

PERUSAL SCRIPT

White Mountain

A One Act Play

by

Mahonri Stewart



Newport, Maine

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WHITE MOUNTAIN

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LBT ORDER #2125

For the Wilson family, especially Krista, Janel, and Danielle.

Visiting your family's house in high school, where you often invited me to participate in your Spirit filled family prayer and scripture study, was a deeply meaningful experience for me. Your home was a spiritual sanctuary.

“And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I shall pour out my spirit upon all flesh;
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams,
your young men shall see visions:
And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days shall I pour my
spirit.” — Joel 2:28–29, KJV

“White Mountain” originated as a student project at Timpview High School in late 1999. Over a decade later, Zion Theatre Company performed “White Mountain” at Provo Theatre Company in Provo, UT, as part of the set *Immortal Hearts and Other Short Plays* on July 16, 2010.

Alterations to the text were very minor and it is more or less the same play that Stewart wrote in high school. It had the following cast and crew:

CAST

Ruth Wainwright: Bryn Dalton Randall

Abraham Wainwright: Amos Omer

Mercy Kimball: Jamie Denison

Jacob: Alex Barlow

CREW

Director: Brian Randall

WHITE MOUNTAIN by Mahonri Stewart. 20 minutes. Cast of 4 (2f, 2m) On the 19th century Missouri frontier, Ruth is abandoned by her impulsive, dreamer husband. Ruth then seeks sanctuary at the home of her brother Abraham, but when Abraham falls in love with Mormon visionary and dreamer Mercy, it creates a conflict between the three of them about spirituality, reliability, abandonment, and following one’s inner vision. Premiered by Zion Theatre Company 2010. **ORDER #2125**

Mahonri Stewart is an award winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center’s American College Theater Festival’s National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then he has also received numerous other awards and honors and continues to expand his writing into various mediums, including screenplays, graphic novels, poetry, and novels. He received his MFA degree in Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University. He received his Bachelors degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He’s a former Playwright in Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater for Children and Youth.

REVIEW EXCERPT:

“The dialogue seemed natural and easy ... I loved the way dreams played a role in both the theme and the dramatic structure of the play. The verbal retelling of dreams was lovely, but best of all were the staged dreams. They are nicely written and beautifully and poignantly staged by director Brian Randall. I was invested in the characters enough that I would have liked to have seen more of their story, but this short play was self-contained enough to be satisfying on its own.” —**Bianca Morrison Dillard**, *Utah Theatre Bloggers Association*

White Mountain

SCENE 1

A cabin in Frontier America, 1830s. Enter ABRAHAM and MERCY.

MERCY: Now, Mr. Wainwright, I will not hear another maligning word about your dancing. You were superb.

ABRAHAM: I think your toes will tell you a different story later tonight.

MERCY: Truly, stop! False humility does not become you. You stepped on my toes once, I'll grant you that, but after that, well ...

ABRAHAM: Yes?

MERCY: Stars were trailing from your feet.

ABRAHAM: You have a poetic turn to you, Miss Kimball.

MERCY: Hardly. I'm afraid I'm rather rough on my beaux. Or so I'm told.

ABRAHAM: Is that what I am? Your beau?

(There is a brief, tense pause.)

MERCY: I do not mean to ...

ABRAHAM: No, I'm sorry, I spoke out of turn. Perhaps I should not have brought you here ...

MERCY: No! I mean, I liked that you did. I still like it. Well, I ...

ABRAHAM: You do?

MERCY: I thought I was perfectly, well, plain ...

ABRAHAM: Plain about what?

MERCY: Mr. Wainwright, I know I have a reputation for over-zealousness, and if I have said anything unbecoming ...

ABRAHAM: I'm getting mighty confused here, Miss Kimball. Are you or aren't you ... ?

MERCY: I like you!

ABRAHAM: You—"like" me? And by that you mean ... ?

MERCY: You have shown me many kindnesses ...

ABRAHAM: And that means?

MERCY: You're not letting me pass through this with any sort of dignity, are you?

ABRAHAM: I am so sorry, I don't speak a woman's language very—prettily. When a woman tells me she wants to be my friend, it has meant that she wants nothing to do with me and when she's treated me miserably, she's apparently tried to tell me she's interested in starting something and when ...

MERCY: Do I have to spell it out to you?

ABRAHAM: I'm afraid my spelling is pretty shoddy, too.

MERCY: Well, then I guess I have to give a crack at the only language you may understand then.

