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## **Family Plays**

# SEARCHING

by  
O.B. Rozell



# SEARCHING

**Drama. By O.B. Rozell.** *Cast: 2m., 5w.* Lisa Davenport has been brought up in a home filled with love and understanding. The fact that she is an adopted child has never bothered Lisa ... until now. A crisis in her life makes it imperative that she find who her real parents are. Her foster mother is dying. Lisa, 16, terrified of being left alone, searches frantically for her natural mother. She has definite clues. But what if her real mother rejects her again? *Searching* is expertly crafted. Junior-high to adult audiences will cherish the suspense, the tenderness and the message. O.B. Rozell's ability to capture and delineate the emotions of people in dire distress makes this play as poignantly effective as his highly successful *The Freeway* and *Of Winners, Losers and Games*. No one can see this play without gaining a little better understanding of what makes happy family life. This play and Rozell's *Sharing* are excellent companion pieces for a night of plays. For comic relief, the author's *Nathan the Nervous* may be added. *Set: dining rooms of the Davenport and Weldon families. Time: today. Approximate running time: 30 minutes. Code: SX4.*

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Searching

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**A One-Act Play**

**by**

**O. B. ROZELL**

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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## SEARCHING

*(2 males, 5 females)*

### Characters

Lisa Davenport—sixteen year-old girl, sweet and pretty

Dorothy Davenport—Lisa's mother

Donald Hearn—Lisa's best friend

Veronica Fletcher Weldon—socialite

Beatrice—Mrs. Weldon's maid

Frank Weldon—Mrs. Weldon's husband

Sandra Perkins—former social worker



**Setting:** The dining rooms of the Davenport and Weldon homes in a large city.

**Time:** Today

## ABOUT THE PLAY

Lisa Davenport has been brought up in a home filled with love and understanding. The fact that she is an adopted child has never bothered Lisa...until now. A crisis in her life makes it imperative that she find who her real parents are.

O. B. Rozell's ability to capture and delineate the emotions of people in dire distress makes this play as poignantly effective as his highly successful **The Freeway** and **Of Winners, Losers, and Games**. No one can see this play without gaining a little better understanding of what makes happy family life.

This play and Rozell's **Sharing** are excellent companion pieces for a night of plays. And for comic relief, the author's **Nathan the Nervous** may be added.



We regret to report that O. B. Rozell died on March 8, 1980 at the age of 44. The I. E. Clark Co. is pleased to have been chosen as the publisher of his plays, which serve as a living monument to his memory. We hope to publish several others posthumously.



## PRODUCTION NOTES

### *Properties*

Since a symbolic set is used for this play, the props may also be suggested. Some of the props may be mimed, as designated in the text, and some may be real. If the director wishes, however, all the props may be mimed or real. The following list includes all hand props, real or otherwise.

2 telephones—one in each half of the stage

Hairbrush—Lisa

Hand mirror—Lisa

3 or 4 envelopes—Mrs. Davenport

2 or 3 school books—Donald

Serving cart or tray—brought on by Beatrice

Pot of coffee, cups, napkins—on cart or tray

Wristwatch—Donald

Tray with soft drinks—Lisa

Purse, containing notepad and pen—Miss Perkins

Notepad, purse—Lisa

Several letters—Mrs. Davenport

Camera—Donald

Wristwatch—Lisa

Purse, containing paper money—Mrs. Davenport

Legal papers/letter in envelope—in Davenport desk drawer

Telephone directory—one on each telephone table

Pizza box—Lisa

### *Costumes*

All characters wear contemporary clothing. All except Beatrice and Mr. Weldon use topcoats or jackets. **Mrs. Weldon's** clothes are stylish and attractive. **Miss Perkins** is obviously a middle-aged spinster and would dress accordingly. **Mrs. Davenport** wears business clothes. NOTE: In casting the play, try to choose a Lisa and a Mrs. Weldon who resemble each other.

