

# 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.

# I Thought I Knew You

By  
PHILIP J. KAPLAN

©MMXXV by PHILIP J. KAPLAN

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU)

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact  
Dramatic Publishing Company  
311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098 • Phone: (815) 338-7170

*I Thought I Knew You* premiered at Stage Left Theater (Spokane, Wash.) on March 22, 2024.

CAST:

AMANDA..... Rebecca Craven  
LEO..... Tom Sanderson  
JEN..... Abby Burlingame  
CODY ..... Barin Saxton

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Susan Hardie  
Scenic Design..... Jeremy Whittington  
Asst. Scenic Design & Props Design..... James Landsiedel  
Lighting Design ..... Isabella Hurrell  
Costume Design..... Joy Wood & Neva White

In addition to the information on the Important Billing and Credit Requirements page (p. 3), all producers of the play 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:

“*I Thought I Knew You* was premiered in the American Association of Community Theatre’s AACT NewPlayFest by Stage Left Theater in Spokane, Wash.”

# **I Thought I Knew You**

## **CHARACTERS**

AMANDA: 50s, Leo's wife and Jen and Cody's mother.

LEO: 50s, Amanda's husband and Jen and Cody's father.

JEN: 30s, Cody's twin sister.

CODY: 30s, Jen's twin brother.

SETTING: A dining room. One door leads to the kitchen, the other to the entrance hallway. A set of stairs leads to the second floor.



# I Thought I Knew You

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*(LEO is sitting at the dining room table. The phone starts ringing. He ignores it. It stops. After a moment, it starts ringing again. His wife, AMANDA, comes in from outside wearing a coat.)*

AMANDA. Aren't you going to get that?

LEO. No.

*(The phone rings a few more times, and AMANDA finally answers.)*

AMANDA. Hello? ... Yes ... No ... I don't want to talk about it ...  
I have nothing to say! ... Don't call again.

*(She hangs up. After a moment the phone rings. LEO takes the batteries out of the phone.)*

AMANDA *(cont'd)*. Do we really have to?

LEO. The calls are nonstop. I should have turned it off earlier, but ...

*(Beat.)*

AMANDA. But?

LEO. Easier to let it ring.

AMANDA. Have you been sitting here all day?

LEO. It's possible. How was your shift?

AMANDA. I'm glad I went in. I had to get away. They need me ...  
and ... everything here reminds me of ...

LEO. I know.

AMANDA. I got a lot of looks at work. They were shocked I went in. But what I was going to do here? Should I have stayed home with you?

LEO. No. I'm doing enough brooding for the both of us.

AMANDA. Driving up I passed a news van parked down the road.  
Did they—

LEO. Why the hell are they still here! I said I wasn't ever gonna talk to them! I don't want to talk to anyone! I want to pretend this didn't happen. They won't let me.

AMANDA. They're just doing their job.

LEO. Let them do it somewhere else.

*(Beat.)*

AMANDA. What if there's an emergency?

LEO. More of an emergency?

AMANDA. A different emergency. We might need the phone.

LEO. I'll put the batteries back if there's a different emergency.

AMANDA. I mean if someone else has an emergency and needs to call us.

LEO. We are last on everyone's contact list.

*(AMANDA takes off her coat. She's still wearing some hospital clothes.)*

AMANDA. Why do they want to talk to us?

LEO. Because they can't talk to ... Cody.

AMANDA. They found another one ... did you see the news?

LEO. I saw.

AMANDA. That makes five ... that makes five!

LEO. I CAN COUNT! I KNOW IT'S FIVE!

AMANDA. Don't yell at me!

LEO. I'M NOT ... can we change the subject ... or not talk?

AMANDA. I'm going upstairs.

LEO. I didn't mean to yell.

AMANDA. I'm going upstairs to change out of my clothes.

LEO. I'm sorry. Don't be mad.

AMANDA. I'm not ... at you.

*(AMANDA hugs LEO.)*

AMANDA. We'll get through this.

LEO. How?

(AMANDA lets go of LEO.)

AMANDA. Faith.

LEO. I need something more concrete.

AMANDA. I had a thought.

LEO. Let's hear it.

AMANDA. I ... I want to reach out.

LEO. To who?

AMANDA. The families.

LEO. No.

