

They Killed Roscoe

Til death us do part.

A Dramedy in One Act

by James Hutchison

Also available from www.jameshutchison.ca

What the Dickens! *Even Scrooge got a second chance.*

When Marty Fisher gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha and the actor playing Scrooge shows up drunk Marty has to scramble to save the opening night production of a Christmas Carol and his engagement to his fiancée Tami.

Two Act Comedy, 6M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

A Christmas Carol – Two versions available -

When Scrooge's nephew Fred finds some letters Scrooge had written to his sister Fan a long time ago the past is unlocked, and Scrooge learns how his fear of poverty and pursuit of wealth have cost him a chance for love and genuine happiness.

CAST OF 10+ - Two Act Drama, 6M, 4W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

CAST OF 25+ - Two Act Drama, 15M, 10W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Under the Mistletoe *Not every romantic evening goes as planned.*

Two couples in their late fifties, one long time friends and the other having just met, try to navigate the tricky road of love, sex and desire while spending a romantic night in the Christmas Themed Suites at the Prairie Dog Inn.

Two Act Romantic Comedy 1M, 1W or 2M, 2W Single Set, 120 minutes

Heart of Stone: A Jessica Quinn Mystery *Trusting the wrong person can be deadly.*

When Jessica Quinn uncovers the truth about her father's killer and the truth behind a woman claiming to be the long-lost daughter of her client Mary McConnell more than one person ends up dead.

Two Act Mystery, 7M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Stories from Langford *Every town has its secrets.*

Six characters from Langford tell stories from their lives: stories about, jealousy, revenge, love and forgiveness.

Two Act Drama, 1M, 1W, Simple settings, 120 Minutes

Death and the Psychiatrist *Even Death Could Use a Friend*

Feeling depressed about having a job where no one likes him Death goes into therapy with Dr. Thompson in order to help him cope with his guilt.

One Act Comedy, 3M, or 2M, 1W, Single Set, 50 Minutes

Plus, other One Acts and 10 Minute Plays including The Blood of a Thousand Chickens, 500 bucks and a pack of smokes, and Elvis is Dead.

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PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

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The Playwright

James Hutchison writes comedies, dramas, and mysteries. He also interviews other playwrights, actors, and directors about the business and creative aspects of theatre, film, and television. You can read his interviews on his blog and download his plays at www.jameshutchison.ca.

They Killed Roscoe – Til death us do part.

A Dramady in One-Act

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CAST of CHARACTERS

Betty the wife

Sammy the husband

SETTING

Betty and Sammy's Living Room/Dining Room

TIME

Late Thursday Afternoon

STORY OF THE PLAY

Ever since Betty's husband Sammy recovered from a near fatal heart attack she has been planning his funeral and looking forward to the day she can bury him.

AUTHORS NOTE

Running time will vary depending on pauses and staging. A longer pause may suit certain moments. These moments should be filled with some form of nonverbal action.

For all the newlyweds out there.

THEY KILLED ROSCOE

SCENE: BETTY and SAMMY's LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM

Setting: There is a tired and worn feel to the furnishings. The room is cluttered. Few visitors ever drop by.

At Rise: BETTY and SAMMY enter through the front door. BETTY carries a large, oversized handbag.

BETTY

I'm just trying to work out the details. It's always better to be prepared. What's wrong with that?

SAMMY

Well do you have to work on them right now?

BETTY

Why not now.

SAMMY

Because I don't want to think about it. You want a drink?

BETTY

I'm dying for a drink. Make mine a tall one.

SAMMY exits to the kitchen. BETTY sits and kicks off her shoes.

BETTY

Oh, that's feels better. *(Shouting to the kitchen)* There must have been 200 people there.

SAMMY (Off)

What?

BETTY(Shouting)

At the funeral – there must have been 200 people there.

SAMMY (Off)

What?

BETTY(Shouting)

At the funeral.

SAMMY

What about it?

BETTY(Shouting)

Oh, for Christ sake! I'm not going to yell.

SAMMY enters with ice and crosses to the bar to mix drinks.

SAMMY

What are you shouting about?

BETTY

There must have been 200 hundred people at Charlie's funeral.

SAMMY

It was standing room only. We were lucky we got a seat.

BETTY

So, have you made a decision?

SAMMY

No. I told you I don't want to think about it.

BETTY

What's there to think about? You only have two suits. God, I wish you were more like your father.

SAMMY

Decisive.

BETTY

No. Dead. He was fifty-one when he died wasn't he?

SAMMY

Fifty-five.

BETTY

The point is he died.

SAMMY

And I didn't.

BETTY

No. You didn't. Even though you had a heart attack – you didn't.

SAMMY

Yes, well – family history – I was lucky to escape it.

BETTY

The damn doctors didn't think you were going to make it.

SAMMY

No?

BETTY

No. I prayed you wouldn't survive.

SAMMY

Did you?

