

The Other Half of Madeline

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

LUKE:

24

MADLINE:

53

Place

Middle America

Time

Day

2.

Setting: A small living room with an old couch facing a TV set mounted on a wall.

At Rise: Luke lays across the couch watching the ending of a science fiction film, when his mother Madeline enters carrying potato chips, a bowl and a TV remote control.

(MADELINE changes TV station with her remote control)

LUKE: I was watching that!

MADELINE: Not anymore you're not.

LUKE: There was five minutes left!

MADELINE: Too bad!! Move. (sitting beside LUKE) Get up off your ass and go somewhere. I'm tired of looking at you.

LUKE: You have no manners.

MADELINE: Manners? This is my house. If I decided to shit on the carpet, I can. Not that I would because that's gross but you get the picture.

LUKE: I'm a go to Billy's house.

MADELINE: You ain't going by your fathers.

LUKE: Says who?

MADELINE: Don't make me smack your face.

LUKE: Why can't I see my old man?

MADELINE: Cause Billy is a child and when you are with him you become a child and all any of you do is drink, drink, drink till the son comes up and ya even go past that on some days and it's getting' outta control. I said no and it's no.

LUKE: But I'm twenty-four years old.

MADELINE: And you're livin' home with momma. I call the shots.

LUKE: Maybe I ought a move in with Billy then.

MADELINE: You tried that before. How'd that go?

LUKE: I wanna go do something! Maybe fishing.

MADELINE: What's your obsession with that creek?

LUKE: Ain't got no obsession.

MADELINE: Living by that creek. Something going on over there I don't know about?

LUKE: It's peace and quiet, something you don't know about.

MADELINE: Very funny. You know you actually got potential. A pea brain but if you water it, who knows, maybe turn into a nugget of some kind.

(LUKE rises from the couch)

MADELINE: Swing me a beer would ya?

LUKE: Oh, you could drink but I have to go dry?

MADELINE: Get yourself your own damn house, pay your own damn bills and maybe, just maybe you can start a family and give me some damn grandkids.

LUKE: Grandkids?

(LUKE gets two beers out from refrigerator)

MADELINE: That's right. When am I ever gonna see them running around this place?

(LUKE hands his mother a beer and cracks open his own)

Whatever happened to that girl Emily? She was a nice catch that one.

LUKE: We broke up, you know that.

MADELINE: Broke up, how?

LUKE: What you mean how? How everybody else breaks up. A break up is a break up.

MADEINE: But what did you do to break up? Cause I know you the one who instigated it.

LUKE: I ain't instigate nothing. She wanted to see other people is all.

MADELINE: And why's that?

LUKE: Cause I...I don't know. Who cares?

MADELINE: Cause you ain't got no job! That's why!

LUKE: I been furloughed.

MADELINE: Ain't nobody furloughed for two whole years. Why can't you find some work?

LUKE: Billy's supposed to get me on a construction sight.

MADELINE: Don't listen to your father, he's a bum.

LUKE: He makes out.

MADELINE: A bum!

LUKE: He ain't no bum, he ain't rich, but he ain't no bum.

MADELINE: That man is a liar! How long you been waiting to get work from him?

LUKE: I don't know, couple a months.

(MADELINE stares at him)

MADELINE: ...You see? You'll be waiting another ten years before you see a drop of work from that man. Forget it, Billy offering YOU a job? (she laughs hysterically) I mean, come on now, I sure don't mind having a good laugh but Lordy Lord, you must be joking to believe him, especially for two months. Ain't you ever ask him what the hold up was?

LUKE: Yeah, he says things is full is all and as soon as a slot opens up I'm gonna slip on in.

MADELINE: And you buy what he's preaching...you must get your brains from your father.

LUKE: I have brains.

MADELINE: Show me your brains.

LUKE: I can't show you my brains.

