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**Dramatic  
Publishing**

# **someone spectacular**

By

DOMÉNICA FERAUD

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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Stewart Talent  
1430 Broadway, Suite 601  
New York, NY 10018

ISBN: 978-1-61959-357-2

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*someone spectacular* had its premiere production at the Romulus Linney Courtyard Theatre at the Pershing Square Signature Center (New York) in July 2024.

CAST:

NELLE .....Alison Cimmnet  
JUDE ..... Delia Cunningham  
LILY .....Ana Cruz Kayne  
THOM ..... Damian Young  
EVELYN .....Gamze Ceylan  
JULIAN.....Shakur Tolliver

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Tatiana Pandiani  
Producers.....B3-A12/Doménica Feraud,  
Paige Evans, Margaret Leigh, Cheryl Dennis  
Scenic Design.....dots  
Costume Design .....Siena Zoë Allen  
Lighting Design ..... Oona Curley  
Sound Design ..... Mikaal Sulaiman  
Casting ..... Conrad Woolfe, CSA & Leigh Ann Smith, CSA  
Dramaturg ..... Paige Evans  
PR..... The Press Room  
Advertising & Marketing ..... The Pekoe Group  
Production Management .....Libby J’Vera  
Stage Manager ..... Yetti Steinman  
Assistant Stage Manager..... Madison Lane  
Company Manager..... Gracie Becker Wilkins  
General Management..... Cheryl Dennis Productions

# **someone spectacular**

## **CHARACTERS**

NELLE (w): Someone's sister. Age 47.

LILY (w): Someone's daughter. Age 30.

THOM (m): Someone's husband. Age 56.

JULIAN (m): Someone's nephew. Age 26.

JUDE (w): Someone young. Age 22.

EVELYN (w): Someone. Age 51.

PLACE: Grief support group, Manhattan. Now.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

Stage directions are minimal. Do with that what you will.

Whenever the grief group is meeting should reflect the time/day the current performance is taking place.

The play must start 10 minutes past the hour. The audience is waiting for Beth, just like the characters are.

CASTING: At least half the cast must be BIPOC.

DESIGN:

Lily's outfit should look like it could have come from Evelyn's closet.

Lily and Jude wear matching necklaces.

Jude has a panda keychain hanging off her backpack.

*for Nathalie*

## someone spectacular

*(Lights up on six chairs spread out in a semicircle with one in the center, facing the rest.*

*NELLE, EVELYN, JUDE and THOM enter and sit from left to right.*

*NELLE carries a large bag. EVELYN wears the most stylish outfit of all time. JUDE bites her nails when no one is looking. THOM is glued to his Android.*

*A crappy coffee machine is set up on a table in the back, next to a Tupperware containing something that resembles banana bread.*

*It looks like every cliché AA meeting we've seen on TV.*

*A dance while they wait: NELLE checks the time once a minute. JULIAN enters the room at two minutes past the hour and sits next to THOM. JUDE runs out at three minutes. EVELYN pulls out her planner at four minutes. THOM pours himself coffee at five minutes. LILY rushes in at six minutes and sits next to JULIAN. The lights flicker. JULIAN gets up at seven minutes and grabs a piece of banana bread. JUDE re-enters at eight minutes. Everyone settles.*

*The room is filled with the sound of silence.)*

NELLE. Should we ... it's been ten minutes.

JUDE. We can't start without Beth.

EVELYN. She's never late.

NELLE. She's usually early.

LILY. Do you think something happened?

THOM. Nothing happened.

LILY. Something could have happened.

*(Silence.)*

EVELYN. What if we played a game?

NELLE. You're kidding.

EVELYN. Until she gets here. To pass the time.

LILY. Like "I Spy" or some shit?

EVELYN. My kids like "Mafia."

THOM. What about fuck, marry, kill?

JUDE. That feels inappropriate.

LILY. Fuck, marry, kill ... Donald Trump, Harvey Weinstein,  
Keith Raniere.

JUDE. You can't be serious. THOM. Who's Keith Raniere?

