

Toast of Broadway

by

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Cast of Characters

TULA:

20's

CHARLIE:

30's

Place

New York City

Time

Morning

Setting: The entire apartment is a soft mixture of NEON COLORED LIGHTS. The opaque walls are shaded with Deep Purple, Dark Blue, Heavy Red and Thick Green, dependent on where one stands, sits or walks. Dust hangs in the air giving a gentle smokey overtone to the atmosphere.

There is not much furniture in the apartment. A wooden blue bookshelf with stacks of unorganized plays piled up on various shelves. Scraps of paper and notebooks find their home amongst the plays. Perhaps a few random mini statue like ornaments join the disarray.

A few unmatched chairs, a wooden table and unframed photos scotch taped to the walls in uneven places.

When you go into the bedroom, there's only a bed and one bureau.

At Rise: TULA sits on the window sill drinking tea, staring at CHARLIE, who remains passed out on the floor but beginning to stir awake. Both people are hot and sweating.

TULA (THICK southern accent): Why you always sleep on the floor?

CHARLIE (THICK New York accent): ...don't wanna wake ya...

TULA: I'm always awake, you know, until you come home.

CHARLIE: I'll try next time.

TULA: Next time?

CHARLIE: To sleep in the bed with you, alright?

TULA: Why's there always a next time, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Pour me a shot of some whiskey.

TULA: There ain't none left...

CHARLIE: Thought you said you was going to the store?

TULA: Not to buy you liquor, Charlie. Them days are over.

CHARLIE: What did you get then?

TULA: Bread and tuna.

CHARLIE: That it?

TULA: Give me more money, I can get more things. (beat) Any luck?

CHARLIE: Not last night. I was ahead but then...no, nothing.

TULA: I had my audition today.

CHARLIE: How'd it go?

TULA: Didn't go.

CHARLIE: What? Why not?

TULA: Cause I had no money! I looked into the change jar and all we had was two quarters. I searched everywhere, including your pockets while you snored.

CHARLIE: So, you already knew I was out.

TULA: I was hoping...

CHARLIE: You coulda knocked on Lenny's door, he would have given you something.

TULA: ...He sure would have.

CHARLIE: Huh?

TULA: How are we supposed to live this way?

CHARLIE: What way?

TULA: The way that we're living, Charlie? How?

CHARLIE: You know it's temporary.

TULA: I didn't go to my audition today because I couldn't afford the bus fare. Is that normal?

CHARLIE: It's just bad timing.

TULA: My foot.

CHARLIE: Your what?

TULA: My foot!

CHARLIE: What the fuck does that even mean?

TULA: It means you a lying dog is what it means.

CHARLIE: Wait a second. Okay? Before you go on one of your parades cause I had a really rough night and can't even deal with...you don't know what the hell happened to me.

TULA: Another one of your fairy tales?

CHARLIE: Just wait a second damn it. I wasn't going to tell you but I got robbed.

TULA: Robbed?

CHARLIE: I was robbed.

TULA: Don't you dare come home packed full of lies! I can't stand it anymore!

CHARLIE: Will you listen to what I'm trying to tell you instead of cutting me off? If you listen, you won't get mad.

TULA: Even if you died and come back, won't even be a valid excuse I'm so done with you. I missed my audition cause of you, you want me to fail and you don't care about me one bit!

CHARLIE: You make me nuts, you know that? I'm trying to tell you so you know the truth and wishing me dead is horrible.

TULA: I wasn't wishing you dead asshole, I was saying that even death is no excuse.

CHARLIE: Don't call me an asshole.

TULA: Asshole. Asshole. They exchange heated looks.

CHARLIE: I was up, I was down and I was up again...I was so up that even losing a couple of hands didn't matter. When I got off the table, I couldn't wait to get back home and pour money all over you for once. I kept thinking about how I was gonna do it, how I was gonna pour rains of money all over you while you were sleeping sound in bed.

TULA: I told you I wasn't sleeping.

CHARLIE: Fine, but this is what I was picturing and I was so caught up with it, I wasn't paying any attention to my surroundings down in the train station. I was jumped from behind, I felt and heard this hit to the back of my head and it was lights out. I woke up all alone, no one came to help me. I checked my pockets and all the money was gone...all the money I had won for us. Tula approaches Charlie and touches the back of his head.

TULA: Where's the bump?

CHARLIE: There is no bump.

TULA: How can there be no bump?

CHARLIE: Because I have a hard head...I'm lucky.

TULA: No, you ain't lucky and you sure as shit ain't lucky enough to have no bump. You're a liar is what you is! Look me in my face right now this instant, you look me in my face and tell me eye to eye that you really got mugged or I should die right now before you. Tell me! (beat) Tell me!

CHARLIE: I didn't get mugged...I was taken for a sucker again at the table...I'm-

(TULA goes off in hysterics and slams the bathroom door. She is heard crying.)