AMANDA. Think about it.

LEO. No.

AMANDA. I wouldn't call. It wouldn't be a phone call.

LEO. No!

AMANDA. I'd ... I'd write a letter.

LEO. They don't want to hear from us.

AMANDA. A note. A short note.

LEO. Saying what?

AMANDA. Saying I'm sorry.

LEO. Deepest condolences. Sorry our son killed your daughter.

That what you want?

AMANDA. No, not that. But you know Cody didn't mean to kill them.

LEO. That will be quite the comfort. Sorry our son *accidentally* killed your daughter.

AMANDA. He warned them to evacuate! They could have listened.

LEO. Dear Grieving Parent, why didn't your stupid child listen to our psychotic son and leave before being blown to bits! Would that have been too much to ask!

AMANDA. Leo!

LEO. Sorry.

AMANDA. Sorry?

LEO. Yeah. Sorry. I'm sorry we raised a monster. I'm sorry Cody was ever born. I'm sorry I miss him. I'm sorry that if he were alive, I'd forgive him in a second and go broke defending our



worthless son. I'm sorry I resent the people he killed ... and I'm sorry I said anything. I should have kept this to myself.

AMANDA. Talking is good.

LEO. It isn't. It doesn't change anything. And it makes me feel worse.

AMANDA. You don't have to talk.

LEO. Can you make me forget?

AMANDA. No.

LEO. I want to forget. But I can't.

AMANDA. I won't contact the families.

LEO. Good.

AMANDA. I still want to do something.

LEO. That's why you're better than me.

JEN (*offstage*). Mom! Dad!

AMANDA. Jen?

*(JEN enters, still wearing a coat.)*

JEN. You're OK! I was so worried about you!

AMANDA. What are you doing here?

JEN. I was out of my mind worried about you.

AMANDA. Why?

JEN. Why? Because of what happened! And because you didn't answer your phone or reply to any of my texts! I thought you might be dead too!

AMANDA. We did call. Right, Leo?

LEO. Right.

JEN. Dad left a voicemail, "Cody's dead, don't worry."

AMANDA. Leo! You said you spoke to her.

LEO. I did. Well, I spoke to her machine. Is that the message I left?

JEN. Yes! And I heard it on the news before I heard your message!

LEO. Well ... I don't want you to worry.

JEN. Mission unaccomplished. Dad, I called you twenty times!

LEO. Why didn't you call your mom?

JEN. Because you trained me not to call her when she's at the hospital, and stupidly I ... doesn't matter, I'm here now! ... Are you a hundred percent sure it was Cody?

LEO. The police are.

AMANDA. Yesterday they knew it was Cody's van. This morning, they identified Cody.

JEN. Cody blew himself up.

LEO. And five other people.

JEN. Fucking asshole!

AMANDA. Jen!

LEO. She's right. Fucking asshole.

AMANDA. Leo!

JEN. Goddamn him. I mean, what the fuck? ... Why?

AMANDA. You didn't have to come. That's a long drive.

JEN. Are you kidding? I mean, jeez. I mean, Cody blowing himself up. And ... I was worried.

AMANDA. We're fine.

JEN. I don't think you are.

LEO. I'm glad you're here. But ... well, I'm glad you're here.

AMANDA. So am I.

LEO. I didn't answer the phone because the press got our number. And crazy people got our number and—

AMANDA. You must be starving.

LEO. What is wrong with me. I should have called again.

AMANDA. Tonight's a microwave dinner. I probably have enough.

LEO. I should have called in person.

AMANDA. The frozen food isn't vegetarian. I'll make spaghetti. But the sauce might have meat in it.

JEN. Stop! I can't think about food, and I desperately have to pee. Hold those thoughts.

*(JEN exits quickly.)*

LEO. I was sitting here all day, and I could have called her. I just sat stewing. Why did I leave that message?

AMANDA. Leo, pull yourself together. I need you to focus.

LEO. On what?

AMANDA. Dinner. I need help with dinner.

LEO. What do you want me to do?

AMANDA. Salad. Wash the lettuce. Chop the lettuce. Oh! The dressing!

LEO. What about the dressing?

AMANDA. Jen had a fit the last time when we gave her dressing that had fish in it.

LEO. Let's not do that.

