

# STAK

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A short dramedy by  
Stacy D. Tanner

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

LINDSEY, eleven years old, intelligent, outgoing, and supernaturally imaginative.

DR. JANE BIGELOW, successful child psychologist with an unrequited love for children's literature.

## SETTING

Kid-friendly psychiatrist's office of Dr. Jane Bigelow.

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*(DR. JANE BIGELOW sits at her desk, notepad and pen poised and ready. Across from her sits LINDSEY KRAMER, her sketch pad, crayons, and a college composition notebook poised and ready.)*

**JANE:** So, why do you call him "Stak"?

**LINDSEY:** He likes to stack things.

**JANE:** You know that Stak's a he?

**LINDSEY:** No. But the name would work for either a boy or a girl or a whatever. Like Gonzo from the Muppets, you know? Gonzo's a whatever. Although Stak doesn't look anything like Gonzo.

**JANE:** What does Stak look like?

**LINDSEY:** I'll show you.

*(Lindsey crosses to Jane, shows her the sketch pad.)*

I don't know if you can tell from my drawing, but he's the size of a house cat. Maybe I should put something next to him for perspective. Like a breadbox. That's pretty classic.

**JANE:** *(Studying the drawing:)* He's cute. I think.

**LINDSEY:** And he can walk on his back legs. Like a bear. He has a cape, too.

**JANE:** I don't see his cape.

**LINDSEY:** That's because he just made it, before I drew that. Last night, out of my argyle socks. Personally, I think he chose argyle as it will go with just about anything. I like argyle, too, but it's harder to draw than you'd think.

**JANE:** Let's go back for a minute, okay? You say he just made it?

**LINDSEY:** Stak's very talented.

**JANE:** Does he make all his clothes?

**LINDSEY:** He doesn't wear clothes. A cape's more of an accessory than clothes.

**JANE:** (*Jots down a note.*) What else can you tell me about him?

**LINDSEY:** You really want to know? Wow. Mom and Carl won't let me talk about him. And there's so much to say. (*Beat.*) Well, what I think is particularly cool is that he likes to change the color of his fur. Sometimes it's sapphire blue just like my dad's eyes. Or Fire Engine Red, like my mom's lipstick.

**JANE:** (*Jots down another note.*) So Stak looks like colors that remind you of your mom and dad.

**LINDSEY:** (*Smiling:*) I knew you'd say that. My favorite thing, though, is when Stak's all undecided and goes with rainbow. Purple, blue, green. Chartreuse.

**JANE:** Tough for him to pick one thing or the other.

**LINDSEY:** There's so many to choose from.

**JANE:** Lindsey, how long have your mom and dad have been divorced?

**LINDSEY:** Two years, six months. Officially.

**JANE:** And when did you first meet Stak?

**LINDSEY:** About a month ago. Right after my birthday. Dad sent me a whole bunch of pens and colored pencils and even a set of Micron Ink Brushes. Professional grade.

**JANE:** Your dad couldn't come to your birthday? That must have made you feel pretty sad.

**LINDSEY:** Not really.

**JANE:** Not really?

**LINDSEY:** He Skyped me from his book signing, and when he got back, we went to Six Flags and had pizza. Have you read the *Fuzzy Gee* series? My dad draws the pictures.

**JANE:** I have, actually. I like them.

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**LINDSEY:** You're kidding. I've never met a grown-up who reads kids' books. Mom says kids' books are for kids, and adults who read them have disorders. Do you have a disorder?

**JANE:** I don't think liking a good story means you have a disorder. In fact, when I was going to college, I kind of wished I could be a children's author. I loved their imaginations.

**LINDSEY:** I wish you were around before. You could have argued my dad's case.

**JANE:** Did your parents argue a lot?

**LINDSEY:** Constantly. Mom was always mad that Dad didn't have a "real job." So before he got published, he went to work for some advertising people. But that meant he had to draw his animals and things at night and on the weekends. Mom said he was obsessed.