### *Lights and Sound*

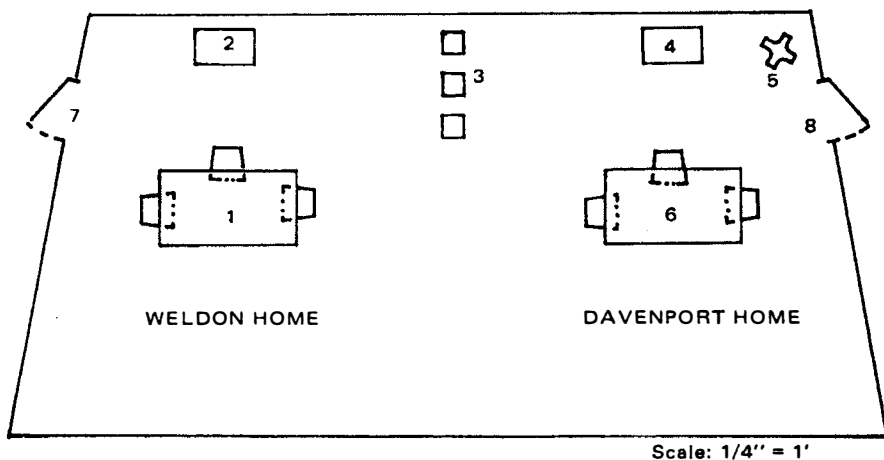
No lighting effects are required. However, if the facilities are available, the technical director may want to dim the side of the stage not being used. The Down Center plane serves as a sort of neutral area from which characters speak directly to the audience. A spotlight may be focused on this area to illuminate the speaker, while the rest of the stage is dimmed.

Sound effects required are: telephone, door bell, automobile horn, clock striking.

### The Set

The set represents a room in the Davenport home (Stage Left) and a room in the Weldon home (Stage Right). The Weldons are much better off financially than the widowed Mrs. Davenport, and the furniture and decor of the two halves of the stage may show this difference. However, since the set is symbolic rather than realistic, both sets may be composed of simple pieces without a distinguishable difference.

Floor Plan



Scale: 1/4" = 1'

- 1—Dining table and chairs
- 2—Telephone table
- 3—Pylons, columns, potted plants, etc., serving as a divider between the two homes
- 4—Desk with telephone (or telephone table with drawer)
- 5—Coat rack
- 6—Dining table and chairs
- 7—Door Right
- 8—Door Left

## SEARCHING

*[The stage is divided into two parts. The Right half is the Weldon home and the Left half is the Davenport home. In each half are a table and chairs, and a smaller table with a telephone]*

*[As the curtain rises LISA moves from Stage Left to Center Stage. She poses and adjusts her clothing in an imaginary full-length mirror. She turns and moves a few steps Left and turns to the audience as if suddenly aware of their presence]*

LISA. My name's Lisa Davenport...or Lisa Something. You see, I'm adopted. Oh, it's nothing to be sad about really. As I understand it, I was given up for adoption when I was born. That was over sixteen years ago. *[She moves to a chair at Down Left and sits, brushing her hair with an imaginary brush while looking in an imaginary mirror]* My mom...I mean, my real mom...couldn't keep me for some reason. *[DOROTHY DAVENPORT enters through the Up Left door and moves to the table]* That's my mom now...not my natural mom... my adoptive mother. Her name is Dorothy Davenport. Most of her friends call her Dotty. She couldn't have any kids of her own so she adopted me. *[LISA turns and looks back at Dorothy]* She's a wonderful mother. Why, from the time I don't even remember, she told me I was adopted, that she chose me because I was the prettiest baby at the agency. I'm so lucky because she and Dad gave me so much love.

MRS. DAVENPORT. *[Calling as though Lisa is in a different room]* Lisa? You'll be late, honey. Donald will be here any minute.

LISA. *[Shouting back]* Okay, Mom, I'll be there in a minute. *[She watches her mother, who is sealing some envelopes]* Poor Mom...she's tried so hard to make everything normal for me...since Dad died. She's so hurt and lonely but doesn't want to let it show. Every now and then I catch her with that far-away look in her eyes and they fill with tears. I never know what to say to help so I just try to love her a little bit more.

MRS. DAVENPORT. *[Shouting]* LISA GAIL!!!!

LISA. I'm coming..I'm coming. *[She rises and moves to the table]*

MRS. DAVENPORT. *[Looking up]* Good morning, sweetheart. *[LISA kisses her on the cheek]* Mmmmmmmm...is that a new perfume? *[LISA sits at the table]*

LISA. Yes...it's called Tender Night.

MRS. DAVENPORT. I don't know where they come up with those names...Tender Night!

LISA. Don't you like it?

MRS. DAVENPORT. Sure, honey, it's a lovely fragrance. It's just a very...well...the name is just too suggestive.

LISA. Aw, Mom, I'm not a child any more.

MRS. DAVENPORT. I know...my baby's all grown up. *[She moves to the coat rack and gets her coat. As she puts it on she turns to Lisa]* Now, don't you dilly-dally around here and be late for school again.

LISA. I won't, Mom. I promise. *[She is checking her make-up with an imaginary mirror]*

MRS. DAVENPORT. If you need anything just call the office...the number's on the pad.

LISA. Okay. *[MRS. DAVENPORT moves to her and kisses her on the cheek]*

MRS. DAVENPORT. And I want a call from you the instant you get in from school.

