

Rabbit Hole

By David Lindsay-Abaire

Research Book

Directed by Caity Quinn

Sound Design/Music by Jing Zhao

Hansen Theatre, Spring 2017

Rabbit Hole is a play written by David Lindsay-Abaire. It was the recipient of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The play premiered on Broadway in 2006, and it has also been produced by regional theatres in cities such as Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The play had its Spanish language premiere in San Juan, Puerto Rico in Autumn of 2010. The play deals with the ways family members survive a major loss, and includes comedy as well as drama. Cynthia Nixon won the 2006 Tony Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play for her performance as Becca in the New York production, and the play was nominated for several other Tony awards.

Characters

Becca—Howie's wife in her late thirties. She is usually a very responsible and sensible person, but makes some rash decisions throughout the play because of grief.

Izzy—Becca's irresponsible but well-wishing sister. She is unwed, but in a relationship with Auggie. She is pregnant throughout the duration of the play. Tension is created as Becca's mourning for her lost child lingers, and she is suspicious of Izzy's ability to raise her own.

Howie—Becca's husband in his late thirties. He is very caring, but has a hard time dealing with Danny's death, which causes him to be angry and depressed, though he hides it as much as possible. He obsessively watches home movies of Danny and thinks that the best way to move on is to try for another child. He attends group grief counseling meetings. It is implied that he has an affair with a woman from this group.

Nat—Izzy and Becca's mother. She is the voice of reason for her daughters. She helps Howie and Becca in the moving process, and provides motherly experience to Becca. Her son (Becca's brother, Arthur), a heroin addict, hanged himself at the age of 30. Becca, however, does not want to hear this, as she feels that the deaths are not comparable. She eventually realizes that her mother has gone through this as well, and accepts the comfort.

Jason Willette—17-year-old boy who accidentally hit Danny with his car, leading to Danny's death. He lives with his mom; his father's whereabouts are never revealed, but the script suggests he's dead. He enjoys science fiction and writes a story about wormholes to other dimensions in Danny's memory, which he publishes in the school's literary magazine. He sends this story to Becca and Howie. He later shows up at the open house,

wanting to talk to Howie and Becca. Howie chases him away, but he later meets with Becca. He blames himself for Danny's death.

Other characters mentioned

Danny—Killed at age 4. Son of Becca and Howie. Heard on a video Howie watches at night. He is on a beach in the video.

Taz—Dog whom Danny followed into the street. He is never seen in the play, but is heard barking on multiple occasions. Becca doesn't want him (because he reminds her of Danny), but Howie loves him.

Rick and Debbie—friends of Becca and Howie who have a daughter, Emily, Danny's age. Debbie avoids Becca after the accident, but Rick and Howie still play squash together.

Reema—Izzy's friend, a waitress at Calderone's. She sees Howie there with a woman, who is revealed to be a woman from his grief counseling.

Auggie—Izzy's boyfriend and baby's father. He had a girlfriend when he began a relationship with Izzy.

Broadway production

Rabbit Hole premiered on Broadway at the Biltmore Theatre in a Manhattan Theatre Club production on January 12, 2006 in previews, officially on February 2, 2006 and closed on April 9, 2006 after 77 performances. Directed by Daniel Sullivan, the cast featured Cynthia Nixon (Becca), John Slattery (Howie), Tyne Daly (Nat), John Gallagher, Jr. (Jason) and Mary Catherine Garrison (Izzy).

While John Gallagher, Jr. was in this show, he was in rehearsals for *Spring Awakening*.

The play was originally commissioned by South Coast Repertory, Costa Mesa, California, and first presented at its Pacific Playwrights Festival reading series in 2005.

The play won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for 2007. The play received five 2006 Tony Award nominations: for Best Play, Best Direction of a Play, Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Play (Tyne Daly) and Best Scenic Design of a Play (John Lee Beatty). Cynthia Nixon won the 2006 Tony Award, Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play.

