



SAMPLE PAGES



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Tommy Broadwater was once a great big TV star. When he was seven years old, he landed the title role on the iconic 1990s family sitcom "It's Always Rory!" But times have been tough for Tommy since he grew into manhood. Now struggling with depression and other personal issues, he decides to reveal everything about himself to his still-adoring public — in a shocking and consequential way.

Dramatis Personae:

TOMMY BROADWATER, 32 to 37 years old, light features, average to tall, handsome. white male. Former child star on two tv series, gay, now older and going through depression and deciding whether or not to come out.

NATE FINGERHUT, 35 to 40 years old, white male. Jewish, gay, Tommy's partner, darker features, a bit out of shape, average or better looks, college educated, the voice of reason.

MARCY KOZLOWSKI, 32 to 37 years old, white female. blonde, pretty, sweet, smart, practical, morning TV co-host, her on-air persona more naïve than she is in real life, tougher than she looks.

D'ARCY COLLINS, 50 to 59 years old, white male. British, edgy morning TV co-host who thinks he's doing hard-hitting journalism, the yang to Marcy's yin. Prototype: Piers Morgan.

RAY BREITWASSER is TOMMY's father, 60 to 69, gruff, compactly built. Self-taught and proud of it. Old school but smart enough to change with the times. A bit of an eccentric.

PAULA BREITWASSER, TOMMY's mother, 60 to 69 years old, white female. Tough, slightly out-of-shape, possibly bleached blonde, formidable. She says whatever she thinks in decidedly uncouched terms. Italian-American.

OFFSTAGE VOICE, male or female, pre-recorded.

ANNOUNCER (DANA BUMILLER), male, pre-recorded. Great voice, with a bit of a smile in it, friendly sounding.

Scene Four

RAY BREITWASSER's bungalow in Culver City, California. It's Sunday, the day after Sitcom Con. The room is crowded with old, worn furniture, faded framed photos hang on the walls, lots of little tchotchkes scattered all over the room. RAY BREITWASSER is TOMMY's father, 60 to 69, gruff, compactly built. Self-taught and proud of it. Old school but smart enough to change with the times. A bit of an eccentric. HE is sitting on the sofa, doing a puzzle in the newspaper. With a pen.

SFX: Doorbell chimes. A pause.

RAY continues to work on his puzzle. It chimes again. RAY looks quizzical, then goes back to his puzzle. Now an impatient ring of the doorbell.

RAY

[Loudly.] Is that the doorbell or my phone?

TOMMY

[Offstage.] Does this *[HE rings doorbell again]* sound like "Polovtsian Dance Number Two" by Borodin?

RAY

Not really. Is that you, Tommy Bear?

TOMMY

[Offstage.] No, my name's Thaddeus G. Periwinkle. I'm working my way through auto repair school selling The Great Books collection.

RAY

We already have two sets. Thank you.

TOMMY

[Offstage.] Answer the door, Dad.

RAY

Who is it?

TOMMY

[Offstage.] Answer the door, Dad.

RAY

O.K., Thad. I'm coming.

RAY gets up and unlocks the door for TOMMY, who opens it and enters.

TOMMY

You're funny.

RAY

I know. Where do you think *you* got it from, your mother's side? They're about as funny as trench warfare. Come on in, Tommy Bear. Make yourself to home.

TOMMY

O.K. What's the big emergency?

RAY

Who said there was a big emergency?

TOMMY

You did. On the phone, remember? That's why I'm here.

RAY

Oh. Right, right, right. Yeah, I need someone to get that jar down off the top shelf.

TOMMY

That's why you made me *schlep* all the way out to the west side? Don't you have any tall neighbors?

RAY

Not that I'm currently speaking to.

TOMMY

Ever heard of a stepladder?

RAY

I've *heard* of one, I just won't get *on* one. Not at my age. You want me to fall on my head like your friend Roger and die and be paralyzed for the rest of my life?

TOMMY

Walter was the one who fell off the ladder, Dad. Roger O.D.'d.

RAY

Oh, right. He was a good man, Walter.

TOMMY

If you say so.

RAY

Well, he was a good actor, anyway. He did a good job playing your father.

TOMMY

I guess.

RAY

What?

TOMMY

I don't want to get into it with you, Dad. He's dead and gone. Let's leave it at that.

RAY

Whatever you say.

TOMMY

I say.

RAY

I'll tell ya, though, that Roger? *He* was a little turd.

TOMMY

Roger was not a little turd. Well, he was little, but he wasn't a turd. He was ... complex.

RAY

Fine. Could we continue this conversation after you, uh ...? [*HE indicates the jar.*]

TOMMY

Right. Sorry.

