

DEEPEST FEELINGS

By Carl L. Williams

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A Dramatic Duet

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SYNOPSIS: A young man working as a tour guide in a cave seeks to rekindle a romance with his ex-girlfriend from high school. She has found a new direction in her life, while he has remained submerged in the past. He hopes in the depths of his heart that he will somehow find a way out of the darkness.

TIME: Present day.

SETTING: The bottom of a tourist cave.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

AARON (m)..... 20, a timid and love-sick tour guide. (62 lines)

PAM (f)..... 20, his more practical ex-girlfriend from high school. (61 lines)

SET: No scenery except a bench, though more can be added if desired.

PROPS: A flashlight, a switch or button on the bench.

COSTUMES: Normal attire.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: The flashlight is always unlit and is just used for pointing. When Aaron turns off the lights in the cave, it's simply a matter of dimming them down onstage, so the actors can still be seen, yet understood to be in the dark.

AT START: AARON, carrying an unlit flashlight, and PAM enter, looking around. They are on a walkway at the very bottom of a cave.

AARON: This is it. The deepest part of the cave.

PAM: How far down are we, Aaron?

AARON: Hundreds of feet. We don't usually take the regular tours down this far.

PAM: Why not?

AARON: Most of the big stalactites and columns and other showy formations are behind us. So, we turn around at the cutoff on the level above and circle back to the surface.

PAM: So, I'm getting the special extended tour.

AARON: It's not all that special.

PAM: Do you enjoy being a tour guide?

AARON: It's okay. Not so much the guiding part, but I really like being in the cave, especially way down here.

PAM: Why down here?

AARON: Oh, I don't know. It's always quiet and calm, and you can hear your own thoughts. You can listen to your heart beat.

PAM: Thank you for giving me my own private tour.

AARON: Glad to. After all, it gives us a chance to be alone and catch up on things.

PAM: I've missed seeing you.

AARON: Have you? I've missed you too, Pam.

PAM: High school seems so far away now.

AARON: Just two years.

PAM: They've been pretty busy years.

AARON: Yeah, I guess so. You like college?

PAM: I do. You really should think about enrolling somewhere.

AARON: I have. Thought about it. *(An awkward pause.)* Now if you look up there, you'll see a soda straw. *(Points with his unlit flashlight.)*

PAM: Oh, like those others we saw before.

AARON: And on the wall over there is a strip of bacon.

PAM: Not as big as the ones we passed earlier.

AARON: No. Not much to see down here.

PAM: Might as well head on back, I guess.

AARON: Let's take a breather first. That's why we have a bench.

PAM: Okay.

They sit down.

AARON: You know... I still think about high school a lot. Well, not about high school so much as certain things that happened in high school.

PAM: Like I said, Aaron, that was a long time ago.

AARON: I know. But I wish it wasn't.

PAM: (*As a diversion.*) Look there. That's what you call flowstone, isn't it?

AARON: Yeah. Flowstone.

PAM: So many interesting geological features in a cave.

AARON: People are always wanting to touch them, even though we tell them not to. Oil from the skin discolors the stone, you know.

PAM: I didn't know. I mean, not until you told me at the start of the tour.

AARON: I guess I covered that, didn't I? I say it so often I sometimes forget. (*Pause, gazing at her.*) Some other things I never say, or maybe never said enough.

PAM: (*Still diverting.*) Who would've thought all these beautiful formations were down here, out of sight?

AARON: Somebody had to look for them... in order to find them.

PAM: I suppose that's right. I'm glad they got preserved this way.

AARON: They're more fragile than they look. Some of them break pretty easy if you're not careful.

PAM: (*With kindness, actually referring to him.*) I'll be careful.

AARON: (*Actually referring to her.*) Of course, I can't blame people for wanting to touch them. They're so pretty. And so close.

PAM: (*Changing the subject.*) Maybe you could be a geologist. If you go on to college.

AARON: It's hard to make up my mind. What I'd study at college.

PAM: Most people in the beginning don't know exactly what they want to do.

AARON: You did.

PAM: Pre-med, that's me.

AARON: Sometimes I feel like I'm pre-life. Like I haven't gotten started yet. Or maybe... maybe post-life, since the best part of my life was that last year in high school.

PAM: We went through a lot of changes then, didn't we?

AARON: Some things I didn't want to change.

PAM: (*A discouraging tone.*) Aaron... look...

AARON: (*Sees it coming.*) Oh, wait. Wait, I nearly forgot one of the best parts of the tour. I saved it till now.

PAM: What is it?

AARON: This switch here turns off the lights, and you can see how totally dark a cave is. Complete, absolute darkness. Get ready, watch.

AARON flips a switch and the stage lights dim.

PAM: Wow. That's dark, all right. Not a glint of light anywhere, is there?

AARON: And listen to the silence.

A moment of silence.

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