left?  
~Sharr White*

## ABOUT THE PLAY

### CHARACTERS AS DESCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR IN THE TEXT

**Juliana** (Julie James): A sharply charismatic scientist, Juliana's obviously fierce intelligence is both her greatest asset and her largest burden, having helped her carve a niche in a deeply competitive field infiltrated by brilliant minds, and yet bringing her a deep impatience and a drive not always understood by those around her.

**Ian** (Shaun Carroll): Juliana's husband, an oncologist.

**The Woman** (Audrey Rumsby): portrays Dr. Cindy Teller, a neurobiologist; Laurel, Juliana and Ian's daughter; and a woman.

**The Man** (Teddy Spencer): portrays a stagehand, Richard Sillner, and Bobby, a nurse.

*You can, in the theater, tell a story,  
but what is really important is the emotional arc.  
~Sharr White*

### SETTING

The play's action takes place in numerous locations, including a doctor's convention on the island of St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands, the Smithton family home, the office of Dr. Teller and the Smithton family vacation home on Cape Cod, also referred to as the "Other Place."

### TIME

Although the playwright did not specify a time for the play, the script implies that the story takes place close to the time of its Off-Broadway world premiere on March 28, 2011.

*What I set out to write was a play about this incredibly intelligent individual—I have a lot of really intelligent people in my life—and I have discovered that they seem to share something in common: the idea that nothing bad can ever really happen to them because they can 'think' their way out of it.*

*~Sharr White*

## **SYNOPSIS**

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When the play opens, we meet Juliana Smithton, a charismatic and intelligent research scientist turned Big Pharma pitch person. In the opening scene she is introducing herself to the audience at a doctors' convention on St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. She identifies herself as the advising research scientist and original patent holder of the base structure of Identamyl, a protein therapy in its final stage of development. The drug is designed to halt the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Although the disease is never named in the play, her slides are consistent with its etiology.

Juliana's presentation at the convention is interspersed with snippets of time spent with Dr. Cindy Teller, a neurobiologist, and Ian, her oncologist husband of more than 25 years, as well as cellphone conversations with her daughter Laurel and Laurel's husband Richard.

Highly respected in a male-dominated field, at 52, Juliana is at the top of her game, poised not only to make medical history, but also to make a great deal of money.

All is not well, however. A young woman, clad only in a yellow string bikini, has suddenly appeared among the pharmaceutical physicians at Juliana's presentation. Laurel seems to be evading her, and Ian is cheating on her and wants a divorce.

*We're ending the synopsis here in order to preserve the play's plot surprises. For those who wish to read the entire synopsis, it is provided in its entirety in a separate document.*

*Anyone who goes through eight years of school should be a surgeon ...  
because I've never formally studied writing,  
the learning process has been through doing."  
~Sharr White*

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Sharr White in November 2011 outside San Francisco's Magic Theatre

Sharr White wanted to be a biologist. His father was a professor of biophysics and physiology and his brother earned his degree in astrophysics from the University of California, Berkeley. Science was his career destination ... until he took his first acting class.

White was born 50 years ago in Frederick, Maryland and spent his adolescence in Southern California and Boulder, Colorado. After graduating from high school, he worked in a warehouse before deciding to pursue an advanced degree in acting. After moving to San Francisco, he completed his BFA at San Francisco State and graduated with his MFA from American Conservatory Theatre (ACT) in 1993. However, White wanted to write plays. With no formal writing training or mentoring, he moved to New York City and spent years writing what he now calls "unproduceable" plays and a novel.

White's career received an uptick in 2006 when his plays began being produced at Actor's Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival of New American Plays. Thereafter, his plays were produced at South Coast Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Lincoln Center Director's Lab and Key West Theatre Festival.

Formerly Brooklyn and New York City residents, Sharr and his wife, Evelyn Carr White, decided to put down roots in the suburb of Cold Spring, NY, which White calls “an almost unbearably quaint little village” on the Hudson River, an hour north of Manhattan.

After Carr White received her BFA in acting from Carnegie Mellon, she switched career gears, citing the “constant judgement” as “a commodity”. She studied interior design at Parsons School of Design in New York City, eventually going to work for architectural design and fashion firms. During her years in Brooklyn, Carr White was a multi term president of a condo board. Currently, she is immersed in the Haldane School System of Cold Spring, serving as the Elementary School PTA Vice President and assisting with budget and after school programming expansion. She was also the interior decorator for a complete renovation of their first home in Cold Spring, originally built in 1895. The second-floor master bedroom is pictured below.



