

Burden of Being Taken

by

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Cast of CharactersAUNT EDNA/MOM

60's/40's

UNCLE BRUCE/DAD

60's/40's

BAKER/SON

20's

Place

Anywhere

Time

Anytime

2.

Setting: TV styled living room/kitchen from BOTH the 1950's and 1970's.

At Rise: Aunt Edna enters to a pitch black stage with only a spotlight on her.

Please Note:

Each actor plays TWO people that will gradually change from one to the other over the course of the play in real time and back again. The characters speak stage directions as part of their actual dialogue.

Blackness. Steel clang. White spotlight.

Enter AUNT EDNA. She does as she says.

AUNT EDNA (monotone): Ssscccccuge, Ssscccccuge, Ssscccccuge, Ssscccccuge.
Pause. No movement.

Beat.

Ssscccccuge, Ssscccccuge, Ssscccccuge, Ssscccccuge. Center. Pause. No movement. Beat. She pants six times. Pause. She stares straight out in a daze...I am Edna. Long Pause.

Enter UNCLE BRUCE. He does as he says.

UNCLE BRUCE: A man enters stage left crawling on his stomach. A pipe dangles from his mouth, unlit. He crawls in circles round and round Aunt Edna.

AUNT EDNA: Speaking to Uncle Bruce, but continues to stare out. I washed the dishes DOT DOT DOT the dishes are washed. Long Pause. I washed the dishes, round and round. I took hold of the dry sponge. I turned on the faucet. I placed the sponge under the faucet. The sponge became wet. I rinsed, I rinsed the sponge. Squeezing the sponge and giving it air, squeezing the sponge and giving it air. I did this a few times. I reached for the grease fighter and gently squeezed the ingredients, like layering mustard on a hot dog, up and down in a zig zag pattern, on the blue sponge. Yes, blue sponge. In the same motion of putting down the grease fighter, I gracefully brought my hand down into the sink grabbing the first dish. A blue dish as well.

I began making circular motions with the sponge, holding the sponge in my right hand, while keeping the blue dish firm with my left. I would at random, flip the sponge for its harder side, in order to really scrape the stickiest substances stuck to the dish DOT DOT DOT making quick but tiny scrubbing sensations in order to scrape off the stickiest substances stuck to the blue dish. Whenever I took this action, I would apply additional pressure in order to get the stickiest substances scraped off. This is what I did. She looks at him.

Guess what? We haven't spoken in days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries. Did you know that? Did you know that we haven't talked? Am I right about that? Are you right about that? How was your day? How was work? How is *she*? How are they doing? Is it they? How have they been? Did you get a raise? Did you bring the car into the shop? Do we need more cat food? What about dog food? How many kids do we have? How are they doing? Is my mother still alive? What will my coffin look like? Are you the biggest fucking asshole I ever met? Things are so identical, aren't they? Wouldn't you say? Do I say? Beat.

AUNT EDNA (cont'd): You are smoking your pipe and when you smoke your pipe, you hold it unusual. Very unusual. You inhale very unusual. The way you inhale your pipe is so achingly unusual. I'm going to do the laundry later. Going to clean your socks. Squeeze out the wetness in your socks. All your hard work in those socks, those socks, all your walking, in those socks. So many miles, so many miles. Are you ready to make the connection? Are you? Are you ready to make the connection? I'll squeeze the life out of those socks. All those miles walked. I'll squeeze and stretch and dry them and fold them and set them in your sock draw all neat and tidy for---

UNCLE BRUCE: He cuts her off! Will you fold my life QUESTION MARK. Don't forget to fold my life, for my life is foldable and meant to be folded by you. Red, white and blue is foldable by you. Fold me into eight hundred and sixty three patterns. Fold me over and over again in order to cut off my lungs to prevent me from smoking my pipe, which is what I have died from by now PERIOD!

AUNT EDNA: Long pause. Patterns!

UNCLE BRUCE: Folded, so folded, how many times was I folded? Aunt Edna speaks.

AUNT EDNA: Beat. Uncle Bruce continues his verbal blame. Uncle Bruce speaks.

UNCLE BRUCE: Aunt Edna speaks!

AUNT EDNA: Nothing to say...

UNCLE BRUCE: In comes Baker, our dumb ass nephew.

Enter BAKER: 50's TV theme music plays.

BAKER: Aunt Edna, you're still here? I thought you'd be dead by now.

Audience laughter heard over speakers.

UNCLE BRUCE: Uncle Bruce chuckles.

AUNT EDNA: Aunt Edna gives a serious look to Uncle Bruce and Baker. To Baker. Sure I'm still here. Bet you thought those pair of midgets could grapple me down. Well, NO! You're not getting any money just yet. I have a lot more years left in me Baker, which means you still have time to get off your ass and get a real job and take care of your wife.

UNCLE BRUCE: Dumb ass nephew chuckles.

BAKER: How long has it been now since Uncle Bruce has been dead?

UNCLE BRUCE: Been dead for fourteen years now. And loving every minute of my patriotism.

AUNT EDNA: Aunt Edna and Uncle Bruce share a laugh.

