**RAINBOW BABY**

(a 40 minute drama by Claire Booker)

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**CHARACTERS**

Dr Louise Adamson. . . A middle aged academic.

Sylvia Glenn. . . . . . . ..A housewife (30s - 50s).

Polly. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . An 18 year old girl with learning difficulties.

Daniel. . . . . . . . . . . . . . A volunteer helper (20s - 40s).

**SET & PROPS**

The action takes place over a period of an hour in a Church hall side room.

Down stage right is a large window (or representation of one). Stage left there is a door (or representation of one) and exit point. A sewing machine sits on a small table, next to which stands a chair. An area up stage right is kept free for the rehearsal scene. In this area there is a step ladder, and a small keyboard instrument such as a synthesiser (music can be pre-recorded so it does not need to be functional). The head of a panto cow, a fake fur coat and a child’s stool are also required.

EXCERPT

**Scene Three**

The lights rise on Louise who has been sitting motionless. She rises, goes to her coat and pulls out a packet of cigarettes, takes a cigarette guiltily, looks around, hesitates, then puts the cigarette back into the packet, and the packet back into the coat.

Louise All this . . . for the perfect child. It could have happened. So easily. *(pause)* She was going to be brilliant, talented, lovely to watch grow. Right now, we’d be choosing universities, discussing Brecht, arguing about the Booker short-list. *(pause)* Why can't I accept it?

Polly *(hammering from outside the window, stage left)* Let me in!

Louise What? *(goes to the window)* Polly.

Polly *(more hammering)* I’m cold.

Louise What are you doing out there?

Polly I’m cold. Cold. Let me in!

Louise I'll go and fetch your mother.

Polly *(hammering)* Pleeeeeease.

Louise You’ll break the glass.

Polly *(more hammering)* Pleeeeeease.

Louise Ok. Ok Just stop banging.

Polly *(stops hammering)* Cold. Cold. Cold.

Louise (*helps Polly to climb in)* Careful now. Mind your head.

Polly Okey dokey. *(as she swings into the room)* Oops, I'm showing my knickers.

 *(pulls on her skirt, then hugs herself)* Brrrr. It’s freezing. *(stamps her feet rhythmically)* One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four.

Louise Come and sit by the heater. *(Louise fetches her fur coat from where it’s hanging)*

Polly One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four.

Louise Does your mother know you're here?

Polly No. I slipped her. *(laughs)* I slipped her. *(Louise drapes her coat over Polly’s shoulders)* Nice. Like a big cat. *(Polly puts the coat fully on and parades in it)* Mieou. Mieou. Purrrr. Purrrrr.

Louise I'd better go and tell her you’re here.

Polly No, no, no. Don’t tell Mum. It's her favourite game. Find Polly. *(stroking the fur and purring)* Mieou.

Louise I really think I ought.

Polly Shall I show you my Christmas cards? I've got twenty already. *(Louise hesitates)* I like you.

Louise Oh.

Polly *(rummaging in the little bag slung across her front)* Do you like my handbag?

Louise Yes.

Polly *(proudly)* It's plastic.

Louise Very nice though.

Polly Now let me see. Bingo! *(pulls out the cards, drops them onto the ground, and kneels down)* Lovely, aren't they? *(spreads them out)* This one's from Auntie Eileen. This one's from Richard. This one's from Mrs Richard. And this one's from Daniel. Two kisses. *(laughs)* That means two babies. *(pause)* How many do you think I've got?

Louise Cards?

Polly Yes.

Louise Twenty.

Polly *(surprised)* Oh, you counted.

Louise You told me.

Polly Did I?

Louise Let’s put them away, shall we?

Polly Oh thingie! My grip's fallen out. *(pushes her hair into place)* I don't know. My hair. I can't do a thing with it.

Louise You are a bit dishevelled.

Polly De-what?

Louise Dishevelled.

Polly De . . .shll . . evelled?

Louise No. Dishevelled. Middle English 'dishevel' from the Old French 'deschevele'. *(pause)* It's a very old word.

Polly *(plays with the word)* Shevele, shevele, shevele.

Louise *(patiently)* Dishevelled.

Polly *(conclusively)* Deshllevelled.

Louise Why not? Deshllevelled it is.

Polly *(putting the cards away)* Do you like my tights? They're from Marks and Spencers. *(pause)* Do you like me? *(Louise instinctively looks away)* Do you like me?

Louise *(pause)* Well . . .

Polly Do you?

Louise Of course.

Polly I like you.

Louise Why on earth do you like me?

Polly I like everybody.

Louise Touché. *(Louise moves away)* If you knew how close we could have been.

Polly Are you sad?

Louise A little.

Polly Oh dear.

Louise It’s hard to explain.

Polly *(noticing Louise is upset)* Don't cry. You’ll get a headache.

Louise *(pause)* I had a little girl once. A little baby girl.

Polly Ooh, lovely.

Louise Yes. She was lovely. Very pretty really. In her own way. *(pause)* But broken. A pretty little broken doll.

Polly Oh dear. Did you mend her?

Louise *(pause)* No.

Polly That's sad.

Louise I gave her away.

Polly Oh.

Louise To strangers.

Polly Oh.

Louise I wrapped her up nice and warm, with her favourite rattle. A little blue one with tiny gold and silver balls. It made a lovely sound. And the lady said: "Come along baby. Your new Mum and Dad are waiting outside." *(increasingly distressed)* And she took you out of my arms. She lifted you out of my arms . . .

Polly Oh no. She's crying. Now, now, now, now, now, now, now. You'd better blow your nose. *(opens her handbag)*

Louise I'm sorry.

Polly It’s always good to blow your nose. *(pulls out a handkerchief)* You can borrow my hankie. I've only used it once.

Louise Thank you, but . . .

Polly *(puts the hankie into Louise’s hand)* Blow hard. *(Louise stares at the handkerchief)* Go on. *(impatient, Polly leads her to the chair)* Let's sit down and blow our nose. *(Polly sits Louise down)* We'll do it together. It’s easy. *(Polly sits on a child’s stool and rummages in her handbag for an old tissue then holds it to her own nose)* Ready? One, two, three . . . blow! *(Louise doesn’t respond)* Oh dear, dear. What are we going to do with you? Proper blow! *(again holds the tissue to her own nose)* Ready? *(Louise lifts the hankie to her nose)* One, two, three . . . blow! (*they both blow loudly*) Bingo! *(Polly looks at Louise for a moment)* Your eyes are all red.

Louise Polly . . . I want to . . . I . . . *(looks at Polly but peters out)*

Polly *(close up to Louise's face)* You've got green bits. You've got green bits in your eye. *(points to Louise’s eye with delight)* See.

Louise *(hesitates, then holds Polly gently by the chin and looks into her eyes)* So have you.

Polly Have I?

CONTINUED

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