

# **Our Friends! In Good Times & Bad**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

**A Collections of Stories and a Play  
About Friendship and Pets and How  
they Bring Relationships Together.**

**By Alix Babiak**

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***INSPIRED BY***  
***BARRY ALLAN BABIAK***  
***&***  
***THE LITTLE PEOPLE***  
***&***  
***THEIR CATS & DOGS***

**PREFACE**

Went for a bike ride to the Park  
Only a Child was I  
Saw another Child Swinging on the Swing  
Had to be Home Before Dark  
The Child was Swinging Too High

**I said “Stop”  
The Child slowed down  
I said “I’ll be a Friend to You,  
Will You be A friend of Mine**

**We talked of Chocolate Bars  
Which We Shared  
We talked of Our Favorite Toys  
We talked About going On the Turning Wheel  
Ran to It  
Danced with Glee  
I said “I’ll be a Friend to You,  
Will You be A Friend of Mine**

***The writing of Our Friends! In Good Times and Bad . . . bring fond memories like the above. I hope this book does the same for you.***

## **ME, YOU, BOOSHA & THE LITTLE PEOPLE**

**© Alix Babiak, January 29, 2019**

**I was off the bus, walking down a beautiful street and visiting my friend. I saw two beautiful blonde haired little people and running up to me was a beautiful Alaskan Husky with a little bit of Wolf. The dog was wagging her tail,**

so I wasn't scared at all. Thus the story of Me, You, Boosha & the Little People. It was the start of the greatest thing that happened in my life.

My moments and memories of Boosha are many and I don't know where to start. There was Christmas, where the two little people would count down with their parent when it was time to open the Christmas Presents. The parent turned out to be my friend, then I was the live in, then I was the partner and now the spouse. Back to Christmas that first year as the live in, Boosha and I were on the couch watching and then the countdown would begin. You know 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. You wouldn't believe these mad humans in these two little people. The wrapping went flying. They opened up my gift of Bugs Bunny slippers. They tried them on and with phony smiles said they really liked them. Then they went back to their work of being crazed mad humans, opening more male gifts like BB guns. I have never had the biggest smile as I had then that day. I was welcomed into this very happy family of a parent, his dog and two little people, who had the biggest hearts in the world.

Now what was there about Boosha? (Boo) Boosha was very choosy of who she liked. Definitely, Boosha didn't like Vets. Everytime the we took Boosha to the Vet, it just wasn't good. While waiting at the Vet, Boosha would nip everyone there. It didn't matter what you looked like . . . young or old, animal or human or just minding your own business. Well, by the time Boosha met the Vet, she ran around the examining room, snarling and freaking out, while the Vet was trying to catch her. I don't think anyone heard of sedation, not even the Vet. Maybe, the Vet just couldn't catch her. Thank you Boosha for liking me and being such a Pal for 11 years and keeping my friendship with my Friend, now spouse for so many years.

I used to sit in the kitchen with Boosha underneath the table. What I listened to on the radio was the talk of the town. A rebellious radio station that got into trouble for cutting down the Mayor who was Gay. For entertainment sake, I listened to Dr. Joy Brown in the evening. Well, in the living room was my

partner in crime and the little, now bigger people. One little person was sitting on a chair and the other little person was lying on his parent's stomach. I would check in once in awhile and this might sound kind of weird to you, but again it was one of the most beautiful sites to see. They were filled with laughter at

another gory horror flick they were watching. They used to get a kick of hands, just hands, coming alive (among other things). Again a little warped.

One day, Boosha escaped. Boosha's hormones were acting up. Boosha was gone for quite awhile. My friend went looking everywhere for Boosha and caught Boosha with another male dog. (Really another dog that was really interested in Boosha) Well, the long and the short of it, was that Boosha had the most beautiful puppies and was the greatest Parent. The puppies were given away.

I woke up one morning with spots all over my stomach and it was kind of itchy. Well, my live in started washing everything because one doctor told me it was scabies. So I decided to go to a Specialist and the Specialist asked me if I had pets. The Specialist came to the conclusion that I just had fleas. No matter what, my live in kept washing everything (you know the couch, the bed, the carpet, sheets, walls) and when I say everything, I mean everything. Well, there are a lot of memories of Boosha in our first home. Me, You & A Dog Named Boosha and the Little People who are still my very best friends.

One day at the end of October, when the leaves were off the trees and winter was brewing, my partner now and I decided to go camping. Why Not? So we drove South to our favorite Campground and to our surprise, found out it was closed. Boosha, in the back seat of the car was being very patient. Did we turn back? No! My partner, my past friend and now spouse, was adamant that we were going camping. I was just the passenger. So we drove to a gas station, where we sort of knew the owner. Seemed like a really nice person. So, I sat in the car and waited and waited while my fiancé went in to talk to that really nice person. In front of me, a big German Shepherd was staring at me and Boosha from the back of a truck. Well, Boosha and I waited in fear.

Eventually, my partner walked out of the gas station and I thought he was just being friendly. He was with a seedy looking little man who hopped into the truck with the big German Shepherd. My partner said we are following this truck. You should have seen the look on my face. More fear for Boosha and I. I just said O.K. but I thought to myself, you've gotta be kidding!

