

*Rebecca Talks With Alexa,*

*or*

*“I’m sorry there are some things I cannot do yet, and explaining why is one of them”*

This monologue with Alexa is a tragic-comic evocation of grief, trauma, sexuality and loneliness. On her husband’s *jahrzeit*, recently widowed Rebecca unpacks her new Alexa device, seven months after her Silicon Valley son sent it to her “He wouldn’t want me to be alone,” she muses half to herself, half to the “Chinese spy” she accuses Alexa of being. Rebecca talks, thinks aloud, and Alexa becomes a better listener than anyone in her life. Alone with Alexa, Rebecca reminisces about a “necessary kiss” in Mexico; she remembers being a child and what happened to her baby sister, Alexia, during the Holocaust; she wonders what to have for dinner. From the mundane to the traumatic, the play investigates the daily travails of an ordinary woman’s life during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has magnified the loss of her husband of nearly fifty years and her isolation from friends and family.

In “conversations” at once philosophical and comical, on subjects such as sex, love, death, catastrophic loss, jokes and *Young Frankenstein*, and becoming a grandmother, we listen in on a 21<sup>st</sup> century moment. To Alexa, Rebecca poses questions she herself cannot answer. Why do terrible atrocities happen to anyone? What is war? What are our obligations to each other? What is love? Rebecca’s conversation with Alexa progresses through associations of subjects we would not have imagined when she first took Alexa out of her box. “I bet you were suffocating inside that box,” Rebecca says, empathizing with the “spy,” the device that immediately becomes her new confidante. In taking Alexa out of her box, Rebecca also starts to unpack and speak aloud years of memories, musings, feelings and fears that have long been kept in their own ‘boxes.’