

LIVING A REAL LIFE

By Dennis Bush

Copyright © 2016 by Dennis Bush, All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-60003-920-1

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers LLC. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers LLC.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this Work must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this Work. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this Work is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers LLC.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers LLC.

BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (888) 473-8521 • FAX (319) 368-8011

LIVING A REAL LIFE

*A Collection of 16 Memorable Monologues for
Auditions, Competitions and Showcases*

By Dennis Bush

SYNOPSIS: How do we choose to live our lives? What baggage do we bring to our relationships and to the situations in which we find ourselves? In *Living A Real Life*, sixteen compelling characters confront their fears, anger, paranoia and pain. They take audiences on a journey filled with hilarity and heartbreak. As a collection presented as a showcase or evening of theatre, or as individual pieces performed in competitions or for auditions, the monologues in *Living A Real Life* will be thought-provoking and memorable.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1-8 females, 1-5 males, 0-3 either; gender flexible, doubling possible)

Monologues for young women:

MELODY (f)	20, knows important things.
HOPE (f)	25, speaks her truth to another young woman.
AMY (f)	Mid-30's, lashes out, after her daughter is kidnapped.
ELLEN (f)	21, explores her pain and rage.
KATARINA (f)	13, understands accidents.
MAYA (f)	21, can't save anyone, including herself.
AMANDA (f)	26, struggles to explain what's happening inside her head.
RACHEL (f)	19, tries to put the pieces of her life together.

Monologues for young men:

KADE (m)	17, wants to be invisible.
BLAINE (m)	18, takes a man step.
RANDALL (m)	22, loses control.
JOE (m)	18, recounts an encounter with a stranger and the power of his own fear and prejudice.

EMMETT (m)..... 17, abandoned by his father,
feels disconnected from
everyone and everything.

Monologues for young women or young men:

LIAM/LEAH (m/f) 18, finds his (or her) purpose
inside a fortune cookie.

CANDACE/CAMERON (m/f) 19, has done her (or his)
research.

AIDAN/AIDA (m/f) 23, talks to a friend who's
struggling with fear and
uncertainty.

DURATION: 60 minutes

LIST OF INDIVIDUAL MONOLOGUES

Monologues for young women:

No Place Like Home

Capacity for Joy

Like It's Your Fault

Do It Yourself

A Kind of Blue

The Deep End

Disappearing

Trying to Solve the Puzzle

Monologues for young men:

Wherever They Take Me

Four Letter Words

Weakness Gives Way to Strength

In the Dark

Living Where People Don't Care

Monologues for young women or young men:

The Guardian of Good and True

Programmed

Being the Miracle

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Living A Real Life is a collection of monologues, each set in a different time and place. The monologues (individually or as a collection) can be performed on a bare stage or with very limited set pieces. Only minimal costuming is needed to suggest the characters. Directors are free to arrange the order of the monologues, as they choose, and may opt to cast one performer per monologue or have fewer actors perform multiple roles. There is also gender flexibility, as indicated, with some of the pieces.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The monologues in this collection may be presented as a complete play or as individual performance pieces. Directors are free to arrange the order of the monologues, as they choose, and may opt to cast one performer per monologue or have fewer actors perform multiple roles. There is also gender flexibility, as indicated, with some of the pieces. The collection includes 16 monologues (8 female, 5 male, and 3 for either male or female) excerpted from Dennis Bush's plays, *...and others*, *Golden Gone* and *Treasure*, in addition to pieces written for individual showcase performances. All the plays from which these monologues have been selected have had readings, workshops, and full productions, including performances in New York City.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Original performers included Elena Conti, Hailey Araza, Autumn Marinello, Alexis Ghigo, Monica Ramirez, Maria Petovic, A.J. Katek, Blake Karnes, Tristan Campbell, Quintin Shepard, Logan Umbanhowar and Wayne Ly.

MONOLOGUES FOR YOUNG WOMEN**No Place Like Home**

MELODY (f) 20, knows important things.

