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THE SPARE KEY

Dialogues / Drama / 3-4 min
Cast 2 Female x1 Male x1

Nora and Daniel are clearing out their late mother's house. Nora stayed and cared for her. Daniel flew in with a folder and a plan to sell. One of them knows something the other does not.

CHARACTERS

NORA - late 30s, the sibling who stayed. Tired, precise, has been rehearsing this for a long time

DANIEL - early 40s, the sibling who left. Efficient, guilty, hides it behind logistics

SETTING

The living room of their mother's house, a week after the funeral, mid-afternoon.

A half-packed living room. Boxes, tape, a stack of framed photos turned face down on the couch.

NORA wraps a mug in newspaper. DANIEL enters holding a folder and a ring of keys.

DANIEL

You started without me.

NORA

I started three weeks ago. You're joining me.

DANIEL

I had to fly in. There was work.

NORA

There's always work.

He puts the folder on the table.

DANIEL

The agent thinks we can list on Monday. She already has a couple lined up. Cash buyers.

NORA

That's fast.

DANIEL

It's a good market. We should move while it holds.

NORA

We.

DANIEL

Nora.

NORA

Sorry. Go on. Monday.

DANIEL

I ran the numbers. Split clean down the middle after fees. It's fair.

NORA

It's fair.

DANIEL

Can you stop repeating me?

NORA

Can you stop saying fair?

She tapes the box shut. Harder than needed.

DANIEL

I know you were here. I know that. I'm not pretending you weren't.

NORA

Four years, Dan. Every hospital run. Every night she called me by your name.

DANIEL

I called every Sunday.

NORA

You did. Six ten. She'd sit by the phone from five.

Beat.

DANIEL

I'm trying to do this right.

NORA

You're trying to do it fast. That's different.

DANIEL

What do you want? You wanna stay? You can't afford this place on your own.

NORA

I don't need to afford it.

DANIEL

What's that mean?

*She goes to a drawer. Takes out a thin envelope.
Puts it on top of his folder.*

NORA

Two years ago. After the second stroke. She asked the lawyer to come here because she couldn't manage the stairs at his office.

DANIEL

What is this?

NORA

Read it.

He reads. It takes a while.

DANIEL

She signed it over.

NORA

Yes.

DANIEL

To you.

NORA

Yes.

DANIEL

And you didn't think to mention that. Once. In two years.

NORA

She asked me not to. She said you'd take it as a punishment.

DANIEL

Isn't it?

NORA

(quiet)

It was a thank you. I didn't ask for it.

DANIEL

So this. All this. Boxes. Listing on Monday. You let me stand here and talk about splitting it down the middle.

NORA

I wanted to see if you'd say it.

DANIEL

Say what?

NORA

Anything about her. You've been here twenty minutes. You've said agent, market, numbers, fair. You haven't said Mom.

Silence. He sits. He looks at the photos turned face down.

DANIEL

I can't look at them yet.

NORA

I know. I turned them over for you.

She takes the keys out of his hand. Works one off the ring. Holds it out.

NORA

Back door. It sticks. Lift and push.

DANIEL

Why?

NORA

Because it's still your house too. Just not on paper.

*He takes the key. Doesn't put it in his pocket.
Holds it.*

END OF SCRIPT