

David's Play

A play in two acts

By Tom Rowan

[OPENING SCENE ONLY]

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

AMANDA, a dancer, 32

MOLLY, a wife and mother, 32

LEO, a critic, married to Amanda, 33

IAN, a schoolteacher and director, 31

BARRY, a comedian, 32

JOSHUA, an actor, Ian's friend, 24

DAVID, a memory, 21

SETTING

Amanda and Leo's condominium on the 22nd floor of a new building on Eighth Avenue in the low fifties, Manhattan. There is a front door to the hall, with an intercom beside it. We can see the living room, part of the kitchen, and doors to the study and the bedroom. The living room couch can open up into a bed. Bookshelves, and a credenza with drawers. On stage left is the balcony, overlooking Eighth Avenue, separated from the living room by a sliding glass door. The décor is modern and clean-lined; the apartment looks comfortable but pristine and new.

TIME

The present. Spring.

ACT ONE**SCENE ONE**

(It's around four o'clock on a Thursday afternoon in April. MOLLY is standing alone in the center of the room, taking in the décor; her purse and a suitcase are beside her. She speaks to AMANDA, who is just offstage, bustling around in the kitchen.)

MOLLY

Are we getting old, Amanda? Because the cab driver on the way here from Penn Station called me "Madam." Cab drivers used to call me "Miss." Do I look like a Madam to you?

AMANDA

(Entering the living room with two glasses of iced tea, complete with mint leaves) Well I don't know; that shade of lipstick is kind of bright on you.

MOLLY

(Laughs) That's not what I meant! I mean what I really don't want to do tonight is act all touristy. Will you promise to yell at me if I act touristy?

AMANDA

Leo will.

MOLLY

Because I lived here. For four years! I did the Actress In New York thing too, I pounded the pavement, I read *Back Stage*. I knew how to hail a cab! I don't want to come across like this lady from New Jersey who can't believe how tall the buildings are, you know?

AMANDA

Don't worry.

MOLLY

By the way, I can't believe how tall your building is! The twenty-second floor?? Little Mike would love it.

AMANDA

Bring him in next time. Before he gets so big I don't recognize him.

MOLLY

Don't you know he's going to be a basketball player? He's six,

but people sometimes guess eight; it seems silly that we call him "Little" Mike. And *Andrew* is almost toilet trained; I'm thinking another two or three weeks.

AMANDA

What about Big Mike?

MOLLY

Oh, *he's* toilet trained.

AMANDA

I mean how is he?

MOLLY

He works twelve-hour days, what can you do, but we think he may make partner this year! You guys've got to come out to Summit and spend a day. Or a weekend! It's only an hour on New Jersey Transit; Mike does it twice a day.

AMANDA

If the show's a hit I won't be able to leave town on a weekend for at least a year. But we have Mondays off, so--

MOLLY

(*Squeals*) *Notorious!* I can't believe you're actually IN A BROADWAY SHOW!

AMANDA

I know; it must be a fluke.

MOLLY

I didn't mean that!--you're bad. I always knew you'd make it, you've always been... I mean, we always dreamed about the day one of us would... and now look at you!

AMANDA

Look at me.

MOLLY

You *deserve* this. You've earned it!

AMANDA

Paid for it anyway.

MOLLY

And everybody's keeping the promise? We're all really showing up?

AMANDA

Looks that way. Unless you count...

MOLLY

(Quietly) Yeah.

AMANDA

Here! Let me grab your stuff. *(She picks up the suitcase and bag.)*

MOLLY

I love the way you've done the place up. Crate and Barrel, right?

AMANDA

We got a *few* pieces from there. We're putting you in the study, which has a very comfortable couch. Ian will be out here on the sofabed, and his friend gets the sleeping bag. *(She carries the bags into the study.)*

MOLLY

His what?

AMANDA

(From offstage) Didn't I tell you? Ian's bringing some actor friend of his from Lincoln, Joshua Something-or-Other. Ian said he's never seen a Broadway show, never even been to New York, so could he bring him.

