

Rose to Ash

by

Joseph Arnone

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

BURT:

50's

AGGIE:

18

Place

Apartment

Time

Night

Setting: The play takes place inside a small Brooklyn apartment in a real dodgy side of town. It's a poor neighborhood, there are crack addicts in the hallway, alcoholics, homeless people and yet there are many families that survive in this atmosphere.

The apartment is comprised of green, yellow and orange colors. One light for the kitchen stage right, another for the living room center stage and a door that leads to Aggie's bedroom stage left. The apartment looks like something out of 1960's Americana and has aged that way. Cheap brown shaggy carpeting. Holes in the lime green couch. A single sofa that is filthy white where Burt likes to sit. A square TV set with antennae downstage with back facing audience.

At Rise: The play opens up with Burt sitting in his single sofa watching the television. Aggie walks into the living room from the kitchen carrying a small watering can for plants.

AGGIE stands in front of the TV, watering the plants.

BURT: Move outta the way! (beat) Whattya standin' there for? Move outta the way!

AGGIE: I'm waterin' the plants.

BURT: I'm watchin' the television.

AGGIE: Your dinner should be ready soon.

BURT: Put some clothes on! Walkin' around in ya robe all Goddamn day like an animal.

AGGIE: Be quiet.

BURT: Can't even leave the house for a minute. Gotta stare at you all day long. Don't you wanna go out into the world, get some fresh air on ya face?

AGGIE: For what?

BURT: To breathe.

AGGIE: And how good is the air I'd be breathin' in these ends? Huh?

BURT: Don't start.

AGGIE: Maybe I'll get some crack dust sprinkled on me as I step off the front stoop, or maybe I'll catch the smells of piss and beer as I enter the corner deli. Where's the dimes Burt? I'll scrape them up, find the cheapest bottle I can get my hands on. And what then, wrestle less till the mornin'? Will the air taste sweeter then, one last goodbye until they see the last of me? I'm chokin'! Chokin' on it all, fuck do you care! You never cared about a damn thing, none of you did, none of you, all of you, I see it all, your lies, they creep up and around these walls, shadows everywhere...their faces, what did they leave Burt? That's why I need to get out of this place, just ain't for me anymore...

BURT: You're too much. You get right under my skin.

AGGIE: Then leave me alone. At least I'm waterin' your stupid plants.

BURT: They're your plants. I bought 'em for you!

AGGIE: And I didn't ask for them.

BURT: Cause it's a gift.

AGGIE: It's more shit for me to manage. God knows you won't.

BURT: Hey, I do enough for ya.

AGGIE: What do you do?

BURT: I put a roof ova ya head! There's food in your gut cause a me! You mope around all day feelin' sorry for yerself. Aren't you embarrassed?

AGGIE: No.

BURT: I can't work forever, you know. I'm gettin' old. Not too many more years left, I can tell ya. I feel it comin'. I feel the door slowly closing in on me. Won't be long.

AGGIE: You promise?

BURT: Hey, that's no way to talk to me, I'm your Uncle.

AGGIE: Uncle of what?

BURT: I'm your mother's brother, have some respect.

AGGIE: And what am I respectin' dickhead? Tell me.

BURT: Respect the fact that I'm your guardian and I take care of ya.

AGGIE: Is that all?

BURT: Well, yeah.

AGGIE goes into stove, pulls out his TV dinner.
She walks back into living room and plops
the meal onto a small fold out table in front
of BURT.

Easy, easy.

AGGIE: Just eat.

BURT: Can you get me a fork please? Supposed to eat with my hands?

AGGIE: Get it yerself.

BURT: Get me a fork!

AGGIE: No, you fuck, get it yerself!

BURT moves the foldable table and storms
into the kitchen. He pulls out a draw which
falls to the floor. He picks a fork out from
the carnage and storms back to his chair.

BURT: I don't do nothin' to bother you! I do what I can to make you comfortable.

AGGIE: Comfortable? What's comfortable Burt? Roaches, flies, mice and the occasional rat is comfortable? Look where we live? Open your crooked eyes.

BURT: Best I can do you ungrateful bitch.

AGGIE: Fuck you, loser.

BURT: I am not a loser!

AGGIE: Big, fat, loser!

BURT: Feel like I'm gonna have a heart attack. Let me eat before I die, please.

AGGIE: Yeah, squeeze that last meal in.

BURT: What is it with you, huh? Why you always mad all the time?

AGGIE: ...I have potential.

BURT: ...Oh man, we gonna have another one of those---

AGGIE: I'm stuck here! In this waste hole of shit and I want out!

BURT: So get out! Go! Go! Go!