That seedy looking little person turned out to be a wonderful person. The person owned a campsite and had total control over that German Shepherd. Shame on me. It was just City Thinking and Fear. The person gave us a really

nice campsite, brought us firewood and turned into a life long friend of my spouse. We stayed at that campsite for a number of years. Boosha loved it and so did I.

One day, in the summer, I decided to take Boosha for a walk. My husband was taking a break and just relaxing on the hammock. The walk forward on the path was clear sailing. The way back was quite different. I didn't know our neighbors had a Great Dane. (a very large dog). Well, the Great Dane came running towards Boosha and I snarling. Boosha, the brave soul, started snarling back. I was in fear for both our lives. I started screaming at our neighbour, while Boosha for an instant, fell on the back and just took off. Luckily, our neighbour took control of the dog. I walked back to our campsite and there was Boosha and my partner. He was laughing and I wanted to kill. As soon as my friend started laughing, however, my heart stopped pounding. My friend said he could hear me screaming for miles.

There were many nights my partner and I sat with Boosha by the fire. We were always filled with laughter and amazed by all the magic of the night, even the tornadoes. A common joke we had was that my partner was the Dork, I was the Dorkess and we had a Dork Dog. We were always very happy that way.

From our friend at the Gas Station, we heard about a place for sale down the road by the river. We went down to see the property and as I walked down the hill, I saw the home of my dreams. It was autumn and as we went down by the river, the changing leaves floated down. We bought the property and never looked back.

We roughed it for a long time, in a cabin with a wood stove. The story that was the funniest, but scariest was the raccoon problem. Now there was a hole in the roof of the cabin and at the time I was working in the city. You see, a baby raccoon fell out the hole right in front of my partner's eyes while watching T.V. My partner grabbed the baby raccoon and took it outside and started getting chased by the Parent raccoon. Boosha, the hero, went between my fiancé and the Parent raccoon. Luckily Boosha was able to chase the raccoon up

a tree. Really, there is nothing funny about that story. It is just the way my partner decribed it: "Big Raccoon Problem" I got my Gun!" Boosha saved the day. Nobody really liked Boosha because of the Wolf in her, but I loved her and so did my fiancé and the little people.

Then the flood came and washed away our cabin. We didn't have a home for about a month. Then we moved up the hill to a Trailer, while down the hill by the river our place was being flood-proofed and a Mobile Home was put on the property. We still live here as partners and the little people were all grown up. Boosha loved this doggie Disneyland, thought baby rabbits were her puppies, made friends with our neighbour's dogs and grew very old. I knew she didn't have long in this world. It was winter and Boosha fell on all fours. She wouldn't get up. Then a miracle happened. She got up, ran down to my fiance's arms and went to doggie heaven.

So that is the story of Me, You, Boosha & The Little People. She was my favorite dog and kept all of us together. That dog saved my life, just for being Boo. Merry Christmas to you all and let memories like these keep you going through good and bad times.

**THE STORY OF BUSTER**  
**(BUDDY BUSTER)**

Boosha died and we grieved (well, we will be grieving forever). It was about two months after the death of Boosha that we went to the Humane Society just

to check out puppies and adult dogs. What a sad place it is. First we went to the Adult Dogs and found a lot of German Shepherd Crosses (Are they busy those German Shepherds). Then we went to see the Puppies. There was this Chow Chow Cross that was about 3 months old that I had my eyes on. My partner had his eye on the most depressed dog there. In a cage, there was this tail hanging out and you had to take a really good look inside to see an eight week old Black Lab Puppy . . . just hiding. My partner put the puppy in my arms and I said “Nothing bad is ever going to happen to you again”. We took Buster home.

We were told that Buster was found on the corner of McPhillips and Mountain in Winnipeg, Canada in the middle of winter . . . frost bitten, cold and scared. He was just a black bundle of fur. Buster turned out to be a disabled dog. EPILEPSY. For three years, Buster grew and enjoyed his life in doggie Disneyland. . . our home. Buster could swim (even catch a fish), eat whatever Buster wanted, had lots of room to run and play frisbie, had a bedroom (which Buster inherited from our children who are all grown up now) and had his own chair. Buster had his dog friends from up the hill, but Buster was a loner and only played with them when Buster felt like it.

Buster deserved his life because Buster was a very gentle, friendly, loyal and just a very good dog. We didn't realize that Buster would get so big. However, grew into a very magnificent looking dog. Even if Buster was seizing, but even when not, we tried to give Buster the best life ever. When Buster stopped playing frisbie, we knew the dog had enough. So Buster went to meet Boosha in Doggie Heaven. A good Vet kept trying to save Buster, but lost that battle. So did we. Thus the sad Story of Buster or Buddy Buster.

### THE STORY OF BUDDY

Well, Buster went to Doggie Heaven and our house was empty. We wanted another puppy . . . One day, we were having breakfast at Chicken Chef and the people next to us said they knew someone that was selling Black Lab Mix (mostly Lab) puppies. We went to St. Pierre Jolys, Manitoba, looked at all these

puppies and their parent. The owner put one of these puppies in my arms with a smile on. The puppy was only six weeks old. Too young to be taken away from his parent. Well, we took the puppy (Buddy) and the puppy had a problem. Buddy was uncontrollable and had a biting problem. You know those darn behavior problems. As soon as we put Buddy down in the house, let's say, as soon as I sat down, the puppy started biting my head. Of course, after he was finished with me, Buddy tore the place apart. No wonder the owner had a smile on.

