

FOR THE MONEY
BY
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THE CAST

OLDER SAL RESPITE
OLDER RICHARD RESPITE
YOUNG SAL & FRED - *Cusey*
YOUNG RICHARD & GLENN -
SYLVIA RESPITE
ATTORNEY PETSON

ACT I
SCENE 1

A living room. Fireplace UC. Settee UL. Two wing back or club chairs UR. Sal and Richard both in late sixties or early seventies are seated in chairs as lights UP. A desk & chair somewhere. Of the two men Sal seems to be the worse for wear. Richard is sometimes distant.

SAL

I don't know.

RICHARD

You can't just say I don't know. You have to know. How do we get the money.

SAL

I get the money. Got it. Not while she's alive.

RICHARD

When will she die?

SAL

Don't know. All I know is as long as she's alive I don't get the money.

RICHARD

What if she spends it all before she dies?

SAL

Can't.

RICHARD

What do you mean, can't?

SAL

You know all this. I told you all this before, a hundred times.

RICHARD

I don't remember. Tell me again.

SAL

All right. The money, my grandfathers money is all mine but I can't touch it until the guardian, my step sister, dies. She is in charge of the estate.

RICHARD

She's in charge?

SAL

Yes.

RICHARD

So she could waste it all on crap for herself if she's in charge of the money, right?

SAL

She's not in charge of the money, stupid. She's in charge of the estate but she only gets enough money to take care of us. Until she dies.

RICHARD

That's when we get the money?

SAL

That's when I, meaning me gets the money and the estate and a chance to live.

RICHARD

What about me? And what happens if you die first?

SAL

You wont believe this. I don't know. And I probably don't even care. What the hell difference does it make?

RICHARD

Don't you think you should find out. What the hell have you been waiting for all these years? If she gets everything when you die, what's to stop her from killing you first and keeping all the money for herself?

SAL

What do you mean killing me first?

RICHARD

Just what I said. If you kill her first, you get the money but maybe if she kills you first, she gets the money.

SAL

For one thing, you don't know that.

RICHARD

That's why I said maybe. You should read the will and then you would know.

SAL

For another thing, I'm not going to kill anybody.

RICHARD

Have it your way but if I was you I'd check. Just to make sure, cause she might find out and kill you first. And if she does she ain't gonna give me anything. So I have a vested interest in finding out.

SAL

She does hate you.

RICHARD

Hate is not a strong enough word.

SAL

I don't want to think about it now.

RICHARD

What are you thinking about?

SAL

Nothing. Not about the money, not about Sylvia.

RICHARD

Who's Sylvia? What money?

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

The setting is the same. The two older men are replaced by two men in their thirties.

RICHARD

Well Sal you are a rich man now. You should be happy. I don't mean because grandfather died but still all things considered ---

SAL

Shut up Richard. You hated him and he hated you.

RICHARD

Like he thought the world of you.

SAL

He just hated me less than he hated you and he hated you more than he hated Sylvia.

RICHARD

Speaking of Sylvia, where the hell is she?

SAL

She went out into the garden. Said she isn't coming back until the reading of the will. If you ask me, I think she thinks she knows what's in it.

RICHARD

I bet you a thousand bucks she's wrong.

SAL

Don't be ridiculous.

RICHARD

How am I being ridiculous?

SAL

Two ways. Firstly. You won't know weather she's right or wrong because you can't possibly know what she's thinking. Nobody does. Secondly, you don't have a thousand dollars.

RICHARD

Not now.

SAL

Not ever if I know any thing about grandfather. And it so happens that I do. He hated everybody, especially after he blamed your mother for my father's death. And then to top it off after he committed to allowing her and me to go on living here she married your father who brought Sylvia into the family along with him. Then the 'piece de resistance' they went and produced you. One medium sized very unhappy family.

RICHARD

That wasn't my fault. Jesus! It wasn't any body's fault.

SAL

Try explaining that to your grandfather. Oops, sorry to late. Actually it was to late upon conception.

Sylvia enters with attorney Petson.

RICHARD

Well lookie who's here and with the lawyer. Have you got the sacred manuscript?

SYLVIA

That is why he is here. Idiot.

RICHARD

I heard that.

SYLVIA

Yes. But do you understand it? Peter may we get on with it?

PETER

Certainly. Let's get right to it I really haven't got all day. After the reading we have to get down to the court house for probate.

