

FIVE FLOWERS

A Play in Two Acts

By

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROSE	SHE is about to turn eighty.
IRIS	SHE is about to turn sixty and daughter to Rose.
JOHN	HE is in his late fifties and son to Rose.
VIOLET	SHE is twenty and granddaughter to Iris.
SCOTT	HE is Iris's husband.
DAVE	HE is Violet's boyfriend.
FRANK	HE is Rose's neighbor.
JIM	HE is Rose's neighbor.
GLADYS	SHE is Rose's neighbor.
AMY	SHE is a nurse.

PLACE

An assisted living apartment complex in Lanesboro, MN.

TIME

Act 1.1- The present.

Act 1.2- The next day; late morning.

Act 2.1- The next day; morning.

Act 2.2- About an hour later.

Act 2.3- The next day; morning

Act 2.4- Later in the afternoon

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ACT 1, SCENE 1

SETTING: The set is a modest apartment, which is part of an assisted living complex. The audience can only see the living room / dining room area, which has a modern appearance to it but filled with old furniture that has been kept by Rose, our main character. The front door entrance is stage left. Directly center stage is the sitting area, couch, a couple chairs, coffee table, etc. Stage right is an old dining room table with four chairs, with a buffet against the stage right wall. There is a phone on the buffet. Upstage of the buffet is a swinging door which leads to the kitchen. Upstage center are two doors, one leads to the bedroom and the other leads to the bathroom. Various pictures of family can be on the walls, and other “homey” decorations, specifically some type of clock, which is clearly visible to the audience. There is a vase containing four roses on the coffee table.

AT RISE: The ticking of the clock is heard, loud at first, but fading as the lights come to full. An elderly woman in her late seventies, ROSE, is sitting at the dining room table, staring at the clock with anger and disgust. A younger woman in her mid to late fifties, AMY, is staring intently at the clock as well as she is taking Rose’s blood pressure. The ticking of the clock fades out completely as Amy begins talking and the two women focus on each other.

AMY

(Loudly) Well, that should do it, Rose. Your pressure is perfect. One twenty over eighty!

ROSE

I guess those pills are working pretty good.

AMY

Just make sure you keep taking them. I’ve put all your pills for the week in here. (Holds up pill box) How have you been feeling otherwise?

ROSE

My pressure is perfect, so I guess I’m feeling the same way.

AMY

I read in your report that you’ve been feeling depressed?

ROSE

Why would I be depressed? I have everything that I could possibly need. Do I look depressed to you?

AMY

I've only been working here for a week. Maybe after I've been here for awhile I'll be able to tell.

ROSE

I'll spare you the trouble. I'm fine.

AMY

All right.

ROSE

And you can stop shouting too. I may be old, but I'm not deaf.

AMY

I'm so sorry. I thought... You didn't say anything when I made my first visit.

ROSE

Wasn't it in my report?

AMY

(Pauses a moment to keep herself calm) Even though I'm originally from here, it's going to take some time to get to know everyone again. I just hope you can be patient with me.

ROSE

Well, you're the nurse.

AMY

What?

ROSE

Patient? I'm the patient. You're the nurse.

AMY

Ohhh, I get it. (Laughs a bit too hard.) That's a good one, Rose. I didn't catch that one right away.

ROSE

I noticed.

AMY

You're pretty quick there. You're gonna keep me on my toes. I can tell. (Begins packing up her things.) I better get going. I'm running late.

ROSE

Oh, that's too bad. (Gets up to move to chair in living room.) My daughter will be

arriving any minute now anyway.

AMY

Iris, right?

ROSE

That's good. You finally got something right.

AMY

Actually, it was in your report. (Looks at picture on wall) I do remember your son though.

ROSE

John?

AMY

He was a senior when I was in eighth grade. Is he still in the area?

ROSE

No, John is a bit of a free spirit. It's hard to know where he'll be next, because he doesn't seem to know himself.

AMY

I know what that's like. It seems funny now, but I had a huge crush on him that year.