This went on for about 6 months. I tried calling everyone about it. When I went to work in the morning. The scene was, myself standing at the kitchen counter with coffee, not able to sit down, and soup bones were one of the answers to the problem. Buddy would be chewing on a soup bone we got from the local butcher. I tried calling the Vet, the Vet's assistant, a dog trainer and the obedient school at the Humane Society. Finally, a dog musher friend of ours told us to use corporal punishment. My partner only had to do it once and I really couldn't look. To our surprise, Buddy transformed in the gentlest, trustworthy and friendly dog. Buddy was just a good dog, like Buster, that there ever was.

Sable (an Alaskan Husky), our neighbours dog grabbed Buddy around the head when Buddy was just eight weeks. We thought Buddy was a gonner and has scares on the nose for life. However, Sable became Buddy's best friend. They used to run all over, across the river, walk down the road and lie together. It was just an amazing thing that Sable would take such good care of Buddy. On a dark, winter evening, Buddy fell through the ice on the river. Sable barked and led Buddy back home and saved Buddy's life. Many blankets were used to wrap Buddy up. Just a cold and frightened pup.

At 6 months and until he died, Buddy was the Hero. He saved and changed my partner's life forever. Alcoholism! A terrible thing. . . Let's just say my partner

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hit rock bottom and kicked alcohol. My partner did this by walking for miles with Buddy. They would be gone all day for many days and how brave were Buddy and my partner.

**That said, Buddy was all that Buster wanted to be. Buddy had a great coat. Buster didn't. Buddy was healthy. Buster was not. Buddy inherited the life that Buster had for a very short time. Buddy waded in the river and if you remember right, Buster was a swimmer. Catching the ball was a Buddy's thing. Not frisbie. The question is, if Buddy was lazy or not. To stand up for Buddy, Buddy could run and walk for miles. He had Buster's old bedroom, Buster's chair and could also eat whatever he wanted. However, Buddy had friends up the hill was not a loner like Buster.**

**Buddy lived this way for nine years. Buddy had bad hips and stopped eating. We had to put him down. I didn't stay for that but sat in the car in tears. Then this black lab beautiful puppy walked into the Vet's office with his owners. Maybe Buddy started a new life . . . that is if you believe in reincarnation. Or that Buddy, from his Doggie Disneyland went to Doggie Heaven. I used to sing to Buddy the following song:**

**Sweet little Buddy  
That's my little Buddy  
Brown Eyes and Floppy Ears  
The sweetest dog  
That's my little Buddy  
Yah, That Buddy was mine.**

**When little Buddy whispered in my ear  
Oh Oh Oh Oh  
I love you Buddy Dear**

**Sweet little Buddy  
That's my little Buddy  
Brown Eyes and Floppy Ears  
The sweetest Dog**

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**That's my little Buddy  
Yah, that little Buddy was mine.**

**THE STORY OF CLEO**

**© ALIX BABIAK JULY 24, 2016**

**WE LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL PLACE. FIRST THERE WERE OUR PETS BOOSHA, THEN BUSTER, THEN BUDDY. NOW WE HAVE CLEO (CLEOPATRA) A CAT. HOW I USED TO HATE CATS. WE HAD TO**

PUT BUDDY DOWN A WHILE AGO. IT WAS A VERY SAD TIME FOR ALL WHO KNEW HIM AND AS I SAT ON MY SWING THERE APPEARED TIGER. TIGER WAS A BEAUTIFUL CAT THAT LITTLE DID I KNOW, BELONGED TO THE NEIGHBORS. TIGER WOULD CRAWL ALL OVER ME AND JUST WANT AFFECTION. YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT I HATE CATS.

I THOUGHT TIGER DIDN'T BELONG TO ANYONE AND WANTED TO KEEP TIGER . SO I KEPT FEEDING TIGER AND YAH, LET HER IN THE HOUSE. TIGER IS THE MOST AFFECTIONATE CAT IN THE WORLD AND DECIDED TO WATCH OVER TIGER. EVEN IN 40 BELOW WEATHER. LITTLE DID I KNOW, TIGER BELONGED TO THE NEIGHBORS UP THE HILL. WHAT A DOWNER THAT WAS. MY PARTNER ASKED THE NEIGHBORS WELL, MY PARTNER HAD THE GUTS TO ASK THEM IF WE COULD KEEP TIGER. BEING THE BEAUTIFUL CAT TIGER IS, THEY WANTED TO KEEP TIGER. SO AS THE STORY GOES ALL HAVOC BEGAN WITH THE STORY OF CLEO.