Sylvia takes a seat on the settee.

SYLVIA

All right then. Down to business.

RICHARD

Down to business.

SAL

Shut up Richard!

SYLVIA

Shut up Richard!

PETER

Every one settle down.

SYLVIA

Is this going to take long darling?

PETER

I don't know, I haven't read it.

SAL

You haven't read it?

RICHARD

Shut up Sal.

Everyone turns and glares at Richard.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I was just thinking.

SYLVIA

That's a laugh. Peter, continue.

SAL

What happened to darling.

SYLVIA

Show some respect or you'll be sorry.

SAL

I'm already sorry. Sorry to be related to any of you.

PETER

Actually, you are only related to Sylvia.

SYLVIA

For which I am eternally not grateful.

SAL

Don't you mean ungrateful?

PETER

Maybe we should dispense with the reading and simply go to the courthouse and file it. All this bickering and vitriolic nonsense is something I personally find distasteful. If you people want to read it you can go down town and read it.

RICHARD

Don't be that way Pete old buddy.

SYLVIA

Come Peter I may have to put up with these - these - these ---

RICHARD

Morons? You wanted to say morons, didn't you?

SAL

Shut up Richard. Read the god damned thing Peter will you please. Enough of this bull. Just read the damned paper.

SYLVIA

What did I tell? They're both belligerent fools. Lets get away from here.

PETER

Very well. After we've filed the papers a copy will be available at my office. We will also be mailing you a condensed form of the will.

SYLVIA

Condensed for the dense. Come along Peter.

Peter and Sylvia exit.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

The two older men in their chairs.

RICHARD

We should have killed her when she showed up with that lawyer on her arm. What was his name? You should have known then that something bad was going to happen.

SAL

What are you talking about?

RICHARD

I'm talking about Sylvia. I had a bad feeling when she showed up with that lawyer fellow on her arm.

SAL

What are you talking about and who the hell is Sylvia.

RICHARD

My sister? The bitch who stole the money.

SAL

Oh, her. I thought she died.

RICHARD

Died? You killed her. But it was way too late.

SAL

I never killed anybody. At least I don't remember killing any one. Why would I kill her?

RICHARD

For the money. You killed her for the money.

SAL

The grandfather money. That's it. Now I remember. This house this wonderful old house and - and grandfather yes I remember now. I hated that old bastard. But how do you know all this?

RICHARD

I'm Richard. Your brother Richard. Actually your half brother. I remember, his name was Peter, Peter something --

SAL

Who's Peter? You were married to Sylvia? I don't remember having a brother-in-law. I seem to forget a lot of things but I wouldn't forget a brother-in-law. What did you say your name was?

RICHARD

Never mind.

SAL

What were we talking about Richie?

RICHARD

Don't call me Richie. I told you before don't call me Richie.

SAL

Richie! Richie! Richie! I would call you rich but you're not.

RICHARD

Stop. Stop. I hate it when you do that. You murderer.

Two men in white uniforms enter.

FRED

Here we are Glenn my man. The inner sanctum. Looks like they're at it again.

GLENN

At what again? Who are they and why aren't they with the rest of the residents?

FRED

One of them, Sal Respity, he's the one screaming Richie. He used to own this place, actually he almost owned it or so the story goes but that was a long time ago.

SAL

Hey what are you guys doing in my house?

FRED

Hi, Mister Respity. How are you today?

SAL

I'm fine thank you.

RICHARD

I'm fine thank you.

FRED (CONT'D)

They're related. Half brothers.

GLENN

So they both used to own this place.

FRED

Almost, almost. But really only Mister Sal and maybe he did own it for a while.

GLENN

What was it a hotel?

RICHARD

It was our home stupid.

GLENN

This whole place was a house once? You two guys lived here?

SAL

Of course we lived here it's our home.

GLENN

What happened?

FRED

It's a long story and you'll hear it a hundred times before you're done. Come on we have to get these two up to bed.

GLENN

Are they always like this? I mean confused.

FRED

Not all the time but we sometimes have a little fun with them.

GLENN

Like how?

FRED

Well when they argue and cant remember what they just said, sometimes we make up some shit and feed it to them.

GLENN

Doesn't that really mess them up?

FRED

Who knows, but it kills time and sometimes it gets very interesting. Like when we hint that one of them killed their sister. That usually leads to great comedy. Come on let's get them up stairs.