RAY

Thank you.

TOMMY

[*HE reaches up and easily takes down a jar.*] Well, *that* was difficult. Anything else while I'm here? Get someone's cat out of a tree? Paint the ceiling?

RAY

If I ever want anything like that ... and I won't ...

TOMMY

... you'll hire a professional.

RAY

You want something done right, you hire a pro. You hear me?

TOMMY

I hear you. I hear you. I've heard you since I was three.

RAY

Good. Sit down and tell me what's going on with you. You want some tea?

TOMMY

Fuck yeah. I could use a nice cup of tea right now.

RAY

Don't say that word.

TOMMY

What? Cup?

RAY

The f-word. It doesn't bother *me*, but it makes you sound ignorant.

TOMMY

I *am* ignorant. I never graduated college, remember?

RAY

Me either. Who cares? Some of the stupidest people I know have a wallful of degrees. Jesus Christ wept! There's nothing worse than a dumb intellectual.

TOMMY

O.K., Dad.

RAY

And even if you *are* ignorant, you don't have to *sound* like it. So I didn't go to college. Big whoop. I happen to be self-taught. The job I had at the plant — remember that? — it afforded me plenty of time to read. And boy, did I read! Everything I could get my hands on: fiction, non-fiction, history, science, biography, romance. You should always try to fill up your brain with facts and ideas.

TOMMY

Yes, dad.

RAY

You know, I took one of those "word power" tests they have on the computer — did I ever tell you this? — turns out I have the exact same size vocabulary as Anderson Cooper.

TOMMY

That's great, dad. So, what kind do you have?

RAY

What kind of vocabulary?

TOMMY

Tea, dad. We were talking about tea.

RAY

I have what I have. This isn't the Beverly Hills Hotel, you know.

RAY prepares tea for TOMMY.

TOMMY

Tetley will be fine, thank you. *[A beat.]* So, Dad, did you see the show?

RAY

What show? *[Excited.]* Is "Rory" back on again? I hope it's on Hulu this time. That's the only one I get, you know.

TOMMY

No, not "Rory."

RAY

They have all the best reruns. "M*A*S*H." "Scrubs." They just added "Married With Children" last week. I forgot how funny that show was! Good acting, too.

TOMMY

No, not "Rory." Marcy's show. Her morning show? On channel nine?

RAY

Oh, shoot. I forgot all about it.

TOMMY

Of course you did.

RAY

And I was gonna write myself a note, too. Damn it!

TOMMY

It's O.K. We only remember the things that are really important to us.

RAY

Don't start with me, Tommy. Please. I happen to be very concerned about my memory lately.

TOMMY

Oh come on, Dad. You're as sharp as a tack. You finish the *L.A. Times* crossword every day.

RAY

Not Friday's or Saturday's. I don't remember things like I used to. Like people's names. I used to be able to come up with the names of old character actors just like that. Now it takes five, 10 minutes, sometimes half a day. Right before you got here, I was trying to think of that guy from *Casablanca*.

TOMMY

Which guy from *Casablanca*? John Barrymore?

RAY

Barrymore wasn't in *Casablanca*.

TOMMY

I meant Humphrey Bogart.

RAY

No, this guy was one of the waiters.

TOMMY

Claude Rains.

RAY

Claude Rains played a policeman, not a waiter. What are you, illiterate?

TOMMY

Sidney Greenstreet.

RAY

No, but this guy was fat, too.

TOMMY

I'm sorry. I can't help you, Dad. I bet Nate would know. Want me to call him?

RAY

He talked with a funny accent.

TOMMY

I've only seen it once, and I was a kid at the time. You showed it to me, remember?

RAY

You've only seen *Casablanca* once? And you call yourself an actor?

TOMMY

Dad, it'll come to you eventually. Just don't think so hard.

RAY

I hope I'm not getting you-know-what.

TOMMY

You're not getting you-know-what. You'll probably *never* get you-know-what.

RAY

What makes you so sure?

TOMMY

Because, nobody in our family has ever had you-know-what.

RAY

Yeah? Watch. I'll be the first.

TOMMY

Look at Grampa Joe. He was sharp as a tack until the day he died. What was he, 94, 95?

RAY

Yeah, but he had my mother to take care of him. Married men live longer than divorcés. Married men and people with pets. They've done studies, you know.

TOMMY

So, get a dog.

RAY

And do what with him?

TOMMY

I don't know. Hang out and smoke Marlboros?

RAY

You're a funny boy, Tommy Bear. And a smart ass into the bargain.