LILY. The NXIVM cult leader. He branded all his bitches.  
Starved them into submission.

NELLE. Why does this all sound familiar?

LILY. HBO did a documentary.

EVELYN. My daughter made me watch that. He's terrifying.

LILY. So, kill Raniere?

EVELYN. Kill Raniere.

LILY. Same. Marry Trump, fuck Weinstein.

EVELYN. Marry Trump?!

LILY. Would you rather marry Weinstein?

NELLE. This is a waste of time.

THOM. We're not allowed to have fun?

NELLE. I'm not paying my sitter forty bucks an hour to play  
fuck, marry, kill.

EVELYN. It's better than paying her to sit here and do nothing.

THOM. Fuck, marry, kill ... Michelle Pfeiffer, Michelle Yeoh, Michelle Williams.

LILY. Battle of the Michelles.

THOM. Is it too easy though?

EVELYN. Marry Yeoh, fuck Pfeiffer, kill Williams?

LILY. Too easy.

THOM. Too easy.

NELLE. What if we vote? Does that seem fair to everyone?

JUDE. Vote to do what?

THOM. "To start, or not to start, that is the question."

JUDE. Starting without Beth violates the rules.

LILY. *Talking* without Beth violates the rules.

*(JULIAN pulls out his Juul. Takes a puff.)*

LILY (*cont'd*). Could you not?

THOM. Let the kid vape. Whatever helps, right?

LILY. It's triggering.

NELLE. I'm so sick of that word.

LILY. I'm doing him a favor.

*(JULIAN pockets his Juul.)*

NELLE. Does anyone have a piece of paper? To tally the votes?

JUDE. I didn't agree to a vote.

LILY. I vote we start. Fuck it.

JUDE. No one here is qualified to lead a session. It's unethical.

NELLE. I take it that's a wait?

THOM. Start. We're already here.

JULIAN. Wait. Starting feels dangerous.

LILY. Danger's a turnoff for the guy puffing on a death stick?

NELLE. OK, so that's three starts and two waits, which means ...

*(They turn to face EVELYN.)*

EVELYN. How about another round of fuck, marry, kill?

NELLE. Did you really come all the way here to play some game?

JUDE. I came to talk to an expert.

NELLE. So book an individual session.

EVELYN. It feels wrong. Without Beth, I'm not sure we're allowed—

JUDE. Beth said we need a safe environment to heal. That's why we should—

NELLE. Evelyn. I am begging you. Don't make me go home without getting to talk about her. My husband and my kids and all these people depend on me, and it's fucking exhausting, so this? This is what keeps me going. For seven days, I wait to come to this shitty room in this shitty place and share my stupid feelings. Please don't take that away from me.

*(JULIAN pulls out his Juul. He's about to take a puff when he remembers. Pockets it.)*

EVELYN. OK. Let's start.

NELLE. Thank you—

JUDE. That's not fair! You emotionally blackmailed her.

NELLE. No one likes a sore loser.

JUDE. Maybe I should go.

NELLE. The door's right there.

THOM. Don't go.

EVELYN. You came back for a reason. Right?

LILY. Beth can clean up the mess when she gets here.

NELLE. Who wants to go first?

EVELYN. You're not a very patient person, are you?

THOM. We already voted. We don't gain anything by wasting more time.

EVELYN. Should we start with a check-in?

NELLE. I hate the check-ins.

LILY. They're fucking useless.

JUDE. I think they're vital.

LILY. You've been here *once*.

JUDE. I still have a say.

LILY. Why don't you start us off then? Since you're so eager to check in.

JUDE. OK. Hi again. I'm Jude, and I think my grief is at a five today? Maybe a six. It gets worse at night, I'm not sure why. So better than last time. But still just ... there.

LILY. Are you finished? Great. Hi! I'm Lily and today my grief is at a ten, because it's always at a fucking ten and every day I wake up shocked I haven't killed myself. Happy?

JUDE. See, that's what I mean. About this being unethical. If you're feeling suicidal, someone should be here to help you with that.

LILY. Bitch, do you really think *Beth* is going to give me something to live for?

