

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S
**TENDER IS
THE NIGHT**

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY
SIMON LEVY



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's
TENDER IS THE NIGHT
adapted for the stage by
Simon Levy

The following acknowledgment must appear on the title page in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

The World Premiere of TENDER IS THE NIGHT was presented
at the Fountain Theatre, March 1995, in Los Angeles, California.
Produced by Deborah Lawlor and Stephen Sachs, Co-Artistic Directors.

In addition, all programs must include biographies for F. Scott Fitzgerald and Simon Levy, which are available at www.dramatists.com.

TENDER IS THE NIGHT was first presented at The Fountain Theatre (Deborah Lawlor and Stephen Sachs, Co-Artistic Directors) in Los Angeles, California, on March 2, 1995. It was produced by Jay Alan Quantrill and co-produced by Yvonne Bennett for The Fountain Theatre. It was directed by Heidi Helen Davis (with Stephen Sachs); the set design was by Robert W. Zentis; the costume design was by Jeanne Reith; the lighting design was by Doc Ballard; the sound design was by Ben Decter; the property design was by Eileen Dietz; the fight direction was by Marty Pistone; the choreography was by William & Deborah Bartlett; the original music was by Jay Alan Quantrill; the production stage manager was Aramazd Stepanian; and the technical director was Scott Tuomey. The cast was as follows:

DR. DICK DIVER Larry Poindexter
 NICOLE WARREN DIVER Tracy Middendorf
 ABE NORTH Philip Abrams
 MARY NORTH Jill Holden
 VIOLET MCKISCO/DANCER/
 WOMAN Susan Marie Brecht
 ALBERT MCKISCO/
 ITALIAN WAITER Robert Stephen Ryan
 ROSEMARY HOYT Lisa Robin Kelly
 COLLIS CLAY Don Winston
 TOMMY BARBAN Paul Gregory Jackson
 FRANZ GREGOROVIVUS David Carey Foster
 BETH "BABY" WARREN Jennifer Massey
 MR. WARREN/PRINCE CHILLICHEFF/
 DANCER David Beckett
 COUNT MARMORA/
 ITALIAN TAXI DRIVER Maximilian Mastrangelo
 Alternate Carol Chenoweth
 Alternate Darin Singleton

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

DICK DIVER, psychiatrist

NICOLE WARREN DIVER, Dick's wife

ABE NORTH, composer, Dick's best friend

MARY NORTH, Abe's wife

ROSEMARY HOYT, Hollywood starlet

COLLIS CLAY, in love with Rosemary

TOMMY BARBAN, French mercenary

FRANZ GREGOROVIVUS, head of Dohmler's Sanitarium

BETH ("BABY") WARREN, Nicole's sister

The following roles are multiple cast:

MR. MCKISCO, ITALIAN TAXI DRIVER, FRENCH
WAITER, ELEGANT DANCER

MRS. MCKISCO, NURSE, ELEGANT DANCER
MR. WARREN, PRINCE CHILLICHEFF, WAITER

COUNT MARMORA, TOMMY'S SECOND,
ITALIAN WAITER

Note: The play can be performed by a cast of 13 (8 men, 5 women), or in any combination that suits the theatre's needs.

SETTING

The action takes place in various European locations and the memory of Dick Diver between 1918 – 1929. Art Deco. The Jazz Age. Period music and dancing are an integral part of the action of the play, which should be fluid, a melting of time and place.

*Already with thee! tender is the night ...
... But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.*

—John Keats
“Ode to a Nightingale”

TENDER IS THE NIGHT

ACT ONE

Delicate, haunting music ... that will recur throughout the play — Abe North's "Unfinished Theme."

It hints of Gershwin and the '20s, of romance and the pain of loving, and the anguish of a questioning heart.

Lights up slowly on a tableau — a group of Americans on the Riviera beach, 1925.

They're caught in romantic moonlight like an old postcard or movie still.

Surrounding them is an Art Deco world. The extravagance and decadence of the Jazz Age. But the world is beginning to crack — a toppled column, a fallen lintel, scattered chunks of marble, a crumbling plaster wall forming a large powdery "beach." Even so, it's a romantic world of youthful exuberance and the promise of a stolen kiss.

On the "beach," lounging beneath huge striped umbrellas, are Nicole Warren Diver, Abe North, and Mary North. They are tan, rich and beautiful.

Opposite them, on the "poorer" side of the beach, sitting in beach chairs under handheld parasols, are Violet and Albert McKisco. They're newcomers to the beach, and they stare intently at The Gang.

