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*Dramatic Publishing*



# **Cheating Death**

by  
Frank Higgins

From...

## **35 in 10**

Thirty-Five Ten-Minute Plays

Compiled and Edited

KENT R. BROWN



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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# **CHEATING DEATH**

By  
Frank Higgins

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**Cheating Death** was first presented in 2003 by Atlantis Playmakers in Billerica, Mass. It was directed by Adam Perlman, and featured Carlos Zaldondo, Gwynne Flanagan and Will McGregor.

### CHARACTERS

CAROL: A woman approaching middle age.

DEATH: A young, handsome man.

HERB: Carol's husband.

SETTING: The bedroom of Carol and Herb.

TIME: The present.

## CHEATING DEATH

AT THE CURTAIN: *CAROL and HERB are sleeping in their bed. The dark, shrouded figure of DEATH enters with his staff.*

DEATH. Carol. Carol Milberger.

CAROL. Honey?

DEATH. Wake up, Carol.

CAROL. What time is it?

DEATH. Later than you think.

CAROL. No, it's not even light yet. We've still got time.

Let me rub your neck... C'mon, you know it helps you.  
*(DEATH hesitates, then sits on the bed. She rubs DEATH's neck.)* You worry too much. So they hired a younger guy at the office; he doesn't know *half* what you know. You know *people*. You're in the people business. The boss knows that; you'll last forever, 'til death do us part.

DEATH. Carol, I've come for you.

CAROL. Oh honey, it's okay.

DEATH. Open your eyes.

*(She sees him, and notices her husband still snores beside her.)*

CAROL. Herb! Herb, wake up!

DEATH. He won't be joining us.

CAROL. Take what you want; take anything but get out!

There's nothing valuable in here anyway.

DEATH. Not true.

CAROL. So that's what you want? You've come to the wrong place, buddy. *(She takes out a can of pepper spray and a stun gun.)* Get out of here right now and I won't hurt you— I warned you. *(She sprays him in the face; DEATH does not react. CAROL steels herself and charges. She stabs at him with the stun gun. DEATH makes no effort to defend himself, and the electric charges have no effect. She drops the stun gun and takes a karate stance. She hacks away; DEATH stands mute and passive. CAROL is finally exhausted. She claps her hands twice and the LIGHTS come on.)* What the... All right, get up, Herb. Joke's over. *(She shoves her husband who continues to snore.)*

DEATH. It's no joke.

CAROL. Right. My birthday was *yesterday*. Who do you work for? Singing telegrams? Well no tip for you— And *you* stop pretending you're sleeping.

DEATH. He can't hear us.

CAROL. That was some act you put on; pretending to be so worried about the young guy at the office, pretending you had to take a sleeping pill. Well it's not funny, and it's not funny you took the batteries from my stun gun. *(She touches her husband in the rump with the stun gun and he reacts and we hear the SNAP of electricity.)* Oh my God! Herb! Oh baby!— Call nine-one-one.

DEATH. He'll be all right. He's not on my to-do list.

CAROL. ...Oh God...this is real.

DEATH. Yes.

CAROL. No. I'm dreaming! I'm hallucinating! Drugs in college: bad *bad*!

DEATH. Prepare yourself.