



ROSE

"Sometimes, I think surviving is all there is to me..."

Character

Rose

The survivor

Gender: female

Age: 22

Key words: masochist, resilience, eccentric, drug-addict, cynical

Drama: you will be playing Rose, a down-on-her-luck prostitutes who has become a prime choice for sadists thanks to her masochist tendencies, cynical spirit and unusual resilience. She is a bit addled by drug use, likes to speak her mind, and uncover unpleasant truths about people. Rose embodies the violence of the system. Can she survive it, or end up broken for good?

Narrative arcs: despair, violence, death or redemption, finding humanity in others

Story

Poor Rose, they say. Poor, sick, unhinged Rose. I never had any chance, but I'm still there, I'm still surviving. Sometimes I think that's all there is to me. Some will to survive, to keep going.

My parents never loved me, there were too many children to feed. I went to school because it was mandatory, but couldn't learn much, there was always so much work to do at home, and I was the eldest, I had to help. I was beaten when I was late doing my chores, or when my mother didn't like my behavior, which was often.

When I was fourteen, she took me to the Flowers of May, I think she sold me there. I had to work, she said. I tried to rebel, didn't want to, but she said I had to obey, for the good of the family. Then I learnt about the taverns, the worst places, where women are locked up and have to take dozens of clients a day. So I chose to obey for fear of enduring an even worse fate.

My first was brutal and hurt me. I bled and got sore. I sometimes feel like the pain never completely left me since that day. Then there were others, diversely hurtful, spiteful, and unclean. I learnt to forget about the pain, to find a place within myself where I was just anaesthetized by the pain. Of course, the drugs also helped. People

started noticing. I could endure almost anything. This rare quality, somehow, made me valuable. Not that I cared. I don't care about much, these days. Sometimes Mia, Madam May's sister, tries to reach out to me, but I laugh at her. She tries to be helpful to the girls, but it's only a way to ease her conscience.

Barthelemy has become one of my regular clients because of that. He's violent and cruel, used to be the bouncer of the Flowers of May, before marrying well and making a fortune. He beats me each time, but I don't care. I retreat in my mind, and the drug help me feel good. Now I feel like he needs me. I'm the first girl he hasn't broken, the only one he can connect with, that knows him for who he truly is. If I was a true courtesan, like Flora or Iris, I could use that to my advantage. I just smile my lopsided smile and laugh at the absurdity of it all instead.

Sometimes I wonder if I'll ever escape my miserable condition in life. Sometimes I wonder why I keep going. Sometimes I tell myself that I'll die brutally without being even aware of it. And at the same time, now that I am used to it, part of me accepts the bitterness of life, and I live with the uncompromising lucidity this life has given me.

Past

Rose was pleading in vain

"Please, mother, I don't want to go, don't make me..."

- You have to, Rose. You are a big girl now, and with all your brothers and sisters, we need the money, we need you to work.

This is a good House, you'll be well treated.

- Please, mother, I'll do anything. I can do some other work?

- Rose, don't make me upset. You know I don't like it when you behave badly. Do you want to be punished again? You will go, and that's the end of it. Would you rather end up in some tavern?"

Rose relented as said nothing. She knew she wasn't brave enough to fight.

Rose heard people shuffling around her. Mia was tending to her wounds. She focused on the pain, concentrating it on a point between her eyes, and letting her wash over her, feeling distanced from it. Someone slipped a sugar coated in drops of laudanum between her teeth.

"It's a miracle she's still alive after all that time. We have to be more careful", said Mia

"I know" said Madam May "maybe it was going a bit far. But the client was willing to pay extra. Let her be on bed rest tomorrow"

Rose was smiling, the fake giddiness of the drug lighting playful lights in her eyes. She watched Mia squarely:

"Come on, Mia, admit it, you hate it there as well. You try to

care for us, you make sure we're healed and fed and well enough, but you're still nothing more than a prison guard trading human flesh. And I know that it makes you sick, Mia. Don't deny it. I've heard you cough and moan in your sleep..."

Others

Flora (37 yrs) : the Favorite of the Flowers of May, she likes people to differ to her and see her as the First of the House. Sometimes, her arrogance annoys me. I know she finds me weird.

Iris (25 yrs) : Flora's rival, she's assertive and likes her job. She's intrigued by me, because she's a dominant, and I'm a submissive. She wishes she could understand how I work, how I can survive. Maybe someday, I'll reach out to her.

Violette (17 yrs) : the new girl. I'm curious about her. Will she find her own way to survive in our oppressive world, or end up broken and discarded, like so many were before her ?

Philippe (47 yrs) : Flora's regular patron, who likes to have his habits in the House. He pretends to be a Hedonist, to enjoy sex like one would enjoy a good wine. He's just a terrible hypocrite enjoying his privileges, like so many of these men are.

André (42 yrs) : he's a submissive and fetishist, and a closeted homosexual. Sometimes he talks with me, he knows I can understand him in a way. We don't have the same connection to pain than most people. André needs the pain to escape from self-loathing. I can understand that. But on the other hand, he's the Prefect of Police, meaning he holds the whole system, corruption, abuse and all. So while he may suffer, he is instrumental to a complete system of misery. I have no compassion lost for him.

Barthélémy (35 yrs) : he's brutal and a sadist. He grew up on the streets and made a fortune, so now he's privileged and arrogant. But at the same time, he has a shrewd understanding of his sadist : he knows he won't be able to live through it without someone to endure his violence and cruelty. And it seems I am the only one that has endured thus far. In a very sinister way, he knows he needs me.

Paul (19 yrs): a newcomer, nephew to Philippe, who probably wants to have him educated in the ways of sex. He looks like any young man, a bit naïve, a bit overwhelmed. It won't last. As soon as he gets used to his privileges, he'll become as rude and cruel as any of them.

Game structure

#1 Workshops

#2 Introduction scenes

#3 Opening

#4 Act I, daytime: the New Year celebration

#5 Act I, nighttime: in the chambers

#6 Act I, remembrances: black box time

#7 Intermission

#8 Act II, daytime: Autumn Solstice

#9 Act II, nighttime: in the chambers

#10 Act II, remembrances: black box time

#11 Intermission

#12 Act III, daytime: Farewell

#13 Act III, remembrances

#14 Intermission

#15 Epilogue