



CRADLE AND ALL
BY **DANIEL GOLDFARB**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

CRADLE AND ALL
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Originally produced in New York City by the Manhattan Theatre Club
(Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer)
on May 10, 2011.

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For Marianna

CRADLE AND ALL was produced at the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) at New York City Center Stage on May 10, 2011. It was directed by Sam Buntrock; the set design was by Neil Patel; the costume design was by Mattie Ullrich; the lighting design was by Ken Billington; the sound design was by Jill BC Duboff; the production stage manager was Hannah Cohen; and the stage manager was Jillian M. Oliver. The cast was as follows:

ANNIE / CLAIRE Maria Dizzia
NATE / LUKE Greg Keller

ACT ONE — INFANTRY

CHARACTERS

CLAIRE DESROSIER — 39, an actress — was almost a movie star in her 20s

LUKE SEAN JOY — 34, a high-end antiques merchant

TIME

A spring night.
9:00 P.M. to about 9:45 P.M.

PLACE

Apartment #7A —
a two-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn Heights

ACT TWO — THE EXTINCTION METHOD

CHARACTERS

ANNIE SAXE — 35, a recruiter for Proctor & Gamble on extended maternity leave

NATE HAMBURGER — 36, an actor — was a series regular on a long-running medical drama

TIME

The same spring night.
7:30 P.M. to about midnight.

PLACE

Apartment #7B —
a two-bedroom apartment in the same building

Note: Claire and Annie to be played by same actor. Luke and Nate to be played by same actor.

CRADLE AND ALL

ACT ONE

As the lights dim, we hear an easy-listening cover of a pop song.

Lights rise on #7A, a two-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn Heights, New York. There is an open kitchen that bleeds into the living room/dining room area. This apartment is pristine, even a little cold. Nothing is out of place. It is spare and white and elegant and modern. The furniture looks low and uncomfortable, but pricey — more to look at than to sit on. Lots of fragile and breakable objets d'art. Sexually graphic but artful lithographs hang on the white walls. Clearly, no children live in or even visit this apartment.

*Also hanging prominently is a movie poster for *A Moment in Paradise*, an indie feature from the late '80s/early '90s that starred a young Claire and Keanu Reeves. They embrace on the poster — she couldn't look more beautiful. (Think Brooke Adams and Richard Gere in Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*.)*

Claire, 39 and beautiful, in a sexy blouse, enters from her bedroom. She fumbles with the remotes on the coffee table until she finds the perfect song, all the while sipping a cocktail (her second). Then, she nervously arranges roses in a vase.

Next, she takes a handful of rose petals and scatters them, first on the table, then on the couch, then, a little impulsively, a little nervously, all over the apartment. There is an abundance of rose petals. It's sort of too much; she bites her lip, but then chooses to be really pleased with it.

The buzzer of the oven goes off. Frantically, Claire perks up, runs to the kitchen, puts on an oven mitt, and takes out warm roasted rosemary scented nuts (the Union Square Café bar nuts recipe). They smell amazing. She puts them in a small crystal bowl and pops one in her mouth —

CLAIRE. Ow! Hot! Hot! *(She takes a big sip of her cocktail — it's too strong and it goes down the wrong way. She spits it out and it spills all over her shirt.)* Shit! Shit shit shit ... Fuck! Fuck fuck fuck ... *(Pulling her blouse over her head, she runs down the hall to her bedroom to retrieve another, equally sexy blouse.)* Ahh! *(A clock reads 9:00 P.M. The unseen apartment door opens and Luke, 34, enters. We can't see him yet. He's taking off his shoes.)*

LUKE. *(Off.)* Do you hear that?

CLAIRE. *(Off.)* WHAT?!

LUKE. DO YOU HEAR THAT?! *(Claire returns, flustered, wind-ed, but tries to cover.)*

CLAIRE. Hear what, darling?

LUKE. It's awful.

CLAIRE. What is?