SAMMY hands BETTY a drink.

BETTY

I had big plans for the insurance money.

SAMMY

I'm sure you did.

BETTY

I had wanted to spend the summer in Europe.

SAMMY

Not Disneyland?

BETTY

Not Disneyland. I wanted to go to Italy or Indonesia. Get out of this town and go somewhere different that's all. Damn doctors.

SAMMY

Yes, damn doctors. How unfortunate for you that medicine has made enormous leaps since my father's day. And of course, I stopped smoking.

BETTY

I should have married your brother.

SAMMY

Lost fifty pounds.

BETTY

If only I'd known better.

SAMMY

And I stopped drinking.

SAMMY takes a drink.

SAMMY

Well binge drinking.

BETTY

Why couldn't you have been more like him uh?

SAMMY

Like who?

BETTY

Your brother. Why couldn't you have been more like him and died in your forties?

SAMMY

Sorry to disappoint you dear.

BETTY

If the ambulance had been stuck in traffic you wouldn't be here.

SAMMY

If you hadn't become pregnant, we never would have married.

BETTY

Don't you start in on our daughter.

SAMMY

Our daughter's a self-centered – self-absorbed – bitch. Just like her mother.

BETTY

And her father's a spineless jellyfish who wasted most of his life teaching dim-witted school kids Canadian history. You shouldn't talk about your daughter like that.

SAMMY

Why not? She shares the same high opinion of me as you do. You hungry?

BETTY

A little. You want a sandwich. I snagged some from the reception.

BETTY grabs her purse. SAMMY is silent as she removes a large quantity of items from her purse including sandwiches, dessert bars, pickles, napkins and packets of salt and pepper all in zip lock bags.

SAMMY

I wish you wouldn't do that Betty. It makes us look cheap.

BETTY

I'm discreet. I don't steal from the table. I just go back to the kitchen and nobody's the wiser.

SAMMY

Did you get any chicken or turkey?

BETTY

No. I've got roast beef and ham.

SAMMY

Did you grab any mustard.

BETTY

No. Why would I grab mustard?

SAMMY

You grabbed pickles. Salt and pepper. Napkins. Why not the mustard?

BETTY

If you want mustard go get it yourself.

SAMMY exits to kitchen.

BETTY

And grab me a Pepsi.

BETTY pulls some paper plates and disposable utensils out of her bag.

BETTY

So, what's it going to be? The blue or the grey?

SAMMY(Off)

What?

BETTY

Oh, for Christ's sake. Do you want to be buried in your blue suit or the grey one?

SILENCE

BETTY

Sammy?

SILENCE

BETTY

Samuel!

SAMMY (Off)

What?

BETTY

I'm not going to shout.

What?
SAMMY(Off)

I said I'm not going to shout!
BETTY(Shouting)

I can't hear you. Speak up.
SAMMY(Off)

Hurry up and get in here.
BETTY(Shouting)

SAMMY enters with the mustard and a can of Pepsi. SAMMY and BETTY eat during.

What are you yelling about?
SAMMY

The blue or the grey?
BETTY

Oh, we're planning my funeral again are we.
SAMMY

Yes. It gives me something to look forward to. What kind of flowers do you want?
BETTY

I don't know. Anything but lilies.
SAMMY

Roses? Pink carnations? Swamp cabbage? Do any of those appeal to you?
BETTY

That family of Charlie's sure didn't spend much on flowers did they.
SAMMY

No. Did you hear what they did to his dog?
BETTY

SAMMY

Roscoe?

BETTY

They had him put down.

SAMMY

They killed Roscoe.

BETTY

I know. Can you believe that.

SAMMY

Charlie loved that dog. Why on earth would they do that?

BETTY

Well according to the family the poor dog was unhappy without Charlie.

SAMMY

So, if the dog had died first – do you think they would have put the old man down?

BETTY

I wouldn't put it past them.

SAMMY

I wish I'd known they were going to kill Charlie's dog. I would have done something about it.

BETTY

Found him a home.

SAMMY

Sure, why not. Or kept him here maybe.

BETTY

Bastards.

SAMMY

Bastards.

PAUSE

BETTY

So, what kind of music do you want?

SAMMY

What?

BETTY

What kind of music do you want at your funeral?

SAMMY

Jesus Betty, can't you give it a rest?

BETTY

If you don't decide – I'll decide for you. You want hip-hop maybe?

SAMMY

No, I don't want hip-hop.

BETTY

Do you want a soloist?

SAMMY

I don't know. What did you think of that soloist they had at Charlie's funeral?

BETTY

Oh my God, she made me envy the deaf.

SAMMY

She couldn't even sing Amazing Grace.

BETTY

It's bad enough having to listen to that wretched little song at every funeral we go to but listening to that woman sing it made me want to slit my wrists.

SAMMY

Maybe I should hire her to sing it at your birthday. Would you like that?

BETTY

We're not planning my birthday, dear.