(MERCY urgently kisses ABRAHAM. After a moment, she draws away and can't look at ABRAHAM, regretting the impulse. ABRAHAM is slightly shocked.)

I—I am so, so—well, I don't what I am—but sorry. I apologize for such an impetuous temperament. It gets me in all sorts of ...

(Having fully recovered, ABRAHAM comes over to MERCY and touches her lightly on the cheek, which silences her. They gaze at each other for a moment and then slowly, gently, ABRAHAM kisses MERCY.)

ABRAHAM: Mercy.

MERCY: Abraham.

ABRAHAM: Do we understand each other?

MERCY: Perfectly.

(They kiss again. ABRAHAM withdraws abruptly, to MERCY's confusion.)

ABRAHAM: Mercy ...

MERCY: Did I do it wrong?

ABRAHAM: No. You are doing everything right, believe me.

MERCY: Then ...

ABRAHAM: There's something I have to know first, before we continue with any of this.

MERCY: All right.

ABRAHAM: My Pa wasn't around, but my Ma, she was something mighty special and she brought us up right. The Bible was meat and drink to us ...

MERCY: I could tell. That's one of the reasons I have been so—admiring.

ABRAHAM: It wasn't a regular education by any means, but it was special to me ...

MERCY: I know what you mean.

ABRAHAM: Hear me out a bit, please. People, well, people have been saying strange things about you ...

MERCY: Not you, too! I am utterly sick to death of all the backbiting and the gossip in this town!

ABRAHAM: No, no, hear me out ...

MERCY: Please, Mr. Wainwright, if that's what I can expect from you, perhaps I've misjudged ...

ABRAHAM: *(Warmly; gently touching her face again.)* Mercy.

(MERCY stops and looks up with some hope again.)

MERCY: Go on.

ABRAHAM: People talk, and you can't really stop them from talking, even when they're saying outright

lies. A reputation is a fragile thing, and the slightest mistakes are misinterpreted and re-misinterpreted—they get distorted and fabricated out of their original shape. I understand all that.

MERCY: Thank you, Abraham.

ABRAHAM: But I have picked up on what they've said, and I just wanted to clear something up, before we keep going with this.

MERCY: All right ...

ABRAHAM: People say—well, they say that you're a—visionary woman.

(MERCY looks away, she does not want to answer to this.)

How do you respond to that, Mercy?

MERCY: How do you expect me to?

ABRAHAM: The most honest way you know how.

MERCY: Well, I have dreams and the like, much like other people.

ABRAHAM: Except not like any other people. Folks say that your dreams come true. That you get—messages and the like, and that—that you've even seen the future, and then seen that future come to pass. And your dreams are just the beginning of your experiences, aren't they?

MERCY: And what if it was true? As you know, I was engaged to Mr. Palmer last year, but when he got whiff of those stories he made his position perfectly clear. Oh, he was very religious himself, he said. But he didn't want to marry a fanatic. He said it was just one stride away from witchcraft.

ABRAHAM: So it's true?

MERCY: *(Painfully)* Yes.

ABRAHAM: Praise the Lord.

MERCY: Pardon me?

ABRAHAM: You're like me. You're just like me.

(There is a KNOCK.)

MERCY: Oh—I'm rather dizzy, may I sit?

(ABRAHAM nods and answers the door to find RUTH, with a suitcase. ABRAHAM is stunned.)

ABRAHAM: Ruth?

RUTH: Good evening, brother.

ABRAHAM: Ruth! Come in, come in! Where's Jacob?

RUTH: *(Looking at MERCY tentatively, but then decides to throw it all out there)* Jacob—Jacob left me.

ABRAHAM: What?

RUTH: He's gone. And he's not coming back.

(Long pause as this sobering piece of news settles in.)

ABRAHAM: Oh, Ruth ...

MERCY: Perhaps I should go ...

ABRAHAM: Mercy, I'll get Jeremiah next door—perhaps he can accompany you home, while I talk to ...

RUTH: By all means, Abraham, walk her home.

ABRAHAM: You're certain?

RUTH: I've traveled this far by myself, haven't I? Anyway, I would relish just a bit more solitude right now, if you don't mind.

ABRAHAM: As soon as I get Mercy home, I will be right back. Ruth. Whatever you feel is best.

