

The Misfits, Part II

John Huston, Director (1961)

The group is headed out to Guido's place. The men lead the way in Guido's truck; the women follow in the car that Roslyn has rented. The view of the Nevada countryside is spectacular: rugged mountains under low-hanging clouds.

"Mmm. What is that beautiful smell?" wonders Roslyn. "Smells like green perfume."

"That's sage, darlin'."

"Oh, sure! I never smelled it except in bottles. Gee, it's beautiful here."

Isabelle warns the younger woman, "Look, dear girl, I think I better tell you somethin' about cowboys."

"You really worry about me, don't you?"

"Well, you're too believin'. Cowboys are the last real men left... and they're about as reliable as jack rabbits."

"Is anybody any different? Maybe you're not supposed to believe what people say. Maybe it's not even fair to them."

Meanwhile in the truck, Guido is trying to give Gay the scoop on Roslyn.

"I couldn't hear what he said to her, but it looked like *she* left *him*." Gay doesn't respond. Hat down over his eyes, cigarette dangling from his lips, he seems to have no interest.

Guido tries again, pausing as he searches for the words he needs. "– the husband. She's kinda hard to figure out, you know? One minute she looks kinda dumb and brand-new, like a kid... and the next minute..."

"She sure moves, though, don't she?" he asks with a leer.

"Mmm," grunts Gay. "She's real prime."

The vehicles pull through a gap in a wooden fence and park beside Guido's place, a one-storey house surrounded by trees at the foot of a mountain. Half of the structure is a skeleton of wooden beams, with a chimney.

Guido unlocks his front door.

Once they're in, Roslyn observes, with some excitement, "It isn't finished yet!"

"It's weathertight," Guido reassures her, slapping a wall. "Come on in!"

Guido shows his guests around the house. Roslyn is still wearing the clothes she chose for court, but she's unpinned her hair.

"This is the living room... And this was gonna be another bedroom." He opens the door and the sunlight streams in. The room is just a wooden frame, with a leaning ladder: a testament to the incompleteness of Guido's life.

But Roslyn leans out into the unfinished room and says, "Oh! It's even nicer this way!"

"Here's a picture window," continues Guido. "Take a look at this view!" The others are there too, but he's speaking just to Roslyn. But the window is opaque with dirt. He tries to clean it off with his hand,

but it's no use. He looks back at Roslyn, embarrassed. In another lovely shot, she fills half the frame and the rest is rectangles of light, with Guido's profile and imploring fingers.

Thinking fast, Guido goes to the door and opens it, revealing a panorama of rolling mountain range and wilderness.

"Take a look at that!" he boasts. To appreciate it, they just have to look past the rickety wooden fence and the brush and junk in the yard.

As Isabelle casts a wary gaze at Guido, Roslyn exclaims, in awe: "Gee, it goes on forever."

Reputation restored, Guido continues the tour. By the time he finishes, it is just him and Roslyn.

"Here's our... This was our bedroom. My wife. She died here."

There's a double bed covered with a patterned bedspread and a lamp on a bedside table. On the wall behind the bed hangs a photograph in an elaborate frame, with a rosary draped over it. It's Guido and his wife on their wedding day.

The bedroom is the only thing we've seen in the house that doesn't look improvised or abandoned.

"I'm... sorry," murmurs Roslyn uneasily.

Guido explains what happened. "She was due to have a baby. I was up working on the roof... and she screamed... and that was that." As he relives this memory, his face is a mask of grief.

"Couldn't you call a doctor?" Roslyn turns away from him, perhaps to hide her own distress.

Incongruously, he puts his arm across the doorway behind her.

"She didn't seem to be that sick," he defends himself. "Then I got a flat. I didn't have a spare. Everything just happened wrong. It'll do that sometimes."

"Yeah, I know," Roslyn sympathizes and pauses for a moment.. "Uh, you couldn't live here anymore, huh?"

"We knew each other since we were seven years old, see?" The camera cuts to a close-up of the wedding photograph.

"You ought to find yourself another girl," advises Roslyn.

"I don't know. Me with anybody else, it seems impossible, you know? She wasn't like any other women. Stood behind me a hundred per cent, uncomplaining as a tree."

"Maybe that's what killed her. I mean, a little complaining helps sometimes, maybe." There's an edge of desperation in Roslyn's voice. She turns to leave the room, but Guido's arm is blocking her way. And he looks angry. She has to push him aside to get out.

Putting on a cheerful voice, she calls into the other room, "Hey, lz, isn't this a beautiful place here?"

"Yeah. It'd be just perfect if somebody'd go out to the car and bring in that bottle of whiskey I bought. With my own money."

"Hey, that's right!" Guido claps his hands.

"And bring that bag of groceries," she orders. "Maybe somebody wants a sandwich."

Guido goes out to the car and Isabelle goes to the kitchen, leaving Roslyn and Gay alone.

She stands at the window.

"Too rough for you, Roslyn?" he asks.

"I don't mind that."

“You should've seen his wife. She helped pour cement and knocked in nails. She was a real good sport,” says Gay.

Roslyn turns to face him. “Now she's dead because he didn't have a spare tire.”

“Well, that's the way it goes,” he says philosophically, adding, “It goes the other way too, though. Don't forget that!”

Roslyn just gazes back at him, sadness in her eyes.

Suddenly Guido is back. “It's sure nice to see people in here! Come on, let's have a drink!”

As they savor their whisky, there's some discussion about whether the women would like to stay a while.

Gay jumps up and says to Roslyn, “Come on. There's no better place to be. And you couldn't find better company, either.”

“All right,” she agrees.

