

"Wallflower House"

A One Act Play by Grant Sutor Vuille

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"WALLFLOWER HOUSE"

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Characters:

Victoria – Young Woman, twenty one years old.

Ellory – Young man, also twenty one years old.

Synopsis: Victoria, a young woman on her twenty first birthday, suffers from agoraphobia. Her friend Ellory has been looking out for her since their high school days together. He supports her by doing errands for her for which she compensates him. He cares for her deeply and is probably the only one who understands her plight. He is instrumental in helping her to accept her condition and to come to grips with the recovery process.

Time: A beautiful summer day in 1989.

Place: Victoria's childhood home.

(It is the year 1989. We are in VICTORIA'S LIVING ROOM. This is her twenty first birthday. The WALLS have a MULTICOLORED FLOWER DESIGN on them. SUNSHINE bursts through a WINDOW. Her RADIO plays only CLASSICAL MUSIC. The LAWN OUTSIDE the WINDOW is being mowed by a shirtless YOUNG MAN her age. The MOWER sputters and pops. She looks out the WINDOW and when she hears the MOWER shutting off, she goes to the COUCH to read a BOOK. She makes room for herself next to a DOZEN STUFFED ANIMALS and DOLLS)

VICTORIA

Now I want you all on the best behavior you can--sorry, your best behavior. I can hear that Ellory has just finished the lawn and when he comes in I don't want anyone being rude to him because he's half naked.

(She picks up her BOOK just as ELLORY knocks)

ELLORY

(Shouting to be heard OUTSIDE the DOOR)

Lawn's done!

VICTORIA

(Shouting also)

Thank you Ellory, you can come in if you like. I have some other things I need you to do for me today.

(ELLORY ENTERS, sweating and shirtless. He blots his forehead and chest with his SHIRT, then tosses it to the floor by the DOOR. He is very handsome and well-built and probably only a few months older than her at most)

ELLORY

Happy birthday, Victoria!

(He gives her a SMALL BOUQUET of FLOWERS he picked up when he was outside in her garden)

Today you're officially an adult.

VICTORIA

(Accepting the FLOWERS)

Thanks, you didn't have to. Oh, my, their gorgeous. You're very sweet.

ELLORY

No proper birthday'd be complete without a few flowers--it's no big deal, Victoria. They're yours from the garden I tend for you. I'd like to show you what I've done to it sometimes. Your garden is a showcase for your generous spirit.

VICTORIA

That's sweet. I can see it from the window. I'm very happy with what you've done with it, tending it so prudently.

ELLORY

Yeah, but not all of it.

(Feeling a little awkward)

Excuse my appearance, but it's pretty fuckin' hot outside today. I think I may have gotten a little sun burned.

VICTORIA

I'm sorry--you're dripping sweat all over. Let me get you a towel.

(She EXITS to get a TOWEL from the BATHROOM)

ELLORY

It's okay. Don't bother. I'll cool down faster if I keep my shirt off.

(He paces around like an animal in heat)

Is there anything else you'd like for me to do for you today?

VICTORIA

(RE-ENTERING, she goes to him and dries him off with the TOWEL)

Well, yes, if it's no trouble, I need you to go to the bank for me and then do a little grocery shopping.

ELLORY

Be glad to. Ya know, if ya want, you can come along and I'll treat you to lunch. After all, it's your birthday, and I'm not busy.

VICTORIA

How nice--except I have a lot of reading to do. Tell you what, though, after you get back from the grocery store, I could cook a nice dinner for the two of us to celebrate my twenty first birthday.

(She stops drying him, a little embarrassed to be touching him with the TOWEL. She gives it to him)

I'm sorry, I'll let you finish.

ELLORY

Why'd you stop? That felt good.

VICTORIA

(EXITING to the KITCHEN)

Let me get that grocery list.

(ELLORY goes to the COUCH still blotting himself, makes room for himself by moving some of the STUFFED ANIMALS and DOLLS, and sits down expansively. As he tosses the towel over in the direction of his SHIRT by the DOOR, VICTORIA RE-ENTERS)

ELLORY

I wish you'd change your mind and go out with me. It's been three years since we had a real date.

VICTORIA

(Handing him the LIST)

You know, on second thought, I'm not able to go out. The heat and humidity is just too much for me. I break out in hives, Ellory. The sun bothers me so--it's so bright!

ELLORY

I never believed that one. The sun's too bright? Ha! You won't go out with me at night either. How long is this kind of behavior going to continue? Your neighbors don't know what you look like!

VICTORIA

Are you making fun of me?

ELLORY

No. it's just that...well...sometimes they ask about you.

VICTORIA

Yes you are making fun of me! Just because I don't like the outdoors you think it strange. Like you said, it's a hot day today. You came it here sweating profusely after tending the garden and mowing. The hot weather makes me feel sick inside. I prefer to stay indoors with the air conditioning turned on full blast.

ELLORY

(Not buying it, he takes a deep breath and flexes his muscles slightly)

The outdoors is good for you, Victoria. It's good to exercise and sweat a little. It makes me feel great. Getting outdoors is just what you need. Locking yourself in is not healthy.

VICTORIA

Let's not get into that again. I'm perfectly content as I am. I'm a little set in my ways is all. I choose to stay indoors. I do not trust that I'll be safe.

(Irritated, she becomes a little imperious)

Are you going to the bank for me or not? It'll be closed soon.

