

A LITTLE LIE

By Bobby Keniston

Copyright © 2016 by Bobby Keniston, All rights reserved.
ISBN: 978-1-60003-870-9

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation.

Modifications: There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to this Work or title of this Work, unless directly authorized by the publisher or otherwise allowed in the Work's "Production Notes." This includes changing of character gender, cutting or adding of dialogue, or alteration of language.

Royalties: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice and will be set based upon your application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged. Any licensing requests and questions concerning rights should be addressed to Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

Credits: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s). Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: *Produced by special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.*

Reproduction: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.

PUBLISHED BY BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS
1-888-473-8521

A LITTLE LIE

A Ten Minute Comedic Drama Duet

By Bobby Keniston

SYNOPSIS: Albert, an electrician sent to Setting Sun nursing home, walks into the wrong room and finds himself in quite the predicament. Gertie, an energetic and talkative old woman, mistakes the poor man for her grown son, Chip. After catching him up on all the gossip, without letting him get a word in edgewise, Gertie starts to probe into her “son's” life, and begins to share memories he should know. Albert, not wanting to hurt the poor woman's feelings, does his best to play along, until she wants to give him a priceless family heirloom! This ten minute duet is filled with laughter, as well as some truly tender and poignant moments guaranteed to warm your heart. After all, a little lie on the side of the Angels can't be all bad, can it?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

GERTIE (f)..... A elderly woman, perhaps in her mid-70s. She has a great deal of energy, and a positive spirit. At times, she has a tendency to speak fast, mainly because she is so excited to have someone to talk to. *(41 lines)*

ALBERT (m)..... A man in his mid-thirties to early forties. He is dressed in work clothes, as he is an electrician sent to look at some wiring in one of the rooms of the nursing home. He is a nice, patient guy, who doesn't want to hurt GERTIE'S feelings. *(42 lines)*

SET

GERTIE THORPE'S room at the Setting Sun nursing home. There is a bed and a couple of chairs. For simpler productions, all we need are the pieces of furniture, as well as a dresser that Gertie retrieves a few items from. For more complex productions, there can be colorful set decorations, including stuffed animals, old photographs, flowers, and basically anything that Gertie could have used to make the room look more “homey”.

COSTUMES

GERTIE – Is an older woman, and should be dressed age appropriate, perhaps even with a big pair of glasses, but her attire should also match her spirit. It should be colorful, not drab, and it should be clear that she takes pride in keeping her appearance neat and tidy. Most likely she would be wearing pants and not a skirt or dress, however.

ALBERT – Should be dressed in work clothes, maybe jeans, work boots, flannel shirt. It's possible he could be in a jumpsuit of some kind, but there shouldn't be a sewn nametag if he is.

PROPS

- Soap Opera Magazine
- Toolbox

PROPS PRE-SET IN DRESSER:

- Chocolates
- Advent Calendar
- Bag of Potatoes and Cabbage
- Greeting Cards
- Box Containing Engagement Ring

This play is gratefully dedicated to my Mother, Raelene Keniston

AT RISE: *GERTIE sits in her comfy chair, looking at a soap opera magazine as ALBERT enters with a toolbox in hand. GERTIE looks up at him, and, ALBERT, surprised and embarrassed, takes a step back.*

ALBERT: Excuse me, ma'am, I'm awfully sorry. I thought this was room 316. I didn't mean to barge in like this. *(Starts to turn away.)*

GERTIE: Chip? *(Puts her magazine down and stands.)* Chip!

She moves toward ALBERT, who is confused.

I knew you'd make it! I just knew it!

ALBERT: I'm sorry, ma'am, you must have me confused...

GERTIE: I've been telling myself all week that my boy was going to pay me a visit, and here you are! Just goes to show that there's always power in positive thinking! And you know me. I'm a positive person, and always have been. *(Walks right up to ALBERT.)* You don't have to linger in the doorway. Come in, my boy, come in!

ALBERT: I'm sorry, I'm not Chip...

GERTIE: Oh, I know, I know, you're all grown up, but you are still my little Chip, and always will be. What do your friends call you these days? Charlie? Don't tell me you go by Charles... much too formal! And unless you want to break your mother's heart, please don't say Chuck... it's so... blunt and coarse, like the rodent gnawing on the wood.

ALBERT: Okay, there's obviously been some confusion, ma'am, and I am really sorry...

GERTIE: *(Referring to ALBERT'S toolbox.)* Chip, please put that briefcase down. You can't come visit your mother without bringing work with you? Honestly, you are going to work yourself right into the hospital. Now set it down.

ALBERT: This is my toolbox.

GERTIE: I don't care what you're calling it, would you please put it down? For me? Please, dear?

