

...AND OTHERS

By Dennis Bush

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...AND OTHERS

A One Act Drama

By Dennis Bush

SYNOPSIS: A journey through the mind and memory of Amanda, a 26-year-old woman, *...and others* explores the dissociative identity disorder (multiple personality syndrome) that resulted from a trauma she suffered at thirteen. Seven personas – female and male – struggle for control. With a mix of terrifying intensity, quirky humor, and heartbreaking revelations, this thirty-minute one-act play will give actors challenging roles to play, directors an opportunity for creative staging, and will have audiences on the edge of their seats.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 female, 4 male)

AMANDA (f).....	26-year-old woman who suffered a traumatic experience, resulting in dissociative identity disorder <i>(78 lines)</i>
MAYA (f)	Opinionated; funny <i>(51 lines)</i>
RACHEL (f).....	Vulnerable, behind a façade of independence <i>(51 lines)</i>
KATARINA (f).....	13; fearless in her innocence; a terrifying layer lurks below the surface <i>(49 lines)</i>
BRADY (m).....	Self-perceived ladies' man; thinks only of himself <i>(56 lines)</i>
RANDALL (m).....	Rife with rage; controlling; brutal, with a twisted sense of humor <i>(52 lines)</i>
KADE (m).....	Boyish; afraid; worried; deeply troubled <i>(52 lines)</i>
LIAM (m).....	Caring; heartbreaking in his desire to be the protector <i>(52 lines)</i>

DURATION: 30 minutes

SETTING: *...and others* is set in the present, in the mind of Amanda (a twenty-six-year-old woman who suffered a traumatic experience), and in the minds of the seven dissociative identities that resulted from the trauma.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

...and others can be presented with a very simple set. No special props or costumes are required. Directors are encouraged to be creative with casting and staging, and to avoid literal use of inferred props or to group actors together so it appears that conversations are happening in places where a character is speaking directly to the audience.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

...and others had a reading at Pearl Studios in New York City in September 2013.

The play had its premiere production in Phoenix, Arizona, in January 2014.

The original cast included Marija Petovic, Monica Ramirez, Hailey Araza, Elena Conti, A.J. Katek, Tristan Campbell, Anthony Quezada, and Logan Umbanhowar. The production was directed by the playwright.

The original cast performed the New York City premiere production of the play in April 2014, at the Crowne Theatre. Shane Crowley was the stage manager.

The playwright offers special thanks to Melissa Teitel, Joe Pascale, Nick Petrovich, Meggy Lykins, Isaac Gamus, Melissa Ganas, Pam Eckert, and Karen Brown for their kind assistance and inspiration, during the creation of *...and others*.

AT RISE: *Lights up on AMANDA with seven actors, standing in a line behind her.*

AMANDA: When something momentous happens to you, you're not always aware how momentous it is – in the moment that it's happening to you. You know it's important. You know it's going to have an impact. But you don't think about it that way. It happens. And, – if you live through it – you just go on living and the experience becomes a part...

MAYA, RACHEL, and KATARINA: A part...

BRADY, RANDALL, KADE and LIAM: A part...

ALL: Of who you are.

BRADY, RANDALL, KADE and LIAM: Of who you'll be.

AMANDA: It's all you know.

ALL EXCEPT AMANDA: It's all you need to know.

BRADY, MAYA, RANDALL, RACHEL, LIAM, KATARINA, and KADE move out of line. They stay upstage of AMANDA but are visible on either side of her and scattered around the playing space.

BRADY, RANDALL, KADE and LIAM: Except when it's not.

MAYA, RACHEL, and KATARINA: Exactly.

BRADY, RANDALL, KADE and LIAM: Yes...

MAYA, RACHEL, and KATARINA: And no.

AMANDA: But knowing and doing...

ALL EXCEPT AMANDA: *Doing and knowing...*

AMANDA: ...are two different things. And I didn't know what to do...
I didn't know what to do.

MAYA touches AMANDA as she says, "And." AMANDA shifts away from focus, as MAYA shifts into the focal point. Any type of physical contact, when one of the others takes over, can work. When AMANDA resumes control, there is no physical contact.

