

Songbirds: The Diary of Dana Ma : Part 1

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Characters:

Dana: A school girl.
The Diary: The voice of the diary should be kind but eerie and whispery, part of Dana's mind.
Mrs Ma: Dana's Mother.

Synopsis:

Dana is very unhappy. Her parents are splitting up and she has no one to speak to about it. She starts a diary as an outlet for her pent up fears and emotions. The situation at home affects her performance at school where she finds herself in trouble with her teachers. To make matters worse her friendship with her best friend Winnie comes to an end. The other girls in her class also turn against her.

Winnie's only friend is her diary and as she writes it the diary finds a voice - the drama has the voice of the diary speaking aloud as Dana is writing.

Winnie writes about what is happening at school but she does not write directly about what is happening at home and so the listener has to guess what is happening at home.

The second part of this drama portrays the events that are happening around Dana both at home and school.

Scene 1

Dana: (Writing) Friday January 14th (Pauses. To herself) Now what? (Pause. Writing) Dear Diary. (Speaking to herself) There... after sitting here for hours staring at an empty page I've finally written something. (Reading) 'Dear Diary.' (To herself) Why am I writing this in English? Maybe because I don't want other people to read it. If Mum finds it she'll think it's my homework and the maid doesn't speak English and Dad never looks in my room. Okay. 'Dear Diary... (writing) How are you?

Diary: Lonely. Scared. I feel something terrible is going to happen.

Dana: (Gasps) (Pause) (To herself) What did I write that for?! I didn't mean to write that! I was going to write, 'Fine', 'I'm fine, thank you.' But instead something made me write... 'lonely' and 'scared' I'm not...am I? Lonely and scared I mean? (Pause) Look what I've written... it looks funny... 'Dear Diary. How are you? Lonely. Scared. I think something terrible is going to happen' What will people think if they read that?! No one must read this. I've got to keep it hidden,

somewhere no one will find it. I'll have to keep it with me all the time... sleep with it...take it to school... take it wherever I go. That's enough for to-day... I feel exhausted... I'd better get some sleep... Where shall I put my diary... I know, I'll put it under my pillow.

Scene 2

Dana: (Writing) Friday January 21st I said I was going to write something in my diary everyday... but I haven't written anything for a week. All I've written is, 'Dear Diary. How do you feel? Lonely. Scared. I feel something terrible is going to happen.' What a funny think to write. Okay... let's write to-day's date. Dear Diary... I have been carrying you around in my satchel for a week now...At night I take you to bed with me and put you under my pillow. You have become quite creased and you look older than you really are. But no one has read you except me. And no one ever will read you. You are my friend... my best friend. (Pause) Although we haven't known each other for a long time I like you more than the other girls in my class... I can't say anything serious to my classmates... If I tell one of the girls something she just tells somebody else... they just like to giggle and point fingers and gossip about other people's business. I don't trust them. But I can trust you, can't I. You won't tell anybody what I say will you diary?

Diary: Tell me. You can tell me everything.

Scene 3

Dana: Sunday January 23rd 'Dear Diary... why is this happening? Why is this happening to me?

Diary: Why? Why? Why?

Dana: It's not fair! Nothing is fair. I bury my head under the covers but I can still hear so I have to put on my walkman and play my music really loud.

Diary: But you can still hear?!

Dana: I know what I want to say but I'm frightened of writing it down in case somebody reads it. But tonight was horrible.... Really horrible... the worst night in my whole life so far. And it started so nicely. Mum made a delicious dinner... dad really liked it too... then mum suggested we all go to the cinema. Then it all went wrong. Horribly, horribly wrong. Oh no! Quick, there's someone coming!

Diary: Hide me!
(SFX: Bedroom door opening)

Mrs Ma: Dana.

Dana: I'm just finishing my homework.

Mrs. Ma: Look, I'm really sorry about what happened at dinner.

Dana: It's okay mum.

Mrs Ma: It's difficult to explain.

Dana: It's alright. I understand. I didn't really want to go to the cinema anyway.

Mrs Ma: (Sighs) One day... when you're a bigger girl... you'll understand.
Dana: Yes mum.
Mrs Ma: Okay... you can get on with your homework now... but don't sit up too late.... You've got school in the morning.
(SFX: Bedroom door closing)
Dana: (Writing) She saw!
Diary: She noticed!
Dana: I wasn't quick enough.
Diary: I heard her coming... but it was too late.
Dana: She thought I was doing my homework.
Diary: Maybe she guessed.
Dana: I'll have to be more careful... more careful in future. (Pause) Time for you to go under the pillow.
Diary: Hide.
Dana: Under the pillow.

