Parlor Games

A Comedy by Ed Tasca

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Dedicated to
Aunt Ree
For keeping track of everybody and their birthdays

STORY OF THE PLAY

A funeral parlor is the perfect setting for this quirky, off-kilter farce where family and “special” friends come to mourn, to surprise, to plot, and even to negotiate their futures.

Everyone thinks Donny D’Silva was killed in a car crash. But it wasn’t Donny at all. Then again, it was – until everyone assumes the real victim is Rodrigo Benitez, Donny’s former employee. Then, Rodrigo shows up, so it’s not him either!

Throughout the confusion, the families of the would-be dead make every effort to take advantage of the loss of their respective loved one. So who was the real victim? In the end, it turns out to be the town’s local lothario, whose life has ended in a most fitting way!

Performance Time: About 80 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4 m, 4 w)

DONNY D'SILVA: Mechanic, 40s.

LARRY D'SILVA: University professor, 50s.

LENA D'SILVA: Donny's wife, 40s.

NATHAN PALTROW: Mortuary director, late 50s.

CHRYSELLE HORSHAM: Attractive woman, late 40s.

ASSUNTA BENITEZ: Latino mother, 50s.

MARIA BENITEZ: Daughter of Assunta, 20s.

RODRIGO BENITEZ: Brother of Assunta, 40s.

Extras as non-speaking delivery men.

SETTING

The well-appointed lobby of St. John the Baptist Funeral Parlor. Entrance door to lobby is SL. A large sofa and a small stand which holds a guest book for signing are DSL. An exit to the basement is just next to the small stand.

An imposing stone statue of St. John the Baptist holding his head in his arms is USL. Further left to the statue is a door to a restroom marked with both men and women figures and a sign, PLEASE KNOCK. A simple metal floor lamp stands beside this door.

A grandiose archway marked CHAPEL leads to a chapel off SR.

TIME: Today, mid-morning.

PROPS

Cell phone for Larry with distinctive ring tone*
Coins and cellphone for Nathan
Pamphlet off SR for Nathan
Handkerchiefs for Chryselle and Lena
Sports clothes on hangers off SL for Donny
Vial of pills for Nathan
Ornate cremation urn, coffin on gurney, and broom from off SR for Nathan

Dozens of baskets of flowers, all sizes, from off SL for Deliverymen

*Suggested ring tone: Van Halen's *Jump*.

ACT I

(AT RISE: LIGHTS on in the lobby are solemnly dim. NATHAN PALTROW takes his place dutifully by the chapel archway. SOUND of a group praying the rosary in the offstage chapel. Within seconds, this turns into a eulogy from LARRY D'SILVA.)

LARRY: *(Offstage.)* I'd like to take a moment, if I may, to say a few words about my brother, Donny. Here was a man who truly was a man. Yes, of course he had faults, don't we all. And of course, he had enemies, who can avoid having an enemy or two. But there was more to Donny… *(Inaudible.)*

(CHRYSELLE HORSHAM, dressed in black, comes out of the wake, SR. The eulogy diminishes in volume. She's crying. She stops a moment, looks back and blows a kiss at the service. NATHAN approaches to comfort her. It's a brief hug.)

NATHAN: He's with his Maker, now. And isn't that a wonderful thing?
CHRYSELLE: I wanted to speak, but I'm afraid it wouldn't be right–
NATHAN: Some of us speak quietly and privately. As long as God hears.
LARRY: *(Offstage.)* There was his genuine hard-working ethic. His lack of pretensions. And we all know he was an easy touch for pals who needed a few bucks or needed some work done to their cars. Well, in one way or the other, we all counted on Donny, I think, without realizing it. And yes, there were the barroom brawls – *(Inaudible.)*
CHRYSELLE: Do you believe that we all meet again?
NATHAN: Of course, I do. This is just a brief parting of the ways.
CHRYSELLE: Thank you so much. You'd know about these things, wouldn't you?
NATHAN: I know what my faith knows.
CHRYSELLE: Death is so…unreal. It never seemed real to me. Do you know what I mean? It's just a trick of nature.

CHRYSELLE: *(Cont'd.)* How could something so alive be here one minute and then be nothing the next? Nothing could be more unnatural than that. Don't you think?
NATHAN: I agree, entirely.
CHRYSELLE: I'm Chryselle Horsham. I knew Mr. D'Silva. He was sort of a competitor of my husband's.
NATHAN: *(Nodding pleasantly.)* Horsham's Pampered Cars. I know the commercial, the car in the sparkling white diaper.
CHRYSELLE: I better go now.

(CHRYSELLE begins tearing up again and exits SL. NATHAN accompanies her off. At the same time...)

LARRY: *(Offstage.)* So, let's remember Donny fondly as the guy who worked hard for his family, and never stopped chasing his dreams. Thank you.

(LARRY meanders out from the offstage wake at SR. He's pretending to mourn, then he suddenly calls to NATHAN, who returns from SL.)

LARRY: *(Cont'd.)* What do you think?
NATHAN: I think that was lovely.
LARRY: I mean…when can we wrap this thing up?
NATHAN: People are still praying.
LARRY: Yes, of course. *(Pause.)* But I'm sure God's got the point by now.

(NATHAN comforts HIM with a quick, sympathetic hug.)

LARRY: *(Cont'd.)* Death is a delightful hiding place for weary men, Herodotus said. It's sad but it's impressively true, because at some point we're all a little weary of life.
NATHAN: Yes. That's interesting. Did you see the little memorial we put on the handout for your brother? It sounds a little like what you just said.
LARRY: No, I don't believe I did.
NATHAN: Let me get one for you.

End of Freeview

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