AMANDA. I don't remember which dressing was the problem.

LEO. I'll ask her.

AMANDA. No! It would mean we didn't remember. So, job number one, check the dressing labels.

LEO. What about fried onions? I can make fried onions. Jen loved my friend onions.

AMANDA. No.

LEO. No?

AMANDA. It was Cody. Cody loved your onions.

*(JEN enters.)*

JEN. That feels better.

AMANDA. Rest, you must be tired.

JEN. Mom, I'm here to help. What do you want me to do?

AMANDA. I don't need any help. I'm fine.

JEN. Of course, Sonia must have been here helping.

AMANDA. I haven't spoken to Sonia.

JEN. What? Why?

LEO. We'll take care of dinner.

JEN. OK ... so you must need help. I'll help with other things.

AMANDA. What other things.

JEN. There's probably paperwork, right?

AMANDA. I suppose.

JEN. And what about the funeral? Where and when? *(Long pause.)*

Mom? ... Dad? The funeral ... you're having a funeral, right?

AMANDA. Leo.

LEO. No funeral.

JEN. Why?

AMANDA. Can we discuss this after dinner? Or tomorrow ... or never.

LEO. It's a little raw.

JEN. You need a funeral. At least for closure. It's not for Cody, it's for us.

AMANDA. Jen, you said you wanted to help.

JEN. I did.

AMANDA. You drove all the way from Boston to help.

JEN. I did. I'm very concerned about—

AMANDA. Here's how you can help ... distract us.

JEN. But—

LEO. Your mom's right.

AMANDA. You're helping by being here.

LEO. We don't want to think.

AMANDA. Not today. Understand?

JEN. I do.

AMANDA. Thanks for coming.

*(Beat.)*

LEO. I can make fried onions for dinner.

JEN. If you want to. But, honestly, not a big fan. Cody. Cody loved fried onions.

## Interlude 1

*(Pre-recorded audio.)*

REPORTER. I'm standing at the site of Saturday's bombing on South Fifth street. Behind me, FBI agents are sifting through mountains of debris, looking for more victims and an explanation. While the bomber, Cody Davis, has been identified, his motive for this horrific explosion remains unknown and may never be known, but according to authorities, it's early in the investigation.

## Scene 2

*(Midnight, the dining room. It's dark. JEN enters dressed in a bathrobe, carrying an open laptop, which provides the only light. She puts the laptop on the table. Lights may be raised slowly throughout.)*

JEN. Connectivity! A beautiful thing.

*(She types for a moment and stares intently at the screen. She does not notice the person behind her.)*

CODY. Hey, sis.

*(JEN gives a startled shriek. Then another shriek as she fully takes in CODY. He looks pale and disheveled. JEN backs away from CODY.)*

JEN. Cody?

CODY. Long time no see.

JEN. Cody ... how did you—you're alive?—I thought you were dead!

CODY. Do I look dead?

JEN. You don't look good. Where the hell have you been? Why did you do it? I miss you. I fucking hate you.

CODY. Good to see you too, sis.

JEN. What the hell is going on?

CODY. I will have to get back to you on the what the hell is going on question. There are so many moving parts and pieces that don't fit together. But it's all true. It'll blow your mind.

JEN. What the fuck does that mean?

CODY. Blow your mind? It's a figure of speech.

JEN. Not that. The parts and pieces. And you're supposed to be dead! You exploded. Your mind was literally blown.

CODY. You're funny, sis.

JEN. I don't understand.

CODY. If I'm being honest, I don't either. Things are fuzzy. For example, where am I?

JEN. Mom and Dad's house.

CODY. Vermont?

JEN. Yes.

CODY. Not Louisville?

JEN. Vermont.

CODY. How'd I get to Vermont?

JEN. You tell me!

CODY. Are you screwing around?

JEN. Why would I do that?

CODY. This isn't a joke! Don't play with me! What's going on!

JEN. My brother did a crazy thing and now he's attacking me.

CODY. There's gotta be more. This is fake! A set.

JEN. Look around, they haven't redecorated in twenty years. And still no cell service. It's like the stone age here.

CODY. When we were seven, we went under the dining room table and carved something. Tell me what we carved.

JEN. I carved a cross, and you carved a peace symbol.

