



# ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE

BY  
MADDIE CORMAN



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



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*For my family...biological and chosen*

The original Off-Broadway production of ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE was produced by Daryl Roth at the DR2 Theatre, New York City, opening on March 25, 2019. It was directed by Kristin Hanggi, the set design was by Jo Winiarski, the lighting design was by Jamie Roderick, the sound design was by Bart Fastbender, the projection design was by Elaine J. McCarthy, the original music was by Claire Wellin, and the production stage manager was Marjorie Ann Wood. The play was performed by Maddie Corman.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I was struggling with my “author’s note” and I reached out to my brilliant friend Richard who responded:

*Oh dear. Author’s Note when the entire piece is a ninety-minute author’s note? Why?*

He’s correct of course. But I cannot help myself, so I will just say that the thought of other actors performing ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE is thrilling and terrifying and something I never dreamed of when I was writing this. I wrote this play because I had to. I wasn’t (and I’m still not) sure exactly why, but I knew that it needed to be written... that this story needed to be told.

Early in the rehearsal process someone asked if I would have an understudy and I just laughed. Then during the New York run something happened. After every performance, multiple people of varying ages, genders, and sizes would come over and hug me and whisper “I AM you.” It became more and more clear that this story—though deeply personal and seemingly unique—was not just “mine.” The details are upsetting and bizarre and sometimes funny and completely individual, but the feelings are apparently universal. So it is with trepidation and delight that I let go of my story and trust that you will honor my truth while blending in your own.

I truly meant for this piece to be something that heals and helps and provides some kind of service. It comes from a place of deep pain and unimaginable loneliness and a burning desire to shine a light on the secrets that keep us sick and tell the stories that are scary to tell and to remind one another of the grace that can sneak in when one’s heart is cracked open.

—Maddie Corman  
2019

## CHARACTER

MADDIE

## PRODUCTION NOTES

In the New York production, projections of Maddie’s personal photos and other contextual images were used, in addition to the projected images and timelines you will see written into this script. Please know that projections of any kind are in no way mandatory for your production—the play works with as little as a single actor and a chair onstage. But future productions are also encouraged to create their own projection designs. If the actor playing Maddie is comfortable using personal photos, the world around “Maddie” could be built out of projections as it was in the original production.

*The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.*

—Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

# ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE

*Lights up on Maddie. She is in a chair, cross-legged, eyes closed, listening to a guided meditation on her iPhone. Music plays along with a semi-soothing beautiful female voice. "Hello... this is Persephone Abromovitz and today's meditation is called 'serenity first.' Do you wake up full of fear of what will be and regret for what has been?"*

*Maddie mumbles "yes," eyes still closed.*

*"Let's let that go for just a few moments. Let's find the peace within... Eyes closed, begin with a deep inhale and exhale. Bring your left ear to your left shoulder and now your right ear to your right shoulder, feet on the ground."*

*Maddie puts her feet on the ground.*

*"Let it go... let it all go. Let go of all of the fear...breathing in delight and exhaling compassion."*

*Maddie picks her nose.*

*"You're just breathing easily. There's no effort... no right or wrong."*

*DING! Maddie gets a text—she looks around and glances at her phone but quickly returns to meditating.*

*"If a thought comes in just recognize it and let it go and continue to breathe without effort... without concern... without strain."*

*DING! The text reads: "whatcha doin'?" Maddie takes her phone and texts back: "meditating!" Maddie puts her phone on her lap and goes back to meditating...*

*DING! The return text reads: "then stop looking at your phone!"*



*Maddie puts her phone back on the table.*

*“Now just notice any sounds around you and feel the breath as it enters your nose and as it leaves. You don’t need to win...you don’t need to do it right...you just need to be here and be now and breathe...”*

*Maddie tries to keep meditating but fails. She presses pause on the app. She turns to us.*

MADDIE. I suck at meditating. But even sucky meditation is better than no meditation. For me.

*She stands. To an audience member regarding her outfit...*

And forgive me for not dressing up. This is my show. I wanted to be comfortable. And... I *get* to be comfortable.

*Beat.*

Maybe for Act Two I’ll put on a ball gown. Kidding. There’s no Act Two...

*Maddie’s Wedding Day fills the space: Romantic music swells. Laughing. Guests. Formal, fun, and full of joy.*

Ohhhh that’s my wedding!

*Maddie pulls out a New York Times.*

Look we made the Vows section!

*We come to an abrupt freeze on a projection of a wedding photo with the groom’s face blacked out with a Sharpie.*

*Maddie looks at us.*

Oops. Yeah. That was me. I had a moment.

*The picture fades.*

So that was my wedding and it was amazing. I married my best person—my confidante and true blue love.

And he had a secret.

Now, every marriage has secrets, I guess. I had a few: the occasional cigarette and the occasional Botox. Oh, and my secret Transcendental Meditation mantra that you’re not allowed to tell anyone... And now even I can’t remember it...

But my husband had a really big secret.

So yeah.

And before we begin this journey—oh my God, I hate the word “journey”—okay before we begin this “thing,” I just want you to know that I am not okay. This is not one of the shows where I talk about how I was okay and then I wasn’t okay but now I am okay.

*She readjusts.*

The only way I have gotten through these past days, which turned into weeks and now years, has been with other people being of service by sharing their stories with me. And now I want to share mine with you. And if a lot of people are annoyed or upset or just want the salacious details, I’m kind of cool with that—because it’s my story and I am not ashamed.

Okay...sometimes I am still ashamed.

*She walks toward us.*

I had a really nice-looking life. I had the nice house...

