

A Father's Love

By: Dr. M. Shane Heard

Note about the Character:

1. Complete: A Typical Teenage Girl before the accident. Talk “normal” and moves “normal”
2. Injured: A Teenage Girl suffering from spinal and brain (monoplegia and aphasia) injuries after a car crash

Note about script: The primary difficulty in this piece is in the vocal and physical characterization of someone suffering from monoplegia and aphasia. Personal research is required to make sure you adequately and accurately represent real, live individuals with these afflictions.

References:

Monoplegia is a kind of paralysis in which only one limb, an arm or a leg, has lost complete voluntary muscle movement. The condition can be temporary or permanent. Cerebral palsy is the most common cause of monoplegia. Treatment typically involves managing your symptoms to improve your quality of life.

References:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLmgBtQYWYQ>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOieTv5yj9M>

Aphasia is a disorder that affects how you communicate. It can impact your speech, as well as the way you write and understand both spoken and written language. Aphasia usually happens suddenly after a stroke or a head injury.

References:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qs2DvQ1qi-w>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOieTv5yj9M>

Note about the Song:

I am partial to this nursery rhyme, but if you have another you prefer, feel free to go with it. If you have a song that fits better, go for it and make suggestions as a revision to a new cut.

Lullaby:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIAZcHKWD4c>

Note about the Language:

I try, as I always do, to make the character as real as possible. Sadly, foul language seems to make most characters more “believable.” If, however, you want to cut or slightly change the language to be more “audience-friendly” (depending on your venue), go for it! Offer the alterations back to me in the form of a revision for approval and publication. Doc. H.

We begin:

Kenna: (Complete):

"I hate you, Dad!" I remember yelling that at my father because he would not take me shopping. Stupid right? I was so stupid. So.....stupid. I was really mad about something else. I suppose at this point, it doesn't really matter what, but I was. And I took it out on the one person who loved me unconditionally. My dad.

"I hate you, dad!" Is what I yelled as I stormed out of the door and jumped into my car. A car he had bought for me by the way. A cute little yellow, four-door Ford Escape. God, I loved that car.

That is the last thing I said to him before....

That is the last thing I really remember before...(transforms physically to monopalegic)

Before....(transforms vocally to aphasia)

Kenna (Injured): (Singing)

Hush little baby, don't say a word,

Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird.

INTRODUCTION

I'm a daddy's girl. I always have been. I love my dad more than anyone. I remember seeing my dad in the hospital a lot when I was little. Kidney failure. He's had 3 transplants and has four kidneys, only one of which works. And even with everything he had going on, he always made time for me. In my 8th-grade year my dad got a call about a perfect match for a kidney. Getting to watch him become full of life again was the best feeling. Though he still has a million problems, he's rarely in the hospital, and he's much happier. We are still as close as ever. Maybe closer even. Despite all of his flaws, he is everything to me. He's my rock and he's my hero. So let's get into the story of a girl who loved her dad just as much as I do. Because a girl should never have to live without A Father's Love by Dr. M Shane Heard.

Kenna: (Complete):

I don't remember anything after walking out the door. Not the drive, not going too fast, not looking down at my Apple Watch to change the song, not the curve ahead of me, not the slamming on the brakes, swerving left, over-correcting, and then

going hard right, directly into the embankment that made my car roll three times. What I really don't remember is not putting on my seat belt, I ALWAYS PUT ON MY SEAT BELT. Well, that is what I always told my dad, but was it true? Did I skip it sometimes? I can't remember anymore. I just remember waking up, hearing voices off in the distance, in the shadows.

Kenna (Injured):

(Singing)

*(transforming to monoplegic) And if that mockingbird won't sing,
(transforming to aphasia voice) Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring.*

Beep, Beep, Beep.

Wwwhat is that? What is that?

Whhhhere am I? Where am I?

Ddddadd? Dadd?

Whhhhere are you? WHERE ARE YOU!?

I-I-I-I am so scared...so scared!

Whhyyy, why do I sound like this (gestures to mouth)...sounded like THIS!

Liiiiikkke, like this monster!!!

MONSTER! —This freak. THIS FREAKKKKKKKK!