ROSE

Oh, did you now?

AMY

Yes, all the girls did. He was so popular. I remember during Valentine's Day I put something in his locker and I spent the day.... Oh, forget it. It's all just silly.

ROSE

John has always been very charismatic.

AMY

Yes, well, I better get going. Good-bye. (Amy moves toward the door. Before she reaches it, a knocking is heard.) That must be Iris.

ROSE

Probably.

(AMY opens the door and an elderly man in his early eighties, FRANK, is standing at the door with a rose in his hand.)

AMY

Your daughter looks like your next door neighbor, Larry.

FRANK

Frank.

AMY

Darn it! I'm sorry, Frank. I'll get it right next time.

FRANK

Don't worry, Amy. You can call me whatever you'd like.

AMY

Aren't you sweet. Did you bring that rose for me?

FRANK

Not this time. This rose is for the lovely lady that bears the same name.

ROSE

That wasn't necessary.

AMY

Well, isn't that nice? Now I've got to run down to Mildred's, but I'll be over to your place in a half an hour, okay?

FRANK

Mildred? There isn't a Mildred living here.

AMY

Shoot. I meant Gladys. (She exits, mumbling Gladys over and over again.)

FRANK

I preferred our other health aide. She could at least remember my name.

ROSE

What did you want, Frank?

FRANK

I just wanted to give you this rose, Rose. I know it's your birthday coming up and I wanted to give you a little pre-birthday present.

ROSE

That's nice. I'll just add it to the others. (She takes the rose from Frank and puts it in the vase with four roses on the coffee table. Frank remains standing at the open door.)

FRANK

May I come in for a moment?

ROSE

No.

FRANK

No?

ROSE

You were already here this morning playing cards. I think that's enough quality time for one day.

FRANK

I merely stopped by to see if you might be interested in going to dinner tonight. My son and his wife are taking me out to eat, and I thought maybe you'd like to come along.

ROSE

I'm not interested.

FRANK

Don't worry, I won't bite. Only the food.

ROSE

I'm busy.

FRANK

Doing what?

ROSE

My favorite story is on television tonight. I can't miss it.

FRANK

You can see it on the reruns.

ROSE

You're a rerun. The only problem is that I can't change the channel.

FRANK

You're a witty one, Rose. That's what I like about you. I just want to see more of you, that's all.

ROSE

You see me when we play Canasta.

FRANK

But you never let me be your partner.

ROSE

Stop playing games, Frank. I'm not interested in any sort of romantic relationship. And the way you flirt with everyone around here, I don't think you are either.

FRANK

I'm sorry, Rose. If you change your mind about tonight, please don't hesitate to call me.

ROSE

I won't. Now leave before Iris shows up.

FRANK

Very well. Until tomorrow, my dear.

(Frank turns to leave just as Rose's daughter, IRIS, does show up. IRIS is around sixty and is just as spunky as her mother. Behind IRIS is VIOLET, Iris's granddaughter around twenty who is visibly pregnant.)

IRIS

Hello there.

FRANK

My goodness, look what we have here. Two lovely ladies. I don't think my day could get much better. How are you, Iris?

IRIS

I'm just fine, Frank. (She walks past Frank.) Hi, Mum.

ROSE

Hello, dear. (They hug.) You didn't tell me that Violet was coming.

VIOLET

We thought we'd surprise you.

FRANK

(To Violet) How is the big city?

VIOLET

Getting bigger. (Holding her belly) Just like me.

FRANK

Nonsense. There's nothing more beautiful than a woman with child. Rose, I think they've all inherited your good looks.

ROSE

Good-bye, Frank.

FRANK

Ladies. (Frank exits and closes the door behind him.)

ROSE

Well, don't just stand there. Give me a hug. I thought you'd be here tomorrow on my birthday.

(Violet hugs Rose as the dialogue continues.)

VIOLET

Hello, Mum, you look wonderful.

ROSE

So do you, dear. How's the baby?

