

# ***Sleepless Nights***

*by*

*Joseph Arnone*

Copyright © 2023

[www.MonologueBlogger.com](http://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

BRENDA (Mother): 50's  
CARLOTTA (Daughter): 20's

Place  
Kitchen

Time  
Day

Setting: The play takes place in Carlotta's kitchen. It's a new house that has only recently been built, in a newly developed town. Everything is brand new and used for the very first time. Nothing too lavish, pretty much plain but clean and modern.

At Rise: The play opens to a bright sunny day. Carlotta sits slumped over the Kitchen's island with her mother on the opposite side. Both women sip tea from their mugs.

BRENDA: If that's all you wanted to be, then you would have kept on being it. No sense in lamenting. You have a good life Carla, and looking back doesn't get anyone anywhere.

CARLOTTA: I know, I know.

BRENDA: Most people would break their neck to be in your position. Especially today, with all this inflation and lack of job security. You are doing good considering.

CARLOTTA: I shouldn't complain...

BRENDA: That's right.

CARLOTTA: I wasn't though, I wasn't complaining about my current circumstances. I know I have a good life with Tom. It's a wonderful life.

BRENDA: And you're a good wife, too.

CARLOTTA: I'm okay, let's not exaggerate.

*Carlotta pours more tea in her mother's mug.*

BRENDA: Thank you, dear, that's enough.

CARLOTTA: I still can't help but wonder how life would have been, had I not walked away from music, I was close to even being offered a record deal.

BRENDA: *(Beat.)* Are you happy?

CARLOTTA: Yes.

BRENDA: *(Nonchalantly.)* Why should it matter?

CARLOTTA: I think about it.

BRENDA: What for?

CARLOTTA: I miss playing music, the way it made me feel.

BRENDA: What I recall is that you were always frustrated, angry, or depressed. We were getting worried about you at one point but ever since you met Tom and found a career, you've been different, carefree. More yourself, I'd say.

CARLOTTA: It was creative frustration. That was normal, maybe I was more emotional, but now I feel..like I'm walking in another body sometimes, as if I'm watching myself, and sometimes, when I have a moment to myself, I don't like who I'm seeing, becoming.

BRENDA: Can't tell you how many sleepless nights you'd given me. Whenever you'd call I had to be your therapist..sometimes I'd dread you phoning, forgive me but it's true. That's what I remember most during those years.

CARLOTTA: What about the music?

BRENDA: MUSIC?

CARLOTTA: MY music!

BRENDA: ...What about it?

CARLOTTA: Never mind.

BRENDA: What?

CARLOTTA: I asked you a question and you...(Sighs.)

BRENDA: About your music...

CARLOTTA: Yes.

BRENDA: What do you want me to say Carlotta?

CARLOTTA: Did you like any of it?

BRENDA: Of course I did, but -

CARLOTTA: Why didn't you ever tell me?

BRENDA: Sure I did.

CARLOTTA: No. You never did. Not once. I had some of the most gifted composers telling me they loved my work but you, you never once encouraged my playing!

BRENDA: Who paid for your tutoring?

CARLOTTA: Dad!

BRENDA: Right. Well, it was OUR decision.

CARLOTTA: I had to beg and plead.

BRENDA: It wasn't my fault the Academy rejected you.

CARLOTTA: That's cause...you don't understand the process.

BRENDA: What process is that? You auditioned and they said no. What more of a process is there than that?

CARLOTTA: That's not it.

BRENDA: Let's not-

CARLOTTA: Sometimes you have to audition more than once!

BRENDA: Is that so? Glenda's kid got in.

CARLOTTA: Who the hell is Glenda?

BRENDA: Not Glenda, Geraldine. Geraldine's daughter, whatever the hell her name is, SHE got in.

CARLOTTA: *That* girl?

BRENDA: I remember. For the violin! She was accepted on her violin playing skills, as I recall.

CARLOTTA: What do you want me to say?

BRENDA: Nothing, I'm just telling you.

CARLOTTA: WHAT are you telling me exactly?

BRENDA: Why did she get in and you didn't?

CARLOTTA: Maybe because she had been playing the violin since she was two years old, and maybe because her family has connections.

BRENDA: Connections? What sort of connections are you referring to?

CARLOTTA: Doesn't matter. My point is that she was an easy fit. I'm an outsider. Get it?

BRENDA: That is why you didn't receive acceptance?

CARLOTTA: You and Dad never understood music or really looked into the lives of other musicians. And you don't understand how those schools do things.

