

## Charlotte – American, 15

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF HELEN OF TROY OR EVERYTHING WILL BE DIFFERENT MARK SCHULTZ

Originally produced in the US by the Soho Repertory Theatre and first performed in the UK at the Drum Theatre, Plymouth.

Charlotte is grief-stricken by the death of her beautiful mother, and her relationship with her father is becoming increasingly difficult. She is obsessed by Helen of Troy and her fantasies of becoming an object of desire start to spill over into normal life.

In this scene she is talking to her Guidance Counsellor, who refuses to help her become a 'porn star'.

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## Charlotte

So like, seeing as I'm made for sex? I'm gonna be in porn . . . It's what I want. I've read about it. I've done a lot of research. Porn is like a very nicely paying industry. And it is an industry. It's not like some flash in the pan sort of thing like some Internet thing or I don't know. It's been around. A while. There are videos and magazines. And if you're a woman? People love you. And they want to have sex with you. And they fantasise about you? And that's what I want . . . I think porn and I are a great match . . . Realistic? Okay? What does that mean anyway? I don't think you know what is realistic. I don't think you know what I can do. What I'm capable of. Do you give this advice to everyone? You're being unrealistic? What if I said, I want to be a doctor. What if I said, A doctor. Or what if maybe I said I want to be the president. Like your president. And you'd vote for me and everything. What if I said that? Would that be realistic? More realistic? 'Cause I don't even know what that means. So tell me . . . You're supposed to be supportive. Right? You're supposed to support me. And help me. So help me be a porn star . . . Guide me . . . When I'm famous? You will be so sorry . . . You will think to yourself, God, I should have helped her and everything. I should have just helped her realise that dream. That goal. I could have become like, her inspiration. Like the wind beneath her wings or whatever. I hate that song. But it's over now. Now you're gonna like in the future when I'm famous you're gonna be sad. I will be so beautiful. Like my mom. You seen my mom? No. 'Cause she wouldn't even look at you. And now she's dead and don't even try to comfort me.

I'm gonna be beautiful. And you're gonna want me . . . No. Okay? No. It's over. It's over. You're gone. Okay? You're through. You and me are over . . . You hurt me. Okay? You hurt me. You're supposed to help me and, you hurt me. But okay whatever. Whatever doesn't kill me makes me I don't know something. But it's a good something. I have dreams. Needs. I am a star. Okay?

## Lynn - 19

## FLATMATES ELLEN DRYDEN

First workshoped and performed by the Chiswick Youth Theatre and published in 2000. The action takes place in a student flat in the 1990s.

Steve, a law student whose wealthy parents own the flat, rents out two rooms to Lynn and Tom, who are studying English. Steve is bored with Tom and tells Lynn that he has advertised his room. A music student is interested in taking it over and will be able to pay him more money. He wants Lynn to interview her. As Lynn starts to protest the doorbell rings and Steve shows in Coralie and her boyfriend, Tony. He then excuses himself and goes out, leaving the three of them together.

Lynn is fuming. She is in no mood to interview anyone. Finally Coralie asks if there is any point in her staying. Perhaps she should come back later when Steve and Tom are there?

From: *Six Primroses Each and other Plays for Young Actors*  
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## Lynn

