

GLORY ROAD

A Play by

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CHARACTER LIST:

MARGARET — an English instructor, 24 years old.

MICHAEL — a male student, 19 years old, wearing jeans and a lumberjack shirt.

KIM — a pert, female student, 17 years old

SETTING:

An office at UBC in a converted army barrack furnished with a desk, a bookshelf, two chairs, a wastebasket, and perhaps a blackboard. A working door opens onto a hallway.

On the desk are an ashtray, a lamp, and a soup can with pens and pencils. The white paint on the bare walls of the office is peeling. October, 1964.

SCENE ONE

MARGARET and MICHAEL sit at either side of the desk. Margaret sits casually, perhaps smoking a cigarette, while Michael nervously jiggles his right foot. On the desk are a few stacks of papers.

MARGARET: You needn't call me Doctor. I don't have my Ph.D. . . . yet. I explained that in class. And stop calling me Mrs. or Miss in class.

MICHAEL: Yes. What do you have?

MARGARET: I have my Master's, and I am working on my Ph.D. at Harvard.

MICHAEL: So it is a Master's degree? That's enough to be an instructor?

MARGARET: Stop doing that! You do that in class too, changing the drift of the conversation toward someone or something else. It is the flow, just like in writing. I want that in these essays.

MICHAEL: It's just that you seem very young to be teaching a 2nd year English class.
You're younger than my High School teachers. What's your zodiac sign?

MARGARET: Scorpio . . . *(raising her voice)* You're doing that again. *(standing up)* I
need to see your UBC student card.

MICHAEL: Why do you need to see that?

MARGARET: I don't have a Michael Bedford on my course student list. Yet, you have
written a mid-term and handed in . . . this essay.

MICHAEL: *(looking through his wallet)* Will my driver's licence do?

Michael hands Margaret his driver's licence.

Margaret looks at the licence and hands it back.

MARGARET: That driver's licence is a fake ID. I know one when I see one, having
worked in a bar. And you are not 23 years old.

MICHAEL: That's what I go under.

MARGARET: Now see here, mister! I checked at the Registrar's office. There is no Michael Bedford registered at UBC. So, who are you?

MICHAEL: Sorry. (*fumbling through his wallet*) I am registered, but under a different name. My student card! I'm in math honours.

Michael hands Margaret his student card.

MARGARET: It says here that you're a 2nd year student . . . and you're 19 years old. You seem younger than your picture.

MICHAEL: Well, there it is. (*pause*) I'm taking six math and science courses. I couldn't register for any more.

Margaret returns the student card, and sits down.

MARGARET: So why take my English literature class?

MICHAEL: It's like fate; I guess, like in our play, Twelfth Night. In which Olivia and Viola consign their future to fate acting through time. Fate.

MARGARET: No. What should I call you . . . Michael? You're taking my class under a pseudonym. As a writer I am OK with that. My question is more like, why are you taking my English class if you are good at math? Most of us don't understand math.

There is a knock on the door and KIM enters, briskly.

MARGARET: Kim, can you come back later?

KIM: The one to whom I am kind is the one who does me most harm.

Kim exits.

MARGARET: Just ignore her. She's having issues with me. *(pause)* So why are you?

MICHAEL: English was one of my majors in high school.

MARGARET: And you didn't want to give up that option, right. I mean, it's like a gate to the future, a gate you might want to enter. *(pause)* You talk about gates in your essay, here, on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

MICHAEL: Did you like it? How did I do?

MARGARET: See, Michael, that's the thing . . . what I think about your writing. Let's get back to your assertion of fate. *(pause)* Do you remember me from that ball room dancing class . . . the first two weeks in September?

MICHAEL: What do you mean? I'm taking ball room dancing as my Phys Ed elective.

There is a knock on the door and Kim enters, briskly.

KIM: *(turning to Michael)* You are fortunate . . . like a God. *(turning to Margaret)* My ears are ringing, and I can barely see.

MARGARET: Kim, do you mind! I am with a student. Later!

Kim exits.

MICHAEL: Sometimes I see her hanging around the Mathematics building, although she isn't in any of my math classes.

MARGARET: *(laughing)* Yeah. She is of two minds and two bodies. She's quoting scraps of Sappho — the Greek lesbian poet — at me. *(pause)* About that dance class we were in. I had just arrived from Toronto. I thought I might meet people. Instructors can take courses for free. But everyone seemed so much younger. Did we dance?

MICHAEL: I had just arrived from Chilliwack. It was all a blur. We have to dance with everyone. I mean, with all the girls . . . The guys dance with the girls.

MARGARET: So, all this isn't something more than just intellectual? It isn't something, physical? You're not stalking me, because I attract you . . . physically?

MICHAEL: Like I said, it's fate. Your time slot fit the vacant, blank time slot in my schedule. Like you said, it's a gate, in the future. Actually.

MARGARET: So you are not denying it — the physical aspect — are you.

MICHAEL: Where does time go when it vacantly passes? Never again will it come to you, never again will it come.

MARGARET: I know that quote too! We were talking about your essay. You compare James Joyce's *Portrait* with Robert Heinlein's *Glory Road* . . . with a science fiction novel, claiming the Christian apocalypse is science fiction.

MICHAEL: Yes. Have you read it? It's about a guy who gets recruited by a beautiful, somewhat older woman who needs to save the Empire of the Universes. She's the queen. They pass through gates to get to different galaxies and universes and fight many battles together.

There is a knock on the door and Kim enters, briskly.

KIM: I honestly wish I were dead. It's what one loves that is the most beautiful.

MARGARET: I have never, Kim, known you to be more annoying. I can get you a transfer to the University of Toronto if you think that would help. I know Jay Macpherson. She's an English professor there.

Kim exits.

MICHAEL: Usually she's hanging around Morginsky's door . . . the math prof.

MARGARET: (*sarcastically*) Older men and their bodies! (*pause*) You're very keen about science fiction, aren't you? Technically you're not my student. So what do you say, we go out somewhere before Kim returns? We'll talk about your essay and science fiction over a cup of coffee.

Blackout