Film adaptation

Main article: Rabbit Hole (film)

The movie adaptation, directed by John Cameron Mitchell, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September 2010, and received a limited theatrical release in December 2010. Nicole Kidman stars as Becca Corbett, the character originally played by Nixon. She is also credited as producer of the film. Aaron Eckhart plays Howie Corbett. Other cast members include Dianne Wiest, Tammy Blanchard, Giancarlo Esposito and Sandra Oh.

Awards and nominations

Awards

- Pulitzer Prize for Drama
- Tony Award for Best Actress in a Play – Cynthia Nixon

Nominations

- Tony Award for Best Play
- Tony Award for Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play -
Cynthia Nixon
- Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play – Tyne Daly
- Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play – Daniel Sullivan
- Tony Award for Best Scenic Design of a Play – John Lee Beatty

David Lindsay-Abaire (born November 30, 1969) is an American playwright, lyricist and screenwriter. He received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2007 for his play *Rabbit Hole*, which also earned several Tony Award nominations.

David Lindsay-Abaire was born **David Abaire** in Boston, Massachusetts. He concentrated in theatre at Sarah Lawrence College, where he graduated in 1992. He was accepted into the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at the Juilliard School, where he wrote under the tutelage of playwrights Marsha Norman and Christopher Durang from 1996 to 1998.

Career

Lindsay-Abaire had his first theatrical success with *Fuddy Meers*, which was workshopped as part of the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center in 1998 under Artistic Director Lloyd Richards. The play premiered Off-Broadway at the Manhattan Theatre Club, running from November 2, 1999 to January 2000 and transferred to the Minetta Lane Theatre on January 27, 2000, closing in April 2000 after 16 previews and 78 performances there. He returned to the Manhattan Theatre Club in 2001 with *Wonder of the World*, starring Sarah Jessica Parker, about a wife who suddenly leaves her husband and hops a bus to Niagara Falls in search of freedom, enlightenment, and the meaning of life.

Lindsay-Abaire also wrote *Kimberly Akimbo* (2000), *Dotting and Dashing* (1999), *Snow Angel* (1999), and *A Devil Inside* (Off-Broadway, 1997). Among his early short plays, he wrote *The Li'l Plays* (1997-1999) which are five comedic plays, each 10–15 minutes in length. His play *Rabbit Hole* premiered in 2006 on Broadway with Cynthia Nixon, Tyne Daly, and John Slattery, and won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play, as well as other Tony awards, and Cynthia Nixon won the 2006 Tony Award as Best Actress. He wrote the book for the musical *High Fidelity*, which ran on Broadway in December 2006.

He wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *Shrek the Musical* which ran on Broadway from November 8, 2008 (previews) to January 3, 2010, with Lindsay-Abaire receiving a 2009 Tony Award nomination for Book of a Musical and in the West End in May 2011. The musical ran for 441

performances on Broadway.

Good People officially opened on Broadway on March 3, 2011, with Frances McDormand and Tate Donovan in the lead roles. The play was nominated for the 2011 Tony Award, Best Play and won the 2011 Tony Award, Actress in a Play for McDormand.

His play *Ripcord* opened Off-Broadway on October 20, 2015 at the Manhattan Theatre Club in a limited engagement. Directed by David Hyde Pierce, the cast features Marylouise Burke, Rachel Dratch and Holland Taylor. The play focuses on two roommates in a retirement home, who according to *Variety* "devise dirty tricks...to torment one another."

Among his influences, Lindsay-Abaire said: "I love Chris's [Durang] work. And I don't think there's been a piece written about me that hasn't mentioned the fact that he and I live in the same world. But I think I've also been influenced by John Guare and Tina Howe and older folks like Feydeau and Ionesco and Joe Orton."

Lindsay-Abaire has received commissions from Dance Theater Workshop and the Jerome Foundation. He has received awards from the Berilla Kerr Foundation, the Lincoln Center LeComte du Nuoy Fund, Mixed Blood Theater, Primary Stages, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, the Tennessee Williams/ New Orleans Literary Festival, and the South Carolina Playwrights Festival.

Characters:

Becca: Wife

Howie: Husband

Danny: Son

Peg: Neighbor

XXX: Neighbor

Izzy: Sister

Jason: boy who killed Danny.

Mom

Authur: Becca's brother who died of OD.

