

Diana's Ark

A play by Anthony L. Mariani

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Cast of Characters

DARCY	20s. A disheveled woman.
THE ZOOKEEPER	30s. The Zoo's panda expert.
JIE -	A LARGE STUFFED PANDA BEAR

TIME

MORNING PRESENT DAY

PLACE

THE PANDA CAGE AT THE CITY ZOO.

MY ZOO STORY IN THE MEMORY OF EDWARD ALBEE – Anthony L. Mariani

WORLD PREMIERE AT THE MANHATTAN REPERTORY THEATRE
SEPTEMBER 29TH 2017
DIRECTED BY NICOLE MILLER MARKS
DARCY PLAYED BY RUTH SOLORZANO
THE ZOOKEEPER PLAYED BY KATKA KRAJCOVIC

ACT I

Scene 1

A sign on the wall reads "City Zoo" DARCY dressed in black jeans and a faded white T-shirt with two small girl panda's holding hands on its front. She is in the corner of the cage hugging a giant panda bear when the zookeeper enters with a food bucket, knocking over a pile of childlike letter blocks.

The ZOOKEEPER

What the hell is going on in here?

(Darcy pulls out a knife and holds it up to the Panda Bear's throat.)

DARCY

Stay back!

THE ZOOKEEPER

You better not hurt her.

DARCY

I Mean it Stand back!

(She takes a swipe with the knife at The Zookeeper.)

THE ZOOKEEPER

Nobody is going to hurt you.

DARCY

I'm not here to hurt anyone.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Then let her go.

DARCY

Not yet.

(Darcy points the tip of the knife blade at the throat of the Panda.)

DARCY

I have demands.

(Clutching the panda tight while holding the knife blade close to the Panda's neck, Darcy pulls out a folded piece of paper from her pocket and tosses it over to the zookeeper.)

THE ZOOKEEPER

Get the hell away from her with that knife!

DARCY

You're not listening to me I'm in charge! Read it!

THE ZOOKEEPER

Look we don't have time to play games. You're stressing Jie out!

(Darcy points the knife at the zookeeper.)

DARCY

Read it!

(The zookeeper starts to unfold the note which has been folded up like a Childs paper origami squares game.)

THE ZOOKEEPER

Really?

DARCY

It fit better in my pocket that way.

The zookeeper reads the letter.

THE ZOOKEEPER

I can't authorize this.

DARCY

You said you were in charge.

THE ZOOKEEPER

I'm in charge of the panda cage, not the whole zoo.

DARCY

You know people who are in charge.

THE ZOOKEEPER

They don't listen to me. What makes you think the city would build this?

DARCY

Build the Memorial!

THE ZOOKEEPER

Zoos were not meant to promote religion.

(Darcy gets aggressive with the knife on the Panda).

DARCY

You don't understand!

THE ZOOKEEPER

I can't build a Noah's Ark Memorial! Now take the knife away from Jie. Please, she can't deal with stress.

(She uses the Panda as a Shield and puts the blade of the knife to the Panda's throat.)

DARCY

I want the memorial built.

THE ZOOKEEPER

I've been working for months to get her to the point to where she can relax. You're setting us back months of work with her.

DARCY

You think I just came out here today to do this? I've been working on this for months! Months!

THE ZOOKEEPER

She would not interact with anyone. The only time would be when she looked in a mirror.

DARCY

You think I just picked some random Panda?

THE ZOOKEEPER

Some days we had to take the mirror away from her because she would just get lost in it.

DARCY

I'm not some religious fanatic. There is a reason I want Noah's Ark.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Finally, five weeks ago she started to play block games with these blocks, like the ones you had when you were a kid.

(The Zoo Keeper starts to re-stack the blocks that got knocked over. She spills more out pushing some towards Darcy to distract her.)

DARCY

When I was a kid, I had a Fisher Price Noah's Ark Set. I played for hours and hours that day I first got it, here we go two by two and I would walk them in the Ark.

THE ZOOKEEPER

First stacking the blocks, we would build small little walls.

DARCY

I got that for my fifth birthday.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Then we started to form words.

DARCY

I remember it was my fifth because that was the first time I made my mom cry.

THE ZOOKEEPER

We used simple words. Boy - Girl

(The Zookeeper uses the blocks and tries to spells-out - B-o-Y and G-I-R-L with the blocks, but before she can Darcy charges and backs her into the corner of the cage.)

DARCY

My Mom knew how much I loved Noah's Ark.

(The Zookeeper tries to make a personal connection with her.)

THE ZOOKEEPER

Then we progressed to Names; I spelled out mine.

DARCY

She had made me a Noah's Ark, style Birthday Cake with little toy plastic animals two by two.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Then I asked her, "What's your name? And she used the blocks to spell out Jie

(The Zookeeper slips past Darcy to the blocks and tries set the blocks to spell out J-I-E.
Darcy comes over and kicks them away.)

DARCY

They brought the cake in and sang Happy Birthday to me.