Scene 4

Dana: (Writing) Monday January 24th. Dear Diary. It's driving me crazy. I don't know what to do. I don't know who to tell. To-day I thought about telling my class teacher, Miss Wu, but then I thought...
Diary: No, no, no!
Dana: I can't tell her. How can I tell her? What will she think?
Diary: No, no, no you can't!
Dana: But who else is there to tell?
Diary: Tell her. Don't tell her. Tell her. Don't tell her!
Dana: I can't! I can't! The only person I can tell is you.
Diary: You.
Dana: Oh diary, my diary... what would I do without you?
Diary: Without you.
Dana: I'd go crazy.
Diary: Crazy, crazy, crazy.

Scene 5

Dana: (Writing) Tuesday January 25th. To-day I tried to tell my best friend Winnie... I started to tell her... but she just looked at me with this stupid look... I knew she didn't understand... she just looked at me through her thick, round glasses and I knew she wanted to laugh... to laugh at me and my family ... so I stopped speaking and I pulled a funny face and I pinched her... and she gave a little scream and ran away and she hasn't spoken to me since. Now she plays with the other girls... and she points with them...points at me.
Diary: She doesn't understand.
Dana: I wanted to tell her but she didn't understand.
Diary: She ran away.
Dana: And now. I don't know who I'm going to tell.

Scene 6:

Dana: (Writing) Wednesday January 26th. Dear Diary. I hate Winnie.

Diary: Hate her!

Dana: I was so tired I fell asleep in class. Winnie put up her hand and reported me to Miss Wu and Miss Wu scolded me for falling asleep in class. After Miss Wu had told me off she said, 'Thank you Winnie.' I looked at Winnie and she looked away. So at the end of the lesson, as we were leaving class, I got behind Winnie without her seeing me, and I pinched her really hard. She screamed and the other girls gathered round. Then Priscilla told Miss Wu she's seen me pinching Winnie and Miss Wu told me I had to write a letter of apology to Winnie. The other day I tried to talk to her... to tell her...

Diary: Tell her. Tell her.

Dana: My heart was beating really fast and my face was burning but I wanted to tell her what was happening to me....

Diary: Tell her, tell her what's going on.

Dana: I was going to tell her... tell her everything... but suddenly she started talking to another girl and then she said she was busy and hurried off.

Diary: I hate Miss Wu.

Dana: Why didn't she listen?! She said, 'You can't hide behind silence Dana.' And she told me to write Winnie a letter saying sorry for pinching her. But..

Diary: I'm not sorry, I'm not, I'm not, I hate her.

Dana: And I hate Miss Wu. I hate everyone. And I'm not writing that silly letter.

Diary: I'm not! I'm not! I'm not!

Scene 7

Dana: Thursday January 27th. Miss Wu asked me if I had written the letter to Winnie. I said..

Diary: No I haven't.

Dana: She asked me why I hadn't written it. I said

Diary: I don't want to.

Dana: Miss Wu said that she would give me one more chance. She said that I had to write it tonight and give it to her tomorrow morning. I think she wants to read it aloud to the whole class. But I'm not going to write it, why should I? Winnie used to be my friend. Now she's my enemy. She put her hand up and told Miss Wu I was sleeping. But I was tired. I hadn't slept all night because I couldn't stop thinking about what was happening to Mum and Dad. And now I'm being punished. It isn't fair. I'm glad I pinched Winnie...

Diary: She deserved it.

Dana: This is my letter to Winnie. Dear Winnie, that pinch I gave you was nothing compared to what you did to me. I thought you were my friend and I tried to talk to you, to tell you what is happening to me... but you wouldn't listen.... You just laughed at me and ran away. And now I hate you.

Diary: I really hate you.

Dana: Your ex-friend, Dana. Huh, see how she likes that! No one understands. No one cares. Only you diary, you're the only one who understands. You're the only one who knows what's going on. You're the only one I can tell my secrets to. You're the only one who knows how I feel.

Diary: Lonely.

Dana: Yes.

Diary: Scared.

Dana: Yes.

Diary: Frightened that..... (Hesitant) it will happen.

Dana: Yes.

Diary: (Hesitant) That.... that he will leave.

Dana: I wish they'd...

Diary: Stop shouting.

Dana: I wish they'd...

Diary: Be like they used to be. Love one another and love me.

Dana: (SFX: Closing diary shut. Speaking to herself) That's enough for tonight. Enough....now under the pillow. There. No one must see you, come near you and read you. Tomorrow you'll be with me all day, in my satchel. Everywhere I go you'll go with me... my shadow, my sister... my twin sister.

Scene 8

Dana: Friday January 28th. Dear Diary. Miss Wu sent me to the discipline teacher, Mister Lo. I don't like Mister Lo. He's stupid.

