

Milton's Plight

by

Joseph Arnone

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Cast of Characters

MILTON:

30's

JOSHUA:

30's

Place

West Village, NYC

Time

11PM

2.

Setting: A cozy and heavily decorated apartment. Large bookcase runs along an entire wall. One would imagine we were living in the Victorian age when it comes to all the furniture. Old, but elegant and well cared for.

At Rise: Milton sits in his single couch sulking and deep in thought, while Joshua stands before him holding a bowl of soup, observing his nature.

MILTON: Oh, I don't want it, I don't want it!

JOSHUA: You have to eat something.

MILTON: Joshua, please!

JOSHUA: I'll leave it on the table. If you decide you wish to eat, it will be right here waiting for you. Try not to make the soup wait forever, because forever is too cold.

MILTON sighs.

(gently) Are you alright?

MILTON: Fine.

JOSHUA: Is there anything---

MILTON: I would like to be alone, that's all.

JOSHUA: Have some soup.

MILTON: I'll eat the fucking soup! Now let me be!

JOSHUA: Three weeks! It's been three weeks since your mother died. Aren't you done sulking and feeling sorry for yourself?

MILTON (dramatically): Leave me alone.

JOSHUA: I'm here for you, I get it, it's painful but this, this rudeness, it's inexcusable. It's exhausting! I'm not going to allow you to berate me and bark orders at me all day whenever you *do* feel like talking. You go from screaming and chanting to brooding and panting, with no care or concern for my own well being.

MILTON: Don't make this about you---

JOSHUA: I feel completely forgotten---

MILTON: This isn't about you, Joshua.

JOSHUA: I don't want it to be about me, but find your decency and treat me kindly.

MILTON: But you don't let me be. If I have more than five minutes to myself, you start cleaning the house. When do you ever clean this house? All of a sudden you've grown concerned with the dust on the counters and the grime on the floors. Mopping things up! Knocking things around like an avalanche! And I'm supposed to be calm? (melodramatic) I'm supposed to heal this wounded heart??

JOSHUA: We've had too much idle time and I don't know what else to do with myself. So, I'm keeping the house nice. Why is that such a problem for you? Don't you want to live nicely?

MILTON (sarcastically): Live nicely.

JOSHUA: What's wrong with living nicely?

MILTON: We already *live* nicely.

JOSHUA: You know what I mean. Keeping things clean. Washing those curtains, oh, they are horrid.

MILTON: We are clean people.

JOSHUA: There was dust in the bedroom corner five inches high.

MILTON: You lie!

JOSHUA: Five inches high with spider webs and God knows what else was being concocted there. Under the bathroom sink I found something sticky and upon closer examination it turned out to be a tube of toothpaste that somehow exploded, causing everything else in its path to drown in its oozing substance. How does one explain that?

MILTON: No one asked you to explain it.

JOSHUA: Making such discoveries isn't my idea of having a good time.

MILTON: My mother just died and you are concerned about toothpaste.

JOSHUA: I'm saying, if you actually listen to what I mean, is that this whole ordeal has been hard on me also. You aren't the only one who's been depressed.

MILTON: Oh, stop it now. You couldn't stand my mother!

JOSHUA: She couldn't stand me, the bitch. I never did a damn thing to ever hurt her or give her a reason to not like me.

MILTON: Apologize for calling my mother a bitch.

JOSHUA: No.

MILTON: Apologize!

Beat.

JOSHUA: Alright, I'm sorry and I'm only saying it cause you're upset.

MILTON: Unbelievable.

JOSHUA (happily): Want some tea?

MILTON: Does it look like I want tea?

JOSHUA: Well, how does someone look when they want tea?

MILTON: I haven't slept in weeks. I haven't showered in days. I've been out of work and they won't take me back. The bastards! Ten years! I've given them ten years of my soul, sucked out of my veins. It's because they secretly despise me. Especially Ronald, oh that son of a bitch had it in for me since day one. The bastard. Always giving me odd stares and making strange noises whenever I went out for lunch. As if I wasn't allowed to do so. Always making me second guess myself at work. Oh, what a dreadful environment. But how I enjoyed the work...oh, how I love, love, love the work...creating, imagining each day. It was the only thing that made me feel as though I were floating on a cloud. Oh, how I long for those days again. But now, the brutal force of reality is upon me. This robe I wear seems to be my most reliable companion. It hears my cries, my thoughts, my pains...holds my tears. *Ronald* set me up! That crude, evil man. He gathered all the others against me. One at a time I saw the change in their demeanor. Ah! Until finally, finally the entire place was against me. And wouldn't you know it, the grim reaper came to take me away...fired...me..imagine? Ungrateful bastards. Knowing my mother is dead. No compassion! No flowers, not even a card or a word. Nothing! (he squawks) I hope they all burn in hell, in the darkest, most inconsiderate, most intolerable depths of hell...

JOSHUA: ...So, no tea then?

MILTON: What do we have?

JOSHUA: We have Irish breakfast, English breakfast---

MILTON: English, English, I'll have English!

JOSHUA: With honey?

MILTON: Just make the fucking tea however you make it Josh!

JOSHUA: Nasty bastard.

JOSHUA exits room.

MILTON (to himself): Me...nasty. I am a nasty bastard. Angry as fuck. First my mother, then my job, what's next? Afraid to ask---

JOSHUA VOICE from kitchen.