I ought to say I'm sorry. But I'm not. Oh! Not you. I only heard about you a few minutes ago. Steve's little joke. He is a wealthy, spoilt brat who's only interested in his stomach. When he's not eating he pushes people around for fun. Tom is a raging neurotic with a chip on his shoulder, who is busy working himself into a really juicy breakdown. They fight. Incessantly. I spend as little time as possible here because both of them, in their different ways, cling to the sweet old-fashioned notion that - deep down - I am longing to do their washing and cooking for them, and I only refuse because I'm scared that the sisters' heavy mob will come and do me over if I give way to my natural instincts and start mothering them both. Steve is reading law - officially. Tom and I are both doing English. He always hands his work in on the dot. I don't even do the work. So tutorials are a permanent embarrassment specially as I'm brighter than he is. He tries to make me work - to fulfil my potential. I refuse. He manages to miss the point about absolutely everything. Life and Literature. And he is scared of girls. In case they don't measure up to Mummy. Steve's scared of them too. In case they don't take food seriously . . . If you think that's a calmer atmosphere than people 'having a relationship' as you call it - getting up at lunchtime, gazing into each others' eyes instead of lunch, then disappearing for the afternoon and going for long intense walks all evening - well, you're welcome to move in right now! Rent money in advance. Strict demarcation of the 'fridge. Steve has three quarters of it. The rest of us share the one remaining shelf. Gas meter. Immersion Heater. Telephone timer. Put your calls down in the book. Launderette down the road. Delicatessen and paper shop on the corner. No credit. The Dairy stopped delivering milk because we always managed to be out when he called to be paid. Or hid. Or didn't have the money in Tom's case. *(Pause)* Is that the sort of thing you were looking for?

# Charlie - 15

## SCHOOL PLAY SUZY ALMOND

First produced at the Soho Theatre, London, in 2001.

**Charlie Silver** is bad news in the South London comprehensive school: a problem to teachers and a bad influence on the rest of the class. Her ambitions are to front a gang, ride a motorbike and to 'mess with teachers' heads'. She boasts a long list of teachers who have given up on her account. Then Miss Fry, the new music teacher, arrives and things begin to change. **Charlie** is given countless detentions, but unknown to her 'gang' is using these detention periods to develop her suppressed musical talents.

In this scene **Charlie** is at the piano waiting for Miss Fry to arrive when her friend Lee comes bursting in. He accuses her of letting him down. She was supposed to meet him and Paul in the car park earlier that afternoon with her customised Hollister bike on which he was to ride 'a lap of honour' against his rival, Danny Chapel. **Charlie** says she has a music exam the next day and needs to practise. She tries to explain to him what playing the piano means to her and how Miss Fry has changed her way of thinking - not only about the music, but also about herself.

Published by Oberon Books, London

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## Charlie

When you do something you don't have to be the best. If everyone thought like that, there wouldn't be any buses, cos . . . cos all the bus drivers would want a Gold medal every time they pulled out the station . . . Not bus drivers . . . I mean no-one would dare look at the stars in case someone goes 'Think you're an astronaut?' . . . Miss Fry says . . . *[Pause]* You've gotta understand . . . that I gave her a hard time for ages, I was so under her skin. A few years ago she got pissed up with all the bands, I thought - yeah I'll hang out with you . . . She was mental . . . She . . . One lesson . . . you see, some lessons she didn't actually teach. And sometimes, especially at the beginning, what she did was boring, you don't wanna hear, she drones. But now and again . . . One time she was about to play a song about a lady who drowned in a river, but it was nothing to do with the lesson, it was just that she liked it. I said it sounds miserable to me, miss, but she said hang on, and she told me the story: It's a sad song, she said . . . she fought for love and she lost . . . and now her skin is white as a lily, her lips are rose red, she's still and she floats downstream. She told me to close my eyes and imagine it was a dark moonlit night and that the water was lapping around the lady, taking her in. She said that when she got to the bridge of the song there would be a special note that didn't sound like the rest of the tune. It was a high sound, extra sad, a black key near the end of the piano - and when I heard it I had to imagine it was like a shooting star bursting across the river, trying to wake up the lady. I told her I couldn't be bothered, but when she started to play . . . And at the end of the second verse, when she hit that key and the sound broke, I felt the note shoot through the roof of this room like a bullet and I saw the star burst and I wanted the lady to wake up. I couldn't wait for that note to come around again. So that she'd open her eyes.

Lue – Dartmoor, 20

### THE WINTERLING JEZ BUTTERWORTH

First performed at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, London in 2006.

The action takes place in an abandoned farmhouse in the centre of the forest of Dartmoor in Winter, where 'Draycott' has made a home for himself.

