

The Summer Of My Twentieth Year

A drama in one act

Written by Mark Rees

Spotlight Publications

The Summer Of My Twentieth Year

CAST (in order of appearance)

John, 20

Grace, John's girlfriend, twenties

Charlotte, reporter, twenties

SET - a garden

TIME - the present

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Notes on the characters

John is twenty years old and believes he has been visited, and given special powers of insight, by the Spirit of God. He was given these powers, he believes, to prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ. He is a bright, intelligent and articulate young man.

Grace is a few years older and is John's girlfriend. She is a gullible young woman, very trusting, who is totally besotted by John and although only in her early twenties is something of an 'old fashioned' young lady.

Charlotte is in her early twenties and is a confident and out-going person; she has recently become a reporter on a regional newspaper.

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A garden

The set consists of a round, raised rostra with a large ten foot high white cross attached to the back of it. There are two lower, narrow raised areas running off this at angles, facing down right and left. There is also flooring in the middle of this, the shape reflecting the angle of the lower rostra R

As the house lights fade there is music

When the curtains open we see John on the cross

Grace is sitting DR on the edge of the lower rostra and Charlotte is standing on the lower rostra DL. The two girls are unlit, only John is in a spot

During their speeches lights come up on them

John It was in the summer of my twentieth year that the Spirit of God spoke to me. It was sudden and direct, as one would suppose it would be. I was alone in my room, asleep, and there was suddenly a white light, and I heard a voice, it said, "You must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." I have been given a power, an insight into the future. I have been chosen! *(Pause)* The Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be soon, for before he ascended he promised that he would come again. And that time is now! There will be a moment in the world when time will come to an end. And that time is now. Armageddon approaches!

He steps down from the cross

There is much sin in this world; there is hatred, pride, jealousy, corporate greed and political manipulation, there is selfishness and desire, infection and contagion, but all of this will be washed away when Jesus comes again. We are about to enter a time when all tears will be gone and there will be no more death. I know, I have been told. We are living in the 'Last Days'. His coming is very near and all the peoples of the earth will be judged, judged by the life they have lived.

Lights change and come up on Grace

Grace I met John through some mutual friends. We were at a party and I saw him across the room. I couldn't take my eyes off him, there was just something about him, you know? I thought he was beautiful. I introduced myself and we sat and talked, we talked for hours, actually I think I did most of the talking, John mainly listened. He's so calm, he has a, oh I don't know, a kind of inner serenity and before we knew it the party had finished and we were the last to leave. He walked me home and when he kissed me goodnight, just a peck on the cheek you understand, as one might kiss a relative or good friend, he said to me, "You have been troubled, there has been much on your mind". And there had been, you see my father had died recently, the 'big C', he'd really suffered and I'd been looking after him. My mother left us when I was ten and he wouldn't have anybody else in the house. *(Pause)* And John knew, he could feel my pain. He held my hands and I hardly heard what he was saying, all I could feel was a warmth flowing through my body. I felt light-headed, intoxicated, I started to laugh, right there on our front porch, I laughed and laughed. I couldn't stop! *(Pause)* It had been a long time since I'd laughed like that, if ever! He's brought light into my life, he's fantastic really, and I'd do anything for him.

Towards the end of her speech John has moved down to her and sits above her with his arms around her

Lights up on Charlotte who is looking into a small mirror whilst putting on some lipstick

Charlotte I got a phone call from my editor telling me to get over here to interview some guy that's been spoken to by God. I thought it was a joke. But it turns out that he's a very religious man, my editor - not God, I don't mean God isn't religious, I meant I was talking about my editor. In fact he used some very unreligious language when I questioned his decision. He told me I'd got to get this interview or I'd be seeking new employment! I've only been in the job for two months, since I left university in fact. He

threw that at me too, “You university types always think you know best, I didn’t go to university, I learned reporting the hard way!” Ah the joys of writing for a regional newspaper. So here I am! I don’t intend to be on this paper for very long, it’s a means to an end. I have my sights set on higher things! I’m going to end up on one of the quality dailies where I’ll have my own column, and my words will influence the nation. I have a gift, apparently, for getting behind a story, an insight if you like. At least that’s what Dr Rogers told me during my last tutorial at university. Mind you, he was trying to slide his hand up my skirt at the same time, hard to tell if the old bugger really meant it! About having insight I mean, not sticking his hand up my skirt. Right that’s it! Lippie on, metaphorical pencil sharpened and I’m ready to face the world!

Music, the lights change and Charlotte exits

John goes off as well leaving Grace alone

Lights up, it is daytime and sunny

Charlotte enters, stands for a moment watching Grace, who is sitting lost in her own reverie. She is holding a ‘crown of thorns’ which she puts to one side but retrieves later for John to put on Charlotte’s head when on the cross

Charlotte Excuse me!

Grace Yes?

Charlotte I’m looking for John Gardener?

Grace Yes.

Charlotte You’re not John Gardener?

Grace No.

Charlotte I’m a reporter, ‘Record and News Weekly’, you may have read it. I’ve come to interview John.

Grace He said you would come.

Charlotte I don’t think so, I didn’t make an appointment. I would normally phone first but I was out of signal, technology eh!

Grace I meant he said the media would come. You’re the first, but he said there would be many.

Charlotte And you are?

Grace I’m Grace, his girlfriend.

Charlotte Charlotte Green, but every one calls me Charlie.

They tentatively shake hands

So um, when will he be back?

Grace Soon.

Charlotte Mind if I wait?

Grace Of course not.

Charlotte Thank you.

Pause

(Sitting) So what’s it like having a boyfriend who’s got a direct line to the Big Fella?

Grace Sorry?

Charlotte God! And how did it happen? Was it a Damascene moment? Was he in the shower one day when suddenly kapow! Enter a choir of angels playing harps ...

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Grace If you’ve come to mock I think you should leave now.

Charlotte I’m sorry, I apologise, I, I do that all the time, I don’t mean to be disrespectful. I’ve just got an odd sense of humour, forget I said that and let’s start again, and please call me Charlie!

Grace Your apology is accepted.

Pause

Charlotte So, how did you two meet?

Grace At a party.

Charlotte Love at first sight?

Grace Not love no, we just connected, it instantly felt right, you know? Our love grew out of that.

Charlotte has taken out a pad to take notes

Charlotte In what way did it feel right?

Grace He made me happy.

Charlotte How does he make you happy?

Grace In everything he does. He's kind, generous and sensitive to my needs.

Charlotte Do you live together?

Grace Yes, but probably not in the sense you mean.

Charlotte In what sense then do you live together?

Grace We live in the same flat.

Charlotte And share the same bed?

Grace No, we don't live together as man and wife. We don't have ...

Charlotte What?

Grace Sexual relations.

Charlotte Aw come on! Do you expect me to believe that! Everybody's slept with somebody! For goodness sake I've ...

The Summer Of My Twentieth Year

A compelling drama by Mark Rees for one man and two women.

Plot Summary

John is twenty years old and believes he has special powers of 'insight' after allegedly being visited by the Spirit of God. The visitation, he has convinced himself, was to prepare him for the Second Coming. A young newspaper reporter, Charlotte, comes to interview him, but her cynicism and failure to take him seriously have terrifying consequences for her.

Approx. 30 minutes