

Ralph Smith of Schenectady, New York's Coming-Out-to-His-Wife Options by Peter Marino

Synopsis:

Ralph Smith is a rather nondescript white man on the eve of turning fifty. He enjoys the comforts of his middle class life and doesn't want to upset his domestic tranquility. Yet he's unable to ignore the turmoil he feels for having deceived his wife Madge about his secret gay life. In this play, Ralph contemplates real and impossible ways of breaking the news to Madge, including insinuating conversation openers, a census taker, a *Redbook* survey, and haiku. Ultimately he has to decide whether it's more humane--to Madge and to himself--to be honest with her or to live with the guilt in silence. The play is suitable for mature audiences. (There is some adult language.)

Characters:

RALPH SMITH: white, professional man nearing 50; inclined toward conflict-avoidance;

MADGE: Ralph's wife, also almost 50; a homemaker and caretaker; accommodating but forthright; (We see MADGE as RALPH perceives her, as if the conflict in his head is being played out for us. The real MADGE is not actually on stage.)

NARRATOR: flashy, handsome male; dressed formally in a dark suit; speaks like a TV game show announcer; he can ring a bell after each option to punctuate;

Set:

Set requirements are minimal: a folding chair; a door of some sort, either free-standing or part of a set, would be useful but is not essential; a copy of *Redbook*; a piece of paper; dream music if available;

Running time:

Running time is ten minutes (promise).