

LAKE ANNE

Characters:

Anne Hamilton Walsh – Late 50's. A still regal dancer.

Will Walsh – 23, Anne's son, cognitively disabled from Down Syndrome

Emily Walsh – early 60's, Anne's sister-in-law

Joe Walsh – 40ish, Anne's nephew by marriage. A charismatic dancer.

Laurie Wells – Late 30's, an actor, reminiscent of Anne in looks/carriage

The play is set in the present, in the living room of Anne's stately home in upstate New York. A projection of a lake is visible upstage throughout the play.

ACT II

Scene i – The next afternoon.

The lake is in shade. ANNE is on the phone.

ANNE

I'm here. It doesn't matter. (pause) Soon is fine. (pause) See you then.

ANNE hangs up, returns to doing dishes.
WILLY enters quietly in inside-out tee shirt, a baseball hat, and bathing suit. He sneaks up on her.

WILL

BOO!

ANNE

Oh! You surprised me. What are you doing?

WILL is animated, racing around the room.

WILL

BOO! BOO! BOO!

ANNE

You have to slow down. Okay? Slow down.

WILL

I scared you, didn't I?

ANNE grabs him by his tee shirt, but he is too strong for her to hold.

ANNE

You did.

WILL

Momma is a scaredy cat.

ANNE

You have to calm down. Your breathing, Willy! What were you doing?

WILL continues to move around; he is out of breath.

WILL

I was watching the game. At Yankee Stadium. I'm going to Yankee Stadium.

ANNE

Could be.

WILL

I am.

ANNE

Who's winning?

WILL

I want to go swimming.

ANNE

That's not a good idea.

WILL

I'm hot.

ANNE

I know. But it's not good for your breathing. Besides, someone is coming to see me now.

WILL

I want to swim the Aussie crawl all around the whole lake. I can do it.

ANNE

If we go to the lake, and that's an "if" providing you do what I tell you to, you'd only float. No Aussie crawl. Okay? Float.

WILL

Floating is for babies.

ANNE

That's not true.

WILL

That's what you say.

ANNE

When do I say that?

WILL

You always say that.

ANNE

When you were little. When I wanted you to practice your crawl and you were being lazy about that and all you did was float. But floating is harder when you get big/ so you can practice.

WILL

I'm big.

ANNE

Yes, you are. What say we have a contest? See who can float for the longest.

WILL

Now.

ANNE

Not right now. I'm expecting company.

WILL

Who?

ANNE

Someone I have business with.

WILL

What business?

ANNE

Just business. I'll make you a sandwich and you can watch some more of the game. And if you can stay quiet while she's here, when I'm done talking to her we'll go down to the lake.

WILL

It's our lake.

ANNE

Of course it is.

WILL

What time will we go floating?

ANNE

After she leaves. After you eat. In a little while.

WILL is reading the clock

WILL

When?

ANNE

Like when I just said.

WILL

(upset) No. What time on the clock? I can tell. Aunt Emily said I did it right.

ANNE

At two o'clock. Okay? I'll make some lunch and you can eat it in front of the TV. You want tuna?

WILL

PBJ.

ANNE

Okay.

WILL

I'm making it.

WILL moves to the cupboard and takes down the peanut butter.

ANNE

I'll do it.

WILL

Mr. Gorman says we can make our own ones.

ANNE

Mr. Gorman is in charge at your program. I'm in charge here. I'm going to do it because I'll do it faster.

ANNE tries to take the jar from WILL who will not give it up.

WILL

(agitated) No. I want to make it.

WILL holds on tightly and ANNE yanks the jar away from him.

ANNE

You calm down right now or there won't be any floating.

There's a knock at the door and LAURIE enters.

LAURIE

Hello, hello?

LAURIE stays by the door. ANNE gives WILLY the jar back

ANNE

(to LAURIE) I'll be right with you. (to WILL) You do it then.

WILL

I'm going to make one for you and one for the lady.

ANNE

Just for you. Use this bread, Willy. And then bring your sandwich inside. Okay? (to LAURIE) Hi. I'll be right with you.

WILL

(to LAURIE) Do you want a PBJ?

LAURIE

I've had my lunch already, but thank you.

ANNE

This is my son, Willy. Willy, this is Mrs. Wells.

WILL

You're pretty.

Aren't you sweet.

LAURIE

I can make you a PBJ.