TOMMY

Yes, we established that long ago.

RAY

[*A beat.*] So ... what can I do for ya?

TOMMY

Excuse me?

RAY

What can I do for you? Why. Are. You. Here.

TOMMY

You asked me to. The jar?

RAY

Right. See what I mean? So, how's Marcy?

TOMMY

That was quite a change of topic.

RAY

So, how is she?

TOMMY

She's Marcy. She's a pain in the ass.

RAY

A very fetching pain in the ass, I might add. You should have married her, Tommy Bear. I told ya but you wouldn't listen.

TOMMY

Not exactly my demographic, Dad.

RAY

That woman *walks* like she loves sex. She *breathes* like she loves sex. She ...

TOMMY

God you're getting crude in your old age.

RAY

Nah, I've always been this way. You just never noticed. Come on, you gotta admit, she's quite the tasty morsel.

TOMMY

Would you stop that please?

RAY

Oh, relax. I'm just trying to get your goat.

TOMMY

Well, congratulations. Goat gotten.

RAY

I'm tellin' ya, if I were 10 years younger ...

TOMMY

Try 50.

RAY

You still could have married her you know. Even though you're ...

TOMMY

I'm what?

RAY

You know.

TOMMY

Look at this: he can't even say it. I was never attracted to her in that way, Dad. Obviously.

RAY

Did that stop Rock Hudson? Or Cary Grant? Five times?

TOMMY

And I'm sure they lived happy, satisfying lives.

RAY

Who cares? They were famous and loaded and had a nice warm ... bed to come home to at night.

TOMMY

You're such a romantic.

RAY

Sometimes I wonder: who's to blame for turning you that way, your mother or me?

TOMMY

Seriously?

RAY

I bet it was your mother.

TOMMY

Oh, yes. That would make everything O.K., wouldn't it? You know those little links I keep sending you? Do you ever click on them?

RAY

Sometimes. But most of them are just psychobabble claptrap.

TOMMY

Interesting turn of phrase. Dad, I've told you a million times: a person doesn't "turn" gay. They're born that way. It's in their DNA. Or RNA. Whichever. Mom didn't do anything, and you didn't do anything.

RAY

Nobody knows that for sure.

TOMMY

Yes, they do. It's called "science."

RAY

Oh. "Science."

TOMMY

Remember that year I went to Camp Carlisle? My first and only summer at overnight camp. You guys drug me there kicking and screaming.

RAY

Dragged.

TOMMY

I just couldn't bear the thought of being away from home for a whole month.

RAY

But you wound up loving it, didn't you?

TOMMY

You remember.

RAY

I remember things that are important to me.

TOMMY

You know *why* I wound up loving it?

RAY

No idea.

TOMMY

There was this handsome boy who lived in my cabin. Short with black hair and green eyes, long eyelashes, sweet suntanned face. Just my type, as I later found out. My first crush. At age *seven*! But it wasn't just his looks that got to me. It was his smell.

RAY

The kid stunk?

TOMMY

He smelled like Off.

RAY

Off?

TOMMY

Off insect repellent. His parents must have told him to use it every 15 minutes. You could smell that boy an hour after he left the room. To me, it was as delicious as Versace. Even today, one whiff and I'm instantly transported to the best summer of my life, and that gorgeous young kid with the skinny legs. I was only seven, but I already knew who I was and what I wanted.

RAY

Maybe, maybe not.

TOMMY

Before camp ended, Off Boy had to go home. He got sick or he had allergies or maybe he was just plain homesick. Anyways, I was heartbroke for 24 hours.

RAY

Heartbroken. Why only 24 hours?

TOMMY

The day after he left, one of the counsellors asked me to be in the camp play: *Cheaper by the Dozen*. I played one of the sons. I even got to sing a solo in my cute little soprano voice: *[sings] Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low*. I soon forgot about Off Boy and found my new love: acting. It was like nothing I'd ever experienced in my life. I felt like ... like I was soaring above the clouds. When I got back home, I didn't want it to be over. I didn't want that feeling to go away. I begged Mom to find me an agent. I knew *this* was what I wanted to do with my life. A few months after I signed with Gloria, I booked that Count Chocula commercial. Remember?

RAY

I remember.

TOMMY

And a few months after that, I got "Rory." But that meant I couldn't go back to camp again because now I was this great big TV star. The kids would have put me on a pedestal or pestered me or made fun of me and Mom didn't want any of that. I couldn't even go to a regular school anymore. I had to be tutored on the set. Margaret Salisbury. Remember her?

RAY

Yeah. She looked like Miss Hathaway from "The Beverly Hillbillies."