

Lenny

by

Daniella Alma

Copyright © 2021

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

LENNY:

30's

MRS. LARNER:

50's

Place
Therapist Office

Time
Day

Setting: The play is set in modern time.

At Rise: The play opens up inside Mrs. Larner's therapy office. It is early morning and we notice the sun rising, we overhear the outside traffic starting to pick up. There are filled bookshelves which surround the room, the furniture is heavy and dated. There is a large window which casts its mass of light onto the two large leather armchairs in which Mrs. Larner and Lenny sit opposite each other in.

LENNY: After all, I've made the commitment to myself, I'm in this for life, Mrs. Larner. When you ask me if I should give up, you know, it doesn't make any sense to me. It's not something I can imagine doing.

MRS. LARNER: Even if it means your life?

LENNY: Yeh, well...even if it means my life.

MRS. LARNER: Have you, Lenny, have you thought of what kind of pain you are willing to endure?

LENNY: Sure I have.

MRS. LARNER: But there's no alternative for you?

LENNY: That's right.

MRS. LARNER: It seems like you've made up your mind.

LENNY: That's right.

MRS. LARNER: Well, what do you expect me...I mean I, I can't help you much more, Lenny. I can't really do -

LENNY: That's alright...

MRS. LARNER: I'm -

LENNY: - If you don't see anything good coming out of this, that's okay. If all you ever were was someone that could hear me, if all you ever were was...was an ear. That's alright, better than most could do... *(gets up to leave)*

You were better than most Mrs. Larner, I wouldn't of had anyone else.

MRS. LARNER: What more advice can you expect me to give?

LENNY: None. I don't expect a word from anyone, you're so hung up on trying to say the right thing, so you say nothing at all. If there's any truth to it, I can understand that. Perhaps live with it, even. Remember we had that conversation? You helped me then, that day, when you said that I shouldn't expect a damn thing, I made that a 'life' thing, I said I'll never expect a thing from any goddamn person ever again. I made that clear to myself. And if that's the only thing I can be proud of, then so be it!

MRS. LARNER: Suit yourself.

LENNY: Suits me fine.

MRS. LARNER: Leave the check on the table.

LENNY: Oh I will. Don't you worry about that, Mrs. Larner. And I'll leave here, as quiet as a mouse, because what else can I expect from you?

LENNY turns to audience.

I left it there that night, on the side table of her office. Like I'd done every Thursday for the past eight weeks. She wasn't as useless as I made her feel but she was damn right cold for making me leave that way. I knew it wasn't all about the money to her but she made it hard for a guy like me to believe it. Another one of them beings that had a way of making a lot less of themselves, who never really care about the traces they leave in your heart or the changes they've brought about you. And boy did she change me. All she did was listen, I guess nobody ever listened to a damn thing I've ever thought of, without changing the idea or without bringing their own stupid ideas into it all. I got what I needed and I left, with a decision that was pretty much made before the whole eight weeks began. But I'm glad I went through with it anyway, I didn't mind sitting with Mrs. Larner every Thursday, it was something to look forward to and the more she seemed to oppose my ideas, the more solidified they became. So I walked on down to City Hall that evening and began the process of changing my name, I went through a bunch of diminutive suffixes, choosing something that went with the ring of Mrs. Larner...I liked the 'er' sound, it had a nice vigor to it. It only took me several attempts before I went with choosing Winter Turner...I didn't much like Winter but the Mr. Turner was good enough and the Winter sounded good on its own too, so I went with it. And that was it, the beginning of the end, I was no longer Lenny Brents and glad of it too. Besides, I think the Brents never came from anywhere either, some old Brent must have done the same thing I did.

I received the papers a few weeks later, a certificate of name change, which I kept for a while, until it was no longer necessary. I then took a light to it and let it burn outside my 400 square foot apartment window. In that same moment, I also witnessed the first change of season, a large snowflake came dancing down to melt under its fire. That was the real life changer for me. It set my purpose, my ideas and good ole Larner wouldn't have the faintest idea of my whereabouts. Nor would anyone else for that matter. I loathed the name Lenny, I hated anyone who had ever said it, girlfriends, fathers, brothers, uncles, teachers, they all had their time with Lenny. All of them. Now it was my time to have a shot at Winter Turner, someone who'd actually like someone for a change or let's put it bluntly, didn't need to like someone. There were many things I started doing, forming habits was one of them, smoking was a chosen one. I once aimed to take up smoking but never really had the time for it. So I'd ordered the finest tobacco which was delivered in a trunk, I paid for a lot of tobacco, little did I know that they'd send the kind of amount that you could fill an old Kentucky whorehouse with.

