

**PLAYS**

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Plays by August Strindberg & Edith Oland & Warner Oland

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**AUGUST STRINDBERG & EDITH OLAND & WARNER OLAND**

# **PLAYS**





**WÄRNER OLAND**  
as *Monsieur Durand* in "Facing  
Death"

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# AUGUST STRINDBERG PLAYS

Comrades . . . . Facing Death  
Pariah . . . . . Easter

Translated by  
EDITH and WÄRNER OLAND

JOHN W. LUCE & COMPANY  
BOSTON, 1912

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1912

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A Comedy in IV Acts.

**FACING DEATH**

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**PARIAH**

A Play in I Act.

**EASTER**

A Play in III Acts.

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## FOREWORD

AUGUST STRINDBERG died at Stockholm on May 14, 1912, just ten days after the first of his plays given in English in the United States had completed a month's engagement. This play was "The Father," which, on April 9, 1912, was produced at the Berkeley Theatre in New York, the same little theatre that witnessed in 1894 the first performance in this country of Ibsen's "Ghosts."

It happened that August Lindberg, the eminent Swedish actor and friend of Strindberg (who, by the way, was the first producer of "Ghosts" in any language), was visiting this country and came to see a performance of "The Father." His enthusiasm over the interpretation given Strindberg, in the English rendering of the play as well as in the acting, led him to cable a congratulatory message to Strindberg; and upon departing for Stockholm, he asked for some of the many letters of appreciation from significant sources which the production of "The Father" had called forth. These he wished to give to Strindberg as further assurance "that he has," to use Herr Lindberg's words, "the right representatives in this country." It is gratifying to those who esteem it a rare privilege to be the introducers of

Strindberg's powerful dramatic art to the American stage to know that he finally found his genius recognized on this side of the ocean.

"Comrades," the first play in the present volume, belongs to the same momentous creative period as "The Father" and "Countess Julie," although there is little anecdotic history attaching to this vigorous comedy. It was written in Denmark, where Strindberg, after finishing "The Father" in Switzerland in 1887, went with his family to live for two years, and was published March 21, 1888.

Although the scene of the comedy is laid in Paris, all the characters are Swedish, which may be accounted for by the fact that the feminist movement, of which "Comrades" is a delicious, stinging satire, had been more agitated at that time in Scandinavia than elsewhere. That Paris was chosen as a background for this group of young artists and writers was probably reminiscent of the time, the early eighties, when Strindberg with his wife and children left Sweden and, after spending some time with a colony of artists not far from Fontainebleau, came to Paris, where there were many friends of other days, and established themselves in that "sad, silent Passy," as Strindberg's own chronicle of those times reads. There he took his walks in the deserted arcades of the empty Trocadero Palace, back of which he lived; went to the Théâtre Français, where he saw the great success of the day, and was startled that "an un-

dramatic bagatelle with threadbare scenery, stale intrigues and superannuated theatrical tricks, could be playing on the foremost stage of the world;" saw at the Palais de l'Industrie the triennial exhibition of art works, "the crème de la crème of three salons, and found not one work of consequence." After some time he came to the conclusion that "the big city is not the heart that drives the pulses," but that it is "the boil that corrupts and poisons," and so betook himself and his family to Switzerland, where they lived in the vicinity of Lake Lemán, which environment was made use of years later in the moving one-act play, "Facing Death," presented herewith.

"Pariah," the other one-act play appearing in this volume, is the generally recognized masterpiece of all the short one-act plays. The dialogue is so concentrated that it seems as if not one line could be cut without the whole structure falling to pieces, and in these terse speeches a genius is revealed that, with something of the divine touch, sounds the depths of the human heart and reveals its inmost thoughts. "Pariah" was published in 1890 and "Facing Death" in 1893.

The period of Strindberg's sojourn in Switzerland, 1884-87, was most important in the evolution of the character and work of the man who, throughout his career, was to engage himself so penetratingly and passionately in the psychology of woman, and love, and the prob-