VIOLET

Everything's fine.

ROSE

And have you picked out a wedding date yet?

VIOLET

Soon. We're just focusing in on her right now. (Pats her belly)

ROSE

Her? It's a girl?

IRIS

They just found out yesterday.

VIOLET

Dave and I couldn't stand waiting any longer. So, at my ultrasound yesterday, we told the doctor we wanted to know and it's a girl.

ROSE

Does Lily know?

VIOLET

Of course, Mom was my first phone call.

IRIS

Just think, five generations of girls.

ROSE

This is wonderful news. Congratulations, dear.

VIOLET

I'm just glad I get to carry on the tradition. And you get to be a great, great grandma.

ROSE

Oh, my, that's too many greats. It's going to give me a big head. (They laugh) Well, sit down everyone. We'll celebrate with some freshly made apple pie. I'll put on some coffee.

IRIS

Just relax. You sit down. I'll make the coffee.

ROSE

Oh, all right. The coffee is in the right cupboard, next to the...

IRIS

I know where it is. (She exits.)

(Rose and Violet move to the dining room table.)

ROSE

Now you'll carry on the name tradition too, right?

VIOLET

We'd like to, but we can't think of any more good flower names.

ROSE

Oh, there has to be some name that would work. What's your favorite flower?

VIOLET

Bee Balm.

ROSE

So what's your second favorite flower?

VIOLET

Hibiscus.

ROSE

Okay, what about your third?

VIOLET

Dandelion.

ROSE

The dandelion?

VIOLET

I think they're pretty.

ROSE

You can't name your child after a weed.

VIOLET

Why not? That way when people say, gee, your daughter is growing like a weed, I can say, yes, I know, she is one.

ROSE

I'm sure you'll think of something.

(IRIS enters from the kitchen with a tray full of cups, saucers, utensils, spoons, creamer, sugar, etc.)

IRIS

I like Marigold.

VIOLET

Yes, grandma, you've told me this a thousand times.

IRIS

No, now listen. Split the name so that Mary is her first name and Gold is her middle. Wouldn't that be clever?

VIOLET

But I want the first name to be obvious.

IRIS

(Looking at the tray) Did I get everything?

ROSE

How about the pie?

IRIS

I was getting there.

(Iris exits to the kitchen. Violet begins placing the cups and saucers around the table.)

VIOLET

We'll get it figured out. It's sort of funny though. Instead of looking through baby books for names, Dave and I have been looking through seed catalogs. We're halfway through the perennials.

ROSE

Speaking of Dave, where is he? Didn't he come with?

VIOLET

He couldn't get off work. They're in a big rush to get this new website up and running, but he'll be here tomorrow for your birthday.

ROSE

That's good. Is he looking forward to the baby?

VIOLET

Of course. We're both very happy.

ROSE

Happy enough to get married?

VIOLET

Yes. Things are a little crazy right now with the baby and his job and we're looking for a bigger apartment and we just want to wait until we can adjust to all these changes.

ROSE

Seems to me a wedding would be the top priority, especially since you're already living together and the baby on the way. Why, your great-grandfather and I were married a year before...

VIOLET

I know, but things are different nowadays. People my age don't feel like we have to get married.

ROSE

You love each other, don't you?

VIOLET

You don't have to worry. Dave and I love each other very much.

ROSE

I'm not worried. (Pause) It's just that Lily had problems with her marriage and it might have...

VIOLET

Mom's divorce isn't genetic. Besides, Iris and Scott are doing fine and you had a good marriage too.

ROSE

You're absolutely right, dear. But he eventually left me too.

VIOLET

He died.

(IRIS enters with plates, coffee pot and pie.)

IRIS

Here we go. This pie looks great.

ROSE

Hopefully it'll taste as good.

VIOLET

Are you kidding? You make the best pie in Lanesboro.

IRIS

The country.

VIOLET

The world.

ROSE

Now you've gone too far.

(They busy themselves with dishing out the pie, pouring coffee, etc.)