MAYA: And I had a moment of clarity. While I was watching a show on TLC, I had a moment of clarity: I just knew that I would be a very bad conjoined twin. I guess, on some level, I always knew that. But, when I saw the girls, all conjoined like they were, it became absolutely crystal clear. One of them had her head tilted at a 45-degree angle. Always. Tilted off to the side, while her sister's head was straight up like a regular person's head. And I knew that I'd be a very bad conjoined twin. Because I'd be the one with the tilted head. And I wouldn't be happy about it. I'd use my left hand – the one that I'd have control of, because I'd be on the left side – I just know I'd be on the left side. And I'd slap the other twin. Repeatedly. And I'd do it hard. Like more of a punch than a slap – whatever it took to make it so she was the one with the tilted head and mine was the one that was straight up like a regular head. (*A profound truth.*) Weakness gives way to strength. It's how it is. How it's always been. How it should be.

AMANDA shifts into the focal point by moving in front of MAYA, who fades upstage. RACHEL and BRADY move downstage closer to AMANDA but not in her light.

AMANDA: Having other people tell you what to do doesn't solve the problem. It doesn't make the decision any easier, especially if what they're telling you seems like the worst possible thing that could happen... the worst possible thing you could do.

RACHEL touches AMANDA as she says, "And." AMANDA shifts away from focus, as RACHEL shifts into the focal point.

RACHEL: And you don't get a vote. Even when you're eighteen and you're supposed to have the right to vote, you don't get to vote. They say that they have to make the decisions for you. For your own good. Because what's at stake is serious, and you're not prepared – you're not able – to make that kind of decision, so they're going to make it for you. And you wonder – *I wonder* – what good it is to be eighteen and to have the right to vote, if you don't get to vote. If somebody takes away that right with a bunch of reasons that keep changing. The reasons keep changing faster than you can keep up with them. The old reasons get replaced by the new reasons and, before you know it, those new reasons are old reasons because there are newer new reasons.

BRADY touches RACHEL as he says, "And." RACHEL shifts away from focus, as BRADY shifts into the focal point.

BRADY: And there are reasons why there aren't any rap songs where the guy only has one girl. He has multiple girls. A *lot* of girls. Because that's how he rolls. He rolls with a lot of girls. Not rolls like a ball rolls. Rolls like in how he lives his life. The way he lives his life. He lives his life with a lot of girls. And you don't hear any of the girls complaining. You don't see any of the girls in rap videos walking off, saying, "I'm not down with this, yo." Nuh-uh. No. They accept what's meant to be. Things that happen are meant to be. So if there's a guy with a lot of girls, then that's how it's supposed to be. What is, is what's meant to be. And you can't argue with how it's supposed to be.

AMANDA shifts into the focal point by moving in front of BRADY, who fades upstage. KADE and LIAM move downstage closer to AMANDA but not in her light.

AMANDA: It wasn't supposed to happen. I mean, I wasn't supposed to be there that day. My being there when it happened was an accident. An accident.

KADE touches AMANDA as he says, "And." AMANDA shifts away from focus, as KADE shifts into the focal point.

KADE: And the accident was my fault. It's always my fault, when bad things happen... I'm bad luck. I try to stay out of the way. I try to stay hidden – so nobody notices I'm there, so I don't jinx whatever's going on – so bad things don't happen. But they do. Bad things happen. *(Begins to cry.)* Bad things happen even when I'm the closest to being invisible. I close my eyes and I try to be invisible. I *try*. But, when I open my eyes, I see myself in her mirror. Standing right behind her. And in her eyes. I see myself in her eyes. And you're not invisible if you can see yourself in somebody's eyes.

AMANDA shifts into the focal point by moving in front of KADE, who fades upstage.

AMANDA: I see my face... *(Clarifying.)* when I look in the mirror, I see my face. But somebody else's eyes are looking back at me. Somebody else's eyes, from inside my head... Watching me from inside. And I don't know what to do.

RANDALL touches AMANDA as he says, "And." AMANDA shifts away from focus, as RANDALL shifts into the focal position.

RANDALL: *(With barely controlled rage.)* And when somebody tells you to do something, you do it! *(Losing control of his anger.)* You don't ask questions. You don't discuss it like your opinion matters. *(Undiluted fury.)* You do it! *(Pulling back his volume, but increasing his intensity.)* When I tell you to do something...do it! *(A beat.)* Good. Now, we understand each other. We know who's in charge – who's calling the shots. And we know who's pathetic... You're an embarrassment. You're like a marshmallow that gets dropped into a campfire. Nobody wants it anymore. It's useless. It's going to melt and burn and disappear. And nobody cares.