Gaby: Friend from support group

DAY 1 Starts in the afternoon

1. Becca works in her garden.
2. Peg invites Becca and Howie over for dinner tonight.
3. Becca declines invitation.
4. Peg steps on flower and apologizes.
5. Howie gets back from work and chat with Becca in the kitchen.
6. Becca gets a phone call from Izzy at night.
7. Becca picks up Izzy from police station for a bar fight.
8. Becca and Izzy drives back to Becca's house.

DAY 2 Starts in the morning

9. Early next morning, Becca finds Howie on the couch watching old family videos of Danny.
10. Howie leaves to play squash.
11. Izzy tells Becca about her boyfriend and that she's pregnant a few weeks.
12. Becca and Howie goes to support group.
13. Becca has a breakdown in the support group because someone said God had to take their daughter because He needed another angel.
14. Becca and Howie go to a restaurant for lunch, but Becca doesn't feel like ordering anything.
15. Becca is at home taking down Danny's things and washing Danny's clothes.
16. Becca goes to her mother's house and meets Auggie.
17. Becca brings Izzy Danny's things.
18. Izzy says it will be weird to see her son walking around in Danny's clothes.
19. Becca leaves.
20. Becca drops clothes off at Goodwill.
21. Becca drives pass a school bus and sees a boy and gets distracted and she follows the school bus.
22. Finally Becca watches the boy get off school bus.
23. Evening, Becca and Howie chat.
24. Howie puts on some music and gives Becca a shoulder massage.
25. Becca turns Howie down (they haven't had sex in 8 months).
26. They argue.

27. Late at night, Howie watches family videos by himself.

DAY 3 Starts in the morning

28. Becca is on the treadmill. Howie leaves to work.

29. Becca takes the train to her old company. Her friends don't work there anymore.

30. Becca follows the boy on the school bus again to the library.

31. Becca picks up the book *Parallel Universes* and checks it out of the library.

32. Becca runs into the boy.

33. Howie turns down Yankees game because of support group.

34. Howie goes to support group alone.

35. Becca calls mom offering to make a birthday cake for Izzy.

36. Becca gives her mom shit over the phone.

DAY 4

37. Howie and Becca drive to the birthday party.

38. Howie talks about having another baby.

39. Becca talks about selling the house.

40. They almost have a car accident.

41. They're at the bowling alley.

42. Becca has a psychological breakdown because her mom talks about Arthur and Danny.

43. Becca follows the school bus again and the boy greets Becca.

44. They go to a park and chat. The boy is the driver who killed Danny.

45. Boy wants to talk again sometime.

46. Howie goes to support group alone. He sees Gaby smoke pot outside support group, he joins her.

47. Howie and Gaby goes to support group high.

48. Howie gets home and he can't find Danny's video.

49. Howie blames Becca, they fight. Howie finally loses control.

Day 5

50. Becca and boy talk again in the park.

51. Boy shows Becca his comic book *Rabbit Hole*. It's about parallel universes.

52. Boy confesses that he might have been going too fast on that day. It was a 30 zone, he might have been going 31 or 32.

53. Howie smokes pot with Gaby again outside support group.

54. They skip support group and go to play arcade games together.

55. Gaby tells Howie that Kevin has left her. She thinks it's inevitable.

56. Howie comes home and apologizes to Becca. And talks about selling the house.

DAY 6

57. Becca is at her mom's house sorting through toys.

58. Howie gets dog Taz back. Their house is for sale. Open House day.

59. Becca goes out to park and read the book.

60. Family comes to see the house. Real awkward moment in Danny's room.

61. Becca and Izzy hang out in saloon.

62. Becca sees a mom not buying her son candy, she interferes.

63. The mom says Becca is obviously not a mom, and Becca slaps her.

64. They get home. Howie tells them they need to clean out Danny's room.

65. The boy (Jason) comes to their house and gives Becca his comic book.
66. Howie is not happy about it. He gets mad.
67. Howie takes Taz out for a walk. He cries.
68. Howie asks Becca why she didn't tell him about meeting Jason. Becca mentions that she knows Howie has been smoking pot.
69. Becca and her mom have a chat about coping.
70. Becca reads the comic book.