MOLLY

Really? That's... Oh. It's just that I thought it was gonna be just us. The Six--I mean the five of us. That's why I didn't even invite Michael, not that he would have come, but... you know?

AMANDA

(Coming back into the living room) I hear you. But you know Ian when he gets a Great Idea.

MOLLY

I love Ian and his beautiful ideas! Haven't seen him in three years!

AMANDA

He said he's got a big announcement to make this weekend.

MOLLY

Oh gosh, do you think he's finally coming out??

AMANDA

No, probably nothing like that; he said a *surprise*.

MOLLY

(*Laughs*) We're so bad.

AMANDA

Honey, sit down! You're here now.

MOLLY

I'm too excited to sit! Can I see your view first?

AMANDA

Oh, sure! (*She leads the way to the balcony and opens the sliding door.*) Now that it's spring Leo and I will be having breakfast out here most days. We're far enough up that it's pretty quiet.

MOLLY

(*Stepping out onto the balcony*) Oh gollywompers! You can see half of Manhattan from up here. Mandy, when you said you two had bought a place in Hell's Kitchen, I pictured... I mean, back when I lived in the city, Hell's Kitchen was porn shops and cheap Spanish restaurants. And diners. And cheap Greek restaurants, and Indian! *Good*, but cheap. And *tenements*. Not luxury high-rise condos!

AMANDA

A lot of that is still here: just walk over to Ninth Avenue. But here on Eighth there's been a ton of development. (*She leans on the balcony rail.*) Look down that way; you can see two Broadway theatres.

MOLLY

Oh, Mandy. (*She looks down.*) You are just in the thick of it, aren't you? Or just sort of... floating over it! In your own private aerie. Queen of all you survey.

AMANDA

Yeah right.

MOLLY

(*Grinning*) So. When are you two going to start a family?

AMANDA

Where did *that* come from?

MOLLY

No place. I was just--what? Was that the wrong--? I mean, look at you! The two of you! Everything's falling into place, right?

AMANDA

(Forced smile) The American Dream!

MOLLY

Our dream! Opening in a new Broadway musical?! Tonight??! You seem so calm. I'd be a spastic mess. Look at me! I *am* a spastic mess! And it's *your* opening!

AMANDA

(Shrugs) We've been in previews for five weeks; I could do the show in my sleep at this point.

MOLLY

(Beat) Okay.

AMANDA

I'm really glad you could be here, though.

MOLLY

Honey, *of course*, what are you talking about? We all made a vow.

AMANDA

A drunken, graduation weekend vow.

MOLLY

Aren't those the best kind?

AMANDA

Are you sure I can't get you a glass of wine?

MOLLY

It's too early. We'll drink a toast when the guys get here.

(The intercom buzzes.)

AMANDA

And as if on cue! *(She goes to the intercom on the wall and presses the button.)* Yes?... Send him up. *(to MOLLY)* It's Barry.

MOLLY

Ah, Barry. How is he, Amanda?

AMANDA

I guess the same. He hangs in there. Told me he was excited

about seeing you.

MOLLY

He's always been so funny and talented. I thought he'd have his own TV show by now, or something.

AMANDA

Oh, he thought that too. But he finds ways to... keep his hand in. He's... "irrepressible," I think is the word Leo used.

MOLLY

And Leo's good with words.

AMANDA

That he is.

(The doorbell rings; AMANDA runs and answers it.)

AMANDA

Hi, Barry.

BARRY

(Bouncing into the room, holding a paper bag, singing.)
 "I'm just a Broadway Baby! Pounding Forty-Second Street! Waiting for my one big chance! To be in a shooo-oooow!" *(He dances AMANDA around and kisses her.)* I'm proud like a Papa! *(Sees MOLLY)* And Miss Molly! Hi, Molly. Even purtier'n I remembered.