(beat)

Kenna: (Transformation to Complete):

(Singing)

*(transforming back to "normal" body) And if that diamond ring turns to brass,
(transforming back to "normal" body) Papa's gonna buy you a looking glass.*

He was there...of course, he was there. Holding my hand. The last person I saw...last person I saw...before I became...became

Something you need to understand about my father is that he is perfect. *(Laughs)* Well, of course, he is not perfect. But to me, he is about as close to perfect as a man can get. When he and my mother got a divorce and I had to choose; I chose to go with him. It really wasn't much of a choice. He was the only one who really ever cared about me. *(beat)* Holy shit, when I say it out loud like that, what a little bitch I was. Like all the damn time. Why was I so mean to him. Sure, I hated, hated, hated my life, but that was not his fault. I was just being stupid, right?

Kenna (Injured):

(Singing)

*(transforming to monoplegic) And if that looking glass gets broke,
(transforming to aphasia voice) Papa's gonna buy you a billy goat.*

Pppain, pain...I have never really felt...pain, Nnnot, not like this!

Maybe cuuutting myself...cutting myself, while I was a liiiittle girl...little girl...

or mmmaybe, maybe I skinned up my knnnnee..my knee.

Mmyy, my dad was always there to pick me up and kkkkiss, kiss my "boo-boo".

Always there for me, always there....(*tries to laugh*)
This pain is so much. Mmmake, make it stop dad, please.

They tried to fix me...tried to fix me...but they couldn't fix it all
Yes, Dad, I am a frrreak...a freak!

LOOK AT ME!
LISTEN TO ME!

(*Quietly*) Nnnnoby, Nobody will love me.
Nnnnoby, nobody will ever want me as a wife.

My life... is OVER! THE PAIN, OH DAD, THE PAIN.

Illt, it hurts...,

Sorry, Dad. I'm sorry.

Kenna: (Transformation to Complete):

(*Singing*)
(*transforming back to "normal" body*) *And if that billy goat won't pull,*
(*transforming back to "normal" body*) *Papa's gonna buy you a wagon and a bull.*

Yes, I remember. You love me. You will always love me.
So, there I was broken, hopeless..

Wanna hear a secret? Had my dad ever left alone for long enough in that fucking (or damn) hospital bed for one second, I would have figured out a way to end it all. I would have found something to take or how to get that damn 7th story window open and proved to my father once for all I could never fly!

But, he never left my side, for so many days that man, that saint, GOD I DID NOT DESERVE HIM, HOW COULD MY MOM LEAVE HIM, LEAVE US. (*beat*) Sorry she is really not part of this story. Sure, I could go on and on about how a shitty mother can cause so much real trauma. I could fill a journal (and I did) with all the times she shit on me, all the times she shit on him. I could shout out loud how her leaving us was so selfish, of course, she did it, because she was selfish. I could tell therapists for hours on end how her leaving was actually good for my father and me and spend more time listening to their babble about how I "internalized all of my problems,"

Kenna (Injured):

(*Singing*)
(*transforming to monoplegic*) *And if that wagon and bull turn over,*

(transforming to aphasia voice) Papa's gonna buy you dog named rover..

Dddad, dad why will the pain not go away? Whhhhy, why am I still hurting sooo much...*(grabs head)* mmmake, make it go away, please DAD!

Kenna: (Transformation to Complete):

(Singing)

*(transforming back to "normal" body) And if that dog named rover won't bark,
(transforming back to "normal" body) Papa's gonna buy you a horse and a cart.*

But in the long run, that was all a crock of shit. I was lucky. Even as the pain grew worse instead of better, even after the countless hours of my father insisting on me getting better, even after all times he spent literally lifting me up, I knew I was lucky, because, because I had him.

However, life was not done using me as its punching bag. Though, I should have been getting better, though I should have been one of those heartfelt stories of salvation that you see on TikTok, that was not for me. You see, one thing the doctors missed, I guess they were too busy looking at my brain to miss I was having issues with my kidneys. That's where the pain was coming from. So, the brilliant doctors decided I needed a kidney and needed one, like now. Of course, guess who was a perfect match?

My father. He didn't even ask me what I wanted. I was underage, so even the doctors did not ask me what I wanted. What I did not want, was to live like this, like this freak, this monster. But they did not ask me and the next thing I knew, I was waking up, recovering from getting brand new kidney, his kidney..but then the real horror began..

Kenna (Injured):

(Singing)

*(transforming to monoplegic)
And if that horse and cart break down,
(transforming to aphasia voice)
You'll still be the cutest little baby in town!*

Dddad? Where are you dad? Whhhat? What? Whhhat? What do you mean he is gone? NO!!!!!!
NO!!!! Dddad? Dad? Stttooop, stop plain' dad. Where are you? Thhhhis, this is not funny! Dad? NOOO!!!!

*Hush little baby, don't say a word,
Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird.*