WILL

WILL moves close to LAURIE.

Mrs. Wells said she had her lunch. Finish now and go inside.

ANNE

ANNE steps between WILL and LAURIE

Thank you, anyway, Willy.

LAURIE

After I eat my lunch we're going to have a contest.

WILL

Oh! What kind of contest?

LAURIE

A floating contest. On our lake.

WILL

A floating contest! That sounds like fun!

LAURIE

Do you want to be in it?

WILL

I didn't bring my bathing suit.

LAURIE

(snicker) You don't have to wear a bathing suit.

WILL

Willy. You need to go and watch the game right now.

ANNE

Okay.

WILL

WILL exits.

Is this a good time?
LAURIE

Fine. A cup of coffee? I mean, tea?
ANNE

No, thanks.
LAURIE

Ice tea? I can make Chamomile.
ANNE

No. Nothing, thanks.
LAURIE

So. What's up? Is there something we need to straighten out with the paperwork?
ANNE

Actually, Mrs. Walsh/ I wanted...
LAURIE

Anne.
ANNE

Anne. My husband and I have been doing some thinking since we met.
LAURIE

Yesterday.
ANNE

Yesterday. Yes.
LAURIE

Is there a problem?
ANNE

No. No. Not necessarily. May I sit down?
LAURIE

Please.
ANNE

LAURIE

I want to say first how much I love your house.

ANNE

Yes. So you said.

LAURIE

That's what I'm here to talk about. You see, I always thought I wanted a new house. But when I saw this place I realized how much I really like old-fashioned houses. Yours is exceptionally lovely. I realize that it isn't currently on the market.

ANNE

That's right.

LAURIE

But being here made me realize how important it is to have the kind of home that you want. More than the property. I mean you can always put in a pond.

ANNE

Maybe so, but I've never seen anyone put in a lake.

LAURIE

Right. This house has such charm. A presence. And being in it made me feel how important that is to me. I love the lake. Absolutely. But you can't build an old house, right?

ANNE

(arch) With the right architect I'd think anything would be possible.

LAURIE

Oh no. Anyway, when you said it wasn't for sale I wanted to see whether there was anything else available of this, um, vintage. Long story short we went to see another house.

ANNE

When did you do that?

LAURIE

Yesterday.

ANNE

You've been busy.

LAURIE

We were so sure we wanted a contemporary. I guess that was my husband's idea. But once I was here I just knew I wanted one like this. With the fireplace and, you know, that borning room.

ANNE

The borning room. Where my husband died.

LAURIE

Oh! I didn't know. I'm so sorry. Anyway, Mr. Rivers took us to see a very lovely home over on Bound Brook Road.

ANNE

Mr. Rivers took you to see it?

LAURIE

Yes.

ANNE

Another house with a lake?

LAURIE

Well, not a lake. But there's a good place for a pond. We walked the property lines and there are these places where it was extremely muddy and Charlie said that was because there were good springs there.

ANNE

There's been a lot of rain.

LAURIE

Anyway, Charlie thought it would probably make an acre pond. I don't know really how big that is? He said it would be a good size. I don't know compared to yours/whether that's bigger or smaller.

ANNE

Did "Charlie" tell you that you never know till after it's dug whether a pond is going to hold water?

LAURIE

Well, we need to get an engineer. He told me that. He'd bring someone out next week to take a look and give an opinion about what we needed to do. He says there's always a way.

ANNE

I guess there is when you have the money. Well, it sounds like you've made up your mind.

LAURIE

No. Absolutely not. That's why I'm here. What I really want to do is to buy your whole place. As nice as that other house is, yours calls to me in a whole different way. And we're prepared to pay a very fair price for it.

ANNE

The lake is for sale. The lake and the 10 acres we discussed.

LAURIE

I don't want to see anyone hurt. I know how much you love the lake. Charlie told me about you and your swimming. I had no idea. I was so impressed. So another thing I thought was that we could set it up so instead of us building, you could build and we'd share the lake. You use it just like you do now.

ANNE

I build a house across from my home?

LAURIE

Look from what I hear either way this isn't going to be your home for that much longer. This way you still have the lake. Otherwise in a couple of weeks...

ANNE

In a couple of weeks what?