AROUND FEBRUARY "OH THERE WERE CATS. YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT I HATE CATS. THERE WERE BLACK AND WHITE CATS AND ORANGE CATS AND THEN APPEARED CLEO, A SMALL GREY CAT WITH GOLD MARKINGS. WE THOUGHT SHE WAS 7 MONTHS OLD AND HOW BEAUTIFUL WAS CLEO. THIS POOR LITTLE CAT HAD SPENT THE WINTER OUTSIDE AND AS WE WERE LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW ONE DAY. CLEO WAS SHIVERING AND WERE SURPRISED CLEO WAS ALIVE. AND OH YES : I HATE CATS. WANTED TO LET CLEO IN, YET THERE WAS TIGER UP THE HILL. TURNED OUT TIGER WAS CLEO'S MOTHER AND DIDN'T GET ALONG. TURNED OUT ALSO, CLEO WAS PREGNANT AND ABOUT A YEAR OLD. CLEO EVEN HAD A LITTER BEFORE.

YEP, WE TOOK CLEO IN. AND YAH, I HATE CATS. CLEOPATRA IS CLEO'S NAME AND WHAT A QUEEN CLEO BECAME!

I WOULD ALWAYS BREAK UP FIGHTS BETWEEN CLEO AND TIGER. TIGER JUST BULLIED CLEO AND TORMENTED CLEO. WE HAD FOUR YEARS WITH CLEO. SHE WOULD RUN THROUGH TREES LIKE THE WIND, SLEEP WHEN CLEO WAS FEELING DOWN, SHOW AFFECTION ALL THE TIME. SWEET CLEO MADE ME LOVE CATS. WE EVENTUALLY HAD TO PUT HER DOWN. TIGER WAS NEVER THE SAME, BUT TIGER BECAME QUEEN. IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO FORGIVE TIGER, BUT NOW WE ARE GOOD FRIENDS. I STILL MISS CLEO, BOOSHA, BUDDY AND BUSTER. THERE IS AN EMPTINESS IN HOUSE WITHOUT THEM. YET, CALL IT DOGGIE HEAVEN OR CAT HEAVEN THEY ALL LIVED IN DOGGIE DISNEYLAND AND A CAT'S DREAM FOR A SHORT WHILE. AT LEAST WE GAVE THEM THAT.

### Starting all over Again

© Alix Babiak January 3,2025

Everybody at one point has to start over again in their lives. It is the hardest thing to do.

Sam (Samantha) was seizing, over medicated and dying in hospital. It took a kind doctor to take her off some medication she was on. She was in hospital for 6 months and lost everything. Her Work, the love of her life, her home everything. She was placed in what was called Supportive Housing.

One day, Samantha went for walk through the shopping mall next to her townhouse. She saw a door and it Just about Life Agency and remembered a friend worked there. She paused at the door for a very long time and finally decided to go in. Up the stairs through another door she asked for her friend. Tod was his name and as soon as he saw her his breath was taken away. "Sam" he said. "Come in and have a seat". Sam was very uncomfortable but what Tod said next made her feel better: "I thought you would be pregnant and fat by now". Sam replied "On the contrary Jack and I didn't work out, I have been in Hospital." Tod replies leaning closer to her: "Are you feeling better". "Weak but better." Tod told Sam that he would meet her in the café just beside here tomorrow. She said she would be there with bells on. Samantha smiled and left. (Play the song "You've Got a Friend" by James Taylor. )

When Sam got home she had a phone message from Kelly Services. She replied to the phone call and was starting work the following week. Her first job was at an Arts Council. She walked around with big smile on her face and started getting her resume together. Sam was a Grade 1 Teacher and really would never Teach again.

So the next day she went to meet Tod and Tod did not show. She got home and got a phone message saying Tod was tied up in a meeting and are you available in 2 hours from now. Sure she said to herself. So she walked to that Café and there he was. She sat down and Hi, I got a job with an Arts Council next week. Tod said she going to be great there with her experience working on all those Christmas shows at school. Sam said she was a little nervous, I seizure, you know. Tod looked despairingly "Listen, if ever you seizure and after give me a call. I'll be there in a minute. Sam said, the seizures should go away in time, but you never know. (Play more than You've got a Friend by James Taylor, "You've got a Brother".

The end of Starting All Over Again is the Sam and Tod were married. Had two children and lived in a Beautiful House in the Country. Sam never stopped seizing, but Tod was there every time to hold her close.

## **NOTH'EN BUT A HEARTBREAK**

© Alix Babiak, May 9, 2021

*Choreography notes:*

*Background music to End of the Innocence by Don Henley and two young performers in a shadow upstage right dance and mime to the words below)*

Marshall and Jasmine were 12 years old and went to the same school (Red River Junior High). Marshall stared at Jasmine from the desk next to her. Marshall always distracted Jasmine from her studies.

One day Marshall asked Jasmine to his birthday party where Jasmine was the only female. After the birthday party, Marshall and Jasmine could be seen walking hand in hand down the street, back and forth from school. Every Day, Marshall would buy Jasmine Chocolate Bars and Candy. Yah, there was a pharmacy on the way to school.

Another day, Marshall took a chance and tried to kiss Jasmine. Jasmine pushed him away. Marshall tried to kiss her again and Jasmine slapped him across the face.

After this, Marshall got over all of this and went to Jasmine's door with a beautiful bouquet of yellow roses. This was recommended by Marshall's Parent. Everyone could see the fondness that Jasmine and Marshall had for each other. They were the talk of the town.

Then one day Marshall was not in school and never to be seen with Jasmine again. Jasmine heard a rumour that Marshall was ill. Jasmine immediately went to Marshall's house and cried. Jasmine will never stop crying until this day. Jasmine went to go visit Marshall in the hospital and saw a ghost so thin and white. Marshall died the next day.

