

# **Basement Folly**

A Comedy

By David Datz

*First 10 pages only*

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### Synopsis

A couple ponders what to do when they discover that an unknown person is living in their basement. Call police? Kick the person out, with so many people homeless? What if it's an unstable relative? Give priority to an old family friend who appears, homeless and needing shelter? What about their adult daughter, who wants a temporary place? What's moral? What's safe? And who's down there, anyway? All fodder for the family's greatest talent: bickering.

### Production History

*Basement Folly* was produced by Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills, CA, and ran for 15 performances in October 2022.

### Author Biography

David Datz is a writer and actor in Los Angeles. He has written three full-length stage plays and several shorter plays. He has also written three novels, and has self-published a sci-fi novel, *Scalies*, which can be found by searching for "David Datz" at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Smashwords, and the Apple book store.

### Cast

Cast members can be of any race or ethnicity.

- Aubrey: Female, wife of Adrian, old enough to have a child aged twenty-something to early thirties.
- Adrian: Male, husband of Aubrey, old enough to have a child aged twenty-something to early thirties.
- Alex: Female, daughter of Aubrey and Adrian, twenty-something to early thirties.
- Ray: Male, old friend of Aubrey and Adrian and aged about the same as they are. Homeless.
- Kim: Female, Alex's lover and domestic partner.

### Time

The present, after dinner.

### Setting

The living room. Some dishes with food remains on a coffee table.

**Note:** More details about setting, costumes, props, and sounds, appear after the script.

Start of Play

*At lights up, ADRIAN is entering from the kitchen, followed by AUBREY, who chases him, grabs his shoulder and jumps in front of him to stop him.*

ADRIAN

I'll just get my tools, it'll only take a minute.

AUBREY

Honey, it's late. You don't have to fix it now.

ADRIAN

We need to clean up the kitchen.

AUBREY

I'll get a bucket of water from the bathroom, you can fix it tomorrow.

ADRIAN

I won't have time tomorrow.

AUBREY

So? It'll keep till tomorrow night.

ADRIAN

I'm telling you, it's simple. I'll have it done in a half hour, tops.

AUBREY

But honey, I don't want you to work on it now.

ADRIAN

Why not?

*AUBREY starts running her hands over Adrian's chest.*

AUBREY

*(Seductively)* Because I'd rather you do other things right now.

*She moves one hand below his belt and the other to his face.*

ADRIAN

Right now?

AUBREY

*(Seductively commanding)* Yes. Right now.

ADRIAN

*(Surprised and amused)* I'd like nothing better, but . . .

AUBREY

But what?

ADRIAN

But it's just not something you ordinarily do.

AUBREY

*(Sexily)* Ordinarily?

ADRIAN

*(Enjoying what she's doing but thinking it must be a joke)* Uh, well, not right after dinner on a week night. At least not recently.

*She moves her body into his, kisses him once on the mouth, becomes even more seductive.*

AUBREY

I'm nothing if not surprising.

ADRIAN

*(He puts his arms around her)* Lately the two of us have been about as surprising as a hot day in August, but . . .

AUBREY

But?

ADRIAN

But usually you're all over my case to fix things right away. What's different now?

AUBREY

I don't know. Your masculine presence has just triggered my feminine desires.

ADRIAN

*(Torn between his desires and his suspicion that something is wrong here)* My masculine presence?

AUBREY

Yeah. Your extremely masculine presence.

ADRIAN

There's something else going on here, isn't there?

AUBREY

My love, what else would I ever need?

ADRIAN

*(Thinking about it)* Are you on drugs? A little legal recreational pot, maybe?

AUBREY

You're the only intoxicant I need.

ADRIAN

*(Still thinking)* Wait. Is there something in the basement? You hiding something?

AUBREY

*(Faltering)* In the basement? Whatever are you talking about?

ADRIAN

My birthday is months away, so it's not a surprise party, is it?

