



A Playgoer's Companion

About the Playwright



Judith Thompson was born in Montréal on September 20th, 1954. After attending Queen's University and graduating in 1976, with a B.A. in English, Thompson enrolled in the National Theatre School's acting program.

Afterwards, Thompson worked as an actor for a year, but then gave up acting to pursue writing. Her plays tend to focus on the horrors of modern society, and deals with

current issues that we face with today. Many of the characters in her plays live dangerous and harmful lives, challenging the view of a normal society. In 1990 she began teaching in the theatre studies program at the University of Guelph. Judith Thompson's first play, *The Crackwalker* (1980), produced at Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille, was an extraordinarily bold and yet compassionate depiction of marginalized characters living in Kingston. Its climactic infanticide created controversy around the play, but it is Thompson's rich, pulsing verbal command and rhythms that make it her landmark work. Her second play, *White Biting Dog*, premiered at Tarragon Theatre, which subsequently produced the premieres of *I am Yours* (1987), *Lion in the Streets* (1990), *Sled* (1997), *Perfect Pie* (2000) and *Capture Me* (2004). Thompson's plays have been produced in English-speaking countries throughout the world and translated into several languages. Thompson herself has extended her energies to radio drama, screenplays, teleplays, plays for young audiences, and also to teaching and directing. Among her award-winning screenplays are *Perfect Pie* (2002), directed by Barbara Wills Sweete, and the cult hit *Lost and Delirious* (2001), directed by Léa Pool. – *adapted from Canadian Encyclopedia*

"I never write to shock, I'm always shocked when people are shocked. I'm just telling what is out there." – Judith Thompson

Awards

Judith Thompson won the Governor General's award in 1985 for *White Biting Dog*. She won it again in 1989 for a number of her plays including *The Other Side of the Dark*. Thompson has also achieved several Dora Mavor Moore Awards from the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts. In 2005, she was made an Officer of the Order of Canada, and in 2007 she was awarded the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts by the Canada Council for the Arts.

“Judith Thompson’s body of work is vast and varied but always visceral. In fact, it often takes your breath away or, at the very least, alters your pattern of breathing.”

– Iris Turcott, head of new play development at CanStage

About the Play

Perfect Pie is a two-act play, which premiered at the Tarragon Theatre. It is an expansion from a solo drama which Judith Thompson performed herself on CBC television in 1994. She also developed *Perfect Pie* as a feature screenplay, produced by Rhombus Media. The play is a perpetual mystery that is slowly unravelled through the long-time friendship of Young Patsy and Marie. This two character play is performed by four actors presented with frequent shifts of scene from past to present. The depth of the two girls’ relationship had been built since elementary school in this “memory play.”

There is a continuous parallel between the characters’ present lives and the memories from their past. – *adapted from a Tarragon Theatre study guide*



“ . . . there is no looking away from it, we must go on the journey of the monologue with the character, even if he or she is breathing fire that burns the air we breathe.” -- Judith Butler

Thompson's personal connection with the play

In the play, Thompson presents through the characters difficulties she has faced in her own life. Thompson has suffered from grand mal seizures which are also experienced by the characters Patsy and Marie in *Perfect Pie*. In a monologue, Patsy gives the audience a personal explanation of the constant terror that these seizures bring. This monologue seems to be a reflection on Thompson's personal experience with these seizures. "I have never written about it and I've been very fortunate that the seizures haven't interfered with my life, although I did live a few years in fear all the time." -- Judith Thompson

“...In this country, a playwright as good as Judith Thompson is a miracle.” – David McFarlane, *The Globe and Mail*

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