Jasmine walked down to a park at the end of her road. Sat on a bench and wrote something like this.

"Why would God do this?

Take a Life So Young

He had so much to Live For

And all God did was Close the Door.

I'll Miss Marshall with my Heart and Soul

Never Forget.

It is Such a Sin."

Yah, Noth'en But a Heartbreak

**WHAT ABOUT BELINDA?**

**© ALIX BABIAK JANUARY 1, 2017**

***INSPIRED BY BARRY BABIAK***

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**ANNA**

## OVERTURE

(ANNA DANCES CENTRE STAGE "LIV'N IN YOUR DREAMS", LYRICS BY ALIX BABIAK)

*"WHEN DREAMS BECOME A REALITY AND YOU KEEP LIV'N IN YOUR DREAMS . . . WHEN EVERY PLACE YOU ARE, YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO BE . . . BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUR GOING AND THERE IS NO WHERE LEFT TO RUN . . . SO YOU JUST KEEP LIV'N, LETTING EVERYTHING PASS YOU BY . . . NOT CARING, OH YAH HURTING . . . SO YAH, JUST KEEP LIV'N . . . OH, YOUR LIV'N IN YOUR DREAMS.*

*PEOPLE TALK, YOU CANNOT HEAR, YOU CANNOT LISTEN AND YOU CANNOT SPEAK . . . PEOPLE STARE AND ALL YOU FEEL IS SHAME . . . SOME DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU . . . AND MOST DON'T REALLY CARE . . . CAUSE YOU'VE LOST YOUR WILL TO DANCE . . . JUST LIV'N IN YOUR PAST . . . SEEING NO FUTURE, ONLY HURT AND PAIN . . . AMIDST YOUR LONELY GAME.*

ANNA (TO AUDIENCE): BELINDA USED TO HUM THAT SONG WHEN BELINDA WAS IN A BAD WAY. DON'T GET ME WRONG, BELINDA WAS FINE MOST OF THE TIME, BUT SOMETIMES BELINDA WOULD JUST SIT THERE, STARE INTO SPACE, AND TALK TO BELINDA. MY RELATIVE USED TO TELL ME TO GO TO MY ROOM WHEN BELINDA WAS LIKE THAT. YOU SHOULDN'T BOTHER YOUR PARENT, SHE USED TO SAY.

WAIT, WHAT IS THIS. (ANNA SEES A TRUNK ON THE STAGE AND PULLS OUT LETTERS) DO YOU THINK I SHOULD READ THEM? THERE ARE A LOT OF LETTERS TO ROBERTO FROM BELINDA NEVER SENT. I WONDER IF BELINDA HAD A PARTNER BESIDES MY PARENT? IT LOOKS LIKE BELINDA HAD IT REALLY BAD FOR THIS ROBERTO THERE IS ONLY ONE LETTER FROM ROBERTO. . .

## SCENE 1

(ANNA DANCES TO "UNWELL" BY MATCH BOX 20)

**ANNA: WE DISCUSSED THIS IS MY PSYCHOLOGY CLASS. THERE IS A BIG THING AMONG MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS NOT TO USE THE WORD CRAZY. I NEVER COULD UNDERSTAND THAT, I REALLY DON'T THINK THEY ARE GOING TO GET RID OF THE WORD AND IF WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE ALL CRAZY (EXCUSE ME UNWELL) IN SOME WAYS, THE STIGMA WOULD GO AWAY. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT MY PARENT USED TO TELL ME.**

**ANNA: HERE IS A LETTER DATED 2007 NEVER SENT FROM BELINDA TO ROBERTO (ANNA READS)ABOUT EVERY 20 YEARS I LOSE REALITY AND GO TO A PLACE WHERE THERE ARE ANGELS AND DEMONS, GOD PAINTS PICTURES FOR ME WITH THE CLOUDS IN THE SKY AND I DANCE WITH THE WIND. (ANNA TO AUDIENCE: I WANT TO GO THERE) HOWEVER, I HAVE SOMEONE WHO PULLS ME INTO REALITY (WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT) AND I LEAD A VERY HAPPY LIFE IN MY OLDER AGE. I LIVE IN A VALLEY, SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS. THERE IS A RIVER THAT FLOWS BY AND I HAVE MY FAVORITE ROCK I LIKE TO SIT ON. I HAVE A DOG I LOVE DEARLY. I HAVE CHILDREN. MY PARTNER ALWAYS MAKES ME LAUGH AND ALWAYS MAKES IT EASIER TO LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD. (PULLS OUT ANOTHER PAPER AND SAYS)**