THE ZOOKEEPER

I looked up Jie, the meaning. It means cleanliness.

DARCY

I blew out the candles. Then that's when it happened.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Then that's when it happened, she took the blocks and reorganized them to spell the name, Juan.

DARCY

I asked my mom where my sister's cake was.

THE ZOOKEEPER

We had the name on record but had no idea that she knew it.

DARCY

That's when my mom started to cry.

THE ZOOKEEPER

You see Jie had a Twin Juan who was stillborn.

DARCY

I knew then I was not dreaming. I did have a twin. A twin named Diana.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Juan means Graciousness. Graciousness and cleanliness what a pair they would have been. For the first time, Darcy relaxes a little with the knife and is not as threatening to the Panda.

DARCY

Elvis had a twin.

THE ZOOKEEPER

I know everything about Elvis.

DARCY

You know then.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Elvis did not have a twin.

DARCY

Yes, he did! Jesse.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Jesse?

DARCY

Jesse Garon.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Garon?

(Darcy waves the knife for the ZooKeeper to step back then she walks over to the Panda with the blocks).

Darcy

He was stillborn too.

THE ZOOKEEPER

Like Aron?

(Darcy Slaps, down Blocks to spelled out A-R-O-N).

DARCY

Some twin-less twins feel guilt that they had survived when their twin did not. Others feel the need to live for two and do the things their twin could not. I think Elvis did both.

THE ZOOKEEPER

So, Elvis had a twin. Well, that explains a lot.

DARCY

He used to tell friends that he felt a significant part of him was missing. He used to beg his father to let him change his name to the traditional spelling "Aaron," But his father would not let him do it. Then after his death, his father granted him his wish in last respect by spelling it that way on his gravestone.

(Darcy slides down an A in front of the name.)

THE ZOOKEEPER

What's your name?

DARCY

Darcy.

(The ZooKeeper moves over to the pile of blocks).

THE ZOOKEEPER

Do you remember Diana?

DARCY

That's just it.

THE ZOOKEEPER

What's it?

DARCY

I feel grief.

THE ZOOKEEPER

For Diana?

DARCY

No, not for her. For the lack of memories of her. She is my twin. We should have shared in every memory together. But I have none. When I was little when I use to play with my Fisher Price Noah's Ark toy, I was always a Panda, and I always named the other Panda Diana. That was long before I even knew I had a twin. (Beat) Jie's name means cleanliness. Like the world after the great flood that washed away everything that once was, only to start a new world, two by two.

THE ZOOKEEPER

I think Jie still has that sense of loss. I can tell by the way she looks at me sometimes. Like she wishes I was a Panda. You know Panda's rarely give birth to twins in the wild. However, over sixty percent of captive Pandas give birth to twins. I wonder if its because they miss that other life, the twin life of the wild. (Beat) Please, won't you please put your knife down?

(Darcy pulls the knife away from the Panda and then sets it down on the ground.)

DARCY

I guess I'm the wild one.

THE ZOOKEEPER

The wild one?

DARCY

Thank you.

THE ZOOKEEPER

For what?

DARCY

If I'm the wild one, what's that make my twin? (Beat) I learned something about Diana today.

(She is still hugging the Panda but not in a threatening way, more for comfort.)

DARCY

I keep having this dream. I'm in a long line of every animal known to humankind. The Line stretches for miles of hoofs, claws, feathers, and fur all leading up to the great Ark. What I look over and beside me is a perfect image of me, my hair, my eyes, my skin, my face, it's Diana. She gives me a warm smile back; it's my smile. We walk for hours two by two hand in hand following the other animals up to this winding road. I notice as we get close to the ramp to board the Ark that the other animals are turning into giant plastic Fisher-Price toys as they climb onto that ramp. I take a step onto the ramp, and I can feel myself turning into plastic, and I look over, and Diana has become a giant Plastic Fisher Price Panda. We walk to the entrance where a plastic Noah awaits. Right as we are about to enter Noah starts to shut the door to the Ark. I cry for him to stop and let us onboard but he shakes his head no and says "Only two by two." I look over to show him Diana, but she is gone. That's when the flood starts and the waters start to rise quickly. In a panic, I'm searching the flood waters for Diana but I see no sign of her, and that's when I wake up drenched in sweat. (Beat) Will you build the Noah's Ark Memorial? (Beat) I gave up my knife.

THE ZOOKEEPER

No, I can't do that but what I can do is build a memorial for Diana and Juan. It would be a memorial for two lost twins whose twins became friends at the city zoo. I think Jie would like that. Would you want that?

Darcy gives the nod yes.

DARCY

Diana means "Heavenly or Divine."

THE ZOOKEEPER

The Divine Graciousness Memorial for twin-less twins.

DARCY

Divine Graciousness. (Beat) Can we have an Ark on it?

THE ZOOKEEPER

Yes, Diana's Ark. Two by Two.

(Darcy begins to start crying, hugging and holding the Panda Bear tight as the lights begin to fade as she sings to the Panda.)

END OF PLAY