

SPRUCEHAVEN B

Three dark tales

By Mark Cornell

Tell Me You Love Me

Characters: ISABEL, 30; TOMMY, 30

Time: Late October, 1995

A Thousand Shades of Black

Characters: FIST, 38; ANSEL, 26; NOAH, 26; ISABEL, 45

Time: Spring, 2010

Lemon Drop

Characters: JOHN, 51; ISABEL, 13; OFFICER SNODGRASS, 38

Time: August, 1978

*Notes on the play:*

*All three plays take place in the B cottage at the Sprucehaven Lodge on Bailey Island, Maine.*

*The actor playing FIST should also play OFFICER SNODGRASS. The actor playing TOMMY should also play NOAH. ISABEL in the first two plays should be played by the same actor. ISABEL at 13 should be played by a teenager. The play, then, requires four men and two women.*

*This play has interludes between plays one and two, and two and three. The stage crew should come on as "the maid service," and dress and behave as those characters.*

*This play should have intermissions during the two interludes between plays one and two, and two and three.*

ISABEL

Sort of.

JOHN

And almost competent. Unlike everyone else. I mean, the police couldn't find you. I found you.

ISABEL

You also lost me.

Beat.

JOHN

Yes. How did he do it? How did this guy grab you?

ISABEL

It was at that football thing in Portland.

JOHN

I know that. The Patriots summer camp. But how did he get you? Your mom and I left you at that kids' tent for five minutes to go hear Chuck Fairbanks speak. What happened?

ISABEL

Why is this important?

JOHN

I just want to know how he did it.

ISABEL

I don't remember.

JOHN

(aggressive)

The lady at the tent told us he talked to you for thirty seconds and then gave you something. What did he give you? Money? Pretty little earrings?

ISABEL

I don't fucking remember.

This stops JOHN.

JOHN

Oh, my God, I am so sorry. Oh, Jesus. What am I doing?

ISABEL

You were being mean. You were being Dad the Football Coach.

JOHN

Maybe I'm just tired. I haven't eaten anything. I'm sorry.

ISABEL

Forget it.

She offers another.

JOHN

One is fine.

ISABEL

You're hungry, aren't you?

He smiles.

JOHN

OK.

He takes a second lemon drop and puts it in his mouth.

JOHN (cont'd)

You going to have one?

ISABEL

No. I can wait for the pizza.

She sits next to him. They sit quietly for a moment as he tosses around the candy in his mouth.

JOHN

So now what?

ISABEL

Now we wait. (beat) For the pizza.

JOHN

I thought we could talk.

ISABEL

About what?

JOHN

Where we go from here.

ISABEL

Oh.

JOHN

How we make up for lost time.

ISABEL

We can't make up for lost time.

JOHN

We can try.

ISABEL

You can't get back what's gone.

JOHN

You're awfully wise for 13.

ISABEL

Joe gives me...uh, gave me books to read. Lots and lots of books.

JOHN

What sort of books?

ISABEL

Books about culture and stuff. Society. All the problems we have.

Tired, he half-laughs, agreeing,  
rubbing his eyes.

JOHN

We do have a lot of problems. Vietnam is over, though.

ISABEL

Joe says books will solve everything. He says books are our friends. And that information is power.

JOHN, looking dazed, barely hears her.

JOHN

Wow, I haven't had a lemon drop in forever. Funny. Suddenly I'm remembering this dentist I had as a kid. She had lemon drops in the waiting area, which, even then, I thought was odd. I mean, who puts candy in a dentist's office?

He sighs, looks at her, smiles. She doesn't react, so he looks off. He takes a deep breath in, and then lets it out.

JOHN (cont'd)

Wow, I am tired. You tired?

ISABEL

No. It's six o'clock.

JOHN

(looking up at the clock)

12:25? That can't be right.

The clock on the wall says 12:25. It's plastic face is badly cracked.

ISABEL

I think that clock is broken. It's been on 12:25 since we got here. And look, its face is smashed.

He checks his watch.

JOHN

It's 6:15. (beat) I can't ever remember being this tired.

He laughs a little to himself.

JOHN

You know, we don't even know this guy's last name. All we have is "Joe." The police raided the house after you and I fled and there was no identification anywhere. No paperwork, nothing. (beat) What's Joe's last name? Did he ever say it to you?

ISABEL

No.

JOHN

Never? Are you sure?

ISABEL

Why are you pushing me?

JOHN

Because I want to find this man. I want to know what he looks like, what he did for a living. I saw all that lab stuff in one of the back rooms, was he a doctor? A chemist? What? And what were his daily habits, did he ever come down out of the mountains? I want to know everything.

ISABEL

I thought we came up here to get away from all that?

JOHN

His name was Joe. What was his last name?

ISABEL

I don't know.

JOHN

Joe Smith?

ISABEL

I don't know.

JOHN

Joe Johnson? Joe Downs? Joe Merriweather?

ISABEL

Stop it.

JOHN  
Joe Emerson? Joe Williams?

ISABEL  
Shut up!

JOHN  
Joe Young? Joe Brown? Joe Harrison?

ISABEL  
Please!

JOHN  
Joe Reynolds? Joe Wilson? Joe-

ISABEL  
Snodgrass! His name was Snodgrass!

She catches herself, startled. He looks hard at her.

JOHN  
What? What did you say? Did you say Snodgrass? Snodgrass?  
Like the cop outside?

His breath labors hard. He swoons.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Oh, shit.

He starts to rise, as if to go to the door, but his body goes half-limp, and he hits the floor on his knees.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Jesus, what's wrong with me?

He looks up at her.

JOHN (cont'd)  
I'm...

He tries to reach for her, but he falls to the floor. The candy spills out of his mouth. He tries to get up. Can't.

ISABEL  
Don't fight it, John.

JOHN  
Isabel...?

ISABEL  
Relax. The poison won't kill you. At least, it's not supposed to.

JOHN  
Poison?

ISABEL  
It just paralyzes you. For a little while.

JOHN  
Wha...what are you doing?

ISABEL  
I'm doing to you what he did to me.

JOHN  
Huh?

ISABEL  
He gave me a lemon drop. To get me to his car. It's laced with some thing with a really weird name. Starts with an "r." He said it's from the sixties.

JOHN  
I...

ISABEL  
He told me to always keep these lemon drops in my pocket wherever I go in case I need them. In case anyone came for me.

JOHN  
Isabel...

He starts crying again.

ISABEL  
I'm sorry, John. I'm going back to him.

JOHN  
Wh-why?

ISABEL  
Because he loves me and takes care of me.

He can hardly talk. Or move.

JOHN  
I've changed.

ISABEL  
So have I.