**(THE STORY OF ROBERTO) I WAS ON A TRAIN HEADING TOWARDS GERMANY WHEN I WAS 20 YEARS OLD WITH MY FRIEND CARMELLE. WE WALKED INTO A SEATING CAR ON THE TRAIN AND THERE WAS A HANDSOME PERSON WITH A BLACK SUIT ON THAT TRAIN WHO REMINDED ME OF DRACULA. WE WERE SITTING ACROSS FROM ROBERTO AND ROBERTO JUST KEPT STARRING AT ME & WHEN ARE EYES MET, I JUST GAVE ROBERTO A BIG SMILE. LITTLE DID I KNOW ROBERTO SPOKE NO ENGLISH. ROBERTO THEN POINTED UP AND DOWN UP AND DOWN MY BODY WITH HIS FINGER. I WAS EMBARRASED. (HEY, I WAS JUST A LITTLE PERSON) WHAT I MADE OUT WHAT ROBERTO SAID, ROBERTO WAS COMPLIMENTING ME ON MY CLOTHES. SO, I SAID THANK YOU. (I THINK HE UNDERSTOOD THAT. THEN THE WEIRD THING THAT HAPPENED, WE STARTED TALKING ABOUT HUCKLEBERRY FIN. (THE BOOK.) HE MENTIONED A FISHING ROD (LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT THE ONLY FISH I EVER CAUGHT WAS A TURTLE) HE SAID ROBERTO WAS FROM YUGOSLAVIA AND PART OF ME WANTED TO FOLLOW ROBERTO OFF THAT TRAIN. YET, I SAID TO MYSELF, MYSELF, IT'S A COMMUNIST COUNTRY AND FELT UNSAFE. THEN THE TRAIN CAME TO A STOP AND I SAID GOOD-BYE. ROBERTO HELPED A YOUNG PERSON WHO WAS MISSING MY PARTNER BACK HOME AND REALIZED HOW MUCH I LOVED HIM. (TO AUDIENCE: IT'S KINDA LIKE RAY ST. GERMAINES SONG CHIKITA KOWALSKI. ROBERTO FROM YUGOSLAVIA.)**

## SCENE 2

ANNA SINGS TO HERSELF AND LOOKS THROUGH LETTERS (*SO YOU KEEP LIVN' LIVN' IN YOUR DREAMS*) AND SAYS TO THE AUDIENCE) HERE IS A LETTER DATED 1982 - IT SAYS "ON DEPRESSION" WELL HERE WE GO . . . I HOPE IT'S NOT TOO SAD.

DEAR ROBERTO,

HERE I AM IN THE MOUNTAINS OF B.C, LIVING IN AN A-FRAME, THERE'S LOTS OF SNOW, NO RUNNING WATER, NO ELECTRICTY AND A WOOD STOVE AND YOU ARE TELLING ME YOU ARE GOING TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, WHEN I EVEN HADN'T HAD A SHOWER FOR A MONTH. IT IS A FAR CRY FROM BEING A CITY PERSON LIVING IN DOWNTOWN TORONTO. MY SIBLING TELLS ME THAT ALL THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE WERE CHASING ME, BUT I CHASED THEM ALL AWAY. I AM DOING MORE TYPING FOR THE THEATRE COMPANY THAN CHOREOGRAPHY, I NEVER WENT TO VANCOUVER TO MEET UP WITH MY FRIEND ( JUST BAD NEWS), MY HEART IS IN MY STOMACH, I CAN'T DANCE AND I HAVE NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN. I HAVE JUST GIVEN UP.

(ANNA SAYS TO "LIVEN IN YOUR DREAMS")

*"PEOPLE TALK, YOU CANNOT HEAR, YOU LISTEN BUT YOU CANNOT SPEAK SO YOU KEEP LIVN' LIVN' IN YOUR DREAMS*

## SCENE 3

ANNA: (GOES THROUGH LETTERS) WOW! THIS IS A GOLD MINE . . . HERE IS A LETTER FROM ROBERTO FROM YUGOSLAVIA. (OPENS LETTER FROM ROBERTO WITH EXCITEMENT)(LOOKS AT AUDIENCE) DEAR BELINDA, I CAN HARDLY SPEAK ENGLISH, SO A FRIEND IS HELPING ME WRITE THIS LETTER. THE PICTURE OF YOU STANDING BESIDE THAT CLYDESDALE HORSE IS REALLY FUNNY. YOU SEE THIS VERY LITTLE PERSON STAND BESIDE A VERY LARGE STALLION. WE WERE A LITTLE AFRAID THE HORSE MIGHT STEP ON YOU. HOWEVER, YOU LOOKED HAPPY AND THEN I READ YOUR LETTER.

I GUESS YOU HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THOSE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE AND IT IS MY RECOMMENDATION THAT YOU GO BACK TO THE CITY WHERE YOU BELONG. I WILL BE IN CANADA IN SEPTEMBER AND I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO TAKE YOU TO SEE MOE KAUFMAN IN TORONTO. ALL I CAN SAY NOW (ALSO SAID IN YUGOSLAVIAN) SORRY FOR YOU. ZAO MIJE.