Dick Diver enters, carrying a rake, dressed in a long travelling

coat and jaunty jockey cap. He looks around at the picture, remembering. This is his memory.

He's 34, instantly likeable and ready to please.

He removes his travelling coat to reveal a red pin-striped swimsuit and joins the "picture."

Instantly, Abe's Theme gives way to a lively Charleston song, very '20s and fun, playing on a gramophone next to Nicole, as lights bump to bright sunshine.

Tableau comes to life: Dick rakes the beach, removing pebbles, which he places in a special bucket; Nicole sews a strange garment; Abe plays the ukulele; Mary sings.

Mrs. McKisco watches them through opera glasses; and Mr. McKisco fidgets, trying to avoid the sun.

Dick does a funny little dance with the rake. His group laughs. He pulls Nicole up ... and they Charleston on the beach — the perfect Jazz Age couple.

NICOLE. Promise me it'll always be like this.

DICK. I promise.

NICOLE. Really?

DICK. Cross my heart and hope to die. *(They kiss.)*

ABE. Hey! No smoochin' on the beach! *(Dick and Nicole laugh.)* I thought we were going for a swim.

DICK. You're right, old pal. Race you to the raft.

ABE. *(To Rosemary.)* Hold him! Hold him! *(Nicole holds Dick as Abe races offstage. Dick wrestles free and runs after Abe. Mrs. McKisco watches them through opera glasses. A moment later, Rosemary Hoyt, fresh from a swim, runs on, looking for an open stretch of beach. She wears a peignoir that accents more of the girl than the woman.)*

VIOLET MCKISCO. Yoohoo! Hello! You're a wonderful swimmer. My name is Violet, and this is my husband, Albert ... *(Proud.)* Albert McKisco.

ROSEMARY. Hello.

VIOLET MCKISCO. You're Rosemary Hoyt and we think you're perfectly marvelous and we want to know why you're not back in America making another marvelous moving picture.

ROSEMARY. Well, I ...

VIOLET MCKISCO. Are you in the plot? We don't know who's in the plot and who isn't.

ROSEMARY. The plot? Is there a plot?

VIOLET MCKISCO. My dear, we don't know. We're not in it. We're the gallery.

ROSEMARY. What kind of plot?

VIOLET MCKISCO. One man my husband had been particularly nice to turned out to be a chief character — practically the assistant to the hero. He's out there swimming.

ALBERT MCKISCO. Been here long?

ROSEMARY. Only a day.

VIOLET MCKISCO. If you stay all summer you can watch the plot unfold.

ALBERT MCKISCO. For God's sake, Violet, drop the subject! Get a new joke, for God's sake!

VIOLET MCKISCO. He's nervous.

ALBERT MCKISCO. I'm not nervous. I'm not nervous at all. I just wish I had a cigarette. That's more important to me right now.

VIOLET MCKISCO. (*Looking offstage.*) Who is that handsome boy who keeps staring at you?

ROSEMARY. Oh, that's Collis. He's following me all over Europe.

VIOLET MCKISCO. Is he dangerous?

ROSEMARY. Oh, Lord, no.

VIOLET MCKISCO. Yoohoo! I say, Collis, over here!

ALBERT MCKISCO. Really, Violet, you're making a spectacle of yourself. (*Collis Clay, 20, Ivy League with a Georgia accent, enters.*)

COLLIS. Hi, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY. Collis. This is ...

VIOLET MCKISCO. I'm Violet. And this is Albert, Albert McKisco.

COLLIS. Glad to meet you, ma'am. Sir.

VIOLET MCKISCO. What a divine accent.

ALBERT MCKISCO. 'Bout time we met some real Americans for a change.

VIOLET MCKISCO. My husband is finishing his first novel, you see.

ROSEMARY. Oh, is he?

VIOLET MCKISCO. It's on the idea of Ulysses. Only instead of taking twenty-four hours my husband takes a hundred years. There's this decayed old French aristocrat and he puts him in contrast with the mechanical age ...

ALBERT MCKISCO. Oh, for God's sake, don't go telling everybody the idea. I don't want it to get all around before the book's published. (*Chastised, Mrs. McKisco picks up a book.*)

ROSEMARY. Well ... it was a pleasure meeting you.

ALBERT MCKISCO. Watch your skin.

ROSEMARY. I will. Thank you. (*She crosses away and lays down. Collis starts to go.*)

VIOLET MCKISCO. Oh, stay with us and tell us all about Rosemary Hoyt.