In this scene Draycott has just brought in 'West' – a vagrant who has been sleeping rough for months and is cooking him a meal. When Lue comes in carrying a small rucksack and a couple of plastic shopping bags, he asks West to keep her occupied while he goes upstairs to fetch a bottle of scotch.

Lue tells West that she's seen him before at a hostel on the Kerry road, when he told her he was a businessman. She is going abroad and needs someone to sign her passport application.

Published by Nick Hern Books, London

Luc

I need help . . . Filling out forms. A form. I'm going away. I'm going abroad . . . I got everything else. I've got sun cream. And a hat. And sunglasses. And a towel. And a bikini. And a book. I just need to do the form. I just need to fill it out. Get someone to sign it . . . For the passport application . . . *(beat)* Here. *(She takes out a form.)* This isn't the form. This is the form you need to fill out the form. The form form is safe. The form form's upstairs. This is the pre-form. The other one. The orange one. Don't touch it. Your hands are filthy. You smudge it, we're bugged. Here look. *(She reads.)* 'Section One. Form C1. A. One. Please keep these Notes until you receive your passport. Note 1a, subsection one – Birth after 31 December 1982 in the United Kingdom. Tick 'Yes' if you were born after 31 December 1982 in the United Kingdom, or if you entered the country on or before December 31 1989, or after July 1 1992, unless a) you were already a temporary citizen in which case refer to note 2a, subsection seven . . .' And I speak English. That's their opener. That's their warm-up. I mean, that's that. I'm staying put. I ain't going nowhere, am I? Wait for it. *(She searches.)* This is the bit. Where is it? *(Reads.)* 'Note 5a, section three.' No, that's not it. Where is it? Here you go. *(Reads.)* 'Section 12a, subsection 2ii should be signed by a British citizen, or other Commonwealth citizen, who is a Member of Parliament, Justice of the Peace, Minister of Religion, Established Civil Servant, or . . . here we go . . . professionally qualified person in the community, e.g. Businessman, Doctor, blah blah blah, or a person of similar standing.' See? I need someone from the community. Someone they trust. Someone of standing. Now I was thinking, if he was a businessman, or say, or a doctor, then he can do it. Because I figure, he's not been out here long. They probably don't know yet. The government. They probably don't know that he's gibbering in Okchampton Market. What do you reckon? What do you say? . . . I just need you to sign my photo. Sign the form. Read the notes. Say who you are. Vouch for me. I've got everything else. You help me, I won't forget it. You help me, that's that. I'm out of here. You can have my room. You won't freeze to death, out there in your fort. What do you say? Eh? What do you say?

Tina - young

## THE WOMAN BEFORE RICHARD SCHIMMELFENNIG

TRANSLATED BY DAVID TUSHINGHAM

First performed at the Royal Court Theatre, London in 2005.

Frank and his wife Claudia are moving house. As they are packing to leave, a woman arrives on the doorstep and announces that 24 years ago she was Frank's lover and has come to claim him back again. Meanwhile their son, Andi is saying goodbye to his girlfriend, Tina.

The action shifts backwards and forwards between scenes, often repeating part of the previous dialogue. It is described as a 'flight of fancy' – but ends with an unexpected and sinister twist

In this scene, Tina describes her last evening with Andi, knowing that she will never see him again.

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Tina

We meet as it's getting dark at the top of the bank like we always do, and then we go to the cinema . . . We follow our heroine in submarines, on motorbikes, in jeeps, by parachute, ship, on horseback, suspended from helicopters.

Then we get the bus home . . . I go in the front door, Andi waits down in the garden by my window . . . My room's in the basement. Andi climbs in through the window not making a sound. Everything's quiet.

We lie side by side in my narrow bed in the dark in silence. No music. Above us and around us – like an ancient mausoleum – the house, a small bathroom, my room and the cellar downstairs, the kitchen and the living-room on the ground floor, upstairs my parents' bedroom and a second bathroom.