LISA. I'll call...I'll call.

MRS. DAVENPORT. You be sure, now. *[She exits through the door Up Left]*

LISA. *[Stands and turns to the audience]* See? She's so lonely for Dad and yet she worries about me. And she isn't well, either. I've known about it for a long time. Oh, I found out by accident...she has no idea I know but I'm kinda glad she doesn't because maybe I can help her have a few beautiful days. But that's why I've been searching for my real mom...I need to find her or maybe my real dad because—what happens to me when Mom *[gestures toward the door]* isn't here? I hate thinking about it but...but where do I go? *[The doorbell rings and LISA goes to the door and opens it. DONALD HEARN enters]*

DONALD. 'Mornin' glory.

LISA. You're actually early for a change.

DONALD. Of course...Dependable Donald—that's me.

LISA. You've been late every day this week. Dependable—Ha!

DONALD. Then, I won't tell you what I found out last night about you-know-what.

LISA. What'd you find out? *[No response]* Donald????

DONALD. Okay...Dad got a couple of names and he called 'em. One was a bust but the other lady may just be the one to help us out.

LISA. Does she know my real mom?

DONALD. I didn't say that.

LISA. Then, what does she know?

DONALD. She was working for the agency when you were born. And Dad thinks she can lead us to the right trail to find your real mom. She's doing some checking this morning.

LISA. Listen, your dad's been great. It makes me sort of nervous, though. I'll never be able to pay him.

DONALD. Don't worry about that. He was glad to set it up for you.

LISA. When do we see this lady from the agency? Can't we skip school and go see her now?

DONALD. Hey, wait a minute! Dad already arranged a meeting. She'll be here...here at your place at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

LISA. I don't know if I can wait that long!

DONALD. Aw, c'mon, let's get to school. That'll keep you busy. Miss Dupreese should help the day fly with her research paper assignment.

LISA. *[DONALD opens the Up Left door]* Yuck! She makes me want to forget I ever even learned how to write. *[She follows him out Up Left]*

*[VERONICA WELDON enters Up Right wearing a very elegant lounging outfit. She crosses to the table Right]*

MRS. WELDON. Beatrice? *[BEATRICE, a maid, enters through the same door]*

BEATRICE. Yes, mum?

MRS. WELDON. Would you mind serving breakfast in here, dear? Mr. Weldon is in one of his foul moods again this morning and I don't cherish being in the close quarters of the breakfast room with him.

BEATRICE. Certainly, mum—no trouble at all. I'll simply fetch your breakfast on the serving cart. *[She exits Up Right. FRANK WELDON enters from the door just as she reaches it. She steps aside. He moves on stage dressed in a neat business suit]*

MR. WELDON. *[Sitting]* This is ridiculous. It's much more convenient for Beatrice in the breakfast room.

MRS. WELDON. Darling, this household is not run for the convenience of our servants.

MR. WELDON. Oh, don't be such a snob. Veronica, you try to make too much of everything.

MRS. WELDON. We're not going to start that again, are we?

MR. WELDON. No, darling, it's a hopeless cause. *[BEATRICE enters with a serving cart]*

MRS. WELDON. What do you mean by that remark? You're the one who awakens like a bear every morning.

MR. WELDON. Okay, I'll admit I'm not the easiest person to get along with in the morning, but the least you could do is wait until I've had time to adjust before you start complaining.

MRS. WELDON. Let's just drop it, dear. I'm sure Beatrice isn't interested in hearing you roar.

MR. WELDON. I'll have only coffee this morning, Beatrice.

MRS. WELDON. Frank! You should eat something. Breakfast is a very important meal. The body needs fuel in the morning.

MR. WELDON. Okay! I'll get some fuel later at the office.

BEATRICE. *[As she pours imaginary coffee from imaginary coffee pot]* Mrs. Weldon?

MRS. WELDON. Yes, Beatrice?

BEATRICE. That Miss Perkins telephoned again this morning. She insisted you return her call this time.

MR. WELDON. Who is Miss Perkins?

MRS. WELDON. Oh...one of those charity ladies, I'm sure. They make me so tired.

MR. WELDON. You really should return her call, you know. After all, we do have our position in this community. Better yet, Beatrice, you may give me the number and I'll call her when I get to the office since it makes Mrs. Weldon tired.

MRS. WELDON. No...no...that won't be necessary. I'll call her in a few minutes. Besides, you'd only have your secretary do it for you. *[BEATRICE exits upstage]*

MR. WELDON. Very good. *[He rises and moves to her]* Just trying to help, dear. *[He bends and kisses her on the cheek]* By the way, I'll be late this evening. We have another board meeting. Why don't you meet me at the Inn around nine and we can give Beatrice the evening off. That is, unless you want to eat alone.

