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## Relationships at the core of 2026 Play Right Prize winning scripts

Complex, yet deeply human relationships are the focal points of the winning scripts for the 2026 Play Right Prizes. Supported by Chancellor Terry Whitehead (BA '94), the annual Play Right Prize competition encourages excellence and development in student playwriting. This year's winners are Steele Prefontaine, Nikko Hunt and Naima Rain.

The three prize winners each receive tuition credit and dramaturgical support to bring their plays to life on stage, with the first-place winner receiving a staged reading during the Play Right Prize and Spirit Prize Gala.



Fourth-year drama (tech/design) student Steele Prefontaine is the

first-place winner. His script, *Homebodies*, follows the final days of two brothers at odds, one caring for the other, as they confront themselves, their past and their present.

The Play Right Prize jury noted the pull of opposing themes of care and resentment, turning the myth of sibling rivalry on its head to create an absurd and confronting story.

Prefontaine says his inspiration came from the real-life story of Homer and Langley Collyer, who became tabloid fixtures in the 1930s for their life of seclusion and hoarding.

“When learning about their story, I found an inherent dramatic tension as I imagined what their final days must have been like. They became the basis of my characters, Ira and Harpo,” he says. “I found creative freedom in taking their story and transplanting it into rural Saskatchewan. Placing the story in Saskatchewan was an integral change in finding the tone of the play. I was able to draw on imagery, language and stories of the people and the land.”

The first runner-up is drama (performance) student Nikko Hunt. For her play, *Hot Commodity*, Hunt explores a mentor/mentee relationship between two young women in the cosmetics industry.

Described by the prize jury as a timely, fast-paced and tightly constructed critique of the beauty industry, Hunt says the idea for her play came from realizing how much her life had been consumed by makeup and skincare products.

“I have spent more than I would like to admit on products that sometimes just sit on my dresser. The main culprit that kept influencing me to buy more was social media. Every time I would open my phone there would be a new lip gloss out, or worse, a new perfume that was a ‘must have’,” she says.

“I began workshopping the play in my Playwriting II class and continued to work on it after the class concluded. During that process I received helpful feedback from my classmates and from my professor, Greg MacArthur, and I used their notes to help guide the next drafts of the play.”

Third-year drama student Naima Rain is the second runner up for the Play Right Prize with her play, *Goodbye See You Later*. The play explores the relationship between a father and daughter, taking place in limbo as the duo unpacks intergenerational traumas, addiction and the effects of residential schools.

The prize jury praised Rain’s submission as a mature and devastating testament of imagination, noting the script acts as both a lullaby and an elegy.

“By the end of the play, you are left wondering if the daughter will follow in his footsteps, as so much of her is made up of him,” Rain says. “The play itself was inspired by a conversation between my grandfather and me about tipi rings, and traditionally how, when someone passed away, their tipi ring would be closed, making it a death lodge.”

Prefontaine, Hunt and Rain will be recognized at the annual Play Right Prize and Spirit Prize Gala on March 19. The winners receive \$1,500, \$750 and \$250 respectively in tuition credits.

[Learn more about the plays on the ULeithbridge Stories site.](#)

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/relationships-core-2026-play-right-prize-winning-scripts>

PHOTOS: Steele Prefontaine, Nikko Hunt and Naima Rain

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