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**Product Code A0802**

# *Love and Happiness*

**A Short Dramatic Play for Two Characters in their Sixties**

by

**Adrienne Dawes**

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# Love and Happiness

by Adrienne Dawes

## CHARACTERS

**Dottie Gregor;** *A Women in her Sixties*

**Harold Gregor;** *Her Husband*

## SETTING

*The Cramped Living Room of a New York Apartment*

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# Love and Happiness

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*(3 AM, in the cramped living room of a New York apartment. Tacky porcelain figurines and assorted knick-knacks decorate every surface, save for an open record player. Alone in the dark, a figure dances to Otis Redding's "Try a Little Tenderness"\*. LIGHTS RISE on DOTTIE GREGOR dressed in a sparkling evening gown and ratty house slippers. Her ruby lips grip a lit cigarette as she sways her hips to the music. She begins to sing, her voice creaking softly over each syllable. Her husband HAROLD enters, dressed in a grimy wife-beater, fading plaid boxers, and black socks pulled up to his knees. He watches DOTTIE from the doorway for a beat then bumps into her playfully. DOTTIE stops, embarrassed.)*

DOTTIE

*(Growling)* Christ Harold! Nearly scared me half to death!

HAROLD

Just tryin' some tenderness . . .

*(HAROLD mimics her slow dance, adding a bit of an Irish jig for flare. DOTTIE rolls her eyes.)*

HAROLD

*(Yawning)* What are you doing up at this hour?

DOTTIE

Nothing.

HAROLD

What's that you've got on? Is that new?

DOTTIE

No. Just something I had tucked away.

HAROLD

Looks nice.

DOTTIE

Oh shut up.

HAROLD

I'm being serious. You look good.

DOTTIE

*(Trying to hurry him out)* Yeah, yeah, now that you've had a good laugh, why don't you go back to bed and leave me alone!

HAROLD

I'm awake now – come on, let's dance. When's the last time we danced to Otie?

DOTTIE

*(Hisses)* Otissss.

*(HAROLD smiles, pulling her close. She lets him hold her as they slow dance.)*

HAROLD

See, this ain't so bad. Been a long time. *(Beat)* God, when *was* the last time we danced like this? I know you remember. Remember *everything* - -

DOTTIE

New Year's Eve party, 1968.

HAROLD

Yeah. *Yeah*. You wore a . . . a sparkly dress –

DOTTIE

I was wearing *this* dress.

HAROLD

Knew I recognized it. *(Beat)* 1968. Geez. Such a long time ago. What happened to us, you know? What happened.

*(DOTTIE pulls away.)*

HAROLD, *Continued*

What? What? I'm just saying—

*(DOTTIE sits on the couch, folding her arms across her chest tightly.)*

HAROLD, *Continued*

Not getting soft on me, are you? Where's the quick comeback? Are we married or aren't we?

*(DOTTIE rolls her eyes at him and takes a drag from her cigarette.)*

HAROLD, *Continued*

Dorothy, why do you always have to act like this? We're having this perfectly nice moment and you just had to ruin it! *(Beat)* I'm trying here, okay? I'm *trying*.

DOTTIE

To do what? Make me miserable?

HAROLD

Be romantic. Make you happy and stuff.

DOTTIE

You want to make me happy?

HAROLD

Yeah.

DOTTIE

You *really* want to make me happy?

HAROLD

Yes, I really - -

DOTTIE

Don't talk.

HAROLD

Don't talk? All these years and I had to do was not talk? Alrighty. No talking. Can do.

*(HAROLD seats himself grandly on the couch, with a smug expression. After a short beat . . .)*

HAROLD

See – I am just sitting here.

DOTTIE

No talking . . .

HAROLD

I'm not –

DOTTIE

So stop –

HAROLD

I am.

*(HAROLD closes his mouth. There is a long beat. DOTTIE finally looks over at him.)*

DOTTIE

*(Softly)* Richard died of a heart attack. His brother called during dinner.