Just as we are, naked, we start running through the house. Without making a sound we move through the rooms in the dark, along the hall, up and down the stairs. We stand still outside my parents' bedroom and then go on, out of the front door and into the garden, naked despite the cold, onto the lawn and then back downstairs again to my room.

Suddenly my dad's standing in the room in pyjama trousers and a top.

'Out, get out now –' and he grabs hold of Andi and drags him, past my mother who's screaming, up the stairs and throws him out of the house.

I run back down the stairs, lock my door from the inside and climb out of the window with our things. My dad shouts after us.

On the way to his parents' Andi gets the pen out. We put our tag everywhere, on every wall, every drive, every garage door, his name and my name together. Andi and Tina together. The pen passes from him to me and back again. No hearts, just our tag – exactly as we are, side by side, on everything all the way to his.

And then when we're outside the door he says: well then –

*Brief pause.*

I love you but we'll never see each other again. Yes, I say, I know. Take care. Goodbye.

**Esperance** You told me that this day would never come. You promised me. When you were in the hospice you said that the worst was over. 'Don't worry, I am the last victim of the genocide.' I remember you saying, 'I am the last.' You hear that song? That sweet song that rings of murder? They are coming home. They are coming home to finish what they started. They can kill you fast, or they can kill you slow, but at the end of the day they still kill you. They killed you slowly. So slowly. I don't know why you wouldn't tell me. I knew. I knew you had the sickness, Mama. I knew you took those pills. But then you got worse. You got worse, Mama. Who knew that Death would take so long, toying with you, torturing you? You would have thought the rape would be enough, but Death came right along to screw you until your dying day. Filling your lungs until you could not breathe. Ripping your skin with sores. Who knew one would rather die at the stroke of the machete than of the slow tick-tock of the Aids clock. Our little Emmanuel is . . . getting worse. We try to get the money together every month, you know, for his medicine . . . he's selling credit in the streets, I'm weaving baskets and selling them by the roadside, it's barely enough . . . I don't know what I'll do without him. If he goes then . . . what am I going to do? I'll be the only one left. The only one left of our family. They are singing in the streets. In the cabarets. They are coming home. My neighbours, my killers . . . I feel like I'm back beneath the dead bodies again. I'm back to being smothered beneath the weight of the dead. When they found me, they thought I was gone. Blood, blood everywhere. Somehow I survived, but, Mama, I'm tired. I don't think I can be a survivor any more.

*Suddenly she can see The Gahahamuka. They sing her a sweet song that is a sharp contrast to the machete song. She is strengthened for a moment and she sings along, and briefly the victims drown the machete song out. Vincent emerges from the forest, carrying the jerrycan. He watches her for a spell until she finishes her song.*

**Vincent** Is this where your family is buried?

**Esperance** *looks up. Beat. The Gahahamuka have disappeared.*

**Esperance** No, just my mother. I don't know where the rest are buried. Some say the mass grave up on the hill. Some say the mass grave down the hill. I do not know.

*She begins to lift herself off the ground.*

**Vincent** Do you need any help up?

**Esperance** No, I can do it on my own.

*With one arm, she has trouble getting herself up.*

**Vincent** Here, let me help you.

**Esperance** Look, I said I was fine.

**Vincent** I just want to help.

**Esperance** I don't need your help.

**Vincent** Please let me help –

**Esperance** *takes a stumble. He catches her. He steadies her.*

**Esperance** Thank you.

**Vincent** You're welcome.

**Esperance** I guess you want another thank you for before.

**Vincent** No, I don't want anything from you.

*She looks him up and down cautiously.*

**Esperance** Why aren't you down there with them? Singing.

**Vincent** I'm not a good singer. You are, though. A beautiful singer.

**Esperance** How long were you standing there?

**Vincent** Just enough to be blessed by your concert.

*She looks down and blushes. She notices the jerrycan in his hand.*

**Esperance** You filled my jerrycan for me.

**Vincent** Yeah. Can I get a 'thank you' for that, too?

**Esperance** *smiles.*