

NOTES

And the Award Goes To is a dramatic short story about the plight of a young girl raised in a home filled with violence. This selection should be performed by a female and may be entered in either Prose Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. The key to this performance is the underlying honesty of the narrator. Avoid playing this selection with an *over*-dramatic tone. Doing so will only undermine the power that lies at the core of the true dramatic nature of the story. Underplay this character; after all, it should be difficult for her to reveal the secrets that have tormented her childhood. Also, play the character's likeability. If the audience *likes* the character, they are more likely to feel *empathy* for her at the end of the performance. This character has a slightly sarcastic sense of humor, so play that, too. Never underestimate the power of a well-placed pause. There are emotional transitions throughout this selection that require the performer to really play the moments. The audience should be able to see the thought process of the performer, as well as how difficult it is for this character to divulge her secrets. If portrayed with 100% honesty, this selection can be a tour-de-force for a talented performer. The drama mask icons simply serve as suggestions for when to turn the pages in the manuscript.

I love movies. I think most people do. It's a form of escape. And who doesn't want to escape from their lives once in awhile? My favorites are the romantic comedies. You know Julia Roberts, Sandra Bullock, Meg Ryan, Amy Adams, Jennifer Aniston—they're the best. They help me forget. They let me escape the reality of my own life; even it's only for just a few hours sometimes. I don't like the dramas nearly as much as I like the romantic comedies. Why would I want to spend two hours watching someone else's depressing life? Especially when my *own* life is more of a drama than any movie I've ever seen. I've never understood why anyone would want to pay money to see a story about someone's miserable life and cry in public like that. I mean, Hollywood spends millions of dollars on a story that is full of violence and abuse, and then people spend millions and *millions* of dollars to see it. If you want to cry, just give me ten bucks. I'll tell you a true story that could make you cry. I might even throw in some popcorn and a bag of chips.



And the Award Goes To

By Shannon Cartwright

My life would make a pretty good movie, if I do say so myself. It probably wouldn't be one of those big-budget films you read about in the magazines. It would be an okay drama, though, if that's what you're into. My life would probably be best told as one of those made for TV movies—like on *Lifetime* or something.



Like most movies, there is always at least one bad guy. For me, the bad guy would be Dad. He was scarier than Jigsaw, Freddy Krueger and Michael Meyers combined. It's hard to admit it, but my father used to abuse me when I was younger. It started out with him just playing around. He'd pinch me. He liked to see what kind of mark he could make on my skin. Mom would be off somewhere at her bridge party playing cards with her girlfriends. When she would come home, I would tell her what happened. She'd look at the red welts on my legs or arms, and she'd tell Dad to remember that I was still just a kid—that he shouldn't be so rough with me. He'd laugh and try to make a joke out of it by saying, “We were only rough housing, Babe. I'm sorry. I'll be more careful from now on. If I was too rough, why didn't she say anything?” Then, when my mother wasn't in the room, he'd call me a little *tattle-tail*. He'd warn me that Mom wouldn't always be there to baby me. He'd tell me that if I was smart and didn't want to stress my mom out, I wouldn't say anything anymore.



As the years passed, Dad's “playing around” transformed into something a little more serious. Dad was—and still is—a smoker. I would always smell like cigarette smoke. That's why I'm never going to smoke. It's so gross. The mothers of the few friends I was allowed to play with would no doubt notice my smelly clothes. They'd teasingly ask me if I'd been smoking. Embarrassed, I would just laugh and tell them that my dad smoked in the house. There was one week—back a few years—that Mom had to visit my grandmother in the hospital. My grandparents lived out of state. With Grandma in ICU, there wouldn't be anyone to look after me in the hospital. So Mom felt it was safe to leave me with Dad. After all, he was my father. He would look after me like his life depended on it, right? Mom hadn't even been gone one day, when Dad decided I would be his full-time slave. I was still very young—around five or six or so. While my mother was taking care of my grandmother six hundred miles away, I was now tending to Dad's every whim: getting him a beer from the fridge; getting the mail; bringing him the remote. Nothing I did was