

# Doubting Thomas - a masterful dramatic play by Art Shulman at the Secret Rose Theatre

*North Hollywood theatre hosts Shulman's latest play, brought to life by strong performances...including his own.*

By **CORINA ROBERTS** (Star Patcher) June 7, 2015

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Four actors, two locations, and a set that never changes. Playwright and actor Art Shulman brings a drama to this sparing stage that challenges our notions of just about everything.

Doubting Thomas is the latest of Art Shulman's creations. A master of subtle suspense, Shulman is in his element as a main character in the tightly written play which is never slow, occasionally tear-jerking, and emotionally confrontational.

John (Ted Ryan) and Marilyn (Nancy Van Iderstine) are surprised with almost unbelievable news; John's long-absent father has passed away, and left half a million dollars to John, his only son. The information is an immediate source of joy and discord - their teenage son Dylan (Ian Hamilton/Adam Simon Krist) is vocal in his resolve not to let their new-found wealth land him in a better neighborhood and a private school.

The household tension, belligerent teen, financial stress and conversations laced with passive aggression are all very familiar...giving the audience a sense of comfort and identity with the story line. But not for long. In the very next scene, everything familiar is gone, and we meet Thomas (Art Shulman), who will continually challenge our sense of ethics and understanding of humanity to the very last act.

In a moving performance that is always believable, Ted Ryan brings us into the heart and mind of John, a man still very much in touch with the pain of growing up fatherless. Even in his dire financial situation, he would rather have a father than an inheritance.

But dead is dead...isn't it?

John must question many things when he meets Thomas, including his father's death.

Marilyn is less than fond of Thomas, but their son Dylan, after initially shunning the crazy old bum, befriends him, and what began as a seemingly simple plot continues with every scene to thicken.

In a performance that will leave you wondering if he was not a homeless man in another life, Art Shulman becomes his part, carrying us into a world thankfully unknown to many, pushing our buttons with deliberation and abandon. The psychological complexity of Thomas keeps the story forever unpredictable, and yet

at its core, *Doubting Thomas* asks a very basic question:  
What is more valuable...love or money?

*Doubting Thomas* runs through June 21 at the Secret Rose Theatre in North Hollywood, with performances on Friday and Saturday at 8 PM, and a Sunday matinee at 2 PM. Tickets can be purchased online at

<http://www.theatreinla.com/doubting-thomas/4938/>

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