

## ***THE GRAVITY OF LOVE***

(synopsis)

JASON SWIFT, 80, is a widely-respected scholar of Tennyson and the English Romantics. He is also the father of a 12-year-old son, JAMIE. JASON feels an inadequate father; JAMIE is a disturbed boy, prone to self-injury and disciplinary problems at school. As the play opens, JAMIE returns from school with yet another summons for his father from the Principal. JASON, at the end of his tether, resolves to send JAMIE away to private school. JAMIE interprets his father's decision as rejection and a lack of love.

JASON, through the Internet, has long been corresponding with a fellow Tennyson scholar named FREDERICK LOWRIE, a professor at an insignificant college, who claims to have met JASON at some previous time. He now wants JASON to do the introduction for a book he's written. JASON is reluctant, but has invited LOWRIE to visit.

The day of LOWRIE's arrival coincides with opening day of the village's newly-sanctioned bow-hunting season for deer—a source of hot contention between the SWIFTS and neighbor, JACK SONDBERG. Young JAMIE is beside himself. He feels a special kinship with the deer.

LOWRIE arrives—and turns out to be a woman. She is DOROTHEA LOWRIE and has assumed a male identity on the Internet to avoid the anti-female bias in Academia. JASON is infuriated by her deception. THEA claims, moreover, to have had JASON as her doctoral-thesis advisor long ago. JASON does not remember her and is both puzzled and suspicious. Meanwhile, THEA is gaining JAMIE's trust and confidence.

JASON, unearthing an obscure journal article, confronts THEA with plagiarism. The truth comes out: THEA was, indeed, "Frederick" at college, but afterwards became transgendered. JASON refuses to have anything to do with THEA's book. As she and JASON face each other in a heated confrontation over honesty, courage and honor, JAMIE senses his favorite buck, whom he's named Roland, has been killed. Making off with a shotgun and two shells, he heads into the woods for revenge. JASON discovers JAMIE and the gun missing. THEA goes after the boy. Two shots are heard. They return from the woods, THEA wounded.

JAMIE is frightened and chastened by what he has brought about. JASON is profoundly grateful to THEA—a gratitude which THEA gently uses to blackmail him into writing the introduction she needs. JASON, for his part, recants on his decision to send his son away: However it turns out, he'll go on struggling to be the best father he can.

**[111 pages, standard play format]**

## **CAST**

JASON SWIFT

Professor Emeritus; 80s

JAMIE SWIFT

Jason's son; 12

THEA LOWRIE

former student of Jason's; middle aged

JACK SONDBERG

Jason's neighbor; middle aged

### **SETTING**

Open-plan living room and kitchen, with visible back porch.

### **TIME**

The present