JOSHUA: Out of English breakfast, we have IRISH and EARL GREY---

MILTON (shouting): I'll take the grey!!

JOSHUA: Earl Grey?!

MILTON: YES, GREY, GREY, EARL GREY!!!

JOSHUA: You don't have to scream like a lunatic.

MILTON (to himself): Heart attack, I feel it, I'm going to have a great big heart attack and make sure I sprawl myself all across this ancient living-room rug for all to see. Bastards. Aimless bastards.

Enter JOSHUA.

JOSHUA: Who are you talking to?

MILTON: What?

JOSHUA: Were you on the phone?

MILTON: I'm talking to the voices I hear in my head.

JOSHUA: Are you really hearing voices in your head?

MILTON: I was talking to myself---do I really have to explain every little thing I do to you. We are getting psychotic!

JOSHUA: Just calm down, tea is on the way.

MILTON: Can't wait.

JOSHUA sits.

Pause...and then.

JOSHUA: What shall we watch tonight?

MILTON: I don't want to watch television.

JOSHUA: Why not? We can watch the National Theatre productions online.

MILTON: We can?

JOSHUA: Yeahhh, they're doing a remake of Frankenstein. Heard it's terrific!

MILTON: No shit.

JOSHUA: So, it will be as if we attended the theatre in our own living-room.

MILTON: Pathetic.

JOSHUA exits room and then...

JOSHUA: Want cookies?

MILTON: Cookies?

JOSHUA: You want?

MILTON: Aren't they old and stale?

JOSHUA: YEAH?

MILTON: YES! YES!

JOSHUA: How many?

MILTON(to himself): Is it me?

JOSHUA: What?!

MILTON: THREE!!!

JOSHUA: OKAY!

PAUSE.

JOSHUA enters.

It's brewing. Here's your cookies.

JOSHUA hands MILTON cookies on napkin.

MILTON: Do me a favor. Can you not shout from the kitchen?

JOSHUA: Shout? You're the one screaming on top of your lungs.

MILTON: Joshua, please, listen to me, just try to hear what the fuck I'm saying...you went into the kitchen and asked if I wanted some cookies...why go into the kitchen and then ask me that? Why not ask me *before* you enter the kitchen, this way we both don't have to shout?

JOSHUA; It didn't occur to me to ask you, until I stepped foot in the kitchen.

MILTON: Of course not.

JOSHUA: Do you think I like shouting?

MILTON: I'll tell you what...why not walk back into the living-room and ask me about the cookies, this way we don't lose our voices? Do you think we can do that next time?

JOSHUA: I don't know.

MILTON: What do you mean, you don't know?

JOSHUA: I'm not gonna remember that nonsense.

MILTON: Forget it. Just forget it. Tea done?

JOSHUA: Let me see. Don't eat the cookies until you have your tea, this way you can dunk.

JOSHUA exits.

MILTON(to himself): Definitely not me.

JOSHUA: Say something?

JOSHUA enters.

JOSHUA: Say something? See I came back in the living-room to ask you.

MILTON: I'm fine.

JOSHUA: Are you alright?

MILTON: I said, I'm fine.

JOSHUA exits.

MILTON lays on the floor and pretends he is dead.

JOSHUA enters carrying both teas.

JOSHUA enters living-room and screams.

MILTON jumps from the floor.

JOSHUA: What are you doing?!

MILTON: I was, I was just seeing what it would be like.

JOSHUA: What? I thought you died? Made me spill the tea!

MILTON: Are you alright?

MILTON helps Joshua with the tea.

JOSHUA: I'm okay. It burns, my hands.

MILTON: Want to go run your hands under cold water?

JOSHUA: No! Why were you on the floor?

MILTON: It was stupid.

JOSHUA: I demand to know WHY!

MILTON: ...I was pretending...I was seeing what it would feel like to die on the living-room floor...okay?

JOSHUA: Are you serious?

MILTON: Have some tea.

MILTON places both teas on table.

JOSHUA: Why would you pretend?

MILTON: Because I'm not happy and if I dropped dead, I'd be somewhat prepared to see how it would go?

JOSHUA: And how did it go, Milton?

MILTON: Well, I didn't have enough time with it.

JOSHUA: Time?

MILTON: Time, you know...I barely laid down before you started screaming your head off.

JOSHUA: I thought you outright died.

MILTON: Why would you think that?

JOSHUA: You've been under so much stress lately. I've been doing my best to help you, but nothing seems to be working and I'm afraid. You actually believe a robe is a more reliable companion than me?

MILTON: I didn't mean...don't...don't get upset.

JOSHUA: No! I've had enough of your morbidity. Watching you practice your own death is all I can stand. Do you want to die?

MILTON: No.

JOSHUA: Stop pretending because it will one day really happen.

MILTON: I know.

Pause.

Sorry. Sorry for everything. I know I've been a real pain in the ass, rude, horrible person. Without you...I don't know, I'd jump off a roof.

JOSHUA: Stop.

MILTON: I would. You're the only thing left in my life that truly matters.

JOSHUA: Go on.

MILTON: How do you take my abuse?

JOSHUA: I love you, Milton. But it won't be for much longer if you don't put an end to your misery and I don't mean death, I mean quit the droopy dog face routine.

MILTON: Let's have some tea.

JOSHUA: I think I made it really good this time.

MILTON: Of course you did.

THEY sip their teas.

JOSHUA: Milton, are we going to be okay?

MILTON: Yes, we will.

END OF PLAY