IRIS

Are you having coffee, Violet?

VIOLET

Just a taste, otherwise little Dandelion will be kicking all day.

IRIS

Stop that. Do you want some juice or something?

VIOLET

I'm fine. Sit.

IRIS

What about Daisy?

VIOLET

It's a possibility, but every time I hear that name I think of that stupid song. Daisy, daisy, give me your answer do. I'm half crazy all for the love of you.

IRIS

That's a cute song. At least until you sang it.

VIOLET

Ha ha.

IRIS

So, what was Frank doing here, Mum? Were you playing cards?

ROSE

No, we play cards in the morning. You know that.

IRIS

What was he doing here then?

ROSE

He dropped by to give me a rose for my birthday. He's been bothering me all week with them.

VIOLET

My, my. It sounds like Mum has a boyfriend.

ROSE

Don't be ridiculous. Frank drives me crazy.

VIOLET

Is it a good kind of crazy? Like "Oh, Frank is here. He's making my heart go pitter patter all ooooooover the place."

ROSE

If you weren't pregnant, I'd wash your mouth out with soap. (VIOLET laughs) I want nothing to do with him. He flirts with every woman here, and if they ignore him, he just moves on to the next one.

IRIS

If you're ignoring him, he sure hasn't given up. Are you sure you're not interested?

ROSE

I knew you'd get all nosey if you saw him here.

IRIS

What's the big deal? Frank seems like a nice guy.

ROSE

It wouldn't be right.

VIOLET

Why? Do you think you're too old?

ROSE

Soap. Lots of soap.

VIOLET

I didn't mean it... I don't know what I mean.

ROSE

(To Iris) It wouldn't be fair to your father, that's why.

IRIS

Dad's been dead for over ten years. I think you've had plenty of time to show your respect.

ROSE

Before he passed on, he never told me to go out and find a boyfriend. As far as I'm concerned, we're still married.

IRIS

There's nothing wrong with having a male friend around for companionship.

ROSE

Now you're talking dirty and you need to stop it.

IRIS

What? How is that dirty?

ROSE

I know what you meant by companionship. And that's exactly what Frank wants. Lots and lots of companionship. Probably every day too. That old pervert.

IRIS

No, I didn't mean that at all. Just forget it.

ROSE

Let's just drop the whole thing. It's finished.

IRIS

Fine. (A short pause as they eat.) What about Tulip? That's a lovely flower.

VIOLET

I don't think I've ever heard of anyone named Tulip.

IRIS

There you go. She can be the first.

ROSE

I had a cat named Tulip. She always pissed in my flowerbeds.

VIOLET

Yeah, I think I'm going to pass on Tulip.

IRIS

I don't remember a cat named Tulip.

ROSE

She died when you were pretty young. Right around the time John was born, I believe.

VIOLET

Do you think he'll come to the party?

IRIS

Yeah, right. John only cares about himself.

ROSE

What's that supposed to mean?

IRIS

The only time he comes back home is if he wants something. Otherwise, he's too busy moving from state to state, doing nothing.

VIOLET

I think that's cool. Just wandering around the country, doing what you want, when you want.

IRIS

It's a romantic idea at your age, hun, but not so much when you're in your late fifties.

VIOLET

Why can't it be? Maybe John is a natural nomad.

ROSE

He's a free spirit. He always has been.

IRIS

He's crazy.

ROSE

Don't talk about him that way. I swear, when it comes to you two, it's like you haven't grown past the fourth grade.

IRIS

I can't help it. He's burned too many bridges with me. Do you realize how much money he owes me?

ROSE

He'll pay you back.

IRIS

Uh-huh.

ROSE

Let's just drop the whole thing. It's finished. (A short pause while they eat.)

IRIS

I've always been fond of Sage.

VIOLET

That's an herb, not a flower.

IRIS

It makes a lovely tea.

ROSE

I used to grow a little sage every summer on the farm.