*Projection: A nice home in Westchester. As Maddie lists her life, images might appear to reflect what she is saying...*

And the cool husband and three great, gorgeous, difficult, hilarious children and a dog and a cat and a semi-great career and friends and family. And I was secretly lonely a lot. And...and sometimes I was on the book sale committee and also on the Broadway and sometimes I was the tooth fairy and also on the television and my husband was never not coaching the kids’ soccer teams and basketball teams and and bringing food to the homeless and directing and producing big fancy TV shows...

And we are all taking vacations to educationally sound but also very comfortable spots and hosting birthday parties and holidays and schlepping to school concerts and and and...then something happened and my great big beautiful life came crashing down—

*Suddenly, all of the pictures fall and slamming onto the screen is a series of overlapping headlines: “Law & Order Director Arrested for Possession of Child Porn”—Variety, Deadline, New York Post, Westchester Journal News,*

People, USA Today.

My husband's big dark secret.

*The articles and headlines fade. Maddie sits in a chair like she is driving a car.*

Early, like crazy-early, like five A.M., I am driving to work. I'm shooting a guest spot on a semi-terrible TV show and I have two days, today and tomorrow, left of my filming. I'm going over my lines in my head which are mostly, "Oh no, my son, is missing!" and, "Oh thank God...you found my son!" I'm almost there, "there" being a soundstage in Brooklyn, and my phone rings.

And it's my daughter—which is weird because it's summer and way too early for her to be up.

"Sweetie?..."

"Mom, the police are here!! Mom, they're taking Dad's computer! Mooooooooom!!?"

And I can hear the boys are in her room with her and they're crying and she is screaming.

"What? Are you okay? What... Put Dad on."

"Mom!!!!"

"Okay, okay... okay... hold on. Hold on. I can't understand you. I'm going to call Daddy and find out what's going on..."

*Maddie "hangs up" and "redials."*

"Babe? Hello...what is going on? Hello? What do you mean you can't talk? What??? The police are in—they want to talk to me? Hello? Sir... You found what? Sir my kids are in the house. Sir, someone need to get my kids..."

*A series of phone calls.*

"Baby...it's Mommy... it's okay... I promise... I don't know... I'm going to call my brother... hang on."

"Hi. I know it's early. I'm so sorry. Listen, I need you to go to my house right now and get my kids and bring them to your place. Please. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. Thank you."

“Dad...hi. I know it’s early. Yes it is an emergenc... They’re okay... I’m okay... No I don’t think he’s okay... Can you go over to my house? Can you take my husband to a lawyer? And then maybe after that you can drive him to Brooklyn where I’m shooting so I can figure out what the hell is going on and what I should do? Can you—Thank you, Dad.”

“Hello... Hi, this is Maddie Corman...yes, I’m almost there! And I’m just... I am having a...well... a well... a family emergency. No, I’m coming to work. I’m just wondering if there’s any way that I could shoot all of my scenes first and maybe be done before lunch? Oh, that is amazing; thank you so much! Yes... I will see you in a minute...”

“Hi, it’s Mommy... Yeah, I love you and I will be there soon and your uncle is on his... oh, he’s there? Okay, great—go with him... don’t worry...take care of your brothers okay? Tell them I will be home as soon as I can... Yes, Daddy is going to be okay! I’m not sure honey... Oh that’s Dad on the other line so...I have to go... I love you.”

“What is happening? What is happening?... What is happening?”

And I go to work and I sit in the hair and makeup chair and I get dressed and I say words and I do not have ANY memory of these hours... I think I bum a cigarette from someone and then later, after I wrap, I get into my car and drive around for a few minutes and then on a street corner in Brooklyn somewhere near the set, I see my husband across the street...

And I am looking at the man that I have been with for twenty years... the man who is the father of my three children and my very best friend who has a really bad temper but would not actually hurt a fly and is the most stand-up, reliable guy I know... who listens to NPR and makes silly puns and sings me songs at the piano and reads the *New Yorker* and plans for our future and who doesn’t flirt with my friends. He is pale and hunched over and I don’t recognize this person... And I want it to be a big misunderstanding. A mistake. Because how can this be? And he gets into my car and I look at him...and he looks away

# ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE

by Maddie Corman

1 woman

Courageous, daring, and unflinchingly honest, ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE is an inspiring true story about discovering a new normal when the familiar world falls apart, a must-see examination of what it means to navigate a world with no certainty. Maddie Corman's profoundly personal play challenges perceptions, captivates audiences, and sparks an emotionally charged discussion that will leave you wondering: What would I do?

*"Four stars! ... Anyone familiar with 12-Step programs knows the term 'qualification.' ... in ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE, Maddie Corman could pass for giving an especially long qualification. [But] it's one thing to spill her story in a meeting where, presumably, others present can, and will, empathize. It's quite a different thing to address an audience not necessarily so disposed. ... She may have been accidentally brave before, but there's no missing that she's deliberately brave now. Good on her."*

—NYStageReview.com

*"Standing ovation for Maddie Corman. Even as I write this, I'm still thinking about, and still floored by ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE... It's riveting, personal theater, but it is also truly harrowing... But Corman infuses the material with the kind of piquant humor that most people long for after a terrible thing happens. ... Her ability to look the worst in the eye and face it just continues to prove what we all realize from the second the lights come up: Accidentally or not, Maddie Corman is strong as hell."*

—TheaterMania.com

*"...[a] completely absorbing solo piece... about how the discovery of [Maddie Corman's husband's] secret affected her and what she decided to do about it for her own well-being, her kids' well-being and yes, the well-being of her husband and of their marriage. ... Despite moments of expressing pure hatred for her husband, she doesn't stop loving him. And there's extraordinary power and bravery within her compassion, making ACCIDENTALLY BRAVE a truly uplifting experience..."*

—BroadwayWorld.com

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