BAKER: Wow, fourteen years already.

UNCLE BRUCE: Baker looks at Aunt Edna.

BAKER: You've changed so much. You've really become quite the hoe in town.

AUNT EDNA: Uncle Bruce shows interest. Well Baker dear, you wouldn't know nothing about the burden of being taken. But then again, you most likely do.

UNCLE BRUCE: Uncle Bruce laughs and then becomes melancholy.

BAKER: No, I don't and that's no reason for you to---

AUNT EDNA: Baaa caaaa caaa daaaa ever! Spinning worlds I preach but no one hears me. Spinning worlds I preach.

BAKER: I even heard you've been a regular at Sunday mass.

UNCLE BRUCE: What a whore.

BAKER: Yeah, it's true dead Uncle Bruce, it's true. She loves going to church and she loves---

AUNT EDNA: Shut your filthy mouth! You blind pig! Oink! Oink! Oink!

BAKER exits.

Beat.

I never wanted to be part of his magical winter wonderland. Trees, midgets, deer, turkey, string beans, potatoes, lasagna, red stockings, glitter, cotton. Controlled carbon copies! Aunt Edna goes inside her shopping bag. She pulls out a framed picture of the way things used to be, the way things used to be with smiles and happiness and joy and fun. She stares at it for quite awhile.

UNCLE BRUCE: Uncle Bruce stares at Aunt Edna staring at the picture of way things used to be.

AUNT EDNA/UNCLE BRUCE (with great affection): Oooohhhhh. LONG PAUSE!

AUNT EDNA: All this crap! Crap! Crap! Crap! Things always in three's, ABC'S - ONE TWO THREE'S. Threes!

UNCLE BRUCE: It sounds the same to me.

AUNT EDNA: Uncle Bruce actually made a statement. Fourteen years dead and he finally makes a statement.

UNCLE BRUCE: You were terrible.

AUNT EDNA: Long pause.

UNCLE BRUCE: You treated me DOT DOT DOT.

AUNT EDNA: Aunt Edna goes to the back of the set and pulls out a pair of crutches. She hands them over to her husband. First time she mentioned Uncle Bruce as husband DOT DOT DOT. Take these so you can get up off the floor.

UNCLE BRUCE: Uncle Bruce looks at her in surprise. You put me here!

AUNT EDNA: Don't blame me you incompetent skinflint! You follower! You disgusting believer! You sponge. You are a sponge! Up! Up! Get up! Off the floor you snake of a husband you. God I've always hated your guts. You know that? Always hated your guts. But I married you. Don't ask me why; maybe it was the security of it. The safety of idealism; the union. Ha! Jokesters! The boring one. Wish I would have stuck with Floyd. Floyd was always fun and exciting. I never knew what was going to happen next with Floyd. He was full of spontaneity and laughter! And he was self made; he owned his own land and knew how to ride horses and fly fish and kick cattle in the groin!

UNCLE BRUCE: He throws his crutches across the room and goes back to the floor on his stomach COMMA crawling around.

AUNT EDNA: What's for dinner, hey what's for dinner? Yeah, what's for dinner?!

UNCLE BRUCE: Uncle Bruce remains silent and crawls off stage left. He shouts from afar, IN COMES SON.

*SON comes in whistling again -
70's TV theme music is heard for
his entrance.*

MOM: Come in you poor hungry child sit down while I serve you dinner, not going to have no son of mine eat unhealthy while in this home, no sir, not going to---she goes in kitchen and begins setting up the dining table which is stage left as Baker goes to sit down comfortably. Sit down comfortably dear. Are you hungry?

SON: Starving! In comes Dad, but this time he is standing hunched over, almost to the point of not being able to see straight ahead.

DAD: What's on the stove Edna?

MOM: Look who decided to show up. Imitating Bruce, "What's on the stove, Edna?" My God, you are such a waste of sperm; can't even wash up or greet me properly before I get, "What's on the stove, Edna?". How about, "How was your day dear?"

DAD: Don't break my balls, my man-made balls, I just walked in the Goddamn house and already you---

MOM: You call this living the dream?!

DAD: You know, I break my ass with work all day long; slaving like a slithering snake and I, I work my self so hard that I don't even have time to take lunch and sometimes a man just wants to get home and EAT. Is that so wrong? Sometimes a man just doesn't want to talk, he doesn't want to be happy, he just wants to EAT. Once he EATS, then he is able to talk, then he is able to be happy, then he is able to tolerate all the bullshit a woman has to throw at him gladly. So, after being married for nineteen years and knowing just by the scent of me, that I would like some fucking *dinner*, don't start throwing insults at me straight away because you already know the circumstances!

SON: Dad, she just needs your love.

Beat - they all laugh out-loud.

MOM: Love? What is love? Who is love? Show me the great love? I haven't seen it, I don't know where it went, I don't know where my one true love went.

BAKER gets up and exits.

He was everything a mother could have dreamed to have in a son. He was my life! *(to Bruce)* Didn't he look so handsome in his uniform Bruce? Didn't he look like such a man?

DAD: He was...

DAD exits.

