

TRIBUTE

(He gives her a cushion for her back. She looks at him for a moment.)

SALLY: Thanks. Can I have a bite of your pickle?

JUD: *(Indicating.)* There's one right here.

SALLY: No, I want a bite of yours.

JUD: *(Offering it.)* Here, have a whole pickle.

SALLY: No, just a bite. *(She takes a fairly large bite.)* There—now we've shared a pickle.

JUD: I noticed that.

SALLY: So now we know each other a lot better and you can tell me anything.

(He looks at her for a moment.)

JUD: Okay—I wanted to tie up some loose ends. *(She doesn't understand.)* I realized my father and I were both getting older and that this was probably the last chance we'd have to—reach some understanding.

SALLY: See, was that so hard? *(She leans over and kisses him lightly. They gaze at one another.)* You really hated me taking a bite of your pickle, didn't you?

JUD: *(Earnestly)* It was nothing personal. I don't like anybody touching my food.

SALLY: *(Teasing.)* And you don't think that's weird?

(He looks at her for a moment and then impulsively kisses her. [The front door opens and Scottie enters. He looks at them and fakes outrage.]

WHAT I DID LAST SUMMER

by A.R. Gurney, Jr.

Ted (16) - Bonny (14)

The Play: Set during summer vacation, 1945, on the Canadian shores of Lake Erie near Buffalo, New York, this warm-hearted memory play is the coming of age story of fourteen-year-old Charlie Higgins. World War II is just winding down, and Charlie Higgins and his mother and sister are attempting to carry on with their lives as best they can while Mr. Higgins is serving in the Pacific. Charlie's mother, Grace, has been finding it increasingly difficult to make Charlie behave, so she has decided to send him to boarding school in the fall. But Charlie rebels; he takes a part-time job to earn spending money rather than tutor Latin. He approaches Anna Trumbull, a Tuscarora Indian know in the area as the "pig woman." Anna is a bohemian spirit devoted to organic living and self expression. She finds a kindred and impressionable spirit in Charlie, whose mother, it turns out, was once one of Anna's prize students. Much to Grace's consternation, Anna stretches Charlie's mind and soul by teaching him painting and sculpture, and filling him with radical ideas about life which eventually cause him to reject the conservative values of his family. This crisis results in a showdown between Grace and Anna in which the conflicting values of Materialism and Idealism are brought into sharp focus. At the end of the summer, Charlie leaves the tutelage of Anna Trumbull with a new sense of himself and his purpose in life.

The Scene: Charlie and his friend Ted have been vying for the attentions of Bonny. Bonny has opted for the more experienced and older Ted, however, despite the disapproval of her mother and father. Bonny is at the beach serving as lifeguard to some younger girls when Ted arrives with news about their date for that night.

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BONNY: *(Bonny spreads the towel, as if she were on a beach. She speaks quietly to the audience.)* Sometimes I think this play is secretly about me. That's what I secretly think. Because, for me, this is a crucial summer. All sorts of important things are beginning to happen. My father's letting me skipper the boat occasionally. And my mother says I can smoke, as long as it's in front of her. And I've got a paid baby-sitting job three times a week. *(She calls out.)* It's not cold, Susie. Just go in slowly. Bit by bit. And it'll be fine. *(To audience.)* And tonight, one of the most crucial things of all might happen. Tonight we might be riding this roller coaster. It's called The Cyclone, and on a calm night you can hear it roar, even though the amusement park is over five miles away! Oh it's the scariest thing! It's built right out over the lake, all rickety and shakey, and they say when you climb to the top, you can see all the way to town. And when you start down, it's so basically terrifying that *women* have thrown their *babies* over the *side*! It costs five tickets per person per ride, and there's a big sign right at the gate saying you have to be at least sixteen before you can ride it. But Ted knows the Canadian boys who take tickets, and right now he's seeing if they can sneak us on. *(Calls out.)* Nobody goes out beyond the sandbar, please! Stay in the shallow water where I can see you! *(Ted comes on eagerly, from U.L.)*

TED: Everything's copasetic.

BONNY: They'll let us on.

TED: No problem.

BONNY: Oh I'm shaking like a leaf. Did you tell Charlie?

TED: How could I tell Charlie? He's over at the Pig Woman's again.

BONNY: We'll have to wait and see if he can come too.

TED: Why Charlie?

BONNY: Because last summer we all promised to ride it together.

TED: They won't let him on. He's too young.

BONNY: He's my age.

TED: That's different. I told them you were my girl.

BONNY: Your *girl*?

