

A LIE OF THE MIND

This play was written by Pulitzer Prize winner Sam Shepard. Its scenes are often unsettling and eerie but contain some ironic dialogue that is typical of Shepard's extraordinary tone. Every role in this play is sizable and rich with exciting challenges for actors.

***A Lie of the Mind* will be presented by The Department of Theatre and Dance next season in The Chapel Theatre. It will be directed by Mark Landis with Set Design by Charlie Calvert and Paige Bergen, Costume Design by Erin Cooper, and Lighting Design by Jesse Portillo.**

Performance Dates run from October 30 – November 10

Rehearsals will begin on or around Sept.23

We will cast some or all of the roles in this show from the upcoming auditions in April. Actors who wish to be considered for any of the roles should present a prepared audition some time during April 12 or 13 (sign up for a time on this site).

Callbacks for *A Lie of the Mind* will be held during the week following these auditions. There will be various days/times made available for callbacks during that week so that everyone who is called back will be able to participate, regardless of their other activities for the week, Actors who are called back will be reading from the 10 Audition Sides which are posted on this site.

On the following pages you can read a little about each of the characters in the play. After reading about the characters, you should read the audition sides posted on this site and perhaps read the entire script of the play which can be obtained by contacting the director, Mark Landis.

Scroll down for more.

There are 8 characters in *A Lie of the Mind*. Each character is part of one of the two different families in the play, though we never learn their last names.

Beth

At the beginning of the story, Beth has been hospitalized. She was beaten by her husband, Jake. The most severe injuries were to her head, and there has been some apparent trauma to her brain. Beth is an actress—perhaps just starting out—and had been in rehearsal for a play at some unnamed small theatre. As a result of the injuries she seems to have developed aphasia: a condition that can happen as a result of traumatic head injury or stroke. When we see her in the hospital she sometimes mispronounces common words, but at other times, the words she says are not the expected words for what she is trying to express. She does not clearly remember what happened to her, though some aspects of her life do eventually come back to her. As the play continues, Beth moves back to her parents' house in Montana to recuperate, and this is where we see her for most of the play. She has no apparent physical maladies from the beating, and, in fact, she has a fairly exuberant, even adventurous personality. She has no physical difficulty in speaking but, now Beth has many new insights which she expresses in sentences that seem strange, or she has new perceptions which her family members can't always comprehend.

Mike

Mike is Beth's brother. He is the first person with her at the hospital and he apparently stays with Beth throughout her time there. When Beth comes back to Montana to stay with her parents, Mike is there, too. Mike is very protective of his sister Beth and he is violently angry at her husband, Jake, for hurting her.

Meg

Meg is the mother of Beth and Mike. In many ways, Meg seems to be a childlike woman. She is certainly kind, and soft, but also seems very naïve, or even simple-minded, particularly in early scenes of the play. She and her husband live in a rural area, and through the years of her marriage to Baylor, Meg has taken on a somewhat old-fashioned role as wife and mother. She finds ways to care for her family as best she can, and she endures a husband who isn't very attentive, or aware. But as we move into the later scenes, Meg is beginning to look at some things in new ways, too. She has some insights about her marriage and her husband that are astute.

Baylor

Baylor is Meg's husband, and father of Beth and Mike. He has lived his whole life in this rural setting, probably raising livestock or maybe a few crops. Baylor has a lot of very strong opinions all of which are under-informed, and would not hold up to any logical scrutiny. Baylor is not a bully, but he does make a lot of assumptions about people and seems like he hasn't learned anything new nor has been willing to question his own assumptions for a very long time.

Jake

Jake is Beth's husband. He does not seem to be a highly educated man, and he has a history of becoming violent when angered. In many ways, he is also very immature. Jake's own father, who died before the play begins, had been a bomber pilot. After the war in which he served, Jake's father spiraled into alcoholism and abusive behavior with the family as Jake was growing up. Jake spends a large portion of the play in the bedroom he had as a child at his parent's house. His views of the world have been distorted—sometimes by his own rage—and are now confused. Jake's confusion, as he begins to look at some things differently from the confines of this childhood room, is a driving force in the story.

Frankie

Frankie is Jake's younger brother. Frankie is aware of Jake's violent temper; but Frankie is loyal to Jake. When Jake thinks he has killed Beth (Jake doesn't know at first, that she was hospitalized), it's Frankie whom Jake called looking for help. Later in the play, Frankie goes to Montana to check on Beth. He wants to talk to her and seems to want to apologize on behalf of his brother. But through a turn of events, Beth's family winds up taking Frankie in to stay with them. It's Frankie, to whom Beth expresses most of her new perceptions.

Sally

Sally is Jake and Frankie's sister. Sally is very aware that her family has a history of dysfunctional behavior, and is aware of Jake's violent temper. But Jake and Sally seem to have a special bond. It's never spelled out in the script, but there are implications that some of their father's abusive behavior when he was drunk may have been directed toward Sally, and that, on many occasions, Jake may have tried to protect Sally from the actions of their father. They are friends as well as siblings, and it is Sally who makes Jake face that he has been as damaging to his family in his own ways, as their father was before him.

Lorraine

Lorraine is the mother of Jake, Frankie, and Sally. She is a rough, undereducated, woman. Like her counterpart -- Baylor in Beth's family -- Lorraine has very strong opinions which are not derived from an analysis of facts. Her husband died some years ago. While there are a few moments in the play when Lorraine expresses some amusement about a long ago memory, she doesn't seem to be sentimental about anything.

Please examine the 10 audition sides which are also posted on this site. These are the scenes actors who are called back will be asked to read, probably numerous times, with partners.