EVELYN. Could we not call women that?

LILY. I'm reclaiming the word.

EVELYN. It's an ugly word.

LILY. Maybe I'm an ugly person.

NELLE. How about we ease into things with a share? I'm sure someone must have something they want to say. That's why we're here, isn't it? Because we understand each other.

THOM. That's a little presumptuous.

NELLE. What is?

THOM. The idea that you understand me.

NELLE. Right. Sorry. Everyone's specific circumstances are very different.

THOM. I wish someone did understand. But she's the only one who would have, if things had been reversed.

LILY. I think about that. What it would be like if I was the one who died. How she would cope. If she would cope.

EVELYN. It's different for a parent.

LILY. People keep saying that and frankly? It pisses me off.

THOM. It's out of order. Losing a child goes against the natural course of things.

LILY. Her death wasn't the natural course of things.

JUDE. This is getting a little heated. Maybe we should call Beth, before we start—

LILY. No one's starting anything.

NELLE. I'll start! If no one else wants ... so I'll start. For a while now, I've been talking to my cactus. I even named it after her. When I come home, I say "Hello—"

JUDE. Is someone taking time? Sorry. It's just that last time, Beth—never mind.

THOM. So, you talk to your cactus?

NELLE. I talk to my cactus. I can't look at pictures or read a single text message, but I can talk to this cactus she gave me and tell it about my day and look after it. My girls think I'm losing it, but I'm terrified that one day the cactus is going to fucking die.

EVELYN. It's pretty hard to kill a cactus.

NELLE. She loved cactuses, and I like to think that's why. Their resiliency. She had a bunch in her apartment, and

when my oldest was little, she put her face right up to one, and we spent the rest of the day picking invisible spines off her cheeks. Her face turned bright red and my sister felt *awful*, and I pretended to be annoyed, but honestly, she looked so cute. Like a baby Snow White.

LILY. Mine loved orchids. She sent me a bunch before she got sick, and I didn't water them because I just assumed there would be another delivery. I still think that, sometimes. And now there are these pots with like a few leaves and soil all over my apartment that I can't bear to get rid of. My apocalypse garden.

JUDE. Aren't you supposed to stand?

LILY. No thanks.

JUDE. But Beth said—

LILY. Some of Beth's ideas are pretty cunty.

JUDE. I like standing. It helps.

LILY. So stand. I'm sure we'd all love to hear from Beth's campaign manager.

JUDE. Did I do something to you?

LILY. You have living parents.

JUDE. Since when is that a crime?

LILY. Since my mother was murdered.

NELLE. She wasn't *murdered*. Do you have to be so dramatic?

THOM. Of course she does. She's an actress.

LILY. A retired actress. Also, actors aren't dramatic—that's like the most cliché stereotype ever.

JUDE. Aren't you a bit young to be retired?

LILY. Aren't you a bit young to be a wannabe mom?

EVELYN. Is it too late to change my vote? I think I would like to change my—

JULIAN. I'll share.

After it happened, no one at work said anything. I guess they thought that because it was just my aunt it wasn't a big deal? So I tried to act normal. I even forced myself to go to happy hour after the funeral. She wasn't my mom, but I loved her just as much. She was the one person who had my back. Put me through school, let me live with her after I finished college. She had her own kids and a husband and this busy life, yet for some reason, she chose me. Now they're all hurting, and I can't imagine how much because my own pain is bad enough. I try to be there for them. I stay up with my cousin when she can't sleep, and I moved back in to help my uncle, but I come here because sometimes, I need someone to be there for me. So Beth not being here? It's not the end of the world, but it also kind of sucks.

EVELYN. I'm sure she'll be here soon.

JUDE. Beth wouldn't abandon us.

LILY. People leave you halfway through the wood a lot more often than you think.

NELLE. My kids love that movie.

LILY. Movie?

NELLE. *Into the Woods*, right? That's what you're—

LILY. The 1988 musical starring Bernadette Peters. Not the Disney propaganda where they were too scared to kill Rapunzel, because I guess death isn't something Disney cosigns.

