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Dramatic Publishing

MIRRORS

A One-Act Play

By
JOHN O'BRIEN



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(MIRRORS)

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MIRRORS was first performed by the Greenroom Dramatic Society of Malden High School, Malden, Massachusetts, at Emerson College in Boston on February 6, 1982, with the following cast:

Fred Peterson	Walter Prince
Freddie Peterson	Dennis Boyd
Chip Peterson	Paul Nelson
Marita Peterson	Laurie Ross
Mrs. Peterson	Angela DeVito
Doctor	Jenifer Cosgrove
Stage Manager	Chris Nelson
Props	Sean Warren
Director	John O'Brien

MIRRORS was the winner of the 1982 Emerson College Award for outstanding theatrical achievement.

The community theatre premiere of *MIRRORS* was presented by the M.I.T. Players of Cambridge, Massachusetts, at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts in May, 1982.

MIRRORS
A One-Act Play
For Three Women and Three Men

C H A R A C T E R S

FRED PETERSON age forty
FREDDIE PETERSON. Fred's son, age eighteen
CHIP PETERSON Fred's other son, age sixteen
MARITA PETERSON Fred's daughter, age fourteen
MOTHER Fred's wife, age forty
DOCTOR. female, any age

Time: That is the question.

Place: Inside Fred Peterson's head

MIRRORS

SCENE: The stage is in darkness. A match flares. We see a man's face. He stares into the flame. He blows out the match. After a short beat, lights come up on the man, FRED PETERSON, sitting in a rocking chair DC. He stares into space. FREDDIE PETERSON enters UR. The stage lights turn red.)

FREDDIE. Hey, Pop.

FRED (still in his reverie). Good morning.

FREDDIE. Morning? It's evening.

FRED (coming to life). Good evening.

FREDDIE. Do you know where the bicycle pump is?

FRED. It's in the cellar.

FREDDIE. You always know where everything is.

FRED. What else are fathers for? (FREDDIE exits DR. FRED continues to stare straight out and up.)

(CHIP enters UR, dressed to kill, except that he wears sneakers.)

CHIP. Hey, Father Fred.

FRED. Good evening. (CHIP stands atop the milk carton at DRC.)

CHIP. So tell me.

FRED. What do you want to know?

CHIP. Can't you guess?

FRED. It's in the cellar.

CHIP. What is?

FRED. The bicycle pump.

CHIP. I don't want the bicycle pump.

FRED. Just teasing.

CHIP. I want to know how I look.

FRED. Not bad.

CHIP. Not bad?

FRED. But I'm no expert.

CHIP. I look irresistible.

FRED. You need a second opinion.

CHIP. Who?

FRED. Someone wise in the ways of the world.

CHIP. Nobody's wiser than you, Pop. (He jumps off the carton.)

FRED. I have it.

CHIP. Who?

FRED. Your sister.

CHIP. Marita?

FRED. Do you have any others?

CHIP. What does she know about men's clothes?

FRED. She's a she.

CHIP. So?

FRED. Shes know everything about hes.

CHIP. Everything?

FRED. Everything worth knowing.

CHIP. I'll ask her. (He exits UC. FRED continues staring out and up.)

(MARITA enters UR.)

MARITA. Hi, Pop.

FRED. Hi, baby.

MARITA. I'm not a baby.

FRED. I keep forgetting.

MARITA. Have you seen Freddie?

FRED. Yes. (Pause.)

MARITA. You're a tease.

FRED. He's in the cellar.

MARITA. What's he doing down there?

FRED. Looking for the bicycle pump.

MARITA. Thanks. (She starts to exit DR.)

FRED. I forgot to tell you.

MARITA. What?

FRED. Chip is looking for you.

MARITA. What for?

FRED. He wants to ask you how he looks.

MARITA. Why me?

FRED. I told him you're the best judge.

MARITA. Of what?

FRED. Of how a man looks.

(FREDDIE enters DR with the bicycle pump.)

FREDDIE. I found it.

MARITA. I am?

FRED. That's my boy.

FREDDIE. You are what?

MARITA. The best judge of how Chip looks.

FREDDIE. If you say so.

MARITA (pointing to FRED). He says so.

FREDDIE (pointing to FRED). If you say so.

MARITA. Is that all you can say?

FREDDIE. No.

MARITA. Then say something else.

FREDDIE. Good-bye.

MARITA. Very funny.

FRED. That's my boy.

FREDDIE. I'm going for a spin on my bike.

MARITA. Don't be late for supper.

FRED. I thought you wanted to see him.

MARITA. Who?

FRED. Freddie.

MARITA. I did?

FRED. You said you did.

MARITA. You're right, I did. I remember.

FREDDIE. What about?

MARITA. I forget.

FRED. That's my girl.

(CHIP enters UC.)

CHIP. Hi. (He stands on top of the carton.)

MARITA. 'Lo. He's high, I'm low.

FREDDIE. That's your offspring.

FRED. I can't keep up with them.

CHIP. How do I look? (MARITA notices his sneakers.)

MARITA. Almost perfect.

CHIP. What do you mean, almost?

MARITA. Nobody's perfect.

CHIP. Who says?

MARITA. My English teacher.

FREDDIE. I'll bet she thinks she's perfect.

MARITA. Who?

FREDDIE. Your English teacher.

MARITA. She's a him.

CHIP. She's a he.

