

Gone Too Soon

by

Joseph Arnone

Copyright © 2020

www.MonologueBlogger.com

All rights reserved. No part of this ePlay may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any other storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the author or publisher.

Cast of Characters

<u>TARVA</u> :	18
<u>BENNY</u> :	52

Place
Kansas

Time
Morning

Setting: A beat up and raggedy trailer home.

At Rise: Benny sits in his chair with a beer can in his hand. His daughter Tarva is picking up clothes off his couch and tidying up the place.

TARVA: Tired of you.

BENNY: That's alright.

TARVA: It ain't alright, nothing about you is alright.

BENNY: Why you gettin' so mad?

TARVA: Doesn't it concern you that I travel two hours each day to make sure you haven't died? I cook for you, clean for you, shop for you. And I can't stand you moaning each time you make your way to the toilet, which is happening too often now.

Think you'd slow down on those beers you keep popping and HOW DO YOU DO IT? How does a man in your condition guzzle down them beers like you do? Hmm? (gesturing) Stomach out to here, waddling around this trailer like a penguin looking for snow. Lighten the load Pop!

(pause.) What you want for dinner? Want me to make you some shrimp pasta? Dad? Hey, I'm talking to you...Dad? Oh, I see, just gonna ignore me. (beat) Alright. (softer) Alright. I didn't mean to come down on you like I did but your philosophy on life stinks. Can't stand the way you live your life. Momma never would have tolerated it. (sighs) Alright. You say things to me that set me off, things that don't show no respect for me and what I do for you. You always go head to head with me and then you go old school and ignore me like you do but you ain't right! Ignoring me won't make you right! (beat) Ahhh, what's the sense of it. I didn't mean to upset you and besides I just got here, we shouldn't peak until later. (laughs) You get that? We'll save the shouting after dinner. What's wrong Daddy...you crying?

BENNY: ...I miss your damn mother. She left me too soon. Kept my promise, she didn't keep hers. Told her I'd stick around, as long as she stuck around and now look. I can die today and it wouldn't bother me none. I'm angry, stuck here, I can't move, confused...thought I'd kill myself by now.

(BENNY shows daughter photograph.)

Here...look at this...that's your mother and me at the beach. This was the day I knew I loved her for sure, ain't ever felt different since.

TARVA: ...Oh, I know Daddy...Mom was so pretty. I could never look like that.

BENNY: You're probably right!

(THEY both laugh)

BENNY (cont'd): She was a real stunner. Could charm her way out of anything. Never saw what she seen in me. I was the lucky one alright.

(TARVA hands her father the photo back)

TARVA: Nice, Daddy...it's nice to have such memories. Wish me and Sam had that.

BENNY: That's cause you married an idiot. And all too young, too too young.

TARVA: Dad, don't!

BENNY: I won't.

TARVA: But you're right...I should have grown up first. Before all this...

BENNY: When you gonna bring my grandchildren around?

TARVA: When I'm done making your place smell decent, but you're no help, just look at this place! What a dump! Is it so hard for you to keep things organized?

BENNY: It is organized, organized chaos!

TARVA: That's why the kids don't visit. No room for them.

BENNY: Oh stop, they got a whole field to run around in out there. AH, they don't know how good they got it, instead they want their face in them devices...

TARVA: Little Danny don't like the smell.

BENNY: Don't like the smell...of what?

TARVA: Here! This place.

BENNY: I can't open up the windows cause they're all jammed. Cheap!

TARVA: Why'd you wanna go through all this trouble? You know, there's that place mere miles from where -

BENNY: No! Don't even mention it! That's, that's a terrible idea and you already know I can't afford it.

TARVA: Yeah.

BENNY: Bring the kids over next time. It's been long enough.

TARVA: If you keep this stink bomb clean, I'll answer your wish.

BENNY: Alright...women.

TARVA: What about *women*?

BENNY: Nothing.

TARVA: You said it, now what did you mean?

BENNY: Women are designed to make men insane.

TARVA: Oh *really*?

BENNY: Can't be more true. Take your mother for instance, love of my life and now she's gone and I'm supposed to keep my sanity...I don't think so!

TARVA: You sound and look sane to me.

BENNY: That's cause I'm putting on an act. The moment you leave, after I watch you drive away, I turn and look at this depressing hunk of metal and this feelin' comes over me, crawls over my skin, makes the hairs on my neck stand up...the heaviness creeps its way in...I feel it, soreness all in my chest, down to my knees and I can barely hang on...taking the first step is one of the most challenging things a man can do after being all alone, so I, I get too anxious to sit 'cause if I sit I think I'll fade away. So I make my way to the fridge, grab myself a beer and I take in that first drink, which reminds me I ain't dead yet. Eventually things get calm, eerily quiet...I'll go outside and sit on the steps, I'll try to think of her again and I'd think of her face and cry, because, a part of me would wish I could have died with her. Then, I'd think of you and hold on for another night so I can see you again...and there it is Tarva, the cycle plays over.

TARVA: I can't stay here forever, Dad.

BENNY: Neither can I.

(TARVA and BENNY exchange looks.)

TARVA: You want shrimp pasta?

BENNY: Hell, no. Last time you almost poisoned me.

TARVA: Don't start being 'shellfish'!

BENNY: I'd rather eat dog food than suffer from your concoctions.

TARVA: You're mad.

BENNY: I feel bad for my grandchildren.

TARVA: They love my cooking!

BENNY: Cause they don't know what real food tastes like. What you get them, that fast food?

TARVA: Excuse me but I cook at home and I work harder than most tryna keep up with them kids!

BENNY: I ain't hungry!

TARVA: Then starve!

BENNY: I'd rather starve.

TARVA: Why do I even come here?

BENNY: To see if I'm dead. You said so yourself.

TARVA: I only said that cause I was angry at how you take care of your -

BENNY: You're all I have left, Tarva! And those two rotten little kids of yours, always poking holes at me with no respect. I haven't gone deaf you know. I hear *everything* those two little scoundrels say. I pretend I don't.

TARVA: They're kids Dad, kids say stupid shit. And if you think that, then why do you want to see them?

BENNY: The last thing I want is for my grandchildren to think of me as some broke loner! I'd like to have a better impression...is that so wrong? Maybe make a lasting memory in their tiny brains like fishing at the creek...I went and bought some fishing poles and thought I'd take the two boys to the creek, just up the road to do some fishing. Let me do that and then I'll die. Is that alright with you?

TARVA: You ain't dying. You're gonna stick around and torture me for another forty years at least.

BENNY: You think I'm gonna live forever, let's not be ignorant folk.

TARVA: Where'd you buy fishing poles?

BENNY: From that man Chuck that lives up on the hill. We got talking about fishing and things worked themselves from there.

TARVA: That's a nice thing to do, Dad.

BENNY: So bring those little rascals my way, okay? They're old enough to learn how to fish, aren't they?

TARVA: Guess so...they've never done that before.

BENNY: Well. A first for everything.

TARVA: Alright, we can start on some arrangement.

BENNY: They might love it!

TARVA: Don't see why they wouldn't.

BENNY: What I woulda done to have grown up with all this nature 'round me...we had nothing like this.

END OF PLAY