

# ***Gone Before You Left***

*by*

*Joseph Arnone*

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Cast of Characters

<u>TASH</u> :	16
<u>PEGGY</u> :	19
<u>MISS FOSTER</u> :	40's
<u>BILLY</u> :	19

Place  
Peggy's bedroom

Time  
Night

2.

Setting: Peggy's bedroom gives the feeling of the 1960's era. The wallpaper and furniture strongly reflect this time period. Peggy wears what seems to be a nightgown.

At Rise: The play opens up with Peggy placing some last minute things in her luggage which is hidden discreetly under her bed. Tash enters the room also wearing a nightgown.

*Tash, 16, ambitious and intelligent for her years but maintains a naivety, stands at the door frame of a bedroom, she enters. Peggy, 19, boisterous and unruly, is inside the bedroom placing items into a luggage.*

TASH: Peggy?

PEGGY: What?

TASH: You busy?

PEGGY: I'm always busy.

TASH: Oh. Never mind.

PEGGY: *(Sighs.)* What do you want?

TASH: Are you *busy*?

PEGGY: *What* do you want?

TASH: Well...*(Closes the door.)* ...Well...I know what's happening. *(Whispers.)* - Tonight.

PEGGY: Tonight? What's tonight?

TASH: Please, don't get mad at me.

PEGGY: I'm already mad at you.

TASH: Whenever Billy James sneaks over here late at night, I can hear the two of you.

PEGGY: What did you just say?!

TASH: I can, I can hear the two of you, as clear as day.

PEGGY: You little bitch. You're eavesdropping on us?!

TASH: My bed rests up against that wall and these walls are paper thin and so I can't help but overhear you two talking and doing things and I've tried - I've tried not to listen, honest, but it's just impossible to avoid.

PEGGY: I bet.

TASH: The reason why I'm, well, I know what's supposed to happen...tonight.

PEGGY: Which is *what*, exactly?

TASH: Just that...that, just that I know you're leaving.

PEGGY: Is that what you think you heard?

TASH: I know it's what I heard, Peggy.

*Peggy grabs Tash by the arm.*

PEGGY: You *think* or you *know*?!

TASH: Ow..you're hurting my arm.

PEGGY: That's the point, isn't it?

TASH: Stop it! Let go!

*Peggy pushes Tash to the bed.*

PEGGY: Understand something right now. You haven't heard a damn thing, ya hear? Not one damn thing about any goings on about me leaving anywheres.

TASH: But I know what I heard.

PEGGY: WHAT DID I SAY?!

TASH: You could punch me in my face and it still won't matter cause I know what I heard and I know you and Billy James are taking off for good.

PEGGY: SHH! SHH! Lower your dumb voice before I put my fist in it. (beat) I ought to punch the living daylights out of you.

TASH: I don't care.

PEGGY: What?

TASH: I'm just saying.

*Peggy circles the room. She goes into her hiding spot and lights a cigarette by the window.*

PEGGY: Shouldn't be having this right now.

TASH: Can I have some?

PEGGY: What? No! Hell no!

TASH: ...You gonna have the baby?

PEGGY: ...What don't you know?

TASH: I know pretty much everything.

PEGGY: Is that so, huh?

TASH: Mm-hmm.

PEGGY: Rats.

TASH: Are you?

PEGGY: Am I what? Oh, the...well, well...we want to, but...we want to.

TASH: Why New York?

PEGGY: Huh?

TASH: Why you want to travel up to New York for? It's expensive, isn't it?

PEGGY: Keep your voice down, I said. Yeah, it's expensive but Billy has connections up there.

TASH: What kind of connections?

PEGGY: Ways for us to make money connections.

TASH: They're bad people.

PEGGY: So they are.

TASH: That's no way to raise a baby.

PEGGY: Don't you go telling me how to raise my own child!

TASH: But Billy's gonna do bad things, isn't he?

PEGGY: Not that bad. Just till we get fixed up.

TASH: Fixed up?

PEGGY: Get things in order.

TASH: Like what?

PEGGY: We want to buy a property out by the shore...they got beaches in New York, it'll be a while before that happens, but we aim to do it...soon.

TASH: You didn't tell anybody?

PEGGY: Of course not.

TASH: Take me with you.

PEGGY: You crazy?

TASH: I already packed my bag.

PEGGY: WHAT?

TASH: Take me with you.

PEGGY: There is no way on God's green Earth -

TASH: You have to take me.

PEGGY: Why's that?

TASH: Cause I'll squeal.

PEGGY: You'll WHAT?

TASH: I'll spill the beans.

PEGGY: You'll do no such thing!

TASH: If you don't take me with you tonight, I will make sure that Miss Foster will know every detail.

