F. Scott Fitzgerald's

The Diamond as Big as the Ritz

Adapted by Alexis Kozak

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DEDICATION

To Barbara and Yiorgos,
to Eliza,
to the original cast and crew,
and to F. Scott Fitzgerald.
This is for you, old chap.

STORY OF THE PLAY

John Unger, a studious and innocent young man, has been invited by his fellow prep school student Percy Washington to summer at his family's opulent estate hidden in the Montana mountains. John readily accepts. There he meets Percy's parents, sister Jasmine, and sister Kismine – with whom he quickly falls in love. But as he and Kismine begin to make plans for the future, John discovers the source of the family's wealth is a secret many have died for. Will he survive the summer? Full evening.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

THE DIAMOND AS BIG AS THE RITZ received its world premiere at Southside Theatre in Middletown, New Jersey, opening on November 20, 2014. It was directed and designed by Alexis Kozak; the costume design was by Jacqui Mazza and Laura Mazza; the lighting design was by Vici Saunders; the sound design was by Jacob Smith and Alexis Kozak; the production stage manager was Marissa Colvin; the assistant stage manager was Bella Hartman; the assistant director was Vici Saunders. The cast was as follows:

JOHN T. UNGER……Elias Kotsis
PERCY WASHINGTON…….Mike Hopkins
MRS. WASHINGTON……..……..Tara Kinsella
BRADDOCK WASHINGTON……..…Brian Nohl
JASMINE WASHINGTON…….....……...Jessica Fisher
GYPSUM…….....Devin Hislop
KISMINE WASHINGTON……..Laura Diorio
HOOK/AVIATOR ONE /ENSEMBLE……...……Nick Mitwasi
TUCK/AVIATOR TWO/ENSEMBLE……...Ricardo Davis
CRITCHTICHIELLO/AVIATOR THREE/ENSEMBLE…….Jon Ahl
VONA/AVIATOR FOUR and MAN/ENSEMBLE…Paulina Homiak

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 4 w, 4 flexible; doubling possible)

JOHN T. UNGER (m): Young adult, prep school boy.

PERCY WASHINGTON (m): Young adult, prep school boy.

MRS. WASHINGTON (f): Middle aged, Percy's mother.

BRADDOCK WASHINGTON (m): Middle aged, Percy's father.

JASMINE WASHINGTON (f): Young adult, Percy's sister.

GYPSUM (m): Adult, a slave.

KISMINE WASHINGTON (f): Young adult, Percy's sister.

ENSEMBLE

TUCK (m): Tuckerton Rogers. Young adult, prep school boy.

HOOK (m): Brandehook Hall. Young adult, prep school boy.

VONA (f): Young adult, waitress.

CRITCHTICHIELLO (m): Adult, Italian aviator.

AVIATORS 1-4 (flex): Prisoners on the property.

Suggested doubling: Tuck, Hook, Vona, and Crichtichiello can all play Aviators.

Setting

Early 1920s. Scene 1 takes place in a diner. The rest of the play takes place at a hidden, opulent estate in the Montana mountains. There is a large, overbearing mountain whose presence can be felt throughout the rest of the set, a dining room, a lavish bedroom and its sitting room, a richly decorated living room, the grounds of a sprawling estate, and a golf course.

In the original production, the pit for the Aviators in Scene 5 was suggested by having them enter in a blackout and lie down in the orchestra pit until their entrance. In Act II, the dining room set was switched out for the living room set during intermission, and the scene in Kismine's room—which is brief—was played on a slightly elevated platform directly behind John's bedroom. The first and the last scenes of the play were performed on side stages, with the main curtain closed, to give a sense of their separateness and distance from the world of the Washington estate. During scene changes, the sound designer alternated between ambient sound and ominous music to sustain the mood of the play.

ACT I: THE APPRAISAL
Scene 1

(In the darkness, period MUSIC plays. LIGHTS up on a diner. JOHN T. UNGER, PERCY WASHINGTON, TUCKERTON "TUCK" ROGERS, AND BRANDEHOOK "HOOK" HALL sit at a booth.)

HOOK: The girls in Boston are real sweet to you.
TUCK: Like lollipops.
HOOK: Each one prettier than the next.
PERCY: While you're in Boston trying to get your hands on some lollipops, John here has been putting us to shame in our orals.
TUCK: What's wrong with a girlfriend or two?
JOHN: I came here to go to school, not to find a girlfriend.
HOOK: Aww. Hear that?
TUCK: Don't we know it. Took us two years to get you out to a meal with us.
HOOK: So, where you from, Unger?
JOHN: Hades.
TUCK: "Hades." Kentucky, isn't it?
HOOK: No, no. Tennessee?
JOHN: Alabama, actually. Small town on the Mississippi.
TUCK: Shoot! The last fellow they let in from down there was Browser. On account of his father donated a library.
HOOK: Hades. Isn't Louis what's-his-name from there?
TUCK: Who?
HOOK: Affer? Uffer?
TUCK: *Iff*er.
HOOK: Last name Iffer, first name Louis. Figure you know a guy by that name, came through school a number of years back.
TUCK: Two years back, I think.
HOOK: Either he *came* from Hades, or he was *going* to *Hell*. I can't remember which.
TUCK: We just figured that being from Hades, you'd know Louis Iffer.
JOHN: You guys are pulling my leg.

TUCK: You make it easy to pull.
JOHN: You heard the one about the church with the broken steeple?
TUCK: No.
JOHN: Doesn't ring a bell.
HOOK: No.
PERCY: That was the punchline, Hook. You are dense. Ha-ha. I like you, John T. Unger from Hades. I don't care what they say about you. How do you like New England?
JOHN: Cold.
TUCK: Colder than Hades?
JOHN: Pretty much anything is.
TUCK: We're headed off for a little R & R tomorrow, before summer break.
HOOK: Eight a.m. tee time. Any chance you hit the little white ball into the little white cup?
JOHN: On occasion.
HOOK: "On occasion."
TUCK: You should join us.
JOHN: I expect I wouldn't be much fun.
TUCK: And why's that?
JOHN: I'm better ironing a shirt than with a nine iron.
TUCK: At least you know they're not the same thing. I can work with that.
HOOK: I bet you he's a shark.
JOHN: Me?
HOOK: A real shark. Look at that face. All mama's milk. Wouldn't touch a vice with someone else's ten-foot barge pole.
TUCK: You a gambling man?
JOHN: I've played a little cards.
TUCK: Cards, huh?
HOOK: I bet you he's a card sharp, too. Ten to one he's beating us aces over jacks every time.
JOHN: I don't know about all that.
TUCK: Friendly wager?
JOHN: What is it?
TUCK: For a free meal.
JOHN: What's the catch?

End of Freeview

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