



CREATING CLAIRE

BY JOE DiPIETRO



DRAMATISTS
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CREATING CLAIRE
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CREATING CLAIRE was presented at the George Street Playhouse (David Saint, Artistic Director) New Brunswick, New Jersey, opening on May 21, 2010. It was directed by David Saint; the set design was by Michael Anania; the lighting design was by Joe Saint; the sound design was by Christopher J. Bailey; the original music was by Scott Killian; and the projections were by Michael Clark. The cast was as follows:

CLAIRE..... Barbara Walsh
REGGIE..... Michael Countryman
ABIGAILCelia Keenan-Bolger
VICTORIA..... Lynn Cohen

CHARACTERS

CLAIRE BUCHANAN — A teacher and docent. Intelligent and affable.

REGGIE BUCHANAN — Her husband. Rumpled. A high school history teacher.

ABIGAIL BUCHANAN — Their daughter. 16 years old. Autistic.

VICTORIA HALSTEAD — Head of the Museum of Earth and Sky.

PLACE

Upstate New York.

TIME

Now.

CREATING CLAIRE

ACT ONE

Scene 1

*A spot on Abigail.
She speaks to no one in particular.*

ABIGAIL. Facts are facts. That's what they teach you in school. And Mother taught me that. And Daddy taught me that. You can't change the facts. (*Lights up on Claire — not quite young, not quite old. She speaks to us — her words illustrated by projections.*)

CLAIRE. In the beginning ... there was a big bang.

ABIGAIL. But something happened to Mother today. Something changed. Mother changed the facts. The shit's gonna hit the fan.

CLAIRE. But don't think of it as an explosion, like a balloon bursting. Think of it as an expansion. The universe expanded, in a trillionth of a second, from the size of a grain of rice, the size of nothing — to the size of a universe. It changed space in a trillionth of a second. Amazing. That was fifteen billion years ago. Those numbers — fifteen billion years, a trillionth of a second — they don't seem real, do they? And a mere eleven billion years later — life, as we know it, began. Hello and welcome to the Museum of Earth and Sky. My name is Claire Buchanan, and I'll be your guide for the Origins of Life Tour. So let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start. Who knows what that's from? That's right, *The Sound of Music*. I see we've got a sharp group here today. Now then, all life on Earth shares a common ancestor with this — (*Projection — a single cell.*) A single cell, which fortunately for us, self-replicated — (*The projections continue, regardless of who's speaking.*)

ABIGAIL. And these cells kept making cells over and over and over again and again and again ...

CLAIRE. And this very slow and very gradual process of change continued over billions and billions of years —

ABIGAIL. Evolution —

CLAIRE. It's called evolution. The change that is life. The change that is life. So from these single-cells evolved multi-cell creatures — worms and jellyfish and other gooey things — and they, in turn, evolved into the first vertebrate, and a delicious dinner — fish.

ABIGAIL. Once upon a time, a fish was born with tiny little lungs and tiny little legs —

CLAIRE. And then, four billion years ago, the first amphibian crawled out of the sea. Yes, in some way, we all came from the sea, due to this process called random mutation — (*Abigail begins to hum. Claire stops. She looks at us. Did she forget her lines? Is she all right? Abigail continues to hum.*) I'm sorry, but that word, "random" — You see, my daughter ... — No, I'm sorry ... — from the sea. We all came from the sea. And from the amphibian evolved the reptile and from the reptile, the mammal, and from the mammal, our really ugly ancestor — Homo Erectus. Which brings us to us, the Homo Sapiens, and Charles Darwin, who developed the theory of evolution — or, as he more poetically put it, "the struggle to exist." Doesn't that just sum it all up? The struggle to — ... I'm sorry, again. You see, I'm feeling ... and I know, I know, feelings should have nothing to do with this, but ... sometimes things need to be said, don't they? (*Claire stops the projections. Abigail stops humming.*) There is another theory of how we came to be. Perhaps — perhaps there was a designer — a designer who created that single cell and nudged it along. A designer, somehow, looking over us. I mean, even the genius that was Albert Einstein believed in some — some super-intelligence who, let me get this right — "who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists." Isn't that beautiful? The harmony of all that ... (*A beat.*) I'm sorry, I, um, um, didn't mean to go there today. If I offended anyone or startled anyone ... — but sometimes things need to be said. (*The projections resume.*) Okay, back to "the struggle to exist — "

CREATING CLAIRE

by Joe DiPietro

1M, 3W

Employed as a docent at a natural history museum, nice, middle-aged Claire comes under fire when her tour-guide patter deviates from the strict scientific beliefs of her formidable supervisor and heads down a path that espouses intelligent design. Claire's spiritual slant attracts extra visitors but soon leads to legal action. A powerful exploration of the supernova that results when science, faith, and politics collide.

"CREATING CLAIRE soberly considers the missing link between faith and science ... DiPietro's compact, neatly-crafted drama focuses more on Claire's growing faith and its effect upon her marriage than upon hotly debating the issues."

—**Variety**

"[A]wfully well done ... "

—**The New York Times**

"Joe DiPietro has approached the controversial subject of creationism versus evolution in his engrossing and provocative play ... DiPietro has a good grip on the spiritual, emotional and psychological factors that determine our choices and beliefs."

—**CurtainUp.com**

Also by Joe DiPietro

FUCKING MEN

ART OF MURDER

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH

THE WOODS

THE LAST ROMANCE

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

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