CODY. Is it still there?

JEN. Are you gonna make me crawl under the table?

CODY. Yes.

*(JEN crawls under the table.)*

JEN. It's still there. Wanna see?

CODY. I'll take your word.

JEN. Decent of you.

*(JEN comes out from under the table.)*

CODY. I have to get to Louisville. Can you drive me? Like right now.

JEN. You have a ton of explaining to do.

CODY. Don't turn on the light!

JEN. How did you know I—

CODY. I just did. Don't.

JEN. Dark then. We'll talk in the dark.

CODY. I gotta think. It's fuzzy. My thoughts ... I'm at the house. Why? How? What's the connection?

JEN. They said you set off a car bomb.

CODY. Who told you that?

JEN. It was in the news! On TV.

CODY. Well, that's progress. That's making an impact.

JEN. No! It's horrible! Tell me you didn't do it!

CODY. I wanted to tell you, I really did, but—

JEN. Damn you! ... The only thing—the *only* thing that kept me going was the hope that the police had it wrong!

CODY. It was me in the van, all right. That's the last thing I remember. I was in the van, and now I'm here. Did they say anything about the tunnel on the news?

JEN. No. Nothing about a tunnel.

CODY. You see! They're already hiding the evidence! I gotta get back!

JEN. Pretend I don't know what you're talking about.

CODY. I'm a hero. Can you understand that?

JEN. No, I can't. I can't understand a word you're saying. It's gibberish!

CODY. I'll break it down for you.

JEN. Please.

CODY. But this is going to put you in danger. Are you sure you want to know? Ignorance is safer.

JEN. That's never true.

CODY. You'll be a target.

JEN. Focus! Eyes on me! Fucking talk!

CODY. OK—OK—I'll talk, boss lady. This is some heavy-duty shit, with—the federal reserve is—no, that's not a good place to start ... and the Rothschilds. No. OK. I think you'll understand this. Something's wrong with the world. You can see that, right? Things don't work the way they used to. No job security. We're in a surveillance state. Nothing's getting better. You could throw up your hand and say, "shit happens, not my problem," or you can dig deeper and do something! Cryptocurrency is taking over. The media lies. 9/11. The Iraq War. What do they have in common? Fear. Manipulation! You can trace it further back. World War I was the accidental war. It served no one. Right? Wrong! It was by design! Even little things. Your check bounces but you can prove you had the funds. Accident, or deliberate? All through history you can find patterns of manipulation and deceit. Look at the Egyptians! The pyramids! Who built them? You with me? ... Sis? ... Jen?

JEN. I'm listening.

CODY. They exist, they're real and they're not human.

JEN. Who?

CODY. This is the part that's going to be hard to believe.

JEN. I'm still listening.

CODY. Lizard people.

JEN. Oh, Cody.

CODY. You can't see them. They blend in, I mean, they look like real people—even close up. How do they do that? Mental projection. They make you see what they want you to see. But at their essence, at their core, they're intelligent lizards. Their symbol is a moon with two stars, and I found it—

JEN. Stop.

CODY. They mark the tunnels and—

JEN. Stop!

CODY. Too much to take in?

JEN. You murdered five people because of an insane delusion.

CODY. No!

JEN. You killed five people.

CODY. I did not.

JEN. Then what did you do?

CODY. I killed five lizards!

JEN. You murdered five human beings.

CODY. Oh, you're an expert then? You sifted through the rubble. You got into the tunnel. You checked their DNA.

JEN. They were people.

CODY. I warned everyone. I had a loudspeaker. "Get out of the area, a bomb is about to go off!" If you heard that a bomb was about to go off, you'd leave right? *If* you were a human. These were not humans!

JEN. One of the victims was deaf.

CODY. Don't give me that crap. I got those liz-tard mother fuckers fair and square!

JEN. They are—they were—human. People—with names.

CODY. Where'd you learn that? From the lizards?

JEN. You're crazy.

CODY. That's the best you got? Sure, everything's going to look crazy if you're ignorant. That's why I gotta get back. They're filling in the tunnel as we speak. They're covering up the evidence! They're going to frame me! Don't let them frame me.

JEN. What happened to you?

CODY. I opened my eyes. I'm sorry you won't open yours.

*(Beat.)*