IRIS

Why don't you get a garden going here? Don't they have a community garden in the back?

ROSE

It's not the same.

IRIS

Why?

ROSE

It's everyone's garden, not my garden. I can't grow something without everyone poking their noses into it. At the farm, it was my garden and I could grow whatever I wanted.

IRIS

I'm sure you can grow whatever you want and no one would mess with it.

ROSE

No, I can't. You have to be part of the garden club and they decide as a group what should be grown and what shouldn't. It's just a bunch of elitist garden snobs growing a bunch of stuff nobody can have.

IRIS

Then join the garden club.

ROSE

I don't want to. I haven't been here long enough for them to get to know me.

IRIS

Mum, you've been here almost a year now. How much longer do you have to be here?

ROSE

I don't know and I don't care. Like I said, I liked it better on the farm.

IRIS

Must we go over this every time I visit? That place was too big for you to handle...

ROSE

But we didn't have to sell it. Your father turned over in his grave the day that happened.

IRIS

No one wanted it. I didn't want it. John certainly didn't want it. Lily didn't want it.

ROSE

That's because they both don't want to be here.

VIOLET

That's not fair. Mom needed to move away. She...

IRIS

Yes, we know, we know...

VIOLET

(Continues talking over Iris) Needed to get out of here after dealing with that horrible man...

IRIS

Your father...

VIOLET

And she needed a change. A place where no one knows her and she could start over again and be...

IRIS

We know, we know! Do we have to go over this every time too?

VIOLET

(Short pause as Violet collects herself) Besides no one asked if I wanted the farm.

IRIS

(Iris gives her a "give me a break" look and then directs her attention to Rose) And how would you have continued to support yourself? You had no retirement plan and social security was a joke. By selling the house and all that land, you're able to live here comfortably for the rest of your life.

ROSE

I can't stay here forever, either. Once I can't take care of myself, I have to leave. Then what?

IRIS

We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. The point is that you'll be able to afford whatever options are available.

ROSE

Options. What options? The only option is straight to the Happy Meadows Nursing Home. And there ain't nothing happy about it. Why don't they just call it the Good Place To Die Home? Because that's what you go there to do.

VIOLET

(Laughs) That's cute. Good Place To Die. (Realizes they are all staring at her.) But probably not funny right now.

ROSE

Let's just drop the whole thing. It's finished. (A short pause while they scrape for crumbs.)

ROSE

How about Rosemary?

VIOLET

Oooo, I like that one.

IRIS

(Suddenly sick of the whole conversation) Oh, shoot, look at the time. (Starts putting dishes, etc, on the serving platter.) We've got to run. We've got to do some last minute shopping for your birthday tomorrow, and the bakery closes at five.

VIOLET

That's right. We've got lots to do. (Pitches in to help.)

ROSE

Just leave everything. I'll clean it up.

IRIS

We'll at least put it in the kitchen, so you don't have to carry it.

ROSE

It's no big deal. It's not like I have to get to a garden club meeting or anything.

IRIS

I've got it. (She exits with the tray.)

ROSE

Well, I'm sorry you have to leave so quickly.

VIOLET

We'll have all weekend.

ROSE

I know. You better get going.

VIOLET

See you tomorrow.

ROSE

Bye, dear.

IRIS

(Enters from kitchen) Okay, let's rock and roll. Thanks for pie.

ROSE

You're welcome.

VIOLET

Can we stop by the flower shop?

IRIS

We've already got the flowers.

VIOLET

I wanted to look for some more names.

(They hurry out the door, saying good-bye, etc. ROSE shuts the door behind them and shaking her head, goes to sit on the couch. She picks a magazine off of the coffee table and leafs through it, not really looking at anything. After a few seconds, she puts the magazine down and just sits there. The energy that the girls brought with them has left, leaving only silence. She looks behind her at the clock. The ticking of the clock is heard again, and as it gets louder, she stares off at nothing as the lights slowly dim. The ticking remains until the next scene begins.)

