

**"Duck, Duck, Goose"**

A Ten Minute One Act for Zoom

By

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SYNOPSIS: Four moms discover that their online social group isn't enough anymore.

SETTING: the play occurs on Zoom or some other remote platform. Characters are in their respective homes. This is a meeting of four moms whose kids shared a homeroom, months into a pandemic

CHARACTERS: CAST: 4 actors, all women

ALLIE	any age, race, navigating a mid-pandemic crisis
BARB	any age, race, stay at home mom of 3
CHRISTINE	any age, race, quiet, thoughtful, organized
DIANA	any age, race, total wreck and could give two shits

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*We open to a zoom call just beginning, Allie logs in, alone in the meeting. She appears to be at a kitchen table, she is fixing her hair, putting on make-up, getting ready for something. She leaves the camera, we see that her business attire stops at the waist. In the background, we hear a child's slow voice saying, Duck.. duck.. duck.. MOOSE! All children lines and sounds should be off camera sound cues, and for the most part, ignored by the actors unless the directions say otherwise. Allie returns with earrings as Barb logs into the call.*

BARB

Oh my god, Allie, you made it! I didn't think you were coming.

ALLIE

I've been so busy..

BARB

Busy? I had a baby. Don't talk to me about busy.

ALLIE

I know, I didn't mean-

BARB

You didn't make the last, what..six? Seven meetings?

ALLIE

Eight.

BARB

I assumed that you gave up on us. Or maybe got sick of us, I don't know. *(calling off camera)* Joey, put that down. Put. That. Down. *(to camera)* Just a second. *(muting herself, as she heads off camera)* Joey, do not feed your brother the dog food, put it down!

*(Christine logs in to the call, she is wearing a heavy winter coat, she seems rather quiet and plain, overall. Her background is carefully curated, looking homey and welcoming and organized and clean. She looks extremely uncomfortable in the coat.)*

CHRISTINE

Allie, you're here! I was just asking Diana about you the other day. How have you been?

ALLIE

Good. Busy. Well, as good as--

*(DIANA logs into the call during ALLIE's line. She is in pajamas, her hair looks a wreck, she is clearly in a very messy house or kitchen and she could give two shits. She should have some alcoholic beverage visible in camera.)*

CHRISTINE

Is that Barb's screen? Where did she go? Did you see the baby yet?

ALLIE

No, she had a problem with Joey--

DIANA

Is that Allie? I thought you forgot all about us, found a cooler moms' group to hang out with.

ALLIE

No, I've just been--

CHRISTINE

Cooler than us? Diana, that's not possible.

DIANA

Why are you in a winter coat, Christine? It's like a thousand degrees outside.

CHRISTINE

The zipper is stuck. I got it online from Kohls, more than half off and now I can't get out of it. I have to go pick up my Instacart order and I need to return it and I don't know what to do.

DIANA

You can't pull it over your head?

CHRISTINE

No, its too tight to wiggle out of. Should I cut myself out? Will they take it back if I do that?

ALLIE

I feel like they'd have to at that point, don't you?

DIANA

Or just wear the coat there and make them get you out of it.

CHRISTINE

Good idea.

*(Daniel off camera: Duck...duck...duck...LOOSE!)*

ALLIE

*(to someone off camera)* Daniel, Mommy is in a meeting right now, honey. Can you go play in your room please?

BARB

*(returning to camera, cradling an unseen baby below camera in lap, camera should be above her chest)* What'd I miss? Everyone's here! *(we hear the sounds of a baby)*

CHRISTINE

The baby! Is she awake? Can we see her please? Did the onesies I sent over fit?

BARB

No, you cannot see her. She's currently latched onto my boob and I'm not about to flash my ta-tas for all of Zoom to see.

DIANA

That's not what I heard.

BARB

Christine, why are you in a winter coat?

DIANA

She got herself stuck in the coat.

