

## ELIZABETH - DAUGHTER OF CHARLOTTE

### CHARACTER STUDY

Elizabeth is a witty child who listens attentively to adults and mimics adult mannerisms and style yet maintains her childhood qualities of minimal responsibility. She has an imaginary friend named Boo who is the only person who truly understands her situation in life, but then of course he would, she designed him in her head.

Elizabeth's home life is quiet disturbing and dysfunctional with a mother who is out to bring pain to an ex who left her for a younger woman and an irresponsible father who hasn't paid alimony for over six months and thus according to the divorce decree and her mother's wishes, isn't allowed to see Elizabeth.

She is above average intelligence, extremely witty, and because of the lack of her social stability in her family testy to her mother who in her mind seems to be set on wrecking any sanctity Elizabeth would otherwise find through a normal family life. She wants to understand her mother's hurt and even help her but is unable due to not having seen her dad for over six months.

Her mother is a mortgage consultant for a finance company and is overworked, underpaid, has been cut in hours, and with an irresponsible alimony paying ex is now behind in her payments.

### SCENE READ STUDY

In the scene below, Elizabeth has been outside with her imaginary friend Boo and has been called inside by her mother Charlotte. Elizabeth is testy with her mom because her mom is not being conducive to allowing Elizabeth's father, Rob, to come visit because the latter is seriously in the rears in alimony.

As the scene opens, Elizabeth has just come in from outside and is about to clean up for dinner and although she wants to ask if her dad can come for a visit she keeps that in the background of her mind as she tries to bare with her disturbed attitude toward her mother because of her mother not allowing her father a visit.

SCRIPT FOLLOWS.....

Elizabeth removes her snowsuit and shoes.

CHARLOTTE

Hang up your suit. And wash up.

Elizabeth is washing her hands and face. Sounds of the table being set are heard in the background.

CHARLOTTE

Who were you talking to out there?

Elizabeth looks in the small mirror sitting on the old sink that is propped at an angle to match her eye level because of the height of the old medicine cabinet.

ELIZABETH

Just talking.

CHARLOTTE

But, who too?

ELIZABETH

No one really. Just talking.

CHARLOTTE

Sometimes you scare me Elizabeth.  
You shouldn't talk to yourself like that.

ELIZABETH

Why?

CHARLOTTE

Because people that talk to themselves usually aren't alright.

Elizabeth leans against the threshold of the doorway and watches her mother take up the last bit of dinner.

ELIZABETH

You talk to *yourself* sometimes.  
Charlotte stops and looks at Elizabeth.

CHARLOTTE

I swear Elizabeth, sometimes you challenge me to the limit.

ELIZABETH

Because I ask you questions or because what I say you don't like?

CHARLOTTE

That will be enough young lady.  
Get in your seat.

ELIZABETH  
Enough of what?

CHARLOTTE  
You know what I mean.

Elizabeth takes a seat at the table as her mother does the same.

ELIZABETH  
Actually, I don't.

Charlotte frowns at her daughter and hands her the green beans.

CHARLOTTE  
Eat your dinner.

Elizabeth frowns and takes the green beans then continues to fill her plate sparsely with other foods occasionally taking frowned glances from her mother.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)  
Elizabeth you hardly eat enough to keep a bird alive.

Elizabeth looks at her food then at her mother in amazement.

ELIZABETH  
Really? In the morning when I put out only one slice of bread there are like 8 to 10 birds that eat it. Charlotte frowns at her daughter.

CHARLOTTE  
You are really being testy tonight.

ELIZABETH  
But you said...

CHARLOTTE  
I know what I said and you are being testy. Now stop it and eat your meal then go get your lessons and wash up for bed.

Elizabeth looks at the clock in the kitchen.

ELIZABETH  
Am I being scolded?

CHARLOTTE  
No.

ELIZABETH

Then why do I have to go to bed so early?

Charlotte stretches to see the living room clock.

CHARLOTTE

Ok. This time change and winter are still messing me up.

ELIZABETH

So then I don't have to go to bed right away.

CHARLOTTE

No. You have a little time yet.

#### ELIZABETH ADDITIONAL SCRIPT

Charlotte stands in the doorway of Julie's house and Julie's mom, JEAN stands behind her daughter. They are already engaged in conversation. Charlotte is anxious.

CHARLOTTE

...so then let me get this straight Julie. You and Elizabeth split right over there...

Charlotte points to the spot where Elizabeth and Julie were last together.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And then you came to your house and Elizabeth continued on the walk toward the park. Does she walk through the park when she walks home?

JULIE

Yes ma'am.

CHARLOTTE

Even when it snows like this?

JULIE

Yes ma'am. She likes playing . . well, walking in the snow.

Charlotte looks across the street then back at Julie who waits.

CHARLOTTE

So tell me Julie do you know why she didn't wait for me at the

school?

Julie turns to her mother.

JULIE

Do I have to?

Julie's mom frowns and nods her head.

JEAN

Julie? You need to answer the question.

Julie turns to Charlotte.

JULIE

Is she in trouble?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know Julie. You tell me?

JULIE

Is she going to get grounded?

CHARLOTTE

Julie just tell me.

Julie's mother turns her daughter toward her.

JEAN

Julie, stop wasting time and tell Elizabeth's mother anything you know and stop stalling.

Julie frowns, turns to Charlotte and explains.

JULIE

Well ok. Well, she waited for a while, then went to the office and they said that you had gotten the message, and I waited with her for a while more after I called my mom and my mom told me to walk home since I have a key.

Julie turns to her mom and again receives a nod and frown.

JULIE

So, Elizabeth was telling me how her dad isn't allowed to visit for Christmas and all and how you were upset with her over it and so she said she was just going to walk home since you were probably busy at work and because she left her bowl and cup out.

CHARLOTTE

Bowl and cup?

JULIE

Yeah. She said she forgot to put them in the sink and so she was glad she got to go home early and put them in the sink before you got home and got mad at her.

Charlotte shakes her head, pulls out her cell and calls home again and while doing so continues conversing with Julie.

CHARLOTTE

So, you're saying that the two of you stood there talking for a little bit then she went on home?

JULIE

Yup. That's what happened.

CHARLOTTE

So then where is she?  
Charlotte stands looking down at Julie.

JEAN

Julie are you telling us everything?

Julie turns to her mother with assurance.

JULIE

Yes mom. I swear.

CHARLOTTE

Look Julie. Elizabeth isn't at home, nor with my mother, nor my Ex. If you know where she is you have to tell me. She won't be in any trouble.

JULIE

I swear. That's what happened and I don't know any more, I swear.  
Julie's mom squats down, Charlotte leans in to listen attentively.

JULIE'S MOM

Honey. If there is anything else that happened or anything else you know you have to tell us. It's important. It's cold out there and Julie isn't home.

Julie nods her head.

JULIE

I swear that's all that happened  
and I don't know anymore.

Charlotte stands, looks across the street, back at Julie and  
Jean and pushes the door open and speaks behind her.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you for your help. Sorry to  
bother