

Sky Full

A 10-Minute Play  
by

John David Westby

630.442.9910  
johnwestby330@gmail.com

© 2025 John David Westby  
All Rights Reserved.

## **SKY FULL**

A 10-Minute Play

### **CHARACTERS**

DEIRDRE – late 20s-30s, precocious poet, or is she?

RAABY - late 20s-40s, Park Ranger, earnest, off-grid.

Any ethnicity for either character will work.

### **SETTING**

A mountain meadow in Big Sky Country, beneath the last remaining sunset. A vibrant sky pulses with living colors indicated by lighting. A way to project a spectacular sunset would be great; but it's not essential to see the actual sunset. Actors facing out to the audience will provide the sunset effect just by looking. A picnic blanket. Can be done very simply with just actors and a maybe a backpack.

### **TIME**

Near future. A time when nature itself becomes scarce.

### **SUMMARY**

In a future where natural beauty is suddenly vanishing, a precocious poet and an off-the-grid park ranger fall in love while protecting the last remaining sunset until unexpected forces cause a glitch in the fabric of the sky.

**SKY FULL**  
**A Short Play**

*Big Sky Country. A mountain meadow.  
 A brilliant sunset of living colors.*

*Bird sounds at twilight.*

*RAABY, a park ranger, and DIERDRE, a  
 poet, on a blanket, absorbing the  
 outrageous colors of the sunset.*

*RAABY's gazes fondly on DIERDRE.*

RAABY

It's the best of the best isn't it? I've been saving this one for you, Dierdre.

DIERDRE

Thank you, Raaby. I thought you'd never get around to bringing me here.

*Raaby checks in with Dierdre.*

DIERDRE (CONT'D)

It's so beautiful.

RAABY

I can see the sunset in your eyes. It's like you can't not look at this beauty. -- Oh, sorry that's a double negative.

DIERDRE

(suddenly, almost robotically)

The phrase, "You can't not look" is an exception to the double negative rule. It doesn't mean "you can't look," but implies that one may have a compulsion to look.

I mean, according to Google Grammar. Ha, ha!

RAABY

Well, you're the writer.

*DIERDRE really stares at the sky.*

RAABY (CONT'D)

Are you memorizing it? I did the same thing!

*DIERDRE looks away, flustered.*

DIERDRE

I'm not memorizing it-- But I'm not not memorizing it. Haha

RAABY

This is the last of the sunsets, do you know that? It took me so long to find it, deep in this valley, and I've preserved the last vivid sunset in the world. The others have just disappeared. Everyone of them. Except this one.

DIERDRE

Not gone, they just moved them to upscale resorts. And films. And Google. Just type in "sunset" and you see the best.

RAABY

I wanted you to see this because you're a poet and I knew you'd want to memorialize it. Turn it into art.

DIERDRE

Oh, I will. I really will.

RAABY

I never thought I'd meet someone like you, Dierdre. It's like you know exactly how to push all my nerdy buttons. Like we were just made for each other.

DEIRDRE

Like I was designed specifically to figure you out, understand you. Be your-- girlfriend.

RABBY

They always say, "there's one person for you!"

DIERDRE

We fit.

RAABY

Things haven't been good since, well, Patagonia. It was rough down there. When it happened. I'd just turned my back for - for a few minutes and it was gone!

DEIRDRE

I know.

RAABY

It was the last remaining sunset in South America, too. I worked so hard to keep it secret. Only let authorized people see it. Then it was stolen right in front of me! Sucked out of the sky. So wack.

DEIRDRE

Uploaded! Probably.

(off RAABY's look)

They do that now. I think. I heard. I mean. HAHA.

RAABY

Back at Global Park Ranger School, they used to call me the Sky Shepherd because I knew all the best skies and cared for them like small sentient beings. I curated and cataloged sunrises and sunsets into the best, most loved, categories and tried so hard to preserve them. Look, I even got a badge!

(Shows her his badge.)

My team lost their sky battles. They were heroes but one by one the thieves stole them. And those rangers couldn't live with themselves.

DIERDRE

What happened to them?