KATARINA touches RANDALL as she says, "And." RANDALL shifts away from focus, as KATARINA shifts into the focal position.

KATARINA: And the walls and the ceiling are all going to be painted with zebra stripes, except they won't be black and white like a zebra. They'll be periwinkle and white. (*Explaining, joyfully.*) Periwinkle is a kind of blue and it's also the name of a doll I had when I was seven. (*As if it's magical information.*) Before I even knew that periwinkle was a color! I got the doll for my birthday and it already had a name, but I changed it. (*An indisputable fact.*) If you adopt a baby or get a doll for a present, you can rename it whatever you want, if you don't like the name it comes with. That's how it works. So I changed Betsy's name to Periwinkle. I also refused to feed her. She came with a bottle and you're supposed to fill it with water or milk and, then, after she drinks it, she goes to the bathroom. That would've been fine if her name was Betsy, but Periwinkle wasn't the kind of baby who'd be happy leaking all over the place. So no bottle for her. No liquids of any kind. (*A quick beat.*) She died about six months after I got her. It was a boating accident. She got thrown overboard into the lake. Accidents happen when you're not expecting an accident to happen. That's how it works. There won't be any accidents with the periwinkle and white zebra stripes on my walls and ceiling. Everything is going to be perfect. And, after all the stripes are painted, I'm going to put up my poster – my giant, almost-as-big-as-a-whole-wall poster of a pale pink unicorn. The horn is made of tape that looks like a 3-D rainbow when light hits it. It's amazing. It's... breathtaking. When you walk in my room, you're going to be like...

ALL except AMANDA gasp dramatically, in unison.

and all you'll be able to say is, "Wow," and, then, maybe – after you catch your breath – you'll say, "My life sucks compared to yours," because as you stand in the doorway to my room you'll realize that you don't have periwinkle-and-white zebra-striped walls and a giant poster of a pale pink unicorn with a 3-D rainbow horn. And I do!

LIAM touches KATARINA as he says, "And." KATARINA shifts away from focus, as LIAM shifts into the focal position.

LIAM: And I will always protect you.

With his hand, RANDALL covers LIAM'S mouth as he says, "And." RANDALL stands behind LIAM but leans his head forward, continuing to keep his hand over LIAM'S mouth.

RANDALL: And I will always take what I want. I will always do what I want. *(Begins to speak in Latin.)* Ab intra, ab origine. Alea lacta est. Ab intra, ab origine. Alea lacta est.

LIAM: *(As if hypnotized; as RANDALL removes his hand.)* From within, from the source. Past the point of no return.

LIAM and RANDALL take a breath, inhaling in unison.

LIAM and RANDALL: Actus me invito factus non est meus actus. *(Take a breath, inhaling in unison. Louder.)* Actus me invito factus non est meus actus.

MAYA, RACHEL, BRADY, KADE and KATARINA: *(In a stage whisper.)* "The act done by me against my will is not my act."

AMANDA: I didn't have a choice.

RANDALL touches AMANDA as he says, "Et." AMANDA shifts away from focus, as RANDALL shifts into the focal position.

RANDALL: Et... ex uno plures.

ALL except AMANDA take a breath, inhaling in unison. MAYA, RACHEL, BRADY, LIAM, KADE, and KATARINA move downstage of AMANDA, obscuring her from the audience's view.

ALL EXCEPT AMANDA: *(With growing intensity and volume.)* Ex uno plures... *(Taking a breath, inhaling in unison. Loudly, intensely.)* Ex uno plures... *(Taking a breath, inhaling in unison.)* From one...

RANDALL, MAYA, RACHEL, BRADY, LIAM, KADE, and KATRINA all turn their heads quickly, in the rhythm of the phrase, to look at AMANDA.

(Turning their heads back downstage.) Many.

KATARINA emerges from the group as she says, "And." The others fade from focus, as KATARINA claims the focal point.

KATARINA: And it makes me not want to leave my room. I mean, seriously and for-very-totally-real, having a giant poster of a pale pink unicorn with a 3-D rainbow horn is the kind of thing that makes a person not want to leave her room. If the people who are in charge of prisons were looking for a way to keep people in solitary confinement without them getting upset about being solitarily confined, they should put giant posters of pale pink unicorns with 3-D rainbow horns on the walls of the rooms they keep the prisoners in. Seriously and for-very-totally-real.

BRADY: *(Touches KATARINA as he says.)* And you can't argue with how it's supposed to be.

