



LOVE ALONE

BY
DEBORAH SALEM SMITH



DRAMATISTS
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LOVE ALONE
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For Christine, who makes it all possible and glorious.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Love Alone grew from the generous support of Curt Columbus, Tyler Dobrowsky, Craig Watson, Emily Atkinson, and the original cast at Trinity Repertory Company. It was written with crucial support from the Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award and the MacDowell Colony. Thanks also truly to Vivienne Benesch, Peter Mark Kendall, Joe Haj, Jeffrey Meanza, Robert Vaughan, Haleh Stilwell, David and Barbara Smith, Scott Montross, Lizzie Hutton, and Susan Schulman.

LOVE ALONE received its world premiere at Trinity Repertory Company (Curt Columbus, Artistic Director; Michael Gennaro, Executive Director; Laura Smith, Production Director) in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 16, 2012. It was directed by Tyler Dobrowsky and Deborah Salem Smith; the set design was by Michael McGarty; the costume design was by William Lane; the lighting design was by Dan Scully; the original music was by Peter Mark Kendall; the sound design was by Peter Sasha Hurowitz; and the stage manager was Robin Grady. The cast was as follows:

HELEN WARREN..... Annie Scurria
 CLEMENTINE..... Leah Anderson
 DR. BECCA NEAL..... Angela Brazil
 J.P. WHITMAN Mauro Hantman
 MR. RUSH..... Richard Donnelly
 DECEDENT SERVICES REP,
 NURSE, LAWYER.....Janice Duclos

LOVE ALONE was produced by PlayMakers Repertory Company (Joseph Haj, Producing Artistic Director; Hannah Grannemann, Managing Director) in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on March 1, 2014. It was directed by Vivienne Benesch; the set design was by Lee Savage; the costume design was by Myrna Colley-Lee; the lighting design was by Cecilia R. Durbin; the original music was by Peter Mark Kendall; the original videos were by Dominic Abbenante; the sound design was by Robert Dagit; the production stage manager was Sarah Smiley; and the assistant stage manager was Charles K. Bayang. The cast was as follows:

HELEN WARREN..... Julia Gibson
 CLEMENTINE.....Arielle Yoder
 DR. BECCA NEAL..... Jenny Wales
 J.P. WHITMANPatrick McHugh
 MR. RUSH..... Derrick Ivey
 DECEDENT SERVICES REP,
 NURSE, LAWYER.....Kathryn Hunter-Williams

CHARACTERS

HELEN WARREN — 51, a realtor.

CLEMENTINE — Early 20s, Helen's daughter, the lead singer and guitarist of One-Armed Edna, a rock band.

DR. BECCA NEAL — 33, an anesthesiologist.

J.P. WHITMAN — 35, Becca's husband.

MR. RUSH — 65, a medical malpractice lawyer.

DECEDENT SERVICES REP, NURSE, LAWYER — All to be played by one actress.

SET

The play is set in many places — an actor takes a few steps and he has changed locations.

There is only one home-world: both families use the same couch, the same dining table, the same box, etc.

Throughout the play characters overlap in space, though they are in separate worlds. They should not freeze, but should continue to exist. Active waiting.

Objects which appear at various times in the play: an expensive couch, a table (one moment in a hospital conference room/the next moment a family's dining table), cardboard boxes (one moment full of legal files/the next moment full of casseroles), an answering machine, a wedding dress, a homemade cradle, an Axatse drum.

Once the white plastic hospital bag of belongings comes onstage it should remain onstage for the duration of the play.

NOTES ON THE PLAY

The play begins with a code-blue hospital light blinking. In a real hospital an intercom would alert the staff to a patient emergency. So the invention in the script of a physical light is meant to create a neutral, subtle alarm. The light indicates something beyond Helen's — and our — knowledge is unfolding, even as we wait.

Clementine's music is essential in this play's landscape. During transitions, let her music refract and vary the tone of the play.

Clementine's parents are Helen and Susan. She refers to Susan as "Mom" and to Helen as "Mimi."

J.P. is a social drinker, but he should not be portrayed as a drunk or an alcoholic.

*“Not if his gifts outnumbered the sea sands or
all the dust grains in the world could Agamemnon
ever appease me — not till he pays me back
full measure, pain for pain, dishonor for dishonor.”*

—The Iliad (IX. 383-386)

*“We have not lost faith, but we have transferred it from God to
the medical profession.”*

—George Bernard Shaw

LOVE ALONE

ACT ONE

Prologue

The code-blue hospital light blinks as the audience fills the theater.

Lights down, except for the blue light that continues to blink as Clementine arrives onstage. She plays her electric guitar — loud, fast rock music. She finishes as —

Scene 1

Lights up/blue light off. Clementine exits. June. A hospital waiting room. Helen Warren sits on a row of chairs. Dr. Becca Neal stands before Helen. They have never met —

BECCA. I'm Dr. Neal —

HELEN. (*Overlapping.*) Oh, I'm not who you want —

BECCA. (*Continuous.*) I'm the anesthesiologist —

HELEN. (*Overlapping.*) You're looking for who? —

BECCA. (*Continuous.*) I need to —

HELEN. (*Overlapping.*) Some other family? —

BECCA. (*Continuous.*) I need to speak with you —

HELEN. (*Overlapping.*) I've seen our doctor — we got here at 4:30 this morning. Ugh, what a long day —

BECCA. (*Interrupting.*) Ms. Warren.

HELEN. Yes?

BECCA. I'm Dr. Neal.

HELEN. Okay.

BECCA. I was your partner's anesthesiologist.

HELEN. *You* were in Susan's surgery?

BECCA. Yes.

HELEN. Where's Dr. Hendrix?

BECCA. He's in the ICU.

HELEN. Susan's in the ICU?

BECCA. No, Dr. Hendrix's with another patient.

HELEN. No? — good, oh, you scared me. You ... ugh.

BECCA. Should I wait for Susan's daughter?

HELEN. *Our daughter.*

BECCA. (*Realizing her mistake.*) Oh no — I didn't mean —

HELEN. (*Interrupting.*) She's home. I sent our daughter home. She's jet-lagged — we met already with Dr. Hendrix. We know the surgery went well.

BECCA. Right. But you know when the surgery began — at the very *start* — it was difficult to intubate Susan. The nurse came out and told you that, correct?

LOVE ALONE

by Deborah Salem Smith

2M, 4W

When Helen's lesbian partner of twenty years dies unexpectedly in minor surgery, Helen and her daughter want answers. Confused by the hospital's silence around the death, they bring a lawsuit against the doctors. Now Dr. Becca Neal must confront her feelings about losing her patient while she juggles the demands of a lawsuit. LOVE ALONE tracks the fallout in both the patient's and the doctor's homes, as both households navigate uncharted waters of anger, humor, and longing. This powerful story of how we grieve and how we heal speaks to an essential truth: We will all be patients one day.

"Few plays or movies capture the complex emotional and professional aftermath of a medical error. So often, the characterizations and story lines are as facile as a cartoon, with careless and negligent doctors, irrational and vengeful patients and families, and soulless, ambulance-chasing lawyers. LOVE ALONE ... breaks this mold. [This] lucid, deeply nuanced and fearless work pulls no punches as it lays bare the emotions of two families."

—The New York Times

"First-rate ... [a] gleaming gem."

—The Boston Globe

"Thought-provoking, well-written, and just darn good theater."

—The Providence Journal (Providence, RI)

"It is real. It is intimate ... even as you are reeling from one moving scene, seconds later in the following scene, you'll be smiling. I bit back the tears with laughter."

—Rhode Island Monthly

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