

The Visitor

Arthur Keyser



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THE VISITOR

It is never too late to give up our prejudices.
~Henry David Thoreau

CAST

HARRY GOLDSTEIN: Seventy-seven years old.

ROSE GOLDSTEIN: Harry's wife, seventy-two years old.

SAM JACOBS: Harry's lawyer, sixty-three years old.

DIANA QUINN- GOLDSTEIN: Late thirties, daughter-in-law of Harry and Rose.

Place

A bedroom on the second floor of an upper middle class suburban home.

Time

Mid-afternoon on a weekday.

At Rise: HARRY is sitting in bed, wearing pajamas. There is a small chair in the room. He leans over to an end table, pulls out a drawer and after fumbling through its contents, he closes the drawer without having found what he was seeking.

HARRY: *(calling out in a loud voice)* Rose! *(hearing no answer, he calls out in a louder voice)* Rose! I need you! Now!

(ROSE walks into the bedroom)

ROSE: I heard you. You don't have to yell.

HARRY: If I didn't yell, it would take you six hours to get up here.

ROSE: I was busy.

HARRY: You'll have plenty of time to be busy after I'm dead. Did you take my cigarettes from the drawer?

ROSE: Of course I did. Do you think they just walked out by themselves?

HARRY: Put them back.

ROSE: You heard what the doctor said. Cigarettes cause lung cancer.

HARRY: I'm dying from pancreatic cancer! If I'm lucky, I have five, six weeks. Who cares if I get lung cancer after I'm buried in the cemetery?

ROSE: I'm not listening to that talk. The doctor is trying a new medicine--and don't tell me it's not going to work. You shouldn't be smoking when you're on a new treatment.

HARRY: If I knew, fifty years ago, when I asked you to marry me, that you would take away my cigarettes when I would be too sick to fight back---

ROSE: You would what?

HARRY: I don't know. I'm too sick to think of a good answer.

ROSE: For fifty years, you've been saying you're sick when you can't think of a good answer.

HARRY: I can't understand why I haven't heard from Sam. I called him and left a message.

ROSE: He's here. Downstairs.

HARRY: What's he doing downstairs? I said I wanted to see him.

ROSE: He only got here fifteen minutes ago. He's talking to Pauline and Marvin.

HARRY: Why are they here?

ROSE: What's the matter? You don't want your daughter and son-in-law to say goodbye?

HARRY: Why are they saying goodbye if you think I'm not dying?

ROSE: I didn't want to take any chances, so I asked them to visit.

HARRY: They can visit...but I don't want Marvin talking to my lawyer. Sam charges by the minute and he'll bill me for his time, talking to Marvin. Tell Sam to come up here now. By himself!

(ROSE walks over to the doorway and in a loud voice, she calls out)

ROSE: Sam? Could you please come up here? Harry wants to talk to you.

(After a brief moment, SAM walks into the bedroom)

SAM: Hello Harry. You have nice color in your cheeks.

HARRY: Don't bullshit me. I'm dying. We have to talk. Sit down.

(SAM sits down on a chair)

SAM: So talk.

HARRY: *(pointing to ROSE)* Not with that cranky woman listening. Go downstairs, Rose. Talk to your idiot son-in-law. And close the door.

(ROSE walks out of the room, shutting the door behind her)

SAM: What's so important?

HARRY: What are you? Some kind of a crackpot? I'm dying. Maybe to you, that doesn't sound important. If I made you miss a golf date, I apologize.

SAM: Don't be obnoxious. You know I don't play golf. I understand you're upset. Nobody wants to die.

HARRY: Everybody dies. I'm seventy-seven and I can't complain. When I was young, they said we should expect to live till sixty-five. I got twelve extra years. *(pause)* Do you have something to write on? I want to change my will.

SAM: Tell me what you want to change. I have a writing pad.

HARRY: Before we talk about my will, I want to get something straight. I don't want to be billed for your conversation downstairs with my genius son-in-law. You're my lawyer...not his. If you include that time on your bill to my estate, I'm instructing my Executor to refuse to pay it.

SAM: Did you forget already that I'm your Executor?

HARRY: I didn't forget. If you send a bill to yourself for talking to Marvin, don't pay it. He doesn't need any legal advice. He needs a brain scan. *(pause)* How God could make a grown-up man that stupid, I'll never understand!

SAM: So how come you made him Vice President of your company?

HARRY: I did it for Pauline. Marvin isn't even capable of working as a checkout clerk in a supermarket. What could I do? Let Pauline and my grandchildren starve?

SAM: Enough about Marvin. What changes do you want to make?

HARRY: First, I want you to sell the company as soon as possible after I'm gone. Marvin wouldn't have the slightest idea of how to run it. The business would go bankrupt and Rose would have to sell her jewelry for food.

SAM: Stop making up crazy stories. You're not a poor man and you also have a very large pension plan. Rose isn't going to go hungry.

HARRY: Even so...I want the company sold. I want enough put aside so that Pauline will have an independent income without depending on that good-for-nothing husband she lives with. The rest, I want for Rose. When Rose dies, what's left of her money should go to Pauline.

SAM: What about Eddie?

HARRY: Eddie who?

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!