

****Option 4 - Edith Monologue****

18

Mandy Conner

~~FRANK. Shut yer crazy mouth, Alvis.~~

~~ALVIS. Yer first wife's dead. Yer kids are dyin'. Yer stupid cotton farm's dead, too. Boy, have you got th' golden touch, Pa.~~

~~FRANK. (Defending his family.) GET OUTTA HERE!! GONE ON!! Yer crazier than a bedbug.~~

~~CUFFY. Both o' ya need t' calm down! This ain't th' place for this~~

~~(To the family and friends still remaining)~~

~~'Cause us, folks.~~

~~ALVIS. (Steps up on the onket) Shows over, folks! Nothin' 'toss here!~~

~~(Others leave.)~~

~~EDITH. Alvis! Look at what yer doin'! (Completely grief-stricken and broken.) Wherever you been hidin', please juss go back there an' save us another heartache.~~

~~ALVIS. What!? What is it?? You don't WANT me here, Eeecedith? You ain't my ma but I AM part o' this family! Or have ya already buried me, too?~~

~~(Realizing where he is and the gravity of his outburst.)~~

~~Oh. Ohhhh. Ma. Oh Ma, I'm so, so sorry. I didn't mean t'~~

~~LLOYD — Leave her be~~

~~ALVIS. (Struggling to understand himself) — But I didn't know — (Tapping his head) They're INSIDE — They told me t'—ya know—oh no they were tellin' me t'—ya hafta know it wasn't me — they said~~

~~LLOYD. — Alvis, you're my boy — but you can't be here no more — You gotta go, son.~~

~~(Bent.)~~

~~Cuffy, can you — ?~~

~~ALVIS. Ma, I AM sorry. Gary Ray didn't deserve this. Neither d'you.~~

~~(CUFFY gently takes ALVIS away. LLOYD stands for a moment with EDITH.)~~

~~LLOYD. Edith, I'm gonna head back to th' house. Winnie and Lula brought over some supper. (Lovingly) Take yer time.~~

~~(He kisses her on the forehead and exits.)~~

START

EDITH. (Furious tears, looking to the heavens.) You. You did this . . . an' I . . . I can't fix it. Look at this place. Dirt an' dirt an' dirt fer miles. Where is th' hope ya promise? Wadin' through knee-high drifts a' grit an' sand . . . an' filth . . . an' death. Fillin' up th' house. Rattlin'

th' windows. Seepin' under th' door an' poisonin' th' lungs a' my boy! He didn't do NOTHIN' t' deserve this. Nothin'. Nothin' but . . . try t' breathe an' paint 'n' love his momma an' his family. An' you juss SNATCHED him right out from under us. (*Wrecked with guilt:*) Oh, God. What did I do? I couldn't save my boy. I try so hard t' raise these children th' right way an' teach 'em th' right things an' how t' know right from wrong, but I couldn't stop 'im from bein' sick . . . so . . . so sick. But you . . . you could'a. You could'a stopped this whole thing. But ya didn't.

(*Beat.*)

Ya didn't.

END

Scene Six

(*Lights fade to blue and the ENSEMBLE's hymnal hums transition us to the sounds of sweeping. EDITH and DOOCHIE are working the midnight shift cleaning at the old Post Office. They clean in silence a bit. EDITH still obviously wrapped in grief and anger over the death of Rayboy. DOOCHIE, unsure of what to say, allows the silence.*)

DOOCHIE. (*Deciding to break the silence:*) It's gonna be a long night at th' ole P. O. if ya don't talk t'me.

EDITH. (*Thinking carefully about her words, but deciding upon . . .*) I ain't got nothin' t'say.

DOOCHIE. How long've you known me, Edith? (*Silence.*) How long?

EDITH. Since we was in school.

DOOCHIE. Since we was nine years old t' be exact.

(*Sits and pulls out her lunch.*)

We have been through a whole lot in those twenty-six years. Hadn't we?

EDITH. But it's not—

DOOCHIE. Sit down a minute.

EDITH. Doochie, we got too much t' do. Th' farm's almost a complete loss an' I gotta—

DOOCHIE. —We'll git it done. Now, sit.

(*EDITH sits beside her and crumples on to DOOCHIE's shoulder.*)