**SOMETHING BORROWED**

(A 40 minute Stage Play)

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**CHARACTERS**

Rosemary a woman in early middle age.

Mrs Williams her elderly mother.

Donald their middle-aged neighbour.

**SET**

The play is set in Rosemary and Mrs William's cluttered living room. There is a small kitchen just visible stage left, and a large window which gives onto the garden. As the lights rise, birds can be heard singing merrily.

Rose (seated by the window, struggling with calculator and paperwork) Figures. Numbers. Nothing makes sense in spring. (pause) Twelve percent of thirty seven pounds? Oh, what's the point?

Moth (enters stage right) Not finished yet? He'll be here soon.

Rose I know.

Moth Make sure you check it out in long hand. Thoroughness. Nothing’s thorough anymore. Everything has to be so fast.

Rose A calculator is thorough.

Moth Those birds are driving me mad. (she closes the window) All that twittering and tweeting. (she shuffles to her armchair and sits down painfully) Ah, that's better. (pause) My back's playing up dreadfully. (pause) I said, my back's playing up dreadfully.

Rose I’m trying to concentrate.

Moth (pause) You'll see. They've charged us £18.50 too much.

Rose I don’t think you’re right about that.

Moth We've got the meter readings. We've kept last year's bills. Gas has gone up 6 percent spread over . . .

Rose Does it really matter?.

Moth I'll thank you not to talk about my money in that fashion. Where would you be without it?

Rose You know I'm grateful, mother, but . . .

Moth No ifs or buts. I want every penny accounted for. (pause) Now where's my needlepoint? I can never find anything when I want it.

Rose Under the chair.

Moth Oh. How did it get there? (starts to embroider) Still no word from Aunt Ginny. She could at least have thanked us for the headscarf. I thought the colour was very wearable.

Rose (refers to paper work definitvely) They haven’t over-charged us. It all adds up.

Moth I don’t see how it can. The radiators were turned on as usual on the first of December. We kept the thermostat constant. We had one cooked meal a day . . .

Rose Perhaps the hot water . . .

Moth Bath times Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Wash days on Tuesdays.

Rose Perhaps the washing machine’s less efficient now. It is 12 years old.

Moth Rosemary, you're blushing. We both know what that means.

Rose I just think . . .

Moth There's no need to think if you tell the truth. Thinking is for liars.

Rose (pause) It was exceptionally cold in January.

Moth Not exceptional, as I recall.

Rose (petulant) That's because I put the heating up for you.

Moth Aha.

Rose Your back . . . I thought . . . I didn't realise it would make such a difference.

Moth Was that the only thing you did? (pause) Look me in the eye. Rosemary? (Rosemary does so) Good. I believe you. If there's one thing I detest and that's being lied to. You've no idea how pathetic you look when you lie. You remind me of your father. He never had the courage to lie well. Of course, I had no option but to let him off the hook. What else can one do with a weak man but carry him?

Rose (checks watch and hurredly clears away paperwork) Now I’m running late. (drops some papers) Blast.

Moth You're such a flutterer, Rosemary. Look at you. When I was your age I had three children, your father was dying of cancer and we were about to lose the business. There was no time for fluttering. I had to act.

Rose (busying herself with tidying up) Yes, mother.

Moth I’ve had a hard life. A very hard life. But do you ever hear me complain? (*Rosemary throws her a look*) I've made it too comfortable for you.

Rose Comfortable?

Moth Even when you were born. Bawling your head off while I lay there pouring out my life blood. You very nearly killed me.

Rose (pepping up) Did I?

Moth You were a very difficult birth. (pause) The others were easy in comparison.

Rose I was the first. It's always more difficult with the first.

Moth Especially Hazel. It was a positive delight putting Hazel into the world. And even Michael, even he . . .

Rose You're just trying to upset me because you know Donald's coming.

Moth Why should I want to upset you because Mr Greenham's coming?

Rose (checks watch) He's late.

Moth He's got another five minutes to go.

Rose (starts to dust the furniture) I expect he’s been held up at work.

Moth Rosemary, you know I hate it when you dust. It makes me ill.

Rose Then move into the other room.

Moth I don't want to move.

Rose Stay, then.

Moth It'll be you who has to nurse my asthma.

Rose Don't get morbid, mother.

Moth Mind the carriage clock. You're going to knock it over.

Rose I don't want him to get the wrong impression.

Moth You know how fond I am of that clock. It's been with me since I was a little girl.

Rose Mother, you never were a little girl.

Moth That’s very cruel, Rosemary. (pause) Hazel would never say anything like that to

me.

Rose Oh, Hazel's so bloody perfect.

Moth Language!

Rose She never makes mistakes.

Moth Very few. Leaving home was one of them.

Rose She seems happy enough on it.

Moth She'd be a lot happier if she'd listened to me.

Rose She's still be here if she'd listened to you.

Moth She'd have made a better match, and a lot nearer home.

Rose Aha! A lot nearer home.

Moth Aberdeen, I ask you. When I think of the sacrifices that girl has had to make for him.

Rose It's no sacrifice.

Moth I miss her.

Rose You were always arguing. The things you used to say to her.

Moth The things she used to say to me!

Rose Hazel had guts.

Moth It was you who encouraged her.

Rose Rubbish.

Moth Oh, I could see you at work, quietly in the background, too timid to do your own dirty business, but always delighted if Hazel did it for you.

Rose That's not true.

Moth We were happy. We could have stayed like that for the rest of our lives. (rises and moves over to look at a framed photo of her children) I tried so hard to keep it together for you all after your father died. I wanted the best for you.

Rose (softens) Hazel still loves you.

Moth From afar. For the price of a postage stamp.

Rose I love you.

Moth Do you?

Rose (hesitant) Yes.

Moth Then why do you dust when I'm in the room?

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