HAROLD

*(Shocked)* What?!! Why – why didn't say something? Jesus Christ Dorothy!

DOTTIE

I thought you weren't talking anymore!

HAROLD

*(Fuming)* I'm talking all right, I'm talking! What's the matter with you? You weren't going to say anything?!

*(DOTTIE stands at a distance, watching him carefully.)*

DOTTIE

*(Slowly)* I – I was. It just took awhile to set in –

HAROLD

You just don't wait till you feel like it to tell someone their best friend died! Jesus Christ!  
*(Beat; quietly)* Poor Richie, aw man. Poor Rich . . . why didn't you say something?

*(DOTTIE turns away from him. Beat.)*

HAROLD

Well?!

DOTTIE

Well what?

HAROLD

You have nothing to say? Absolutely nothing?! Richie's been with us forever, he's been our friend since we first met!

DOTTIE

*(Sharply)* Richard was *not* my friend. He was *never* my friend!

HAROLD

Oh, okay. So let's dress up in our little dress and dance around like it's a party, like we're celebrating!

DOTTIE

I am celebrating.

*(Beat. HAROLD gapes at her; DOTTIE sniffs and smooths the folds in her dress.)*

HAROLD

I think you better tell me what you mean by that –

DOTTIE

You know what I mean.

HAROLD

I don't, so tell me!

DOTTIE

*(Furiously)* You don't know? What is it now – you don't remember? You forgot?

HAROLD

*(Yelling, exasperated)* Just fucking tell me! Stop playing games!

DOTTIE

I'm not playing anything - -

HAROLD

You're psychotic, you know that? Absolutely, out-of-your-mind psychotic! You need some rest—you're flipping out... trauma's all gone to your head –

*(HAROLD tries to lead her to the bedroom door. DOTTIE yanks her arm away.)*

DOTTIE

I'm fine. I'm fine, Harold.

HAROLD

You need some sleep – it's too much to handle right now, it's too much - -

DOTTIE

I said I'm fine! I'm happy Harold! I have been waiting for this day for over 40 years! I hope that sonofabitch rots in hell.

*(HAROLD slaps her hard. DOTTIE clutches the side of her face glaring at him venomously. HAROLD steps back horrified at himself.)*

DOTTIE, *Continued*

*(Taunting him angrily)* Oh domestic violence! That's new! Not as satisfying as you thought, is it?!

HAROLD

*(Fumbling)* Richie's . . . he was good people! He did good things for the boys. Loaned us money so Jason could go to college! He gave us . . . more than you'll ever know. We owe him our - -

DOTTIE

I don't owe him *anything*.

HAROLD

*(Shaking with rage)* You – you ought to be glad I stayed with you, all this time. I could've left you right then and there but I didn't. The boys needed their father - -

DOTTIE

*(Painfully)* And what about me, Harold? I didn't need you?! *(Beat; quietly)* Let me tell you. Being raped in your own home, in your own bed by the one person you never thought would cross you, never thought in a million years you wouldn't be safe with - that is pain. Add on years and years of seeing his twisted smile turning up at your kid's birthday parties, Super Bowl Sundays, Christmas vacations with the man who violated you, your kids hanging on his every word, looking up to him adoringly, that's painful. But there's nothing like your own husband doubting your word, blaming you for something you never wanted, never asked for -  
-

HAROLD

You were both so fucking drunk when I got back to the house, you didn't even know where you were, what your name was! Just couldn't wait for me to leave, yapping at me to get more beer, prancing around in that slutty little dress! At least Richie owned up to his mistakes, you never even had the decency to apologize - -

DOTTIE

And what should I apologize for? I didn't want to have sex with him, Harold! I told him. Over and over again. No. But 'good ole Richie' kept on anyway. It wasn't my fault. Not my drinking, not the dress I wore. That was him. That was all Richie.

*(HAROLD turns away from her. DOTTIE grabs him.)*

DOTTIE, *Continued*

Why isn't my word enough? Why does his word still mean more to you than mine?

*(HAROLD pulls away from her.)*

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