SAMMY

How about your funeral then. You seem so anxious to plan mine. I think I'll have you buried in that one-piece jump suit you keep at the back of the closet.

BETTY

What jump-suit?

SAMMY

The yellow one. The one that makes you look like a banana.

BETTY

Oh, you're a funny one, aren't you? Well maybe I'll have you buried in a clown costume. Would you like that?

SAMMY

Going with a circus theme, are we?

BETTY

Why not? I could have your body shot out of a cannon.

SAMMY

Well, that would certainly be more exciting than Charlie's funeral.

BETTY

What a snore fest that was. The music was dreadful, the eulogy almost put me to sleep, and the luncheon was nothing special.

SAMMY

Why can't they have pizza at these things instead of these little sandwiches and dessert squares?

BETTY

Well, if we go with the circus theme for your funeral we can have hot dogs, popcorn, and cotton candy.

SAMMY

You'd be happy if I dropped dead at the table right now wouldn't you. Pull a John Dunne.

BETTY

A what?

SAMMY

A John Dunne.

BETTY

What's a John Dunne.

SAMMY

The author. You know. John Dunne. He was married to Joan Didion.

BETTY

Who?

SAMMY

Joan Didion. The writer.

BETTY

I thought you said John Dunne was the writer.

SAMMY

They're both writers.

BETTY

Are they?

SAMMY

They were.

BETTY

Were.

SAMMY

They're both dead now.

BETTY

I wonder what they're funerals were like.

SAMMY

Better than Charlie's I'll bet. They're from New York. The literary elite.

BETTY

Even the literary elite die.

SAMMY

They do. They did. John Dunne had a bad heart. He sat down at the dinner table and died in an instant. That's a John Dunne.

BETTY

Sounds unpleasant. I'd much rather you died in your sleep. Do you know how many times I've prayed that you'd die in your sleep.

SAMMY

Do you know how many times I've thought of putting a pillow over your fat face and holding it there?

BETTY

But you haven't done it.

SAMMY

Not yet I haven't.

BETTY

Why not?

SAMMY

Because that would spoil all the fun. You give me a reason to go on living. I did love you once. Or at least you fooled me into loving you.

SAMMY takes a bite of a dessert bar. SAMMY tries to clear his throat. He starts to cough. He looks at BETTY. SHE moves towards him and then steps back. He reaches for his drink but knocks it over. BETTY grabs the phone but doesn't dial. SAMMY collapses to his knees and then falls forward so that he's on his hands and knees coughing and trying to breathe. He gives another cough and dislodges what was in his throat. He turns over and sits on the floor clearly shaken.

BETTY

Are you alright.

SAMMY

What the hell were you doing?

BETTY

I panicked. I didn't know what to do.

SAMMY

You call 911 is what you do. You give me the Heimlich or at least try. But you don't step back and watch me die.

BETTY

You weren't really choking – were you? I don't think so. I could tell you were faking it. You just wanted to scare me that's all.

SAMMY

What kind of a sick bitch stands there and watches her husband choke to death?

BETTY

You didn't choke to death. You were just doing it on purpose. To see what I'd do. If you'd have collapsed, I would have done something.

SAMMY

Called your travel agent and booked a trip to Europe.

BETTY

Called 911.

SAMMY

Really?

BETTY

Really. You'd do the same for me wouldn't you?

SAMMY

Oh yes. I'd do the same for you.

SAMMY stands.

SAMMY

Black.

BETTY

What?

SAMMY

I want a black suit.

BETTY

You want to be buried in a black suit.

SAMMY

Yes.

BETTY

You don't have a black suit.

SAMMY

Well then, you'd better buy me one hadn't you. I was thinking Armani maybe.

BETTY

I'm sure we can find something on sale. Why pay full price for something you're only going to wear once.

SAMMY

Alright, put your shoes on and let's go.

BETTY

Right now.

SAMMY

Yes, right now. You wanted me to be more decisive. Make a decision. Well, I've made one.

BETTY

Have you?

BETTY puts her shoes on.

SAMMY

Yes. And while we're shopping you can pick something out for yourself.

BETTY

For myself?

SAMMY

If I'm picking out the suit, I'm going to be buried in then you should pick out the dress you want to be buried in. That's fair, isn't it?

BETTY

Because one of these days.

SAMMY

Oh, yes. One of these days or – one of these nights.

BETTY

It will happen.

SAMMY

I'm sure it will.

BETTY

Only a matter of time.

SAMMY

Days maybe?

BETTY

Weeks?

SAMMY

Years?

BETTY

Maybe years. *(Pause)* Could be hours.

SAMMY

Could be.

BETTY and SAMMY exit as SAMMY sings AMAZING GRACE.

SAMMY

AMAZING GRACE HOW SWEET THE SOUND
THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME

I ONCE WAS LOST BUT NOW AM FOUND
WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE.

Curtain