Death Bed

A Short Play by

Margaret O'Donnell

Run Time: 10 minutes

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Deathbed

By Margaret O'Donnell

Characters
Polly, female-identifying, age 50s-60s
Bill, male-identifying, age 50s-60s
Robert, male-identifying, age 50s-60s
Clara, female-identifying, age 20s-30s

Setting
A living room.

At rise, Polly and Bill walk up front porch stairs and knock on a door. Polly leads. Clara opens the door.

CLARA

Hello! How lovely to meet you. I'm Clara, Robert's niece. From L.A.? He's sleeping. Come on in. He'll be so pleased to see you. He thought you were coming later.

POLLY

Oh. We thought we'd come now. I'm Polly.

CLARA

It's perfectly fine! We just have to wait for him to wake up. Could be any minute now. I thought Robert told me a different name. And you must be Tom?

BILL

Bill.

CLARA

Oh well. I must've gotten the names mixed up. Some tea?

POLLY

Well, okay.

CLARA

Great! I'll be just a minute. Take a look around at Robert's books. He wants you to have anything you want. He told me the three of you talk books all the time.

(exits)

BILL

We do? By the way, could Robert be sick?

POLLY

Sounds like it. Should we tell her?

BILL

Tell her what? That we're not who they're waiting for? Then we might not get any books.

POLLY

I don't care about the books! I just want mother's netsuke back. And the silver service. And all the crystal. And the paintings. When Robert's gone, I bet this girl will get it all. We don't even know her.

BILL

We don't have room for all that stuff.

POLLY

That's not the point! It's my heritage! Robert should have given all Mom's things to me when Rose died. He knew I wanted it. But doesn't this place look kinda empty? Not like I remember. I wonder where he put everything?

Bill examines books on a bookshelf.

BILL

Oh look. Robert's got the whole series of Zane Grey westerns. First editions! I never would have pegged him for a Zane Grey fan. Maybe I can take those…

POLLY

And put them where?

BILL

The same place you're putting all the loot you want to take?

POLLY

It's not the same! You don't have any emotional attachment/

BILL

Yes I do! I loved Zane Grey as a kid. My dad got all the books, and read them to me.

CLARA

Here we are! Robert's still sleeping. I've got a banana torte for us. Cake is about all Robert wants to eat these days. But a few bites, and he's done. So good of you both to come. This is his last visit, and then he said he can go in peace. But let's have some cake/

POLLY

You know, we haven't been keeping up with all Robert's relatives. Does he have many nieces and nephews?

CLARA

I'm it! He and Aunt Rose were always so good to me, especially after my parents died. I'm like the only survivor of my whole family, both sides.

POLLY

How about Rose's family? Did you know them?

CLARA

No. I heard they were estranged from that side. She had a sister she didn't like, I think. More tea?

POLLY

Yes.

CLARA

Oh, I hear Robert. He'll need help getting up. Have some more cake/

(Clara exits)

POLLY

She will get it all! Little snot.

BILL

Holy crap. He's got the entire Flash Gordon comic book series! From the forties and fifties! I loved those comic books. And looks like all of Hardy Boys. He's got my whole childhood preserved here/

POLLY

Stop it, Bill! We need to think.

BILL

Yeah? About what? You're not gonna demand the stuff back, I hope?

POLLY

Maybe we could be super nice, and apologize for being so mad about not getting Mom's things back when Rose died. If he's really sick, maybe he's forgotten/

BILL

Sure. Try it. See if he believes it. By the way, mad isn't the word, Polly. You were vicious.

POLLY

You're supposed to be on my side! I know Mom would've wanted me to have her things. And all he gave me was her jewelry.