“That's it, sport!”

Guido makes everyone feel welcome. “Come on, sit down, everybody. Let's get comfortable. I'm sure glad you like this place.”

They chat for a while and then Roslyn asks Guido, “Have you got a radio or a phonograph? Maybe we'll have some music.”

Guido frowns. “There's no electricity.”

“The car radio!” suggests Roslyn.

Gay snaps his fingers. “Now who'd have thought of that?”

“You always get an idea, don't you?” says Guido. He goes to bring the car around and Isabelle heads for the kitchen.

These men don't seem to have much sparkle in their lives and Roslyn has awed them with a simple idea.

Gay pours Roslyn another drink. “I hope you're gonna stay on here. Any chance?”

“Why? What difference would it make?”

“Might make all the difference in the world as time goes by,” he says with a smile. Just then, the music comes on. Gay invites Roslyn to dance.

They're dancing cheek to cheek when Guido comes back. He's not happy to see the girl he's had his eye on in the arms of his friend.

Isabelle compliments Gay: “Hey, that's pretty good dancin', cowboy!”

But Guido challenges him, “What are you doin'?”

“She used to teach dancin',” Isabelle explains. “You know? Before she was married.”

Guido steps over to claim a dance with Roslyn, demanding fiercely, “How about the landlord? Move over, boy, huh?”

“Just watch out for those pretty little feet!” warns Gay.

“Don't worry, she knows how to get out of the way,” Guido replies, then tells Roslyn, “Let's go!”

The two of them dance, with Guido showing some prowess.

Gay is impressed and seems to enjoy watching them, not the least bit jealous. “Where'd you learn that, pilot?” He remarks to Isabelle, “I never knew him to dance at all.”

The song ends but, as the next one comes on, Guido takes off his hat, tosses it aside and says to Roslyn, “Come on, honey. This is a good one. I haven't danced like this in years.”

“Didn't your wife dance?” she asks.

“Not like you. She had no gracefulness.”

“Why didn't you teach her to be graceful?”

“You can't learn that.”

“How do you know? I mean, how do you know? You see, she died, and she didn't know how you can dance. To a certain extent, maybe you were strangers.”

Guido takes offense now. “I don't feel like discussing my wife.”

Gay observes them, but says nothing.

“Don't be mad. I only meant that if you loved her, you could've taught her anything. Because... we're all dying, aren't we? All the husbands and all the wives. Every minute. And we're not teaching each other what we really know, are we?” She's grabbing desperately onto the shoulder of his jacket and seems to be getting upset, but then she snaps out of it. “Guido, you're a nice man. Smile. Come on,” she cajoles him.

Later, in the coming darkness, we see Guido stumble out of the house, obviously drunk. Next comes Roslyn, quite drunk indeed. She falls off the porch – which has no step – and right into Guido's arms.

He tries to kiss her forcibly but, out of it as she is, she knows she does not want that. Grunting and panting, she tries to push him away with one hand and covers his mouth with the other. On the porch behind them, Gay stands in the dark, looking at them disapprovingly.

Finally, Roslyn does break away. Giggling, she pushes Guido away and runs out into the yard, leaving the men staring after her.

Isabelle joins the men to watch Roslyn dance in the yard. It's nothing like her dances with Gay and Guido earlier. It's not a performance. This is all for her; she seems to be a part of nature as she drifts and turns. She ends up clinging to a tree. Its leafy branches fill the top of the frame. At the bottom, beneath her feet, scattered leaves catch sparks of moonlight.

Gay goes to her. He puts his big hand gently over her smaller one and eases her away from the tree, saying, “We'd better get you home, girl.”

She falls into his arms, murmuring, “You were worried about me. How sweet.”

“Just wanna keep you all in one pretty piece.”

“Would *you* have had a spare tire?” she asks him.

Isabelle calls from off-screen, “Somebody'd better drive her.”

Guido is willing to let her go. Right now she seems like a little too much for him. “Go ahead,” he says to Gay. “I'll take the truck.”

But Roslyn doesn't hold anything against him. On the contrary: she feels sorry for him. “Oh, lz, don't leave poor Guido alone.”

Gay guides Roslyn to the rental car, calls the dog, who jumps into the back seat, and they are off.

As they speed down the road, Roslyn sleeps against Gay's shoulder. He gazes down at her with quiet pleasure.

He stops the car and she slowly wakes up, opening her eyes.

"You're a real beautiful woman. It's almost kind of an honor sittin' next to you. You just shine in my eyes. That's my true feelin', Roslyn."

She looks up at him silently.

"What makes you so sad? I think you're the saddest girl I ever met."

"You're the first man that ever said that. I'm usually told how happy I am."

"That's because you make a man feel happy."

He leans towards her for a kiss, but she stops him.

"I don't feel that way about you, Gay."

He pauses for a moment, frowning, then smiles and tells her, "Well, don't get discouraged, girl. You might! Look, why don't you try it out here for a while, see what happens? You know, sometimes when a person don't know what to do... the best thing is to just stand still. I'll guarantee you'll have something out here you wouldn't find on every corner."

Eyebrows raised, he continues, "I, uh... I may not amount to much in some ways, but I am a good friend."

At last he gets a smile from her. "Thanks."

He starts the car. "Let me take you back and get your things. Try it for a while, see what happens."

They drive on for a while. Then Roslyn asks, "Don't you have a home?"

He pauses for a moment, then answers, "Sure. Never was a better one, either."

"Where is it?" she asks.

He grins. "Right here." He nods his head towards the land around them: scrub, bare ground, and distant mountains. She looks out the window, deep in thought, then glances at him. The screen goes dark.