RACHEL: *(Touches BRADY as she says.)* And what's at stake is serious.

RACHEL, BRADY, and KATARINA are all clustered together, in physical contact with each other. MAYA moves into the cluster.

MAYA, RACHEL, BRADY, and KATARINA: And I had a moment of clarity.

RACHEL, BRADY, and KATARINA fade upstage.

MAYA: I would be a very bad lifeguard. I wouldn't want to get up in the lifeguard chair, in the first place, because it's up too high. No chair should be perched at the top of what is, essentially, a ladder. But, if I did climb up the ladder and sit in the chair, I wouldn't want to get down just because some little girl was swimming in the deep end and got scared and started hyperventilating and going under water and breathing in the water and gagging and choking on the water and screaming – when she wasn't underwater. She shouldn't have been in the deep end in the first place. Where are her parents? Why didn't they teach her that little girls who can't swim very well have no place in the deep end. You shouldn't really be in the pool at all till you know how to swim well enough to save yourself, if something happens like when a big kid does a cannonball and lands on your head and you get knocked under the water. If that happens – regardless of whether or not your head gets wedged in the big kid's butt – you are on your own. You can't count on the lifeguard to save you. At the most, the lifeguard will blow a whistle at you and yell, "Stop horsing around in the pool," but that's it. That's all the intervention you can count on. And you wouldn't hear the whistle, anyway, because your head – and your ears, because they're attached to your head – would be underwater. And, even if you did hear the whistle and the, "Stop horsing around in the pool," you'd probably wonder how a horse got in the pool. Horses shouldn't be allowed in pools. Not even the little miniature ones. And while you were thinking about horses and pools, it might occur to you that "horsing around" is an expression that doesn't really have anything to do with horses, unless the first person to use it was yelling at actual horses that were being all boisterous. (*A tangent.*) I wonder if "boisterous" is boisterous because it's how boys behave when a bunch of them get together. (*Getting back on track.*) And, despite the horses and boys, you'd still be on your own in the pool, so you better learn how to swim. Which is good advice that I should have followed myself. Because, then, I could swim. And I think lifeguards have to know how to swim before they can get the lifeguard job. I'm assuming there's some kind of test involved. Like the boss of the pool throws a kid in the deep end and the potential lifeguards have to jump in and swim to the kid and save it. *It* being the kid.

Though, they probably use mannequins or dummies instead of throwing real kids in the pool. Otherwise, the bottom of the pool would be filled with kids that the wannabe-lifeguards didn't get to in time or didn't know how to save. And that would be depressing. For people in the pool and for the lifeguards who actually got the job and had to look at the pool with the deep end full of bodies, which would probably look even more disturbing from way up on the ladder-perched lifeguard chair. So, no, I wouldn't be a very good lifeguard. I wouldn't even be a mediocre lifeguard. I would not be a good guardian of life in any situation. And I willingly admit that.

BRADY touches MAYA as he says, "And". MAYA shifts away from focus, as BRADY shifts into the focal position.

BRADY: And you don't hear any of the girls complaining.
Complaining is a sign of weakness.

RACHEL touches BRADY as she says "And". BRADY shifts away from focus, as RACHEL shifts into the focal position.

RACHEL: And it doesn't help to make anything better. Complaining is just words mixed with attitude. Actions make a difference. Actions can change a situation from bad to good. Unless the situation you're in is so bad that even the best actions won't make a difference. And, then, you're left feeling even worse than you did before, because you know you can't make a difference. You start to think that nobody can make a difference. And you're scared. Because actions are supposed to speak louder than words, but the words are being screamed at you, so loudly. And somebody else's eyes start looking out from inside your head.

LIAM touches RACHEL as he says, "And." RACHEL shifts away from focus, as LIAM shifts into the focal position.

