

The Almost Final Episode of Four of a Kind

By Brent Holland

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DEDICATION

My older brother Byron is my best friend. If I'm funny at all, he's definitely a big part of the reason why.

STORY OF THE PLAY

"Four of a Kind" has been a hit show for years and the four girls on the show have grown up in front of a television audience. Unbeknownst to them until recently, they have been woefully underpaid by industry standards and are getting only a portion of what their "on-air" father makes. When the studio refuses to re-negotiate, the girls take matters into their own hands during their live season finale! While holding all of the cards, the four girls re-negotiate their contract during commercial breaks at the threat of very serious plot repercussions! Approximately 35-40 minutes.

SETTING

The play takes place on the set of the television show "Four of a Kind." The set is a typical middle America living room complete with a couch and chair. However, the edge of the room, where a wall would be has space for a work area, including space for a camera operator. The producer's office has a desk and chair that can be quickly placed downstage or in front of the curtain.

The play takes place in the present with the actors dressed in casual clothing that would be representative of an average middle-class family.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 5 w, 3 flexible)

DIRECTOR: (Flexible) Directs the show. Understands the girls' dilemma but at the end of the day just wants to produce a good show and protect his job.

PRODUCER: (Flexible) Answers to the corporate bosses and is concerned with ratings and money.

LISA: (Flexible) The agent that has represented all four girls since the show began. Knows they are underpaid.

JASMINE: Plays Molly on the show. She is the leader of the girls on and off screen.

ANA: Plays Jessie, one of the twins on the show.

ARABELLA: Plays Kristen on the show and is the twin sister of Jessie. Arabella is insecure.

ALLIE: The youngest of the four and plays Lindsay, the on-screen "baby sister." She is very manipulative and inventive.

DREW: Drew is the primary camera operator who is dating Jasmine in real life. He is totally on her side.

MARK: Plays the Dad on the show. Not a particularly nice person, and he is always at odds with the four girls. He is a successful actor and is well paid.

ERIN: Plays Dad's girlfriend, Christine, on the show. Isn't happy on the show and would love to move on to other things.

PROPERTIES

Paperwork and contracts
Desk phone for Producer
Cell phones (4)
An envelope
Textbooks and homework
Pizza box(es)

Towel
Defibrillator
Book for Mark
Whiskey bottle with brown liquid
Several shot glasses
Folder with contracts and a pen

Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on the Producer's office. The PRODUCER is seated looking at paperwork. The DIRECTOR enters.)

DIRECTOR: You wanted to see me, Mr. Nester?

PRODUCER: *(Looking up.)* Yeah, come on in, Chris. Have you seen the numbers?

DIRECTOR: For last week? Not yet.

PRODUCER: We slid from fourth to ninth for the week.

DIRECTOR: *(Seriously.)* Well, that sucks.

PRODUCER: That's an understatement.

DIRECTOR: Yeah, but ninth is still a top ten show.

PRODUCER: And for a normal show that would be fine, but this is "Four of a Kind" we're talking about. We've been in the top five for all nine seasons and the overall number one show for the last five.

DIRECTOR: It's just one episode...

PRODUCER: Is it? We've fallen out of the top five, six times out of twelve episodes this season. We won't have the numbers for last night's show for a few more days, but if we drop out of the top ten, I bet the studio is going to want to make changes.

DIRECTOR: *(Seeing the implication.)* I've been in the chair almost since the beginning, they need to remember that.

PRODUCER: But if we aren't a top five show any more, they're going to wonder if a new direction is needed... ya know?

DIRECTOR: These girls have lived on television for nine years... America has grown up with "Four of a Kind." We've run every scenario and situation under the sun with these kids... maybe it's just fatigue setting in.

PRODUCER: Maybe... but that's not an answer the studio's going to accept. They're panicking.

DIRECTOR: Is that why we're doing a live show?

PRODUCER: You know that wasn't my call. The studio thought filming the episode where he tells the girls he's engaged live would give a kick to the season finale.

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DIRECTOR: The cast hates the idea. I do too.

PRODUCER: But we're going to have to live with it.

DIRECTOR: It's a logistical nightmare and it adds nothing to the episode, except that we might totally screw it up.

PRODUCER: I wouldn't recommend that. *(SFX: Phone buzzes and he picks it up.)* Yeah? *(Listens.)* Okay. Send her in. *(Hangs up. Then, to the DIRECTOR.)* Lisa's here.

DIRECTOR: Their contracts are due?

PRODUCER: *(Sighing.)* Actually, no. They have two years left on their contract, but they want to renegotiate. We haven't even wrapped up season nine, but it's been non-stop.

DIRECTOR: *(Getting up.)* Better you than me.

PRODUCER: No kidding.

(LISA enters, sees the DIRECTOR.)

LISA: *(To PRODUCER.)* You busy?

PRODUCER: No. Chris was just leaving. Come on in.

(DIRECTOR goes to exit.)

LISA: You ready for tomorrow night?

DIRECTOR: *(Flatly.)* No. Are the girls ready?

LISA: I don't know. They don't stop complaining about it long enough to find out.

DIRECTOR: I feel their pain. *(Exits.)*

LISA: *(Down to business.)* You know the current contract isn't going to fly anymore. The girls are ticked.

PRODUCER: What can I say? It's the best we're going to do.

LISA: That's crap. We all know what Mark and Erin make on the show and it's four times what the girls are making. The girls are making way less compared to principal characters on other hit shows and they also haven't gotten a significant raise since season two.

PRODUCER: What's your point? Mark Carter had a career before this show. He's never been cheap.

LISA: But no one is tuning in to see Mark Carter. Without the girls, there wouldn't be a show.

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PRODUCER: But the show MADE these girls, they need to remember that.

LISA: They don't care. They know it can't last forever and they want to get paid. I can't blame them.

PRODUCER: Well, they can bring that back up in two years.

LISA: That's not going to work. Jasmine is ready to walk out right now.

PRODUCER: And if she walks out on a contract from us, she won't ever find work again.

LISA: Is that a threat?

PRODUCER: *(Coldly.)* Yes. Just let them know that we are very serious about that.

LISA: *(Getting up.)* Well, I guess there's nothing left to talk about then.

PRODUCER: Not for another two years.

LISA: So that's your final word?

PRODUCER: Mine and the studio's.

LISA: Well, I'll deliver the news, but they're not going to be happy about it.

PRODUCER: They're actors. As long as they can act happy, we'll all be okay.

(LIGHTS fade to a BLACKOUT.)

Scene 2

(LIGHTS up on the set of "Four of a Kind" before the final rehearsal for the live show. JASMINE, LISA, ANA, ARABELLA and ALLIE are mid-conversation.)

JASMINE: So if we don't do what they say, they'll black ball us??

LISA: That's the impression I got.

ANA: We should have done this before the season began.

JASMINE: *(Angrily.)* I'm gonna quit.

ARABELLA: You can't. We need you, Jazz.

JASMINE: What if I walk out before the live show?

End of Freeview

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