

WOMEN'S MONOLOGUE'S

Bargaining

by Kellie Powell

Hannah: Ryan, there's something I have to tell you. (*Pause.*) I was born in 1931. I never lied to you, I *am* 23. But I've been 23 since the year 1954.

I know, I know. It's impossible, right? No one lives forever? But, sometimes they do. In 1953, I got married. A few weeks after the wedding, I suddenly fell ill. My husband took me to a hospital. I was there for almost a week. I was in so much pain. And no one could say for sure what was wrong. One night, in the hospital, a stranger came to see me. He told me, "Janie, you're going to die tomorrow." That was my name then, the name I was born with.

This man, the stranger, he offered me a chance to live forever. He said, "You can die tomorrow, or you can live forever. Stay young forever." Well, of course my first thought was, the devil has come to tempt me. He wasn't the devil. And of course, I don't believe in the devil anymore.

There are powerful beings on this earth, but man created Satan. And God, for that matter. My point is, this man offered me a chance to live. And I took it.

I will live forever. I will never age. I cannot be harmed, not physically. I can't be hurt by bullets, or knives, or fire, or even explosions. I can't be hurt by diseases - in fact, I can't even catch a cold. When my husband was 45, he died in a car accident. At his funeral, the stranger came to see me again. He asked me if I wanted to... give up my gift, and... die. I thought about it. But I said, no. I wasn't ready. I knew there was more for me. I have centuries and centuries ahead of me. These first hundred years... are like a drop in the ocean...

My husband never knew about me, and he didn't have a choice. I don't want to go through that again. I don't want to fall in love again for twenty years. Twenty years is... gone in the blink of an eye. I'm looking for someone to love *forever*. Most people, when they say forever, they mean... well, they don't *really* mean forever. But I do. I'm in love with you, Ryan. And I'm asking you to share forever with me.

The Hours (2002) by David Hare

Virginia: Why Mr. Woolf, what an unexpected pleasure. You were working in the garden, I didn't wish to disturb you. I went for a walk.

I've endured this custody. I've endured this imprisonment. I am attended by doctors.

Everywhere. I am attended by doctors who inform me of my own interests. They do not speak for my interests. My life has been stolen from me. I'm living in a town I have no wish to live in.

I'm living a life I have no wish to live. How did this happen? It is time for us to move back to London. I miss London. I miss London life. I'm dying in this town.

I wrestle alone in the dark, in the deep dark, and only I can know. Only I can understand my own condition. You live with the threat you tell me, you live with the threat of my extinction? Leonard, I live with it too. This is my right. Tis the right of every human being. I choose not the suffocating anesthetic of the suburbs, but the violent jolt of the capital. That is my choice. The meanest patient, yes even the very lowest is allowed some say in the matter of her own prescription. Thereby she defines her humanity.

I wish for your sake Leonard I could be happy in this quietness. But if it is a choice between Richmond and death, I choose death.

You cannot find peace by avoiding life, Leonard.

FROM:

Suddenly Last Summer

(A young psychiatrist has been questioning Catherine about the events on the evening of her cousin Sebastian's death.)

CATHERINE

At a Mardi Gras ball some—some boy that took me to it got too drunk to stand up! I wanted to go home. My coat was in the cloakroom, they couldn't find the check for it in his pockets. I said, "Oh hell, let it go!"—I started for a taxi. Somebody took my arm and said, "I'll drive you home." He took off his coat as we left the hotel and put it over my shoulders, and then I looked at him and—I don't think I'd ever even seem him before then, really!—He took me home in his car but took me another place first. We stopped near the Duelling Oaks at the end of Esplanade Street...Stopped!—I said, "What for?"—He didn't answer, just struck a match in the car to light a cigarette in the car and I looked at him in the car and I knew "what for!"—I think I got out of the car before he got out of the car, and we walked through the wet grass to the great misty oaks as if somebody was calling us for help there! He took me home and said an awful thing to me. "We'd better forget it," he said, "my wife's expecting a child and—" I just entered the house and sat there thinking a little and then I suddenly called a taxi and went right back to the Roosevelt Hotel ballroom. The ball was still going on. I thought I'd gone back to pick up my borrowed coat but that wasn't what I'd gone back for. I'd gone back to make a scene on the floor of the ballroom, yes, I didn't stop at the cloakroom to pick up Aunt Violet's old mink stole, no, I rushed into the ballroom and spotted him on the floor and ran up to him and beat him as hard as I could in the face and chest with my fists 'till—Cousin Sebastian took me away.