The four men exit and immediately Sylvia enters with Peter in tow.

SCENE 4

PETER

Well now that's settled. Welcome to your new home. Of course it's not in your name but that doesn't matter now does it?

SYLVIA

We can take the master suite.

PETER

I had better not move in right away. It might raise suspicions.

She crosses to him and is very playful.

SYLVIA

Don't be silly. I'm the executrix am I not Mister Lawyer. Mister Peter, lawyer person?

PETER

Yes you are Miss Sylvia, gorgeous executrix person.

They embrace, they kiss.

PETER (CONT'D)

Of course you know that I can't stay every night.

SYLVIA

We'll discuss that later. Right now there are other things on the table for discussion.

PETER

Yes, yes. Down to business. You will have full control of the estate. The grounds and all the buildings. There are certain restrictions. To wit.

SYLVIA

I simply love it when you talk lawyerly.

PETER

Pay attention. (*Sylvia cuddles close and nuzzles him.*) Not that kind of attention. At least not now. You are restricted in the amount of money or assets you can use for your own benefit.

SYLVIA

Darling?

PETER

Yes dear.

SYLVIA

No, I meant 'Not that kind of attention darling'.

PETER

What? Oh! Yes I see, darling. Back to business.

SYLVIA

Off to bed?

PETER

We have to do this. (*He pushes her away, gently.*) Listen to me --- darling. I do love you but we must get to these matters and the sooner the better.

SYLVIA

(*Pouting a bit.*) All right if we must.

PETER

[Good girl. Here is what will happen.] Sal will receive a letter informing him that you will be controlling the purse strings and that all his reasonable needs will be met. You on the other hand are restricted to half of the personal expenditures allowable for his needs.

SYLVIA

Why that means. What does that mean?

PETER

It means that we are going to be very careful. At least for a while.

SYLVIA

How long is a while?

PETER

[The first thing] I have to do is look into the assets of the estate.

SYLVIA

What assets? It's an estate.

PETER

Yes, it's an estate. [You live on an estate.] But your grandfather's estate encompasses more than this property alone. There are other instruments.

SYLVIA

Instruments. (*She giggles.*) What sort of instruments? Fun ones I hope.

PETER

Not those sort of instruments. Annuities, other properties, investments that sort of thing.

SYLVIA

This is boring.

PETER

You won't think so in a minute or two. Do you remember the shares I bought? The thousands of certificates of Enron that I bought for practically nothing.

SYLVIA

Because that's what they were worth. Let's go upstairs. And tomorrow you can write me a letter to explain it all.

PETER

Not to us. I have a plan on how to use them to our advantage.

SYLVIA

That's very nice.

PETER

You have no idea. As executrix and with my help we magically move most of the assets to appear as if Mister Respite had reinvested his holding into Enron.

SYLVIA

How does that work to our advantage?

PETER

We keep the money that would have gone into buying Enron stock.

SYLVIA

We make believe that the old man bought a worthless stock. Why would he have done that?

PETER

It will not have been worthless on the date of the transactions which I can alter.

SYLVIA

Won't someone notice?

PETER

We and the money will be out of the country by then.

SYLVIA

Where shall we go? And if we are going why not take all the money.

PETER

We have to leave enough money behind to run the estate and not arouse suspicion until after we have cleared out.

A kiss and an embrace.

SYLVIA

It's going to be fun isn't it Peter?

PETER

More than you know.

And they exit.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

Several days later. Young Sal & Richard enter. Richard is reading a letter aloud as they enter.

RICHARD

"and as executrix of the estate" What the hell is an executrix?

SAL

The feminine form of executor.

RICHARD

Shouldn't it be executoress? Any way "as executrix of the estate shall be responsible for managing the trust fund for Salvatore Respite assuring that the allotted monthly allowance is not exceeded." You get everything and I get nothing?

SAL

I told you to expect that. Didn't I? After all he hated you the most.

RICHARD

I think Sylvia was screwing him.

SAL

He wasn't the only one.

RICHARD

Well now I'm getting screwed. You didn't get screwed did you?

SAL

Not by Sylvia. Not yet any way.

RICHARD

Of course not. She's your sister.

SAL

She's your sister not my sister.

RICHARD

I don't get it.

SAL

That's right! You do however get screwed. You get screwed by your sister while every one else is screwing your sister. That's kind of funny don't you think.

RICHARD

Think what? Well it doesn't matter what I think now, does it?