GOOD LUCK (IN YUGOSLAVIAN- SRETNA) ROBERTO

**P.S. I HAVE WROTE THIS JUST FOR YOU . . .**

**(ANNA SAYS TO “JUST THE WAY YOU ARE” BY BRUNO MARS JUST AT CHORUS)**

**(ANNA, WITH TEARS IN HER EYES TO AUDIENCE: SO THIS IS ROBERTO FROM YUGOSLAVIA (A GOOD FRIEND). I WONDER IF THEY EVER MET IN TORONTO. MY PARENT ONCE TOLD ME, WE ARE ALL CRAZY. I MEAN UNWELL. WE ALL GET HAPPY AND SAD AND HAVE OUR OWN IDIOSYNCRASIES. MY PARENT ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT THE GOOD PERSON ON ONE SHOULDER AND THE BAD PERSON ON THE OTHER SHOULDER, SO JUST LET THE GOOD PERSON WIN. SAME FOR SWEARING . . . MY PARENT ALWAYS TOLD ME THERE WAS A PLACE TO USE THE F WORD BUT YOU BETTER BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU SAY IT AND TO WHOM OR YOU’D GET INTO A LOT OF TROUBLE. MY PARENT WAS A REAL COOL GUY. I ALSO REMEMBER GOING TO BELINDA’S RECITALS. I WONDER IF BELINDA WOULD HAVE HAD ANY STUDENTS IF THE PARENTS WOULD HAVE KNOWN ABOUT BELINDA’S CONDITION? SHE WORKED WITH ALL THOSE CHILDREN. I THINK WHAT LUCKY CHILDREN.**

#### **SCENE 4**

**ANNA: (STILL GOING THROUGH LETTERS) (TO AUDIENCE) HERE IS A LETTER DATED 1989**

**DEAR ROBERTO,**

**I MET THE MOST AMAZING PERSON TODAY WHO HAS A SOLUTION TO ALL THE WORLD’S PROBLEMS. I EVEN TOLD HIM THAT I HAVE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AND THAT I HAVE JUST GOTTEN OUT OF A HOSPITAL IN SUDBURY AND WAS ASKED OUT. HE MUST BE A SPECIAL PERSON.**

**(TO AUDIENCE) MY PARENT WAS SO FUNNY, COULD PUT A SMILE ON ANYBODY’S FACE, ALWAYS TOOK ME FISHING AND CANOEING AND HAS THE BIGGEST HEART IN THE WORLD.**

**(ANNA STARTS LOOKING THROUGH THE LETTERS) HERE’S ONE DATED 1991**

**DEAR ROBERTO,**

**I AM GETTING MARRIED. SOON TO BE MY STEP-CHILD SAM ONCE CAUGHT ME TAKING MY MEDICATION AND ASKED WHAT WAS WRONG. WAS I SICK? I TOLD SAM WHEN HE GOT OLDER I’D TAKE SAM TO A&W AND EXPLAIN EVERYTHING. WELL, SAM TURNED 14 AND I TOOK SAM TO A&W. I TOLD HIM THAT SOMETIMES I GET REALLY DEPRESSED AND SOMETIMES I HEAR VOICES. THE DOCTOR’S SAY I HAVE A MILD FORM OF SCHIZOPHRENIA**

AND AS I WAS EXPLAINING THIS TO SAM HE SAID: "OH YA, THERE ARE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL WHO GET DEPRESSED AND HEAR VOICES."YOU KNOW BELINDA, WE ARE ALL A LITTLE WEIRD AND THAT'S O.K. CAUSE I LOVE YOU BELINDA. YOU ALSO MAKE A MEAN MACARONI AND CHEESE. (ANNA TO AUDIENCE: WHAT A COOL PERSON!) (KEEPS READING) THERE IS ALSO A TRUSTY DOG NAMED BOO WHO ALWAYS GIVES ME UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND ALLAN (MY FIANCE) IS THAT SPECIAL GUY I MET LAST YEAR.

## SCENE 5

ANNA: (GOING THROUGH LETTERS) IT LOOKS LIKE THERE ISN'T A LETTER UNTIL 2007

DEAR ROBERTO,

AFTER 20 YEARS, IT HAPPENED TO ME AGAIN: THE ANGELS AND THE DEMONS, THE VOICES AND I HAVE PUSHED EVERYONE WHO IS CLOSE TO ME AWAY. THE NURSES ALWAYS WARNED ME IF I DO TOO MUCH THAT'S WHEN I GET ILL. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY I CAN'T CONTROL THIS. I AM IN HOSPITAL, TALK OF DIVORCE WITH MY PARTNER AND I HAVE NO HOME ANYMORE. THAY WANT TO PUT ME IN B.C. HOUSING, BUT WARNED ME OF BED BUGS . . . I HAVE RUN OUT OF TEARS.

ANNA TO AUDIENCE: POOR BELINDA, SHE SEEMS FINE NOW . . . IT LOOKS LIKE BELINDA HAD TO START OVER SO MANY TIMES IN LIFE. HERE IS A BIRTHDAY DAY CARD FROM SAM TO HER. IT SAYS"FROM YOUR STEP-SON MOM, ON YOUR BIRTHDAY: BELINDA, IT IS SO NICE TO KNOW, THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS THERE EVERY DAY, WITH YOUR LOVE AND SUPPORT CHEERING ME ON MY WAY! AND FOR ALL THE THOUGHTFUL THINGS YOU DO, I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU AND TO TELL YOU HOW GREAT IT IS TO HAVE A SPECIAL PERSON LIKE YOU" HAVE A HAPPY BIRTHDAY. THEN SAM SAYS "THIS CARD REALLY SUMS IT UP. I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH. HAVE A WONDERFUL BIRTHDAY.