CHRISTINE

I can't get the zipper undone. I'm going to return it. As soon as I can get it off. She must be so big by now! Is she still a good baby?

DIANA

Is there such a thing? So how've you been, Allie?

ALLIE

Oh. Good. Fine. Good, I guess. I mean, busy. Well, you know..

*Silence, in which we hear Daniel's slow:  
Duck.. Duck.. duck.. JUICE!*

DIANA

(*finally*) No. We don't know. You disappeared for what? I don't even know how long.

CHRISTINE

Three months.

DIANA

Three months! Right after Barb had the baby and the school's went back to remote learning.

BARB

How's remote schooling going? We hate it, HATE IT! One second. (*muting as she yells off camera*) Joey, do not tape your brother to the dog!

ALLIE

Schooling's going okay, I guess...

CHRISTINE

Okay?

DIANA

You guess?

*Silence, off camera Daniel: Duck.. duck..  
duck.. SPRUCE!*

BARB

Remote schooling is literally the worst. But we could have been a pod! Did you see the Moms Who Run on Facebook? They did that.

DIANA

OMG, Barb, I hate Moms Who Run. Or maybe I just hate running? I don't know, but I wasn't joining some POD where I had to get dressed and get Kim ready every morning. And no way was I teaching anyone else's kids, sorry not sorry. *(doorbell)* Be right back, that's my groceries. *(DIANA leaves camera)*

ALLIE

What's a pod?

CHRISTINE

We weren't comfortable with the idea, too many families aren't being careful enough with social distancing and wearing masks. I mean, maybe it if it was just the four of us, but you know how much my Sarah hates your boys. And then do we find a second pod for Michael and kids his age? Like I said, we weren't comfortable at all with it.

ALLIE

What is a pod?

BARB

*(ignoring ALLIE)* I get it, but it would have been nice.

DIANA

*(returning to camera)* I swear to god, it looks like the Instacart driver ate half my ribs on the way here.

BARB

Pods are.. like a mini safe group? How would you describe it?

CHRISTINE

A covid circle? You know you all kind of stick together and its assumed you're all being careful or are honest about each other's risk.

DIANA

Our neighbor is in one with their kids, but one of the families got sick and the whole pod had to go on quarantine. She's has three more days.

BARB

I just miss you guys. Even you, Allie, who apparently didn't need any of us!

ALLIE

It's not that I didn't need you-

DIANA

Three months, Allie. That's a long time not to check in.

CHRISTINE

Don't you feel you need the social connection?

BARB

**Adult** social connection.

DIANA

We've even had a few late-night drinks on zoom.

CHRISTINE

Those weren't late night, Diana.

DIANA

They weren't? (*Christine shows her two fingers to indicate two o'clock*)

BARB

I know you're doing fine with this whole social isolation, Miss Perfect Allie, but we could have used your friendship.

ALLIE

(*outburst, out of nowhere*) I'm not doing fine with it!  
(*silence, Daniel: Duck...duck...duck...truce!*) Not really. I mean, it's not so much the social distancing and isolation. I have my husband and my kids.

DIANA

That's enough?

ALLIE

I don't know, not really? On nice days, we see the neighbors. I think they're being safe but I don't ask because I don't want to know because I want a break from the kids for two minutes. These new roles being thrust on me, I can't handle them. Stay at home mom and kind of a teacher and a weird incompetent tech expert? (*beat, near tears suddenly*) When did my job become less important than **his**? Why does he get to sit in his home office, locked behind a door, while I'm crowded at the kitchen table, juggling work calls and second grade google meets and Jr. High Home Ec projects. And planning the grocery deliveries, that of course I'll have to be the only one wiping down and putting away and cooking and serving and cleaning up after. And I swear to all the powers that be that if one more person drops their dirty clothes on the floor *right next* to the laundry hamper, I'm going to snap! (*beat, deflated*) I'm going to snap. That's the truth that I've avoided coming onto our calls and venting about for three months. I'm the one that's always had it together. You know? Barb, you have your new baby and your hands full and haven't I always been there to pick up your pieces? And Christine, you're definitely the rock but it was always me that you would call when you needed a shoulder. Now you're stuck in your coat and in your home and I can't do anything but tell you to cut yourself out of it. And Diana... you're the life of the party but how many times did I drive you home? I didn't want to face you all like this... I can't do this anymore. I don't want to do this anymore.