AUBREY

*(Still seductive but worried)* The surprise is going to be right here.

ADRIAN

*(Decisively)* Alright.

*He removes her hands from his body and sets her in place.*

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

I'm going down there to get my tools.

*ADRIAN starts to move toward the exit leading to the basement stairs, but AUBREY runs and gets in front of him and stops him again.*

AUBREY

*(Decisively)* Remember what happened the last time you got your tools?

ADRIAN

The last time? What are you—

AUBREY

You were going to fix the radiator in our bedroom.

ADRIAN

So?

AUBREY

So you broke a pipe and we had to call a plumber. Plus we had to pay double because it was at night.

ADRIAN

But that was a much more complicated job—

AUBREY

I don't want to have to call a plumber again.

ADRIAN

I don't think that's really what's bothering you.

AUBREY

And then there was the time you decided to adjust the timing on the car. What a mess that was.

ADRIAN

Speaking of timing.

*He once more starts for the basement door.*

AUBREY

*(Pleading a little)* Honey, no. Please don't.

ADRIAN

What the hell is down there that you don't want me to know about?

AUBREY

*(Giving up)* I'm sorry. Can we talk?

ADRIAN

Instead of doing whatever it was you said you wanted to do before?

AUBREY

Please.

ADRIAN

*(Even more suspicious)* Of course.

*AUBREY goes to couch and sits and pats the cushion for him to join her, which he does.*

AUBREY

Well.

ADRIAN

Well?

AUBREY

It's not a what. It's a who.

ADRIAN

*(Considering)* A who?

AUBREY

Yes.

ADRIAN

There's somebody down there?

AUBREY  
Yes.

ADRIAN  
Somebody you don't want me to know about?

AUBREY  
I was going to tell you.

ADRIAN  
You were going to tell me?

AUBREY  
Of course.

ADRIAN  
For how long were you going to tell me?

AUBREY  
For how long? For as long as it takes to tell—

ADRIAN  
No. You were planning to tell me, right? So for how long have you been making this plan? In other words, how long has this been happening?

AUBREY  
You mean how long has there been a who down there?

ADRIAN  
Aubrey, please don't play games with me. It's your no-good sister, isn't it.

AUBREY  
No. Not her.

ADRIAN  
But there's somebody.

AUBREY  
Yes.

ADRIAN  
Who?

AUBREY  
I'm not sure.

ADRIAN  
You're not sure?

AUBREY  
No, but I can explain. Really.

ADRIAN  
Start.

AUBREY  
For about three weeks.

ADRIAN  
That's not an explana—three weeks?

AUBREY  
Yes.

ADRIAN  
*(Nonplussed)* Three weeks.

AUBREY  
Give or take a couple days.

ADRIAN  
Go on.

AUBREY  
*(Brightly)* Would you like a little more wine?

ADRIAN  
Aubrey.

AUBREY  
I'll go get it. Please promise not to go down there while I'm gone.

*Without waiting for an answer, AUBREY exits to kitchen. ADRIAN rises, drifts toward the basement door, looks back toward kitchen. He's at the door when AUBREY enters, glasses in one hand, wine bottle in the other. When she sees him, she stops.*

ADRIAN  
I was just thinking about it.

AUBREY  
Alright, go.

ADRIAN  
What?



AUBREY  
Go. That's an order. Go.

ADRIAN  
An order?

AUBREY  
Yep. Do it.

ADRIAN  
*(Considers)* You know I don't take orders.

AUBREY  
*(An order)* Then come over here and have a little wine.

ADRIAN  
Is that an order too?

AUBREY  
Oh for god's sake.

ADRIAN  
Alright. Wine it is.

*ADRIAN meets AUBREY at the couch, where they resume sitting. AUBREY puts glasses and bottle on the coffee table and pours. She hands him a glass and raises hers.*

AUBREY  
To, um.

ADRIAN  
Yes. To?

AUBREY  
To us.

ADRIAN  
To us.