SAL

[Exactly. Wait a minute.] Didn't the letter state that you get to live here? What the hell more do you want.

RICHARD

I was his grandson too. Just like you.

SAL

Listen to me. You and I are related, half brothers. You were not related to my grand father. The fact that you get anything at all is a mystery given what I know about him. He always held our mother responsible for my fathers death.

RICHARD

He thought she killed him? I never knew that.

SAL

No, he didn't think she killed him only that she was somehow responsible for the accident.

RICHARD

How could he think a thing like that?

SAL

Don't know and at this point and I don't care. Read the rest of the letter.

RICHARD

Here read it yourself.

He tosses the letter at Sal and exits.

SAL

Read it myself? *(Yelling after Richard.)* You have outlived your usefulness. Read it myself! We'll just see about that.

He walks over to phone and dials.

SAL (CONT'D)

Hello Carla. It's me Sal. Could you possibly do me a favor? *(Pause.)* I know. It won't happen again, I promise. *(Pause.)* Actually we are not speaking to each other, although I don't think he is aware of it yet. It doesn't matter. I can always lock him in his room. *(Pause.)* Oh, sure. I've done it before even when grandfather was alive. *(Pause.)* Of course he did. Grandfather always believed me and would rail at Richard and tell to stop making up stories. Any way can you come by tomorrow?

Sylvia enters.

SAL (CONT'D)

Got to go now. *(Pause.)* How did you guess? Tomorrow then. Bye.

He hangs up.

Phone

SYLVIA

Hi honey. Who were you talking to?

SAL

Nobody.

SYLVIA

Did you ever notice that people say that when they don't want you to know who they were talking to? Why can't people say It's none of your business. Just be honest about it.

SAL

You have a point. It is none of your business, to who I was speaking.

SYLVIA

To whom were you speaking?

SAL

Still, not your business.

SYLVIA

I was correcting your English.

SAL

Thank you.

SYLVIA

I hope your we speaking to someone about adult education. You really need to brush up on proper grammar.

SAL

I think I've had quite enough education for one lifetime.

SYLVIA

Education? Six years and three universities. Every body knows that you minored in girls and booze while your actual major was waiting for grandfather to die.

SAL

That is what I majored in. You are right, and it has been my life, both vocation and avocation. Until now that is. So what can I do for you?

She moves toward him.

What do you want, Sylvia.

She puts her arm around his shoulder.

Stop it Sylvia. That approach hasn't worked since I was a teenager.

SYLVIA

Remarkable the way time flies and memories are altered.

There was a time as I recall.

She continues to hold him.

SAL

What do you think you recall? That you flaunted your wares around this place until a shy seventeen year old took the bait?

SYLVIA

Shy? Shy my ass. You used the power which you knew you possessed to take advantage of me. If only your grandfather had known the truth.

SAL

Not to worry, he certainly knew the truth. He was the one who told me about you. How he watched you measure him, searching for an opening as he measured your every move. How he knew that you would do anything if you thought you could benefit from it. How he ---

She releases her grip on him and backs away.

SYLVIA

You dirty little underhanded scheming bastard, son-of-a-bitch, lying manipulating something or other ---

SAL

There there, calm down.

She sinks into a club chair.

SYLVIA

All these years you knew about me and that old man? I, I, never. I never.

SAL

Of course you did. But that's water over the dam or under the bridge. It was fun for a while.

Trying once to endear her self to him.

SYLVIA

It was wasn't it? What happened to us back then?

SAL

There was no us back then. Grandfather was doing you. I was doing you. All the while he and I knew that you thought you were doing us. I don't know about grandfather but I got bored. There were so many other worlds to conquer. I never did thank you for all those things I learned from you.

She exits hurriedly. He shouts after her.

SAL (CONT'D)

I'm still using some of them.

He looks around the room.

SAL (CONT'D)

That is wonderful. Grandfather would have loved it. I wonder if I should tell Richard. Maybe this would be a bad time.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6

Sylvia and Peter enter and X to the desk.

PETER

Are you sure?

SYLVIA

I checked. Sal's car is not in the garage.

PETER

Everything has been prepared. Once you have signed these documents, I will execute the sales and deposit the money in the account. The phony paperwork and the Enron certificates are already in the mail to the probate court. That should give us enough time to get out of the country.

SYLVIA

Should give us enough time?