MOLLY

Not as skinny as you remembered.

BARRY

You look perfect to me. *(Kisses MOLLY)* Missed you.

MOLLY

I've missed you too.

BARRY

Didja??

MOLLY

I did. *(Slightly awkward pause)*

AMANDA

Barry has a new job.

BARRY

I do? *(Beat)* Oh, that! Yeah, The Job, whatever. Strictly

temporaneous. I just came from there.

AMANDA

Can I get you a glass of wine? Leo and Ian should be here any minute.

BARRY

Sure, or a beer. My contribution!--got it right here. And some chips and dip! (*He brandishes the bag.*)

AMANDA

Oh dear; I'll take that. Leo has some lovely hors d'oeuvres underway, actually. I'll get you a glass. (*She takes the bag and heads to the kitchen.*)

BARRY

I can't get over how quick you guys got the place fixed up, Amanda. Crate and Barrel?

AMANDA

(*Poking her head in from the kitchen*) Maybe a couple items.

BARRY

It rocks.

MOLLY

Tell us about your new job.

BARRY

It sucks. I'm working at the TKTS booth in Times Square.

MOLLY

I remember! Selling tickets to Broadway shows?!

BARRY

Well, no. I guess I should say I work *near* the booth. The producers of this Off Broadway show hired me to hand out leaflets to people standing on the line.

MOLLY

What's the show? (*BARRY hands MOLLY one of the flyers, and she reads it.*) "*Confessions of a Gay Jewish Grandmother: The Musical.*"

AMANDA

(*Reentering and handing BARRY a beer in a lovely glass*) Sounds like they covered all the marketing bases.

BARRY

I know, right? It's a one-man show. (*Doing his spiel*) "It'll make you laugh till you cry, ma'am! Half price available for tonight!"

MOLLY

(*Playing along*) I don't know; it sounds interesting. But I already have tickets for the opening of *Notorious* tonight

BARRY

Notorious, isn't that the new jukebox musical? I'd kill for a ticket to that.

AMANDA

Please, you guys. I hate the term "jukebox musical."

BARRY

That's what they call it though, right?

MOLLY

I think a musical using all songs by Duran Duran is a *great* idea.

AMANDA

From your mouth to Ben Brantley's ears. (*Changing the subject*) That sounds like a fun job, Barry. Right there on the Rialto; you'll probably meet some important people.

BARRY

Or get fired. I had to leave... a tad early today.

AMANDA

How late were you supposed to work?

BARRY

They say eight o'clock or whenever I run out of flyers. Whichever comes first. So I just tried to give them out faster today.

MOLLY

How many do you have left?

BARRY

(*Pulling out a huge, thick stack of flyers*) This many?

MOLLY

Ouch.

AMANDA

Don't lose your job on my account, Barry. You could meet us at the theatre later; it's not even four-thirty.

BARRY

Hey, I promised you guys ten years ago that I would be here for this, and I meant it. They can take their minimum wage job and stuff it! Plus, I can easily hand out the rest of these on the way to the theatre later, right?

AMANDA

If you say so.

BARRY

How come the show starts at six-thirty anyways? Broadway shows start at eight.

AMANDA

This is opening night, Barry. They do an early curtain so we can all get to the party sooner.

BARRY

You're taking us to the CAST PARTY??

AMANDA

Uh, yeah? Did you miss that part? As your snazzy outfit would suggest?

BARRY

I guess I must have! Major schmooze alert!

MOLLY

(To AMANDA) So tell us what songs you're singing in the show!

AMANDA

I don't sing that much; I'm mainly the lead dancer.

MOLLY

The lead dancer. Wow.

BARRY

Does your character have a name?

AMANDA

Uh-huh.

MOLLY

And...?

AMANDA

(Beat. She looks at them and says flatly:) My name is Rio.

MOLLY

(Laughs) I love it!

BARRY

Do they make you up to look Mexican?