BARB

You're not alone, Allie. You *have* always been the one that has it together, we all just assumed that..

DIANA

That you didn't need us anymore.



CHRISTINE

I thought about calling so many times but I know how busy your life is, with the kids and your job. We all should have been better.

ALLIE

So that's how I'm doing. I'm going absolutely crazy. I miss my old life so much. I miss getting Daniel ready for the 7:45 AM bus every morning and the commute work, of all things to miss. I want structure to my day (*beat*) I miss not having to be everything for everyone. (*pause, Daniel: Duck.. duck.. duck.. FUCE!*) (*snapping*) Oh for ducks sake, Daniel, it's GOOSE. Duck, duck, GOOSE!

BARB

Thank you! I was about to snap myself if someone didn't stop him. Oh shoot! (*muting herself*) Joey, do not jump off head first, you are not Superman! (*leaves camera*)

ALLIE

I don't like feeling this way.

DIANA

You know what I miss most? Eating out, having someone else serve me food and clean it up afterwards.

CHRISTINE

Oh yes, that would be so nice...

DIANA

None of us like feeling this way, Allie.

ALLIE

What can we do about it?

CHRISTINE

You know, we started this group for fun and to keep in touch. But... maybe it's a support group.

DIANA

Great, like any of us are qualified to be offering support to anyone else.

ALLIE

Do we ever get to go back to our lives? Is there an end to this? (*silence, BARB returns to her camera*)

BARB

What'd I miss? You all have weird looks on your faces. Did the baby throw up on me again?

CHRISTINE

We have decided as a quorum to officially make this a support group for socially isolated Moms during the pandemic.

DIANA

Moms that don't run, we need to make that distinction.

BARB

What do we call it? I love the idea! We can help each other out, share ideas of how to keep the kids out of our hair even for a few minutes. Maybe sometimes send over food.

CHRISTINE

Like cookies! Allie, I can send some cookies over if that would make you feel a little better.

DIANA

Let's call it.. Duck Duck Goose, the pandemic support group for moms who don't run.

ALLIE

Thank you so much for this. For just being you guys... I have a meeting in five, though.. I'm sorry.. I'll be on next week.

CHRISTINE

You promise?

ALLIE

I promise.

DIANA

You have a little lipstick on your teeth. (Allie uses camera to fix) You also have kind of a crazed look in your eyes, but I don't think we can do anything to fix that.

BARB

Joey and Daniel can facetime anytime you want! It should keep him out of your hair for a meeting and it keeps Joey from fighting with his brother. I miss you, Allie. I miss all of you! I need to put the baby down and Joey is in her crib. See you next week! (yelling off camera) Joey! (*logs off*)

ALLIE

See you next week!

CHRISTINE

We officially adjourn the first meeting of Duck Duck Goose. I have to go return this coat. This is what I get for winter shopping in spring. See you next time.

DIANA

Drinks. Soon. On zoom.

*(Diana and Christine log off. Allie is left alone on the camera. Daniel off camera; Duck.. duck.. duck.. GOOSE! She stares at the camera for a minute, looking frazzled and tired and done with the day. Then she takes a deep, steadying breath and pulls it together.)*

ALLIE

Good job, Honey, that's right. Duck duck goose! Mommy's sorry she yelled earlier. I have a math worksheet you can do while mommy has her meeting. If you finish it all by yourself, you can watch your favorite TV show. Come on! (*She ends zoom call*)

THE END