(CHARLIE slowly approaches the door, placing his palm on it.)

Tallulah...Tally...Tula, baby...

(TULA swings open the door in a blatant rage)

TULA: I can't believe I fell for all your lies and tricks. Everything you made me believe. I'm not becoming anything because of you.

CHARLIE: Stop working yourself up.

TULA: You want me to fail because I have talent and you're jealous. You promised me you would write me a story, something I can be in, you promised me a play...you haven't written a play in ten years. You're pathetic. All you do is doodle, drink and gamble. You make me sick! SICK!

CHARLIE: Calm down-

TULA: I left my whole life for you. My family, my friends. I don't see my family...I left my ex for you.

CHARLIE: Don't bring him up. You were leaving him anyway and you came back to New York with me because you want to be an actress, so don't start that-

TULA: I loved him and he loved me and you tore us apart.

CHARLIE: Bullshit

TULA: You're the bullshit. Selling me your fantasies and dreams. Ha! Nothing but cheap sneaky lies. How stupid I was to imagine a life with you. Look at this shit hole, this dump I live in. You don't work, you never take me anywhere, you never say nice things to me, never romantic, you show no support for my passions or my dreams. You are a loser! I want out! I hate you and don't want to be with you anymore. My ex never treated me like this...he loved me...

(TULA bolts into the bedroom and slams the door. Suddenly a crash is heard.)

(CHARLIE storms in the room.)

TULA (cont'd): There! There! That's what I think of us now. You are nothing to me!

CHARLIE: What are you doing? How can you break that?

TULA: We're done!

CHARLIE: You happy now?

TULA: Get out!

CHARLIE: What the hell is wrong with you?

TULA: GET OUT!

(TULA pushes CHARLIE. CHARLIE grabs hold of TULA and throws her on the bed.)

(TULA gets back up and charges CHARLIE.)

(THEY lock arms and she hits him across the face.)

(CHARLIE pushes TULA on the bed again. He steps out of the bedroom slamming door.)

(TULA is heard crying wildly in the bedroom.)

(CHARLIE breathes heavy and tries to calm himself down. He walks to the living room window and looks out. Things calm a bit after a moment.)

(TULA comes out of the bedroom with a bag strapped across her chest and she stares into CHARLIE.)

CHARLIE: I wrote something for you...(Charlie pulls papers from his pocket) I wrote something last night...it came to me.

TULA: It's too late.

CHARLIE: Just read it. I wrote it for you. It's something I think you could be good in.

TULA: Charlie, when I first met you—

CHARLIE: Shut up already, will ya, and read what I wrote?

TULA: I can't. I'm sorry. I can't. I've already made my decision. Going back home, away from you, away from all this.

CHARLIE: Are you out of your mind?

TULA: No, I'm just coming to my senses. We're just a pair of dreamers. We're nothing. This whole thing, it's one giant ferris wheel of desperation that keeps going round and round and it's time I jump off, no matter how far I fall.

CHARLIE: You would play a girl from the Bronx who is a street hustler, taking care of a mentally ill mother and much younger brother.

TULA: It's all gone now, Charlie.

CHARLIE: Your father is in jail and you work for his friend who has his way with you.

TULA: All gone now, Charlie.

CHARLIE: You do what you need to do to take care of your family and...well, I wrote a whole scene and that's the idea..I can see it...can't you see it?

TULA: I was gonna be something more, something great and...I wanted to make a difference in this world.

CHARLIE: The character's name is Sophie.

TULA: I failed.

CHARLIE: No! Wait a minute. Don't leave. Just hold on a second, damn it.

TULA: Charlie, I'm starving.

CHARLIE: Want me to make you a tuna sandwich?

TULA: There's no tuna or bread. I have the five dollars.

CHARLIE: You could have went to your audition.

TULA: No...I didn't go cause...I couldn't go...

CHARLIE: Baby, please...let's just talk this out. We can read the scene I wrote together, we can go through it line by line, I can write this thing quickly, I don't need much time and I can start sending it out to all the theatres. I still know a few people, some friends of mine, they will most likely want to put it up and you can play the lead role, just like we imagined together. This is the role you've been waiting for...this is the role you will need. You can't give up. Give up on me, that's fine but don't give up on your dreams, please don't do that. Leave me, but don't leave yourself. Here, I'll leave right now, read the scene, just read it and see if you like it. (he places the papers in her arms) If you do, I will finish it...I will finish it for you... one straight week of writing and I'll, it's yours, you can have it and it's all yours. I swear. We'll be the toast of Broadway baby, you and me, I promise, this is it. This is for real this time.

(CHARLIE leaves.)

(TULA stands in the center of the room holding the papers and looking out in a teary-eyed daze.

END OF PLAY