PEGGY: You little shit!

*Peggy grabs Tash by the arms.  
Tash screams.*

*The door opens.*

*Enter Miss Foster.*

MISS FOSTER: What's going on here?

*Peggy and Tash strike a pose.*

*(Sniffing the air.)* What is that...*(Sniffs.)* What is that smell?

PEGGY: Smell? Uh?

TASH: We are readying ourselves for bed and only just blew out the candle.

MISS FOSTER: I thought I told you no candles.

TASH: I'm sorry.

MISS FOSTER: Give it here.

TASH: Well...

MISS FOSTER: Well...what?

TASH: You see, the candle completely melted.

MISS FOSTER: Melted?

TASH: Finished. It completed it's cycle. No more wax to burn.

MISS FOSTER: Something isn't right.

TASH: Right?

MISS FOSTER: Yes. Something seems amiss.

PEGGY: The candle reached its end.

MISS FOSTER: Did it?

PEGGY/TASH: Mm-hmm.

MISS FOSTER: Let me find out you're both lying and I will make sure that you both reach your own end. Bed! Now!

*Tash runs out of the room.*

*(to Peggy.)* Now!

PEGGY: Okay.

*Miss Foster leaves the room.*

*A moment later Tash slips back into the bedroom.*

TASH: What time are we leaving?

PEGGY: I can't take you.

TASH: Why not?

PEGGY: I can't look after you.

TASH: I'll look after myself.

PEGGY: No.

TASH: I can't stay here with Miss Foster.

PEGGY: I said, no.

TASH: My life is already over in this place. She will never let me leave to go anywhere, least of all New York. This is my one chance Peggy and I am coming, I've got to come with you.



PEGGY: There is no way I am taking you.

TASH: I already asked Billy James.

PEGGY: You WHAT?! (*Lowering her voice.*) You did what?

TASH: He granted me permission.

PEGGY: How?

TASH: I told him my story and he understood an' he said he'd take me on so long as you agreed to it.

PEGGY: I don't agree to it.

TASH: It don't matter cause it's two against one in favor that I could go, so I'm going.

PEGGY: Me and my unborn baby said no.

TASH: That's two against two.

PEGGY: I'm older so you lose.

TASH: Unfair!

PEGGY: Get the hell out of my bedroom and if you say a word I will beat you down.

TASH: Peggy.

PEGGY: No!

TASH: Peggy, don't you see where my future's heading? You know how terrible it is here. I can't do another day here in this place without thinking I'm going to lose my mind. If you leave, if you just get up and abandon me and walk on out of here, I'm going to grow up like all the others and that frightens me, it frightens me to death! A person deserves a chance, even if it's only a single chance at something greater than themselves. I want to come with you to New York, I can't be that person that watched a dream go by when it presented itself to me. Don't you understand? Peggy? Do you see me living here, in this town forever? Is that where you see my future? I'll never make it out if I don't leave tonight. If I don't leave with you tonight, I'll live out my life regretting it, it'll haunt me, it'll creep up on me at night and turn my thoughts into nightmares, don't look away Peg! I'm certain this is the right choice, I won't be a burden to you or Billy, promise I won't, I'll find my ways out there, but, but don't just leave me here, cause you might regret it, too. Don't let me die here Peg. Take me with you, let's get out of this place, we'll do it together, give me that chance.

PEGGY: ...I hate you...

TASH: I don't care.

*They smile.*

PEGGY: You said you packed your bag?

*Tash runs and hugs Peggy tightly.*

Come on now, get the hell off me. No time for that.

TASH: I'll never forget this day for as long as I live.

PEGGY: Get off.

*Tash releases her grip.*

Billy James will be waiting for us at three in the morning sharp. I want you in my room five minutes before three. If you are not here I'm leaving without you, got it?

TASH: (*Ecstatic.*) I can't believe this!

PEGGY: Hey! Did you get my instructions or not?

TASH: Basically, two fifty-five in the morning on the dot I will be entering your room.

PEGGY: That's right.

TASH: Thank you, Peggy. I won't let you down.

PEGGY: Shh. Go. See you soon.

*Tash slips out of the room.*

*Peggy gathers her belongings.*

*A moment goes by and Billy James appears at the window.*

(*to Billy.*) Quiet now.

*Peggy hands her luggage to Billy.*

BILLY: Is Tash coming?

PEGGY: Shhh...keep it low. She changed her mind.

BILLY: She get cold feet?

PEGGY: Something like that. Let's go quick.

*Billy takes the luggage.*

*Peggy takes a last look at the  
room before leaving through the window.*

*Lights slowly fade out.*

**END OF PLAY**