MOM: Oh, he was our light then Bruce. He was our strength. He was what kept us strong, right? We remained for him, for his happiness. His happiness was our happiness.

SON comes in stage right dressed in a military uniform - digital club music plays and he dances.

SON: Mom!

SON runs to his MOTHER and hugs her.

Mom, Dad, I have so much to tell you guys...

MOM: You're not supposed to be here. (pause.) We were supposed to pick you up at the---

SON: I came early to surprise you guys. I wanted to see the look on your faces.

DAD: Let's sit down in the living room.

THEY all sit in the living room.

MOM: You're such a silly dilly! Mom hugs her son and doesn't release him. You look so handsome! My baby is all grown up!

SON: Mom, mom, you're...you are going to have to let go of me at some point. Mom releases son. Mom, wait until I tell you guys what happened.

MOM: Let me just hold you, my son, my son I love you so much--

DAD: Give the boy a chance to speak, darling.

MOM: I know, you're right, I'm sorry. Go ahead, speak away!

SON: I wanted to tell you both myself. I was blown apart into thousands of pieces just two days ago. Blood and guts sprayed everywhere. Some of the guys and I were getting really drunk off base and when we made it back we started tossing around grenades and daring each other to do crazy shit. So, me being the craziest of all, took out the pin, jammed the grenade down the front of my pants and blew my balls clear off!

Beat.

You HAD to see the other guys faces, similar to yours right now actually, and it was wild. Totally stunned, everybody was totally, totally stunned. Any-hoo, just wanted you both to hear it from your most perfect fucking son. Because I'm absolutely perfect. The best Goddamn son ever invented by your mixed combination of DNA. Say, pass those potatoes! You know, I used to follow the wind whichever way it blew me, like a leaf spinning around, tossing and tumbling and begging to be stopped. Just like you guys. Awww shucks. Aren't we all a bunch of chuckles? Just like you've been, Dad. Right?? Right, Mom? The most happy stiffs to ever out Americanize America. Follow the wind until it blows us all up! Roast that turkey, Mom. Be a skinflint, Pop. Love you guys! Say, pass those peas! My muscles grew big and strong. They'd make us do these daily morning exercise routines. Powerful stuff. Tons of barking in your ears, but it's amazing cause over time, you really get strong and it's so worth all the mental torment. GRAVY!!! By the time you come home, you are as good as a dead bug. Did you guys know that? Should have let me play the piano DOT DOT DOT I was good at the piano. Wasn't I good at the fucking piano, Pop?

DAD (sadly): You were always good at the piano.

SON: Mom?

MOM (sadly): Yes.

SON: So why did you guys let me waste my talent?

DAD: We wanted what was best for you.

SON: Leaving me to the wolves was best for me?

DAD: You were always too delicate. You needed a boost in the proper direction.

SON: Oh boy, did I. You know I got fucked in my ass, repeatedly?

MOM shrieks.

MOM (gently): Don't say such things at the table, dear.

SON: I'm dead, so it doesn't really matter now, does it Mom?

DAD (curiously): Son, why would you get fucked in your ass?

SON: Because I was a delicate case. Just as you said, Pop. You left me out to dry. Never gave me anything I ever needed. Just talking, talking, talking, talking, *talking* COMMA blah, blah, blah, *blah*, BLAH! My whole life! EXCLAMATION MARKS. RIGHT?! You fucking fuck! Son kisses father on the cheek and doesn't let go!!!

DAD: Get off me! Get off me! Son refuses to stop! I never loved you and you know it, don't you? You know I never loved you. I was caught up with the dream of loving my son, but your mother, your wicked, twisted mental case mother, she was the one who decided to break us up. SHE! She loved you and forgot me. She was the one who left me out to dry first! How do you like that?!

SON stops kissing his father.

SON (singing & shaking his hips): Pina colada! La, la, la. Pina colada! Yeah, la, la.

MOM: Both of you stop this instant!!! Son sits at his seat. There, that's better. Discipline. We all need a bit of discipline in life in order to carry out our cause. We are a happy and loving family. We DOT DOT DOT we DOT DOT DOT we...

DAD: Get it out.

MOM: We DOT DOT DOT we DOT DOT DOT we lost our son.

*SON stands up and kisses his
MOM'S forehead, pats his DAD on
top of his head and exits.*

*DAD gets up and slowly gets down
to the floor and crawls off set*

*MOM resumes her 'play opening'
standing position at center stage.*

AUNT EDNA: Long Pause. This is Edna...I was Edna. Long Pause. She picks up the bag she set down earlier. Slowly; mechanically. Her posture evens out and is no longer slumped to one side. She slowly turns around. Sssccccuge Sssccccuge! Pause. She pants. Pause. She moves. The sound of slippers is produced from her mouth. Sssccccuge Sssccccuge, Sssccccuge Sssccccuge. She abruptly stops. She let's out a painful moan. Oooooooooo...Oooooooooo! Pause. She walks. Sssccccuge Sssccccuge, Sssccccuge Sssccccuge. Sssccccuge Sssccccuge, Sssccccuge Sssccccuge!

White spotlight turns off. Steel clang. Blackness.

END OF PLAY