**JANE:** (*Studies Stak's picture:*) Do you think about Stak a lot?

**LINDSEY:** Not obsessively, if that's what you mean.

**JANE:** I mean, does he follow you to school? Interfere with your homework?

**LINDSEY:** Oh, no. He's very well behaved. For the most part.

**JANE:** Have you told your friends about him? Or, shown them, rather?

**LINDSEY:** They think he's pretty epic. Roger says Stak's a chubby nerd-monster, but I take that as a compliment.

*(Jane opens Lindsey's file, skims it.)*

**JANE:** I was wondering how often you think about Stak, because some of your teachers say you have a little trouble concentrating in class.

**LINDSEY:** Really? I thought they'd say I have a lot of trouble. But that's not Stak's fault. School's boring. You know that. You

went to college. Why didn't you ever write a kid's book, like you wanted?

**JANE:** My parents said as long as they were paying for it, I'd take their courses, not mine. But I love medicine, and the mind. It wasn't a bad compromise.

*(Jane takes a stapled bunch of composition papers from Lindsey's file. It's littered with red pen.)*

What's this?

**LINDSEY:** Extra credit.

**JANE:** *(Reading:)* "Today's Unicorns."

**LINDSEY:** You want to read it? Out loud? It'd be so cool to hear someone besides my dad read a story of mine out loud.

**JANE:** *(Reading:)* "Many people don't realize that the unicorn is alive and well in the twenty-first century. This is because most people do not know how to look for them. Today's unicorn can be identified very simply by observing the modern horse, or *equus ferus*, which has a star in the middle of its forehead. They are direct descendants of the unicorn, as this is where their horn once was." *(To Lindsey:)* Was this for English? Creative writing?

**LINDSEY:** Science. We had to find an example of evolution.

**JANE:** Did Stak suggest you write this?

**LINDSEY:** Oh, no. Stak thought it might get me in trouble.

**JANE:** I see.

*(Jane puts the Unicorn report back in the file, writes on her notepad.)*

**LINDSEY:** You're sure writing a lot.

**JANE:** Just making some notes.

**LINDSEY:** About me? Or about Stak?



**JANE:** A little of both.

**LINDSEY:** You're going to write me a prescription, aren't you?

**JANE:** Lindsey, this is just our first session. It's a little early for me to decide what you need.

**LINDSEY:** I don't need anything. Why does everyone think imaginations need prescriptions?

**JANE:** Lindsey, you're saying Stak isn't imaginary.

**LINDSEY:** He isn't. But he had to start somewhere. Just like Fuzzy Gee. Or the Cat in the Hat. How sad would it be if they medicated Doctor Seuss?

**JANE:** I don't think Doctor Seuss ever really saw a six-foot cat.

**LINDSEY:** Are you sure?

**JANE:** Of course I'm sure. I had an imaginary friend, too, just so you know. Her name was Francy. Part person, part fairy. She was purple. But I knew she wasn't real.

**LINDSEY:** She was for a while, though. Right?

**JANE:** I thought so. But then I realized that she was just pretend.

**LINDSEY:** Oh. I'm sorry. Your mom made you see a doctor, too, huh?

**JANE:** Lindsey...

**LINDSEY:** Seriously, though. Don't you think E.B. White saw real spiders? And mice? If his mom made him see a doctor, there wouldn't be a Charlotte. Or a Stuart Little.

**JANE:** Those are stories based on real life things. Spiders, mice, rabbits, monkeys. They're all real. (*Holds up Stak's picture.*) Stak just can't be.

**LINDSEY:** Why not?

**JANE:** Because he's pretend. He lives in your mind, which is

fine. But that's all. Stak is an imaginary friend. He doesn't really exist.

*(Lindsey slumps in her chair, crosses her arms.)*

**LINDSEY:** Darn it. I thought you were going to be different.

**JANE:** Different than who?

**LINDSEY:** Than everybody that has to see something to believe it. If you can't see it, it doesn't exist.

*(Lindsey takes Stak's picture and holds it up to Jane:)*

You see this, don't you?

**JANE:** That's different. It's a picture. A good picture, but just a picture. *(Off Lindsey's look:)* Like...like unicorns, right? There's lots of pictures of them. In movies, books. Greeting cards. But unicorns aren't real, either.

**LINDSEY:** Of course they are. Just not right now.

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