*They clink and drink. They look at each other, smiling. AUBREY puts a hand around ADRIAN's neck and plants a kiss on his mouth.*

AUBREY  
We're good, aren't we?

ADRIAN  
We're great, hon.

AUBREY

Maybe we should just go upstairs.

ADRIAN

I'm still thinking about downstairs.

AUBREY

Oh, that.

ADRIAN

Aubrey.

AUBREY

*(Pleading a little)* Well. It's hard to explain.

*Seeing she needs comfort, ADRIAN softens and puts his arm across her shoulders and draws her close.*

AUBREY (CONT'D)

I know it's weird.

ADRIAN

You can tell me.

AUBREY

Promise you won't be angry?

ADRIAN

How can I promise that?

AUBREY

*(Kittenish)* You have to promise.

ADRIAN

*(Exasperated, withdraws his arm, puts his glass down)* For god's sake, Aubrey, we've been together for a couple centuries. You're not acting right. This isn't you.

AUBREY

*(Getting angry)* Now you're getting angry.

ADRIAN

*(Angry)* I never promised not to. Crap, I'm going down there.

*ADRIAN rises, strides purposefully toward basement door.*

AUBREY

*(A command)* Don't.

*ADRIAN stops, turns back toward her.*

ADRIAN

*(A command)* Tell.

AUBREY

Can't it wait until morning?

ADRIAN

Tell.

*AUBREY puts her glass down, takes a big breath, and rises. She is preparing a speech.*

AUBREY

There are lots of people out there, needing shelter.

ADRIAN

*(Not liking what he hear)* Right.

AUBREY

Homeless. Undocumented.

ADRIAN

*(Growing alarmed)* Right.

AUBREY

We always talk about how bad life is for them.

*ADRIAN starts slowly moving back toward the couch.*

ADRIAN

We do.

AUBREY

How lucky we are.

ADRIAN

*(Glancing at basement door)* We are lucky.

AUBREY

How we'd like to do something about it.

ADRIAN

Uh-huh.

AUBREY

I mean, besides give money to shelters.

*ADRIAN has arrived back at the couch but does not sit.*

ADRIAN

Sure.

AUBREY

So, I decided to do something.

ADRIAN

Without consulting me?

AUBREY

Yeah. It came up suddenly, the chance to do something, and I decided to jump on it.

ADRIAN

You decided to let someone stay in our basement?

AUBREY

I thought, it's cheaper than donating to some organization, and it's more efficient, you know? No administration costs, no waiting period, no bureaucracy, nothing like that.

ADRIAN

So you donated part of our house, as lodging, without so much as asking me?

AUBREY

You don't always ask me.

ADRIAN

*(Baffled)* Ask you?

AUBREY

You don't.

*Beat while ADRIAN thinks about this.*

ADRIAN

What are you talking about?

AUBREY

The car, for starters.

ADRIAN

Car? What car?

AUBREY

You know exactly what car.

ADRIAN

*(Thinking about it)* Wait, you mean the MG?

AUBREY

See? You do know.

ADRIAN

*(Still baffled about how this is relevant)* That was years ago. Decades, even. And besides you drove it as much as I did.

AUBREY

*(Righteously)* Still, you made a major purchase without consulting me.

ADRIAN

*(Starting to fight)* And we had a big fight over it and I promised I would never do something like that again. And I haven't.

AUBREY

*(Now in a full-on quarrel)* Our agreement was about major purchases.

ADRIAN

It was about major anything. Neither of us would make a major decision without the other.

AUBREY

It was about purchases. I haven't purchased anything.

ADRIAN

You're telling me—

AUBREY

It was just about *purchases*. Big ones.

ADRIAN

You're splitting a hair.

AUBREY

Am I?

ADRIAN

Yeah. Unless you can show me a signed a contract saying we would talk to each other only about major purchases and not other major stuff.

AUBREY

I can explain to you what you've done.

ADRIAN

What I've done?