Diary: I hate him.

Dana: He asked me why I was so disobedient.

Diary: I didn't answer.

Dana: He told me I had to answer him.

Diary: But I didn't.

Dana: He said I was a very rude girl.

Diary: And I told him he was rude.

Dana: And he became very angry.

Diary: He shouted.

Dana: He said he was putting me in detention. He said he was going to write to my parents. I said to him...

Diary: I don't care... write to who you want to!

Dana: He started to tremble.

Diary: He wanted to hit me.

Dana: But I wasn't scared. I didn't care if he hit me or not. Let him. But he was scared of getting into trouble so he held his hands down by his side and trembled. (Pause) When I got home no one was in, so it didn't matter that I was late. Detention is stupid.

Diary: Everything is stupid.

Scene 9

Dana: Sunday February 1st. A week since it happened.

Diary: Pinch, punch the first day of the month.

Dana: And no returns.

Scene 10

Dana: Monday February 2nd. Dear Diary. The letter has come. It came this morning. The envelope has got the name of the school printed on it. Under the school banner it says, 'Truth Above Everything.' That's so funny. There is no truth. Especially not in that school. Under the school banner should be written, 'School for the Deaf Where Nobody Listens.' I put the letter on the table. But no one has seen it.

Scene 11

Dana: Tuesday February 3rd. I hate Tuesdays. They're so close to Monday.

Diary: I hate Friday too because it's close to Saturday.

Dana: I hate everyday because it's close to the following day and the following day is always worse than the day that went before.

Diary: The letter.

Dana: Is still on the table. No one's opened it.

Scene 12

Dana: Wednesday 4th February. Dear Diary. Miss Wu asked me if my parents had received a letter sent by the school. I told her I didn't know. The other girls have started calling me names. Priscilla Liu called me...

Diary: ... weird

Dana: And the other girls have also started calling me weird. I don't answer them. I just look through them as if they were made of glass. I don't care about them.

Scene 13

Dana: Thursday February 5th. Dear Diary, Everything has gone wrong.

Diary: I am to blame. It's all my fault. Everything. He's left and it's my fault.

Dana: The letter from the school is still on the table. It hasn't been opened. I don't think it will ever be opened. Mum is in her room. I don't think she will ever come out again. (Pause) I have made a decision. I am going to tell you but you must keep it a secret. A big secret. Tell no one. Promise? Okay.

Diary: I'm leaving home. And after tomorrow I'm never going back to school again.

Dana: It's the only way to make things better. I'm going to put some things in a bag... you my dearest diary... a pen... some clothes... biscuits. I'm going to leave without anybody knowing.

Diary: And then things will get better. Maybe... (Hesitant)... he'll hear that I have left and he'll come back.

Dana: Maybe I'll see him somewhere... walking in the street... and I'll tell him myself. I'll say...

Diary: It's alright I've left. You can come back now.

Dana: So, dear, dear diary, this is the last night you will have to hide under my pillow in this bed. Tomorrow night we will be far away. I don't know where. You shall always be with me. My friend, my only friend, the only person on the whole earth who listens to me. I shall try to keep you dry.

Diary: I shall always keep you with me.

Dana: So... good night... and who knows where we'll be when I next open your pages and write in you.

Scene 14

Dana: Friday February 6th. Dear Diary. It's cold. I'm in Sai Kung. We used to come here when I was a little girl. We used to sit by the sea and have dinner. And once we got on a boat and went for a ride. Miss Wu told me Mr Lo had tried to phone my parents but he couldn't get through. She asked me when the best time was to phone.

Diary: I just shrugged.

Dana: As I was leaving school I looked at Winnie and I thought.

Diary: I'm never seeing you again. Never.

Dana: And I wondered. If she knew that I was never going to see her again... would she be sad? She plays with the other girls now. They all ignore me. They think I'm weird. Suddenly I wanted to go up to Winnie and tell her...say to her...

Diary: I'm never going to see you again.

Dana: But in the end I didn't. I just thought it in my head. Well tomorrow I won't be at school and she won't have to ignore me any more and Miss Wu can stop being angry with me and Mr. Lo can stop trembling. And at the end of the week the school will close for the Lunar New Year and Winnie can go home and get all her red packets and count her money and eat her fish and chicken and long noodles. I've eaten my biscuits and I don't know where we can sleep tonight.

Diary: Maybe in one of the boats.

Dana: That will be nice. We can rock from side to side and fall asleep. (Pause) Someone is looking at me. A man. I don't like him. I'd better put you away now diary.

Scene 15

Dana: We're in a boat now. An old boat on a beach. It smells. I'm cold. I can't see what I'm writing. Goodnight diary.

Diary: Good night.

The End