



KIN

BY BATHSHEBA DORAN



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Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced
the world premiere of KIN Off-Broadway in 2011.

For Katie

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to a great number of people for the development of this play, not least the original cast. To their names I must add Dominic D'Andrea, Jennifer Van Dyck, Jenny Maguire, Jenny Worton, Jordan Harrison, Jonathan Walker, Kathryn Grody, Katie Doran, Knud Adams, Lucy Smith, Mark Subias, Megan Monaghan Rivas, Paul Steinberg, Peter MacRobbie and Polly Lee. Thank you to everyone that is the Lark Play Development Center, South Coast Repertory Theater and Playwrights Horizons, particularly Adam Greenfield and Tim Sanford for extraordinary dramaturgical wisdom. Above all thank you to Sam Gold for all the suggestions, insinuations and insight.

KIN was presented by Playwrights Horizons (Tim Sanford, Artistic Director; Leslie Marcus, Managing Director; Carol Fishman, General Manager) in New York City, opening on March 21, 2011. It was directed by Sam Gold; the set design was by Paul Steinberg; the costume design was by David Zinn; the lighting design was by Jane Cox; the sound design was by Matt Tierney; the dialect coach was Stephen Gabis; the production manager was Christopher Boll; and the production stage manager was Alaina Taylor. The cast was as follows:

LINDA	Suzanne Bertish
MAX	Bill Buell
ANNA	Kristen Bush
SEAN	Patch Darragh
KAY	Kit Flanagan
HELENA	Laura Heisler
SIMON / GIDEON	Matthew Rauch
ADAM	Cotter Smith
RACHEL	Molly Ward

A NOTE ON DESIGN

When I began writing I thought of this play as taking place in what I found myself referring to as “the landscape of the mind.” Many of my characters were based in what I only thought of as “the city.” It could have been any major Western Capital — New York, Paris, London, or an imaginary city entirely. Other characters were simply placed “far away.” I was attempting to conjure the globe. Eventually I found it helped the story to be specific so now there is a literal geography, but I hope that the director and design team will help recapture my early sense that this play was taking place above all in a non-literal landscape.

A NOTE ON STAGING

This is a play made from largely two-person scenes that is nonetheless about an ensemble. To underline this, my original idea was to have the entire cast onstage for every scene except the first and last. Sam Gold refined this suggestion into something more delicate, complex and idiosyncratic. I now think it suffices to say that I hope future directors will find their own way to maintain a sense of ensemble so that we feel all characters throughout, hidden sometimes, in shadows maybe, but present.

CHARACTERS

ANNA (30s)

ADAM, ANNA'S FATHER (60s)

HELENA (30s)

SEAN (30s)

LINDA, SEAN'S MOTHER (55 – 65)

MAX, LINDA'S BROTHER (55 – 65)

RACHEL (30s)

KAY (60s)

GIDEON (34)

SIMON (40s)

(Gideon and Simon should be played by the same actor. This should not be emphasized, but an unrecognizable transformation is not required.)

TIME AND PLACE

The action of the play takes place over the last seven years in various locations in America and Ireland.

“What can I say? God help me, what can I say? Silence will stifle me ...”

—Sophocles, *Electra*

“I saw a crow running about with a stork. I marveled long and investigated their case in order that I might find the clue as to what it was that they had in common. When amazed and bewildered I approached them then indeed I saw that both of them were lame.”

—Rumi, *Spiritual Couplets*

“A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so.”

—Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

KIN

Scene 1

An office at Columbia University

Anna sits. Simon stands. Everything awkward, uncomfortable.

SIMON. I thought it was best not to leave you dangling, you know? But at this stage of life ... I mean ... I know what I'm looking for, you know what you're looking for, we know what we're looking for, or maybe we don't, maybe that's the thing, maybe I don't know what I'm looking for, but I know it's not you. That sounds terrible, doesn't it? But no, fuck it, I'm trying to be truthful here, let's have truth in human relations for once, how about that? Let's be truthful with one another. I mean, did you think this was going anywhere? Really? *(Anna shakes her head.)* Thank you. Thank you. Now I feel less like an ass. And I mean — I'm so much older than you, that's probably why you picked me, right? A father figure? You lost your dad when you were very young, right? So that was probably part of the attraction, don't you think? But that's not healthy, that's not sustainable, or maybe it is, I don't know.