DAY 7

71. Howie calls Gaby.
72. Howie goes to Gaby's house.
73. Becca drives to Jason's house and sees that he is going to prom.
74. (Flashback of the accident.)
75. Becca cries in her car.
76. Jason sees Becca.
77. Howie throws away child's seat.
78. Howie comes home. Becca is not home. He finds that Danny's room is cleaned out.
79. Becca cries in her car.

DAY 8

80. Howie is sleeping on Danny's bed.
81. Becca is sleeping in her car.
82. Jason wakes her up and they go to park.
83. They talk about the comic book.
84. Becca finds comfort in science.
85. Howie wakes up and sees Becca in the kitchen.
86. Howie says he has thought that Becca left him.
87. Becca wants to invite Rick and Debbie over for a cookout.
88. Danny's birthday is coming up.
89. They talk about what they're going to do.
90. They have the cookout with family and friends.
91. They are moving towards reconciliation.

RABBIT HOLE ANALYSIS

Jing Zhao Oct 19, 2016

Characters:

- Becca: Danny's mother. late 30s/early 40s
- Howie: Danny's father. late 30s/early 40s
- Nat: Becca and Izzy's mother.
- Danny: Son who died in a car accident.
- Izzy: Becca's sister early 30s

World:

- Larchmont, NY.
- Present time.

Given Circumstances:

- Danny's died 8 months ago in a car accident.

External Events:

- Act One
 - Scene 1 (Late Feb. Kitchen. Afternoon)
 - Izzy tells Becca about the bar fight.
 - Izzy reveals that the girl she hit was Auggie's girlfriend.
 - Izzy tells Becca she's pregnant
 - Becca offers Danny's old clothes to Izzy, but Izzy turns it down.
 - Scene 2 (Becca's living room. Later that night.)
 - Becca and Howie discusses about Izzy
 - They talk about bathroom set for Izzy's birthday.
 - Becca complains about Debbie.
 - Howie dims lights, puts on music, & gives her a massage.
 - Becca turns him down.
 - Becca proposes selling the house.
 - Howie proposes having another child.
 - Becca goes to sleep.
 - Howie watches video of Danny.
 - Scene 3 (A week later. Kitchen)
 - Nat, Izzy, Becca, Howie cut birthday cake
 - They chat about the Kennedys
 - Becca presents gift to Izzy.
 - Nat gives Izzy baby stuff for birthday.
 - Becca feels bad and tries to take back the shower set.
 - Nat brings out the topic of finding comfort.
 - Becca loses it.
 - Becca goes to bed.

- Scene 4 (Danny's room. Later that night)
 - Becca rereads letter from Jason.
 - Jason has enclosed short story with this letter.
 - Jason wants to meet in person.
 - Howie tries to watch video tape of Danny, but finds that the tape's been recorded over.
 - They have a big fight. (CLIMAX?)
- Act Two
 - Scene 1 (Living room. Two months later. Open house day)
 - Izzy tells Howie that he gotta clean out Danny's room if he wants to sell the house.
 - Izzy asks Howie if Becca blames her.
 - Izzy confronts Howie about his "date" with another woman 2 weeks ago.
 - Becca and Nat returns home with groceries.
 - They tell the story of Becca slapping a stranger in the supermarket.
 - Jason enters the house.
 - Howie kicks him out of the house.
 - Scene 2 (Danny's room. A week later)
 - Becca and Nat cleans out Danny's room.
 - Becca talks about her literature class.
 - Nat talks about how she kicked Bailey.
 - Nat tells the story of Danny eating espresso beans.
 - Becca and Nat have a good moment talking about coping.
 - Scene 3 (Living room. A few days later)
 - Jason and Becca chat.
 - Jason tells Becca about driving a bit too fast that day.
 - Becca finds comfort in parallel universes.
 - Scene 4 (Kitchen. Dusk)
 - Becca gives Izzy baking recipe.
 - Howie decides to not go to group anymore.
 - They decide to go to the cookout on Sunday.
 - They sit in the couch and Becca holds Howie's hand.