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Three Days of Rain

Dragon Productions Theatre Company

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"None of this ever happened." In the midst of a heated argument, inner feelings flow unabashedly into the open; closely held secrets tumble into the light of day; and suddenly looks of shock and regret replace those of intended insult and resulting anger. In Richard Greenberg's *Three Days of Rain*, this same sequence occurs decades apart by members of two families and their two generations, leading each time to an uneasy agreement to act as if nothing ever occurred. In this 1998 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the question of what really happened years prior and who did what becomes central to three grown children after two of the three of their parents have passed away and the third is losing her mind.



Tasi Alabastro and Robert Sean Campbell

Photo by Scott Ragle

In the current opening by Dragon Productions Theatre Company, three actors play the members of both generations in the two halves of a play that is a compelling family drama increasingly turned into family mystery. We slowly begin to understand that the phrase "none of this ever happened" has a much broader application than the argument of the moment as the children seek answers to an unexpected and

upsetting inheritance. In the end, the play leads each of us to question how we really know about our own families' histories and why we are who we are today.

A discovered journal leaves sparse but intriguing clues about a famed architect father who has just died, beginning with one line that reads "1960, April 3-5 ... Three days of rain". Prodigal son Walker has shown up a year after his father's funeral, having disappeared with no contact with his family. He is now hanging out in the sparse, shabby Manhattan loft apartment where his dad, Ned, once lived and worked with his partner, Theo. At an early age, the two designed Janeway House, a masterpiece still considered "one of the prime, private residences of the past half century."

Walker's sister Nan arrives in a sullen mood after assuming her brother might well be this time really dead—this not being the first time he has escaped for months/years with no notice or follow-up. They are to meet today with Theo's son Pip at the lawyer's office for the long-delayed reading of Ned's will, with both siblings assuming they will be inheriting the famed house that won in 1963 "the non-Pulitzer Prize" for architecture.

Tasi Alabastro's Walker cannot sit still or be silent more than a second as he roves through every inch of the small apartment in a near manic rant once his sister arrives. His unruly, round mop of hair flies in all directions as he entreats his mostly silent sister (still in her coat with arms crossed and lips tightly pursed) to give him a hug. Katie O'Bryon Champlin displays a plethora of snarls and looks of disbelief before her Nan finally begins to open up and let Walker know just how worried and frustrated she has been the past three years. She is not at all willing to share his bubbling excitement for exploring the discovered journal their dad evidently kept and is in fact doing all she can to stop his reading the cryptic one-liners left.

But it is one of these lines written right after Ned's partner Theo died that becomes paramount for Walker, especially after the surprise that Ned has left Janeway House—a house Walker has already decided he now wants to reside in for the rest of his life—not to his kids but instead to Pip, Theo's son. It is this one-line clue that Walker uses to piece together an entire history of the working relationship between his dad and Theo that he and his sister (and the world) had never known.

But that is not before all hell breaks loose. Pip, a boyhood friend of both the siblings, is now a soap opera star and is just as shocked and more than a bit embarrassed, given this surprise gift from his father's partner. When the three meet back at the apartment after the lawyer's revelation, emotions fly through the roof, with Walker in a rage over his dad's decision.

As the handsome Pip (who dresses like he is ready for his next photo shoot), Robert Sean Campbell tries at first to appease Walker and to reunite with Nan with big smiles, charm, and calming reassurance. But with Walker's increasing attacks, the mood quickly shifts, giving director Meredith Hagedorn much opportunity to masterfully guide the actors into silence and looks that could kill before a volcanic volley of secrets and accusations erupt that the three have never dare shared—all leading to one of those "none of this ever happened" moments. But to Walker, what is now out of Pandora's box in the end does not matter once he figures out the real meaning of that one line his dead dad once wrote after Theo died. For him, everything is now resolved.

In the second half of Richard Greenberg's play, the time clock reverts to those three days of rain in 1960. Tasi Alabastro is now Walker's dad, an extremely shy, stuttering Ned who is devoted to his friend and partner, the much more charismatic and outgoing Theo (of course played by Robert Sean Campbell). The two architects—barely out of school and holed up in low-rent apartment together—are in the midst of designing what will be someday known as the Janeway House. Theirs is a partnership where they have

come to agree that "talent is divided into genius and taste," with the more flamboyant Theo gladly taking on the former and the guy who can hardly piece a sentence together, Walker, relieved to embody the latter.

Intersecting herself into their lives is Lina (Katie O'Bryon Champlin), a talky southern belle who has come to New York and is now in what is clearly a fireworks-sparking relationship with Theo. Their hot love for each other is only matched and even exceeded by the roaring verbal battles that disturb neighbors but seem to have little affect on the silent Ned at his drawing desk—where he actually seems to be doing very little but staring.

The skins of the onion begin to shed layer by layer as we learn what really happened during those three days of pouring rain—so authentically created against the window panes through the combined efforts of scenic and lighting designer Nathanael Card and sound designer Jonathan Covey. Each of the actors is brilliant in showing another side of the earlier generation that we have heard about in the first act—a side their children have quite evidently not seen.

The assumptions and conclusions of the children are given a true-life test in Richard Greenberg's intriguing *Three Days of Rain*, leaving lessons for us as audience on how much we perhaps can assume and conclude about those we think we know who preceded us. Dragon Productions Theatre Company scores a big winner in this, Meredith Hagedorn's final directing effort before she relinquishes her role as Artistic Director. Congratulations to Meredith and kudos to this fine cast and outstanding Dragon creative team.

Three Days of Rain, through June 17, 2018, at Dragon Productions Theatre Company, 2120 Broadway Street, Redwood City CA. Tickets are available online at dragonproductions.net or by calling 650-493-2006.

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