GLASS MENAGERIE

AMANDA (to Laura)

I went to the typing instructor and introduced myself as your mother. She didn't know who you were. Wingfield, she said. We don't have any such student enrolled at the school! I assured her she did, that you had been going to classes since early in January. 'I wonder,' she said, 'if you could be talking about that terribly shy little girl who dropped out of school after only a few days' attendance?' 'No,' I said, 'Laura, my daughter, has been going to school every day for the past six weeks!' 'Excuse me,' she said. She took the attendance book out and there was your name, unmistakably printed, and all the dates you were absent until they decided that you had dropped out of school. I still said, 'No, there must have been some mistake! There must have been some mix-up in the records!' And she said, 'No – I remember her perfectly now. Her hands shook so that she couldn't hit the right keys! The first time we gave a speed-test, she broke down completely - was sick at the stomach and almost had to be carried into the wash-room! After that morning she never showed up any more. We phoned the house but never got any answer' – while I was working at Famous and Barr, I suppose, demonstrating those – Oh! I felt so weak I could barely keep on my feet! I had to sit down while they got me a glass of water! Fifty dollars' tuition, all of our plans – my hopes and ambition for you – just gone up the spout, just gone up the spout like that.

AMANDA (later, same scene)

So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay home and watch the parades go by? Amuse ourselves with the glass menagerie, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonograph records your father left as a painful reminder of him? We won't have a business career – we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion! What is there left but dependency all our lives? I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren't prepared to occupy a position. I've seen such pitiful cases in the South – barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife! – stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room – encouraged by one in-law to visit another – little birdlike women without any nest – eating the crust of humility all their life! Is that the future that we've mapped out for ourselves? I swear it's the only alternative I can think of! It isn't a very pleasant alternative, is it? Of course – some girls do marry!

LAURA:

No, Mom, please! I have to say this. I can't go outside these walls. There's just too much pain! I can feel everyone staring at me—staring at this. (*She points to the braced leg.*) The noise it makes, it's just so loud! That's why I dropped out of high school! I felt everyone's eyes staring at me, heard all the giggles they tried to suppress as I clomped and limped down the hall. Especially when I would enter the choir room! Jim would never want to be around me again. Sure, we talked sometimes, but he wouldn't want to be around me any more than those few occasions—not around the limping girl who makes such a racket! Nobody would want to be near me. So I tuned out from the rest of the world before it could cause me any more pain than I have already suffered. And it seems that whatever crippled my leg—

—yes, Mom, you might as well admit that I'm crippled!—has crippled the rest of my being throughout time. It seems I just got worse and worse at school. And then at business college, in that confined typing room, that quick clacking of keyboards surrounded me as I stumbled and fat-fingered all the letters. It felt as if the professor was breathing down my neck, silently mocking me as I continued to fail.

Mom, secluded from the world in this home listening to phonograph records and dusting my glass collection—this is where I belong! I fail everywhere else in the outside world. Here, there's nothing to fail at! I'll never succeed at finding a husband or a job, so I might as well give up trying now and just be content in my bubble with at least having no additional failure for the rest of my life! I can't see Jim! (*Tears are welling in her eyes.*) It would only result in the ultimate failure—rejection from the only person I have ever loved! Mom, I can't! Just have dinner without me.

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

(Blanche recounts the tragic death of her late husband.

F. **BLANCHE** He was a boy, just a boy, when I was a very young girl. When I was sixteen, I made the discovery – love.

All at once and much, much too completely. It was like you suddenly turned a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow, that's how it struck the world for me. But I was unlucky. Deluded. There was something different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's, although he wasn't the least bit effeminate looking – still – that thing was there ... He came to me for help. I didn't know that. I didn't find out anything till after our marriage when we'd run away and come back and all I knew was I'd failed him in some

mysterious way and wasn't able to give the help he needed but couldn't speak of! He was in the quicksands and clutching at me – but I wasn't holding him out, I was slipping in with him! I didn't know that. I didn't know anything except I loved him unendurably but without being able to help him or help myself. Then I found out. In the worst of all possible ways. By coming suddenly into a room that I thought was empty -- which wasn't empty, but had two people in it ... the boy I had married and an older man who had been his friend for years ...Afterward we pretended that nothing had been discovered. Yes, the three of us drove out to Moon Lake Casino, very drunk and laughing all the way. We danced the Varsouviana! Suddenly, in the middle of the dance the boy I had married broke away from me and ran out of the casino. A few moments later – a shot! I ran out – all did! – all ran and gathered about the terrible thing at the edge of the lake! I couldn't get near for the crowding. Then somebody caught my arm. "Don't go any closer! Come back! You don't want to see!" See? See what! Then I heard voices say – Allan! Allan! The Grey boy! He'd stuck the revolver into his mouth, and fired – so that the back of his head had been – blown away! It was because – on the dance floor – unable to stop myself – I'd suddenly said – "I saw! I know! You disgust me ..." And then the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has there been any light that's stronger than this – kitchen – candle ...

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