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WHAT THE GARDEN KNOWS

Monologues / Drama / 3 min
Cast 1 Female x1

Ruth's son has arrived with a folder and a plan to sell the family home. She wants him to leave the house, and her late husband's roses, alone. But every argument she reaches for is one she has already lost.

CHARACTERS

RUTH - 50s to 60s, a recently widowed retired nurse who has never once asked for help

SETTING

A backyard at dusk in late fall, present day.

A backyard at dusk, late fall. Dead leaves, a wheelbarrow, a row of bare rose canes along the fence.

RUTH, in a coat over her nightgown, holds a trowel she is not using. She speaks to her adult son, who has followed her out from the kitchen.

RUTH

No. Stay on the step. You'll get mud on those shoes and then I'll have to hear about it.

I know what the agent said. I was in the room. Eight weeks on the market, maybe six if we "present it properly." Which means paint over the pencil marks on the pantry door. Which means the roses come out, because buyers don't like maintenance.

(beat)

Your father put those in the year you were born. He didn't know the first thing about roses. He read one book and then argued with it. Every June he'd come in with his arms scratched to pieces and say, they're winning, Ruth, but I got 'em worried.

She crouches and pushes the trowel into the soil, then stops.

I can handle the stairs. I can handle the boiler. I know how to bleed a radiator. I taught you how to bleed a radiator. So don't stand there with that folder like you've come to read me my rights.

(sharper)

Don't. Don't do the voice. The one you use on the phone with the bank.

A long pause.

You're right. I know you're right. That's the part I can't stand.

She sits back on her heels.

I signed on Tuesday.

Not with you. With the agent. I called her myself, the week after the funeral, before you'd even said the word. She came over with her little tablet and I signed it at the kitchen table where your father used to do the crossword, and then I made her a cup of coffee because I didn't know what else to do with my hands.

(quieter)

I wanted you to fight me on it. That's the truth. I wanted somebody in this family to stand in that kitchen and say no, not yet, not this house. And you came in with a folder.

Pause. She looks at the roses.

They'll take in a pot. Most things will, if you're careful with the roots.

She holds the trowel out toward him.

Well. Take your shoes off, then.

END OF SCRIPT