

SCORNE

A Ten-Minute Dramatic Duet

by
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*This short play is most effective as a contest duet, where the mentally retarded boy, LOUIE, also plays the three voices inside his head. *On stage, these voices may be played with three additional actors.* As the voices talk, LOUIE'S character should find the central focal point where LOUIE would be standing, and move to each side of an imaginary LOUIE, mercilessly taunting him. Optionally, RICHARD can play the voices in LOUIE'S head.*

CAST: RICHARD and LOUIE

AT RISE: A young mentally retarded boy, LOUIE, sits, looking around, his head moving in bird-like observation. HE rocks and sings to himself, chattering in a brook-like babble, contented and melodious. A dark veil comes over his eyes and HE becomes more agitated and fearful until HE is overcome by the inner voices that command his demeanor. His caretaker, RICHARD, is kneeling beside him, frozen.

(Voices inside LOUIE begin to speak)

VOICE #1: Sit up straight! Have some respect for yourself! Shoulders back. Chest out.

RICHARD: Louie, are you there, Louie?

VOICE #2: Aye boy, posture is everything. Show yourself off right. Don't be such a baby.

RICHARD: Louie, can you hear me?

VOICE #3: Come on, Louie, do what they say or they're gonna get mad.

(LOUIE comes back into himself, afraid and shaking)

RICHARD: **(breaking into the boy's reality)** Louie, are you listening to me? Louie, pay attention. I'm trying to tell you something important. Louie, pay attention! Look at me.

LOUIE: **(looks at caretaker)** I listenin' to you, Richard. I be listenin' real good.

RICHARD: That's right. Good boy. That's a good boy. Now, keep looking at me. I have something important to tell you today.

LOUIE: **(repeats)** ...Something 'portant to tell me, something 'portant to tell me. **(HE keeps looking around)**

RICHARD: Now, you need to look at me, buddy. Can you look at Richard in the eyes?

LOUIE: ...In the eyes...Richard, in the eyes, I look in Richard's eyes.

RICHARD: We've been together a long time now, haven't we, Louie?

LOUIE: ...Together...long time...been together real long time...Richard love Louie. Louie love Richard...long time together.

RICHARD: Richard loves Louie, that's right. We're pals, aren't we, bud?

LOUIE: We build kites...go real high to sky...fly high in sky...

(LOUIE starts to spin around, flapping his arms)

RICHARD: No, Louie, no flying today. Come on, be still. Listen to Richard. LOUIE! BE STILL.

(As RICHARD raises his voice, boy reacts immediately and contracts into a passive position)

LOUIE: I listenin', Richard, I be listenin' real good. I be good boy.

RICHARD: **(sighs, his patience obviously strained)** Louie, do you know what today is? Do you remember what is going to happen today?

LOUIE: We fly a kite today! Fly high! Fly high in the sky!

RICHARD: No, Louie, we're not going to fly a kite today. Today is the day I go to my new job. You remember, I told you I would be going to my new job today. Remember, Louie? I've been telling you every day now for several weeks.

LOUIE: Richard go away...not come back?

RICHARD: No, Louie, I said I'd come back to see you.

LOUIE: People go away...not come back.

(LOUIE holds his head in pain for a moment, then VOICES enter again.)

VOICE #1: That's right, Louie, people go away and they never come back. Think about your father. He sent you away to the institution and said he'd be back, but he never came back, did he?

VOICE #2: And what about your mother, Louie? She died. She went crazy, then she killed herself. She ain't ever coming back either.

VOICE #3: Yeah, Louie, ain't nobody ever come back for you, it's just us and you here inside your head. Just us and you... **(beat)**

(LOUIE holds his head, obviously in pain again.)

RICHARD: I have someone I want you to meet soon, Louie. His name is Mark. He's going to be taking care of you now.

LOUIE: Not want Mark. Want Richard. Richard go away and never come back. ***(begins to cry)*** Mark not love Louie. Mark not know Louie. How to fix his cereal with more sugar in the milk. Or put on the chapstick for Louie's mouth so it not hurt. Mark not know. Richard knows.

RICHARD: ***(to audience)*** Louie has dealt with some serious abandonment issues. His mom's suicide. His dad leaving him in the institution. There was an uncle in between who did a whole abuse number on him. He came to us pretty much damaged goods, isn't that right, Louie?

LOUIE: I can hear you. I can hear you saying all those things.

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