PETER

Will give us enough time. Nothing to worry about darling.

SYLVIA

I'm worried about Richard?

PETER

Why? You never cared about him before now. Not becoming sentimental are you?

SYLVIA

Don't be silly. It's just that he might somehow figure the whole thing out. Accidently of course.

PETER

He's a dolt. No imagination no ambition.

SYLVIA

Wait! What if Richard took the car?

PETER

Are you getting paranoid? What's the matter? Get control of yourself. Now put the letter in the drawer and let's get out of here.

He starts to exit left.

SYLVIA

Not that way. We should leave this way.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

The two older men are in the room. Sal is seated on sofa, Richard in the US club chair.

RICHARD

That fellow Glenn said to tell you that they know who killed her.

SAL

Who killed who?

RICHARD

Whom! It's who killed whom. *(He laughs. A triumphant laugh.)* I've been waiting years for that.

SAL

What in hell are you talking about?

RICHARD

English. I'm talking about grammar. You and her were always correcting my grammar. This time I corrected yours.

SAL

At a time like this you've become English professor. What about the killing?

RICHARD

Oh, that. What about it?

SAL

You just now said ---

RICHARD

Wait a minute. Let me see now. *(Pause.)* Got it. That fellow Glenn said that they know who killed her.

SAL

Her? Who is her?

RICHARD

Sylvia, that's whom? *(Again laughter.)*

SAL

That thief, who cares. Wait one minute, I thought she and that lawyer ran off with the money. And if someone killed her how did Glenn know about it?

RICHARD

I told him.

SAL

Now is when you should be laughing. This is very funny stuff. You told him that I killed Sylvia? That is very funny. I mean very, very funny. Ironically, it is.

RICHARD

I know you did. And stop pretending that you don't know what I'm talking about.

SAL

You know do you? How did I do it?

RICHARD

Don't know how you did it but you did it you probably killed both of them. Sylvia and the lawyer. But you see I don't really care about that. I only care about the money.

SAL

What money you old fart. There isn't any money. We are both living here because I made a deal to let us live here when I sold the house to the senior citizen people.

RICHARD

And now you're a senior citizen, still living here.

SAL

So are you.

RICHARD

You see I know that you have been spending that money on yourself. You started right after everybody including the police decided that Sylvia and her boyfriend stole the money and ran away with it. When you saw that the coast was clear you started spending the money on yourself. Very quietly.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Nobody knows where you went for months at a time. I didn't know but I knew you had the money and the only way you could have gotten your hands on the what those two embezzled was by killing them and taking it.

SAL

What do you want?

RICHARD

Not being a greedy person, I'd settle for a share.

SAL

Blackmail? I don't think so. First of all you have no proof. And second of all, screw you.

RICHARD

I tried to be nice, handle this in a civil manner but as usual, in the end you turn out to be the same greedy son-of-a-bitch you always were. Apple not fall to far from tree.

SAL

I hate to repeat myself but here goes. Screw you.

Sal gets up to leave.

SAL (CONT'D)

And tomorrow I want your ass out of here.

RICHARD

I know where the money is.

Sal is momentarily startled.

SAL

What did you say?

RICHARD

I know where the money is.

SAL

What are you going to do tell the police?

Sal sits down.

SAL (CONT'D)

Let's see now. What are my options? Tell me what are my options.

RICHARD

Well the way I see it.

SAL

The way you see it? I don't think so. Off the top of my head I see two. Number one, I can call your bluff. Or number two and I think I prefer this one. I can move the money and let you scream wee, wee, wee all the way home. Which by the way will be somewhere else.

RICHARD

Sorry wrong numbers.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Both of them. The fact is that when I discovered where you stashed your stash, which took a lot of painstaking investigating, I took the liberty of moving it. Now what, genius?

SAL

Give me a minute.

RICHARD

Take two.

SAL

Let's suppose that I call the police and tell them that I have suspected you all along of having pulled off this scheme to steal the money. Then what?

RICHARD

I guess I have no choice. We can share the money.

SAL

It's my money. I earned it.

RICHARD

This is where we let the cops in and replay your confession. You look surprised. Shocked even. Don't be. I didn't call the cops, just wanted you to admit it. Before I kill you.

Richard produces a gun .

SAL

You'll never get away with it.

RICHARD

Probably not but I can now afford a really good lawyer.

Richard shoots Sal.

THE END

*last
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can you
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Recommend*

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