

A Casket Gal

A Ten-Minute Play

by

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CHARACTERS

TAMMY 32. A very meticulous person. She has a plan for everything. Not always a good plan, but a plan.

JANE 29. Tammy's sister. She doesn't have a plan for anything.

SETTING

Jane's home in Indiana. A front porch. The present.

THE PLAY

(Early morning at JANE's house. TAMMY is dressed very well and is generally put together. JANE is dressed in a robe. They are on the front porch.)

TAMMY

Okay, give me the details one more time.

JANE

We've been over it a hundred times.

TAMMY

It's important.

JANE

This is stupid Tammy. It's like five in the morning. I have to go to work soon.

TAMMY

Who cares about work?

JANE

My bills.

TAMMY

Who cares about bills? We are talking about something bigger here. It could happen at any moment so you need to be prepared.

JANE

Tammy this is dumb. Go home. You're going to wake up the kids and then Brad's going to get all pissed and then you won't be able to come over this weekend to go shopping.

TAMMY

Shopping? This is more important to you than your own flesh and blood?

JANE

I've already got a sitter. I haven't bought a new bra in three years. We can talk about it then. Again.

TAMMY

Humor me.

JANE

Fine.

TAMMY

So, you get the call. Now what?

Who's gonna call?
JANE

I don't know, Mom.
TAMMY

What if Mom's dead?
JANE

Jane.
TAMMY

It's a fair question.
JANE

Why do you gotta say something like that?
TAMMY

Chances are she's going to die first.
JANE

You just want Mom to die.
TAMMY

No, I want her to stop calling me three times a day.
JANE

Look it doesn't matter who calls.
TAMMY

Sure it does. My sister's dead I want to know who's calling to let me know.
JANE

Fine. Your husband.
TAMMY

Why does Brad know before me?
JANE

Because the cops called your house but you weren't home.
TAMMY

And why are the cops calling? Are you planning on doing something illegal?
JANE

The funeral home calls you then.
TAMMY

JANE

I don't think that's how it works Tammy.

TAMMY

The hospital, mom, a French prostitute, it doesn't matter.

JANE

It matters, but we can move on. I mean there's a big difference between mom and a French prostitute, but go ahead. What are you doing with prostitutes anyway? And why French?

TAMMY

Why not French?

JANE

Well if it were me I'd make sure that Brad called you.

TAMMY

But he can't call you?

JANE

I just think that I'd know before him.

TAMMY

That doesn't make sense. Anyone could find out.

JANE

That's not how it works. I deal with our side of the family and he deals with his side. You don't make your spouse deal with the in-laws like that.

TAMMY

Shut up.

JANE

Maybe if you get married your husband can call.

TAMMY

Fine. My future husband calls you.

JANE

Your future husband - Jude Law.

TAMMY

I don't even like-

JANE

Jude Law.

TAMMY

Fine. Jude Law.

JANE

Where did you guys meet?

TAMMY

What?

JANE

What's he like? How's his accent? Does he let you—

TAMMY

We met at the supermarket.

JANE

That's pretty cliché. When was the last time you talked to somebody at the store? Let alone J—

TAMMY

Jane! Please focus. This is important. It's for all eternity so I need to know that I can trust you.

JANE

You can trust me. I'm just asking what your ideal husband would be like.

TAMMY

He's smart and funny and good looking and he does something noble for a living like care for the elderly. And he needs to be a good father.

JANE

You're having kids now?

TAMMY

In your fantasy world.

JANE

How many?

TAMMY

JANE!

JANE

Two? Three? Seven?

TAMMY

I don't know...three.

JANE

I would have pegged you for one. It'll be easier for you to smother and repress one.

Fine, one.

TAMMY

Was that so hard?

JANE

So, Jude Law calls you—

TAMMY

What if I die first?

JANE

Jane!?!

TAMMY

Sorry. You just seem so certain that you're going to die before everyone else.

JANE

(Pause.)

You have some horrible disease don't you? Is this like Philadelphia?

TAMMY

What? No, I'm just planning.

JANE

Explain it to me like I'm four years old.

TAMMY

What?

JANE

Denzel. From Philadelphia. He said that to everybody. Remember? He's in court and he's all like hey mister gay hater, explain it to me like I'm in second grade and then Tom Hanks comes out and he's like look at my legions and then he almost dies on the stand and Antonio Banderas is all like why did they make me dress up as a sailor for Halloween? I mean not all gay guys are sailors and then they play that really sad montage at the end. I hate that montage. Do I have to make one of those for you?

TAMMY

Can we focus please?