BRENDA: What difference does it all make?

CARLOTTA: I was invited to audition again! They told me to come back the following semester to try again.

BRENDA: And did you?

CARLOTTA: NO!

BRENDA: I didn't come all this way for us to argue.

CARLOTTA: We're not arguing.

BRENDA: See what happens when we visit the past?

CARLOTTA: I really wish you'd stop saying that, Mom.

BRENDA: We can't change the past.

CARLOTTA: I know we can't change the past, Mother. I know we can't change the *past!* But it haunts me! Don't you get it? Don't you listen? I'm trying to talk to you-to make some sense out of it-and you wave me off each time I'm trying to tell you anything! Pushing it under the rug won't help! I'm not satisfied! Fulfilled! Whatever the hell I'm trying to tell you, I'm not *complete*. I feel cut off from who I am, like I've been in mourning for someone who's slowly dying but is still there.

Alright, I'm happy with Tom, but that's all you seem to care about, me and Tom, Tom and me! Tom, Tom, Tom! What about my life? What about me and who I am? I invested so much of myself into music, and I was getting somewhere with it all, I was *good*, I would have gotten accepted into the damn Academy had I auditioned once more! YES, for goodness sake, I am happy I met Tom, but that doesn't mean I should have forgotten myself!

You never cared; you've cared but you never REALLY cared. As long as everything looks fine on the outside, that is enough for you and Dad. But it isn't fine and I'm telling you how I've been feeling for the longest time. With you, it's always about marriage, "When's the big fat wedding? Where's the property? Babies?" and everything else that nauseates me. But, what about me? What about ME and who I am and wish to be? Have you ever, in all your life, thought about that?

BRENDA: (*Dolefully.*) I want you to be happy. Back then you were never happy.

CARLOTTA: I was happy, you just, didn't see it.

BRENDA: You had a funny way of showing it.

CARLOTTA: Have you ever really listened to my music, the songs I'd send you? Did you ever listen to any of them?

BRENDA: I've listened to each and every song you've ever sent to me.

CARLOTTA: Why was it always a half-hearted response? Or if you ever did give a response, it was always filled with criticism-all the things that were wrong with what you heard. I wasn't looking for compliments, not that you would ever give me one-but I was looking for-I don't know-something.

BRENDA: Had I given you more of that..what then?

CARLOTTA: Not sure.

BRENDA: What do you think would have happened then?

CARLOTTA: Maybe I would have intensified my focus.

BRENDA: It should have already been in you.

CARLOTTA: It is in me!

BRENDA: Maybe I should get going.

CARLOTTA: No. Stay. I thought we could just talk for once.

BRENDA: This isn't talking, you're shouting at me and blaming me.

CARLOTTA: I don't want to shout and I don't blame you for anything, but I can't ignore this anymore.

BRENDA: You know, I came all this way; you seemed so happy over the phone this past week, like you needed to tell me something and all the while I was imagining some form of good news, like maybe you were pregnant-

CARLOTTA: Oh, there's no getting through to you-

BRENDA: I know, it's terrible for me to wish to be a Grandmother, isn't it?

CARLOTTA: Isn't there anything else you wish to do with your free time? Didn't you spend enough of those years raising me?

BRENDA: There were things I wanted to do. But, after your father passed...I've been...if there is one thing left that I would wish for, it would be to see you have a family of your own...it's the most rewarding, most fulfilling thing you could ever have but instead you belittle me and hurt me, making me out to be a mother who was never truly there for you and I've ALWAYS BEEN THERE! I was so looking forward to this day cause WHO ELSE do I have?

CARLOTTA: Mom!

BRENDA: No! I'm leaving!

CARLOTTA: MOM, WAIT!

BRENDA: I was a good mother to you, Carlotta, and I STILL am a good mother, and maybe I don't understand every little thing that goes on inside that brain of yours, but I know my daughter. I've stood by your side for whatever decisions you've made in your life, whether I've agreed with them or not. I've made room for you to be your own woman. You tell me, years later, that you still want to WHAT, be a pianist-is that it? You wish to go back to playing the piano? THEN GO! DO IT! Do it! I will not argue with you. If that's what you feel you need to do, Carla, then you better do it, and you better go all the way this time. (Pause.) All the way!



CARLOTTA: Don't leave all upset. I worry about you driving.

BRENDA: It's getting; late and I...I.

*Carlotta puts her arms around her mother.*

*Both women hold one another.*

**END OF PLAY**