

The Forbidden Fruits of Honey Frost

(a full-length one act; ninety minutes)

TIME: The present

PLACE: Wards Island, New York City: a stylized set represents the operating theatre of a hospital, a law office, an apartment, an apple orchard, and a vintage clothing store.

CHARACTERS:

HONORIA (HONEY) FROST, an American heiress raised in London, age 24

BEVERLY GRAVENSTEIN, a New York estate lawyer, age mid 40s

INGRID GRAVENSTEIN, Beverly's daughter, a university student, age 19

SCARLET MAEVEEN BAILEY, an Irish born orchardist, age 40s

MILTON FROST, Honey's uncle, an astronomy professor, age 50s

JONATHAN FROST, Milton's son, a medical student, age 27

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

On the stage of the operating theatre of the Wards Island Hospital, Beverly Gravenstein, a seriously ill estate lawyer, speaks to an audience of medical specialists attempting to fathom the origin of her affliction. She relates the arrival from London of Honey Frost, the sole heir of an American antiquities dealer who made his fortune looting the buried treasures of the Middle East. Honey's inheritance includes an apple orchard in the Hudson River Valley with a barn containing a sarcophagus that features a carving of the goddess, Pomona, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Honey. The orchard is infested with worms that arrived inside the sarcophagus and are propagating, preventing the apples from being edible; however, the wormy pulp can be brewed into a cider which has a euphoric effect, is highly addictive, and proves to be extremely profitable. Needing something to occupy herself, Honey opens a vintage boutique and hires Beverly's daughter, Ingrid, to be her personal assistant. The boutique, named Forbidden Fruits, proves a surprising success, and as the women become friends, Honey reveals the details of her sordid past; Ingrid reveals her passion for Honey's cousin; and Beverly becomes smitten with Honey's Uncle. When the cider is later exposed to be the cause of a potential pandemic, they are quarantined on Wards Island and forced to face the catastrophic possibility of species extinction.

THEMES: The play is a dystopian exploration of the corrosive effects of obscene wealth, sexual predation, and the human capacity for romance, resilience, and belief in the world beyond. The infested apples serve as a metaphor for the corruption of democratic ideals when the ethics of business affect every aspect of human life.