JANE

Sorry. You're sure you don't have AIDS?

TAMMY

Yes.

JANE
No cancer, or tumors, or TB or anything?

TAMMY
Not yet.

JANE
Okay.

TAMMY
Okay. So you get the call. Now what?

JANE
Well, I'm probably sad.

TAMMY
Probably?

JANE
Well I don't know what's recently transpired. What if you steal my wife or like murder ten people?

TAMMY
Why do you have to make this so complicated?

JANE
I don't want to have anything to do with it. I want to go back to bed.

TAMMY
Then why did you agree to help me?

JANE
What was I supposed to say? My sister wants me to spread her ashes, I can't say no.

TAMMY
Just shut up. Here.
(She pulls a Ziploc bag out of her purse and hands it to JANE.)

JANE
What's this?

TAMMY
Me.

JANE
That's weird. I don't want to touch it.

TAMMY

It's not really me.

JANE

I know, but it's supposed to be you. Can I wear gloves when I do this?

TAMMY

No.

JANE

Not even like fancy white gloves?

(Pause.)

What is it really?

TAMMY

Sand.

JANE

Why is there a screw in there?

TAMMY

What?

JANE

There's a screw in there.

TAMMY

I got it from the backyard.

JANE

You stole it from Abby's sandpit?

TAMMY

Jane, please.

JANE

Sand's too heavy.

TAMMY

How would you know?

JANE

I don't know, it seems too heavy to be a person.

TAMMY

Just take it.

JANE

Okay.

TAMMY

Toss some.

JANE

No.

TAMMY

You need to practice. I don't want you to mess everything up right at the end.

JANE

It's not that hard.

TAMMY

There's a lot that goes into it. First you need to make sure you're downwind, otherwise it'll blow back on you. Second you need to make sure that it isn't raining, otherwise it won't spread and it'll clump up and stick to everything and that's just disturbing. Third you have to pace out the handfuls. You don't want to just dump it all out at once, but you don't want it to take forever either.

JANE

I'm sorry I wasn't paying attention.

TAMMY

Jane.

JANE

I'm kidding. Relax, it's not rocket science.

TAMMY

It's my life.

JANE

Am I supposed to say something?

TAMMY

I don't want to force you to say something about your dead sister, but yeah, it would be nice if you said something.

JANE

Okay.

TAMMY

So?

JANE

What?

TAMMY

What are you going to say?

JANE

I don't know. I have to think about it.

TAMMY

This is supposed to be a dry run.

JANE

Do I really have to go to the ocean?

TAMMY

You have to go to Cape Cod - Provincetown, not just the ocean.

JANE

This is going to cost me a fortune you know. I hope you live forever.

TAMMY

I'm sorry you have to go to one of the most beautiful places in the world to carry out your dead sister's last wish.

JANE

Fine.

(She takes a handful out of the bag - including the screw - and tosses it.)

Tammy.

(Pause.)

TAMMY

That's it? You're just going to say my name?

JANE

I don't know. I couldn't think of anything to say.

TAMMY

I'm your sister.

JANE

Quit being so dramatic.

TAMMY

I'm not being dramatic.

JANE

You're not being dramatic? What would you call this? You're thirty-two years old. You're digging up your ashes out of your niece's sandbox at three in the morning in a little black dress and heels because our great uncle who we saw twice died without a will. I just practiced tossing—

TAMMY

Spreading.

JANE (Con't)

-your ashes into the ocean off of my front porch - in Indiana!
I've got better things to do than plan your funeral.

TAMMY

Forget it. I knew I couldn't trust you with something important.

JANE

We both know that you won't get cremated. It's not your personality. It's too messy for you. You're a casket gal all the way. You like things wrapped up nicely, tight corners and straight lines - I mean look at this whole thing with the ashes. With a casket you can control everything-style, fabric, clothes the whole nine yards; a tight little self contained box. With the ashes they could end up anywhere, but you know where a casket is going. You pick the perfect spot and you know that you're going to end up there. I've never met anybody that's more perfect for a casket than you. Plus you don't have to worry about me ruining your epitaph - you can write it yourself. You really want me to spread your ashes, fine, I'll do it, but I think you'll be sorry.

TAMMY

You think so?

JANE

Absolutely.

TAMMY

Maybe a casket would be better.

JANE

Yup.

TAMMY

I do like woodwork. And I am better with words than you. Maybe you're right.

JANE

You think about it.
You want some coffee? Maybe watch a little Alfie on DVD?

TAMMY

Yeah.

(They exit inside. Lights fade out.)

THE END