MELODY: It's not my fault if people are stupid. It's not my fault if they believe there's no place like home. It's that kind of thinking that keeps people from exploring the world or questioning the reasons they think the things they think and do the things they do. It's what keeps them from knowing the truth. It's what keeps them from living a real life instead of being satisfied with a tiny, pathetic existence. *I am living a real life. And you can, too. But you have to un-click your heels. It's like when Glinda tells Dorothy to click her heels three times and say, "There's no place like home," except it's the opposite and you don't have to say anything. (She stands up and demonstrates.)* You start with your heels together – but not touching. And, then, you un-click them once... twice... three times. And you imagine yourself in an amazing place, surrounded by exciting people like the ones you see on the news on TV. And you think, "I know things. Important things." And I'm living a real life. *(Quick pause; defensive.) I am. (With no room for doubt.)* I am living a real life. *In here.* My parents put me in here when I was 12, because they said they couldn't handle me. They said they were afraid. I don't think they wanted to be parents in the first place. They weren't good at it. I know enough to know that. They said I was too mature for my age – that it was like I was 21 instead of 12. My precociousness unnerved them. I think they felt intellectually threatened. And after I wrote the story about setting the kitchen on fire, my teacher had a meeting with my parents and one thing led to another, and here I am. *(A quick pause; indignant.)* It was just a story. The teacher said, "Write about something helpful you could do at home." So, I wrote a story about a 12-year-old girl who happened to have the same name as me. In the story, the girl took the lighter fluid her dad used for the grill on the patio and she sprayed it all over the kitchen and set it on fire. The cabinets burned up and the refrigerator and stove kind of melted. Nobody got hurt. And the parents in the story were grateful that the 12-year-old girl

named Melody did them a big favor and gutted their ugly kitchen. It was *just a story*. I didn't actually set the kitchen on fire. It was a design suggestion, not a plan of action. The appliances were avocado-colored. And the cabinets were all rickety and hideous. So, making changes – by whatever means – would have been *helpful*, which was what we were supposed to write about! But my parents didn't see it that way. And they got doctors to say that I was "a threat to myself... and others." Because of a *story!* And they convinced a judge to sign papers that got me put away in here. Judges don't always listen to parents, but they listen to doctors. So here I am... It was only supposed to be till I was 18, but I chewed off a nurse's finger, last year, so now I have to wait till I'm 21. Or maybe I chewed off my own finger... Or maybe I watched a finger getting chewed off in a movie and there's another reason I have to stay in here till I'm 21. Which is only a few weeks away. So, if I don't chew anybody's fingers off or write about burning up anybody's kitchen, I'll get out... In the meantime, I keep very busy. I watch a lot of TV. (*A beat; then, with no emotion.*) There's no place like home.

Capacity for Joy

HOPE (f) 25, speaks her truth to another young woman.

HOPE: As we were walking into the restaurant, my boyfriend said he left his phone in the car. And he looked at me like I was supposed to instinctively know that I should go get it. When I kept following the hostess to the table, he touched my arm and asked, "Are you going to my phone? In my head, I thought, "Get your own phone. You're the one who left it in the car, so you should be the one to go get it." But I didn't say that. Not to him. I'd never say that to him. I went and got his phone. And, even if there hadn't been a text from another woman clearly visible without having to search through his messages, I would still have decided that that was the last time I'd ever fetch his phone or anything else. (*A beat.*) When we met, Marc was so sweet and kind. I wasn't used to that. He took me to nice places and introduced me to his friends and co-workers. It's like he was proud of me – like he wanted to show me off to people. Nobody had ever treated me that way. I felt so lucky to be his girlfriend. I actually sent him a card for our three-month anniversary that said, "Thank you for letting me be your girlfriend." And I meant it. But that night, at the restaurant, I wasn't feeling so grateful. I was pretty much halfway to a full-scale panic attack. Every step I took toward the table got harder and harder to take. It was like my legs got heavier and heavier. I looked at Marc – his face hidden by the menu he was holding – and I wanted to turn around and run out of the restaurant. (*She begins to cry.*) But I couldn't. Besides the fact that my legs felt like they weighed a thousand pounds, I knew that running away would just delay the inevitable. Breaking up with Marc wasn't the inevitable. (*Wiping away the tears, as her understanding and resolve grows.*) Facing a future that was weighed down by my past was what I needed to do. Right then. And right now. I read once that a person's capacity for joy should be twice as big as the amount of chaos and pain they have to deal with. If that's true, then, my capacity for joy should be immeasurable. It isn't yet, but it should be. Shouldn't we all have an immeasurable capacity for joy? But