White and Carr White in their first Cold Springs home, 2014

At present, White maintains his “day job” as a copywriter in the fashion industry and spends his weekly train commute writing plays. Carr White says of her husband, “Since I’ve known Sharr, his work ethic is staggering. He’s gotten up at 5 AM every day and written.” The couple have two young sons.

Sharr White's plays include *The Dream Canvas* (1995, NADA); *Iris Fields* (1996, developed at the Lincoln Center Theatre Directors Lab and performed at the Key West Theatre Festival); *Six Years* (2006; 30th Anniversary Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville); *The Dream Canvas* (downtown New

York at Todo Con Nada); *The Last Orange Dying* (off-Broadway at the Ohio); *Safe from the Future* (off-Broadway at Raw Space); *Heaven and All Things Lovely* (far above Broadway in the Marriott Marquis, room 3806); *Satellites of the Sun* (finalist, Princess Grace Award); *The Escape Velocity of Savages* (Dr. Henry and Lillian Nesburn Award as part of the Julie Harris Award in Playwriting); *Achilles in Sparta* (2007, a play for young performers at Denver Center Academy); *Sunlight* (2010, Marin Theatre Company); *Annapurna* (2011, Magic Theatre, San Francisco); *The Other Place* (2011: off-Broadway at the Lucille Lortel Theatre; 2012: on Broadway at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre); *A Sunrise in Times Square* (2013, 34th Marathon Of One-Act Plays: Series B, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NYC), *The Snow Geese* (2013, Manhattan Theatre Club and MCC Theater at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, Broadway); *Stupid Kid* (2017, The Road Theatre Company, the Road on Magnolia, NoHo Senior Arts Colony, North Hollywood, CA), *The True* (2018, The New Group at The Alice Griffin Jewel Box Theatre at The Pershing Square Signature Center, NYC), *Lucky* (2019, Summer Shorts 2019 Series B, ThroughLine Artists, 59E59 Theater B, NYC)

*The Other Place* premiered Off Broadway on March 28, 2011 at the Lucille Lortel Theatre before moving to Broadway on January 10, 2013 at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre. The play closed on March 3, 2013 after enjoying 34 previews and 61 performances.

*The Other Place* received two Outer Critics Circle Award nominations: Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play and Outstanding Actress In A Play (Laurie Metcalf). Laurie Metcalf won an Obie Award for Performance and was nominated for the 2013 Tony Award, Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Play.



Opening Night of *The Other Place* on Broadway, January 10, 2013. Pictured from left: Joe Schiappa (The Man), Sharr White, Daniel Stern (Ian), Laurie Metcalf (Juliana) and Zoe Perry (The Woman)

## RESOURCES

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“Beyond the Wings: Who is Sharr White?” by archphoenix. November 19, 2014.  
<http://dragonproductionstheatre.blogspot.com/2014/11/who-is-sharr-white.html>

“A Broadway Playwriting Debut for Cold Spring’s Sharr White” by Alison Rooney.  
*The Current Highlands*, February 18, 2013.  
<https://highlandscurrent.org/2013/02/18/a-broadway-playwriting-debut-for-cold-springs-sharr-white/>

“I interview Playwrights Part 124: Sharr White” by Adam Szymkowicz, February 24, 2010. *1000 Playwright Interviews, Aszym Blogspot*.  
<http://aszym.blogspot.com/2010/02/i-interview-playwrights-part-124-sharr.html>

“Interview with Sharr White, Playwright *The Other Place*” by David Allen. Central Square Theater.  
<https://www.centralsquaretheater.org/read-watch-listen/news-articles-multimedia/interview-sharr-white/>

Sharr White. *Doollee.com: The Playwrights’ Database*.  
<http://www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsW/white-sharr.php>

“Sharr White on Vulnerability, Mortality & the Dark Inspiration Behind His New Drama *The Other Place*” by Sharr White. *Broadway Buzz*, January 8, 2013.  
<https://www.broadway.com/buzz/166488/sharr-white-on-vulnerability-mortality-the-dark-inspiration-behind-his-new-drama-the-other-place/>

“Study Guide: *The Other Place*” by Erin Schachter, Ceilidh Wood, Michael Gregor.  
*Canadian Stage*, January 18, 2015.

“*The Other Place* (play)” *Wikipedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Other\\_Place\\_\(play\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Other_Place_(play))

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/theater/reviews/the-other-place-at-samuel-j-friedman-theater.html>