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 1

ACT 1, SCENE 2

AT RISE: It is the next morning. The ticking sound fades. ROSE and three other elderly people sit around the dining room table, playing Canasta. FRANK is one of the other three. The other two are GLADYS, who is ROSE'S partner, and another older man, JIM, who is Frank's partner.

GLADYS

Whose turn is it?

FRANK

It's yours, dear.

GLADYS

What?

FRANK

It's yours, dear!

GLADYS

Oh, sorry about that. I was off in La-La Land again. (She draws.) Oooo, I wanted that one. There you go, Jim. (She discards)

JIM

Gladys, if you throw me another black three, I'm going to scream. (He draws)

GLADYS

No, thank you. I can't have a lot of dairy.

JIM

What?

GLADYS

Did you ask if I wanted ice cream?

ROSE

No, he wants you to stop throwing him black threes!

GLADYS

Well, I can't help that. It's just part of the game.

FRANK

I think it's going to be a very painful game today.

JIM

I think you're right. (He discards) I should have popped a Demerol before we started.

ROSE

That's not what I needed. (She draws)

JIM

Good.

ROSE

It's my birthday. You need to be more kind. (She discards)

JIM

Not when it comes to Canasta.

FRANK

(He draws) Excellent. Another lovely lady. That makes seven and that's makes a Canasta. (He puts the cards from his hand down on the table.) Here you are, Gladys, my dear. Have a ten. (He discards)

GLADYS

Oooo, I wanted that one. (She picks up the pile and attempts to sort them.)

JIM

Good grief.

FRANK

What *don't* you have in your hand?

GLADYS

Yohan? Who's that? It sounds Norwegian. Didn't he live on Ox Cart Road?

FRANK

Never mind.

GLADYS

I better put some of these down before I get caught with all these points in my hand. Here Jim, that's your card. (She discards)

JIM

(Screams) Wheee! What a surprise, a black three! (He draws)

GLADYS

I can't help it. I just got a whole bunch more.

JIM

Then stop picking up the discard pile. (He discards)

GLADYS

Yes, winning does make me smile.

FRANK

So, who is coming to your birthday party this afternoon?

ROSE

Just my family. (She draws)

FRANK

And me, perhaps?

ROSE

Have you been invited?

FRANK

Not yet.

ROSE

Then I guess you're not coming. (She discards)

FRANK

(He draws) You mean to tell me after all those roses I've sent this week, I don't even get invited?

JIM

I got invited.

FRANK

When?

JIM

A couple of days ago when we were playing cards.

FRANK

And where was I?

ROSE

The bathroom.

FRANK

What a crock. (He discards)

GLADYS

Ooooo, I have that one. (She picks up the pile again and begins sorting. She looks at Frank.) Who has to go to the bathroom?

JIM

This is getting beyond ridiculous.

GLADYS

(As she discards) Here you go...

GLADYS / JIM

A black three.

JIM

I love the black three. Hello, black three. (He draws)

GLADYS

Yes, I'll be at the party.

FRANK

She was invited too? (JIM discards)

ROSE

Only by accident. When I invited Jim, she thought I was talking to her. (She draws)

FRANK

You have quite the elitist club going here, Rose. What is this, the new version of the garden club?

ROSE

Someone has to compete with them. (She discards. Frank quickly draws.)

JIM

You know I've been on the waiting list for five years, and I still haven't got in. I've got a great idea for an herb garden.

FRANK

I must say, Rose. I am deeply hurt. (He discards)

GLADYS

Ooooo, I have that one. (She picks up the pile and sorts.)

JIM

It's like deju vu every minute. Throw me a black three, Gladys!

GLADYS

There you are. (She discards. JIM draws.)

ROSE

If you're going to pout about it, Frank, then I suppose you can come.

FRANK

Thank you, dear. I knew you'd come around.

ROSE

But don't talk to me and whatever you do, don't talk to my family.

FRANK

Why can't I talk to your family?

ROSE

Never mind. (She draws) Partner, may I go out?

