

Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da, Life Goes On
A drama for teens
By Claudia Haas
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CAST: 4 (any gender, any race, welcomes actors with disability)
(Cast is anywhere from 14-17; Drew is the youngest)
Robin – grieving loss of grandmother
Casey – grieving loss of Roxy, their dog
Sam – grieving because his mother left them
Drew – grieving loss of childhood teddy bear

(LIGHTS UP on four teens – scattered onstage as blocked by the director.
THEY speak directly to the audience and do not acknowledge each other until the end.)

ROBIN

Don't tell me she was old. I know that. Or it was "her time." Or she's "in a better place." I don't want to hear any of those things.

CASEY

There's a photo of me with Roxy on the day I came home from the hospital. I was all bundled up and Roxy was sniffing me and you can see my father's hand by her snout – just in case Roxy did something unexpected. But she didn't. Roxy always protected me. From the day I was born.

SAM

I know she's still alive. But she's not here. We don't know where she is right now. But we know she's not here.

DREW

Francois. I don't know how we settled on that name. But that's what I called him. I never called him "Teddy" for short. Francois was bigger than life – meaning he was there for all the big things. My mother sneaked him into the hospital after I had my tonsils out even though the nurses said, "No. He's full of germs."

ROBIN

My mom keeps telling me stuff bout heaven and how Grandma's there watching over me. What does that mean? Is she in the sky? She can't sit on a cloud, right? Because clouds disappear and she would fall down.

CASEY

There's this thing called "The Rainbow Bridge" and Dad says that Roxy crossed that bridge and is in a better place. He called it "Dog Heaven." They say dogs can't go to heaven. If that's true, then I don't want to go to heaven either. I'd rather cross over The Rainbow Bridge.

SAM

I ask Dad about Mom. But he has no answers. But I don't believe him. He must know why Mom left, right? People don't just "leave," do they?

DREW

Francois was really helpful when my parents came home with my little sister. He told me that she would become my best friend. (Beat.) I'm still working on that.

ROBIN

Grandma told me she had a bad heart. That made sense because she loved so many people and when you love a lot, maybe your heart gets bigger and bigger...

CASEY

When I come home from school, I still expect Roxy to be there and then I get teary-eyed when I realize all over again that those days are over.

SAM

Every time the phone rings, I jump. Is that Mom? It never is.

DREW

Last year, my mother said that I was getting too old for Francois. That teens don't sleep with their teddy bear. I asked her, "Where is that written?" "Is it in the Constitution" or in "The Bible?" She had no answer.

ROBIN

I think Grandma was preparing me for this when she told me about her heart. But you can't prepare anyone for this, can you? She told me that after she died she would visit me and tell me how things were going.

CASEY

Last night I was in bed just thinking about Roxy. I heard a gentle "thump thump." It sounded exactly like a tail wagging. It sounded exactly like Roxy when she was laying down and wagging her tail.

SAM

My sisters and I spend a lot of time looking out the living room window searching to see if Mom was coming back. Dad told us we were wasting our time. He even told us to go watch TV! That was a first.

DREW

We stayed at this cabin and it was great – really fun. But it's a long ways away and we left super early in the morning to get back home. I fell asleep in the back and when I woke up, I realized I didn't have Francois with me. I had grabbed a pillow instead. I told Mom to turn around and go back to the cabin. Francois would be waiting for me. She said it was too late but she would call the owners and have them mail Francois to me.

ROBIN

Grandma hasn't visited me yet. I'm not sure I want her to. I mean, yes, I would love to talk to her and feel her arms around me again. But if she visited – does that mean she's a ghost? I don't want Grandma to be a ghost. I don't think ghosts are happy. I want Grandma to be happy - wherever she is. (Beat.) And I really don't want ghost arms hugging me.

CASEY

Dad said that the thumping I heard was a tree branch against the window – not Roxy. (Beat.) It's possible.

SAM

It's been two weeks. Sometimes I go into my parent's bedroom. Some of her clothes are still there. I think I saw her wedding ring on a tray with her other jewelry. I'm not sure. I didn't stay too long. I had the feeling I wasn't supposed to be there.

DREW

When we called the resort, the owner said the cabin had already been cleaned and there was no sign of a teddy bear. My mom said it was probably for the best and I began to get suspicious. Did she plan this? Who would separate a kid from their teddy bear?

ROBIN

Mom said that she dreamed of Grandma last night and Grandma was fine. Is that what Grandma meant when she said she would visit? It's better than being a ghost.

CASEY

There's a photo of me on my tenth birthday hugging Roxy. It's turned down on my dresser. I can't look at it right now.

SAM

I was in my bedroom and I heard the TV on really loud. Louder than it's ever been so I went downstairs to see what was going on. My Dad was there. But he wasn't watching the TV. He was crying. I sneaked away.

DREW

I made up a story in my mind that whoever cleaned the cabin, saw Francois and took him home. Maybe even washed it. And then gave it to a child. I'd like to think that Francois is safe in someone's arms. I hope he doesn't miss me too much.

ROBIN

My mom and I looked at old photos of Grandma on her wedding day. I never really knew my grandfather. But the photos made me happy. She was smiling and laughing – she was even flashing the “peace” sign. Maybe she's with my grandfather now. Maybe she's smiling and laughing. Or are these little white lies we tell each other to feel better?

CASEY

Roxy was cremated and buried in our backyard. Everyone helped dig. Everyone cried. It's in a sunny spot and we're going to plant flowers there – the kind that come back every year. We'll put a sign on the mound saying something like, "Roxy, Forever." I like the word "forever." But I'm not sure I believe that word is ever true. But still, I like it and the word helps.

SAM

I'm still waiting. Will I ever know why she left? Will she ever come back? I think about time and how there's a lot of time ahead of me. And one day, I will know. One day, there will be answers. It helps me when I tell myself that. But I still look out the living room window searching for her.

DREW

I saw a Teddy Bear in the window of a toy store. I thought about buying it but then felt guilty about trying to replace Francois. No bear can replace him. But still, is there anything wrong with giving a new Teddy Bear a new home?

ROBIN

The sun was shining today. The TV morning news told everyone to go outside and enjoy the warmth.

(THE ACTORS finally look at one another.)

They say that life goes on.

CASEY

But I'm not ready to hear that.

SAM

Not today.

DREW

Maybe tomorrow.

ROBIN

Maybe.

END OF PLAY/BLACKOUT