

May 4th Voices: A Haunting Exploration of the Kent State Tragedy



May 4th Voices: Kent State, 1970: A Play by David Hassler

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 538 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 80 pages
Screen Reader	: Supported



Prologue: A Day of Darkness

On May 4, 1970, tragedy struck Kent State University in Ohio. Members of the Ohio National Guard opened fire on a group of unarmed student protesters, killing four and wounding nine. This senseless act of violence shocked the nation and became a defining moment in the history of the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement.

Over half a century later, the Kent State shootings continue to resonate as a haunting reminder of the fragility of life and the dangers of unchecked power. In 2007, playwright James Still's powerful drama, *May 4th Voices*, premiered in Kent, offering a gripping and moving exploration of the tragedy and its aftermath.

A Chorus of Voices

May 4th Voices weaves together the personal narratives of those who were present on that fateful day: students, faculty, members of the National Guard, and even the parents of the victims. Through a series of monologues and scenes, the play delves into the perspectives, emotions, and experiences of these individuals, giving voice to the complex tapestry of events that unfolded.

The characters in the play are not mere historical figures but living, breathing human beings with their own hopes, fears, and motivations. The audience is invited to witness their struggles, their triumphs, and their profound grief as they grapple with the aftermath of the tragedy.

Exploring Layers of Trauma

May 4th Voices is not simply a retelling of historical events. It is a deeply introspective work that explores the profound psychological and emotional impact of the shootings on both the individuals involved and the broader community.

The play delves into themes of trauma, loss, guilt, and healing. It examines the long-lasting scars that the tragedy left on the survivors, the families of the victims, and the town of Kent itself. Through its exploration of these complex themes, May 4th Voices encourages audiences to confront the enduring legacy of violence and to reflect on the importance of empathy, reconciliation, and social justice.

A Living Legacy

May 4th Voices is not only a powerful theatrical experience but also a vital contribution to historical understanding and remembrance. The play serves as a reminder of the importance of free speech, the dangers of unchecked

authority, and the devastating consequences that can arise when these principles are violated.

By keeping the memory of the Kent State shootings alive, May 4th Voices helps to ensure that future generations learn from the mistakes of the past and work towards a more just and peaceful society.

A Call to Action

May 4th Voices is more than just a play; it is a call to action. It reminds us that the fight for justice and peace is an ongoing struggle and that we must never forget the sacrifices that have been made in the pursuit of these ideals.

The play challenges us to reflect on our own responsibilities as citizens and to work towards creating a world where violence and injustice are no longer tolerated. May 4th Voices is a powerful reminder that even in the darkest of times, hope can prevail if we dare to speak out, to demand change, and to work together to build a better future.

XENIA AREA COMMUNITY THEATER
PRESENTS

MAY 4th VOICES

By David Hassler

Based on Eyewitness Accounts
of the 1970 Kent State Shooting

Directed by Craig Smith

X*ACT



Friday & Saturday May 6,7,13,14 @ 7PM
Sunday - May 8,15 @ 3PM

Tickets at www.kiact.org OR AT THE SHOW

General Admission \$15
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Memorial to the victims of the Kent State shootings

References

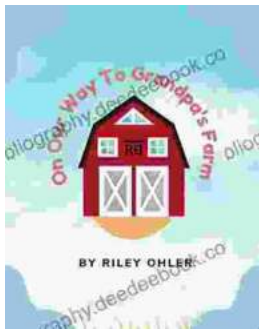
1. Still, James. *May 4th Voices*. Dramatic Publishing, 2007.
2. "Kent State Shootings." Kent State University, <https://www.kent.edu/may4>.
3. "The Vietnam War and the Kent State Shootings." PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/kent-state-shootings>.

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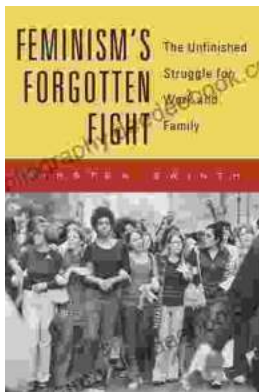


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