

SECRETS

A Ten-Minute Dramatic Duet

by
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CAST: CHARLIE and DEIDRE

****This script is written as a contest duet, where only two actors should play all parts. However, this play involves three separate characters, and if performed on stage, a third actor may be added. For contest purposes, CHARLIE's character will also play the part of DEIDRE's FATHER. For forensics competitions, all props in this duet should be mimed.***

CHARLIE: Deidre.

DEIDRE: Yes?

CHARLIE: Got a smoke?

DEIDRE: You know I don't smoke.

CHARLIE: That's what I like about you. Ya' sparkle. So clean you squeak.

DEIDRE: I have to finish this term paper.

CHARLIE: Can I help?

DEIDRE: I'd rather do it myself.

CHARLIE: I like you, Deidre.

DEIDRE: Charlie, I go steady with David.

CHARLIE: I like your steadiness.

DEIDRE: Good.

CHARLIE: Why David?

DEIDRE: He doesn't make unreasonable demands on me.

CHARLIE: And I do?

DEIDRE: Not exactly.

CHARLIE: I have a feeling.....like I want to protect you.

DEIDRE: I don't need protection.

CHARLIE: You don't?

DEIDRE: No, I don't.

CHARLIE: How's your father treating you?

DEIDRE: I'm sorry I told you that, Charlie. It's not your concern...I shouldn't have spoken.

CHARLIE: You can't hold a thing like that in.

DEIDRE: My father treats me okay. He's not drinking.

CHARLIE: He'll start up again. Like my old man. Drinks, then starts swinging.

DEIDRE: Your father hits you?

CHARLIE: Not since I got bigger than him.

DEIDRE: I can't hope for that, I guess.

CHARLIE: **(looks closely)** You've got another bruise.

DEIDRE: I turn black and blue if someone breathes on me.

CHARLIE: He did that, right?

DEIDRE: I bumped into something.

CHARLIE: He's beating you up all the time. You think I can't see that?

DEIDRE: Please, Charlie. Don't tell anyone!

CHARLIE: It's tearing me up to see it go on like this.

DEIDRE: It's not your problem!

CHARLIE: I didn't sleep last night, Deidre. All I could think of was a guy that weighs 180 pounds beating up on a small, defenseless girl. You know what could happen to you if he hits you too hard?

DEIDRE: I don't want to talk about it.

CHARLIE: But he could...

DEIDRE: I SAID DROP IT!!!

CHARLIE: **(pause)** You want to pretend it isn't happening?

DEIDRE: It isn't happening. He's been calm.

CHARLIE: Then it's a good time for me to go home with you.

DEIDRE: What for?

CHARLIE: I'll tell him that I know he's beating you up...and that if he doesn't stop, I'm going to turn him in. I'm not afraid of that creep.

DEIDRE: Charlie...All I needed from you was someone to listen. Please don't do anything.

CHARLIE: Why me? Why didn't you go to the counselor's office?

DEIDRE: My father earns a living for our family. If I make trouble for him, he could lose his job. And counselors call the police.

CHARLIE: You'd survive.

DEIDRE: I want my sister and me to live together as a family.

CHARLIE: Before your mother died...did he beat her, too?

DEIDRE: They had their arguments, like any married couple.

CHARLIE: Did he ever hit her?

DEIDRE: I never said he hit her.

CHARLIE: But he did hit her?

DEIDRE: In the bedroom at night...I would hear her cry out, as if she was having a nightmare.

CHARLIE: Did you see any bruises?

DEIDRE: She'd burn herself on the stove, or bump into things.

CHARLIE: Deidre, your father is sick.

(As SHE remembers, DEIDRE has a flashback. SHE now reverts back into a little girl. SHE sways back and forth in a rhythmic manner, quietly humming or singing a tune. CHARLIE changes his stance and attitude to one much older than himself, as HE plays DEIDRE'S father.)

FATHER: ***(CHARLIE'S character)*** Daddy's songbird be singin'?

DEIDRE: ***(in a younger, softer voice...the voice of a child)*** For Mama. I'm singin' for her. Do you think she can hear me?

FATHER: Dunno. She barely heard *me* when she was alive.

DEIDRE: How is me and Peggy gonna get raised now, without Mama?

FATHER: You'll have to look after Peggy. You're the lady of the house now, Deidre. I'm counting on my little songbird.

DEIDRE: Me? I can't do it like her. I ain't Mama.

FATHER: You're responsible now. There's rent to pay. You do a good job, ya' hear? You got to do a good job. Rent's not free no more ***(gently rubs his hand through her hair)***. Rent's not free.

(both characters move back and resume their previous roles)

DEIDRE: My father is not sick, exactly. Men have frustrations.

CHARLIE: The heck we do. I would never hit a woman. And my father may have beat me, but he never dared hit my mother. Never. Because I'd break his head if he ever did.

DEIDRE: I guess that's why I told you, Charlie.

CHARLIE: Because you want me to beat him up?

DEIDRE: No. I just sensed that you'd understand. I wasn't trying to get you angry.

CHARLIE: Then how will it end?

DEIDRE: When I graduate from high school, in two more years, I'll get a job. I'll get a place of my own, and I'll take Peggy with me and I'll be a mother to her.

CHARLIE: How old is Peggy?

DEIDRE: She's eleven.

CHARLIE: Does he beat her, too?

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