MADELINE Not literally dumb wad but figuratively. Show me you have brains with action. Get up off your lazy ass and find yourself some work. I told you my brother Malcolm get you some, but you don't want it. Get you a good paycheck each week and you'll learn a trade and maybe even work your way up to buying your own damn house, with a wife and some kids and all is happy in happy land. But no, I got me a son who sits on his buttocks staring at star wars movies all day long wishing he were Darth Vader or maybe Princess Leia, HA HA HA, maybe you wanna be the Princess. Ha! But you gotta be something else other than this bum I've raised up. Talkin' 'bout going to Billy's house, yeah, that'll get you somewhere nowhere.

LUKE: I hate your brother.

MADELINE: Yeah, well. What that man ever do to you?

LUKE: What he did to Billy.

MADELINE: Oh, you mean that beat down he gave him when you was just a boy. You remember that?

LUKE: Yeah, I hate him for it.

MADELINE: Your father deserved what he got.

LUKE: Sick family I come from.

MADELINE: Billy smacked me in my face while I was breastfeeding Lily and caused me to drop her and well, you know the rest of it...how you gonna blame my brother for taking care of business? Only left him within inches of death on account of you, but trust me, he woulda went the whole nine holes with Billy if you weren't around.

LUKE: Disgusting. You're all so disgusting to me.

MADELINE: You have a right to your opinion but opinions don't get anyone anywhere anyways, so who cares?

LUKE: I care.

MADELINE: You care? What you care about? Star Wars?

LUKE: Maybe you should care that if I ever see Uncle Malcolm again I'm a beat his face in.

MADELINE: Ha, ha, ha, oh boy you got it twisted. Malcolm will toss you around like a rag doll.

LUKE: I could take 'em.

MADELINE: Whatever, maybe you can, maybe you can't, it's yet to be seen.

LUKE: Whatever yourself.

(pause.)

MADELINE: You should be mining for gold in them fields.

LUKE: I don't wanna work for Uncle Malcolm!

MADELINE: I think you should work out your differences and get some work.

LUKE: Billy told me that what you said isn't the truth?

MADELINE: What I say?

LUKE: That you said he was responsible for killing Lily and he told me that when he smacked you that you thrust her to the floor in anger...

MADELINE: ...That what he said?

LUKE: That's what he said.

MADELINE: You can believe what you wanna believe Luke.

LUKE: Is it true or not?

MADELINE: If you think for a second that I would ever do anything to jeopardize the health and well being of my kids, well, you got another thing coming to you. I might be hard, but I ain't no killer. Call me what you wish but the day I lost Lily, I lost half of me. I go on living cause I'm too scared to die, and because I gotta put up with your dumb face, but I was there, not your father, at that hospital...I was the one who seen it all go down...truth be told your father shoulda gone to jail for life, but I never admitted the truth to the law. When I was questioned, I explained that Lily simply fell out of my arms when I was trying to breastfeed her and that was that.

LUKE: But how could she have died if she simply fell out of your arms?

MADELINE: You wanna know the truth, boy?

LUKE: Yeah!

MADELINE: Yeah?!

LUKE: I said YES damn it! YES!!

MADELINE: I'll tell you the sickening truth...I've only lived with it long enough. When I saw your Father coming to hit me, he was in some sort of drunken rage, hollering obscenities at me and throwing things all around the house, well, I was breastfeeding your sister and I tried to stay calm, but Billy got outta control, and he approached me and when he went to strike me I held Lily up to block him, never thinking he'd keep going and never realizing that he would. When his fist connected, it landed straight at the back of Lily's head. It was the single biggest mistake I ever made in all my living years. I still don't understand what made me hold her up in front of my face like that. Maybe it was my own pent-up revenge on Billy, I can't deny that possibility. (beat) All I know is that we both shared in something evil and that single act changed our lives forever. You say you come from a sick family? Well, there's your stone cold evidence.

LUKE: Can't be.

MADELINE: Oh, it be as clear as day. Billy don't even know it cause he was too drunk to recognize what we did.

LUKE: No!

MADELINE: You wanted the truth, now you got the truth.

LUKE: You lied to Uncle Malcolm. You made it like Billy did it.

MADELINE: I did.

(LUKE stands)

LUKE: I....

(LUKE leaves the house)

MADELINE: And that's the story son...story as we wrote it and get to reflect on, for the rest of our sorry lives...

END OF PLAY