

Fever Dream

by

Joseph Arnone

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Cast of Characters

REGGIE:

20's

DON:

60's

Place
Bar

Time
Night

Setting: The play takes place in a dive bar.

At Rise: The play opens up with Reggie sipping her drink and Don wiping down the bar counter with a towel.

REGGIE (to herself): What a guy...

DON: You ah, you want me to fill you up some?

REGGIE taps the top of her glass
with her finger.

Never understood why you come to this dive bar. You once told me it's cause we're local, but there are many other local bars in this town not far from here and they're all way nicer than this dump...

REGGIE: Why does it shock you?

DON: You are much more upperclass, don't you think? Have that big Wall Street job and all...finance is it?

REGGIE: Finance.

DON: Why not live in the better part of town? All that money you make.

REGGIE: I do.

DON: You do? So, why you keep coming here for?

REGGIE: I come across town because I keep trying to work up the nerve to visit my father. He's not well. They found this mass around his heart and the prognosis isn't all that great...

DON: You not talkin' to your pops?

REGGIE: Nah. Haven't for years...found out through the shitty family grapevine that he's not doing good. You would think my brother would call but, he's another asshole on so many levels...found out from some prying cousin that informed me of the news...you know the kind, feigning concern when they are actually happy you are miserable...those people do exist.

DON: Oh, yeah. You don't gotta tell me.

REGGIE: There you go. The way things are, I guess.

REGGIE downs her drink. She taps the top
of her glass with her finger.

DON pours.

DON: I had tough relations with my old man. He was a hard case. Heavy with his hands. Me and my three brothers. Scared to death of him all my life. Got worse too, when he was older. They say you mellow out with age, but not my father, he got more violent.

REGGIE: Sad.

DON: Yeah, can't tell you how many beatings I took from that guy. That's why I went into boxing, didn't get very far but won a few amateur titles I'm proud of and all. Looks good on the walls.

REGGIE points to a framed photo on the wall.

REGGIE: That's you?

DON (chuckles): Yeah, that's when I was twenty-three years old and had a full head of hair

REGGIE: Hot stuff.

DON: You think so?

REGGIE: Absolutely.

DON: Gee, thanks. I wasn't fishing for no compliments.

REGGIE: I know.

DON: The good ole days...say...you gonna try and see your old man tonight?

REGGIE: I've been trying for weeks. Always end up in this place. I tell myself I'll have a drink, loosen my nerves and then I'll go face him.

DON: Yeah. You go when you're ready. That's all.

REGGIE: Being ready isn't my problem. I've been ready my whole life. Not a damn thing I won't face. I fear nothing. Nothing...except myself. I'm so afraid I won't be able to keep myself together in his presence. There's so much anger I feel towards him. And now that he's not well, I'm supposed to play forgiveness and put on my best face. Why? Why should I? After everything that was done all my life...why should I act like it didn't happen? Don't my feelings matter? No, they never mattered, I imagine...that's why I was always stepped on. I come from a family of professional critics. Spent my whole life trying not to step on a land mine, but it's kinda hard when you're raised in a minefield. It's all about learning how to disarm the situation so it doesn't eat you alive and when that stops working, you try the next best thing, staying out of reach. But every once in a while you receive a personalized package sent directly to you, with a bright bow on it and you are forced to see what's inside, but all it ever does is blow up in your face, ripping open all the scars you've healed throughout the years and all you can do is try not to bleed to death...

REGGIE downs her drink.

DON pours her a drink.

DON: This one's on me.

REGGIE nods.

REGGIE: It's about forgiveness, isn't it? That's the massive wall blocking my heart. One can't forget, but to live with the pain is supposed to be somehow courageous. I don't think I buy into all that.

DON: You shouldn't.

REGGIE: I don't.

DON: Took me a long time to figure out that the only way to live a good life is to put yourself first.

REGGIE: See, that's not what I'm saying. I don't want to be a selfish person either.

DON: But if your old man was nothing but bad to you, why keep allowing your nose to stick in the mud.

REGGIE: Maybe there's beauty in self-sacrifice.

DON: Hmm. Never heard that one before.

REGGIE: Maybe all any of us are supposed to do is suck it up. Live out our average lives and hold our breath for as long as we can...

DON: ...Before we fall...

REGGIE: Exactly.

DON: ...Before my dad died he told me he loved me...believe that?

REGGIE: He did?

DON: First time, last time. Must have been while he was in a fever dream, maybe...but, he died right after, like minutes right after that.

REGGIE: And he said he loved you?

DON: I was sitting down. The only one in the room. My brothers, they're from out of state and were traveling in...I was just sitting there...he was supposedly in a vegetative state, so he was on his way out and I heard him speak, clear as day the words, Donnie I love you...and that was it, he checked out...

DON wipes his eyes with his bar towel.

Sorry...don't mean to get upset in front of a beautiful lady.

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REGGIE: That's alright.

DON: You have your own problems.

REGGIE: No, really, it's okay.

DON: If you were to ask me if it was worth it, all the years of abuse and carnage, just to hear my old man say them words once to me, well, if I was being totally honest with ya, I'd have to say YES, hearing him say them words meant everything to me, though when he said them I hated his guts. It was like a spear of love was slammed through my chest and I haven't been able to take it out ever since. And it's a good thing. I only think about my two brothers and the fact that they didn't get to have that with him.

REGGIE: You ever tell them?

DON: Tell them what?

REGGIE: What your dad told you in the end?

DON: Nah...I can't...they been through enough pain and oh, I don't know, I don't wanna hurt them more by saying it but...

REGGIE: Maybe it would give them some relief to know he said that to you.

DON: Relief? Perhaps you're right. I ain't never thought about it that way before.

REGGIE: They would know he had a good spot left in him.

DON: ...Yeah...

REGGIE: Thanks for sharing your story with me, Don.

DON: Eh, no worries...had no idea I'd be talking to you about him...

REGGIE: I'm gonna visit my father.

DON: You are?

REGGIE: I've decided.

DON: That's wonderful.

REGGIE: Yeah...after hearing you say what you said...you really touched my heart...thank you.

DON: Oh, no need to thank me sweetheart.

REGGIE: No, really, thank you.

REGGIE takes out her purse.

REGGIE (cont'd): Let me satisfy the bill.

DON: Oh, no. I couldn't let you do that. Not after our talk.

REGGIE: No, really.

DON: Nah, you've given me plenty of money these past few weeks. No charge. Go see your father, alright?

REGGIE: Can I give you a hug?

DON: Sure.

REGGIE and DON meet at the end of the bar and have a warm embrace.

REGGIE: I appreciate you.

DON: Think nothin' of it. Happy to be of service.

REGGIE: I'll let you know how things go.

DON: I'll be looking forward to that.

REGGIE grabs her things and makes her way to the front door...she exits.

DON looks on proudly.

END OF PLAY