

SPRING AWAKENING

cosy chat about reproduction.

MORITZ: I can't chat about reproduction, Melchior. No...no, couldn't you write it all out, everything you know—clear, unambiguous—stick it in one of my books during break and I'll take it home without knowing. One day it'll just turn up. So I'll have to look through it however much work there is piling up. And if it's absolutely essential—you could put a few diagrams in the margin.

MELCHIOR: You're a little girl, Moritz. Still, it'll be an interesting piece of work. You haven't ever seen a girl, I suppose?

MORITZ: Yes, I have.

MELCHIOR: All over?

MORITZ: Completely. On Shrove Tuesday I slipped into the anatomy museum. If anyone had caught me I'd have been expelled. It was like waking up on a new day...everything there, it was the truth—such beauty...

MELCHIOR: Oh. Well, then illustrations won't be necessary.

MORITZ: No...of course not... Of course you've seen it...

MELCHIOR: That time in Frankfurt, when I was there with Mother last summer, one day... You're going, Moritz?

MORITZ: I must work... Good night.

MELCHIOR: See you tomorrow.

ASCENSION DAY

by Timothy Mason

Faith (18) - June (18) - Mary-Lois (17) - Joyce (16)

The Play: Life often takes a turn when we are young that affects us forever. This theme is explored with an edge in Timothy Mason's short play set in a Lutheran Bible camp in Wisconsin, late in May, 1947. The story centers around nine teenagers spending a week at camp, strengthening their faith through testimonials, enriching the quality of their lives by study (everything from "nature tips" to lifesaving), and having time to spend with each other, sharing life experiences. If all of this seems like expected church camp business, what is underneath this engrossing drama certainly isn't. In this seemingly tranquil environment, on the shores of a beautiful lake, loon song abounding, a series of moments compose a score that will not only change many lives, but will allow us the opportunity to reflect on the path our lives have taken. Written with economy, the issues are significant, the characters crystalline. The week is seen through the eyes of the young people. In fact, the adults at camp never appear—but are always a threatening presence. Specifically we follow the story of two sisters, Faith and Charity. Faith, the older of the two, is returning to camp—this year as a junior counselor. Last year at camp, her life began to change. Having been brought up in a strict home, overseen by a demanding, single-minded father, Faith found her experiences at camp exciting but disturbing. She met a boy, a boy who has returned this year. Faith struggles to handle the feelings in her heart, while at the same time, striving for perfection in the eyes of her parents, her sister, and herself. Her rigid instincts for right and wrong (influenced by her father) have driven away the boys and, during the course of the play, will sever the close bond that for years had held her and Charity together. Charity wants the freedom to explore a new-found excitement away from the watchful eye of her parents and resists Faith's firm governance. Perhaps seeing her own choices in Charity's actions, Faith drifts further away until the desperation demands action. A rekindled spark with Wesley, last year's boyfriend, ends in disaster. Those around her seem shallow, mindlessly content for the same kind of life that their parents live. Faith somehow demands more from life. As the

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loons cry on the lake, Faith shatters inside, unable to maintain her fragile facade. Her final fateful move brings the play to its startling climax, and forever changes the course of her life.

The Scene: A few days have gone by, rather uneventfully, and the girls take a moment to finish their hot chocolate on the back steps of the dining hall. It is a moonlit night. Among the thoughts on the minds of the girls is Faith's concern that these few days have passed without Wesley, her boyfriend from last summer, so much as saying hello.

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(Wednesday night. Faith, June, Mary-Lois and Joyce sit and stand on a flight of steps behind the dining hall, drinking hot chocolate. Over the lake, there's a moon.)

JOYCE: On a night like tonight I can't imagine a thing wrong with the world.

FAITH: You should get a better imagination.

JUNE: Faith, she's fine, stop worrying.

FAITH: It's ten-thirty.

MARY-LOIS: Gosh, I had no idea.

JOYCE: When do you suppose the moon'll be full? It's pretty close.