ANNA. My father's still alive.

SIMON. Oh. Then I'm confusing you with someone else. Sorry. Of course he is. The point is — and this is where I'm the real asshole — I don't know what I want. Not really. I mean, sometimes I think I want something long term, but I've *been* married, you know? And it was no fun. Now maybe that was her, maybe that was me, maybe it was the combination but ... but ... I just want someone I can talk to, you know? And fuck. And we *had* that. I'm not denying it. We had that. But now ... it's over, isn't it? I mean the conversation is over. Can't you just feel it? There's something

dead here. The light's gone out. And if the light's gone out, then put out the light. Or maybe not. I don't know ... we could try to ignite it. But love shouldn't be so much effort. Or maybe it should. It's such a fucking construct, you know? Literature is such a fucking *trap*. Unrealistic expectations. I don't know. I'm just so fucking lonely. And I know you are too, maybe that's what brought us together, right? Loneliness. A love of Keats. Your mind, you have a fucking brilliant mind, you know that? Your thesis is fucking brilliant. You're going to have an incredible career, and you'll forget all about me! I'll just be some old professor of yours that you inveigled into bed with your skinny arms and your brilliant mind. Because let's be real. We admire each other, but ... this is even a little sordid. The rest of the faculty knows, I think. Clancy made a veiled comment ... and it's not against the rules, exactly, you are an adjunct and this *is* the English department, we are all poets here, and poets fuck, but Clancy's comment ... I think fundamentally ... it made me feel cheap. And it made you ... cheap by association ... So I think ... You haven't said anything ... Are you going to make this hard on me? Don't. Please don't. This is just human relationships. I wrote a poem once. When I was in my thirties and I still wrote poetry. And I compared a woman's vagina to a revolving door. People come in. They go out. That's life. And you know what my simile for the penis was? A staple gun. In an office. Punch, punch, punch. Revolve, revolve, revolve. That is life. That is the fucking monotony of searching for your soul mate. Okay? I still stand by that. So just ... Did we even love each other?

ANNA. No. (*Simon stares at Anna, hoping for a better cue to exit. He doesn't get one. So he sighs and leaves.*)

KIN

by Bathsheba Doran

5M, 5W

Anna, a Texan Ivy League poetry scholar, and Sean, an Irish personal trainer, hardly seem destined for one another. But as their web of family and friends crosses distances both psychological and geographical, an unlikely new family is forged. Bathsheba Doran's play sheds a sharp light on the changing face of kinship in the expansive landscape of the modern world.

"The truism that families come in all shapes and sizes is illuminated with haunting beauty ... in this exquisitely wrought comedy-drama ... a piercing portrait of the contemporary social architecture, in which the distance between people can be widened or collapsed with disorienting ease, whether it is through the click of a keyboard, a telephone conversation or a chance encounter. Many of the characters in the play never actually meet, and yet we come away with a moving sense of how each individual's experience resonates — troublingly or happily — in the lives of almost everyone else."

—**The New York Times**

"KIN ... is stubbornly theatrical. Doran has written an intimate story by telling its nonintimate details, peripheral moments (like after-the-kiss debriefs with family members) that nonetheless coalesce into something penetratingly romantic ... Doran has actually written around her story. This forces audiences into becoming complicit in imagining the central relationship."

—**Time Out New York**

"... compelling ... [an] expanding web of relationships is examined primarily for the better, illuminated with humor and insight in a series of concise, effective, emotion-laden vignettes ... Doran's dialogue is pointed and humorous ... KIN is both entertaining and thoughtful, a satisfying emotional journey from start to finish."

—**Associated Press**

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