TED: So they'd let you through.

BONNY: You mean you didn't mention Charlie?

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TED: I said I was bringing my girl.

BONNY: Oh. *(She calls out.)* Stay together, everybody! Everybody stay close together! *(Pause.)*

TED: So what do you say?

BONNY: How would we get there?

TED: How do you think? By car.

BONNY: With you driving? Or your father?

TED: I got my license, remember?

BONNY: I can't then.

TED: How come?

BONNY: My mother doesn't want me to go out alone at night in cars with older boys. She was even mad I took you sailing with me.

TED: That wasn't a car. And it wasn't at night.

BONNY: Well I don't know. She thinks you're too old for me.

TED: She didn't think that last summer.

BONNY: Well maybe you weren't last summer. *(Calling out.)* Yes I saw, Susie! I saw you do that somersault! That was very good, Susie.

TED: Don't tell her then.

BONNY: Don't *tell* her?

TED: Just meet me out by the main road.

BONNY: Without Charlie?

TED: Look, Charlie's going his way, why can't we go ours? Come on. I'll fix it so we ride in the front row. And I'll take you to the Frozen Custard place afterwards. And introduce you to my whole gang from high school.

BONNY: Gosh...

TED: *(Touching her arm.)* Sure. It'll be like a date. A real date.

BONNY: You're distracting me, Ted. I'm supposed to be watching these... *(She looks out at the lake.)* ... kids. *(She jumps to her feet.)* Uh-oh.

TED: What?

BONNY: How many heads do you see out there?

TED: *(Counting quickly.)* One...two...three...four...

BONNY: There's supposed to be five!

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TED: (*Pointing.*) And five, over there!

BONNY: Thank God! (*Calling out angrily.*) Susie, when you decide to swim underwater, would you *tell* people, please?

TED: Close call, huh?

BONNY: That wouldn't have happened if I had used the buddy system.

TED: I hate the buddy system.

BONNY: Well at least it's safe. (*Clapping her hands.*) Everyone out of the water, please. I'm instigating a new rule! (*She starts Off U.R.*)

TED: What about our date?

BONNY: Tell you what: I'll ask my father.

TED: He'll say no.

BONNY: He might not. He lets me do more than my mother. (*She goes Off U.R.*) New rule, everybody! New rule! We're going to have the buddy system! (*She goes Off.*)

TED: (*Calling after her.*) Your father will say no! (*To audience.*) Sure he'll say no. Lookit, someday somebody ought to write a play about a Canadian kid who hangs around Americans while his dad takes care of their summer homes. Here's the story: First, he's friends with those kids, trading comics with them, playing tennis, horsing around on the raft. Everything's hunky-dory. Then he starts growing hair on his nuts, and what do you know? The plot thickens. Suddenly when he shows up at the tennis courts, he gets the fish-eye from Mrs. Putnam for even sitting down and watching, for Christ sake. And soon he feels creepy even going down to the beach, like now it's out of bounds, or something. And then suppose he wants to take out an American girl. My God, suddenly it's like he wants to French kiss her, and bang her, and carry her off to Saskatchewan, all on the first date! I dunno. All I know is somebody ought to write about it sometime.

WOMEN AND WALLACE

by Jonathan Marc Sherman
Wallace (16) - Sarah (16)

The Play: Jonathan Marc Sherman wrote this unique coming of age play at the age of eighteen. In flashback, we see a young man in various relationships with the women in his life, including his grandmother, a first love, and a psychiatrist who helps him unravel his complicated life. The play opens with eighteen-year-old Wallace pelting a young lady with a ripe tomato and declaring his love. We then see Mother and six-year-old Wallace as she sends him off to school, followed by the shocking discovery of her suicide. The play builds momentum as it unemotionally addresses Wallace's journey toward manhood, encountering women at various points along the way. Seen through Wallace's eyes, the play presents a series of troubled, funny, and insightful life moments. Although faced with unique circumstances, his delights, problems, desires, and needs reflect a universal picture of growing up that is informed by the basic relationship between all men and women. Here Wallace's gender and age are far less significant than the life-struggle to understand and to grow as a human interacting with the opposite sex. Clever and sparse in its style, the play is an excellent example of how the theater is a place to reflect and articulate all life experiences, particularly those of young people.

The Scene: The scene takes place in Wallace's bedroom. Wallace and Sarah are high school friends. However, this is the first attempt to date each other.

Special Note: A careful examination of the entire play will yield other scenes worth studying, and two fine speeches by Wallace suitable for solo work.