



Pr(a/e)ying Mantis

A Play by Andrea Browne

Dramaturgy by Shannon Blake Skelton



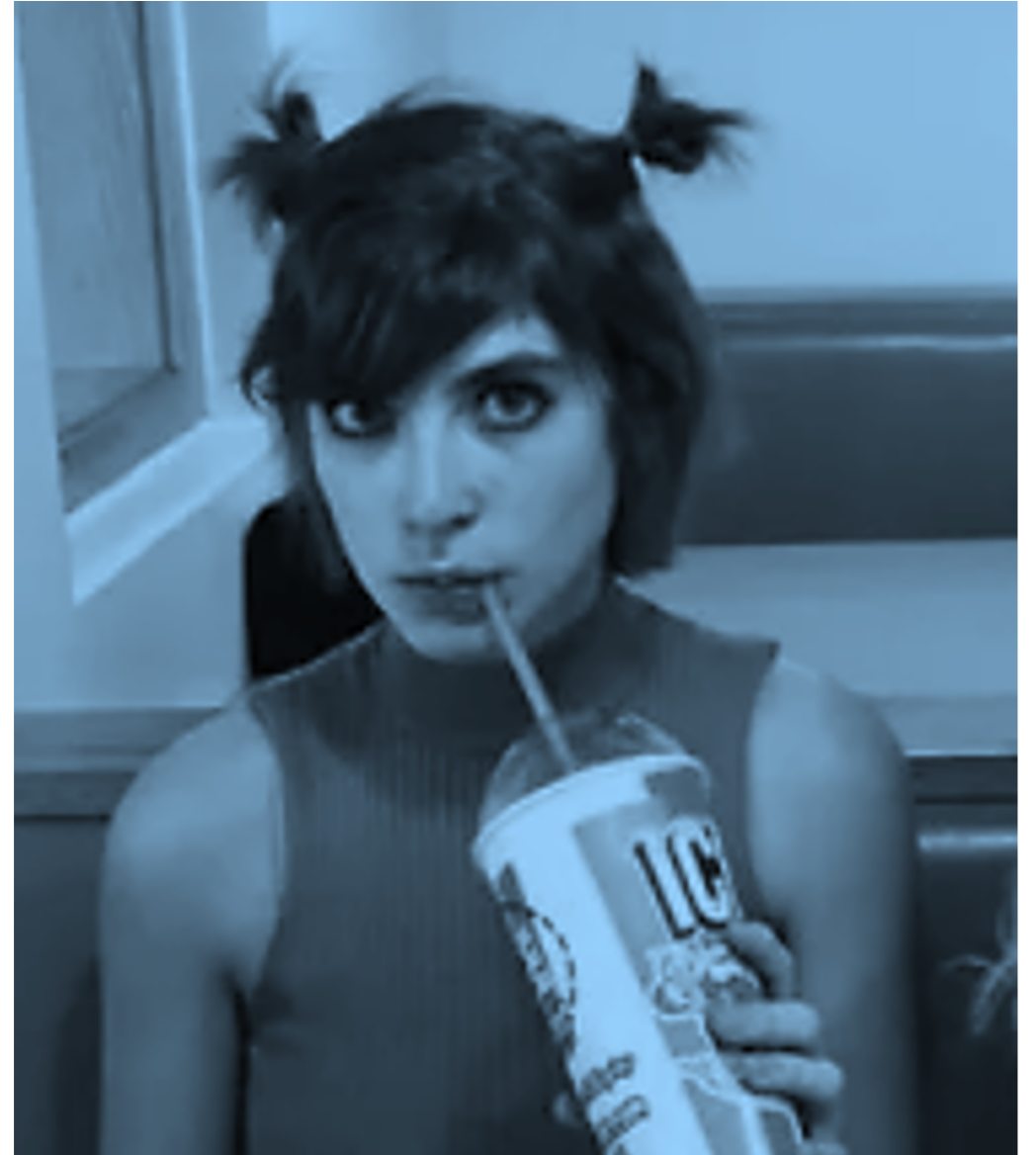
Prey vs. Pray

- Prey /prā/ (verb) “to hunt or kill for food.”
 - Pray /prā/ (verb) “to address or offer thanks to a deity or other object of worship.”
 - The mantis not only appears to ‘pray’ with its claws, but is also a creature who ‘preys’ on other insects and even larger animals.
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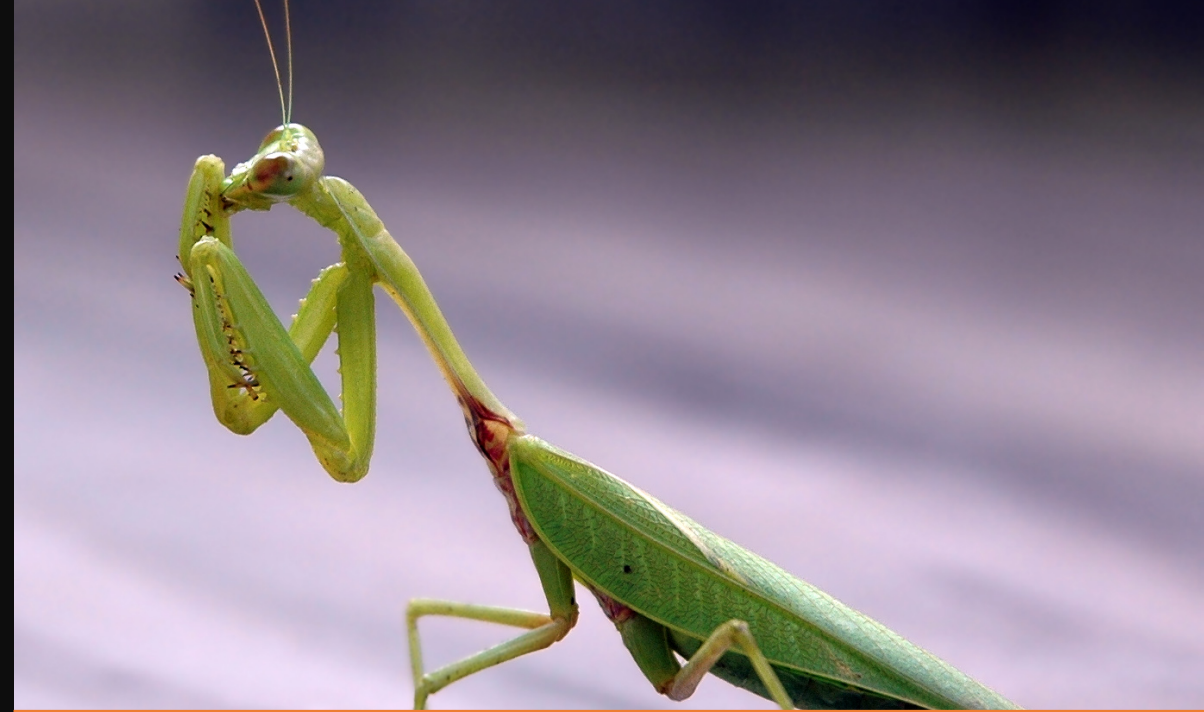
Andrea Browne

- Playwright of “Pra(a/e)ying Mantis”
- Please listen to the audio interview with Andrea Browne [HERE](#)
- Born 1997
- From Colby, Kansas
- Graduate of Kansas State University, 2020
- Andrea and her writing partner/sister Rachel can be found at <https://wildcatgirls.com/>
- Their video work is [HERE](#)
- Browne draws influence from reality television, her twin sister Rachel and her older sister Gabby who is an artist and performer.



