

“Signs” Description

April reads horoscopes.

Lydia writes horoscopes.

April reads them devoutly, using them to guide her life choices.

Lydia just makes them up, using the money she makes from them to support herself while she completes her novel.

“Signs” follows the story of April, a woman who writes metaphors for a living — whenever an author is having trouble thinking of a creative, evocative metaphor, the metaphor is outsourced to her. One day, April discovers the “perfect metaphor” — a marvelous yet dangerous creation, a comparison so perfect that it renders other forms of communication meaningless.

This creation takes her on a journey in which she meets a peculiar set of characters. She becomes enchanted with Thierry, the owner of a scent and candle store called the “Olfactory Factory” who is passionate about making very particular scent concoctions, like “freshly opened book,” “campfire,” and “rain.” And she is pitted against Louis, her boss, who — intent on taking the perfect metaphor for himself — is becoming increasingly obsessed with the lost results of a psychology experiment he took part in decades ago.

Eventually, April comes in contact with Lydia, an all-too-familiar force who has been transcribing April’s fate through her horoscopes all along. After Lydia and April meet, the story turns upside down — April reads the metaphor for the first time, Louis discovers the truth of his forgotten past, and we learn about the transporting power of Thierry’s scents.

Praised by the National Eugene O’Neill Theatre Conference for its “imaginative whimsy and quick pace,” “Signs” is a magical, dreamlike and hilarious journey that explores determinism, memory, and transcendence. It asks, “Where do forgotten memories go, after you forget them?” And it examines the little things — a piece of music, an image, or a scent — that can transport us to a place where all memory and time exist.

“Signs” has had two readings at Stanford University, one of which explored the use of olfactory design in the play. Audiences responded enthusiastically, lauding the play’s delightful twists, poignant humanity, originality and humor.