ALBERT, unsure what to do, puts his toolbox down.

Thank you.

She takes both of his hands and leads him into the room.

Now come on, have a seat. Stay awhile. We have a good deal to catch up on.

ALBERT: Maybe I should call a nurse...

GERTIE: Why, dear, are you not feeling well? You need to start taking better care of yourself. You're not getting any younger. Now have a seat. Anywhere you'd like.

ALBERT, giving up for the moment, sits down. GERTIE sits opposite him.

It's been so long! Look at you! You look so different.

ALBERT: I'm not surprised.

GERTIE: Do you like what I've done with the room? I moved the chairs this way, so that when I had visitors on sunny days, no one would have to squint, but we'd still have plenty of sunshine in the room.

ALBERT: It's very nice, yes. Listen, ma'am, I...

GERTIE: I almost forgot! I have something for you! *(Stands.)* Just a moment, you stay right there.

ALBERT: Honestly, it's not necessary...

GERTIE: Hush! Just because my little man is all grown up and successful, it doesn't mean I can't buy him a little gift from time to time.

GERTIE crosses to a little drawer on the other side of the stage.

Note: if the set is such that there could be a "closet" door, then she could open that and rummage around in there. Otherwise, a little dresser works just fine. She rummages during the following.

ALBERT: Ma'am, I don't want to hurt your feelings, or upset you in any way... you seem very nice, and I hate to disappoint you, but... well, I'm not your son. My name isn't Chip. It's Albert. I'm an electrician. I'm supposed to be looking at the wiring in room 316.

GERTIE: Here we are! That's all of them I think!

She rises from the dresser or emerges from the closet with an armload of boxes and envelopes. She crosses over to where ALBERT is sitting.

First, some Halloween candy for when I thought you might visit on Halloween. *(Hands it to ALBERT.)* And here's a box of Turkish Taffy for when I thought you might visit on Thanksgiving. Get it? Turkish Taffy for Turkey Day? *(Laughs and hands it to ALBERT.)*

ALBERT: That's very nice of you, but...

GERTIE: And here's a chocolate Advent calendar for when I thought you might visit near Christmastime. You used to love these when you were little. *(Hands it to him.)* And here's a box of cordial cherries I bought you in case you visited for New Years. *(Hands it to him.)* And here's a cute card I thought you might like if you visited on Groundhog's Day. *(Hands it to him.)* And I got you this box of chocolates in case you came by on Valentine's Day. *(Hands it to him.)* And here's a little bag of potatoes and a head of cabbage for a boiled dinner, if, by some chance you stopped in on St. Patty's Day. *(Hands him the bag.)* And finally, a thank you note on the off chance you came to visit on my birthday and brought me a present, not that you ever have to worry about buying me a present, just seeing you is enough. *(Gives him the card.)* There we are. All caught up! Now what were you saying dear when I was fetching these things for you? I couldn't quite hear.

ALBERT: I was just saying... well, I was trying to tell you that.. *(Looks at all of the items GERTIE just gave him. A slightly sad look comes across his face.)* I'm sorry, I was just going to say that I don't visit you nearly as much as I should.

GERTIE: Don't you worry about that! I know how busy you are, Chip. The important thing is that you're here now! *(Sits.)* I can't tell you how often I brag you up to the folks around here. My son the big shot lawyer! Have they made you partner at the firm yet?

ALBERT: Uh...well, I think it's just a matter of time.

GERTIE: You deserve it! I don't know of any other young man who works quite as hard as you do. I'll march right into that firm myself and give them a piece of my mind! What's it called again? I can't seem to remember. The law offices of who?

ALBERT: It's... well, the... the...Law offices of Albert...son and...Wires. Albertson and Wires. *(Quickly changing the subject.)* But enough about me and silly old work. I want to hear how you're doing. I hope things are going well for you here at the... well, you know... the...

Do Not Copy

GERTIE: *(With a knowing smile.)* At the “home,” dear? It’s all right, Chip, you can call it what it is. And don’t worry, everyone here at the Setting Sun has been very kind to me. It’s a funny name for a nursing home, though, don’t you the think? The Setting Sun. *(A strange look comes on her face, and her eyes grow distant.)* Although I suppose the sun is setting on those of us who live here now. *(There is a slight pause, and then her eyes clear and her smile returns.)* I’m happy to say I’m one of the more active residents here, and I do appreciate being able to have my own room. Did you know there are people here who stay in their pajamas all day? The poor dears! I don’t mean to be rude, but I do hope I never get to that point. If I ever stop taking pride in my appearance, that’s the day I want to stop... well, never mind. There is a woman who lives two doors down from me who tries to put on her own makeup. She asks me every day at breakfast how it looks, and I can’t bring myself to tell her she looks like a clown who’s been rejected from the circus! *(Giggles.)* So I tell her every morning that she looks younger and more beautiful than the day before, and, Lord, if that doesn’t always put a big smile on her face. I figure that a little lie on the side of the angels never hurt anyone. *(Slight pause.)* So, my boy, do you find time in the busy schedule of yours to do any dating? Any new ladies in the running?