JIM

(Upset) Great.

ROSE

Partner, may I go out!?

GLADYS

What?

ROSE

MAY I GO OUT!?

GLADYS

Yes, of course. You don't have to shout. (To Frank) She gets so worked up about things.

FRANK

Don't I know it.

ROSE

(She lays down her cards) There we have it. I think that may be enough points to win the game, right boys?

JIM

I suppose.

FRANK

We'll get them back on the next game, Jim.

JIM

You've said that for the past three days.

FRANK

And one of these times I'll be right.

ROSE

We can't play anymore today. Iris is coming with the crew to get ready for the party at noon and it's nearly eleven-thirty.

JIM

Oh man, that's reminds me. (Pulls a briefcase out from under his chair.) Time to take the pills. (He opens the briefcase and it is full of pill bottles.)

FRANK

You know, Jim, every day I swear you've added more pills to that briefcase.

JIM

Actually, I have. (Holds up a bottle) This one is to thicken my blood. It seems that I'm taking so many pills now my blood is too thin.

ROSE

Maybe you shouldn't take so many pills.

JIM

You would think that would be the logical solution, but I've got so many ailments now, I need them all. Blood pressure, heart medicine, arthritis, back pain, hacking cough, stuff to make me regular, stuff to make me irregular, stuff to put me to sleep and stuff to keep me going. I really like those.

ROSE

What don't you have?

JIM

Not sure. I found out yesterday that I've got Glaucoma too. I don't have anything for that yet.

FRANK

Do you have any aspirin?

JIM

With codeine or without?

FRANK

Without please.

JIM

Suit yourself. (Pulls out another bottle and passes it to Frank.)

FRANK

Medicare must love you.

JIM

No, I love Medicare.

ROSE

How can you keep track of all of that? I usually have the nurse put them in the weekly pill box.

JIM

(Pulls out a long piece of paper) I have a chart. I figure if I can't keep track of them all by myself, then it's time to move on to the Home.

GLADYS

Are we done playing?

ROSE

Yes!

GLADYS

Then I better get going. I have a present to wrap.

ROSE

You didn't have to get me anything, Gladys!

GLADYS

Sure, now you tell me.

(Gladys exits while they continue talking.)

FRANK

Eighty. Can you believe it, Rose?

ROSE

I wish I didn't.

JIM

I have a pill that could help you with that.

ROSE

I wish they had a pill that just kept everyone young all the time, instead of coming up with pills to make you *think* you're young again.

JIM

Like Viagra?

ROSE

You know what I mean.

FRANK

You can always be young at heart, Rose.

ROSE

That doesn't get rid of my liver spots.

FRANK

You have to look at it positively. Think of what you've accomplished in your life and be proud.

ROSE

I haven't accomplished anything.

FRANK

You raised a family, didn't you?

ROSE

Yes.

FRANK

That's the most important thing.

ROSE

But that's all I did. I was married at eighteen and was pregnant a year later. I spent my whole life on that farm and never went anywhere and never did anything exciting.

FRANK

Then change it. Do something.

ROSE

It's too late.

FRANK

It's never too late.

ROSE

No, it's getting later and later. You need to leave so I can get ready.

JIM

She's right. See you in a little while.

(Both men get up to exit.)

FRANK

Think about what I said, Rose. Words for the wise.

ROSE

That's exactly what they are, Frank. Words. That's all I hear from you is words, words, words. It's like diarrhea of the mouth.

JIM

I have a pill for that too.

ROSE

Well, give it to him in the hall.

(She ushers them out and shuts the door. The ticking of the clock is immediately heard, but softly. She walks back to the table and puts the cards away in the buffet. She pauses to look at a picture of her late husband, touching it tenderly. A knock is heard at the door.)

ROSE

Come in, it's open.

(The knock is repeated.)

ROSE

Iris, if that's you, you can come in!

(The knock is repeated.)

ROSE

Good grief!

END OF FREE PREVIEW

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