AMANDA

Kinda. I wear this curly dark wig. It takes a million pins to make sure it doesn't fly off when I'm dancing.

BARRY

"Just like that river twistin' through the dusty land," huh?

AMANDA

I do my best. It's silly, you guys.

MOLLY

Oh I can't wait!

(The front door swings open, and LEO enters, followed by IAN and JOSHUA, each of whom has a backpack and a duffle bag. AMANDA and MOLLY scream in delight.)

LEO

Look who's here! *(Kisses AMANDA)* We made great time from LaGuardia; beat the rush hour.

(IAN goes straight to AMANDA and embraces her warmly.)

IAN

Hey, gorgeous. How are ya? I'm so proud of you, Mandy.

LEO

It's Amanda now; no one calls her Mandy anymore.

AMANDA

Ian can call me Mandy. *(to IAN)* I'm good. Better now! You look great; you never change.

BARRY

Tell me about it! *(Hugs IAN)* There must be a wicked scary picture of you in some attic someplace!

IAN

You Character!

BARRY

You Character!

(They high five each other.)

IAN

And Molly! Molly the Mommy! How's your beautiful family?

MOLLY

(Hugging IAN) They're perfect! Can you believe they let me out of the house for a whole night? It's so wonderful to see you! You too, Leo!

IAN

I want you all to meet my good friend, Joshua. Josh, these are the rest of The Six Characters!

JOSHUA

It's an honor to meet you all. I've heard so much about you from Ian.

AMANDA

Don't believe any of it. It's lovely to meet you! I'm Amanda, and this is Barry and Molly.

BARRY

Hi! Great to meetcha.

JOSHUA

(Shaking their hands) Hi, Barry; I'm Joshua. Molly...

MOLLY

We're so glad you could be part of this weekend! Amanda said you've never been to the city before?

JOSHUA

That's right. Always wanted to, though!

AMANDA

He's adorable, Ian.

LEO

Can I get you some white wine?

JOSHUA

Um... sure.

LEO

Ian?

IAN

Just something... whatever you have that's non-alcoholic.

LEO

Ginger ale? Sparkling water?

IAN

Ginger ale's great.

AMANDA

(to LEO) I'll get the drinks, dear. Can you help Ian and Joshua find a place to stow their bags?

LEO

Uhhh... sure. Maybe over here behind the couch?

AMANDA

You guys are going to be out here; we're putting Molly in Leo's study. The sofa bed is kinda lumpy, I'm afraid; the two of you can fight over who gets the floor! Molly, is your iced tea okay? Are you ready for some wine?

MOLLY

Sure; might as well live it up.

IAN

(Putting his duffel bag behind the couch) It's great of you guys to let us stay here. One night in a New York hotel would cost more than I make in a week.

MOLLY

Teachers never get paid anywhere near what you're worth.

IAN

I know, right? Especially in public schools.

BARRY

(Ruefully) Hey, as long as you're making rent...

IAN

Where are you living these days, Bar?

BARRY

Brooklyn. New place with a coupla buddies.

MOLLY

Very cool! I hear Brooklyn's getting *pret-ty trendy*.

BARRY

Some neighborhoods are. We've got a nice view of the river.

LEO

(*Pouring drinks*) The Gowanus Canal is not a river.

BARRY

Maybe not *technically*.

LEO

(*To IAN*) He lives in a cupboard. Try some of these salmon sandwiches; I have to go heat the goat cheese. (*He goes into the kitchen.*)

IAN

(*to BARRY*) A cupboard?

BARRY

It's not a cupboard; Leo's being a dick as usual. (*Calling out to the kitchen*) It's not a cupboard, Leo, shut up when you don't know what you're talkin' about. (*to IAN*) It's a walk-in closet.

IAN

You live in a closet?

AMANDA

You can relate to that, right, Ian?

MOLLY

Amanda.

