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# Alone, Together

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**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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ISBN: 978-1-61959-253-7

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“Commissioned and originally presented in June 2020 as part of the  
University of California, Santa Barbara, Department of Theater and Dance LAUNCH PAD Zoom  
Festival *Alone, Together*; Risa Brainin, Artistic Director.”

Thank you to all the playwrights; directors; actors; designers; dramaturgs; artistic, production and administrative folks; donors; and audiences who have contributed to making LAUNCH PAD a vibrant home for new plays.

## Foreword

On March 10, 2020, one week before the end of winter quarter, everyone in the University of California, Santa Barbara community received an email from Chancellor Henry Yang instructing us to move to online teaching as soon as possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theatre/dance faculty immediately came together to figure out what to do to best serve the needs of our students. Final projects and upcoming productions had to be canceled, and students were heading home for the foreseeable future to take classes on Zoom from their childhood bedrooms! We were all thrown into a bit of chaos: how could we create a remote curriculum for all of our aspiring young artists?

It was at that point that my dear friend, festival co-director and head of the B.F.A. acting program, Annie Torsiglieri, had the vision to say: “Let’s commission playwrights to write monologues and plays that are meant to be performed on Zoom.” Well, I went a little crazy and invited every writer who has ever worked with our new play development program, LAUNCH PAD, over the past 15 years to participate. That was around 30 writers, and 24 answered the call! We gave the writers this prompt: *Alone, Together*. A total of 39 plays were written, 23 directors engaged, 61 actors cast, 5 stage managers, 3 designers, 3 dramaturgs and 10 staff assembled virtually, and, together, we created an all-day, live Zoom festival in four chapters on Saturday, June 6, 2020.

What we couldn’t anticipate is that not only would we be rehearsing during a global health pandemic but also in the midst of a revolution. George Floyd was murdered on Monday, May 25, and it reignited the cry against racism in our country. Our company was composed of students, faculty, staff and professional guest artists from across the country. Many were protesting by day and rehearsing by night. Even today, as I write this, the protests continue. It was important to both Annie and me that all of the artists involved in *Alone, Together* knew (and still know) that UCSB Department of Theater and Dance and LAUNCH PAD stand with our Black communities across the country on this day and every day. BLACK LIVES MATTER. We are with you.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in a famous letter from the Birmingham jail in 1963: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” We, as artists, are committed to speaking out against injustice.

Xochitl Clare, one of our actors, announced *Alone, Together* on her Facebook page by quoting performance and installation artist Ester Hernandez who said, “We must continue to use our creative skills to give strength to our political, cultural and spiritual struggle.”

Xochitl then continued with her own thoughts: “‘Is making theatre really important now?’ my heart asks. As a young Black artist, struggling to grapple with our world, channeling my energy towards my craft has provided me some solace. Support me as I move forward in virtual solidarity with fellow theatre artists across the nation to do a very simple, yet important thing—to *come together*.” And that’s exactly what we did on 6/6/20. With an audience of 800 people over the course of the day, we all came together.

As theatre-makers, we communicate through the art we create. The 39 plays in this collection reflect many perspectives on life during the early days of the quarantine. They brilliantly offer moments of joy, pathos, insight, hope and comfort knowing we are never really alone.

—Risa Brainin  
Artistic Director, LAUNCH PAD

# That Flower, That Flower

By  
LYNN ROSEN

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(THAT FLOWER, THAT FLOWER)

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*That Flower, That Flower* was commissioned and originally presented in June 2020 as part of the University of California, Santa Barbara, Department of Theater and Dance LAUNCH PAD Zoom Festival *Alone, Together*; Risa Brainin, Artistic Director. It was directed by Kate Bergstrom.

CAST:

EDIE ..... Lana Spring

### AUTHOR’S NOTE

This is adapted from my play *Apple Cove* produced by WP Theater in 2011. I revisited the character of Edie for *Alone, Together* for a few reasons.

- A. I regret not giving Edie a moment like this in *Apple Cove* when it was first produced.
- B. Edie’s need to break free is what we all wish we could do during COVID-19!
- C. Edie’s exuberant escape from a place of rigidity, fear, homogeneity and tribalism is symbolic of my wish for America.

NOTE TO ACTOR: Discover these thoughts *as* they occur. Edie didn’t plan this. It’s a last-second idea. She’s speaking off-the-cuff. No time to think or pause because Alan could wake up any second and convince her to stay. In other words, a snappy pace will help you find intention. Also, although Edie says she’s sad, and she *is* sad about many things, don’t play this sad. Think energy and exuberance! She’s freeing herself. Lastly, there is funny stuff in here, but Edie doesn’t know it’s funny. This is all real and urgent to her.

—Lynn Rosen

# That Flower, That Flower

## CHARACTERS

EDIE: A woman in her 20s.

PLACE: A gated community in Florida where there are rules for everything, from what flowers to grow, to what paint to use, to what clothes to wear.

TIME: Present day.

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*(EDIE records a “Dear John” video to her husband, Alan, 20s, into a security cam. [If that’s not doable, she can do it on Alan’s computer.] The flower she speaks of is awesome and powerful. It’s her awakening. She’s been betrayed by Alan but still has love for him. Her dainty dress contrasts with her wild hair, the dirt on her face, under her nails, on her hands. It’s like she’s gone through a metamorphosis. She is very close to the camera.)*

EDIE. It was that flower, Alan.

That flower that came from nowhere. From the ooze and silt.

That ugly, pretty, thorny, black, brown, gold and purple flower.

I knew the rules of The Cove by heart—tulips only, hedges only so high, bushes only so bushy, English speakers only—so when that flower popped up in my garden, I dared not touch it.

But every day, Alan? I got a little bit closer.

I caressed a leaf.

I bled on a thorn. Yeah! That’s where all the Band-Aids went! Ha!

I inhaled its moldy mocha-soil scent, its dirty scent, and it was succulent.

I know the word succulent embarrasses you, Alan, I’m sorry, but it was succulent.

It infected me, and it was like *I* grew thorns and curves and colors!

Like *I* burst up from the manicured lawn!

Like *I* became succulent!

It’s wise, this flower. It was here long before they butchered the trees and drained the swamps, before they killed the bees and birds and otters. Before the gates of this Cove were built to keep out the chaos, the stranglers, the strangers. *(Aren’t we taught to welcome strangers?)*

Before my mom ran after that kite and never came back.