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# Comedy

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## Adam Wade

By Jane Borden



Photograph: Mindy Tucker

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At the start of his new solo storytelling performance, *The Adam Wade Show*, Wade screens a video of his tween self lip-synching "Only the Lonely." Then, referencing the posters on his bedroom wall, he explains in a loud, thickly accented voice, that he "was a big fan of *The Princess Bride* and the Boston Celtics."

Over the past decade, the 34-year-old has developed more than 60 autobiographical tales. He's won 15 Moth StorySlams, a record, and two GrandSlams. Among the more memorable pieces: He finally scores a date with an old crush from home, but gets so drunk at dinner that his mother has to retrieve him; after his first kiss, he throws up on the girl; he thought he had an "in" at a cool-kids high-school party because in grade school he stuck up for the host when she was bullied...she kicks him out anyway, but don't worry, he and his friends steal her wine coolers.

The tales are a little sweet, a little sad, and okay, a lot of them depict failing with girls. But underneath brims an unflinching self-confidence; he believes in the power of being a good egg. I've heard Wade described as self-deprecating, but I disagree. That phrase implies manipulation: Either a comic wants you to laugh "at him" to gain your sympathy, or "with him" to let you know he's in on it. With Wade, there's no distance between story and storyteller. "I never could tell jokes," he explains over the phone. "The more I was myself, the better I did."

"He's completely vulnerable," explains George Dawes Green, the founder of the Moth. "When he goes on stage he brings only himself. People instantly fall in love with him."

Wade's work requires a new category: You laugh "around him."

Wade performs in *Nights of Our Lives* Wed 31 at [Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre](#) and cohosts *Real Tales from College* Apr 14. The Adam Wade Show happens Apr 12.

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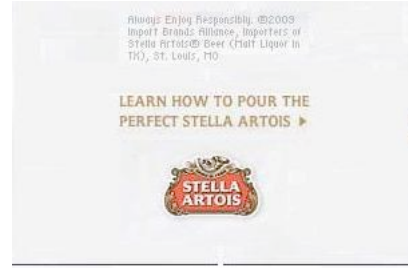
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