COLLIS. Well, I ... uh ... (*Violet yanks him down beside her.*)

DICK. (*Offstage.*) A thousand francs says I can.

ABE. (*Dick and Abe run on, towelling off their swim, laughing.*) Two thousand.

DICK. You're on. (*They don't see Rosemary sunbathing. Last minute, Abe skirts her, but Dick is forced to leap over her, dripping water.*)

ROSEMARY. Oh!

DICK. Sorry. You weren't here a moment ago.

ROSEMARY. Oh, sorry ... I ...

DICK. It's not good to get too burned right away.

ROSEMARY. Thank you. Do you know what time it is?

DICK. 'Bout half-past three. (*Beat.*) Say, why don't you bring your sunshine under our umbrellas.

ROSEMARY. Why ...

DICK. Though I must confess none of us have seen your moving picture ... yet.

ROSEMARY. Then you know who I am?

DICK. Of course. I'm Dick Diver. Come on. (*He escorts her to his group.*) Look what I found in the sand. A starfish. (*Nicole regards Rosemary suspiciously.*)

NICOLE. Dick is always rescuing strays. It's a compulsion.

ABE. Where the hell's Tommy with those drinks?

DICK. (*Kisses Nicole.*) My wife, Nicole.

NICOLE. You're very pretty.

ROSEMARY. Thank you.

DICK. The Norths. Abe and Mary.

ABE/MARY. Hello. Hiya.

ROSEMARY. I love all your songs.

ABE. I like her already.

NICOLE. Are you here for a long time?

ROSEMARY. Not very long. Do you like it here — this place?

ABE. They have to like it. They invented it.

ROSEMARY. Oh?

MARY. This is only the second season that the hotel's been open in summer.

NICOLE. We persuaded the owner to keep on a cook and a *garçon* and a *chasseur* — it paid its way and this year it's doing even better.

ROSEMARY. But you're not in the hotel.

NICOLE. (*Pointing.*) We built that house on the hill, up at Tarmes.

DICK. Our villa by the sea. Just like in the moving pictures. (*He does another Chaplinesque dance with the rake. Everyone is charmed ... especially Rosemary. Tommy Barban enters with drinks. He's French Foreign Legion, dark, battle-hardened, and not quite civilized.*)

TOMMY. *Des rafraichissements pour ceux qui ont chaud et soif.*

NICOLE. English, Tommy. English.

TOMMY. There is no romance in that language.

ABE. And people wonder why I don't return to the States.

DICK. Rosemary Hoyt. Tommy Barban.

TOMMY. *Enchante.*

ROSEMARY. *Enchante.*

TOMMY. Did you have a good swim?

DICK. Exhilarating. Nothing like wrestling a few sharks to feel like a man again, eh Tommy?

TOMMY. I would not know, I only wrestle men.

MARY. (*Referring to the McKiscos.*) Mr. and Mrs. Neverquiver are staring again.

NICOLE. Whatever did you do, Abe, to earn their obsessive devotion?

ABE. I think I mentioned I'd read a book once. Haven't been able to shake them since.

NICOLE. Well, I have felt there were too many people on the beach this summer. Our beach that Dick made out of a pebble pile. The day before you came, the married man, the one with the name that sounds like a substitute for gasoline or butter ...

ROSEMARY. McKisco?

NICOLE. Yes ... well they were having words and she tossed some

F. Scott Fitzgerald's
TENDER IS THE NIGHT
adapted for the stage by Simon Levy

8M, 5W (doubling, flexible casting)

The carefree swirl of the Jazz Age ... and the tragic romance of Dick and Nicole Diver. Fitzgerald's "favorite novel" is the story of their passionate love affair and their life as the perfect Jazz Age couple. He's an idealistic American psychiatrist, full of charm and a promising career. She's an extraordinarily beautiful and wealthy mental patient being treated at a Swiss sanitarium. They fall in love and marry. Unfortunately, her shameful and tragic past continually forces him to be both doctor and husband. He can't. And though they love each other, he eventually has an affair with a Hollywood starlet, dooming their marriage and setting the stage for his disintegration and loss of self. Surrounding them are a host of expatriate Americans and glamorous Europeans Dick has "collected."

"A magical, exciting theatre experience. Golden is the glamor; bittersweet is the romance, and potent is the magic of F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic jazz age novel ... Brought lyrically and luminously — and yes, tenderly — to the stage in this sensitive dramatization by Simon Levy."
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"A perfect production. Top notch. Magic."
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"Lavish. Ambitious. Lovely."
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"Sheer perfection. A brilliant adaptation of a classic literary piece."
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