

WINDOWS INTO MANAHATTA

THE STORY

When Jane Snake, a Lenape woman from the Delaware Nation of Oklahoma, relocates to her ancestral homeland of Manahatta to launch an auspicious career on Wall Street, her life quickly turns into a turbulent journey of reconciliation. Realizing the implications of her career path as a Wall Street securities trader and the tragic history of her Lenape ancestors who once called Manahatta home, Jane navigates the meaning of her Native identity, connection to culture and duty to family. Back in Oklahoma, her sister Debra works against the odds to keep the Lenape language alive, while their mother, Bobbie, unwittingly takes out a mortgage loan she can never repay. Time and place flow seamlessly and converge as the generations of Jane's family enter into the unfolding story. Her ancestors in Manahatta are suffering the exploits of the Dutch West India Company and the encroaching fur trade. After the "sale" of Manahatta, Peter Minuit is sent by the Dutch West India Company and orders a cruel campaign against the Lenape still living in Manahatta. As the past and present events spiral into crisis and collide, all are faced with difficult, life-altering choices. *Manahatta* explores the meaning of identity, home, the cyclical nature of greed and the cost of American capitalism on human lives.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Mary Kathryn Nagle is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and an award-winning playwright whose work has been commissioned and produced in theatres across the U.S. Her latest play, *Sovereignty*, opened in 2018 at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. Nagle's plays are deeply informed by her work as an attorney. She is a partner with Pipestem Law P.C. (www.pipestemlaw.com) and specializes in tribal sovereignty and legal protections for Native women and children against domestic violence and sexual assault. Her play *Sliver of a Full Moon* performs regularly in Native communities and universities and centers on the need for the restoration of tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians under the 2013 re-authorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Nagle is also the Executive Director of Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program (<http://yipap.yale.edu>), which aims to cultivate and increase the visibility of Indigenous storytelling and performance on the American stage.

LENAPE—THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE

The ancient creation story of the Lenape people originates from deep ocean waters and a Tree of Life atop a giant turtle's massive shell, hence "Turtle Island," the name used by many Indigenous people for what is now called North America. The Lenape were revered as benevolent people existing in a society of which the women were the moral backbone. The Lenape lived for centuries in many small villages throughout an area from what is now Philadelphia to New York City, from Atlantic City to Pittsburgh.

Then came the pale ones with hairy faces and long knives, sailing in large boats along a river now known as the Hudson. The Lenape cautiously welcomed these strangers to find respite on their shores and in their camps. They would soon find many more strangers continuously arriving.

European hunger for vast new resources resulted in the infamous "Purchase of Manhattan" by Dutch colonial powers. This forced misunderstood concepts of land sales and violently enforced boundaries on a people who only wished to peacefully coexist on the eternal gift of their Creator.