FREDDIE (in mock amazement). Men teach English?

MARITA (appealing for help). Dad?

FRED. They're teasing you.

MARITA. I know that.

FREDDIE. And we only tease people we like.

MARITA. Flatterer.

CHIP. Come on, you can help me straighten my tie.

MARITA. It is straight. (CHIP pulls his bow tie to one side.)

CHIP. It was.

MARITA. I'm glad I'm not a boy.

FREDDIE. Me, too.

CHIP Let's go. (MARITA steps close to the milk carton and
CHIP climbs on her back.)

MARITA. Lucky me. (She carries him piggyback off UR.)

FRED. To be young again.

FREDDIE. Was I that silly?

FRED. When?

FREDDIE. When I was young.

FRED. When *you* were young?

FREDDIE. When I was Chip's age.

FRED. No.

FREDDIE. Good.

FRED. You didn't get silly until later.

FREDDIE. I don't feel silly now.

FRED. Weren't you going for a spin?

FREDDIE. I was.

FRED. Change your mind?

FREDDIE. Yes.

FRED. It's a free country.

FREDDIE. So far.

FRED. What happened?

FREDDIE. When?

FRED. Just now.

FREDDIE. What do you mean?

FRED. Something must have happened to make you change
your mind.

FREDDIE. Nothing happened.

FRED. If you say so.

FREDDIE. It's just that, when I was in the cellar, I got thinking
about something.

FRED. That's my boy.

FREDDIE. Something I've thought about before.

FRED. The mystery deepens.

FREDDIE. And now's my chance.

FRED. For what?

FREDDIE. To see you alone . . . (He steps DR, puts the bicycle pump down.)

FRED. Here I am.

FREDDIE. And get some advice. (He sits on the milk carton.)

FRED. What else are fathers for?

FREDDIE. It's something that worries me.

FRED. Money?

FREDDIE. No.

FRED. Girls?

FREDDIE. No.

FRED. Heaven and hell?

FREDDIE. No.

FRED. Am I getting warm?

FREDDIE. No.

FRED. If I can't get warm with hell, I give up.

FREDDIE. It's gonna sound funny. I don't know if anyone else ever thought of it . . .

FRED. Probably not.

FREDDIE. Since the beginning of time.

FRED. The suspense is killing me.

FREDDIE. Are you ready?

FRED. I've been ready for five minutes.

FREDDIE. What do people do?

FRED. Did you say what I think you said?

FREDDIE. What do you think I said?

FRED. What do people do?

FREDDIE. That's what I said.

FRED. I don't get you.

FREDDIE. When I was young . . .

FRED. When *you* were young?

FREDDIE. When I was Chip's age.

FRED. Yes?

FREDDIE. I used to live.

FRED. What are you doing now?

FREDDIE. I'm thinking.

FRED. That's dangerous.

FREDDIE. And I'm wondering what people do.

FRED. You don't mean their jobs?

FREDDIE. No.

FRED. I didn't think you did.

FREDDIE. I mean hour by hour.

FRED. Minute by minute.

FREDDIE. Second by second.

FRED. They bowl, they knit, they contemplate their navels,
they scheme, they dream, they pour their drinks and bore
their shrinks . . .

FREDDIE. Or their children.

FRED. They make love, they make hate, they think about
yesterday, they think about tomorrow . . .

FREDDIE. What about today?

FRED. My son, the philosopher.

FREDDIE. I just started wondering about it a couple of weeks
ago.

FRED. When you were brushing your teeth.

FREDDIE. How did you know?

FRED. That's when most great ideas come.

FREDDIE. Maybe I should brush my teeth three times a day.

FRED. It has to be in the morning.

FREDDIE. Do *you* have great ideas?

FRED. I always have great ideas.

FREDDIE. When you brush your teeth?

FRED. And when I wake up in the middle of the night.

FREDDIE. Me, too.

FRED. Do you know why?

FREDDIE. No.

FRED. That's when we're closest to our dreams.

FREDDIE. Or our nightmares.

FRED. They're even better.

FREDDIE. Nightmares are better than dreams?

FRED. More important.

FREDDIE. Do you have nightmares?

FRED. Doesn't everybody?

FREDDIE. I don't know.

FRED. Everybody has them. Some don't remember them.

FREDDIE. Do you remember yours?

FRED. I remember the ones I remember.

FREDDIE. What are they? (FRED stands and crosses DLC.)

FRED. One is about fire.

FREDDIE. Fire?

FRED. That's my favorite.

FREDDIE. What happens?

FRED. The house is on fire. You guys are burning.

FREDDIE. The family?

FRED. And I can't get you out.

FREDDIE. Jesus.

FRED. It haunts me.

FREDDIE. Is that your worst one?

FRED. There are two worse than that.

FREDDIE. How can anything be worse than that? (He crosses UC of the chair.)

FRED. You guys are burning, and I *can* get you out.

FREDDIE. Why is that worse?

FRED. I stand outside and watch you die.

FREDDIE. Why?

FRED. I'm afraid.

FREDDIE. What's your worst one?

FRED. I set the fire.

FREDDIE. And that's when you have your best thoughts?

FRED. Then and when I'm brushing my teeth.

FREDDIE. What happens when you brush your teeth?

FRED. I understand my nightmares.

FREDDIE. *Do* you understand them? (He crosses DLC to Fred's right)

FRED. Yes.