LIAM: And I'll protect you. Always. I will always protect you. I can't think of anything that would be more important to me than protecting you. Looking after you. Making sure you're okay. And safe. Always. I got a fortune in a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant – which is pretty much the only place you can get a fortune – and it said, “You are the guardian of everything good and true.” I put it in my pocket. (*Clarifying.*) The fortune, not the cookie. And I didn't think about it, again, till I reached my hand in my pocket about five hours later and found the fortune. To be honest, when I said I got the fortune in a cookie at a Chinese restaurant, I was just guessing that that's what happened. I don't remember going to a Chinese restaurant, so I couldn't remember getting a fortune in a cookie or putting the fortune in my pocket. But that's where the fortune was – in my pocket, so I put the pieces of the puzzle together. I have to do that a lot. Put pieces of the puzzle together to figure out how things happened and when they happened and if they really happened to me or if I'm just getting the leftovers of somebody else's life. So I have to make it feel like it's mine. Like the pieces are mine. (*A simple fact.*) Finding a cash register receipt in my pocket can answer a lot of questions. It triggers some new questions, too, but I prefer to focus on the questions it's answering, not the questions I didn't know I should be asking. Finding the fortune gave me a purpose more than it provided information. “You are the guardian of everything good and true.” That's a major, serious, momentous piece of purpose. I am the guardian of everything good and true. At the moment, I'm choosing not to focus on the “everything” part of it. “Everything” is pretty overwhelming. So, in my mind – while it *is* my mind – I am the guardian of good and true. Just guardian... good... and true.

As AMANDA moves downstage, the others move to the sides and behind her. They've been blocking the audience's view of her but, now, they give way to her moving into focus.

AMANDA: You take the good with the bad. It's not like you get a choice. You take what comes your way and you work with it. You do your best with it. And I do. Between the blanks... The missing pages – the sections that've been cut out or were never there. I try to fill in the blanks... The holes in my memory. (*A confession, of sorts.*) I disappear... It's like being asleep when you're not asleep. And I wake up in the strangest places. I find myself in a parking lot and don't remember driving there. I look in the mirror and see myself in clothes I never bought. And I see other people's eyes inside my head, looking back at me in the mirror. It wasn't always this way. I used to only see my own eyes looking back at me. And I didn't have any holes in my memory. (*A transitional beat.*) But always isn't ever always. And forever can end in a heartbeat.

ALL EXCEPT AMANDA: (*Simulate a heartbeat, by chanting.*) "buh-BUM... buh-BUM... buh-BUM." (*Softly underneath AMANDA'S next set of lines.*)

AMANDA: Sometimes, my head feels heavy, like I have a cold and I've taken a double dose of Nyquil. Like my head is filled with soggy cotton balls. Or thick gray fog that's hard to move through. And, then, what I see... starts to change. It's like I'm inside the house – *my* house – and then, in the blink of an eye, it's like I'm in a car, backing out of the driveway, but I can see myself looking out of a window. I see myself looking at me.

KADE moves behind AMANDA, faces away from the audience. AMANDA, as if drifting away.

I see myself looking at me.

The heartbeat chant stops. AMANDA and KADE take a breath, inhaling in unison. The next two lines are spoken simultaneously.

AMANDA: And the *house* gets farther away... Like the driveway is a mile long, and I'm at the end of it.

KADE: And the *car* gets farther away... Like the driveway is a mile long, and she's at the end of it.

AMANDA and KADE take a breath, inhaling in unison. The next two lines are spoken simultaneously.

AMANDA: And I can't see myself in the window.

KADE: And I can't see her... from the window.

AMANDA and KADE take a breath, inhaling in unison. The next two lines are spoken simultaneously.

AMANDA: I disappear.

KADE: She disappears.

A beat.

MAYA, RACHEL, BRADY, RANDALL, LIAM and KATARINA: Bye-bye.

KADE touches AMANDA as he says, "And." AMANDA turns away from downstage, but doesn't fade upstage. KADE faces downstage, as he continues.

KADE: And I wait till it's quiet. Till I'm sure she's gone and nobody else is going to take over. And I kind of tiptoe forward to take my turn. I don't want to disturb anybody. Some of the others scare me. I don't think that's bad. Fear is something I'm aware of. Everybody should be. It's like a fire alarm for your mind and body. It lets you know when something is wrong... Or might be wrong... And it lets you know that, so you can do something to stay safe – to protect yourself. But, just when I'm feeling okay – like everything is going to be quiet and safe and happy, somebody takes me somewhere. (*Clarifying.*) Somebody outside, *not* somebody *inside*... And I go along, because I don't have a choice. Or, maybe, because I'm afraid to say "no" or to disagree. You can't be invisible when people are mad at you. You can't be invisible when you most need to be invisible. That's the downside of invisibility. (*Pause.*) And so I go. Wherever they take me. But I pretend that I'm not there – hoping that, if they look in my eyes, they see her and not me.

ALL EXCEPT AMANDA: And a lot of people are fooled by that.

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