ELLORY

So what? I've got your bank card. I'll use that in the machine 'outside' like I always do.

VICTORIA

I prefer you do my business with the tellers. I like them to see who's drawing from my account.

ELLORY

Baby, I'm the only one they've ever seen. They'd think I'm your husband if it wasn't that we don't share the same last name. They probably suspect I'm after your money...and that I'm some kind of gigolo.

VICTORIA

(Sitting at the edge of the sofa)

Oh, no, that will never do. We'll, we'll have to straighten them out about that won't we. I'll call them myself as soon as you leave and explain that you're in my employ tending my garden, and....

ELLORY

...Hold it, hold it, hold it. Why bother? I'm telling you, Victoria, what difference does it make? I don't care what they think of me, and why should you? And you never go out, so you shouldn't care one bit what they think. It's not like they're going to run into you in a nightclub or something, pointing fingers and snickering in your direction.

VICTORIA

But I do care about what people might think of me. We're not married. No telling what crazy things they'd think we're up to. My reputation is important.

ELLORY

Oh, please, Victoria, think about it? So what? They don't know you. Nobody's seen you for years have they?

VICTORIA

No.

(Quietly)

Not since Mommy and Daddies funeral.

(Carefully)

I don't want people getting the wrong idea.

ELLORY

Don't worry. I'm sure anyone who used to know you thought you moved away long ago.

VICTORIA

(Puzzled)

Don't they know that you work for me?

ELLORY

I don't think so. You didn't want me to say anything to anybody, so I haven't. In a way, I'm kind of a loner myself. All my high school buddies went away to college. I lost touch. I'm over here so much, it's like we're married.

VICTORIA

But we're not.

ELLORY

I feel like we are, except for one thing.

VICTORIA

(Embarrassed)

If it's what I think you mean, you--Ellory, you're crushing Sylvia!

(He pulls out a DOLL, SYLVIA, from behind himself and hands it to her)

ELLORY

Sorry. I didn't see her sitting there.

VICTORIA

You should be more careful. You might have hurt her.

(He gets up and goes to the WINDOW)

ELLORY

It's not like she felt anything.

VICTORIA

(Comforting SYLVIA)

No, she's alright. Her feelings are hurt a little. You ought to be more careful, Ellory.

ELLORY

What about my feelings?

VICTORIA

What do you mean? You haven't been hurt, have you?

ELLORY

I mean, I asked you out on your birthday and you turn me down, just like you've done for three years. I've got feelings to hurt, too.

VICTORIA

Please, let's don't talk about that.

ELLORY

I love you, Victoria

VICTORIA

Please stop.

(He changes the RADIO station to ROCK MUSIC. He begins to dance)

ELLORY

I want you to be my wife.

VICTORIA

(Getting up nervously)

Please don't put that station on. I get nervous--it frightens me!

ELLORY

(Going to her)

Dance with me, Victoria.

VICTORIA

I can't. I don't like dancing.

(He takes her in his arms and they dance slowly, sensually. When he begins kissing her on the neck, she breaks away and moves quickly to turn the RADIO off. She breathes heavily and seems shaken up)

ELLORY

Don't stop. Come here. Don't you like me touching you?

VICTORIA

Yes, but it reminds me of the high school prom. I was so happy being with you, but I hate to think how my parents were killed that night while we danced. I don't like to remember.

ELLORY

(Moving to her)

It wasn't your fault. You have to stop blaming yourself. That car accident had nothing to do with you or me. I love you. I told you so that night and I still feel the same way today.

VICTORIA

But you keep asking me to marry you. I don't want marriage.

ELLORY

Why not?

VICTORIA

You know why not.

ELLORY

No, I don't because you think if we marry we'll end up dad like your Mom and Dad. That's a lot of horseshit.

VICTORIA

But they were so happy together. When they died, I died with them.

(He takes her in his arms)

ELLORY

(Holding her close)

But you're not dead, because I'm here to protect you. Oh, darling, I want you so much.

(He begins kissing her but she breaks away and goes to her STUFFED ANIMALS on the COUCH. She picks up a LARGE BEAR and cuddles it)

VICTORIA

You really are overstepping your bounds here, Ellory. May I remind you that you are in my employ.

ELLORY

I make enough for the both of us working in my Dad's auto body shop. I'm a good mechanic. And he thinks I'm nuts hanging around with you. Big fucking deal. It's only a part-time job with you, anyway. I come to see you after work, or sometimes really early in the morning. I bend over backwards to please you.

VICTORIA

That's about the third time you've sworn in my presence. Do it again and I'll discharge you!

ELLORY

Who do you think you are, the Queen of England? You can't dismiss me so easily as you might think. I could walk out of here anytime I wanted and get a job elsewhere, no sweat. And don't think you've been the only chick in my life. A man has urges ya know that gotta be satisfied once in awhile!

VICTORIA

If you're trying to hurt my feelings or make me jealous, then just forget it. I told you long ago I'm not interested in you or anyone else. I'm perfectly content to live here alone by myself.

ELLORY

I'm sorry. I shouldn't get all worked up about this...your feelings count, too. It's hard to explain how I feel about our relationship.

(He goes to the WINDOW)

I'm not trying to hurt you. I get angry because you frustrate me so. It's not healthy for you to shut yourself away from the world. You're a prisoner here in your own house. You depend on me for everything.