MRS. WELDON. You know how I hate dining alone. I'll see you at nine. *[He waves and exits Up Right]* Beatrice? *[BEATRICE enters]*

BEATRICE. Yes, mum?

MRS. WELDON. Bring the telephone and that woman's number.

BEATRICE. Yes, mum. *[She gets the telephone from a table in the*

*corner and places it on the table in front of Mrs. Weldon. She reaches inside her apron pocket and takes out a slip of paper, handing it to Mrs. Weldon]*

MRS. WELDON. Thank you, Beatrice. *[BEATRICE clears the imaginary dishes to the cart and exits upstage. MRS. WELDON dials the telephone number]* Hello? Is this Miss Sandra Perkins?...This is Veronica Weldon. I understand you have been trying to get in touch with me... Yes...Yes, my maiden name was Fletcher...Yes, I have two children—Kevin, thirteen, and Melissa, eleven....That's correct, they're away in boarding school, of course. Listen, Miss Perkins, is this some sort of survey because if it is I simply don't have the time....WHAT? I'm afraid you have the wrong person....OF COURSE NOT!!!! *[She is very irritated]* No, Miss Perkins, you may not come to see me. Now, unless you wish to be sued, I suggest you drop this matter and leave me strictly alone!!! *[She slams the receiver down and moves to Center Stage pacing for a few seconds, obviously shaken. She turns, suddenly aware of the audience]* You've all heard the old saying, "Your past will catch up with you"? I suppose I never dreamed it would but...what will I do if it does? I wonder if I can face it. I can just imagine what Frank would do...and his mother. You see, that woman *[gesturing to the telephone]* on the telephone knows all about me. She could ruin my whole way of life just as I thought it had been ruined back then. *[She looks up helplessly distraught]* Oh, God, I thought I'd forgotten it but...but...it all comes back. I hate that awful memory...*[She exits through the Up Right door]*

*[There is the sound of a clock striking four o'clock. LISA and DONALD enter Up Left]*

LISA. I hope she didn't come early and give up on us.

DONALD. She said four o'clock, nut.

LISA. What time is it?

DONALD. *[Looks at his wristwatch]* It's one minute after.

LISA. Whew! Good. You want a Coke or something?

DONALD. Sure sounds good. *[LISA exits Up Left. DONALD moves to Center Stage]* I guess you're wondering where I fit into this? Well, besides being a neighbor and Lisa's best friend, I'm also adopted. My adoptive father traced my real parents down a couple of years ago, so when Lisa mentioned that she was looking for hers, I thought he could help her, too. My real dad was killed in the war overseas before I

was born and I never did actually find my mom. I was put up for adoption after she was arrested for a pretty bad crime. I was only six months old and I couldn't very well go to prison with her so the state took me. Well, when I found out all that, I just gave up looking for her. I don't think I want to find her any more. Besides, my adoptive parents are great...boy, I'm one of the really lucky ones. So's Lisa...her mom's wonderful. There's one thing about our folks, though. They don't let us get away with anything no matter how hard we try. Ever since we were little kids we've been trying to outsmart 'em and we get caught every time. Every single time. *[LISA enters with a tray of imaginary beverages]*

LISA. Here you go. *[She sets the tray on the table just as the doorbell rings]* Oh, she's here....

DONALD. Listen! Don't get so excited. She may not know anything.

LISA. Okay...okay. *[She rushes to the door and opens it. SANDRA PERKINS steps inside]*

MISS PERKINS. Lisa Davenport?

LISA. Yes, I'm Lisa Davenport.

MISS PERKINS. I'm Sandra Perkins...Judge Hearn, your attorney, telephoned me and asked that I meet with you.

LISA. Please come in, Miss Perkins. Here, let me take your coat. *[She takes coat and hangs it on the rack]* This is Judge Hearn's son, Donald.

MISS PERKINS. Of course, your father has told me all about you. *[She sits]* Lisa, I'm afraid we've run into a problem with your situation. These matters aren't as simple as they might seem.

LISA. Then, you couldn't find her? I guess I knew it all the time.

MISS PERKINS. Oh, no...in fact, I did find her but I don't believe she'll ever agree to see you, much less admit to being your natural mother.

LISA. Does she know about me?

MISS PERKINS. The only thing she knows about you is that you were born. She doesn't know if her baby was a boy or a girl, and I'm afraid she'll never admit that she gave birth to you at all. She has that right, you know, and in a way I can't blame her.

LISA. I'm not all that bad. *[She moves away]*

DONALD. Lisa, don't start getting defensive. Listen to what she has to say before you jump to any conclusions.