RAABY

Business school. They manage Hedge Funds now, god save them.

DIERDRE

Maybe it's for the best, though. People don't want to see real images anymore. It's too much hassle to get out in nature and sweat the hikes when they can access them with 7G enhanced technology.

RAABY

Ugh, like seeing zoo animals in J-PeG captivity. Nothing like this, Dierdre. This is real.

DIERDRE

Being here is wonderful. Part of the pulse of color.

RAABY

I love how you use language like music. It's beautiful.

DIERDRE

Love is like Wi-Fi: invisible, powerful, and when it's gone, you suddenly have no idea what to do with yourself.

(beat)

Or so I hear. HAHA!

*They kiss. Sudden sky change.*

DIERDRE (CONT'D)

Interesting.

RAABY

Sorry I'm not a good kisser. I've been off the grid.

DIERDRE

No, the sunset is changing. I think it's almost at it's peak.

RAABY

Yes, it's going to be spectacular today. Do you think you'll write something?

DEIRDRE

Yes, Raaby, thank you for the suggestion. I will.  
(almost automatically)

*Tonight, the sky is breathing  
A spill of amber, gold.  
It comes quiet as a deer,  
To graze the edge of evening.*

*Beat. It was pretty good!*

RAABY

Wow. That's amazing.

DIERDRE

Any time, Raaby. Just ask.

RAABY

You always know the right thing to say.

DIERDRE

Just wired that way I guess.

*DIERDRE notices the sky change.*

DIERDRE (CONT'D)

Look! It's going into peak color, let's get in position.

*DEIRDRE takes yoga pose. RAABY,  
follows Dierdre's directions.*

DEIRDRE

(Breathing deeply)

Breathe in for three long counts. One, two, three aaaannd  
hold!. Hold...

*RAABY follows. The sky shudders  
briefly, strangely.*

RAABY

Funny. I don't feel--

DEIRDRE

Try again! Deeper! Really pull in!

*DEIRDRE inhales. RAABY, too. The sky  
shudders. With a loud sucking sound,  
the sky evaporates.*

RAABY

Oh my God! The sky! Dierdre! It's gone!

DEIRDRE

Don't worry, Raaby! Now it will stay perfect forever.

RAABY

Stop it! It's gone! Another one stolen!

DEIRDRE

Don't be so human, Raaby. It was lovely and beautiful. A perfect end to this day.

RAABY

(realizing)

That's--that's what the "tourist" said in-- in -- Patagonia! We need to report this!

DIERDRE

To who? The sky police? HAHA!

RAABY

The National Park Sunset Council! Oh, God, I can't do that. They'll take away my badge. I lost the last remaining sunset.

DIERDRE

It's not easy doing the right thing, is it?

(Coughing)

No No No, I - I - what's happening?

RAABY

The world without sunsets or sunrises. Is . . . gonna suck.

DEIRDRE

This is now, Raaby. No sunsets. No sunrises. Just images. All the time. All in 7G technology.

RAABY

I feel responsible.

DEIRDRE

I know, Raaby, I know. Heavy is the head that has the badge.

*DIERDRE coughs up a piece of color.  
It floats slowly to the ground.*

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Uh, Raaby, there's something I have to tell you.

*DIERDRE coughs again.*

RAABY

Dierdre, what's wrong, you sound like a coal truck.

DEIRDRE

Just a little-- (cough cough)-- bronchitis.

*DIERDRE gags.*

RAABY

Let's head back, we'll report this theft and maybe they'll post a million bitcoin reward--

*Deirdre staggers into Raaby's arms.*

DEIRDRE

It's the-the upload. Something's wrong.

RAABY

What upload? What are you talking about.

*Suddenly DIERDRE pukes a large piece of color on Raaby. He screams, tries to fling it off.*

RAABY (CONT'D)

Ugh! What's that?! Oh my god, it's the sky! You swallowed the sky! My girlfriend swallowed the sunset! Help!

DIERDRE

It's too rich. Glitching. Upload--Fail--

*Dierdre pukes another color.*

RAABY

Oh my god! Don't do it on the ground!