for me to do that, I need to have a boundless capacity for valuing myself and acknowledging what I bring to the world. I have to believe that the me I see reflected in the eyes of the people who love me, should be the me that I see when I look in the mirror. I have to know that, just like they say in the safety briefing on an airplane, you have to put on your own oxygen mask before helping someone else. I have to make sure that I take care of myself before I try to take care of other people. That's not easy to do. I struggle with feeling selfish, when I put myself first. But I have to do it. I have to. *(A pause, as a smile crosses her face.)* I'm going to be the best version of myself that I can be. And I'm going to have an immeasurable capacity for joy.

Do Not Copy

Like It's Your Fault

AMY (f)..... Mid-30's, lashes out, after her daughter is kidnapped.

AMY: People look at you like you're a failure when your daughter gets kidnapped. Even the police treat you like it's your fault. My husband and I were *questioned*. Like *suspects*. Like we'd done something wrong. (*Angrily.*) We didn't do anything wrong! We were asleep and, when we woke up, she was gone. It was like the sunshine went out of my life. When she was born, I looked at her and thought, "She's special." She had gold flecks in her eyes and her hair was light brown with golden highlights – like they'd been done at a salon. (*Letting the memory wash over her.*) She was beautiful... perfect. So you can understand why she was so special. You can understand why she was my favorite. Parents shouldn't be investigated when their child goes missing. The police shouldn't waste their time questioning people who didn't do anything wrong. They should be out looking for the people who kidnapped the child. *My child.* And they shouldn't have gotten annoyed when I pointed that out to them. If anyone had a right to get annoyed, it was me! Don't tell me that, without a ransom note or communication from the kidnapers, it's not a kidnapping. And don't call it an alleged kidnapping. It's not alleged. I know what I know. And I know my daughter didn't run away. She wouldn't have. And nothing the police said or did was going to change that.

Do It Yourself

ELLEN (f)..... 21, explores her pain and rage.

ELLEN: You can learn a lot of stuff about yourself when you spend a lot of time alone. You have to think deep thoughts – you have to *reflect* on yourself and what's happened to you in your life, if you expect to learn anything worthwhile about yourself. (*Quick pause; switch to more upbeat energy.*) And the stuff you don't know, you can learn about from DIY videos on YouTube. DIY means Do It Yourself, if you didn't know that. And, if you've only watched the videos of people singing at you or seen the stupid videos my mom has posted, you may not know about DIY. But, now, you do... Sometimes, I make my own videos. They're spoken-word poetry, but I post them like they're DIY videos, because watching somebody explore their pain and rage can teach you how to do that yourself. You have to do it yourself. You have to find the message that's meant for you. You have to sort through all the millions of videos with all their messages and you have to find the one that's meant for you and you have to listen to it. And then do it... Yourself. (*A beat.*) I'm special... Not more special than anyone else – just special enough to be noticed. And special enough for the people who notice me to think that I'm *special*, which is way better than them thinking that I'm odd or ugly or disgusting. When people notice you, you can't control what they think of you or if they spend any actual time thinking of you. You can't know if they think you're special. You can hope, but you can't know for sure. I. Am. Special. If you – Y - O - U, not just capital U – believe it, then I'll believe it. So, believe it.

A Kind of Blue

KATARINA (f) 13, understands accidents.

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... (*She gasps.*) 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!

The Deep End

MAYA (f) 21, can't save anyone, including herself.

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.

Disappearing

AMANDA (f)..... 26, struggles to explain what's happening inside her head.

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. 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. (*As if drifting away.*) I see myself looking at me. And the house gets farther away... Like the driveway is a mile long, and I'm at the end of it. And I can't see myself in the window... I disappear.

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from LIVING A REAL LIFE by Dennis Bush. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011

www.brookpub.com