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The Dark at the Top of the Stairs

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THE DEPARTMENT OF

SYRNAH PLAYERS

of

Tulane University

THE BACK AT THE TOP OR THE HEAT STROKE

by William Inge

Staged by William Inge

December 13 and 14, 1960. This is an

production presented by permission of

Grease Productions [and the

THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

and

THE TROJAN PLAYERS

of

Taylor University

Present

THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

by William Inge

Shreiner Auditorium

December 12, 13, and 14, 1963  8:15 p.m.

Produced by special arrangement with
Dramatists Play Service Incorporated
ABOUT THE PLAY

The Dark at the Top of the Stairs is a play that a child might overhear as he peeks secretly into the deepest recesses of the hearts of adults. Yet, just as truly, it is a play which an adult might witness as he stands just outside the hearts of children, for William Inge depicts here the terrific reluctance with which the human heart shares that which is most basic to itself, even with those it loves.

Inge's warm, sensitive, human, and often humorous portrayal of the lives of average people is an honest, penetrating, yet encouragingly affirmative dramatization. Along with Luther, A Man for All Seasons, and The Miracle Worker, its affirmation is the minority voice of the contemporary theatre. Critics were nearly unanimous in naming this the best of Mr. Inge's plays. Robert Coleman wrote that it "digs deeper into what makes people tick than any of them" and that the drama catches "the essence of humanity." Brooks Atkinson suggested that these are "just quick and poignant glances into the privacy of hearts and souls."

With deft strokes, Mr. Inge's portrait reveals the loneliness, the need, which exists under the deceptive facade of each of us. The gruff boisterousness of Rubin Flood, Cora's self-righteousness, and over-indulgence of her children, Lottie's rau-
cous joviality, the stoic retreat of Morris Lacey, and Sammy Goldenbaum's intense desire to please are masks to reveal the agony and fear within. It is then that the characters are caught in the shocking awareness of how little they really know the people they love the most. It is this complexity of human life, the fear and frustration coupled with the intense desire to love and share, that the Christian must comprehend. It is this insight which makes this play so desperately needed on this campus, since without this comprehension there is no hope for the Christian to reach and share.

In an article he wrote for The New York Times, Mr. Inge states, "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs is a play culled from my memories of childhood, lived in a wildly prosperous oil boom town of the 20's...the theme of the play is fear, the personal fear with which each man lives in a world that does not want to recognize fear. I know that as a child I thought all my fears were peculiar to me alone and that all the rest of the world was brave. It has taken me years of living to realize the fears in us all, the fears in the most seemingly brave, the bravery in the most seemingly frightened...The Dark at the Top of the Stairs may represent any number of things to any number of people. To me it represented a fear of the future."

Mr. Inge does not glibly, by the use of some Deus ex machina, solve this dark at the top of the stairs. He has too much integrity to take the easy way out. He is, however, affirmative enough to suggest that regardless of the form the darkness takes for each of us, it can be braved if we find someone who loves or understands and is willing to face it with us. The rickety, steep, and formidable ascent of life need not end in despair if a person can find a hand to hold, a heart to share, another fearful being who will accept. Then we can "go up together."
CAST FOR THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS

Rubin Flood ........................................ Dale Lantz*
Cora Flood ........................................ Constance Cuthbertson
Sonny Flood ........................................ Mitchell Young
Reenie Flood ....................................... Leanne Levchuk*
Flirt Conroy ........................................ Barbara Bennett*
Morris Lacey ....................................... Carl Haland*
Lottie Lacey ........................................ Louise Smith*
Sammy Goldenbaum ................................. Mark Clough*
Punky Givens ...................................... Gary Bragg

SETTING
The setting for the entire play is the home of the Flood family in a small Oklahoma town close to Oklahoma City. The time is the early nineteen-twenties, during an oil boom in the area.

Act I
Late Monday afternoon in early spring.
15 minute intermission

Act II
The following Friday evening.
5 minute intermission

Act III
Late afternoon on Saturday
Punch will be served on the main floor during the intermission between Act I and Act II

* Denotes Trojan Player Membership

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director ................................................. Jim Young
Assistant Directors ................................. Marijane Ritter, Stanley Thompson
Designer-Technical Director ........................ Tom Ringenberg
Consultant ............................................ Gladys Greathouse
Stage .................................................. Sandra Phinney*
   Roberta Aller*, Philip Carman, Danny Carpenter, Lane Crosby, Barbara Durnbaugh, Robert Finch*, Thomas Housley, Sandra Humble*, Jeanne Rupp*, Pam Steel, Nancy Ozia*
Stage Properties .................................... Dayle Dickey*
   Svend Abrahamsen*, Mark Clough*, Ellenor Hustwick*, Miriam Schmitt, Robert Schmitz
Lighting and Sound ................................. Robert Hunter
   John Kunkler, Dee Friesen*, Gene Platte
Costumes .............................................. Molly Moffett*
   Joyce Johnson, Marion Dódd, Marilyn Domhoff
Make-up ................................................ Sonja Strahm
   Sharon Howard, Naome Fearing*, Janice Lowrey*
Publicity ................................................ Dianne Skoglund*
   Carolyn Herr, Alyce Dick, Carolyn Saxton
Box Office ............................................. Dianne Skoglund*
   Dara Dean Peters, Edith Ann Landrith*, Barbara Davis*
House .................................................. June Heflinger
   Konita Forbes, Mavis Chapman

* Denotes Trojan Player Membership
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

J. R. Parker

Mrs. Madge Cox