LENNY (cont'd): It sure was a lot of tobacco, so much that when I'd opened the trunk I started coughing, and now doubting my ability as to whether I could develop the discipline to form the habit. I never had good lungs, which is one of the reasons why I've always been short tempered, my heart beats faster when my lungs get stressed, the temper goes up and...but what good is it, talkin' of old Lenny. We might have the same body but the mind changes and the mind does a good number on us all. This time I'll be different, think different, be different, live different. I won't much need to talk about old Lenny and all the miserable bastards that he came across, god, you've no idea, they were such miserable - each one of them. The worst was a teacher called Nicky, she was such a miserable bastard that she had failed me in one of the subjects I was most enthusiastic about, singing. I loved to sing, I think I had learnt singing from listening and observing the birds in the back porch I grew up in. They made great use of their little air sacs and it taught me how to sing. I wasn't too bad at all but because Nicky was bullied about being a bad singer herself, she never liked anyone who *could* actually sing, so she failed all the best singers in the class. Who would believe it?

Had a brother who was one of the most miserable bastards you could ever come across, a drinker he was, a habit I will never form. You've got to have your wits about you or they'll come for you the second time around. So long to all of them, I couldn't care less about Mrs. Lerner but she was on my mind sometimes, or more than sometimes. I wondered if she ever really listened, I wondered if I was ever on her mind or if she was just going through life the same way Lenny was, just going through the actions, to survive another day.

Then I would think about my Mother too, I wondered if I was doing her a disservice by changing my identity, or maybe somewhere up there she would approve. Maybe she'd be too busy doing something better with her second life. Maybe we killed her, pushed her to her limits and she just couldn't take no more...that was the final light that went out for me. If there was anything keeping ole Lenny alive, it was her...she was a good woman alright, a real good woman, the kind of woman you don't see anymore. Human, real, loving, kind...she would take you in her arms and fill you with the kind of warmth you only felt in your dreams. Only women can have that about them, that kind of angelic ora...only a woman has that, but you just don't see it much anymore.

There were so many things I wanted to do as a kid, so much ambition. I never wanted to do the usual things kids wanted to do, I was ready to pack up my stuff at five and start exploring, I had my maps drawn out and everything planned but I was always held back from it. The naysayers wouldn't give in. By the time I got to seventeen, I just gave up trying, so much ambition and need had been burning up in me since I was that little kid and it all just fizzled out, I just gave up trying to be me. Too many years of living a life I never wanted to live just burnt me out. That's what happens I guess, it's a real sad thing too, if you don't keep the fire hot.

LENNY (cont'd): This time around, there ain't one thing I'm gonna do that I don't wanna do. It don't mean I'm not gonna help anybody, it don't mean that. It just means that I ain't gonna do a damn thing that I don't wanna do anymore. You got the picture, Mama?

That was my grandma's saying, she always used to point out all the things we pretended to overlook and then she'd look at me and say, "You got the picture, Mama?". By the time I was five, I pretty much had everyone sussed out around me, I saw all their flaws, all the countless ways they were wasting their pointless lives on doing stupid things for stupid people. It never ceased to amaze me, nor did it make any sense and I always said, God - if I'm gonna live, don't let that be me, I'd rather have an awful life, than a dull and stupid one. Why didn't I listen, you might ask...where'd I go wrong? Influence, society...it all ends up making you who you never wanted to be.

SCENE 2

LENNY sits in the dark on a large reading chair, he is back at Mrs. Larner's therapy office. The blinds which were wide open in the first scene are now shut closed. It is evening time, approx 6pm...we hear slight noise of rush hour traffic building from the outside street.

MRS. LARNER enters.

LENNY: Mrs. Larner...

MRS. LARNER: Lenny -

LENNY: Please don't turn on the light, just not yet....you can call me Winter Turner now, Mrs Larner.

MRS. LARNER: I'm sorry, Winter. You'll have to give me a while to adjust, especially since it's only been a few months...

LENNY: Sixteen weeks approximately. It's been hell.

MRS. LARNER: Hold on, I'm trying to find my seat...

LENNY: Two feet to your right.

MRS. LARNER sits.

MRS. LARNER: I warned you, Winter.

LENNY: It isn't me, Mrs Larner, it's been everyone around me. They came looking for me and, and now they can't seem to leave me alone. I've never had so many people so desperate to be a part of my life, Winter's life that is (*Correcting himself*).

And now I'm trying to live, to live, live this, this new identity, this new beginning and they're haunting me. Some old geezer that I knew quite well one time, showed up to my apartment door with a fully baked christening cake in his hand, he then barged his way in and called me by my new name with some kind of demonic enthusiasm, that you only see in the movies, then he proceeded to bring up all these memories he had of us, it made me sick to my stomach, the more he spoke, the more I wished for some astral force to expel him from existence. I yelled at him, told him to leave and never come back but he begged for my forgiveness! Can you believe it? He thought he had did me wrong and wanted to somehow make up for it all. Ohhh it was a nightmare, a never ending evening of angst and prayer. Just when I thought that was the end of it all, more started coming out the woodworks, tracking me down from all the edges of earth. It's like I've been cursed, it's a curse Mrs. Larner.