BARRY

It works fine, you guys. As a short-term thing, strictly *temporaneous*, till I get back on my feet fiscally. See, these two dudes I met at the comedy club, Joel and Randy, they already had the place, but they were having trouble making rent some months. So they needed a third, and Randy came up with the idea to turn this great big old-fashioned closet-thing they have into another bedroom.

IAN

How big is it? I mean I'm trying to picture a closet big enough to put a bed inside...

BARRY

Well, it's not quite that wide. But it's got this really sturdy iron rod running all the way across, you know, like where they used to hang the coats from? It's real sturdy, really strong. So I figured out a way to hang a hammock from one end to the other, and that's where I sleep. It sort of... dips down in the middle, you know, like hammocks do, so it's not as long as a bed. It keeps my back curved a little bit, which is very healthy for the spine, so that's another benefit. Underneath I've got my little chest of drawers, and my CD player. And in the morning, I just unhook one end of the hammock and push it off to one side and that leaves plenty of room to, you know, stand around.

JOSHUA

That's really clever. It sounds cozy.

AMANDA

You do what you gotta do in New York.

IAN

Your place is so big, Mandy. And beautiful.

AMANDA

Thanks, sweetie.

IAN

I mean it, I love what you guys have done. I'm thinking... Crate and Barrel?

(Pause)

AMANDA

I'm going to have to hurt you.

IAN

What did I say? I like Crate and Barrel!

AMANDA

Yeah, well so does everybody apparently.

LEO

(Returning from the kitchen with a plate of hors d'oeuvres) I told you we should have gotten more things at Pottery Barn.

IAN

You guys are such yuppies. Who'da thunk?

LEO

We're in our mid-thirties, Ian. Sure you don't want some wine?

IAN

I'm sure. *(Beat)* I'm in my early thirties.

MOLLY

(Explaining to JOSHUA) Ian skipped third grade; he's a year younger than the rest of us.

LEO

Which he hated at the time but loves to remind us of now.

IAN

(Still checking out the apartment) I guess the rent on a place like this would have to be astronomical.

LEO

You mean the mortgage payment?

AMANDA

(Smiles) We're homeowners! It seemed like a good time to invest, especially in this neighborhood.

BARRY

You thinkin' about finally moving here, Ian?

IAN

(Laughs) You know I've been thinking about that for years.

MOLLY

Is that what your big announcement's about?

IAN

What big announcement?

LEO

You told Amanda on the phone that you had a big announcement you were planning to make this weekend.

IAN

Ah, so I did.

MOLLY

(Hinting) We like Joshua, Ian.

BARRY

How can you tell? He hasn't said anything.

MOLLY

He has a great smile, though. See? I can tell he's nice. (To JOSHUA) I can tell you're nice.

JOSHUA

(*Embarrassed*) Thanks.

AMANDA

And attractive. He's very attractive, did I say?

IAN

Yes, you did say. You guys, this is not--

LEO

See how well adjusted I am? I have no problem with my wife telling other men they're attractive right here in my living room.

AMANDA

I thought I'm allowed to look at gay men, though, right? Because there's no chance of anything--

LEO

Famous last words.

AMANDA

And he's gay. You're gay, right, Joshua?

JOSHUA

Yes.

AMANDA

See?

IAN

Amanda! I'm sorry, Josh. Don't pay attention to them; they're being awful.

AMANDA

We're just trying to make this easier for you, Ian. I mean, how long has it been?

IAN

How long has *what* been?? Joshua and I are NOT... we are just friends, and colleagues, if that's what you're hinting at. And I'm not... that's not what my announcement's about. At all.

BARRY

So what is it about?

MOLLY

Yeah, Ian. Out with it.

IAN

Not yet, you guys. This is Amanda's night. We'll talk tomorrow.

LEO

Ian, Amanda's opening in a new Broadway musical. Whatever your little announcement is, you needn't worry about upstaging her.

IAN

(Raises an eyebrow) You never know.

-CONTINUED-
END OF SAMPLE