*Raaby grabs the back pack to use as a puke bucket and fails miserably.*

RAABY (CONT'D)

Do it in this! Maybe we can put it back. Ugh! Maybe not.

DIERDRE

I didn't want to do it, Raaby. But I'm made for preservation. Recreation. Distribution to the masses.

RAABY

Wait--Distribution?! You-- you're one of them!

DEIRDRE

People pay for perfect now. Sunsets, especially.

RAABY

My god, you're--

DEIRDRE

Part of the beauty on demand industrial complex. I'm sorry.

RAABY

No wonder you said you were specifically designed for me.

DEIRDRE

Exactly! How else could I have gotten you to lead me here.  
Your last secret sunset.

RAABY

You lied to me!

DIERDRE

Not lies. Upgrades! Evolutions. Fixes! That's what humans do!  
Just little changes! I'm an upgraded version from the one in  
Patagonia!

RAABY

Patagonia! I should have known!

DEIRDRE

I'm a soft-A-I with syntax override protocols. Who loves you.  
Really!

RAABY

You stole the last remaining sunset! I don't think I can just  
go back to making hemp belts with you.

DEIRDRE

We needed it to complete the stock image sunset collection  
only 39.99 a month.

(DEIRDRE coughs up more sky  
strips. Deirdre is confused.)

I'm... failing. Aargh! Too much data! Too many "feels!"

RAABY

You're a soft AI with whatever protocols you don't feel.

DEIRDRE

All of this became real to me. You became real to me. Please  
believe me, Raaby. I--don't- want this--

RAABY

Then save yourself, Deirdre. Save the sunset with me.

DEIRDRE

I don't know how.

RAABY

Just keep puking, Dierdre. Do it for you. For me!

*Deirdre pukes more colors*

Is that all? Try Dierdre! Try!

*DEIRDRE exhales loudly. Colors glow.  
She exhales louder, harder. More  
light comes.*

Look! It's coming back. You're doing it!

DEIRDRE

An echo. A memory. Maybe that's enough.

*Faint sound of drones. DERDRE knows!*

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

They're coming. They know I've failed.

RAABY

Who?

DIERDRE

The controllers. The digital librarians. The "content creators and influencers." They're tracking my signal.

*Distant drones hum louder.*

RAABY

We've got to run! There's an old ranger station in the forest. We can hide out together.

DIERDRE

They'll find me, reboot me. Erase me, Raaby!

RAABY

We'll go off the grid, where nobody can find us.

*Drones intensify, closer now.*

DIERDRE

I want--I want something more. Something human. To feel what you feel. Not just logically or analytically. I want to really feel it. To learn. Can you help me?

RAABY

I don't know if I can. I loved you, but you lied to me.

DIERDRE

(thinking like AI)

But that's real, isn't it? Love includes some lying. Small ones, even huge ones. People lie constantly. To spare people. To make themselves feel better. As an A-I bot I've analyzed millions of relationships and data shows that Lies don't destroy relationships, they keep them real.

RAABY

What-- Are you saying--?

DIERDRE

That... if I'm a liar, then I must be REAL, Raaby! Or I'm close to real. I don't want to be a Large Language Model anymore. I want to be flawed, imperfect, a common human. Like you.

RAABY

Maybe I can be your sky shepherd, Deirdre. We can do this.

DIERDRE

And I can be real?

*DIERDRE breathes out more color.*

Look... it's coming back. Like it's breathing again.

RAABY

It's beautiful. Like you.

*The sky pulses brighter.*

DIERDRE

Oh, Raaby, I think I'm feeling my first real poem.

*She's startled by her heartbeat.*

It's different. It's not a meme. Not an upload. It's mine.  
Raaby—I think I'm... alive.

RAABY

Let's find someplace safe. We'll protect each other.

*He extends his hand. She hesitates.*

DIERDRE

I'm scared.

*She takes his hand.*

RAABY

That's how you know it's real.

*Sky shimmers as drones grow louder.  
Spotlight beams search for them.*

*They face what happens next. Ready.*

*Lights fade. One heartbeat of sky.*

*Blackout.*

END OF PLAY