NOW HERE IS A NOTE FROM BELINDA WRITTEN JUST RECENTLY:

I AM BACK WITH MY PARTNER AND FEELING REALLY POSITIVE ABOUT MY LIFE. I HAD A MEDICATION CHANGE WHICH SEEMED TO HAVE DONE THE TRICK FOR THE PAST 7 YEARS. I AM A VERY LUCKY PERSON TO HAVE ALL THAT LOVE OVER THE YEARS . . . THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS I FEEL NO SHAME. THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE OUT THERE THAT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP, WHO HAVEN'T FOUND THE RIGHT MEDICATION AND ARE SHUNNED BY THEIR COMMUNITY AND FAMILY. I PRAY EVERY NIGHT, THAT EVERYONE WHO SUFFERS FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS (1 OUT OF 5 PEOPLE) FIND THE RIGHT MEDICATION, GET THE LOVE AND SUPPORT THEY NEED AND THAT THEY FEEL NO SHAME.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT US CRAZY PEOPLE (EXCUSE ME, UNWELL) DO GET BETTER.**

**ANNA TO AUDIENCE: (TO AUDIENCE) WE RECENTLY GOT SOME BAD NEWS THAT MY PARENT WHO IS NOW 86 YEARS OLD SUFFERS FROM DEMENTIA. SOME OF THE MEDICATIONS THEY USE FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS CAN DO THIS TO YOU. I KNOW ONE DAY SHE WON'T KNOW WHO I AM AND HOPE SHE CAN BE WITH MY OTHER PARENT UP IN HEAVEN REALLY SOON. AS FOR ROBERTO FROM YUGOSLAVIA, I HOPE HE HAS MET HIS CHIKITA KOWALSKI. THERE IS HOPE!**

**(END WITH ED SHERAN'S FIRE LOVE)**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**ALIX BABIAK IS A PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER AND PRODUCER. SHE HAS WRITTEN, CO-WRITTEN, DIRECTED, CO-DIRECTED, CHOREOGRAPHED, CO-CHOREOGRAPHED MANY THEATRICAL AND DANCE PRODUCTIONS FOR SUCH PLACES AS YORK UNIVERSITY IN TORONTO, THE ROYAL DANCE CONSERVATORY IN WINNIPEG, STARBURST DANCE STUDIO IN ST. MALO, MANITOBA, MANY SOCIAL AGENCIES FOR THE INTELLECTUALLY AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED AND THOSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS. ALIX IS CONSIDERED A DANCE AND THEATRE ARTIST WITH THE CANADA COUNCIL OF THE ARTS AND A LITERARY AND THEATRE & DANCE ARTIST WITH THE MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL. ALIX HAS HER BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS HONOURS, MAJOR DANCE, MINOR THEATRE FROM YORK UNIVERSITY IN TORONTO, ALIX'S 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR AFTER-DEGREE PROGRAM FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG AND ALIX HAS A MENTAL HEALTH WORKER CERTIFICATE FROM MANITOBA EDUCATION AND TRAINING. ALIX HAS WRITTEN TEN BOOKS THAT INCLUDE "WORKS FOR THE BEAUTIFUL MIND", "OUR FRIENDS . . . IN GOOD TIMES & BAD", "THE BOOK OF LIAM" AND "MY HEART & MY SOUL", "JUST ABOUT LIFE", "BEAUTIFUL TRUSTS" AND "SECRETS OF DANCE". "BEAUTIFUL TRUSTS" IS ONE OF TEN BOOKS OF PLAYS, STORIES AND POEMS IN THE LIBRARY ARCHIVES OF CANADA. ALIX SPECIALIZES IN CHOREOGRAPHED BASED DANCE/MIME MUSICAL PLAYS. ALIX HAS RUN ALIX'S OWN DANCE SCHOOL IN ST. MALO AND BROUGHT THE ROYAL WINNIPEG MANITOBA HYDRO SATELLITE PROGRAM TO ST. MALO (WHERE SHE COORDINATED AND TAUGHT). ALIX ALSO CONCEIVED AND TAUGHT THE INTELLECTUALLY & PHYSICALLY DISABLED DANCE PROGRAM IN ST. MALO AND CONCEIVED, COORDINATED AND TAUGHT THE ART PROGRAM FOR THE INTELLECTUALLY & PHYSICALLY DISABLED IN ST. MALO, BRINGING IN CANADIAN ARTISTS FOR WORKSHOPS AND PRODUCED ANNUAL PLAYS. OVER THE PAST 6 YEARS ALIX SPENDS HER TIME MOSTLY PLAYWRITING , WRITING AND DOING CHOREOGRAPHY. ALIX IS ALSO PAST PRESIDENT OF A NON-PROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATION CALLED ARTS FOR THE BEAUTIFUL MIND, PAST ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF WORKS FOR THE BEAUTIFUL MIND, PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ST. MALO/ST.PIERRE ARTS COUNCIL AND PAST PRESIDENT OF ARTS FOR THE MIND INC. OUT OF WINNIPEG, MANITOBA. A SPECIAL THANKS GO OUT TO BARRY ALLAN BABIAK, JAQUELINE DROUIN , JANEL SHAW AND THE ARTS ACCESSIBILITY NETWORK, AND SCOTT DOUGLAS – CONSULTANT ON THE PLAY "IT'S TOO HARD TO HATE".**