

The Misfits, Part III

John Huston, Director (1961)

We are back at Guido's place. We see the low house framed between the big tree that Roslyn hugged after her drunken dance and the chimney rising through the skeleton of wooden beams. Gay is working in the yard, bent over his hoe. It's a bright, sunny day.

Gay goes into the bedroom where Roslyn is asleep and looks at her for a moment, admiring her. Then he sits on the bed and caresses her arm gently to wake her up.

He leans down and kisses her and she smiles at him happily. "Come on," he says. "I got a surprise for you." She smiles again and stretches. So she did come to feel "that way" about Gay.

In the kitchen, Gay whistles lightheartedly as he shakes something in a frying pan. Roslyn walks in, tying her bathrobe. She stops for a moment and says in amazement, "You cooked breakfast! Here, let me."

"No, no, no. You sit down and enjoy yourself. Just this once."

"You do this often?" she asks, as she sits down at the table by the open window.

He sets the plates of eggs on the table for them and swings his leg over the chair to sit. "Uh-uh. First time for me."

"Really and truly?"

"Mm-hm," he confirms as he pours their coffee.

"Mm. Smells delicious," she says, digging in.

"Hey, you really go all out, don't you? Even the way you eat. I like that."

"You like me, huh?" she asks, leaning towards him with a delighted look.

They chat for a little while, getting to know each other some more.

Suddenly Roslyn says, "Listen, if you wanna go somewhere, I don't mind being alone."

"Do I look like I wanna leave?"

"I just want you to do what you feel like."

"No. It makes me feel peaceful."

"Did you ever think of getting married again?" Roslyn asks.

"Yeah. I've thought about it a lot of times," he begins. "But never in daylight." She laughs at the joke.

"You get lonesome for your children?" she wants to know.

"Oh, I see 'em now and then," he says cheerfully. "They come whenever I'm in a rodeo. I'm a pretty good roper!" he boasts. Then he gets serious and confesses, "I get lonesome, sure."

With a pensive look, Roslyn asks, "What happened? Did you just stop loving your wife, Gay?"

"Well, I come home one night and she's all wrapped up in a car with a fella. Turned out to be an old friend. A cousin of mine, as a matter of fact."

"Oh. You never had any idea, huh?"

“No. You know, in those days I thought you got married and that was it. But nothin' is it. Not forever.”
“That's what I can't get used to. Everything keeps changing.”
“I'll tell you this, though. I wouldn't know how to say goodbye to you, Roslyn. It surprises me!”

Gay changes the subject, but only slightly. He looks around the room. “There's a lot to be done around this place. If we were gonna stay awhile.”

In answer, Roslyn suggests, “Let's go out in the sunshine. Come on!” She reaches across the table for his hand and leads him out.

They stand in the doorway. Roslyn looks out at the vast expanse of land, but Gay looks over at her, his face radiant with happiness. He holds her hand to his chest.

She has a proposal for him: “Let's just live like you said in the bar. I don't know where I am yet.” She sounds desperate.

But then something catches her eye, something to make the place a little more of a home. She points to some cinder blocks and says excitedly, “Hey! Couldn't we use them for a step?” On her first day at the house, we saw her stumble drunkenly out of the front door for want of a step.

“Well, we just might at that.” Gay goes over, picks up the heavy cement blocks and carries them over to the entrance. “There you are.”

“Let me try it. It's perfect. I can go in... and I can come out.” She steps in and out of the house, back and forth, repeating with elation, “Go in... and I can come out. Go in... and I can come out.”

In the next scene, Gay sits on a beach, a tiny figure in a vast landscape, the lake rimmed with mountains and sky. A closeup shows him fully dressed, cowboy boots and all, his arms folded on his knees. He's watching Roslyn frolic in the water with Dooley. She runs out of the water, her hair in braids like a little girl. She tumbles into Gay's arms, squealing with delight, as the dog bounds around them.

A dissolve brings us back to Guido's house. Gay is out working in the garden again. A soft roar from overhead brings him to standing. Roslyn comes out of the house to see what's making the noise. She's wearing a white sleeveless blouse and blue jeans, her hair in braids. Gazing at the sky, she and Gay finally spot Guido's small plane.

“What's he doing?” asks Roslyn.

“I guess he's just sayin' hello.”

“What does he do? Just fly around?”

“Could be goin' for eagles. Now and again the ranchers hire Guido to shoot eagles.”

“Why?”

“Well, they kill a lot of lambs. He gets fifty bucks a bird.”

Roslyn looks down and says nothing.

Kneeling, Roslyn examines the lettuce with great attention and exclaims, “I never really saw anything grow before. How tiny those seeds were!”

But Gay notices something different. “Hey... What have we here now? Well... Just plain old rabbit!” he says with consternation.

And then with determination: "I'm gonna get him." Gay stands.

"It's just one lettuce," protests Roslyn, looking up at him wistfully. "Maybe he won't do it anymore."

Gay strides into the house to get his rifle. "No, ma'am! It's them or us! There won't be a thing left inside of a week."

"Couldn't you wait and see?" Roslyn begs. "I can't stand to see anything killed."

"Honey, it's only a rabbit."

"But it doesn't know any better, does it?"

"Go on inside and let me handle this."

"I know you worked hard..."

"You're darn right!" he retorts. "I never worked that hard for anybody. And I didn't do it for some bug-eyed rabbit." He did it for her, actually.

"Gay, please."

"Honey, will you go on inside now? And stop bein' silly!"

"I'm not being silly. You don't respect what I feel," she insists sadly, turning her back to him. Then she turns to face him and yells angrily, "And I don't care about the lettuce!"