ALBERT: *(Has been listening to her rather fast talking, is not expecting the question, and is a little startled)* I’m sorry, what?

GERTIE: You’re not getting any younger, dear. I don’t say that to be cruel, and Lord knows a man as handsome and successful as you should have no trouble finding someone. But I worry about you working all the time. You need a good woman. Having the right partner by your side makes walking through this world so much easier. *(Thinks a moment.)* You know, there’s a nurse who works here on the night shift--- her name is Kara, and she’s such a sweet and lovely young lady. And she’s single! I’m sure the two of you would hit it off if you gave her a chance!

ALBERT: *(Not really thinking, ALBERT holds up his hand to show his wedding ring.)* Thanks, but I’m already taken.

GERTIE looks at him, hurt, and ALBERT, too late, realizes his mistake and tries to cover

No, you see, what I meant was, this ring, I mean, is more like a...

GERTIE: *(Standing and turning away.)* Oh, Chip, this is just too much! I can understand that you're too busy to ever visit me, but I can't believe you wouldn't even invite me to your wedding! Your own mother! *(On the verge of tears.)*

ALBERT: *(Rising and moving to her.)* Wait, wait, it's not what you think. Let me explain!

GERTIE: *(Turning to face him, upset.)* I'm listening! Although I don't know how you can even begin to justify getting married without telling me!

ALBERT: *(Really thinking on his feet.)* Just listen. The thing is... well, I know how you worry about me working so hard and never having time to meet new people. So, I decided to take your advice, and I took a ballroom dancing class.

GERTIE: Dancing? You? Oh, Chip, that's wonderful!

ALBERT: I know, you wouldn't expect it, right? Well, Marlene was in the same class...oh, that's her name, Marlene...

GERTIE: What a unique and pretty name.

ALBERT: I thought so. Anyway, we were paired up to dance together, and I was afraid it was going to be awkward, but we just started making each other laugh.

GERTIE: That's how I knew your father and I were meant to be. We used to laugh and laugh.

ALBERT: We started seeing each other outside of the dance class, and, well, that's why I'm here. One night a few weeks ago, I was feeling impulsive, and I asked her to marry me. There's no doubt she's the one for me, and I wanted her to know that there was no doubt. And she said yes. And we were so happy and excited, that we eloped that very night!

GERTIE: Chip, that is awfully sweet, dear, and I know it's easy to get swept up in the romance of a moment, believe me. But don't you think you'll both regret not having a bigger ceremony for your friends and family?

ALBERT: Don't you worry about that. We are planning to have ceremony. Both of us are so busy at work right now, but we're hoping sometime in June, maybe.

GERTIE: That is a lovely month for a wedding.

ALBERT: And of course you are going to be there, in a place of honor in the front row on the groom's side. I wouldn't want it any other way.

GERTIE begins to cry again, this time tears of happiness, and throws her arms around ALBERT. ALBERT, at first, is a little taken aback, but then returns her hug.

GERTIE: I'm so happy! I can't tell you what this means, knowing my little boy has found someone to love! *(She pulls away from the embrace.)* Just a minute! There's something I need to give you... for your wife!

ALBERT: You don't have to give us anything...

GERTIE: Of course I do! When my only son gets married, you can be sure I'm going to give a gift to commemorate the occasion! *(She bustles, excited, back over to the dresser or the closet.)*

ALBERT: Honestly, a gift isn't necessary. Or save it for the big ceremony.

GERTIE: *(Calling back.)* One can never know what happens from day to day. Take the gift now, and I'll know that you have it.

ALBERT doesn't notice the inconsistency that GERTIE heard him this time, but supposedly didn't hear him before. He is too busy reacting to her comment.

ALBERT: I wish you wouldn't talk like that. I'm betting that you'll outlive me!

GERTIE: *(Returning with a little box.)* I wish YOU wouldn't even suggest such a thing.

ALBERT: How about we both live forever? Does that sound like a good compromise?

GERTIE: Oh, why not? Though I do love the idea of seeing your father again. Speaking of your father... *(She hands him the little box.)* Open it.

ALBERT: I'm not sure that I should.

GERTIE: Don't be silly. Open it.

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from A LITTLE LIE by Bobby Keniston. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011

www.brookpub.com