AGGIE: WHERE? Where can I go?

BURT: Get married!

AGGIE: (screams)

BURT: Meet a nice fella and get married.

AGGIE: This isn't 1950 America anymore BURT!

BURT: That's what I know.

AGGIE: That's all you know cause you're a dinosaur. You're a relic!

BURT: Relic? What's a relic?

AGGIE: You are the past.

BURT: I don't know how to keep up with you kids these days. You all speak different languages, wear different clothes. Some days I feel like I stepped into a foreign country, I don't recognize anything anymore.

AGGIE: That's because you've never left Brooklyn your whole pathetic life.

BURT: My food tastes like ice, hope you're happy. I ask for one afternoon to relax. Wanna watch the news, wanna eat a hot meal, instead I got you climbin' walls.

AGGIE: You couldn't pay me to climb these filthy walls.

BURT: Are you eatin'?

AGGIE: No.

BURT: Why not? You're two pounds, eat somethin'.

AGGIE: I'm not hungry.

BURT: Why aren't you hungry?

AGGIE: All of a sudden you give a shit.

BURT: I've always given a shit.

AGGIE: No, you haven't. You just come and go as you please. I take up space. I've never been wanted by you. I was forced on you. You took me cause you had no choice.

BURT: I took you cause my sister died and your father fled and there was nobody else, yes, that's true, but I still took your ungrateful ass.

AGGIE: Treated like a dog.

BURT: (laughs)

AGGIE: You're laughin'?

BURT: (laughing more) Calm down.

AGGIE: You fuckin' dirty bastard.

BURT: Hey now, don't talk like that.

AGGIE kicks over the foldable table. Shit goes flying everywhere.

I wasn't done eating that!

AGGIE: Clean it up yourself!

AGGIE rages into her bedroom and slams door.

BURT is left in silence. He surveys the food on the floor and shakes his head. His attention carries over to the TV screen. He watches. He sits back down and looks over at the AGGIE'S bedroom door. He sighs. Shakes his head again and rises from his chair. He walks over to AGGIE'S door.

BURT: (knocking gently) Ag...Ag, come on...you blew a gasket, I'm not mad at ya...

BURT walks back to the living room, gets on his knees and begins piecing together all the spilled food on the carpet.

AGGIE opens her bedroom door.

AGGIE: I hate you.

BURT: I hate you too, darlin', don't we all hate everyone...don't we all.

AGGIE: Hope you fuckin' die soon.

BURT: What good will that do ya?

AGGIE: I'll be free of you.

BURT: There's the door.

AGGIE: You've always wanted to get rid of me.

BURT: Well, I mean, one day, eventually, yeah.

AGGIE sits on the couch, staring at BURT cleaning.

AGGIE: If I died, would you care?

BURT: I would.

AGGIE: How much?

BURT: How do you measure care?

AGGIE: Would you cry?

BURT: Cry? Umm, on the inside.

AGGIE: Fuck does that mean Burt?

BURT: It means YEAH.

AGGIE: Cryin' on the inside doesn't count.

BURT: Why's that?

AGGIE: Cause it's the tears, seeing tears makes it real, makes it felt. So basically what you are sayin' is that you don't give a shit.

BURT stands back up and sighs. He dumps the TV dinner into the garbage and washes his hands in the sink.

AGGIE gets a vacuum out from the closet and vacuums the rug. When she is done she goes back into her bedroom and slams the door, leaving the vacuum where the mess once was.

BURT looks at the vacuum and wraps the wire around it, placing it back into the closet.

BURT knocks on AGGIE'S bedroom door.

BURT: Ag...Ag you want me to fix you up a TV dinner? Huh? (beat) How 'bout some mac and cheese the way you like it? Want that?

BURT goes back to the couch and sits. He watches TV.

AGGIE comes out of her room and goes into the kitchen. She drinks water from a glass that's already been resting on the table and tosses it into the sink...it shatters.

...Destruction, nothin' but destruction.

AGGIE: What??

BURT: You are a destructive person.

AGGIE: It was an accident.

BURT: That was a deliberate accident. Saw the way you tossed the glass. How can it not shatter like that?

AGGIE: I'll clean it.

BURT: Right.

AGGIE walks into the living room. She stops and stares at BURT.

BURT makes eye contact with her.

AGGIE: I'm not happy.

AGGIE reveals a shard from the broken glass and slices her throat.

BURT jumps up out from his chair screaming and in SHOCK.

BURT: No, no, dear God, no, no.

AGGIE collapses to the floor. She shakes and twists her body and dies.

BURT CRIES TEARS.

END OF PLAY