Praying Mantis

- 2000+ species
 - Majority are tropical or subtropical
 - With spiked front legs, the mantis seizes prey in a viselike grip
 - A mantis may be disguised as foliage, twig or lichen
 - The term 'mantis' means 'diviner'
 - Greeks believed the insect to have supernatural powers
 - According to superstition, the saliva of a mantis can cause blindness in a man, and if eaten, it can kill a horse or mule
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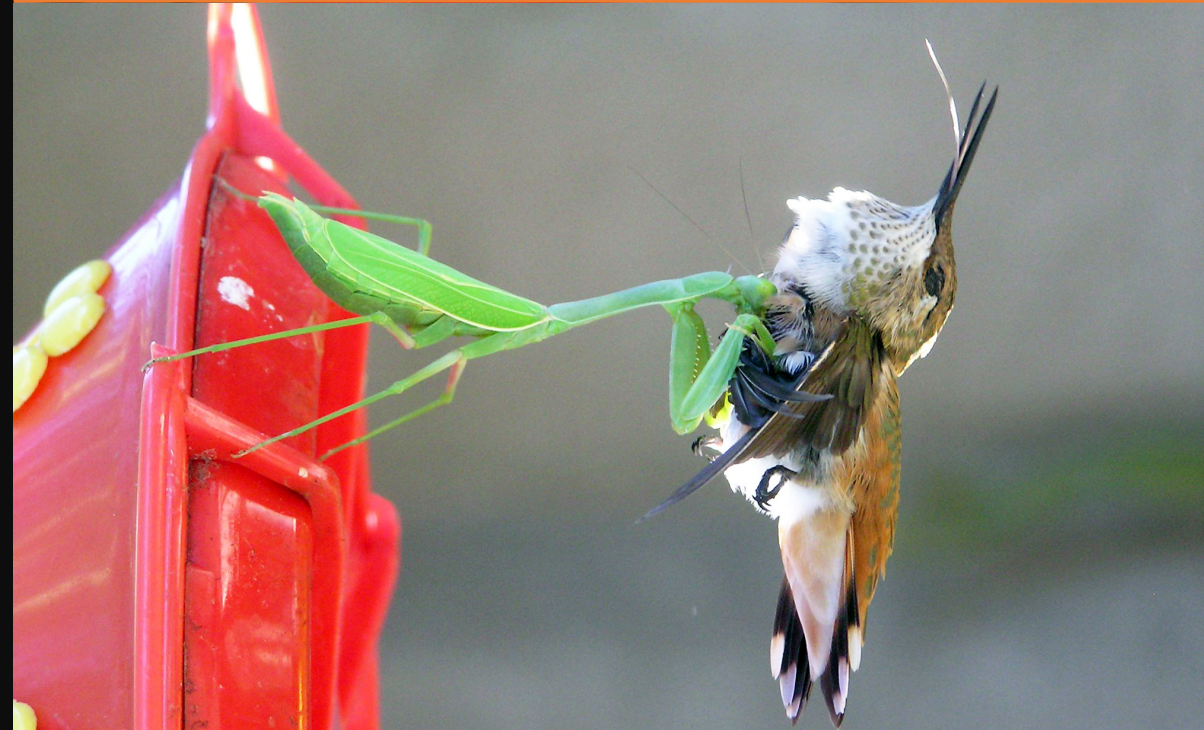
Praying Mantis – Mating Habits

- Praying mantis courtship can be a dangerous: females have been well-documented biting off the heads and eating other body parts of the males with whom they mate.
 - It is not as common as we expect: the mantis species that exhibits cannibalism of their mates makes a meal out of the males between just 13 and 28 percent of the time.
 - A study published in 2016 found that when female mantises consume their mates, they acquire important amino acids that are then incorporated into the eggs they lay.
 - They also appear to lay twice as many eggs after cannibalizing a male.
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Praying Mantis vs Hummingbird

- Indeed, praying mantises can – as depicted in the play – kill and consume hummingbirds.
 - A mantis has to be very hungry to kill prey as large as a hummingbird.
 - A mantis has rapid reflexes while their forearms and legs have spikes, allowing them to pin prey.
 - They can also turn their heads 180 degrees, so prey have little chance of going unnoticed.
 - A mantis' uncanny ability to blend into their surroundings, and their knack for staying very still, make it difficult for birds and insects to identify them.
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Improvisation

- Andrea Browne composes in an improvisatory manner.
- There is little planning or structuring to her initial draft of play.
- Though we tend to think of improvisation in music (jazz) and performance (comedy improv), artists and writers also use improvisation.
- Artists such as Jackson Pollock (top) approached painting as a process, seizing moments and emotions to create work without plan or preconceived notions.
- Writer Jack Kerouac (bottom) also embraced improvisation, typing at a manic pace to convey the ideas and sensations that came to him in a cascade of remembered details and experiences.



Praying Mantis Memes

Because of their oddly human facial appearance, flexibility and mating practices, the praying mantis has been a popular image in memes.



Please Make Sure You Visit the Following Sites:

- [Audio Interview with Andrea Browne](#)
- [Kansas Theatre Works \(Audio Production of “Pr\(a/e\)yin Mantis”\)](#)
- <https://wildcatgirls.com/> (Andrea and Rachel Browne’s Website)
- [TheWildcatGirls' YOUTUBE Channel](#)

Enjoy the Show!