"I care about it! And how about havin' some respect for me?"

They're interrupted by visitors. Roslyn cries out, "Oh, Guido and Isabelle!" and bounds down the new cinder-block step. The four friends embrace and exchange greetings.

"Boy, am I in the right place?" Guido asks, impressed by the work that Gay and Roslyn have done on his house.

"Have you seen the vegetable garden?" asks Roslyn. "It took Gay about a week just to get the soil turned over."

With gusto, Gay lists the many improvements he's made: "Mowed the grass and put in them flowers too. I got your windows unstuck. Fireplace don't smoke now." As he talks, he removes the bullets from his rifle without calling attention to it. Guido notices, but the women don't.

"Roslyn, you must be a magician," Guido says, pointing to Gay with his thumb. "The only thing this boy ever did for a woman was get out the ice cubes."

Gay takes him inside, to show off the changes there.

Isabelle takes Roslyn's hands. "My, you look lovely. You've really found yourself, haven't you?"

But Roslyn doesn't want to talk about her and Gay right now. "Well, I... Oh, it's so nice to see you, Isabelle." She guides her former landlady into her new house. "Look, we have a step!"

Arm in arm, the two women survey the living room. Isabelle is dressed for the airplane: a scarf wrapped around her head, a billed cap holding her goggles. She's in awe. "Well, I never saw anything like it in my life. It's magical." To Gay, she says, "I just hope you realize you finally made contact with a real woman. My dear girl!"

Gay's expression suggests that it's true. But Guido doesn't look so pleased. This was the house that he was fixing up for his wife, and now another man is making it over for the woman who might have made a good candidate to replace her.

Roslyn reaches for his arm. "Come, Guido. I wanna show you the rest. I've changed a few things, though," she warns him.

Screenwriter Arthur Miller, married to Marilyn Monroe at the time, apparently could not resist winking at the viewer, by showing pin-up photos of the real-life Marilyn, tacked to the inside of the closet door. Roslyn closes the door so that Guido won't see it, but he opens it and stares at the photos. "We've changed some things around," she says, gesturing. "How do you like it?" Guido is still gaping at the photos. She closes the door again, saying, "Oh, don't look at those. Gay just hung 'em up for a joke."

Walking over to the bed, she points to a framed picture of flowers. Smiling, she says, "I put your picture up in the living room." He opens the closet door yet again, and she has to push him out of the room, saying, "Come on, let's have lots of drinks!"

Back in the living room, Roslyn says, "Oh, it's so nice to have company!" Guido is looking rather displeased until he spots his wedding picture, in its gilt frame, on a side table, centered with care on an oval of lace.

Roslyn hands him a drink saying, "I put your picture there. Is that all right?"

"You don't have to keep it out, Roslyn," he replies, his face softening.

"Why, Guido, it's part of the house," she says, taking his arm. "Besides, it's your house."

Gay distributes drinks and Guido begins to talk about himself. He concludes: "I'm gonna tell you somethin', Roslyn. I spent four years in the war. Did two tours, flew 50 missions. Every time I came back to base, I started to design this house. But somehow I could never get it to look like my idea of it. Now it almost does. You just walk in, a stranger out of nowhere... and for the first time it all lights up." The camera finds Roslyn looking pleased.

He goes on, "And I'm sure you know why too."

She shrugs with a shy smile and asks, "Why?"

"Because you have the gift for life," he explains. "The rest of us, we're just lookin' for a place to hide and watch it all go by."

Gay is holding his drink, still wearing his cowboy hat. He looks puzzled and a little distressed. Isabelle, good sport that she is, raises her glass in tribute to Roslyn. "Amen!" she says.

They all toast to Roslyn and she toasts back to them.

Walking across the room, Roslyn says, "Gay did all the work, you know."

"Yeah," he responds, putting his arm around her. "And the rabbits are sure enjoyin' it too." Her expression darkens, but only slightly.

Guido has a proposal for Gay: "Can you break away from this paradise long enough to do a little mustangin'?"

"Mustangin'? Now you're sayin' somethin'."

Stepping away from Roslyn, Gay moves towards Guido, asking with some anticipation, "You been up in the mountains?"

"Took a quick look earlier this mornin'. I spotted fifteen horses."

Gay hesitates. He's not very excited about this number, but he's itching to do some work – cowboy work, not work for wages. Finally he replies, "That's not too bad. Boy, I'd sure like to get my hands on a rope again."

Isabelle chimes in, "I will never understand cowboys. All crazy about animals, and the minute they got nothin' else to do... they run up in those mountains and bother those poor wild horses. Shame on you!" she scolds Gay.

"Horses?" asks Roslyn innocently. She doesn't know what they're talking about or why Gay and Guido should be ashamed.

"Oh, sure, honey," Gay explains – but not completely: "Nevada mustang. Used to ship 'em all over the United States. Not many left... We'd have to pick up another man," he advises Guido.

"Dayton Rodeo's on today. We ought to be able to pick up a fella down there," suggests Guido.

"That's an idea." Gay turns to Roslyn, "Hey, you never saw a rodeo."

"Oh, you gotta see a rodeo!" exclaims Isabelle.

Roslyn is enthusiastic: "I'd love to. Will you come too?"

"I'm all set," answer Isabelle, raising her glass.

"I'll get dressed up! Let's have some fun!" Roslyn twirls around with excitement as she walks towards the bedroom.

"That's a girl. Get going right now!" says Gay. He puts his arms around her and, speaking for Arthur Miller and us all, says, "Honey, when you smile it's like the sun comin' up."