EVELYN. That's one of my favorite Sondheim shows.

LILY. My mom took me to my first musical when I was like eight. It was our thing. And now I can't listen to a cast album without wanting to light my skin on fire.

THOM. You still have your dad. Maybe for him you can—

LILY. Maybe you don't know the first thing about my relationship with my dad.

THOM. There are people who need you, people whose lives would be destroyed. Suicide, the contemplation of it, it's selfish.

LILY. Oh fuck the fuck off.

THOM. I'm trying to help.

LILY. Guilting me isn't helpful.

EVELYN. He's not trying to guilt you; he's pointing out the possibility that—

LILY. I don't need this. OK? Especially from you.

EVELYN. What did I do?

LILY. You had a mom you didn't even *like* who lived to see eighty, yet here you are. Wasting our time with your no longer sad, sad story.

*(THOM's phone buzzes. He answers it, starts heading out.)*

THOM. Hey Mark. Yeah, I saw. Have you called David? OK. Right. But he's game? Fantastic. So what I'm struggling to understand is ... *(He exits the room.)*

EVELYN. I'm sorry about your mom, I really am. But I'm also ... you had a mom who loved you. And fifty-one is far too young and everything about her death was horrendous, but at least you knew what it was like to be loved by your mother. *I am grieving someone who—*

JUDE. Beth says we're not supposed to compare.

LILY. For someone who's only met the woman once, you seem to care an awful lot about preserving Beth's "integrity."

JUDE. I was defending you.

LILY. Did I ask for your help?

JULIAN. Why don't we start our breathing exercises?

LILY. Sorry are you Beth now? I must have missed the memo.

EVELYN. That's a great idea!

(*LILY pauses.*)

EVELYN (*cont'd*). We should vote for a replacement Beth.

To lead today's session!

JULIAN. I think one vote was enough for today.

NELLE. I can be Beth.

JUDE. *Please* don't be Beth.

NELLE. I don't see any other volunteers.

JUDE. Could someone please call her?

LILY. Don't you have her number?

JUDE. I'm new.

JULIAN. She's new.

NELLE. Are we sure cactuses can't die?

EVELYN. I think it's cacti.

NELLE. That's a weird word. Cacti.

(*THOM re-enters the room.*)

JUDE. My mom, she's not great either. When I told her about the baby, she didn't even say sorry. She just started ranting about how I would get an infection if they didn't take it out immediately.

NELLE. You can get sepsis if they leave the fetus in. It's dangerous.

JUDE. I couldn't sleep, even after they did the procedure. I would wake up in the middle of the night, terrified that they got it wrong and this dead baby, my *child*, was still inside. Poisoning me.

JULIAN. Maybe your mom was trying to help.

JUDE. I needed her to be a normal mom and listen to me. Instead, she found a way to make me feel even worse. Because that procedure? It's *horrible*. Even if you don't

want the baby, and we did. But I shouldn't have called her. I should have known better.

THOM. My wife miscarried when she was your age. It was brutal, but we went on to have two healthy pregnancies. You'll be OK.

JUDE. I would feel better if I heard that from your wife. It was her body. Her loss. Fuck. This is why I wanted to wait for Beth.

LILY. Do you think Beth's dead? I think Beth's dead.

JULIAN. That would be kind of funny.

THOM. How would that be funny?

JULIAN. I don't know. We lost people we weren't supposed to lose. I just think it would be funny if our grief counselor up and died on us.

NELLE. Beth probably forgot.

THOM. You don't forget about your grief group, not when you've devoted your life to grief, because then you understand precisely why you can't not show up on your grief group.

LILY. If she's dead, who do you think inherits her closet?

EVELYN. The lady knew how to rock a kooky outfit.

LILY. RIP Beth's rainbow crocs.

JUDE. You're killing her off that fast?

THOM. Emergencies happen. Maybe there's someone in her life who's sick. Someone who needs her. Someone she's already been grieving.

JULIAN. Or pre-grieving. Like on *Succession*.

LILY. That's not a thing.

THOM. I started grieving at the hospital. As soon as they said cancer, I knew.