LAURIE

Charlie said you need to make a more permanent settlement on the property by the end of July. This way you'll get a much better deal. You would walk away with something substantial. Either here or to go somewhere else. We want to give you the money the property deserves. Charlie told us the full listing price.

ANNE

There is no full listing price.

LAURIE

He said it was all on the market for a while.

ANNE

That is incorrect.

LAURIE

Well, maybe I misunderstood. The point is there's bound to be a fair price and we'd be willing to negotiate around it. You must see that if this deal doesn't go through it is unlikely that...I don't want to be unfair. I told my husband that we wouldn't take advantage. You have your son and I can see now what a worry he must be.

ANNE

That's none of your business.

LAURIE

And so I would want any deal we make to be totally fair. If we bought the house before it came to auction well then you would both be secure. I think we can do something here that works for everyone. Charlie was going to talk to you but I thought the right thing to do was for me to say this to you face to face.

ANNE

Mission accomplished.

LAURIE

I can only imagine what a hard time this must be for you.

ANNE

You've said what you came here to say and now I need for you to leave.

LAURIE

I would think the two of us can come to an understanding.

ANNE

I understand. Is there something you need help understanding?

WILL enters, out of ANNE's line of vision.

ANNE (cont'd).

Maybe you want to understand what it's like when you stop doing the work you love? For which you are admired. Or maybe you want to understand what it's like to take care of a child who you never stop worrying about? Or, maybe you'd like to understand what it's like when someone tries to throw you out of your family's home that's been around a couple hundred years or so? How old are you, anyway? 35?

LAURIE

38.

ANNE

Wearing well. Doing well. "Charlie" says that your career is going very nicely. Congratulations. And, now a baby! A child whose life you can shape and who will grow up to do you proud. A reflection of everything you always wanted and still have. In your perfect house made more perfect still with a solarium. Do I understand you correctly? Well, maybe it will all keep falling in place. But maybe it won't. And then, if it doesn't, come on back and maybe then we can come to an understanding. But not now. Right now I want you to leave. THIS IS MY HOUSE. YOU ARE NOT WELCOME. YOU ARE NOT WELCOME.

WILL

(to ANNE) You have to be calm, Momma.

WILL stands between LAURIE and ANNE. He is agitated and his breathing is hard.

ANNE

Go to your room, Willy.

WILL

(to LAURIE) GO AWAY. YOU GO AWAY FROM OUR HOUSE.

WILL pushes LAURIE, who falls.

ANNE

No Willy!

ANNE moves between LAURIE and WILL and helps LAURIE up.

ANNE (cont'd)

You better get out of here.

LAURIE

You better get a leash on that boy of yours.

ANNE

Fuck you.

LAURIE exits.

ANNE

Can you control yourself for one minute? For one goddamn single minute?

WILL

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

ANNE

I cannot be watching over you every moment of every day. You have to be able to control yourself.

WILL

I'm sorry. Don't be mad.

ANNE sits in her chair. Her back is to WILL as she tries to compose herself. WILL comes to her.

WILL (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

ANNE

Okay, okay. I heard you the first time.

WILL

Mr. Gorman says I can't do that. I can hurt people.

ANNE

Yes.. You cannot do that.

WILL

I'm big. So I can take care of you. We can stay here and I can take care of you. I won't let anybody hurt you.

ANNE

I know.

WILL

Are you still mad at me?

ANNE

I'm not mad at you.

WILL

Are you crying?

ANNE

No, honey.

Because you should smile.

WILL

ANNE reaches up to WILL to stroke his face.

I will, Willy. Give me a minute now.

ANNE

She's mean. I don't like her.

WILL

It's okay. You won't see her anymore.

ANNE

I can tickle you. I can make you laugh.

WILL

Not now.

ANNE

WILL tries to tickle her, and she puts his hands down.

Do you want a glass of water?

WILL

No. No, honey.

ANNE

I'm going to pick some flowers for you.

WILL

That would be very nice.

ANNE

Is she going to live here?

WILL

No. She is not going to live here.

ANNE

You need money.

WILL

ANNE

I am going to get whatever we need. I'm going to go to work with Joey. We'll have plenty of money. Okay?

WILL

Okay. Can we go to the lake now? I'm going to float. That's all. I'm only going to float.

ANNE

Why don't we both rest for a few minutes. Can you do that for me?

WILLY

Okay.

WILL curls up on the floor in front of ANNE.
He rests his head on her lap.

End Scene i