LUKE. From the hall. Turn down the Muzak and you'll hear it. *(She picks up a remote and mutes the music. They [And we.] hear a baby crying.)*

CLAIRE. What is it? *(And we see him. He looks stylish in a sort of befuddled, English way — Burberry plaid, argyle vest, European eye-glasses, underbite ...)*

LUKE. It's — a baby. *(He goes straight for the hall and into the bedroom to change into something more comfortable. He doesn't even notice everything Claire has done.)*

CLAIRE. *(Covering.)* Oh, of course. Right. Is that — Is that Olivia?

LUKE. *(As he walks.)* One day I'm going to go right on over there and knock on their door if I can get past their fucking stroller, which I have asked them now *three* times not to leave in the hall and spoke to Manny about it who doesn't ... It's absurd with the maintenance we pay. And I'm gonna say it say it say it say it — “Come on, man, control your child!” *(She goes towards the door.)*

CLAIRE. Do you think she's alright?

LUKE. Who cares!

CLAIRE. Luke — !

LUKE. (*Offstage.*) I have no idea.

CLAIRE. Poor Nate. Poor Annie. Poor baby.

LUKE. (*Offstage.*) Poor me!

CLAIRE. I don't mind it, actually.

LUKE. Brooklyn Heights is becoming the Upper West Side before our very eyes!

CLAIRE. If it bothers you so much, why didn't you just close the glass door. (*She listens for one more beat, then shuts the door. We don't hear Olivia anymore.*)

LUKE. Great idea. Would you? I brought sushi. From Nobu. I, uh, I thought we could eat sushi on the couch. And then maybe go for a romantic walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. Have a glass of Sherry somewhere darkly lit on the Lower East Side. Share a sticky toffee pudding. (*Luke emerges from the bedroom as Claire un-purses her lips. He looks preppy-sleppy. Definitely not dressed the way Claire is.*)

CLAIRE. Surprise! (*He takes in the roses — it's startling to him.*)

LUKE. Oh my. (*She notices.*)

CLAIRE. Ummmm, cocktail?

LUKE. (*Cautiously.*) Sure. That — that sounds fine. No fruit —

CLAIRE. Of course. I'll mix one right up. (*She does. It would be methodical if she wasn't nervous. Aggressive cocktail shaking. Luke puts down the bag of takeout sushi on the table.*)

LUKE. Is this all for me?

CLAIRE. I'm very proud of you. Isn't it fabulous? (*Nervous head shaking.*) You don't like it?

LUKE. I didn't say that.

CLAIRE. Then you like it?

LUKE. How many roses did you buy?

CLAIRE. A dozen dozen.

LUKE. A dozen dozen. Well that's just crazy. You kook! I'm the one who's supposed to be buying *you* roses.

CLAIRE. Well you *don't* anymore and truthfully, there hasn't been much to celebrate with me except for my birthday and Valentine's day and the tumor in my breast being benign — (Which, come to think of it, might have been a good time for flowers.) And I really don't want to do anything to celebrate my next birthday, which as you know, will remain unspoken —

LUKE. Claire —

CLAIRE. Like a werewolf, the clock will strike midnight and I'll become a cougar, just like that.

LUKE. Don't say that. You know I hate that.

CLAIRE. What?

LUKE. It's so base.

CLAIRE. Cougar? Rrrraooooowww.

LUKE. No. Not funny. Not even remotely. Don't don't don't. You're better than that.

CLAIRE. Okay.

LUKE. Don't be so actressy.

CLAIRE. Fine. I get it. I guess I touched a nerve.

LUKE. And when did "cougar" even enter into the vernacular? I despise the whole concept. Women as animals looking for fresh meat.

CLAIRE. Me hungry. You meat.

LUKE. Claire! Really, there's five years between us. You look 27.

CLAIRE. I moisturize religiously. And I have a cosmetic dermatologist who's also a misogynist.

LUKE. Well, it's so demeaning.

CLAIRE. To me?

LUKE. To me! And what happened to the women's movement anyway? Why are you even okay with that label?

CLAIRE. I'm not. That's why I'm staying 39. Forever. In five years, we'll be the same age. I never want to celebrate any birthday ever again in my life. In fact, if you even acknowledge one I'll kill you. But you! Tonight is about you! (*He just sort of stands and nods/bows.*) Bravo!

