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SUNDAYS AT THE HOUSE

Lead Focused / Drama / 4-5 min
Cast 3 Female x1 Male x2

Daniel, the oldest of three siblings, calls a late-night meeting at the kitchen table. The family already agreed to move their father into a care home. Daniel has a different plan, and he has already set it in motion.

CHARACTERS

DANIEL (LEAD) - 30s, the oldest sibling, moved away years ago and has been up for three nights making a plan

NORA - late 20s, the middle sibling, sharp and practical, stayed close to home

TYLER - early 20s, the youngest, wants to keep the peace

SETTING

The kitchen of the family home, late at night, one week after their father's fall.

A kitchen table late at night. Three coffee mugs, a folder, a closed laptop. DANIEL sits at the head. NORA and TYLER sit across from him.

DANIEL

Okay. Everybody's here. I'm gonna talk for a minute and I need you to let me get to the end.

NORA

That's ominous.

DANIEL

It's not ominous. It's a plan. We toured Ridgeway. We toured Maple Court. We did the spreadsheet. I know we said Ridgeway.

TYLER

We put the deposit down on Ridgeway.

DANIEL

I got the deposit back.

Beat.

NORA

You what?

DANIEL

This morning. It's back in the account. Dad's not going to Ridgeway. He's staying here. I'm moving in. I gave notice at work on Friday.

TYLER

You quit your job.

DANIEL

I gave notice. There's a difference. Two weeks.

NORA

Danny, that is not a plan. That is a panic attack with a folder.

DANIEL

Let me get to the end.

NORA

No. No, because I know the end. The end is you in this house for three years turning into the person Dad turned into when Mom got sick. We watched that. You watched it from a different state, but we watched it.

DANIEL

That's fair.

NORA

It's not fair. It's just true.

DANIEL

Okay. Here's the part you don't know. Two nights ago, at the hospital, he woke up at four in the morning and he thought I was Uncle Ray. He held my hand and he apologized to Uncle Ray for something that happened in 1979. And then he came back, and he knew it was me, and he said, "Don't let them put me somewhere with a smell."

TYLER

Ridgeway doesn't have a smell.

DANIEL

Every place has a smell, Ty.

TYLER

So because he said one thing at four in the morning...

DANIEL

Because he asked me. He asked me. Not you, not Nora. I'm the one who left. I'm the one who called on birthdays and thought that was showing up. He asked me anyway. You don't get asked twice.

NORA

(quieter)

And what about your life?

DANIEL

My life is a two-bedroom apartment and a job I can do from a laptop, once I find the next one. My life is not the problem. The problem is that in a year he won't know which one of us is which, and I want to be the one who's here while he still does.

Silence. TYLER picks up his mug, puts it down without drinking.

TYLER

The stairs. He can't do the stairs.

DANIEL

Bed goes in the dining room. I measured. Chair lift for the bathroom is four grand. Insurance covers half.

NORA

The night stuff. He wanders.

DANIEL

Alarm on the doors. I sleep light anyway.

NORA

You've been up all night doing this.

DANIEL

Three nights.

NORA

(a breath)

You should've called us.

DANIEL

I'm calling you now. That's what this is.

He opens the folder and slides two sheets across the table.

DANIEL

This isn't me asking permission. I'm doing this. What I'm asking for is Sundays. Nora, you take the first and third. Ty, second and fourth. You come, you sit with him, I go outside and remember what air is. Fifth Sundays, we all come, and we eat too much like we used to.

TYLER

And if it doesn't work?

DANIEL

Then we go back to the spreadsheet. But it works until it doesn't. Not the other way around.

NORA picks up the sheet. Reads it. She turns it face down on the table.

NORA

First and third.

DANIEL

First and third.

NORA

I want it in writing that I said this was insane.

DANIEL

It's in the folder. Page two.

TYLER laughs, short and wet. He wipes his face.

TYLER

Second and fourth.

DANIEL

Second and fourth.

DANIEL closes the folder. He looks toward the hallway where their father sleeps.

DANIEL

He's gonna hate the bed in the dining room.

NORA

He's gonna hate all of it.

DANIEL

(standing)

Yeah. But he's gonna hate it here.

*He picks up the mugs and takes them to the sink.
Lights fade.*

END OF SCRIPT