

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest you read the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Alone, Together

Edited by

WILLIAM DAVIES KING

Foreword by

RISA BRAININ

Written by

LINDA ALPER, KATIE BENDER, JAMI BRANDLI,
DAN CASTELLANETA, DEB LACUSTA,
LEO CABRANES-GRANT, MIA CHUNG, YUSSEF EL GUINDI,
ANNE GARCÍA-ROMERO, IDRIS GOODWIN,
ENID GRAHAM, ARLENE HUTTON, LILA ROSE KAPLAN,
WILLIAM DAVIES KING, JENNY MERCEIN, BRIAN OTAÑO,
LYNN ROSEN, CHERI STEINKELLNER, JAMES STILL,
ALISON TATLOCK, ANNIE TORSIGLIERI, JOHN WALCH,
CHERYL L. WEST and SHERI WILNER.

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMXX by
DRAMATIC PUBLISHING

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(ALONE, TOGETHER)

For inquiries concerning all other rights, use the
contact information listed on the title page of each play.

ISBN: 978-1-61959-253-7

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

In addition, all producers of any play in this anthology must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“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

Mom's Kids
(a reunion on the Zoom)

By
JAMES STILL

©MMXX by JAMES STILL
Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(MOM'S KIDS [A REUNION ON THE ZOOM])

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact
Bret Adams Ltd.
448 W 44th St., New York, NY 10036 • Phone: (212) 765-5630

Mom's Kids (a reunion on the Zoom) 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 Michael Bernard.

CAST:

MOM..... Cheri Steinkellner
JACK..... Harry Davis
JILL..... Betty Galindo
THOR..... Dillon Redd

AUTHOR'S NOTE

There has been a lot of conversation about being at our best while sheltering in place—and then there are Mom's kids ... I wrote *Mom's Kids (a reunion on the Zoom)* wondering about people who didn't get that memo, siblings who aren't swayed by gratitude for Zoom and habitually turn everything up a notch so they are actually at their worst. Of course under the dark/savage humor of the play are the bare anxieties and fears that so many of us are feeling in the spring of 2020. And Mom? She has something to say, but her children are too busy freaking out to listen. And then they do. Wait—Mom said WHAT???

—James Still

Mom's Kids

(a reunion on the Zoom)

CHARACTERS

MOM: a woman in her 50s

MOM'S KIDS (in their 20s): JACK, JILL and THOR

NOTE: Everything tells a story. In the same spirit in which I wrote the play, characters may/can/should be played by actors of any race, ethnicity, origin and other-abledness. In whatever way the play is cast, it will tell the story of a 21st-century family.

*(The four of them are in different locations, alone and together on Zoom.
We drop in on the middle of something.)*

JACK. ... but what was so important we had to do this on Zoom? Are you OK?

JILL. Are you sick?

THOR. Are you having symptoms?

JACK. Are you out of toilet paper?

THOR. What the fuck, Mom?

JACK. Oh God.

THOR. What? What did I miss?

JILL. Your lighting there is terrible, Thor. You look awful.

THOR. Shut up. Why isn't Mom talking?

JACK. Mom! So what is this? Are you marrying that guy?

THOR. What guy?

JACK. The guy.

THOR. I didn't know Mom was seeing a guy.

JILL. That guy's a loser, Mom. Please don't ruin your life with a loser.

THOR. What guy?

JACK. Mom?

(...)

JILL. Mom!

JACK. Why isn't she talking?

JILL. Maybe it's a bad connection.

THOR. Blink twice if you can hear us.

JILL. Mom! Talk!

THOR. Why is she being so weird?

JACK. Shut up, Thor. She's not being weird—

THOR. You don't call this weird?

JILL. I hate both of you—just everybody shut up! Mom, seriously, what's going on?

THOR. Don't be all pretend-y with Mom—don't do that in front of us—

JACK. "Pretend-y" isn't really a word, Thor.

THOR. Shut up, Jack, I'm talking to Jill. So don't act like we don't know what you're doing.

JILL. What? What am I doing, Thor?

JACK. Don't play innocent, Jill—we know all your tricks.

JILL. My tricks?

JACK. You're such a manipulator.

JILL. For fuck's sake, would the two of you not gang up on me—for once? Just for frickin' once?

THOR. You're so good at playing the victim.

JILL. When someone gets attacked they ARE the victim!

JACK. We did not attack you.

JILL. What do you call it then? The two of you coming at me—it's always like this—

THOR. Always??? Queen of the hyperbole, your royal asswipe.

JILL. Very mature, Thor.

THOR (*mocking her*). "Very mature, Thor."

JILL. Shut up!

JACK. Who's attacking who?

JILL. I can't stand to be anywhere near the two of you, I never have, I never will—

JACK. Well lucky for all of us, with this virus thing we can't be anywhere near each other.

THOR. I already hate this whole fake Zoom culture stuff, it makes me feel *too* connected. It's overwhelming, right?

JILL. I still hate you both, I hate you equally, I hate you twice as much as I hate you each.

THOR. That is just stupid.

JILL. I hate you even more on Zoom.

JACK. You don't even make sense.

JILL. How would you know?

JACK. About what?

JILL. About making sense, about being sane, about *not being an asshole!!!*

JACK (*to THOR*). Do you believe her?

JILL. How long since you've been sober?

JACK. What?

JILL. I know you're drunk, I can smell it on you through the internet—it's oozing out of your virtual pores like pus.

THOR. You don't have to be gross, Jill. You know I get motion sickness—

JILL. Then stop moving!

THOR. I'm not moving, it's the idea of all that oozing pus—

JACK. I can't believe you'd go after my drinking—on Zoom no less. That's just low.

JILL. I'm talking *truth*, I'm a truth-teller.

JACK. You're talking trash—you know how hard I've been working to get sober—

JILL. And it hasn't worked, clearly, because you probably *woke up* drunk.

THOR. That is really low, Jilly.

JILL. Don't call me "Jilly"—we're not kids, I'm not your baby sister who you get to drag around like a pet and then forget about whenever you get bored.

THOR. Oh not that again. Really? Really?

JILL. Yes, really. It happened. It's fucked up.

THOR. Fine.

JACK. I'm still back there on the part about pus oozing out of my virtual pores—

THOR. Oh Jesus, stop it!

JILL. Not pus—*like* pus—alcohol oozing out of your virtual pores *like* pus.

THOR. I think I'm going to throw up now.

JILL. Drama Queen, Drama Queen, Drama Queen—

THOR. Now you're going after my sexual orientation?

JILL. Which is just a fancy way of saying, "Thor likes cock"—

JACK (*laughing*). OK—that was funny. Plus one for Jill.

THOR. It wasn't funny, it was disgusting. And it's just like you to keep score.

JACK. Don't get all up in your self-loathing, bro.

THOR. Is this about me trying to kill myself? Is that what this is about?

JACK. I didn't say anything about you trying to kill yourself.

THOR. And don't call me "bro."

JILL. What are you talking about? You tried to kill yourself? When?

(...)

When? Thor?