LUKE. I guess it is rather exciting. To finally be done with it.

CLAIRE. Six hundred thousand — That must be some kind of record.

LUKE. Uncle Cliff got more than two million for the lotus flower, which of course he reminded me of as I was leaving ... Prick.

CLAIRE. Anyone would get that much for a lotus flower. There are only, what, ten left on the planet.

LUKE. Eight.

CLAIRE. Eight? See? I bet you, with your befuddled charm, you would have gotten three — minimum.

LUKE. How long are you going to shake that drink? (*She hasn't even been aware that she was still doing it. She stops immediately, pours into a martini glass.*) You're so distracted.

CLAIRE. Am I?

LUKE. Are you? (*She hands him his drink.*) I love that we are upholding the tradition of the cocktail hour. It's so *Mad Men*.

CLAIRE. Cocktail hour? It's ten after nine.

LUKE. You know what I mean.

CLAIRE. Drinking?

LUKE. Cheers. *(He takes a sip. He doesn't like it but tries to hide it from her.)* Mmmm. Sort of perfumey?

CLAIRE. Rose water. I read about it on Epicurious. I've already had two! To die, right?

LUKE. Mmm-hmmm.

CLAIRE. Total cougar drink, but what the hell. *(Not amused. He ignores it.)*

LUKE. Anyway, in terms of the rose collection, I think it just might be, if not an absolute record, at least a VERY good price.

CLAIRE. For a lamp.

LUKE. Tut tut. Not a lamp. A Tiffany floral.

CLAIRE. I love that you say tut tut.

LUKE. Yeah?

CLAIRE. I love that you're younger than I am and say tut tut. It's somehow comforting. As I drift into middle age. *(Beat.)* That's your cue to tell me I'm not drifting into middle age, by the way.

LUKE. I love it too, actually. It's sort of effortless now. Not a trace left of Orange County. To this day, I am rather taken with my own affect.

CLAIRE. It's fun.

LUKE. Thank you. It IS fun. And you're not drifting into middle age.

CLAIRE. Six hundred thousand for a Tiffany floral. Crazytown! I still don't understand why some are so much more valuable than others.

LUKE. How many times must I go through this with you? There are many factors — size, color, availability, design, condition, number of asymmetrical pieces.

CLAIRE. But the roses? They're not that rare, are they?

LUKE. No. But in general, the more pinks and reds, the more valuable the lamp. The people want reds and pinks so reds and pinks sell best. At least, since I started doing this. Which makes the rose florals, over all, if not insanely rare or original, at least consistently desirable.

CLAIRE. Fascinating. I never tire of hearing you talk about it. Expensive things are endlessly interesting, aren't they?

LUKE. Yes. We were so lucky we didn't have a rose when he came

CRADLE AND ALL

by Daniel Goldfarb

1M, 1W

Relationships aren't baby-proof. Annie and Nate have a baby who won't sleep. Claire and Luke are losing sleep over the decision to start a family. In adjacent Brooklyn Heights apartments, Daniel Goldfarb's fresh and witty look at love, sex, commitment and parenthood unfolds, and no one will rest until the truth between each of these couples is spoken.

"CRADLE AND ALL is a smart, pitch-perfect play that is a cut-to-the-bone look at how babies can expose secrets their parents want hidden. With evident humor, Goldfarb has churned up all those little things that drive couples crazy. The play often feels so true that it becomes universal." —**Associated Press**

"Daniel Goldfarb insightfully lampoons the instincts of contemporary urban parents." —**The New York Times**

"CRADLE rocks!" —**amNewYork**

"Thoughtful, amusing and shrewd, with characters that surprise you and deepen." —**New York Daily News**

"A daring and engaging evening. Utterly natural and emotionally true. Daniel Goldfarb has an insightful grasp on the way people in a relationship behave." —**The Record**

"An excellent showcase and a sure bet to entertain audiences." —**BackStage**

"Engaging and perceptive." —**Time Out New York**

Also by Daniel Goldfarb

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