MRS. LARNER: Sounds like it...we need to turn the lights on.

LENNY: (*Nervous.*) Just one light...

MRS. LARNER turns on a lamp.

MRS. LARNER: There, better. You look the same, Lenny - Winter.

LENNY: I've longer hair now.

MRS. LARNER: I couldn't tell.

LENNY: And a mark now on this side of my eye.

MRS. LARNER (*Leaning forward.*): Well yes, that's different.

LENNY: I should have chosen another name. Instead I'm stuck now with Winter Turner, I can't go through all that again. It'll end me.

MRS. LARNER: Why have you come to see me, Winter?

LENNY stares ahead for a while, finding himself lost for an answer.

LENNY: I...I'm finding it hard to face what might be the truth...which you did warn me of. That I'll never be able to escape. That perhaps, I'll be Lenny forever. I had a dream Mrs. Larner, one so great it kept me believing that there could be a possibility, a possibility of being someone I'm interested in being.

LENNY (cont'd): I was walking through this old cobbled street town, I had a top hat on, a nice wool coat and I was shaking hands with some fruit vendors on a corner, I heard some bells from behind me in the distance and looked over to the field where they were coming from, I felt a lightness, some lightness in my chest, like I was about to walk in the shoes of someone I could respect, someone who had class, integrity, honesty, talent, will, someone who had great will... In my hands were some papers of some kind, I'm not sure what they were for, who they were for, but they meant something. The problem is, Mrs. Larner, is that Lenny could never become that kind of man.

MRS. LARNER: What makes you think that?

LENNY: Because, that's just the opposite of what Lenny is.

*MRS. LARNER sits back in her chair
and studies him for an awkward moment.*

MRS. LARNER: What makes you think that?

LENNY: ...

MRS. LARNER: There is a lot that you don't know about me, Winter. (Pause.) I did my running like you, quite a long time ago. One morning, I woke up and it dawned on me that there were no ends of the earth left for me to run from. That no matter what I did, I couldn't escape the constraints placed on me, my background, heritage, its circumstances. Little did I know that there was only so much that I could actually escape from. In the end, I knew I couldn't keep running. That at some point, I had to face myself and acknowledge, that if I'm going to be worth anything, I've got to look at all of the women in me, I've got to face my past, present, future. I knew then that it was all I had, that if truth was worth seeking, I would have to start there. And as the years went on, I've accepted, that perhaps I will never be fully satisfied, that perhaps none of us will ever be. But that we'll find a sense of peace, amongst that chaos, something to feed its hunger, to tame its storm. We just can't keep on running, we can't keep on sailing endlessly into the unknown, eventually something will break, you see. But it, it took some endless roads to find my home. So what it might be is that you need to look on some more, you might have some running left in you, before you reach that place...it's not always a walk to get there.

LENNY: To get where? That's the problem.

MRS. LARNER: To find your home, maybe it isn't here.

LENNY: Where could it be?

MRS. LARNER: I can't answer that, Winter. Perhaps the reason why you changed your name is because you need to leave everything that feels familiar behind you. Maybe you need to get out of here, get away from it all...maybe it is here but you can't quite know that, until you find out for yourself.

LENNY: You sayin' I should go traveling, explorin'?...I mean, I've always thought about it. You know, I've some places in mind I've always wanted to go to, I've been savin'...planning for a while, just never had the guts to see it through. But look, I got my new passport an all, Mrs Larner! Have a look at this, it's got my new name on it and all! Never owned one of these before...

*LENNY shows MRS. LARNER his new passport,
that displays his new name MR. WINTER TURNER...
inside it is also a small map.*

I was thinking of heading as far south as I can go, then on to Mexico and, here, look here, these are all the places I've had mapped out for as long as I can remember.

LENNY (Cont'd): Why...erm, well...why don't you come with me, Mrs Larner?

MRS. LARNER: Oh...I, I can't Winter, you know that.

LENNY: (Disappointed.) Right...right. (Shows her his map.) Well here's all the places I've wanted to go since I was a kid, except I'll be going as Winter now...

I'm looking to start along this route here and then make my way along the coast. (Pauses for a moment.) I'll be honest with you, I've never really took the thought seriously, until now. I think I just needed you to say it would be alright, I kinda needed you to say that. Your say in all this. I never really had anyone tell me to do anything different, it was always the same old, you know? Get a job, get a house, get a kid...things everyone in life just kinda expects from you...that's why I wanted change. (Lenny gets up to put on his jacket.) Well, I couldn't a done it without you Miss. I'll be off now...It's time we said goodbye anyway, isn't it?

*LENNY moves toward the door, takes off
his hat and kneels do to MRS. LARNER.*

MRS. LARNER: (Fondly.) There's no one like you Lenny.

A moment of stillness is felt between them.

Lenny: But we're not so different, are we? So we'll meet again. Like two ships passing in the night...till we're home.

Music / Lights Fade out.
END OF PLAY