

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.

JOHN
(noticing...)
There's a scar on your forehead.

ISABEL
There is?

JOHN
Two scars. Three. Looks like you were burned. Did he do that to you?

ISABEL
I don't know. No.

She covers herself.

JOHN
Are you lying?

ISABEL
No.

JOHN
He never tried to hurt you?

She rubs her arm.

JOHN (cont'd)
He do something to your arm?

ISABEL
I don't want to talk about this.

JOHN
Tell me what he did to you.

ISABEL
Nothing. He's nice to me.

JOHN
Nice?

ISABEL
Yes.

JOHN
Did he...uh...did he ever lie down with you?

ISABEL
Of course.

JOHN
I mean, did he lie close, in bed, like me and your mom?

ISABEL

Like you and Mom? I remember *you* being in the guest room a lot.

JOHN

Did he put his hands on you? In ways you didn't like?

ISABEL

I *always* like it. He loves me.

JOHN

He doesn't love you.

ISABEL

Yes, he does. He says it all the time.

JOHN

He doesn't love you. Don't say that. How can you think-

ISABEL

Cigarette burns are a sign of love. Broken arms are a sign of love. When he ties me up and puts needles into my back, that is love. When he presses himself down on top of me and pushes my face into the bed, and puts things inside me, it's because he loves me. I scream and cry and bleed because I know he loves me.

JOHN

Oh, my God.

He starts to cry again.

ISABEL

He pays attention to me. You *never* paid attention to me. Every night when he comes home, he tells me he misses me. When he locks me up in my box at night, he sits outside and reads to me. You *never* read to me. He says good night. You never said good night. He tells me he loves me. (beat) All I ever wanted was for you to tell me you loved me.

JOHN

I love you, Isabel.

ISABEL

I don't believe you. (beat) You're crying again.

JOHN

Why do you speak about him in present tense?

ISABEL

What do you mean?

JOHN

"He's nice to me. He pays attention to me." You speak as if it's still going on.

ISABEL

Oh. That's a weird thing to notice.

JOHN

It's over. You know that, right?

ISABEL

(abruptly)

It's really hot in here.

JOHN

There's no AC.

ISABEL

Can you open some windows?

He gets up and opens the front window. He closes the curtain, fingers it back briefly, to look, then drags it back.

ISABEL (cont'd)

Are you going to get the bathroom window, too?

He goes into the bathroom. Struggling, he unsticks the window, opening it all the way.

JOHN

There.

He comes back out. Stands there. Doesn't know what to say.

JOHN (cont'd)

You want to watch TV?

ISABEL

There is no TV.

JOHN

(looking around)

Oh. Yeah. (beat) You see what that strange guy at the lodge was watching on his TV when we checked in? Bizarre.

ISABEL

It's called *Faces of Death*. Supposed to be real deaths. That people film.