FAITH: Full moon, June the first—first quarter, June the ninth—new moon, sixteenth of the month.

JOYCE: How do you keep track of things like that?

FAITH: I pay attention. If I hadn't promised her I wouldn't act like her sister while we're here, I'd kill her.

JUNE: When are you going to talk to Wesley?

FAITH: June, just don't.

MARY-LOIS: *(To Joyce.)* Are you going with us into town in the morning?

JOYCE: No, I've got Junior Lifesaving. It's strange, when you're out here it's as though things like towns don't exist, the rest of the world doesn't exist.

MARY-LOIS: Oh, I know.

FAITH: It's been nearly a week, if he wants to talk to me he can come up and talk to me.

JUNE: Not when you've got a look like that on your face.

FAITH: A look like what?

JUNE: I don't know. Mount Rushmore.

FAITH: I am sick to death of people telling me I turn to stone, I don't turn to stone, I am not made of stone, I am made of all the ordinary things people are made of. *(Beat.)*

JUNE: Pardon me. *(Long uncomfortable pause, which Joyce tries to cover with a song, unsuccessfully.)*

JOYCE: *(Singing.)* "K-k-k-Katie, K-k-k-Katie, You're the only g-g-g-girl that I adore..." *(She trails off. Long pause.)*

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FAITH: *(To June.)* What are you doing in the fall?
JUNE: Oh, it's going to be crazy. George gets demobilized at the end of August, we figure he'll be back home by the first week of September, just in time to help finish getting the crops in. Mom's already working on the dress, and I'll start sending out the invitations and working on the bridesmaids' dresses and turning Dad's den into a home for George and me and that's going to be no picnic, believe me, I think Dad wishes he'd never said okay, he's really going to miss that den. You're going to like your dress, I think, at least I hope, just a very pale purple taffeta with a delicate white lace. The groom's dinner'll be at Weston's Steak House and the rehearsal dinner'll be at the hotel, and we're renting the American Legion club for the reception, and by the thirty-first of October I'll be Mrs. George Nyquist.
FAITH: Oh, yeah, I forgot. *(Beat.)*
JUNE: Faith, you just say things like that to annoy people, you didn't forget my wedding for goodness sake.
JOYCE: *(To June.)* Gosh, I envy you.
JUNE: *(To Faith.)* What are you doing this fall?
FAITH: I don't know. Dad'll hire me at the feed-store, I guess.
JOYCE: Marrying a *soldier*.
JUNE: What about college? Out of our whole class, you were going to be the one who went to college.
FAITH: Out of our whole class, you mean all nine of us? Yeah, I guess I thought so, too. Chippewa County Community College. Maybe I still will. Dad doesn't see the point of it. At first I was upset, but now I'm not sure I can see any point either.
MARY-LOIS: I can't help it, I want to start having babies. As long as I can remember I've just wanted a baby, a whole lot of babies, I love babies.
FAITH: Did you ever wonder, if we didn't happen to be born here, if we were born somewhere else, everything would be different?
MARY-LOIS: What do you mean?
FAITH: I don't know. *(Pause.)*
JOYCE: What is it about a moon that makes you want to be with someone so bad?

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MARY-LOIS: I asked my Aunt Elinor, she's a spinster, I asked her if she ever missed having children, gosh, I could have bit my lip. She said, No, I've got my nieces and my nephews, and then she went upstairs to bed with a migraine headache for the rest of the day.
JOYCE: When I said the moon made me want to be with someone, I wasn't talking about children.
JUNE: Joyce, we know what you were talking about.
JOYCE: Or your Aunt Elinor. *(The girls laugh a little. Long pause.)*
JOYCE: *(Singing.)* "K-k-k-Katie... "
JOYCE & MARY-LOIS: "K-k-k-Katie....
You're the only g-g-g-girl
That I adore.
When the m-m-m-moon shines
Over the cowshed,
I'll be waiting by the k-k-k-kitchen door."