Exit ABRAHAM and MERCY. Still repressing her emotions, RUTH gets down to business and places her suitcase on a table and starts unpacking her things. Before long she gets to a man's shirt. She is surprised to see it in there. RUTH pokes her finger through a hole in it, laughing sadly. She looks at it in her hands and, almost against her own will, she smells it with longing. She sits in a chair and looks around bewildered. She caresses the shirt softly and then places her head upon it, wrapping it like a pillow in her arms. Exhausted, she sleeps. There is a change in the lights indicating a change in the time and place. JACOB appears. JACOB is dream-like, not dressed in period specific clothing like the rest, but rather seems timeless. JACOB takes away the luggage and then comes back to RUTH and starts caressing her hair softly, as she continues to sleep softly.)

JACOB: What are you dreaming, my dear one? Are they the stressful dreams of re-living trauma? Of deep seated fears revealing themselves? The dreams of the bizarre interactions of seemingly random pieces of your life? Or are they fantasies of wishes certain never to reveal themselves in this life, so they must find place in your rest?

RUTH: *(Stirring)* Hmmm ...

JACOB: Am I a dream?

RUTH: Jacob?

JACOB: Good morning, Love.

RUTH: Good morning.

JACOB: Sorry to interrupt your dreams.

RUTH: There's no vision that could replace you.

JACOB: Or am I made of the same substance as dreams?

RUTH: No. You're real.

JACOB: Am I?

RUTH: Yes.

(Taking his hands.)

See? Tangible.

JACOB: I love you, Ruth.

RUTH: I'm very lucky.

JACOB: What should we do today?

RUTH: Do? You have to manage the shop and I have to get the house organized, not to mention mend this shirt of yours ...

JACOB: All of that can wait, can't it? I'll just close the shop for today and you can leave the house until tomorrow. As for my shirt ...

(JACOB takes the shirt)

... we'll use it as our banner!

RUTH: Banner?

(JACOB stands on the chair and starts waving the shirt like a flag.)

JACOB: Our banner! It will be the symbol of our freedom, the flag of our revolution!

RUTH: And what is it exactly that we're revolting against?

JACOB: Against this whole rigid city. These stale people.

RUTH: Now, Jacob ...

JACOB: I'm becoming cramped in that shop.

RUTH: Jacob, we've been here less than a year ...

JACOB: And I'm already discontent with it.

RUTH: You'll settle into it.

JACOB: I don't want to settle into it. Let's go to the edge of the wilderness!

RUTH: We just got back from the edge of the wilderness.

JACOB: Not as far as I would have liked to have gone.

RUTH: Now listen, please, Jacob. We've finally got something steady here. There's stable commerce here, there's culture, respectable people, and wealth to be had. We're doing well, aren't we? We're happy, aren't we?

JACOB: You're happy.

(RUTH looks at JACOB with a level gaze, having an internal debate. She then smiles.)

RUTH: Then let's take the day off. We'll run away from our cares—for a day.

JACOB: Don't say that unless you mean it.

RUTH: I mean it.

(JACOB strides over to RUTH and take her hands.)

JACOB: Oh, Ruth, I love you! Just wait a minute, I'll get my hat!

(Exit JACOB. An anxious fear comes over RUTH.)

RUTH: So when do I wake up?

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

ABRAHAM is asleep in a chair; snoring slightly, his head back, his hands up. RUTH enters and smiles affectionately at her brother. An idea then occurs to RUTH and she smiles mischievously. She enters again with a jar of molasses and a feather. She then pours the molasses into ABRAHAM's right hand, pondering the risks involved. She decides to go forward with it, and brings the feather to ABRAHAM's nose. ABRAHAM snorts, but there is no other effect. RUTH brushes the feather under his nose again. ABRAHAM brushes his face his left hand. Undaunted, RUTH pours the molasses in ABRAHAM's empty hand as well. She is about to bring the feather back to his nose when there is KNOCK, which wakes up ABRAHAM.)

ABRAHAM: What in tarnation ...

(He sees the molasses in his hands and then looks up at RUTH)

You little sprite—you mischievous imp!

(ABRAHAM stands and approaches RUTH with his molasses covered hands.)

RUTH: Now, Abraham, remember how much you love me ...

ABRAHAM: This isn't about love, this is about revenge!

RUTH: Don't you dare ...

(Another KNOCK.)

The door ...

ABRAHAM: They can wait ...

(A chase ensues, as ABRAHAM tries to cover RUTH with the molasses. There is squealing, yelling, and screaming. They exit momentarily. MERCY enters, with a basket.)

SEVEN more pages in Scene Two of this script