

If William Inge were alive today...

In the new [“Back Porch,”](#) a Bluestem production at the Victory Theatre in Burbank, playwright Eric Anderson implicitly suggests how William Inge might have written his hit play [“Picnic”](#) (1953) or his subsequent variation on it, [“Summer Brave”](#) (1973, just before Inge committed suicide in Hollywood), in an era when he would not have felt compelled to stay in the closet.

The scruffy but charismatic guy (Jordan Morgan) who passes through a small town in Kansas in the ‘50s excites a young man (Isaac W. Jay), not a young woman, in Anderson’s play. And this charmer shows up in this town for a different reason — he’s doing stunts for William Holden during the Kansas location filming of Hollywood’s version of [“Picnic.”](#)

It’s a fascinating play, with an all-male cast, though perhaps it’s just a bit too 21st-century in a few aspects. But it might especially interest those who saw the recent [“Picnic”](#) at the Odyssey Theatre in West LA. That staging of Inge’s play by John Farmanesh-Bocca featured a Black cast in an otherwise colorblind and conventionally-gendered revival.